Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015

The mission of the Dane County Historical Society is to preserve and advance knowledge of the history of Dane County, Wisconsin. Some of the ways in which the Society carried out this mission in 2014 include:

• Presenting programs for DCHS members and for the general public on various aspects of local county history
• Maintaining the Otto Schroeder Records Center for historical collections and records; and making those collections available to the public
• Providing a means through which local area historical societies can cooperate on joint projects and exhibits

We had a very busy year at DCHS; and we hope to continue meeting those goals in the coming year. Some of the 2014 programs and projects are summarized here.

Wisconsin Foundry Project

On February 15, 2014, Dane County Historical Society was asked to participate in a program about manufacturing in Madison organized by the East Side History Club. The program, held at the Goodman Community Center, was very well attended.

Mary Clark, president of DCHS presented a background talk about the history of the Wisconsin Foundry & Machine Company. We also brought along a large display of photographs from the foundry.

Although Madison and Dane County at one time had many foundries and machine shops, the Dane County Historical Society became interested in this particular foundry because our archive was given a collection of photographs, catalogs, records and other documents from the Wisconsin Foundry & Machine Company.
Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015 (Continued from page 1)

Wisconsin Foundry and Machine Company began life in 1910. One of the items in the collection of documents that was given to Dane Co. Historical Society is the original Articles of Incorporation – it was signed on July 7, 1910 – by G.W. Botham.

George Washington Botham, known to everyone as G.W., served as President of the company from 1910 until 1940 when he stepped down to let his son D.L. take over the presidency. D.L. in turn was succeeded by his son Dorsey James (D.J.), known as “Tuck.” It was Tuck Botham who donated the collection of photographs to the Dane County Historical Society in July of 1995, just two years after the foundry finally closed its doors.

Other founders and key players in the long-running company were Joseph Eisele, Vice President of the foundry from the beginning until his death in 1948; and August J. Buenzli who was also instrumental at the foundry until he died in 1938.

Present in the audience for the East Side History Club presentation, were several members of the Botham, Eisele and Buenzli families, who each shared reminiscences of their families and of the foundry. We also heard from a number of former workers at the factory or possibly at some of the many customer companies who ordered products from the foundry. It will be a challenge to attempt to identify some of those people in the photographs.

Dane County Historical Society has a small contingent of very loyal donors who have contributed toward the Foundry project over the years. We hope to use those donations to clean, preserve, process and potentially digitize some of this valuable collection. If you would like to contribute toward this project to make the Foundry materials accessible, we would appreciate donations in any amount.

Workers at Wisconsin Foundry & Machine Co. engine repair shop, 1944.
Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015 (Continued from page 2)

**Annual Open House**

The Dane County Historical Society first organized its archival Records Center at the Madison Public Library in 1968. In 2002 the Records Center was renamed as the Otto Schroeder Records Center and moved into its current home in the basement of the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

One of the largest challenges that faces the Society is how to make available the marvelous collections and documents in the Otto Schroeder Records Center. DCHS is a volunteer-driven society and we never have enough volunteers. As such, the Society has not been able to maintain office hours or to offer by-appointment access to the archive. These historical jewels go virtually unseen by the general public, or even by our membership. To partially address this situation, DCHS began hosting a very popular annual Open House event a few years ago.

On Sunday, May 4, 2014, Dane County Historical Society held its third annual Open House at the Society’s offices and headquarters in the beautiful Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison. Amid coffee and refreshments, there was plenty of opportunity to meet with folks from the Society and to explore with us some of the interesting collections that make up the Otto Schroeder Records Center.

Attendees had a chance to tour the archive as well as view many interesting papers and collections that were specially brought out for display, where they could be handled and discussed by those that wanted a closer look.

**Featured Presentations.** This Open House featured two very interesting and popular speaker presentations during the afternoon.

First, the audience heard from local author and historian, Tracy Will, who spoke about “Place Names of Dane County.” Tracy had an abundance of slides depicting interesting places and stories around the county. The presentation was given in “alphabetical order,” and due to so much interest with questions and comments from the audience, we only got through about half of the alphabet in the allotted time. It just served to illustrate the point that Dane County has a very rich heritage.

Next, Robert Birmingham took the podium to speak about “Indian Mounds in Dane County.” Bob is well known around the state; he served for many years as Wisconsin state archaeologist at the Wisconsin Historical Society. He now teaches and writes about one of his favorite topics, Indian Mounds.

Bob taught us some very interesting facts about the mounds and mound culture that existed in Dane County.

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presentations and their knowledge of Dane County history.

Below are just a few of the society’s unique documents and collections that were on display during the open house:

• **Plat Maps of Dane County.** One of the most popular types of material in the Otto Schroeder Records Center is the collection of Dane County plat books and atlases. The Society has many of these large, interesting plat book – the earliest is from 1861. The volumes contain plats of each of the Dane County townships as created by the original federal survey, as well as plats of the cities and villages established at that time.

• **Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Madison.** The Sanborn Map Company created maps for fire insurance assessment. On display was DCHS’s Map for downtown Madison. The map contains an enormous amount of information including outlines of each building, street names, railroad corridors; building use and the composition of building materials, etc.

• **Martin Schneider Architectural Plans and Drawings.** This is an unprocessed collection of hundreds of architectural drawings by the noted Madison architect, Martin P. Schneider.

• **Madison Theatre Guild Scrapbooks.** Housed in 7 large archival boxes, this collection consists of clippings, photographs, programs, correspondence, scripts, circulars, and advertisements documenting the activities of the Madison Theatre Guild for the years 1946-1978.

• **Malone Cheese Factory records (1902-1957, 1972).** The records of the Malone Cheese Factory near Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, and its predecessors include records of incorporation as a cooperative; minutes of board of directors meetings, etc. It was located on Highway 92 between Mount Horeb and Mount Vernon, Wisconsin.

• **Wisconsin Foundry Collection.** Photos and documents from the Wisconsin Foundry and Machine Company.

• **Our Roll of Honor, Dane County in the Civil War (1903?).** This 24 page pamphlet is a listing by town, village, and city of the soldiers who were killed or died from wounds or disease while in the service from 1861 to 1866, inclusive, with the cause and place of death, where known. Where not otherwise stated, death was from disease.

• **Sixty years of Perry congregation: a souvenir of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Perry (1915).** A 144 page illustrated, and indexed history of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Perry, Dane County, Wisconsin and its member families from 1846 to 1914.

**Wisconsin History Tour**

During 2014, the Wisconsin Historical Society sought to increase engagement and build awareness of its vast resources by offering a program in various localities around the state called the Wisconsin History Tour. As the third stop on the Tour, it visited Verona and provided a free month long exhibition accompanied by a week of history-related programming.

Bob Birmingham discusses Indian Mounds of Dane County.
Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015 (Continued from page 4)

Dane County Historical Society along with the Verona Historical Society was invited to participate in creating the local content for the exhibit at the Verona Public Library. The exhibit remained up at the library throughout the month of August 2014; in addition, there were also other events and activities to celebrate local history during the third week of August. DCHS supplied photos and text for one panel of the exhibit to portray places and events in the general history of Dane County.

Dane County Historical Society also organized and participated in the August 23, 2014 Community Event at the Verona Public Library. We invited and coordinated with other local historical societies around the county to participate with us in setting up exhibit tables at the library to highlight local society programs, publications and services. This was a wonderful opportunity to publicize our society with brochures and books and tote bags.

Besides DCHS, the local societies that participated were: Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society, Historic Madison, Inc., Fitchburg Historical Society, Friends of the Schumacher Farm Society, Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, and Oregon Historical Society.

DCHS Annual Meeting

One of the requirements for local affiliates of the Wisconsin Historical Society is that a local society must convene an annual membership meeting, and hold board elections at that meeting. For the Dane County Historical Society’s annual meeting in 2014, we again called on Tracy Will for a presentation about the founding of the UW-Madison Arboretum and the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) camp that was established at the Arboretum.

The annual meeting was held on November 9, 2014 on a beautiful Sunday afternoon at the Arboretum Visitor Center.

Continued on page 6
Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015 (Continued from page 5)

Tracy’s very interesting talk which he titled, *Aldo Leopold and the CCC. Create the Madison Arboretum*, was punctuated with photographs, some of which were completely new even to the Arboretum staff. Tracy drew on an online cache of over 50 photographs of the CCC in the arboretum.

The men of the CCC worked from 1934 to 1941 on the Arboretum of University of Wisconsin Madison providing the majority of the labor needed to establish the ecological communities that make up the Arboretum. This was accomplished by excavating and moving land to return farmland to its natural condition as well as reintroducing native plants.

Tychoberahn Project

Dane County Historical Society has been planning and preparing to digitize our collection of high school yearbooks from Madison Central High School for some time. Several years ago, we had the Madison Central High School student newspaper, *The Mirror*, scanned and made available online via our Dane County Historical Society website.

In June 1969, Madison’s Central-University High School held its final commencement exercises, a ceremony that signaled the end of an era. Dane County’s oldest public high school began in 1853 in the basement of a Methodist Church in Madison, with 90 pupils and one teacher. Throughout its history, the institution had various names. It began as Madison High School; became Madison Central High School in 1922 when a new East High school became Madison’s second high school; and finally changed to Central-University High School in 1965 when intern teachers from the University of Wisconsin became part of the teaching staff.

The annual Tychoberahn yearbook began in 1900. The publication name is derived from two Indian words, “tah-hah” the word for lake and “tshopiwi” a word meaning four. The words were combined to form Taychoperah, the name which the
Ho Chunk people gave to the four lakes region around Madison.

Dane County Historical Society’s records show that on June 19, 1969, two weeks after the school closed its doors for the last time, Principal William Marsh donated material to the Society including copies of the school’s yearbook, Tychoberahn.

The Society has been collecting additional donations toward the Tychoberahn project for several years. Many loyal Central High School alumni have donated additional volumes and funding toward the success of the project to digitize the Tychoberahn. In 2014, we were finally able to move forward with the project. Earlier in the year, we had secured a price quote from Northern Micrographics in La Crosse for digitization of our entire collection of Tychoberahn volumes. Working with 69 volumes from 1900 through 1969 there were almost 5000 pages to digitize.

The volumes were hand-delivered to Northern Micrographics in July. Often when older volumes are professionally scanned, it is easier and cheaper to slice open the volumes for flat scanning. DCHS had insisted that the volumes remain intact during the scanning so all of the original volumes were scanned as bound volumes and remain safely stored in the archive. The complete set of online Tychoberahn yearbooks can be viewed at: http://content.mpl.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/DCHS

Looking Back at a Successful 2014 – and Forward to 2015 (Continued from page 6)
Board Corner

As DCHS’s newest board member, I’ve been asked to introduce myself. So: “Hi, I’m Rich Eggleston, the Dane County Historical Society’s newest board member. Have a good day.”

What more to say? Well, I’m a historyholic. I’m also on the boards of Historic Madison Inc. and the Fitchburg Historical Society and I belong to the Price County Historical Society as well. If that’s not over-dosing on local history, I don’t know what is.

I bring with me to each of these organizations a love of old photographs and the stories that go with them. I want to get that stuff out of the attic — literally as well as figuratively — and make it available to new audiences in the digital age. DCHS will soon have its archives digitized, and I hope to help mine that resource for the benefit of residents of Dane County and beyond.

I’m a retired communications professional; I was an Associated Press reporter in Madison for a quarter century, mostly covering state government. So I know a good story when I see one. I watched history being made on a daily basis, and watched the people making it. So if you need any help clearing out the historical stuff from your attic — figuratively, darn it, NOT literally — let me know.

From the Office

Hello friends of Dane County Historical Society! My name is Nicole Culver-Lutz and I’m the new part-time office manager here at DCHS. I’m from Wisconsin originally but spent about 18 years living in Western Montana. My family and I moved back to this area in 2008 to be closer to my parents and siblings. I started working here in October and I’m really enjoying it!

My first task was organizing the office and getting caught up on lots of back filing. We hadn’t had anyone working in the office for several years so there was a lot of catching up to do. We now have three separate areas in the office: my desk where I manage the office; the volunteer cataloging area; and a public area with table and chairs in the front for visitors. On a daily basis I handle all the email and mail correspondence, process any invoices and memberships, help onsite researchers looking for information in our archives and help to inventory some of the collections. When I’m not working here I am spending time at home just a mile down the road with my husband and two children.

I’m excited about being a part of Dane County Historical Society and collecting and preserving the history of our county. I am starting to establish open office hours at the Society; something the Society has been anxious to do for several years now. Feel free to stop in and say Hi if you’re in the area!
Donations and Memorials – January-December 2014

The following donations were given to the Dane County Historical Society in 2014. Donations of any amount are always greatly appreciated. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Society. We depend heavily on donations to carry out our mission to collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge about the history of Dane County, Wisconsin.

Donations of $100-$500

**General Fund**
- Sharon Mulak/Lloyd Velicer
- Erica Gehrig

**Archives Processing (Foundry Collection)**
- Peter W. Clark
- George F. Jacobs, Jr.
  (multiple donations totaling in the $100-$500 range)
  - In memory of Shirley Ann L. Homberg
  - In memory of Erna M. Shendel
  - In memory of James H. Furstenberg
  - In memory of Robert H. Consigny and Ronald D. Remy
  - In memory of Charles A. Bass
  - In memory of Dorothy C. Jenswold
  - In memory of Joan M. Jennerjohn

**Legacy Fund**
- Beverly Kneebone
  (multiple donations totaling in the $100-$500 range)
  - In memory of Stephen R. Mueller
  - In honor of Jack Loew
  - In honor of David Kneebone
  - In honor of Dale Hunsaker
  - In honor of Grace Kreutzer
  - In honor of Maurice Ellis

Donations of up to $99

**General Fund**
- Beverly Kneebone
- Karen Turner
- Joe/Barbara Weston Corry
- Gloria/Virgil Simley
- Jonathan D. Cooper/Jane M. Richard
- Melanie Woodworth
- Neil McCallum
- Gerald/Betty Fuller
- Shirley Haidinger
- Megan Koepsell
- Sandy Bennett
- Martin Timmins
- Ruth Dahlke

**Madison Central HS Fund**
- Joanne Jensen
  - In memory of John Cloutier
- Caryl F. Bremer Family Trust
- All Central High School reunion
- Beverly Kneebone

**Legacy Fund**
- Joanne Jensen
  - In memory of Don Beale
  - In memory of Mickie Schmudlach

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Professor Johnston often said that if you didn’t know history, you didn’t know anything. You were a leaf that didn’t know it was part of a tree.

–Michael Crichton, Timeline

History with its flickering lamp stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days.

–Winston Churchill

If one could make alive again for other people some cobwebbed skein of old dead intrigues and breathe breath and character into dead names and stiff portraits. That is history to me!

–George Macaulay Trevelyan

The lovers of romance can go elsewhere for satisfaction but where can the lovers of truth turn if not to history?

–Katharine Anthony

The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present.

–David Thelen

History is but the record of the public and official acts of human beings. It is our object, therefore, to humanize our history and deal with people past and present; people who ate and possibly drank; people who were born, flourished and died; not grave tragedians, posing perpetually for their photographs.

–Bill Nye, History of the United States
The creation of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum was a by-product of the dust and Depression years of the early 1930s. The project stimulated a handful of farsighted botanists, naturalists, and ecologists to realize their vision for a nature preserve and environmental proving ground that would have an influence far beyond Dane County.

The concept of an arboretum had many parents. Wisconsin’s pioneer scientist Increase Lapham had called for the creation of a preserve as early as 1853. Landscape architect John Nolen proposed the expansion of Madison’s Vilas Park around the southern shore of Lake Wingra in 1911. Regent Michael Olbrich secured the University’s approval for a plan to begin arboretum development around Lake Wingra in 1927, but after he died in 1929, the project languished. Joseph Jackson, Jackson Clinic Medical Administrator and friend of Michael Olbrich, revived the idea in 1931 and acquisition of the first Arboretum land, the 245-acre Charles Nelson farm, occurred in 1932.

Low Depression prices made it possible to acquire more land on the scale conceived by Olbrich and Jackson. Acquisition of Town of Madison properties through benefactors’ donations, came about as failed farms in the area passed into public ownership. The Depression also provided 200 youthful workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Under the supervision the University’s famed naturalist, Aldo Leopold and others, they moved rocks, hauled and planted trees, and dug ponds between 1935 and 1941. In addition, they scalped the topsoil, burned off invading grasses that were not native, and reintroduced plants from existing remnant prairies.

Leopold, who joined the UW faculty as the country’s first professor of game management in 1933, had been thinking about the need for an arboretum for many years. His idea was to “reconstruct … a sample of what Dane County looked like when our ancestors arrived here during the 1840s.”

In his keynote address, at the Arboretum dedication on June 17, 1934, Leopold explained the importance of restoring and studying the original ecosystem. In addition to the intentional and necessary changes in the soil and flora and fauna, development had induced unintentional and unnecessary changes that “threatened to undermine the future capacity of the soil to support our civilization.” These changes, he argued, had reduced the standard of living materially and spiritually. Highlighting the damage caused by man-made erosion, fires, deforestation and the introduction of various insect pests, he suggested that some of the environmental changes could threaten the “actual physical existence of the social structure.” He defined the Arboretum as a “bench mark … a starting point, in the long and laborious job of building a permanent and mutually beneficial relationship between civilized man and a civilized landscape.”

Early Arboretum work involved research by U.W. Madison botanists, biologists, and horticulturalists such as John T. Curtis, Grant Cottam, G. William Longenecker and a select team of youthful CCC laborers who implemented studies of the area’s wildlife.

The Arboretum gradually expanded as the University acquired adjacent parcels, those containing effigy mounds and springs on the south shore of Lake Wingra, the woodlands and “Lost City” west of Fish Hatchery Road, and the forested moraine and wet prairie (Greene Prairie) east of Seminole Road and south of what became the West Beltline Highway. The Arboretum added thousands of native plant species from forest and prairie habitats over the years, successfully recreating the native landscape of pre-settlement Wisconsin.
Seeking Board Candidates

The Dane County Historical Society is seeking additional members for its Board of Directors. An eleven member Board serves the Dane County Historical Society. Prospective new board members are nominated by the full board and are elected by the membership in attendance at the next annual meeting. Board members serve for three-year terms.

The Board is a hands-on, working board with oversight responsibilities for running the Society and carrying out its mission to collect, preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of Dane County, Wisconsin.

The Board of Directors meets monthly, on the third Monday of the month at 4:30pm. Meetings are held at the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

Letters of Interest
We are looking for candidates with
• An understanding or interest in Dane County or a specific town or area within
• A passion for history, place & culture
• A willingness to commit time, energy and leadership to the Society

Anyone interested in being considered for the board is encouraged to forward to the board a letter of interest that includes:
• Your name and contact information, including an email address
• Reasons for your interest in serving the Dane County Historical Society
• Any special skills or professional relationships you would bring to the board (e.g. program planning, accounting, member on other non-profit or historical society boards, etc.)

Please address your letter of interest, or questions to:
Mary Clark
Dane County Historical Society
3101 Lake Farm Road
Madison, WI 53711
dchs@danecountyhistory.org

Dane County Bookshelf

Occasionally, the Society hears about publications related to Dane County. If anyone knows of additional publications about Dane County, its history or its people, please pass them on to us. If anyone would like to donate books, town or family histories, or other publications about Dane County to the records center, please let us know.

Pioneers of Ecological Restoration: The People and Legacy of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum / by Franklin E. Court. Published by University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. 336 p. The book chronicles the history of the arboretum and the people who created, shaped, and sustained it up to the present. It begins in 1910 with John Nolen, the famous landscape architect who was invited to create plans for the city of Madison and the university campus. It then follows decades of collaborative work related to the arboretum’s lands, including the early efforts of Madison philanthropists and businessmen Michael Olbrich, Paul E. Stark, and Joseph W. “Bud” Jackson. With labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s Depression, University of Wisconsin scientists began establishing both a traditional horticultural collection of trees and plants and a completely new, visionary approach to recreate native ecosystems.

Ghost Signs of Madison, Wisconsin / by Maureen Janson Heintz. Published by Create Space, 2013. 66 p. A “field guide” to some of the fading signage that clings to some older buildings especially along the East Side rail corridor, and recalls Madison’s past. Once you see some of these images, you will start to look around you and see more “ghost” sign remnants all over the city.
President’s Message from Mary Clark

The past year has been a pretty busy time for the Dane County Historical Society. We hosted a number of programs; we participated in the WHS local history tour; and most exciting, we finished our digitization of the Tychoberahn yearbooks from Madison Central High School.

One thing that we were not able to do during 2014 was keep up with the quarterly schedule for publishing our society newsletters. We published only one issue of the newsletter last year. As most of you know, the Dane County Historical Society is a totally volunteer run organization, and we never have enough volunteers to help out. It is definitely our goal to get back to a quarterly publication schedule in 2015, so I am inviting anyone who is interested to get involved with this newsletter.

The Dane County Historical Society Newsletter welcomes articles and opinion pieces that would be of interest to our members. Examples of pieces that are appropriate for the DCHS newsletter include articles about persons, places or events of historical interest or significance to Dane County; information about online resources of interest to local history lovers; and personal or family reminiscences about growing up or living in Dane County. If you would like to contribute an article, or even just an idea for an article, contact me at dchs@danecountyhistory.org.

Please note that we are including with this newsletter a 2015 membership form. Your membership will help us to continue working on our goals and objectives; we depend very heavily on our members for support. If you haven’t already done so, please take a moment to complete and send in your membership renewal; and of course, we always appreciate any additional donation along with your membership, if you care to help in that way. Unsure if you have already renewed for 2015? Just look at the mailing label of the newsletter. If it says 2015, you have already renewed; otherwise, please renew today.

Looking forward to a busy and a very interesting year in 2015.