

# DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The Dane County Historical Society Office and the Otto Schroeder Records Center are located in the lower level of the Lussier Family Heritage Building on Lake Farm Road just south of the Beltline near Lake Waubesa.

Volume 30

Summer 2011

Number 2

## Dane County Plat Maps

By Mary Clark

One of the most popular types of material in the Otto Schroeder Records Center is our collection of Dane County plat books and atlases. The Society has a variety of these large plat books, old and new. 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.

“Plat” is the term for a U.S. map, drawn to scale, of a town or a section of land that has been subdivided into lots showing the location and boundaries of individual parcels. The United States surveyors drafted township plats of Public Lands Surveys to show the distance and bearing between section corners, sometimes including topographic or vegetation information. After the filing of a plat, legal descriptions could

refer to specific towns and ranges, and even to block and lot-numbers rather than portions of sections.

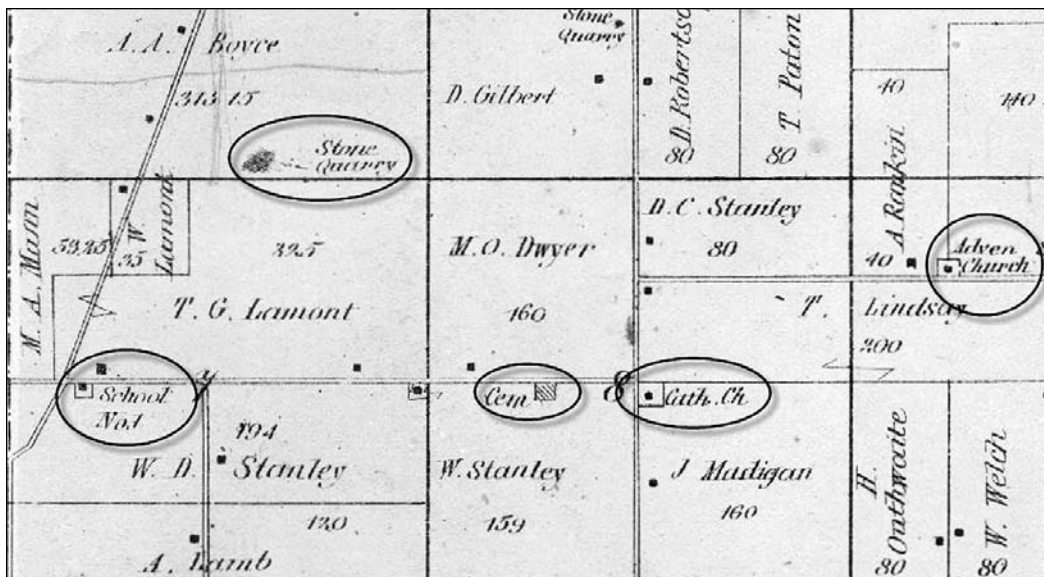
This collection of historic plat books and atlases provides a window into some interesting early information about Dane County. They are widely used for local history and genealogy research. Several atlases also contain other specialized plats such as lots along a lakeshore.

The plat maps are especially interesting for the amount of information they can shed on area families and institutions. The maps detail landowners along with the amount of acreage they possess in the county. Families can be followed as successive generation names appear. Structures such as houses are located on the maps with a black square; other features such as churches, schools and cemeteries are also usually indicated. These features can give a picture of the settlement at the time.

Researchers can use these maps to identify where their original family homestead was located.

Because these plat books are in such demand, and because of the often fragile condition of the older books, the Dane County Historical Society has long pursued a goal of digitizing the data in the books and making it available online for the public.

Approximately seven or eight years ago, DCHS experimented with scanning



Plat section showing owner names, acreage, homestead buildings, School No. 1, a cemetery and churches.

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## Dane County Plat Maps (Continued from page 1)

and loading one of our plat books (1873) online to the Society web page. That page is still one of the most visited locations on our website. That 1873 volume is available at:

<http://www.danecountyhistory.org/1873plat/1873plat.html>

In 2010, the Society participated along with Madison Public Library, through the Wisconsin Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning, in a federal Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) grant to digitize historical records for Dane County. For our part in the grant, the Society contributed four of our oldest plat books to be digitized and made available online. These four volumes (1861, 1890, 1899 and 1911) were added to a growing collection of plat books and other local history information that is now available on the Internet through the University of Wisconsin's Digital Collections website.

Our plat maps are part of a collection entitled "*Historical County Plat Maps from South Central Wisconsin and Early Madison City Directories.*" In addition to our plat maps in this collection, there are files from Madison Public Library, McMillan Memorial Library in Wisconsin Rapids, Portage Public Library and Portage County Public Library in the collection. The web address for the larger collection is:

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WI/subcollections/MadisonLocHistAbout.html>

The following DCHS plat books (with their direct online links) were made available last year at the UW-Digital Collections site:

### 1861

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.MapDaneCo>  
*Map of Dane County, Wisconsin / A. Ligowski.*  
Publisher Unknown. 41 pages ; 21x21 cm.

This is the oldest of the plat maps in the Otto Schroeder Records Center collection. This volume consists of a map of Dane County that was cut up and pasted into a bound atlas. It is sometimes referred to in citations as the Dane County Map of 1862, although the actual publication date is 1861. It contains a folded map of Dane County plus each of the 1861 township plats. It also includes individual town maps of Cambridge, Pheasant Branch, Mazomanie, Clinton, Christina, Clifton, Stoughton and Black Earth.

This particular copy of the atlas had previously been disassembled in order to take photographs of the pages.

The pages are extremely fragile, and as result, they are unavailable for direct research use. This volume was our first priority on the list of items we wanted to have digitized and made available online.

### 1890

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.PlatBookDane1890>

*Plat Book of Dane County, Wisconsin: drawn from actual surveys and the county records /* by C. M. Foote & J.W. Henion, Surveyors and Draughtsmen. Published by C.M. Foote & Co., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1890. 71 pages ; 48x40 cm.

In addition to the standard full plat of each township section, this volume also includes:

- "Government Surveys" – a one page detailed description of the "Land System of the United States" adopted by Congress, May 20, 1785 and resulting in the basic grid system of land demarcation from Ohio to the Pacific. Dane County was surveyed according to this system.
- "Patrons' Directory of Dane County, Wisconsin" – a 10 page listing of inhabitants of the county and their occupations.

### 1899

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.AtlasDane1899>

*New Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin, prepared from actual surveys and from the county records /* by Leonard W. Gay. O. Anson, M.B. Stone, draughtsmen. Published by Leonard W. Gay & Co., Madison, Wis. Printed and bound by M.J. Cantwell, Madison, Wis., 1899. 101 p. ; 47x39 cm.

In addition to the standard full plat of each township section, this volume also includes:

- Post office directory for each of the townships. Each of the township plats is accompanied by a listing of the landowners whose names appear on the plat along with a number that indicates which post office in the area served them – that is, where they went to pick up their mail.
- Plats of lakeside lots on Lake Kegonsa
- Listings of members of the Dane County Bar

This volume also includes some very interesting advertisements. These period ads themselves tell a story of the times. Some consist of display text, and a few others feature photographs. Examples of text from display

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## Dane County Plat Maps (Continued from page 2)

ads include “The Fair, Madison’s Progressive Department Store,” and “B.M. Bruge, West Lawn Fruit Farm and Nursery, Breeder of Fancy Chickens, Madison, Wisconsin.”



Advertisement for “The Fair” from 1899 Plat Book

1911

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WLMPLAtlasDane>  
*Standard Historical Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin containing maps of Villages, Cities and Townships together with Replats of the County, Maps of state, United States and World*

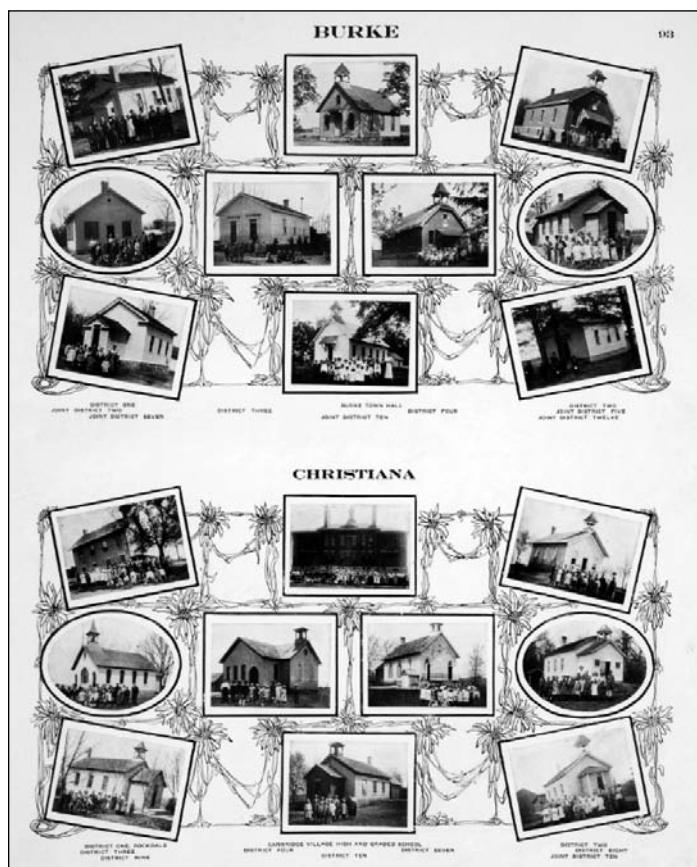
Published by the Cantwell Printing Company, Madison, Wisconsin, 1911. 107 p. ; 21x21 cm.

In addition to the standard full plat of each township section, this volume also includes:

- “Dane County Public Buildings” – photographs of the Court House, Jail, Asylum and Poor Farm Buildings
- “District Schools of Dane County” – 18 pages of exterior photographs of school buildings, sometimes including teachers and students, made espe-

cially for this publication. Includes graded schools, high schools and one-room country schools from each township

- “Dane County Rural Routes” – map with color indicating rural routes
- “Directory of Leading Merchants and Farmers of Dane County”
- Plats of lakeside lots around Lakes Kegonsa, Mendota, Waubesa, Wingra



District schools of Dane County, from 1911 Plat Map

## Airport Exhibit Features Southeast Communities

By Jerry Remy

The multi-panel kiosk exhibit at the Dane County Regional Airport depicts various historical aspects of the county’s early days. Recently added to the kiosk is the 81 inch panel depicting the communities in Dane County’s southeast quadrant. The “Early Days” of Fitchburg, Oregon, McFarland, Stoughton, and Deerfield are featured. The communities of the northeast and southwest sections of the county are slated to be featured in future months.

The airport’s historical displays are part of the many events taking place during the year-long celebration of the Dane County’s 175th year. For more DANE 175 information check out <http://danecounty175.org/>

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# Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties

By Barbara Furstenberg

*In commemoration of the Dane County Historical Society's 50th anniversary in 2011, we have selected "Fifty Nifty" items or collections to highlight from the Otto Schroeder Records Center that reflect the range of materials in the archive. This is the third installment (records 21-30) of the "Nifties" series.*

There are three broad cataloged collection areas within the Otto Schroeder Records Center of the Dane County Historical Society. These collection areas (Library, Archive, Artifacts) consist of thirteen sub-categories; for example, the Archives Collection, the Photograph Collection, the Pamphlet Collection, the Book Collection, etc. This article will highlight a few of the items in the Book Collection. The Book Collection consists of resources about Wisconsin and Dane County at various points in its development; town and church histories; collected speeches of political leaders; reminiscences; and creative writing. Many of the earliest books were donated by two individuals: Donald W. Anderson, longtime publisher of the *Wisconsin State Journal* and Walter E. Scott, noted conservationist and writer.

Don Anderson (1900-1978) was a Montana native who spent his career largely in Madison, Wisconsin. Anderson started at the *Wisconsin State Journal* in 1923 as a humor columnist, moving on to city editor, Sunday editor, managing editor, business manager, assistant publisher, and finally, publisher in 1942. After Lee Enterprises bought the newspaper, Anderson became vice-president of the Lee group. Anderson was a prominent community leader and a supporter of the Dane County Historical Society among many other causes. Aware of the importance of preservation of historical documents, Anderson contributed his papers to several archives. The Wisconsin Historical Society Archives has 14 boxes of his correspondence, clippings, reports, and speeches. Anderson donated a collection of his personal books to the Dane County Historical Society.

Walter E. Scott (1911-1983) and his wife Gertrude were founding and charter members of the Dane County

Historical Society. Scott was born in Milwaukee and spent forty years with the Wisconsin Conservation Department and its successor the Department of Natural Resources. Scott was an expert in many aspects of conservation in Wisconsin, including water, air, plants, mammals and birds. Scott was interested in historical aspects of conservation and acquired a large collection of books, pamphlets, and other documents, many of which he donated to the Dane County Historical Society.

While most of the titles in our Book Collection are not rare nor uniquely held by the Dane County Historical Society, they do give a picture of the historical knowledge about Wisconsin and Dane County at the time of their publication. The following are a few of the interesting books in the Book Collection of the Otto Schroeder Records Center:

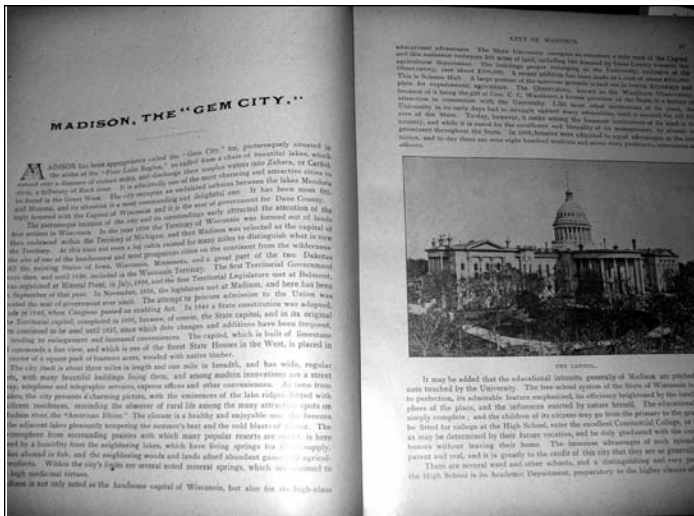
*Wisconsin: comprising sketches of counties, towns, events, institutions, and persons, arranged in cyclopedic form.* Edited by Ex-Gov. Geo. W. Peck. Madison, Wis.: Western Historical Association, 1906. 416 pages. These brief sketches of counties, towns, events, institutions and persons involved in Wisconsin history cover time periods up to 1906. The sketches cover topics as varied as the Peshtigo Fire and Camp Randall. The sketches can be as short as two lines to describe a discontinued post office or sometimes run several pages, as for "Political Parties in Wisconsin." The editor of the volume listed on the title page is George W. Peck (1840-1916). Peck was given major credit on the title page of the volume, although he functioned primarily as the "supervising editor." The volume was actually compiled by William J. Anderson and William A. Anderson. The pages of the item are in good condition, but the binding is cracked and very fragile.

*Pen and Sunlight Sketches of the Principal Cities in Wisconsin, (omitting Milwaukee, including Menominee, Michigan); their growth, resources, businesses, manufacturers, financial institutions and prospects.* Chicago: Phoenix, 1893. 269 pages. This volume, bound in bright blue, was published in association with the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The publication describes sixteen Wisconsin cities; there is a ten page chapter entitled, *Madison, The 'Gem City.'* The chapter gives a narrative about the city, including photos of the Capitol, the Armory/Gymnasium, and birds-eye views of the skyline and the campus. The chapter also includes forty short sketches about local businesses such as Wm. J. Park & Sons, Madison

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Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties (Continued from page 4)



Lumber Co. and The Fair department store. The sketches are fun to read, written in the journalistic style of the day. About The Fair (31 N. Pinckney St.), is written, “It is one of the largest department houses in the Northwest . . . the present firm was formed, composed of Messrs. Joseph and Frederick Kaiser and Samuel Spiegel, all energetic, live, wide-awake progressive business men.”

Wisconsin and Its Resources: with Lake Superior, Its Commerce and Navigation: including a Trip up the Mississippi, and a Canoe Voyage on the St. Croix and Brule Rivers to Lake Superior: to which are Appended, the Constitution of the State, with the Routes of the Principal Railroads, List of Post-offices, etc.: with Illustrations and Authentic Maps of Wisconsin and the Region of Lake Superior / by James S. Ritchie. Philadelphia: C. Desilver, 1857. 318 pages. “With a desire to afford correct information the author has obtained statistics which disclose the true character of the soil, climate, and resources of the state. He has endeavored to present knowledge that will induce the settler to find a happy home within her borders.” The volume also includes a list of newspapers and is illustrated with a few plates and, following page 175, a folded map of the Lake Superior area with its railroads and steam boat connections. This small volume is very fragile; because of its condition, it is tied with cotton string and housed in a custom-made box.

History of Dane County, Wisconsin : containing an account of its settlement, growth, development and resources; and ‘extensive and minute’ sketch of its cities, towns and villages — their improvements, industries, manufactories, churches, schools and societies; its Civil War record, biographical sketches and portraits of prominent men and early settlers; preceded by a history of Wisconsin, statistics of the state, and an abstract of its laws and constitution and of the constitution of



the United States / Consul Willshire Butterfield. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1880. 1289 pages. Often referred to as “the Butterfield history,” this thick volume is a classic of Dane County history. It contains portraits, pre-history, information about Madison and Wisconsin, as well as almost 350 pages of Biographical Sketches. There are also narratives about individual towns and villages with their own biographical sketches. The full-text of this volume is also available online at the Wisconsin Historical Society website.

Selected Addresses and Orations of William F. Vilas. Madison: printed for private distribution, 1912. 254 pages. The pieces in this elegant brown leather volume were collected and published by Anna M. Vilas after her husband’s death. The publication includes a biographical sketch of, and 12 addresses and orations delivered by Vilas between 1876 and 1904. William Freeman Vilas (1841-1908) became a lawyer; fought in the Civil War; and served as Postmaster General of the United States, Secretary of the Interior during the Cleveland Administration, and U.S. Senator from Wisconsin. He was well known in Wisconsin and the nation as a speaker. “This is no. 59 of an edition of one hundred copies which have been printed for private distribution.” The volume is beautifully leather bound and housed in a slip case.

Meine dreissigjährigen Erfahrungen als Priester in Madison, Wisconsin / Rev. Alois Zitterl, Rector der St. Erlöser Gemeinde. 1907. 183 pages. Roughly translated as “My thirty years of experience as a priest in Madison, Wisconsin,” this is an account of Holy Redeemer Church in Madison. It also provides information on the German Catholic church in Wisconsin, with a number of photos of priests and churches in Dane County and Wisconsin. The text is in German, but many of the early photos of the church have captions in English.

Salmebog for Lutheriske Kristne i Amerika / M.B. Landstads Salmebog. Minneapolis: Den Forenede Kirkes Forlag, 1895. 749 pages. Roughly translated as “Hymnbook for Lutheran Christians in America,” this tiny little leather volume stands just a little over 5 inches tall. Written in Norwegian, it includes lyrics, hymns and prayers.

Bascom Clarke: The Story of a Southern Refugee. Charles Elbert Whelan. Madison, Wis.: American Thresherman, ca1913. 216 pages. Whelan based this book on unpublished material written by Bascom Byron Clarke (1851-1929) about his early life, focusing primarily on his years in Indiana. In 1890, Clarke moved to Madison, Wisconsin and became the editor of the “American Thresherman Magazine” a magazine devoted to farm equipment and its customers and dealers. He was known for his pithy aphorisms that expressed a Horatio Alger attitude and for his philanthropy in Madison, which named a neighborhood park and beach for him after his death. A frontispiece illustration by George W. French is titled “Alone with God and Poverty.”

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## Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties (Continued from page 4)

My Story for the First Seventy-Seven Years. Don Lescohier. Madison, Wis.: Art Brush Creations, 1960. In 1960, Don Divance Lescohier (1883-1961) looked back on his days as a University of Wisconsin graduate student (1907/09) and at his career as a professor of labor economics. His wife Mary Elizabeth was the editor of *The Land Economics Journal*, a University of Wisconsin publication, and was active in the Frank Lloyd Wright Monona Terrace Madison Civic Center movement. Includes passing and fragmentary references to UW-Madison events, 1920-1960.

Minde fra jubelfesterne paa Koshkonong. Decorah, Iowa: Den norske Synodes Bogtryfferi, 1894. 63 pages. Roughly translated as “Commemorative Jubilee Celebrations of the Koshkonong,” this slim publication commemorates 50 years

of Norwegian settlement at Koshkonong. It is illustrated with photos of Lutheran pastors, churches and a Stoughton school in southern Dane County. Most of the book is written in Norwegian. Pages 49-63 are in English, presenting an address delivered by the Rev. Adolph Bredesen, at the dedication of the pioneer monument at East Koshkonong, Wisconsin in 1894. The monument reads, “*In memory of the pioneers of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Here the first Norwegian Lutheran minister in America preached Sept. 1, 1844, and Oct. 10, 1844 organized the East Koshkonong church, which, nine years later, with 27 other churches, formed The Norwegian Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Grateful children and grandchildren erected this monument Oct. 10, 1894.*” A photo of the monument is included.

# University of Wisconsin Digital Collections

By Stef Morrill

## What is it?

The University of Wisconsin Digital Collections (UW-DC) is the name for a collection of online resources that support teaching and research at UW, document the University and Wisconsin and provide access to rare or fragile items. The items cover a range of subjects, including history; the collection includes books, manuscripts, photographic images, slides, maps, and more.

The resources are organized into collections, and are available free through the UWDC website.

The newly digitized Dane County Plat Books (described in the article on page 1 of this issue) are part of “The State of Wisconsin collection.”

## How do I use UW-DC?

Start by visiting the website at: <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu>. You’ll find the newly redesigned home page, which includes news, learning resources, features collections, and more. In the right-hand column of the page, you’ll find the two ways to get access to the resources: “Search the Collections” and “Visit a Collection”.

Use “Search the Collections” if you have a specific term or name that you are looking for.



## Are there resources related to Dane County?

Absolutely! One of the many available collections is the “State of Wisconsin” collection, which includes many resources related to Madison and Dane County, such as:

- Historic county plat maps
- Books on the history of agriculture, Madison, and the county
- Madison Metropolitan School District reports
- Madison Park and Pleasure Drive reports
- World War II Veterans of Mount Horeb, which includes oral histories, scrapbooks, and more

Use “Visit a Collection” to browse the resources in a specific collection. There are many collections of interest to history buffs, including “The History Collection” and “The State of Wisconsin Collection.”





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# DCHS Seeks Donation of Funds for Archival Supplies

The Dane County Historical Society has been awarded a Wisconsin Historical Society & Wisconsin Council for Local History matching grant for 2011 in the amount of \$ 550.00. The funds will be used for the purchase of archival supplies to facilitate processing, cataloging and preservation of printed archival materials in the Otto Schroeder Records Center, the official archives operated by the Dane County Historical Society, housed at the Lussier Family Heritage Center on Lake Farm Road in Madison.

Some of the supplies identified for purchase will serve to replace storage boxes damaged three years ago by water seepage in our basement archives room. Additionally we seek to purchase acid-free document cases, photo and newspaper storage boxes and other archival and conservation supplies to help us complete backlogged cataloging and processing of new and existing collections.



The grant is a “matching grant,” which means that the Society must come up with a matching amount of funds from local or non-grant sources. Our grant proposal was strengthened by our stated plan to raise these matching funds through special member donations. We hope that the majority of our local matching money for this project can be acquired through specific fund raising efforts with the society membership.

For the past few newsletter issues, the Society has been featuring descriptive articles about our unique archives collections. The series of articles, entitled “Fifty Nifties,” is being written by DCHS board member Barbara Furstenberg. These articles have served to highlight important collections in the Otto Schroeder Records Center. Now that we have given

some attention to the wonderful archival collections maintained by the Society, we are asking for at least ten members to step up and donate \$50.00 each towards the matching funds to be used for this project. These donations will be placed in a restricted account dedicated to archival supplies. Any funds raised over and above the needed \$500 will be dedicated to purchasing additional archival supplies in future.

## Goals

The DCHS Board of Directors has identified several immediate goals for the archives program in this anniversary year:

- Facilitate cataloging and processing of the archives collection toward completion for both backlogged collections and newly acquired collections
- Get materials properly processed, organized and housed to allow the Society to reinstate open hours in the archive
- Replace archival supplies damaged by water and mildew in the 2008 weather-related disaster event

Using funds from this mini-grant and our own matching funds should help us to meet all three goals for this year.

Acid-free storage materials can be very expensive. However, investing in these high-quality archival materials is imperative because we recognize the importance of a secure long-term archival storage strategy for our valuable records.

Some of the items we will purchase with this project include:

- Acid-Free document cases
- Archival storage newspaper boxes
- Archival storage cartons
- Negative and photo boxes
- Acid-free buffered folders
- Melinex (similar to Mylar) envelopes & sleeves

In addition to archival storage materials, we will also purchase a number of conservation supplies, and a hygro-thermometer to monitor the continued temperature and humidity in the archive.

If you can help with this archives project by donating \$50.00 toward our matching funds, I encourage you to do so. Send the Society your tax-deductible check with a notation that you wish your donation to be used for **ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES**.

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Dane County Historical Society  
3101 Lake Farm Rd.  
Madison, WI 53711

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## President's Message from Mary Clark



Mary Clark

I hope everyone is keeping cool this summer! Summer is traditionally a slower time for historical societies; but DCHS has been keeping busy with planning and projects in this, our 50th anniversary year.

We are particularly focused on the Otto Schroeder Records Center. The Dane County Historical Society Board of Directors recognizes that we hold the archival materials in the Record Center on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the people of Dane County. The Board has been struggling with issues of archival access. As advocates for local history, we want our materials to be available to our membership and to the general public. However, at this time we do not have staff to maintain open hours in the archive. At the same time that we are making progress towards having the collections more visible to the public, we have had to effectively close the archive, even to appointments, due to lack of staff or volunteer time to allow researchers into the archives.

I would like to call everyone's attention to the article in this issue about our grant to purchase new archival storage and preservation supplies. We need your help in coming up with a match for this grant. If you can help with this archives project by donating \$50.00 toward our matching funds, I encourage you to do so. Send the Society your tax-deductible check with a notation that you wish your donation to be used for **ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES**.

The Dane County Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter), by the Dane County Historical Society and printed by The Printing Place. Submissions are due 15 days prior to publication. Reader reviews, testimonials, flak and flattery, are also welcome. Send to: DCHS Newsletter, 3101 Lake Farm Rd. Madison, WI 53711. E-mail: <a href="mailto:dchs@danecountyhistory.org">dchs@danecountyhistory.org</a> Mary Clark, President, Howard Sherpe, Editor, Dane County Historical Society
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