
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 31

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Number 3

Otto Schroeder Records Center *of the* Dane County Historical Society

Plans for “Otto”

By Mary Clark

The long-standing mission of the Dane County Historical Society is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of Dane County, Wisconsin. One of the primary activities of the Society toward the fulfillment of this mission is the operation of the *Otto Schroeder Records Center*, located at the Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison.

We maintain a repository and library for historical documents, photos, maps and other publications to benefit our members, visitors, interested citizens, researchers, teachers and their students, and future generations with roots in Dane County.

Establishment of the Archive

On November 13, 1968, the Dane County Historical Society formed the Dane County Historical Records Center, which opened at the Madison Public Library. In August of 1999 the archive was moved out of Madison Public Library and into storage at the Lakeview Sanatorium nurses dorm in Madison. Late in 2002, after a major fundraising effort, the Dane County Historical Records Center was renamed as the Otto Schroeder Records Center and moved into a new home in the basement of the freshly built Lussier Family Heritage Center.

The collection had suffered from being held in

storage for a period of time and needed to be inventoried, reclassified and recataloged. An electronic cataloging project began shortly after the move, under the guidance of consultant Debbie Kmetz. With the help of Ms. Kmetz and a number of dedicated volunteers, the Society has now reorganized and cataloged collections in the Otto Schroeder Records Center using PastPerfect database software, in order to make the collections more accessible to the public.

PastPerfect Museum Software is a collection manage-



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Plan for “Otto” (Continued from page 1)

ment system used by over 8000 historical organizations around the world; and in use by about 500 museums and local historical societies in Wisconsin. In addition to DCHS, the following Dane County historical organizations are using the PastPerfect Software:

- Deforest Area Historical
- Madison Masonic Center Foundation
- Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society
- Norwegian American Genealogical Center
- Oregon Area Historical Society Museum
- University of Wisconsin - Madison Archives

Our use of the PastPerfect software has allowed us to professionally manage and catalog our collections and to make the information searchable and available. We have also purchased the additional support to make the collection information available to the general public via the PastPerfect website. That part of the project is almost ready to unveil to the public.

Today’s Collection

The Records Center collects written documents and image material, whether printed, handwritten or typed, published or unpublished. The obvious area of emphasis for the collections of the Otto Schroeder Records Center is Dane County, Wisconsin. This includes materials that encompass the county as a whole, or that depict history of individual cities, towns, townships or villages located within the borders of Dane County. The scope of the Records Center does not include duplication or overlap of its collection with the collections or missions of the numerous local historical organizations in the county. Although some overlap may occur between the collections, that is not the primary focus.

Examples of some of the types of archival materials in the Record Center include:

- a) Personal correspondence and diaries
- b) Business records of small businesses; ledgers, product photographs, newsletters, and photographs of building interiors and exteriors
- c) Manuscripts, reminiscences and journals relating to Dane County history or written by residents of the county
- d) Club records of local organizations; correspondence, directories, minutes, scrapbooks and membership lists
- e) Original architectural plans of area commercial and residential buildings

- f) Plat maps of Dane County towns, roads, and surveys, as well as general maps of Dane County.
- g) Photographs and postcards of local people, buildings and activities

One of the most popular collections in the Otto Schroeder Records Center is the collection of Dane County plat books and atlases. The Society has a variety of these large plat books, old and new. They are digitized and available online.

Goals and Projects

For 2013, the Board of Directors has identified a number of goals and objectives for improved maintenance of and access to the Otto Schroeder Records Center:

- Update the collection policy
- Create more indexes and finding aids for collections in the archive
- Complete the re-entry of PastPerfect data
- Unveil the online catalog of the archive collections
- Begin processing of the photo collections
- Inventory, prepare and digitize the Madison Central yearbook (Tychoberahn)
- Evaluate and prepare the Wisconsin Foundry Collection
- Host a second annual archive open house in the spring

How Can You Help?

The Board of Directors is now looking to take our collection maintenance to the next level. Currently there is a single laptop computer in the DCHS office for all archival and administrative activities, including PastPerfect cataloging, creating Word documents and finding aids, creating needed indexes to collection materials, creating administrative, financial and board reports, scanning and storing digitized images, etc.

Although our volunteers are dedicated and very hard-working, it is difficult to schedule their work or even to recruit new volunteers with only a single computer to work on. They must stagger their hours so that everyone can work with the computer. The Board has decided to purchase an additional laptop computer and to create a networked environment within the DCHS office to allow more volunteers to work at the same time.

Not surprisingly, this larger, more efficient networked environment comes with a greater cost to the

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Plans for “Otto” (Continued from page 2)

Society. In order to support multiple PastPerfect stations, we will need to purchase a more expensive “networked” license for the software. With that comes a more expensive support contract.

	2013 Costs	Annual Costs
Second laptop computer:	\$600	-
Upgraded PastPerfect 5.0 software:	\$300	-
Upgraded maintenance contract:	\$340 (1st year)	\$432
PastPerfect Online hosting:	\$352	\$352

The board is confident that this is the appropriate next step in maintaining the Otto Schroeder Records Center to preserve

and provide access to our collection of Dane County’s heritage material. We have budgeted for the ongoing costs, although the one-time cost for the new laptop and the software upgrade will affect us very heavily in 2013. We hope to raise about \$1500 through donations to help handle the one-time costs we will incur during 2013. If any members would like to contribute to our “computer fund” to help the society move into this more advanced networked environment, that would be most appreciated.

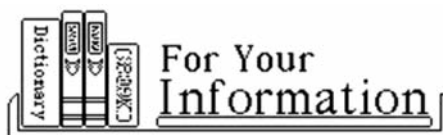
Board of Director Elections

At the September Board of Directors meeting, board officers were elected for the 2012/2013 year. Pursuant to the society’s bylaws, “officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors from among their number at the first meeting of the Board following the annual meeting.” Officers serve for a period of one year, and may be re-elected.

Elected as officers for the Board of Directors for the coming year are:

Mary Clark (returning as president);
Joanne Jensen (returning as vice-president);
Barbara Furstenberg (returning as secretary).
Dane Varese was elected as the new treasurer.

Dane County Bookshelf



Occasionally, the Society hears about new publications related to Dane County. If anyone knows of additional new 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.

Letters Home to Sarah: The Civil War Letters of Guy C. Taylor, Thirty-Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers / Guy C. Taylor. Edited by Kevin L. Alderson and Patsy Alderson. University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. 264 p.

Forgotten for more than a century in an old cardboard box, these are the letters of Guy Carlton Taylor, a farmer who served in the thirty-sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the Civil War. During 1864-1865, Taylor wrote 165 letters home to his wife Sarah and their son Charley. From the initial mustering and training at Camp Randall, through the postwar Grand Review of the Armies parade in Washington, D.C., Taylor observes all that is passing around him.

Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone? : The History of the Cheese Factories & Creameries of Iowa County, WI / Iowa County Historical Society. 2011. 404 p.

Although not actually about Dane County, this is an exhaustive publication about the cheese making industry in Iowa County. It includes detailed maps of each township within Iowa County, and every cheese factory that once stood. Each factory is extensively profiled using historical records, filled in with oral histories and newspaper articles. The book is a model of collaborative research by a county historical society. The Iowa County Society donated a copy of this inspiring publication to the Dane County Historical Society.

It's Time to Renew Your Membership in DCHS!

A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Thank you for being a member of the Dane County Historical Society. We really appreciate our many members who have given of their interest, their time and their money to partner with the Society in achieving its mission of preserving the history of our county. Your support means a great deal to the Society; and it gives us a boost for the important work we do on behalf of everyone who values the heritage of this county. We strive to be the steward of our county's memories and stories.

So at this time, I invite you to please take a moment to renew your membership. Society memberships run for a calendar year, and now is the time to renew for 2013.

The Society celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2011. After all these years, the Society continues to be a vibrant organization that is busy with programs and projects, and with members who are very enthusiastic and loyal.

This is a particularly exciting time to be involved in our society. We welcome your participation in any of our ongoing projects. Help us:

- Promote the heritage of the county as we plan for the placement of our 46th historical marker in 2013
- Maintain and improve the Otto Schroeder Records Center and make its collections accessible to members and to the general public
- Facilitate cooperation and sharing among the more than twenty local historical societies in the county.

Our 2013 membership fee schedule remains the same as in previous years at just \$15.00 for an Individual Membership and \$20.00 for a Family Membership.

Better yet, consider renewing your membership at our GOLDEN MEMBERSHIP level. Golden membership dues are applied to the Society's Legacy Fund, which we are building to ensure that the work of the Society will go on. Golden members also receive a complimentary DCHS tote bag.

And, for those that renew or join at the Golden Level, we are again offering the "two-for-one" opportunity for you to share your love of history with someone else. For 2013, renew your own Society membership at the Golden Level and give a friend or family member a One-Year Gift Membership for FREE. Just give us the name and address of someone you would like to receive a complimentary membership in Dane County Historical Society for 2013. We will send your guest a notice that you have given them this wonderful gift of history. They will enjoy full membership benefits for the upcoming year.

Please take a moment to fill out the membership form included with this newsletter and mail in your renewal today; or use our online membership option, available through the DCHS website, to renew your membership online:
(<http://www.danecountyhistory.org/member/index.html>). We thank you for being such a good friend of the Dane County Historical Society.

Sincerely,
Mary Clark

New Historical Marker in 2013

Dane County Historical Society is still deliberating on the focus and the location of our next historical marker to be erected in 2013. The Society began placing historical markers at various locations around the county in 1963. At one time, the Society attempted to place one marker each year. More recently, however, the cost of the markers has continued to increase. That, plus the fact that to date we have placed over forty markers, has caused us to slow down the pace of placing these historical markers; we are now dedicating

a marker every other year.

We have placed markers throughout the county in 28 different cities, towns and villages. There are a few locations where we have not yet dedicated a marker: Deerfield, Fitchburg, Middleton, Monona and Oregon. If anyone would like to recommend a location for an historical marker in one of those places, we would love to hear from you. Contact us at dchs@danecountyhistory.org

Dane County Historical Society Recognizes Robert A. Bean

By Barbara Furstenberg

The Dane County Historical Society (DCHS) presented a resolution at the fall networking meeting of Dane County historical organization on October 13, 2012, commending Robert A. Bean for his many years of service in areas of historic preservation.

A long-time member of DCHS, Bob Bean has played key roles in our society and even more so in the Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society (HBGHS) over the past three decades. He was elected its first president in 1972. Soon thereafter HBGHS began its signature project of rescuing and restoring the 1856 Dean House at 4718 Monona Drive, Madison. Saving the Dean House required ambitious fund-raising and hours of physical work removing old plaster and floors and refinishing the new. Dorothy Haines had written that “Mr. Bean has [led] the society by inspiration, direction, and real physical labor.”¹

The Dean House is now a popular museum and cultural center for the city. It has become a furnished house museum with exhibits relating to the history of Historic Blooming Grove. HBGHS has offered a variety of popular public fund-raising events, including an annual winter sleigh ride, ice cream socials, and summer Back Porch concerts. Bob has been instrumental in all these events.

Born in East Troy, Wisconsin, Bob graduated from Beloit College and received his Master’s Degree in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. He taught high school social studies in Albany and Monona Grove, retiring in 1989. He received an Honorary Membership Award from Historic Madison, Inc. in 1978. He received a Local History Award of Merit from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In 2007, the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation gave him a Historic Preservation Advocacy Award.

The Dean House was the last historic house remaining in the area. The yellow brick Italianate structure was built as a farm house and was being used as the club house for the Monona Golf Course when it was deemed unsafe and marked for demolition. It is a Madison landmark, under supervision of the city’s Preservation Planner and the Landmarks Commission. The Historic Blooming Grove Township includes Monona, parts of McFarland and Madison as far as the Yahara River.

Thanks to Ann Waidelich for providing information for this article through copies of the award statements from Historic Madison, Inc., the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation (presented by Erica Fox Gehrig), a HBGHS press release by Dorothy Haines and a September 9, 1992 “Herald Character Sketch” from the *Monona Herald*.

¹undated press release, Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society (ca,1998)



RESOLUTION

October 13, 2012

Verona, Wisconsin

WHEREAS, Bob Bean taught high school teachers in social studies for thirty-three years at Albany and Monona Grove High Schools;

WHEREAS, Bob Bean was the first president of the Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society and has served that organization for thirty-one years;

WHEREAS, Bob Bean has provided leadership in the preservation of the 1856 Nathaniel Dean House in Monona, Wisconsin;

WHEREAS, Bob Bean enjoys bringing history to life as an impersonator of Abraham Lincoln;

WHEREAS, Bob Bean has been honored with a lifetime membership in Historic Madison Historical Society;

WHEREAS, Bob Bean has been a faithful and lifetime member of the Dane County Historical Society for many years;

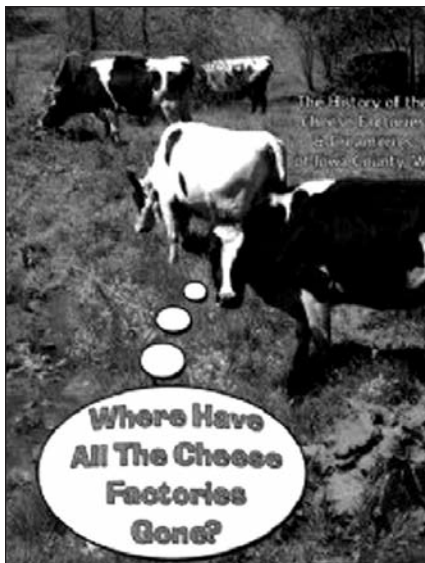
WHEREAS, Bob Bean has loyally supported collaborative efforts of the historical organizations of Dane County;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dane County Historical Society congratulates Bob Bean on his lifetime of distinguished service and leadership in local historic preservation.

Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?

By Barbara Furstenberg

In 2000 Ross Richardson, son of an Iowa County cheese maker who built and ran the Pleasant Valley cheese factory, suggested that the Iowa County Historical Society should do a project on the county's cheese factories. It sounded reasonable and so a group of women at the society started collecting oral histories and making a list of cheese factories. Little did they realize what they were getting into. They described the process by which they developed their comprehensive publication, *Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone?* at the October 13, 2012 meeting of Dane County historical organizations.



The meeting was hosted at the Verona Public Library; the Dane County Historical Society had invited the group of women from the Iowa County Historical Society to address the attendees. The presenters included authors Joan Bennett, Carolyn Meuer and Maria Sersch; also in

attendance was Iowa County Historical Society former president Alice Griffiths. A fourth author, Melva Phillips, was not able to attend.

The Dane County networking group was very interested in the massive publishing project undertaken by our sister society in Iowa County, as an example of the potential scope and quality of a cooperative county-wide project. Many of the Dane County societies have talked about undertaking a similar kind of cooperative project in our county.

Like many counties in southern Wisconsin, dairying became central to Iowa County in the early 20th century. At its peak in 1922, a total of 149 cheese factories and 6 creameries were operating in the county. And the Iowa County Historical Society project was determined to inventory and document every one of them.

The presentation began as Joan Bennett described the process by which they developed their book which was published in 2011. Joan spoke for the group as

she described the evolution of their project. The group started by collecting oral histories and making a list of cheese factories. By 2004, the list had grown to about 140 factories. The group was very organized in assigning individuals to be responsible for researching the factories in each of the townships of the county, conducting dozens of oral interviews.

Meanwhile, Joan did archival research at the Wisconsin Historical Society Area Research Center (ARC) at Platteville where she discovered a series of maps showing the distribution of cheese factories in the county, dating from as early as 1878. She realized that there had been many more cheese factories than originally identified. As the cheese industry had evolved, the facilities and methods needed regulation and documentation. Joan found samples of that type of documentation at Platteville for the period between 1903-1963 to incorporate into the publication.

Joan also spoke about the very interesting oral history portion of their project, as they went about collecting many stories from the elders. The ICBS group interviewed many cheese makers who unfortunately did not live to see the completed book.

The group found that newspapers were also a good source of information, especially the community brief sections. One of the more interesting and prolific sources of information for the project was a column by Ed Mundy, published in the *Dodgeville Chronicle* from 1923-1958. His "Pick-up" column shared the local

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Iowa County historians and authors, from left to right. Alice Griffiths, Carolyn Meuer, Joan Bennett, Marie Sersch.

Where Have All the Cheese Factories Gone? (Continued from page

news and gossip that he learned as he traveled the county, visiting all of the dairy farms and cheese factories picking up milk.

The next phase of the project involved road trips to take photographs and document the exact location of each cheese factory. The society also solicited photos from the public through newspaper stories; and they found an artist to make sketches of factories for which they did not have photos.

The Wisconsin Humanities Council awarded them a grant to underwrite a series of meetings around the county. The public brought in artifacts relating to cheese factories, such as bills, receipts, implements, churns, and promotional items.

Over time, the documentation project was extended to ancillary businesses associated with cheese-making, such as storage houses and milk routes. The researchers also made contact with local historical organizations from around the county.

Their next problem was deciding how to create the physical book. After they had amassed a database of 204 cheese factories, they approached the Dodgeville High School business education teacher for help. The teacher was contracted to help design the format and lay out the pages. With the format of two pages per factory, the resulting book exceeds 400 pages.

Joan concluded her portion of the presentation by noting that of the 149 cheese factories profiled in the book, only six continue operations today; four of which have a long history and two that are newer.

Marie Sersch spoke about how the Society financed the book. The Iowa County Historical Society received grants to enable the publishing of the book, including a matching grant from Chevron. There were also many individual donations and memorial gifts. They decided to offer the publication at "pre-sale." They took 350 presale orders and were able to raise about \$7,000 prior to production. This money was used to pay advertising costs, the design consultant, and various other expenses. To date there have been 900 books printed with approximately fifty remaining.

The books were printed by a local printer in Dodgeville, who also stores them for the society. The books are sold at local businesses in ten book increments. Marie concluded by mentioning that the Iowa County Historical Society has actually made a profit on the book, adding "It sure beats a bake sale."

Alice Griffiths, who had been president of the Iowa County Historical Society at the time of the project, spoke about Melva Phillips, an instrumental force behind the project. The 84 year old Phillips was not



Joan Bennett describes the cheese factory research done by Iowa County Historical Society.

able to attend the Dane County meeting because she was busy working on a church bake sale. Melva contributed to the project with her invaluable personal contacts; she is also the Iowa County Historical Society scrapbooker. This clipping collection, especially the obituaries, provided a strong foundation for the project. Alice indicated that Melva had asked her to especially recognize Joan, who was largely responsible for collecting all the information, creating the database, and creating the book format.

Alice advised that "there are people out there who can give you so much information. Go out there and talk to them and record it. It was truly an act of love to put this together."

Carolyn Meuer spoke on data collection. She emphasized that, "if you can't prove it, don't print it," citing the example of a situation in which four girls each gave a different version of the same story. By cross-referencing, Carolyn was able to piece together a story that each of them could recognize.

Carolyn explained why the format of the book is scrapbook style. The style allowed for the numerous sidebars facilitate the story-telling. These little anecdotes, quotes and stories are meant to trigger memories that enrich the reader's experience.

Carolyn also recommended that it is always good to have the totality of history in mind when doing oral interviews because the process can provide leads and information that relates to topics other than the one the interviewer had in mind. She read a letter of appreciation from one of the descendants of a cheese maker.

Carolyn reminded us that, "we are at such a crucial point. There are so few people of that generation left. If we don't get to them now, the information will be lost."

Dane County Historical Society
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President's Message from Mary Clark



Mary Clark

Well ... here we are at the end of another year. The Board of Directors wants to thank all of our loyal members and friends for their support throughout the year. We are planning an eventful 2013, with an emphasis on projects to improve the Otto Schroeder Records Center collections and to make those data collections more accessible. We look forward to hosting our second annual archive open house in the spring, and we hope many of you will be able to attend to see what we have been up to in that area.

One of the most exciting ways in which we are moving forward with management of our archive is the long-awaited addition of a second computer, which will enable us to accommodate more volunteers and to really move forward with our cataloging projects. We are expecting greater first-year costs as part of the plan to improve our computer network. If you would like to help us move faster toward this more aggressive archive management plan, won't you consider an additional donation to our computer fund?

Please take a moment to renew your membership in the Dane County Historical Society, using the enclosed 2013 membership form. We depend heavily upon your support to be able to carry out our important mission. Happy Holidays and wishing everyone a wonderful new year!

“History is not just something that happened long ago and far away. History happens to all of us all the time. Local history brings history home; it touches your life, the life of your family, your neighborhood, your community.”

—Thomas J. Noel, Denver author and historian

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