

Zida Caswell Ivey was a force behind founding of Museum

By Russ Maki, 2017 Archive Assistant of the Year

Zida Caswell Ivey came from a family that made some of Fort Atkinson's earliest recorded history, so her role as a pioneer in recording the city's past came naturally.

And she made some history of her own when she became the founding force behind the city's first museum and, later, a leading light in the creation of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society.

It's unusual to have a city museum in operation before an organization to act on its behalf is formed, but Ivey, granddaughter of Fort pioneer and Congressman Lucien B. Caswell, took the initiative on her own, with the support of her colleagues in the Daughters of the American Revolution. She recounted the museum's founding in the Sept. 12, 1941, edition of the Jefferson County Union:

"For many years the Daughters of the American Revolution of our local chapter had a dream of opening a museum and collecting relics and records of pioneer days," she wrote. "... With the room in the public library provided by Mrs. Charles Worcester [*note: Dwight and Almira Foster's granddaughter*] as a starting point, they approached (me) with the proposition that (I) put (my) shoulder to the wheel and get the project under way.

"During the first two years it seemed rather discouraging to sit in a room with cases which held little in them, but publicity went into the local papers each week, thanks to the editors who gave staunch support to the project, and in due time things began to be loaned and given. The beginning was in September 1933 and on Washington's Birthday the following February in celebration of the day, the DAR sponsored the formal opening with a special loan exhibit which continued for one week. ... From that time on donations came in regularly until today the room is filled to overflowing with objects connected with pioneer days and the development of our city."

While the early years were challenging, her efforts were appreciated. A Jefferson County Union editorial in 1939 praised Ivey's effort behind the museum after the state Historical Society recognized its quality.

"The local museum has gained a statewide reputation as the finest small city museum in Wisconsin," the newspaper stated. "... (M)ost of the credit for its remarkable growth goes to its director, Zida C. Ivey, who has given unsparingly of her time without financial remuneration to museum work. To the hundreds of Fort Atkinson residents who haven't visited the museum in the basement of the Dwight Foster Public Library, we say -- you've really missed something and should go see it at your first opportunity. To Zida Ivey, we say -- congratulations for a job well done."

The availability of a valuable collection of native artifacts prompted Ivey to seek a means for raising money to buy it. That led to the organization of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society on Feb. 21, 1939, when Ivey was appointed as the society's secretary.

Ivey remained the museum director when it moved from the library to the Frank Hoard house in October 1957. The house remains the foundation for today's Hoard Historical Museum.

Outside the museum, Ivey served for 30 years as a Jefferson County jury commissioner; was the historian for Fort Atkinson's First Congregational Church; and received plaudits for her paintings and poetry. She also wrote a regular column for the Daily Jefferson County Union that contained historical details about Fort Atkinson and the surrounding area.

In February 1967, the city of Fort Atkinson announced plans to build an addition to the Hoard Museum, but Ivey did not live to see that come to fruition. She died of an apparent heart attack on February 23, 1967. She was 82 years old.



Zida Ivey nee Caswell as a bride. The Hoard Historical Museum is proud to have Zida's wedding dress is part of our collection.

401 Whitewater Avenue
 Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
 920-563-7769
 fax 920-568-3203

www.hoardmuseum.org
 www.facebook.com/hoardmuseum
 Hours: Tuesday – Saturday
 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 Closed Sundays & Mondays

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Merrilee's Musings

By Merrilee Lee, Museum Director



Confession time: I have birthday parties on the mind.

We just celebrated our daughter's fifth birthday. After weeks of planning, it was a fun-filled giggle-fest complete with cartoon character-decorated cakes and cupcakes – just what a 5-year-old birthday party should be. I too, have a birthday coming up but I'm guessing there will be far less giggling at my party. And, I'll definitely have more than 5 candles on my cake.

We also have a birthday party to plan here at the museum. Our August 3rd Gala is our birthday party for the Historical Society. For 80 years, the Historical Society has been working tirelessly to preserve, protect, and promote our town's history and culture. It's time to celebrate!

While reading this newsletter, a phrase that I recently read came to mind: We are our ancestors' wildest dreams come true. We have rights they could only dream of, opportunities unheard of to them, and possibilities that they couldn't even imagine. The same is true for the Historical Society. Sadly, Zida Ivey didn't see the 1st building addition be completed; imagine what she would say if she saw the building today. What if she strolled through our state-of-the-art collections spaces, all perfectly climate-controlled, and could see the strength of our collection. She would be amazed at what we've done. Imagine what we will be able to accomplish in the next 80 years.

Merrilee

As we celebrate our milestones, we also would like to remember those who have loved and supported the Historical Society as members and/or volunteers.

Vada Behrens, Midge Bull, Betty Klopac,
 Betty Meier, Ted Sells, Joy Stahl, Jerry Strunk,
 Jean Tyler, and Annabelle Udey.

Thank you to those who gave memorials in their name.

Recent Events at the Museum

☞ Mary Hoard Art Show ☞

More than 750 Fort Atkinson public, private, and home school students entered Part One of the Mary Hoard Art Show this spring. Students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade created a vast array of wonderful art. Thank you to all the teachers, students, and families who helped make the show a success!

Part Two of the Mary Hoard Art Show showcased artists from throughout Jefferson County. There were many artists who have participated in the past, and we welcomed a number of artists who were new to the show. Part Two winners include:

High School

Two-Dimensional: Rhianna Leatherberry, first place; Randalyn Findlay and Maya Kish, tied for second; Melody Lueck and Charlie Dittbenner, tied for third; & Jenny Flores, honorable mention. Digital Art: Marta Huss-Lederman, first; Max Allard, second; Aaliyah Yang, third; & Alyssa Samson, honorable mention.

Three-Dimensional: Riley Koehler and Martina Walling, tied for first; Natasha Carothers and Jessica Sharp, tied for second; Lara Guthridge, third; Kyle Pierce and Sophie Chapman, both honorable mention.

Adult Awards

Local Significance, Non-Professional: Alison Meschke, first; Mary Tilton, second; Varla Bishop, third; and Jan Runge, Linda Hertig and Marcus Tauch, all honorable mention.

Local Significance, Professional: Amelia Nowak, first; Bethann Moran-Handzlik, second; Peter O'Hearn, third; and Tess Seichter, honorable mention.

Two-Dimensional, Non-Professional: Jill Jensen, first; J. Loren Gray, second; Alison Meschke, third; and Mary Bughman, Fran Kelly and Liz Bowie, all honorable mention.

Two-Dimensional, Professional: Scott Rados, first; Kent Parks, second; Jennifer Morris, third; and Carolyn Nord, Jan Gilkey and Jan Holewinski, all honorable mention.

Three-Dimensional, Non-Professional: John Lupiezowicz, first; Tom Brown, second; Sarah J. Weh, third; and Ed Morris, Jeannette Schroeder and Rick Santovec, all honorable mention.

Three-Dimensional, Professional: Angie Hamele Szabo, first; Amy M. Weh, second; Karen Gomez, third; and Brian Szabo, Bob Swann and Ryan Ebert, all honorable mention.

☞ Howie Weiss Exhibit – Ongoing ☞

In February, the Museum unveiled a new temporary exhibit that featured Fort Atkinson local Howard Weiss. The exhibit opening welcomed Weiss descendants and Howie's brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Onnie Weiss. Without giving away the whole exhibit, Weiss grew up in Fort Atkinson, went to college in Madison, played football, and served his country during World War II. The exhibit will be on display through the end of the year.

☞ Fourth-Grade Projects ☞

Each spring, the Museum is lucky to be inundated by area fourth-graders. All fourth-grade students from Fort Atkinson public schools participated in a Lorine Niedecker poetry unit and all private school fourth-graders were invited to participate in an oral history project.

The public school switched last year from oral histories to poetry because of a change in curriculum. According to Merrilee Lee, director of the museum, Lorine Niedecker is a good fit with the new curriculum not only because of the poetry component, but also because of science. Much of Lorine's poetry focuses on nature. Lee said that teachers have told her that the poetry activity is very popular with students and that kids are really enjoying it. "We have some very impressive young poets," Lee said.

Binders containing the poetry and the oral histories will be on display at the museum all summer.



"Wally" by Bella Bowie,
Part One Popular Choice,
Kindergarten-5th Grade



Jim and Onnie Weiss with family.

Meet the New Staff at the Hoard Museum!

This spring, the Museum has hired two new staff members: a new Collections Manager to assist Merrilee with our artifacts and another Operations Assistant to help in the office and with programs and events.

If you've visited the Hoard Museum on Saturday mornings in the past year, you may have already met our new Collections Manager. Alisha Bade, a UW-Whitewater graduate, first came to us as a volunteer working in our museum's archives. Alisha has a love of history and is passionate about preserving the history of the city of Fort Atkinson, which she calls home. Under the museum's director, Alisha will be working with volunteers and museum staff to organize our collection of more than 20,000 historical artifacts. She is excited to be with us and is looking forward to helping with Museum programs and events!



Alisha Bade, *top*, and
Brandon Thornton, *left*



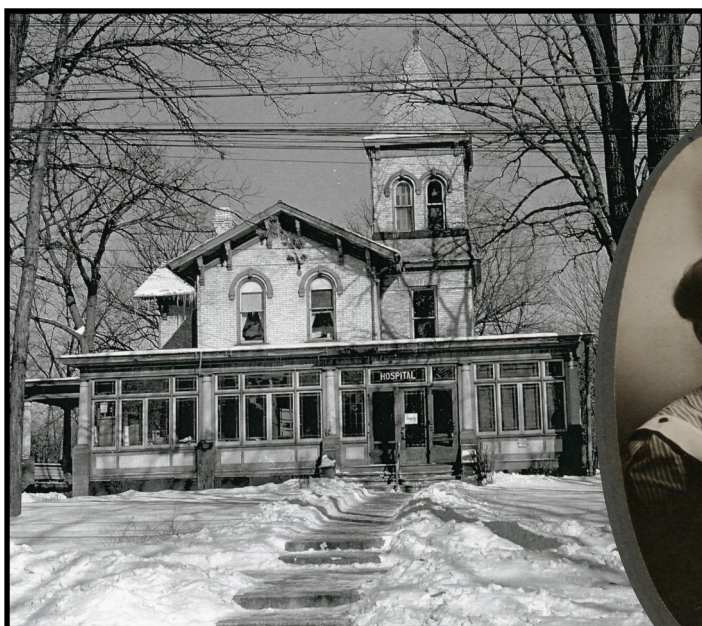
Brandon Thornton is a recent UW-Whitewater History graduate who has recently settled in Fort Atkinson. Originally from Door County, Brandon has worked in Special Collections while in college and with students during summer camps. Brandon's research interests focus on Wisconsin immigration from 1800s – present, which makes him an excellent fit for the Hoard Museum! Stop by on Wednesdays or during special events to say "hello" to Brandon!



Zidy Ivey in the parlor of the Hoard House.

From the Archives

This spring, a representative from Fort Healthcare asked if the Museum had any images of Fort Atkinson hospitals in the Archive. Take a look at the images found in our collection!



Majerius Hospital on Madison Avenue.



Miss Channley from Dr. Brewer's Hospital, early 1900s.



Dedication of Fort Memorial Hospital in 1950.

Volunteer Spotlight

Without volunteers, the Museum would not be able to offer nearly as many programs or services as it currently offers.

There is a wide variety of tasks for volunteers, and the museum is always looking for volunteers in every area. Currently, there are many openings in two areas – events and the kitchen.

Our programming has been growing, both in number of events and in number of visitors at the events. Two events that are relatively new and have opportunities for volunteers are Dairy Day at the MOOseum and the Fort Koshkonong Rendezvous.

The Museum is now coordinating the Fort Koshkonong Rendezvous at Rock River Park, and because the museum is in only the second year of organizing this event, there are many new opportunities for volunteers. The rendezvous, always held the weekend of Memorial Day, was May 25 and 26 this year. Let us know if you are interested in helping in 2020!

Other events include Morning at the Museum, Mary Hoard art shows, the Fourth of July Ice Cream Social, the Governor Hoard Celebration and the Holiday Open House.

At events, there is a role for everyone. Some jobs are inside, some are outside. Some require standing, some are sitting-only tasks. Skills needed include flexibility, friendliness, and ability to work with others.

The other area where volunteers are needed is in the kitchen. This position requires able-bodied people who can be on their feet for a two-hour shift. Volunteers work in teams of two or three during special events and programs and usually work for two or three events per year. Some of the programs are held on Sundays or evenings. Kitchen volunteers help prep food, set out and restock beautiful spreads, and run a super-fast dishwasher.

Please speak to Volunteer Coordinator Tammy Doellstadt or other staff if you are able to help. You can reach Tammy at tammyd@hoardmuseum.org or by phone at 920-563-7769.

Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Dairy Day at the MOOseum ☛

Saturday, June 15, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Come to the Museum to enjoy all things dairy. While here, meet the seven milking breeds and the Wisconsin dairy farmers who care for them. Special dairy exhibits will be on display, and a representative of Hoard's Creamery will share samples of the company's new cheese varieties.

Dairy Day at the MOOseum is fun for all ages. Children can have their faces painted like a cow, and both adults and children can participate in dairy related games, including trivia and races. The event will conclude with the cow parade on the 400 block of Foster Street at 1:30 p.m., with an emcee sharing fun facts about each breed.



While at this event you will be able to purchase a grilled cheese sandwich for lunch from the Jefferson County Agri-business and try one of the 8 Root-breed floats that are inspired by the seven milking breeds.

This year's event is sponsored by the Jefferson County Farm Bureau, the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Sprecher's Brewery, Kwik Trip, and Tractor Supply Co., as well as by the following Business Patrons of the Museum: Abendroth Water Conditioning, Blodgett Garden Center, Day Insurance, Fireside Theatre, JM Carpets, Jones Dairy Farm, Paddy Coughlin's Irish Pub, Regina Therapeutic Massage, W&A Distribution, W.D. Hoard and Sons.

☞ Foster House Open ☛

**First Saturday of the Month, July – October
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

The Foster House will be open for tours this summer! Stop by on the first Saturday of the month from July through October to tour and talk with a trained museum volunteer about the 1841 Foster House, the family who built it, and the early days of Fort Atkinson. Away on weekends? You can also make an appointment to visit the Foster House by contacting the Museum office by calling (920) 563-7769 or e-mail info@hoardmuseum.org.



Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Historic Walking Tours ☞

June 22, July 20, and August 17, September 14;

Tours at 8, 9, and 10 a.m. at the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market

For the past three summers, Museum staff have guided groups from the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market around downtown and through the surrounding neighborhoods to explore the history and architecture of Fort Atkinson.



The downtown tours will resume again this summer! The walks begin on the hour at 8, 9, and 10 a.m., and last approximately 30-40 minutes. Participants should be prepared to walk approximately one mile over paved surfaces. Tours begin and end at the Fort Farmer's Market information table. *No reservations are required; donations to the Museum are appreciated.*

☞ 41st Annual 4th of July Ice Cream Social ☞

Thursday, July 4, 1 - 3 p.m.

The Museum is celebrating Independence Day with our 41st Annual Fourth of July Ice Cream Social! Come for the ice cream, stay for the fun! This year's event will feature games, crafts, face painting, and, of course, ice cream! *The Harmony Cornet Band* will play throughout the Social. Want to spend the afternoon? Feel free to bring a lawn chair or blanket!

The Fort Atkinson Piecemakers Quilting group will present handmade quilts to veterans and to select other members of the community at 12:30 p.m. on the South Lawn near the Foster House.

Thank you very much to our event sponsors: Abendroth Water Conditioning, Daily Jefferson County Union; First Baptist Church; Brianne Brandenburg & Tari Smith of Frostie Freeze; Mr. Martin Lemke & friends; and PremierBank. Additional thanks to our Business Patrons for sponsoring this event: Abendroth Water Conditioning; Badger Bank; Behling, Jasper, and Selburg; Business & Tax Systems LLC; Blodgett Garden Center; Daley Painting & Decorating; Fireside Theatre; Jonas Office Supply; JM Carpets; Jones Dairy Farm; PremierBank; TallGuy Productions; Tuttle's Pharmacy; W.D. Hoard and Sons; and W&A Distribution.



Celebrate Independence Day with sundaes, cookies, and the rest of Fort Atkinson!

☞ Victorian Culinary Culture – Members-Only Event ☞

Saturday, July 13, 1 - 2 p.m.

Join staff as we taste and share how Victorians ate! The Victorian Era was a time of great cultural change, and food was no different. Traditional food preparations were still used, but cookbooks with standard measures and improved supplies (advancements like baking powder) changed how home cooks cooked.

The May Members-Only Day, *Coffee and Croissants* gave members a chance to enjoy the Hoard House. "It is a new way to use the Hoard house," said Merrilee Lee, director of the museum. "It was great for people who know each other but don't get a chance to spend time together to be able to sit together and talk."

Members-Only Days are special events available for members of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society and Hoard Historical Museum. These interactive experiences offers member a fun and unique way to learn more about our regional history.

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Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum:

- June 15 ♦ Dairy Day at the MOOseum, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- June 8-22: ♦ Visionary Artists Show, open during regular museum hours
- June 22: ♦ Walking Tours, 8, 9, & 10 a.m., start and end at the Farmers Market
- July 4: ♦ 39th Annual Ice Cream Social, 1-3 p.m.
- July 6: ♦ Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
 ♦ Summer Morning at The Museum, 9- 10:30 a.m.
- July 13: ♦ Members Only, Victorian Food Culture
- July 20: ♦ Walking Tours, 8, 9, & 10 a.m., start and end at the Farmers Market
- Aug. 3: ♦ Screening of the Dawn of the Red Arrow WWI documentary, 1 p.m.
- Aug. 3: ♦ 80th Anniversary Gala, 5 to 8:30 p.m.
 Tickets available in July