

Fort Atkinson Historical Society 80th Anniversary Gala Highlights

By Linda Ager, Museum Staff

The Fort Atkinson Historical Society celebrated its 80th anniversary Aug. 3 with a gala at the Hoard Historical Museum. The gala was followed by a week of special tours and presentations at the Museum.

The Fort Atkinson Historical Society was formed in 1939 to preserve, protect, and promote the history and culture of the Fort Atkinson area.

The way in which the historical society started is unusual, according to Merrilee Lee, director of the Hoard Historical Museum. Usually, a historical society forms and then begins collecting artifacts. But the Fort Atkinson Historical Society formed to care for artifacts that had been

collected by a different organization, Merrilee said.

The Daughters of the American Revolution began collecting artifacts in anticipation of Fort Atkinson's 1936 Centennial. The first public showing of the artifacts was held in 1933 at the home of DAR member Luella Hoard, according to Merrilee.

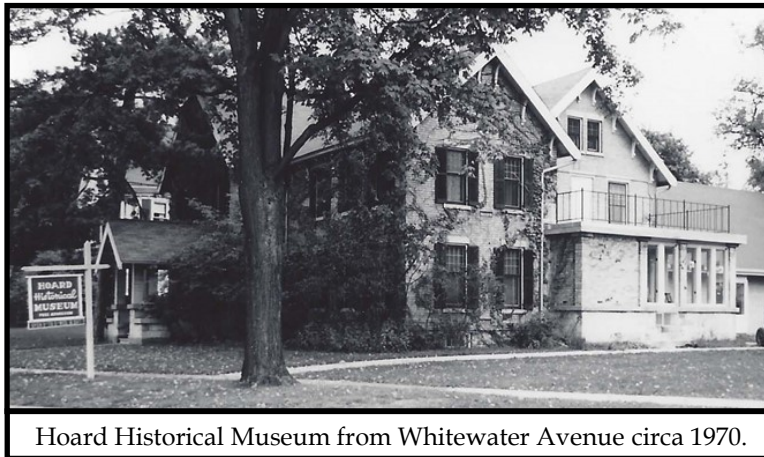
The collection was moved to the Dwight Foster Public Library in the 1930s. DAR member Zida Ivey maintained the room. In 1939, the historical society incorporated as an organizing body to maintain the collection.

The collection remained at the library until 1957, when the museum moved to its current location in the former Frank and Luella Hoard house. The city acquired the house for \$1 from Frank and Luella's children, W.D. Hoard Jr. and Shirley Hoard Kerschensteiner, after Frank and Luella passed away.

The museum underwent multiple additions to become the facility it is today. A two-story gallery addition was built on the back of the house in the 1960s. In 1979, the museum entered a partnership with the National Dairy

Shrine and the museum grew to accommodate the Dairy Shrine. In the 1990s, an addition added space for the Lincoln Era Library and Exhibit, as well as office space. The latest addition, in 2007, added the mounds exhibit, the Jones Gallery, the archives and storage space for collections.

Today, the museum remains a collaboration between the



Hoard Historical Museum from Whitewater Avenue circa 1970.

historical society and the city of Fort Atkinson. The society owns the artifacts as well as the Foster House. The city of Fort Atkinson owns the main building and the grounds. Merrilee said both the historical society and the city contribute thousands of dollars each year to the operation of the museum.

"Fort has always been proud of its history, even as the history was being created," Merrilee said.

The story told by the historical society is a microcosm of United States history. At the museum, we have the history of Native Americans, pioneers, the Civil War and the dairy industry, Merrilee said. Within that microcosm, Fort Atkinson has a unique story to tell. To have Native American mounds, Paleolithic campsites along Lake Koshkonong, W.D. Hoard, the panther intaglio and a Black Hawk War connection all in one city contributes to a rich history.

Merrilee said, "Our job is to maintain this for the future, just as people for the past 80 years maintained it for us." The Fort Atkinson Historical Society currently has 400 members, including individuals and families, organizations, and businesses. The collection includes more than 20,000 artifacts.

Several of the exhibits that were created for the gala, including toys, items from the world wars, and prams, will remain on display through fall.

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



The Historical Society's 80th Anniversary has afforded us the opportunity to look back at our history with a greater appreciation. Throughout this year we have spent hours discussing where we've come from as a historical society: how we were started, who was involved, why were we started, and so forth. I've also had the wonderful opportunity to discuss museum events with people who saw them first hand: the original museum when it was in the basement of the Dwight Foster Public Library; the move to the Hoard House in 1957; the addition of the National Dairy Shrine Museum in the early 1980s; and the most recent renovations in the 1990s and the 2000s. Each addition brought new energy to our organization that continues today. Who would we as a museum be if we were still in the library's basement or without the partnership of the National Dairy Shrine?

I was excited to be reacquainted with our organization's strong history and am looking forward to being part of our future milestones.

Merrilee

As we celebrate our 80th Anniversary we would also like to recognize those who support the Museum.

Thank you to the families that donated to the Hoard Museum in honor of Cynthia Smith's birthday!

We're hiring! The Hoard Museum is hiring a part time maintenance employee. Stop by the Museum or go to our website, hoardmuseum.org, for a position description and application.

Recent Events at the Museum



☞ Dairy Day at the MOOseum ☞

The 5th Annual Dairy Day at the MOOseum was an all-around success. Approximately 700 people attended the three-hour event where they could meet the seven milking breeds, sample the new Hoard's Creamery cheese, have their faces painted, play dairy-themed games, enjoy cow-themed root *breed* floats, and get a grilled cheese sandwich from the Jefferson County Agribusiness Club. The event ended with a Cow Parade on Foster Street with Museum Director Merrilee Lee sharing cow facts about the specific cow and about the breed (along with a few cow puns as well!).

Thank you to our Business Patrons: Blodgett Garden Center, Day Insurance, Fireside Dinner Theatre, Fort HeathCare, Jones Dairy Farm, Paddy's Pub, W&A Distribution. An additional thank you to our event sponsors: Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Lundy Farms, Sprechers, and the Wisconsin Farm Bureau.

☞ Ice Cream Social ☞

An estimated 950 visitors included the Museum in their Independence Day plans. 2019 was the third year where the Fort Atkinson Piecemakers Quilting Guild presented unique quilts to honor 24 local veterans. The Harmony Cornet Band played music from the 1860s-1900 and included selections of patriotic melodies, dance tunes, love songs, "popular music" of the day, hymns, and opera melodies. Visitors could also play historic games, get their faces painted, and see the temporary exhibit, "Presidents of the Black Hawk War."

Thank you to our sponsors: Blodgett Garden Center; Business and Tax Systems, LLC; Daley Painting and Decorating; Fireside Dinner Theatre; Fort HealthCare; Jonas Office Supply, Jones Dairy Farm; TallGuy Productions; Tuttle's Pharmacy; PremierBank; W&A Distribution; and W.D. Hoard and Sons.

☞ John Wolfram ☞

On Thursday, July 11, more than 140 people came to listen to Fort Atkinson native and retired Navy Frogman, John Wolfram, talk about his experiences with the Apollo 11 lunar landing. Wolfram was part of the team that helped retrieve the astronauts from their capsule in the ocean and brought them to a Naval ship. For an hour he brought his audience along with him, from training through the execution of his mission.

Book now on sale at the Hoard Museum Gift Shop for \$20 +tax.



☞ Summer Camp! ☞

This past July the Museum partnered with the Fort Atkinson School District to host a weeklong Middle School History Camp. Brenda Thayer, a Fort Atkinson Middle School teacher, approached the Museum this past spring to co-host the camp. For the first year, the 15 students worked in the Museum, went on tours throughout town, and were able to get to know their hometown better. Both Mrs. Thayer and the Museum are looking forward to continuing the camp next summer. Thanks to downtown businesses, NASCO, and Jones Dairy Farm for opening their businesses to our History Campers!



From the Archives

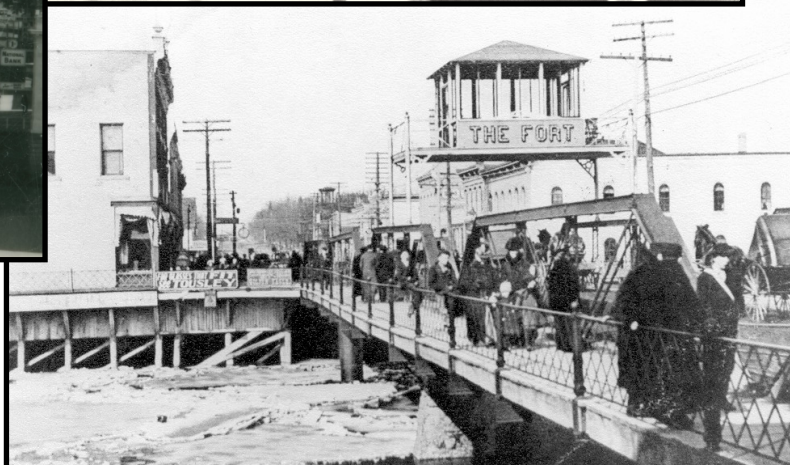
We recently installed a temporary display of historic images of Fort Atkinson's Main Street. Here are a few images from the display. The exhibit will be on display through the end of the year.

Looking North on Main Street
circa 1900 (*right*) and
circa 1970 (*below*)



*Image to the Right : Looking South on
Main Street circa 1890*

The second iron bridge built across the
Rock River had a bandstand labeled "The Fort"



Volunteer Spotlight



I hope you have had a wonderful summer! The museum has been very busy and our volunteers have helped us accomplish much! A special thanks to the Collections volunteers who helped set up and take down hundreds of items for our 80th Anniversary displays.

As we turn to fall, we hope that you make plans to attend our Annual Volunteer Recognition Party on Friday, September 20. **Please contact the office by Tuesday, September 17 to reserve your spot!**

We hope to gear up our oral history transcription process this fall. We are looking for people with good listening and typing skills. Cassette tapes from the 1980s and 1990s have been digitized and now need to be transcribed. There is quite a variety of topics. Hours are flexible. Please see Tammy if you are interested in this project.

☞ Black Hawk Artists ☛

Saturday, November 3, 1 - 4 p.m.

Open through Thursday, November 21, during Museum Hours

For the 47th Annual Black Hawk Artist Show the Black Hawk Artists wall which greets visitors inside the main door will reflect each artist's interpretation of *Ephemeral* – a fleeting presence. The Black Hawk Artists are a group of women who meet monthly to encourage each other's art and to plan their yearly show at the Museum. The public is invited to join the artists at their opening reception, and enjoy music provided by the Fort Atkinson High School Chamber Orchestra as they view more than 100 new works the Black Hawk Artists have created in the past year.

The gallery shows off the diversity of the artists' work: pastel, acrylic, ink, and oil paintings, jewelry, pottery, felted and stitched pieces, marbled silk scarves, sculptures, photography, and digital creations. Group discussions of this year's show included insights about the role of art in sustaining and enriching peoples' lives.

The Black Hawk Artists are proud to introduce new members Mary Pratt and Janet Nelson. Mary Pratt is well-known locally for her pottery – intricate pots and vases enhanced by sculptured animals or flowers. Janet Nelson produces acrylic animal paintings infused with humor as well as art towels that bring art into the kitchen.

The show will also feature a memorial to founding member Jean Tyler, who passed away earlier this year.

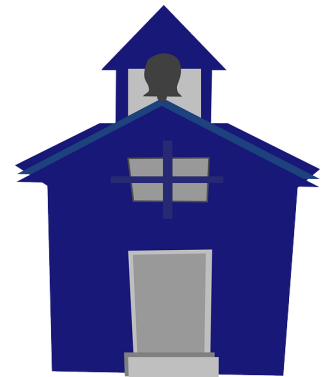


From left to right, bottom row: Angie Hamele Szabo, Janet Nelson, Karen Gomez, Mary Pratt, Linda Tump, Jan Gilkey, and Kim Karow. Top row: Karen Crosby, Priscilla Heussner, Sally Koehler, Jan Holewinski, and Judith Henning. Not pictured: Julia Ince and Mary Wallace.

☞ Country Bells Reunion Memorabilia On Display ☛

September 24, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Did you attend a one-room country school in Jefferson County and weren't able to attend the reunion held in late July? Or did you attend the reunion, but didn't have time to spend looking at the historical map or some of the memorabilia records from your school? Several reunion committee members will be on hand at the museum to assist you with reviewing the documents from your school and answer questions you may have.



Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Morning @ the Museum Pre-Kindergarten Program ☞

First Friday of the Month, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

The Museum opens an hour early for preschool children and their families or teachers on the first Friday of the month during the school year. This time allows little ones to explore the exhibits at their own pace with their family or teachers. Storytime is at 9 and 9:45 a.m. and crafts are available throughout the morning.

October 4 - World Cheese Day

November 1 - Ambulance Day *Learn about first responders and see an ambulance up close!*

December 6 - Gingerbread Day



☞ Herbal Teas – Garden Education Program ☞

Saturday, September 21, 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Cultures throughout time and around the world learned how to use plants. Teas, seasonings, dyes, essential oils, and salves have been developed from herbal plants. The Foster House Herb Garden at the Hoard Museum has dozen of herbs that grow in Wisconsin and can be used fresh or preserved in various teas. The program will be presented by Jefferson County Master Gardener Dennis Bries.

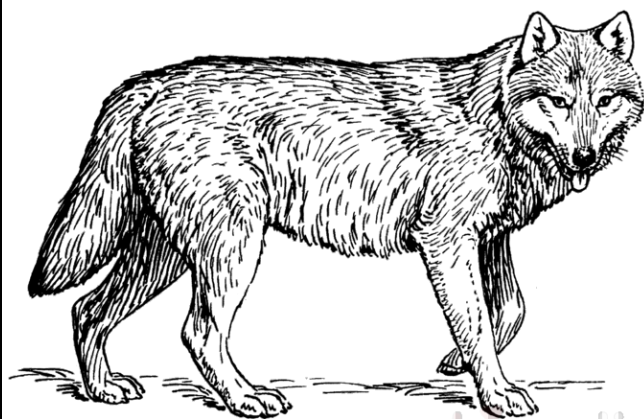


Education programs are free to the public. The final 2019 Garden Education Program will be “Landscape and Garden Design” on Saturday, November 23.

☞ Hoard History Hour Tracks and Skulls – Animal ID Workshop ☞

Saturday, September 28 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Space Limited & Registration Required! \$5/participant. Recommended for grade 3 and up.



Join Dr. George Clokey, UW-Whitewater Biology Professor, to explore the natural world of Wisconsin! Four-legged animals share our world with us and leave clues that they have been here. Dr. Clokey will show different animal tracks and participants will be able to make their own plaster casts of paw prints to take home.

Hoard History Hour programs are special programs held throughout the year that focus on a unique aspect of our region, ranging from history, to sciences, and the world around us.

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

⌘ Civil War Day and Governor Hoard Celebration ⌘

Saturday, October 12, 1 - 4 p.m.

William Dempster Hoard, Wisconsin's 16th Governor, was born on October 14, 1836 in Stockbridge, New York. Each year, the Museum celebrates his birthday by exploring part of his life.

As a young man, he moved to Wisconsin, where he pursued several careers without success and enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War. As governor, Hoard was an advocate for agriculture and education. Controversially, he supported the Bennett Law, a law that required elementary and high schools in Wisconsin be taught in English. Come learn why he believed the Bennett Law was right for his citizens. Also featured will be a discussion about Wisconsin immigrants.

While here, enjoy a slice of cake to celebrate Hoard's 183rd birthday!

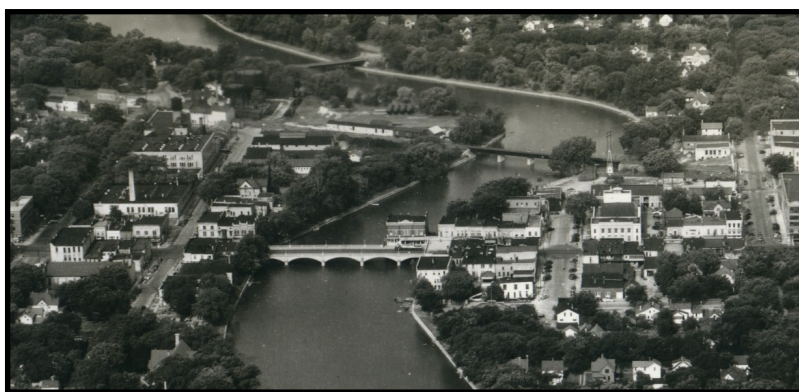


⌘ Historic Bicycle Tours ⌘

October 19, tour starts at 9 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 Fort Atkinson exploring the history and architecture of Fort Atkinson. The bike tour starts and ends at the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market on E. Milwaukee Avenue at 9 a.m. and lasts approximately an hour.

No reservations are required; donations appreciated.



⌘ Hoard History Hour *Birds from Hoo's Woods* ⌘

Saturday, October 26, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Co-sponsored by The Friends of Rose Lake

Join us while we host Dianne Moller, director of Hoo's Woods Raptor Center, and her native birds. Hoo's Woods is a raptor education and rehabilitation center near Milton. Dianne will be bringing five birds to the Museum, a young bald eagle (*pictured right*), barn owl, two screech owls, and a peregrine falcon. Come see the birds and learn more about each bird and their habitat.

Hoard History Hour programs are special programs held throughout the year that focus on a unique aspect of our region, ranging from history, to sciences, and the world around us.



Dianne Moller and Victor E., a young bald eagle.



Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum:

- September 21: ♦ *Herbal Teas* Garden Education Program, 2 - 3:30 p.m.
- September 28: ♦ *Tracks and Skulls, Animal ID* Hoard History Hour Program, 1-2:30 p.m.
- October 4: ♦ Morning @ the Museum Pre-K Program, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- October 5: ♦ Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
- October 12: ♦ Civil War Day and Gov. Hoard Celebration, 1-4 p.m.
- October 19: ♦ Historic Fort Atkinson Bike Tour, 9- 10:30 a.m.
- October 26: ♦ *Birds from Hoo's Woods* Hoard History Hour Program, 1-2:30 p.m.
- November 1: ♦ Morning @ the Museum Pre-K Program, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- November 3: ♦ Black Hawk Artists Opening Reception, 1-4 p.m.
On exhibit through Thursday, November 21
- November 23: ♦ *Landscape and Garden Design* Garden Education Program, 2 - 3:30 p.m.

Questions about our events? Contact the Museum office by calling (920) 563-7769 or emailing info@hoardmuseum.org.