
Hannah Swart, Fort Atkinson Historical Society Stalwart Leader

In 2019, the Fort Atkinson Historical Society celebrates its 80th anniversary. We are taking the opportunity to highlight our organization's legacy and those who helped make the Museum the integral community institution that it is today.

Archive Assistant and retired journalist Russ Maki wrote the following article using the Museum's Archive. He has been a Museum volunteer for five years and was our 2017 Archive Assistant of the Year.

Hannah W. Swart already was an established educator and executive before she devoted her considerable skills as a writer and historian to the Hoard Museum for more than two decades, including 17 years as curator.

During that time, she co-authored a biography of Black Hawk War General Henry Atkinson; wrote a biography of Watertown's Margarethe Schurz, founder of America's first kindergarten; and wrote *Koshkonong Country* a three book series on the history of Jefferson County.

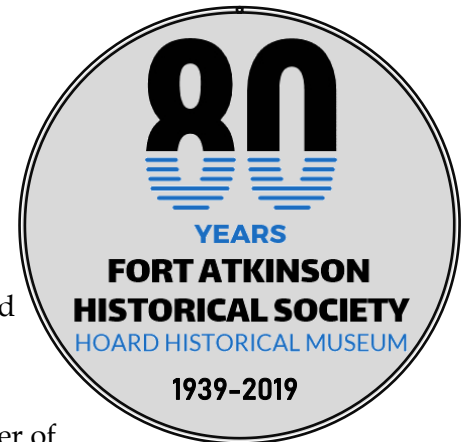
The daughter of Oscar Werwath, founder of the Milwaukee School of Engineering, she served as the technical school's registrar and as director of its welding institute before she and her husband, George Swart, moved to the Fort Atkinson area in 1951.

After their children were grown, Mrs. Swart accepted an assignment in 1960 from Hoard's Dairyman editor W.D. Hoard Jr. to join his wife, Mary, in tracing the city's early years. They put their research into print in "Footsteps of our Founding Fathers," a study of General Atkinson, Black Hawk and the Black Hawk War. Hoard serialized the work in the Daily Jefferson County Union in 1963 and published it in booklet form in 1964. In the meantime, Mrs. Swart began volunteering at the Museum as a researcher for longtime curator, Zida Ivey.

When Mrs. Ivey died in 1967, Mrs. Swart was a natural choice to assume the role as curator - and more. She worked to continue the Museum's goal of educating young people about local history. In 1970, she started a "history of Fort Atkinson" series with cooperation from the Fort Atkinson Vocational and Technical School and the Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce. She went on to reach out to the schools, scheduling field trips to the Museum for fourth-graders, bus tours of the city for eighth-graders, and a slide-show presentation on local history for 11th graders, the year when U.S. history was a prominent part of the curriculum. The Museum is still an active partner with the Fort Atkinson School District.

The Museum prospered under Mrs. Swart. The annual attendance grew from 1,000 or fewer in the early 1960s to more than 25,000 in the early 1980s with the boost in attendance with the opening of the National Dairy Shrine Museum on the Museum complex. The Museum's success continued after her death in 1984. In the past few years, the Museum has averaged more than 20,000 people annually.

Her enthusiasm proved infectious, swelling membership in the Fort Atkinson Historical Society from 57 to more than 650 during her tenure.



Hannah Swart

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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



I recently jumped on the organizing bandwagon and read one of Marie Kondo's books. She described her organizing method called KonMari. As I read her description of how to organize our belongings, I realized that all she is advocating for a personal collections policy. Museums use collections policies to determine what artifacts to collect and explain how the Museum will use them. Generally, most museums collect to educate. Marie's major tenet is that the object needs to "spark joy" to justify being kept by the owner.

For the Hoard Museum, our collection policy is a bit more detailed than just sparking an emotion. Ours (in brief) states that an object needs to have been created, used, owned, or collected by someone with a Fort Atkinson connection. And personally, many objects in our collection do "spark joy" within me. There are some that don't necessarily spark joy, but I value the story they are telling and recognize that they will spark joy for others in our community.

Adherence to this policy is what has allowed our collection to grow in an orderly fashion. Over the past 80+ years, we've collected artifacts related to Fort Atkinson's past and present. Our oldest artifacts are our Paleolithic stone tools, and some of our newest are today's Daily Jefferson County Union newspapers. We will continue to use our collections policy to guide us as we collect items that tell our story because telling our story sparks joy within us.

Merrilee

In 2018, donations were made as memorials in honor
 of the following individuals:

Laura Beane William "Bill" Starke
 G. Dixon Telfer Bette Ward Estelle Wiesmann

Recent Events at the Museum

☞ Bob LaMuro Piano Mini Concerts ☞

Wednesdays, 12:15-12:45 p.m.

Starting last year, the Museum transforms into a concert hall on Wednesdays. Join us each Wednesday over the lunch hour for a free half-hour concert given by Bob LaMuro! Bob is a local piano teacher and an accomplished pianist. Come enjoy a new selection of songs each week. Feel free to bring your lunch or coffee!



☞ Holiday Open House ☞

On Saturday, December 8, the Museum opened its doors for our annual Holiday Open House. Dozens of bakers made hundreds of cookies to welcome the community to the Museum for an afternoon of holiday piano music and wintertime crafts. Visitors were able to create their own holiday cards, make winter birdfeeders, and decorate gingerbread houses. The day coincided with the announcement of the winners of our annual Gingerbread House Contest. This year 12 gingerbread creations were entered into four separate categories.

Congratulations to our winners!

Original Design – Kit

1. "Gumdrop Village" Bella and Sophie Bowie
2. "Cooper Christmas Villiage" Julie, Joesph, Julia, Ruth, and Joyeux Cooper
3. "The Red Barn" Megan Lundy

Original Design – Scratch

1. "No Place Like Home" Malika Moss-Malch
2. "Snow Day" Alli Zempel and Cana Vorpahl
3. tie "Buried Treasure" Selah Vorpahl and Naomi Schultz,
"House of Cards" Alisha Bade

Building Replica Design – Kit

1. "The Polar Express" Vicky Daniels

Building Replica Design – Scratch

1. "Green Gables" Elsa Ager-Hart
2. tie "Redwall" Roald Ager-Hart,
"That's No Moon, That's a Space Station" The Winski Family



Top: "The Polar Express" by Vicky Daniels, popular choice winner.

Bottom: "The Red Barn" by Megan Lundy

Thank you to all who visited the Museum during the holiday season and to those who voted in the popular choice contest. The popular choice award went to "The Polar Express" by Vicky Daniels.

If you enjoyed the Gingerbread House Contest, please consider entering your own creation next year! This is an annual event and past groups expressed how much they enjoy participating in the contest.



A Special Thanks:

This past winter, a longtime member of the Museum celebrated a milestone birthday. Instead of gifts for herself, she requested that donations be made in her name to the Hoard Museum. Thank you to all who donated in her name, and an even bigger thank you to the birthday girl who was generous and thought of how she could help the Museum on her special day!

(Hannah Swart, Continued from page 1)

Awards and acclaim followed her success. In 1972 the Wisconsin Historical Society presented the Fort Atkinson Historical Society with the Reuben Gold Thwaites Trophy for Local History, its premier honor. Also that year, Hannah Swart and Mary Hoard were joint recipients of the Fort Atkinson Lions Club's Distinguished Citizen Award for their research into local history. In 1974, the American Association for State and Local History gave the Museum its commendation.

By then, Mrs. Swart was just hitting her stride. *Koshkonong Country* came out in 1975, followed by two volumes of a companion work on which she served as lead editor, *Koshkonong Country Revisited*, published in 1981 and 1983. Her books are still available in the Museum's Gift Shop. Governor Patrick Lucey appointed her to the Wisconsin American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, where she served as co-chair of the commission's Heritage Committee. She was a charter member of the Old World Wisconsin Development Committee and served a stint as president of the women's auxiliary of the state Historical Society.

In April 1984, Mrs. Swart was presented with the Distinguished Service Award from the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters for "outstanding contributions to the life, culture and welfare of Wisconsin." At the time of her unexpected death on July 26, 1984, she was laying groundwork for a campaign to have the Museum accredited by the American Association of Museums – a distinction held by only 19 museums in the state at the time.

Museum milestones under Hannah Swart:

1968: Museum expansion

1971-72: Dwight Foster House moved to present location

1974: Museum chosen for National Dairy Shrine

Mrs. Swart was also a founder of the Fort Atkinson Arts Council and served on the organization's first board of directors. She was an active promoter of the Girl Scouts as well.

But history is where Mrs. Swart made her mark in Fort Atkinson, and this museum remains a testament to her energy, her intellect and her dedication. Her legacy lives on with her descendants continued support of the Museum.



Hoard Museum Volunteers

The Museum is fortunate to have more than 200 people who volunteer at the Museum each year. They help with research in the Archive, greet visitors to the building, bake cookies, assist in the office, deliver posters, serve during special events and much, much more.

Besides saying "thank you," we try to show our appreciation to our volunteers in other ways as well. Volunteers are invited to attend our Volunteer Enrichment Programs throughout the year, open to volunteers and a guest. Unless otherwise noted, all programs are held at the Hoard Museum. *Please RSVP for VEPs with Tammy.*

- ◆ On Friday, April 12, from 10–11:30 a.m., Museum Director Merrilee Lee will present "Happy 80th year, Fort Atkinson Historical Society – A Look Back at Us!"
- ◆ On Thursday, May 16, from 10-11:30 a.m., Museum staff and Jack Blodgett will present on "Jack's Hidden Beer Tunnel" Fort Atkinson's Brewery History will also be covered!
- ◆ On Friday, August 9, from 9-11:30 a.m. We will meet at the Museum but go on a field trip to the Ward Cemetery.

We also hold an Annual Volunteer Awards Party in September. This is where we name honor people for their service as well as name the Volunteer of the Year.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Tammy, at the Museum office (920) 563-7769 or by e-mailing tammyd@hoardmuseum.org. Most people volunteer once or twice a month in a way that fits with their lifestyle and interests.

Thank you to our volunteers at the Hoard Museum! We hope to see you at the next program!

☞ **Howie Weiss: Fort Atkinson's Own MVP Temporary Exhibit On Display** ☞
Opens Saturday, February 16, *Members-Only Opening Friday, February 15, 5-7 p.m.

December 12 marked the 80th anniversary of "Howie Weiss Day" in Fort Atkinson. Who was Howie and why did he get a "day" named in his honor? Howard "Howie" Weiss was born in Fort Atkinson on October 12, 1917, to Herman and Lottie Weiss. He was also the older brother to current Fort Atkinson resident and Museum member & volunteer, Jim Weiss. Growing up in Fort Atkinson, he played football for Fort Atkinson High School. He was also a member of the basketball and golf teams, but he excelled on the football field. As captain of the team his senior year, he helped lead the Fort Atkinson Cardinals (the high school mascot at the time) to its first Southern 6-League championship, outscoring all of their opponents 208-12.

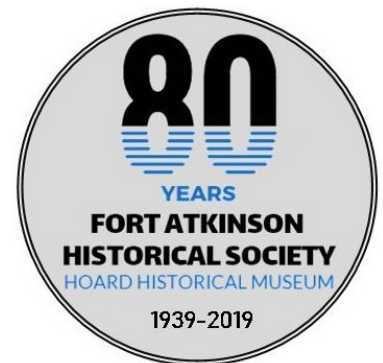
After graduating high school in 1934, he attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he was a running back for the team. Come learn more about his life and football career with the Hoard Museum's newest temporary exhibit, *Howie Weiss: Fort Atkinson's Own MVP!*



☞ **Fort Atkinson Historical Society's 80th Anniversary** ☞

Throughout the year the Museum will be highlighting the history of our community and the history of the historical society. We will have different types of collections on display throughout the year.

- ♦ At the Fort Atkinson Historical Society Annual Meeting, on February 27, Director Merrilee Lee will present on the history of city and the Museum.
- ♦ The Museum is partnering with The Unity Project and Fort Atkinson's Parks and Recreation Department to install informative signs in local parks to explain the park's history in English and Spanish.
- ♦ Formation of the Hoard Historical Literary Society. *Learn more about the new group on page 6!*
- ♦ This summer we will introduce new themes to our walking tours. These tours are approximately 45 minutes in duration and start and end at the Fort Atkinson Farmers Market in downtown Fort Atkinson.
- ♦ **Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 3 for the Museum's 80th Anniversary Gala!**



Last November, the Museum participated in the 23rd Annual Holiday Lighted Parade to promote the Hoard Museum and to share our 80th Anniversary with the larger community. We brought our message of celebrating and preserving our history to the street alongside John Chady in an early Ford Model T. Our bundled volunteers handed out candy, including Cow Tails, and event calendar bookmarks.

Thank you to John and all of our dedicated volunteers who joined us that cold night!



Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Quilt Collectors Show and Talk ☞

Saturday, February 23, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. *Quilt Show from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Talk from 1:30-2:30 p.m.*

Local quilters and collectors are bringing their beautiful and unique collections to the Museum for this year's Collectors Show. Come see a variety of quilts made in different periods, with a variety of patterns and techniques. The Museum will also have select quilts from our collection on display.

The Collectors Show will also feature guest speaker Melissa Wraalstad, executive director of the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts in Cedarburg, WI. At 1:30 p.m., Ms. Wraalstad will be presenting, "Treasures from the Vault," using quilts from the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts' collection.



Quilt from the Hoard Museum collection.

☞ Fort Atkinson Historical Society Annual Dinner ☞

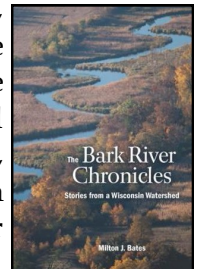
Wednesday, February 27, 5:30-8 p.m.

Join us on Wednesday, February 27 for the Fort Atkinson Historical Society's Annual Meeting. Each year, the Fort Atkinson Historical Society meets to update members on the current standing of the Society, have a delicious dinner and are treated to a presentation. Museum Director Merrilee Lee will highlight Fort Atkinson history and show why we have needed a historical society these past 80 years. Please call the Museum at (920) 563-7769 to R.S.V.P.! Dinner is \$30 per person. The presentation and meeting are free to all members.

☞ Hoard Historical Literary Society ☞

Are you interested in reading and learning more about the Black Hawk War, the Indian Mounds that populate our vicinity, the tiny communities that were settled long ago and have since disappeared, and more? Then you are invited to join the Hoard Historical Museum's new book club, The Hoard Historical Literary Society.

The book club will meet at the Museum every other month on the second Wednesday, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The first meeting will be held Wednesday, March 13th, when the group will be discussing *The Bark River Chronicles* by Milton J. Bates. Bates paddled the meandering Bark River and tells the fascinating story of the people who settled and inhabited the towns along its banks, ending up in Fort Atkinson. The book club is free to join, however, please contact the Hoard Historical Museum to sign up. Contact the Hoard Historical Museum to register. Books will be available to check out at the Dwight Foster Public Library or for purchase from the Hoard Museum Gift Shop.



The formation of the Hoard Historical Literary Society is in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society. Founded in 1939, the mission of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society is to preserve, protect, and promote the history and culture of Fort Atkinson and the surrounding area.

☞ Morning @ the Museum ☞

First Fridays of the Month, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

During the school year, the Museum opens an hour early for preschool children and their family members or teachers on the first Friday of the month. This time allows little ones to explore the exhibits at their own pace with their families or teachers. Refreshments for preschoolers and adults are served. Storytime is at 9 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. in the exhibit space, and crafts are available throughout the morning.

Upcoming themes: • March 1: Dr. Seuss Day • April 5: Art Day



Volunteer Bonnie Schaefer reading to our littlest visitors.

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Garden Education ☞

Saturday, April 6, 2 p.m.

Even though snow blankets the area, the Museum's Master Gardeners have been meeting to plan upkeep for the gardens that enhance our grounds. They have also finalized the Garden Education Programs to help you with your own gardening endeavors.

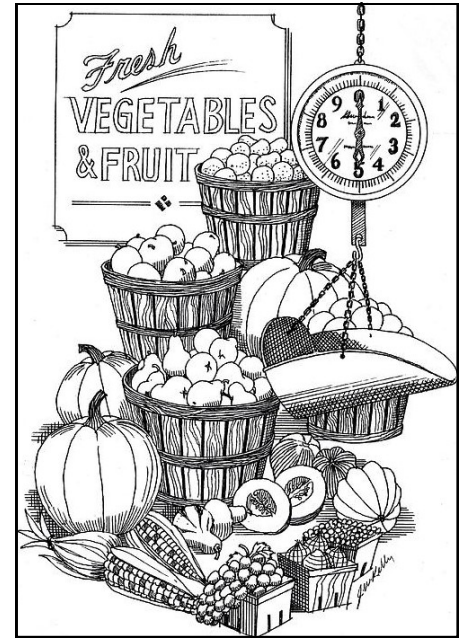
Volunteers who wish to assist with garden upkeep are welcome. Volunteers can choose to help with occasional group work days or to work with a master gardener to maintain one of the individual gardens. Please contact the museum if you would like to volunteer.

Garden education programs are taught by the Jefferson County Master Gardeners who give their time to the museum by teaching and maintaining the gardens. Programs are for gardeners of all abilities and free to attend.

April 6: Propagation Methods

May 18: Eating Local: Farmer's Markets

We invite you to join us in the gardens and in the classroom this year!



☞ 59th Annual Mary Hoard Art Show ☞

Co-sponsored by the Hoard Historical Museum and NASCO

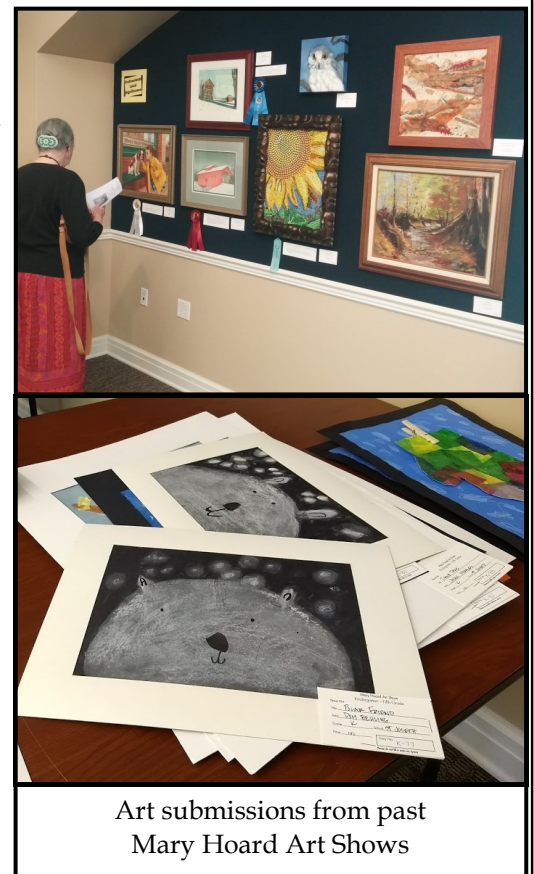
Part One Opening Reception - Wednesday, April 3, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Kindergarten – 8th Grade

Part Two Opening Reception - Sunday, April 28, 1 - 3 p.m.
High School – Adult

Fort Atkinson Historical Society members are invited to come at 12:30 p.m. to admire and purchase art a half-hour before the public!

Each spring, the Hoard Historical Museum seemingly overnight becomes the best art gallery in town. The Mary Show Art Show is in its 59th year and we are proud to continue the tradition of celebrating local artists started by Mary Hoard, Bob Hase, and many others.

The art show is presented in two sections: Part One features the artwork of Fort Atkinson area public, private, and homeschoolers in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Part Two features High School students from Fort Atkinson and adult artists that live, work, or take classes in from Fort Atkinson and Jefferson County. Information and registration forms are in the Museum office or on our website, www.hoardmuseum.org.



Hoard HISTORICAL MUSEUM
FORT ATKINSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NATIONAL DAIRY SHRINE MUSEUM

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Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

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Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum:

- February 15 ♦ *Howie Weiss: Fort Atkinson's Own MVP* Temporary Exhibit Opening for Members, 5 - 7 p.m. Opens to the Public on Saturday!
- February 23: ♦ Quilt Collectors Show 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Quilt Talk "Treasures from the Vault" Melissa Wraalstad from the Wisconsin Quilt and Fiber Arts Museum, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- February 27 ♦ Fort Atkinson Historical Society's Annual Meeting, 5:30 - 8 p.m.
- March 1: ♦ *Dr. Seuss Day Morning* @ the Museum preschool program, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- March 13: ♦ *The Bark River Chronicles*, Hoard Historical Literary Society, 10-11:30 a.m.
- April 3: ♦ Mary Hoard Art Show Part 1 Opening, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Open through Saturday, April 13
- April 5: ♦ *Art Day Morning* @ the Museum preschool program, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- April 6: ♦ *Propagation Methods* Garden Education Program, 2 - 3:30 p.m.
- April 28: ♦ Mary Hoard Art Show Part 2 Opening, 1 - 3 p.m.
Members-Only Benefit: 12:30-1 p.m.! Open through Saturday, May 11
- May 3: ♦ *Morning* @ the Museum preschool program, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
- May 4: ♦ 1841 Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m. - noon

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