

Lucien Caswell reminisces about the early days of Fort Atkinson

As we work through our archive inventory projects, we have the opportunity to comb through our files to discover the gems that have been stored for future generations. From the Caswell Family File we discovered this typed letter from Lucien Caswell to Henry E. Southwell. Southwell arrived in Fort Atkinson in 1855, was a merchant and lumberman and married Celeste Foster, the daughter of Dwight and Almira. Caswell appears to be continuing a conversation about Fort Atkinson's history and reminiscing with one of the few people who was still able to discuss their shared past. Reading his letter, I feel a kinship with him and his feelings about our community, as well as understanding his sense of loss for those who are no longer with him to share his memories.

-Dana Bertelsen, Assistant Director

A note about formatting: I have transcribed the letter as it was written. The phrasing and grammar are Caswell's.

Fort Atkinson, Wis., May 14th 1914

Dear Mr Southwell

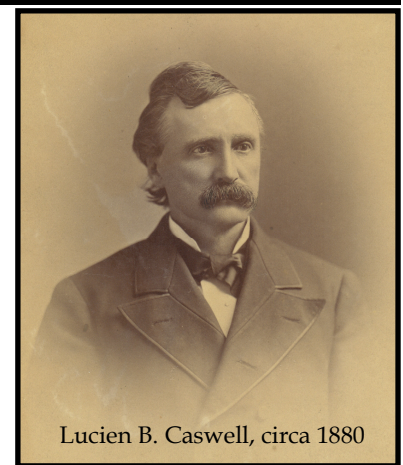
I receive your recent good letter in reference to the early days of our little, but awfully nice city. I have read that letter over many times as there is something in it that makes me wish so much that there were more of our old friends alive who worked with you and me to make our town what it is. We had no natural advantages that towered above other villages, and what we have, we have earned by hard work. You give me too much credit, for there were others who gave their all, to help build us up, and to make this a home suitable to live in and bring up a family. But where are they now? All or nearly all are gone. I have scarcely one left with whom I can confer, or talk over the old times. They have passed away. And I hope ever so much you could come, so I could see one at least, that could sympathise with me in our struggles to keep us from following in the wake of Hebron, Aztalan, Cold Spring and some of the other little places, that perished for the want of someone to push and keep the wheels of activity in motion.

I like your suggestion that the history of Fort Atkinson should be written up and preserved in the new library building when erected. There is absolutely no history of it now kept in any public place. The paper contributed by Mrs Southwell¹ I think from 1874, contains more historical facts, than all

other papers written on the subject. It is now authority, and about the only history we have. I would most cheerfully contribute anything I could if there were opportunity. I remember quite a good many facts, that I learned before I moved

here. My first visit was in 1840. The most of the old stockade was standing then. I was here next in November 1842, when Mr Foster ferried my people over the river on our way to Aztalan, through a channel he had cut through the quite thin ice, while boy like, I walked over on the ice. I passed through here very often after that, as my sister Mrs Rickard lived at Aztalan, and I kept the run of the Fort quite well. There are but few people here now that know or have any idea how much they owe to the Foster family. Only think of it; Mrs Foster never saw a white woman from the time she came here the 10th of November until in February following, when the Alvin and Ed Foster women came. I can understand and appreciate the situation, for my people came in May thirtyseven, and for many months

(Continue on page 4)



Lucien B. Caswell, circa 1880

1. Celeste, the daughter of Dwight and Almira Foster, was one of the first to arrive in the area in 1836. Her address is in the 1879 *History of Jefferson County*.

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

2016 FAHS Board of Directors

Deilee Calvert-Minor, President
 Bob Cheek, Vice President
 Loren Gray, Treasurer
 Bonnie Geyer, Secretary

Elected Board Members

Deilee Calvert-Minor
 Bob Cheek
 Bonnie Geyer
 Karen Gómez
 Loren Gray
 Sue Johnson
 Denice Jones
 Ron Langellier
 Gerald McGowan
 John Molinaro
 Joel Winn

Standing Members

Jude Hartwick, City Council Rep.
 Steve Larson, Nat'l Dairy Shrine Rep.
 Merrilee Lee, Museum Director
 Matt Trebatoski, City Manager

Emeritus Member

Milo Jones

Museum Staff Members

Merrilee Lee, Museum Director
 Dana Bertelsen, Assistant Director
 Tammy Doellstedt, Volunteer Coordinator
 Linda Ager & Beverly Dahl, Operations Assistants
 Greg Misfeldt, Maintenance



Merrilee's Musings

By Merrilee Lee, Museum Director



We frequently receive requests from researchers on a variety of topics: house research, genealogy, business history, commercial building history, photo requests, etc. Each time we work to answer their request, but recently, we received one that reminded me of why we do what we do. A researcher emailed asking for a copy of an obituary for two of her ancestors who passed away in 1896. The obituary was quickly found in our bound volumes of the Jefferson County Union (at that time, not yet a daily paper) and I emailed an image to the researcher. Her ancestors, a husband and wife, had passed away within a day of each other and the family held a double funeral. The last line of the obituary read, "It was a touching sight when the long procession passed along Main Street, the two hearses going side by side, and bearing husband and wife to their last earthly resting place." (Krueger, October 2, 1896)

The researcher then emailed me a very sweet thank you response. She wrote, "I know very little about the Kreger/Krueger side of my family. Ancestry.com has been helpful in finding my relatives but this obituary changes them from a statistic on a census report to a real person." The last part of her sentence stood out to me. At a history museum, how often have we read lists of names, whether on a census, a city directory, a military service report, or a graduation list, and "forgot" that those names stand for a person? A person who was real and had the same range of emotions as you and I? Someone who loved family and friends, who had a birthday, a favorite color, and who had a story worth preserving. To badly paraphrase a Charlton Heston sci-fi movie, "Statistics are people!"

So here's to our **continued** work in preserving the stories of everyday people, whether they lived 10,000 years ago or 10 years ago. Thank you for your on-going support of our work. And if you have any research questions, just ask. We love to research and find out more about OUR history!

Merrilee

Congratulations to our newly elected 2016 Board Officers: Deilee Calvert-Minor, President; Bob Cheek, Vice President; Loren Gray, Treasurer; Bonnie Geyer, Secretary. Welcome to our new board member Denice Jones!

Correction to Winter, 2016 newsletter: We published that the 1st Community Art Show, later named the Mary Hoard Art Show, was in 1960. We were mistaken. It was in 1961. This is what happens when historians do math. We subtracted when we should have checked primary resources!

Historical Society Bylaws Updates

Last fall, the Fort Atkinson Historical Society Board voted to update the bylaws that govern the Historical Society. The bylaws were last changed in 2008. As a good practice, bylaws should be routinely examined and updated as needed. The updated bylaws now include the following changes:

The official purpose and registered title of the organization was added. The purpose of the Historical Society, according to the bylaws, is “to tell the unique story of Fort Atkinson, Jefferson County, and Wisconsin to local, regional, national and international audiences,” as well as to operate the Hoard Historical Museum and to “make educational programming and collections accessible through traditional and contemporary methods.”

The annual meeting is to be held once a year rather than on a specific date as had been listed previously in the bylaws. Also, the annual meeting invitation does not need to be mailed out via regular mail, which also had been specified in the bylaws. (*Don't worry, we will still be mailing invitations to all members.*) The annual meeting will now include, but not be limited to, the reading of the minutes from the previous annual meeting, treasurer's report and election of new board members.

The board now has the ability to suspend or expel a Historical Society member for “conduct unbecoming a Member.”

The board directors will now serve three-year terms rather than the two-year terms directors had been serving. The maximum number of consecutive terms remains unchanged at three terms.

Directors may be removed from the board with a two-thirds vote of the directors.

An indemnification clause was added for directors, officers, and employees of the Society.

A job description for the Museum Director, a City of Fort Atkinson employee, was added. The Museum Director is responsible for carrying out the vision and goals of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society, preserving the collections, promoting the educational programming of the Hoard Historical Museum, and is in charge of hiring and the day-to-day supervision of Fort Atkinson Historical Society personnel.

If you wish to read the full updated bylaws, please contact Merrilee.

Volunteer Spotlight

In April of 2015, the Museum's archive volunteers started the months-long process of re-inventorying the archival files about local families. Through this process, the Museum's updated list of family files now includes more than 465 family names. Each file contains a more detailed list of the file's contents, which may include letters, genealogies, newspaper clippings, personal documents, and official documents. This information will be useful when answering research questions and studying local history.

Volunteers worked in three-hour shifts and documented the contents of each file. This was a slow and meticulous process, but our volunteers were always enthusiastic and quick to report their findings to Museum staff. The first round of documentation was completed in late March 2016. This is an ongoing process and we continue to make smaller additions. *Thank you* to all of the archive volunteers who worked to complete this process!

If you are interested in volunteering at the Museum, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Tammy Doellstedt, by calling (920) 563-7769 or e-mail tammy@hoardmuseum.org.



Nikki Knudsen and Priscilla Heussner work together on the family file project in Knox Library.

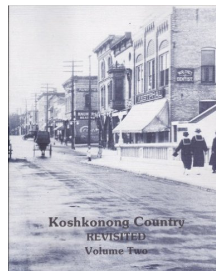
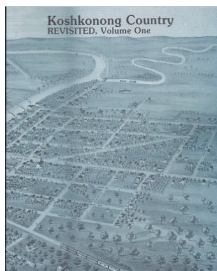
Mr Foster at Fort Atkinson on the East, and Janes, of Janesville on the south were our nearest neighbors, and my mother did not see a white woman for many, many months, we settled in Rock Co, at the foot of the lake. And why should we have done this, while there were such excellent lands near Milwaukee, Racine and Chicago, that we passed through in coming out to Rock River? I suppose it was for us to make the advance and open up the country, so others would be encouraged to come.

While we at Fort Atkinson, have succeeded well, in building up a little almost model city, and a fairly good place to live, for ordinary people, it is getting pretty dull and lonesome business for me, left alone as I am, for companionship, as my co workers are practically gone. I am now the only one living, I think, that was in Rock or Jefferson counties, May 20th 1837, the day I settled at the foot of Lake Koshkonong. All my old friends in Rock county have passed on. I have now to console and comfort me, my own folks, and good health, which I find to be most valuable at this time of life.

L.B. Caswell

Who was Lucien B. Caswell??

Lucien Bonaparte Caswell was born in 1827 in Vermont. His family moved to Jefferson County when he was 10 years old and settled along Lake Koshkonong. He attended Milton Academy and Beloit College and was admitted to the bar in 1851. He was a civil servant at all levels: he served on the school board for 65 years, in the Wisconsin Assembly and in the United States House of Representatives. Locally, he founded the Bank of Koshkonong and the First National Bank (which is now Premier Bank) in Fort Atkinson and played a large role in bringing the railroad to Fort Atkinson, which brought Northwest Manufacturing and other industries to the community. Lucien Caswell died in 1919 at the age of 92.



To learn more about our city's earliest inhabitants, stop by the Knox Archive or purchase *Koshkonong Country* in the Museum Gift Shop.

National Volunteer Week

**Celebrate
Service**

National Volunteer Week
April 10-16, 2016

This year's National Volunteer Week is from April 10-16. The first National Volunteer Week was declared by President Richard Nixon in 1974 with Proclamation 4288. The week focuses on inspiring, recognizing, and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities.

At the Hoard Museum we are celebrating our volunteers from April 10–30 with balloons, flowers, and a few extra goodies in the kitchen!

*Thank you to all of our
volunteers!*

Member Perk!

Come early to enjoy the 56th Annual Mary Hoard Art Show: Part 2 as a perk of your membership supporting the Hoard Historical Museum! Beginning at noon (a full hour early), the Museum's front and back doors (off Foster Street) will be open to members. Art will also be for sale beginning at noon. The non-member public will be able to enter the show at 1 p.m.



Watercolor by Mary Hoard, 1960.

Fort Atkinson designated a Bird City



Don't miss Fort Atkinson's Bird City celebration on Saturday, May 7, 2016. The Friends of Rose Lake and Hoard Historical Museum will have activities throughout the day for all ages. Events will be held at Dorothy Carnes Park and the Hoard Historical Museum.

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's Bird City Program designates cities that are able to prove that they care for birds. The requirements include maintaining habitats, eliminating hazards (free-roaming cats fall here), and ongoing bird education. Through the hard work of the efforts of interested citizens Yoyi Steele and Daniel Schneider, and with the cooperation of the City Council, Fort Atkinson is now a Bird City. There are more than 89 such cities in Wisconsin.

In early May, people throughout the Western hemisphere work to increase interest in birds through bird walks, programs, and festivals. Dick Wanie explained, "Locally, this is the time of year the Neotropicals, the species of bird that winters in tropical areas but moves into northern latitudes to nest, will be migrating through our area. Many residents look forward to seeing rose-breasted grosbeaks at their sunflower seed feeders, hearing the Baltimore orioles singing, 'Here, here, come here dear,' and marveling at the little fellow, the ruby-throated hummingbird, darting around the flower garden."

This year is also the centennial of the signing of the International Bird Treaty. Before the treaty, birds were unprotected and the market was unregulated; countless birds were taken to market in the late 1900s for food and feathers. Bird numbers plummeted as feathers adorned ladies hats and restaurants served wild birds. Passenger pigeons, the most numerous bird in North America, became extinct by these actions and destruction of habitat. The last passenger pigeon died in a zoo in 1914. President Woodrow Wilson signed the International Bird Treaty with Great Britain in 1916, and thus began modern wildlife hunting laws and conservation.

Activities on May 7:

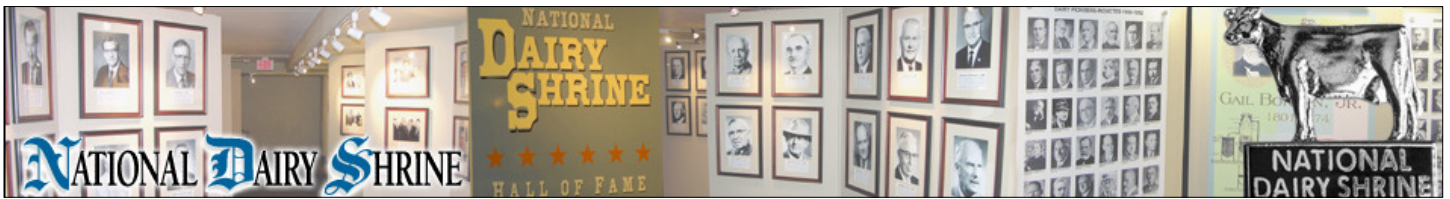
The Friends of Rose Lake, in conjunction with the Hoard Historical Museum, will offer a number of birding opportunities for area families. Don't let the day pass you by!

The "Big Sit" starting at daybreak— Join bird enthusiasts throughout the day to spot as many birds as possible. The count begins at daybreak at the overlook located in Dorothy Carnes Park. Bring the whole family, and binoculars. New to birding? Stop by and learn a few things. A representative of the Friends of Rose Lake will be present all day and have a spotting scope and binoculars for you to use. Dorothy Carnes Park is a few miles west of Fort Atkinson on Hwy 12 on Radloff Lane. It is well marked!

Birds on the Loose! 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. — At the Hoard Historical Museum you can talk with Friends of Rose Lake representative Dick Wanie while you look at and handle stuffed local species of birds. Be sure to check out the Bird Room in the Museum to see more than 500 mounted birds, including a sandhill crane, great-blue heron, and local neotropical birds. Tom Belzer will present on Fort Atkinson birding areas and lead a short bird walk on the museum grounds, and, if the weather is nice, to the wetland of Haumerson's Pond to identify common birds.



The Hoard Historical Museum bird exhibits include both rare and common bird species.



The History of June Dairy Month

Written by Dr. David Selner, Executive Director of the National Dairy Shrine

June Dairy Month, an annual tradition developed to celebrate the dairy industry and its many contributions to our society, originated in 1937. During its first two years, 1937 and 1938, it was called National Milk Month and ran from June 10 to July 10.

Originally supported by the National Dairy Council (NDC), June Dairy Month was established to help stabilize dairy demand during periods of peak production. To assist in that effort, NDC provided materials to promote the 6,300 stores participating at that time.

"June Dairy Month" became the official title of the promotion in 1939 and focused on greater use of dairy products. Campaign material, prepared by NDC, were offered to producers, processors and dairy product distributors. June Dairy Month was initially funded by a one-cent-per-pound butterfat assessment paid by dairy producers.

During the war years less emphasis was placed on promotion and more on surviving the war. The retailers helped customers receive an adequate supply of dairy products and provided information to help use them properly. After the war, efforts focused on resuming dairy product usage and regaining 'lost' butter sales. By 1950, retailers, producers, and processors all worked together to promote June Dairy Month.

In 1955, the ADA (American Dairy Association) became the national leader for June Dairy Month campaigns. The emphasis changed to sales promotion programs for dairy products. Advertising and merchandising programs were added to the already-effective public relations program. The June promotion became a month-by-month merchandising event in which one or more foods made from milk were highlighted nationwide on a monthly basis. This advertising was visible evidence of dairy farmers' dollars at work.

June Dairy Month has continued to evolve over the years. Often entire communities across the country, both rural and urban, have embraced the campaign and have become involved in many ways. Some areas celebrate with dairy food demonstrations, others with dairy princesses, some with parades or cow milking contests. Several businesses offer free milk or ice cream to their customers. Others have dairy events featuring favorite sports teams or local celebrities.

In Fort Atkinson, the museum complex hosts a variety of fun and educational events to help promote the importance of the dairy industry for the city and its rural dairy neighbors. The cooperation between farmers and other community members is really the basis of what June Dairy Month is all about – celebrating and using a wonderful product.



May is Preservation Month

On Saturday, May 21, the Hoard Historical Museum and the Fort Atkinson Historic Preservation Commission are hosting a **FREE** conference at the Museum from 9 a.m. - Noon. Jen Davel, Preservation Architect for the Wisconsin Historical Society, will present "Understanding Tax Credits for Historic Buildings," and David Desimone, Director of the Black Point Estate in Lake Geneva, will present "Black Point Estate: A Preservation Story." There will also be a discussion on the local landmark process in Fort Atkinson. For more information, visit the Fort Atkinson Historic Preservation Commission's website at www.fortpreserves.org.

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

Dairy Day at the "Moo"seum



On Saturday, June 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Museum is hosting our second annual Dairy Day at the "Moo"seum. All seven milking breeds will be back for the Cow Parade on the Museum lawn at 1 p.m. Popular events from last year, including dairy trivia for young and old, youth games, and delicious dairy samples, will be back this year.

New to the 2016 Dairy Day will be a book signing with Patty Meads-Hanson, the author of the children's book *Everyone Loves Blossom*, written about the world's tallest cow. John Klett, the man behind "Hoard's Dairyman Farm" diorama in the Dairy Shrine, is bringing an 8- x 20-foot diorama featuring the changes in farming through the decades.

This year, the Museum will host a Dairy Dessert Cook-off. The contest will be divided into Youth (18 and under) and Adult entries. Desserts must include two or more dairy products. To participate, bring your dessert and registration information to the Museum at 11 a.m. on Dairy Day. Entries will be scrutinized by local celebrity judges and prizes will be given for each category. Rules and registration forms will be available on May 1 on our website, www.hoardmuseum.org.

Special Member Perk: Come meet the cows as they arrive and settle in at 10 a.m.!

37th Annual Ice Cream Social

Mark your calendars for 1-3 p.m. on Monday, July 4 for our annual ice cream social! As in years past, we will have cookies, ice cream and many, many toppings for you to layer on your ice cream. There will be music, patriotic readings, fun and historic games and activities, and opening of the temporary exhibit "Black Hawk War Presidents: Lincoln, Taylor, Davis." Doors open at 1 p.m.!



2016 Garden Education

The first four garden education programs of this year are all about garden do's and don'ts. On May 14, get tips on how to grow herbs and vegetables to use in your favorite dishes. The program is at 2 p.m.

Our well-attended January and March programs focused on Square Foot Gardening and Common Mistakes in Planning and Planting. Plan to attend this free program presented by some of the Museum's Jefferson County Master Gardener Volunteers!

Foster House Open for Tours!

Built in 1841, the Foster House was the first frame house constructed in Jefferson County. Dwight and Almira Foster were the first permanent non-Indian settlers in Fort Atkinson, arriving in November 1836 with their young daughter, Celeste. After four years of living in a log cabin on the banks of the Rock River, the Fosters moved into their new two-story, five-room home, with window glass shipped from New York via the Erie Canal.

Step inside the Foster House to see how 19th century Fort Atkinson residents lived, and learn about how our community grew. A friendly guide will be available to answer questions and show visitors around the first and second floor of the house.

In 1969, Major Arthur Langholff donated the house to the Fort Atkinson Historical Society and it was moved to its current location on Foster Street, adjacent to the Hoard Historical Museum complex. After a two-year restoration process, the Foster House re-opened to the public in 1971.



The Foster House will be open the first Saturday of the month from May – September from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Free!



401 Whitewater Avenue
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Events at the Museum:

- April 24: Mary Hoard Art Show Part 2 Opening, 1-4 p.m. *Members-Only Opening at Noon!*
- May 7: Mary Hoard Art Show Part 2 Closes at 2 p.m.
Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Bird City Celebration, 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- May 11: 4th Grade Oral History Celebration, 5:30-7 p.m.
- May 14: Garden Education, *Planting your Kitchen Garden*, 2 p.m.
- May 21: Preservation Conference, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Concert on the Lawn featuring *The BriarPickers*, 3 p.m.
- May 27: School Groups at the Foster House in coordination with Rendezvous Days, all day
- June 4: Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Fort Atkinson dedication as a Peony City, 2 p.m.
- June 11: Dairy Day at the "Moo"seum 11 a.m.-2 p.m. *Member perk! Arrive at 10 a.m. for a sneak peek!*
- July 2: Foster House Open for Tours, 10 a.m.- 12 p.m.
- July 4: 37th Annual Ice Cream Social, 1 - 3 p.m.
- August 6: Foster House Open for Tours, 10 - 12 p.m.