

Fort Atkinson and the National Women's Suffrage Movement

By Jennifer Kalvaitis, public historian and Hoard Historical Museum volunteer

In an election year, politics are on everyone's mind. Throughout the nation people are having conversations about who is voting, why, and poll accessibility. The historical roots of these conversations started with the formation of our country and have not stopped. 2020 is also a landmark year as it is the 100th anniversary of extending the ballot to double the number of potential voters. The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1920 and gave women the right to vote. While the 19th Amendment was a huge advancement, it was not perfect. Many women of color and women who spoke English as a second language still did not have access to the polls until additional legislation was passed—including the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. However, without the 19th Amendment, neither of these acts would have impacted the rights of women.

Wisconsin women were active for many years in asking for the right to vote. Most histories of the women's suffrage movement begin with the Seneca Falls Convention, held in upstate New York in 1848. This meeting, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, was attended by many women, including one who would come to call Fort Atkinson her home. An article in the *Milwaukee Journal* featured Louise Smith in 1920 as one of the only two living attendees of the Seneca Falls Convention at the age of 84. In 1920, Smith recalled, "A girl friend and I attended it and we became so interested and enthusiastic by all of the wonderful speeches and talks that we came home, cut up our dresses and made them into the 'bloomer' costume like those worn by many of the suffragists of the period."¹ Smith lived in Fort Atkinson for a number of decades. She passed away in 1925, but unlike most of the women who attended the Seneca Falls Convention, she saw women gain equal access to the voting booth.

Fort Atkinson was also home to what is believed to be the longest published suffrage and temperance newspaper in the country. Emma Brown and her brother Thurlow were in the newspaper business in upstate New York and founded a similar newspaper after they moved to Fort Atkinson. They established *The Wisconsin Chief* in 1857 to promote human freedom, and printed articles about suffrage, moral reform, abolition, temperance, prison reform and more. Thurlow died only a few years after the move but Emma continued to print that paper until just before her death in 1889.



Above:
Louise Smith
in the 1920s



Left:
Emma Brown,
editor of the
Wisconsin Chief,
in the 1880s

Both images are from
the Hoard Museum
Collection.

¹ "Wisconsin woman at first suffrage rally," *Milwaukee Journal*, December 5, 1920.

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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



In 2020, the Museum is focusing on women's suffrage. Suffrage and the path to the 19th Amendment is a fascinating topic. For many, the mention of suffrage brings to mind the image of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, or Mrs. Banks from *Mary Poppins*. To me, it is the type of political process that the constitutional framers desired: part grassroots movement, part political procedure that utilized the political system already in place. At its heart it's a truly all-American process. I was fortunate that both of my grandmothers discussed with me their grandmothers' and mothers' reactions to receiving the right to vote. From asking their husbands how they should vote to voting in every election that they could, my great-grandmothers' reactions to voting mirrored other women's reactions at the time. I think of their stories and remember the process we as a country went through regarding suffrage while I'm standing in the Municipal Building waiting to cast my ballot.

This year, I'm looking forward to learning more stories about suffrage: the process, the reaction, and the aftermath. I hope you, too, are looking forward to discovering more this year about this decades-long process!

Merrilee

Thanks to all who renewed your annual membership to the Fort Atkinson Historical Society and Hoard Historical Museum. Your continued support helps to make the Hoard Museum the best museum in town!

Do you have an IRA from which you must take a required minimum distribution (RMD) and not certain what to do with the funds? Choose us! The Hoard Historical Museum and the Fort Atkinson Historical Society are a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contact the Museum for more information.

Recent Events at the Museum

❧ Holiday Open House ❧

On Saturday, Dec. 14, 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 and decorate gingerbread houses or sugar cookies. The day coincided with the announcement of the winners of our annual Gingerbread House Contest. This year, 11 gingerbread creations were entered into four separate categories.

Congratulations to our winners!

Original Design – Made with a Kit

1. “Santa’s Workshop” Bella, Sophie, and Liz Bowie
2. “Christmas at the Campground” Vicky Daniels
3. “Christmas Chalet” Megan Lundy

Original Design – Made from Scratch

1. “Jesus is Born” Ruth, Julia, and Julie Cooper
2. “Christmas Train” Alli Zempel and Cana Vorpahl
3. “The Barn” Anya, Joyeux, and Julie Cooper

Building Replica Design – Made from Scratch

1. tie “Little House in the Big Woods” Moriah Cooper
“Man and Dog at Tower” Mike Helmick

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 was close, but went to “Santa’s Workshop” by Bella, Sophie, and Liz Bowie. 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.

Thank you to our Business Partners for sponsoring the Holiday Open House: Blodgett Garden Center; Daley Painting and Decorating; Day Insurance; Fireside Dinner Theatre; Fort HealthCare; Jones Dairy Farm; Regina’s Therapeutic Massage; Hometown Pharmacy; PremierBank; W&A Distribution; and W.D. Hoard and Sons.

❧ Winter Updates to the Museum ❧

For the first three weeks of January, the Museum was closed to visitors to allow staff to work on larger and messier projects. This year, our new maintenance man, Cody, spruced up the Museum with a few coats of paint. Cody painted the upstairs playroom in the Hoard House yellow and walls in the Gift Shop and Mary Hoard Gallery on the first floor of the Museum blue. Staff also worked on upcoming event plans, collections and archive projects, updated exhibits and displays, and finished 2019 projects. Stop in to see the changes!

Right: Cody touching up the new paint outside of the Museum Office

Left: Collections Manager Alisha cataloging and numbering part of a recent acquisition.



Top: Moriah Cooper’s “Little House in the Big Woods”

Lower Right: Shirley Brown playing holiday music

Left: A gingerbread house crafted at the Holiday Open House



Wisconsin has much to celebrate in 2019 and 2020 for the suffrage centennial anniversary. While Wisconsin did not extend many voting rights to women prior to 1920 (as numerous other states had) Wisconsin raced to be the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment. On June 10, 1919, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan all wanted to be the first state to approve the federal amendment. Wisconsin ended up being the second state to vote on the amendment on that day, but Wisconsin did not let that deter them from their desire to be first. They selected former State Senator David James, a 76-year-old man to race to Washington, D.C., to be the first state to file our paperwork with the federal government. James recalled:

*We packed into a taxi and arrived at no time at the offices of the Secretary of State, where my papers were safely filed, and I received a signed statement that Wisconsin was the first... I returned to the Secretary of State's just in time for the entrance of the messenger from Illinois. He walked up and slapped his papers down on the table. 'I've brought papers to show Illinois was first,' he said, and was interrupted by our peals of laughter.'*²

Wisconsin also learned later that Illinois voted on the wrong language and therefore the state had to re-validate their vote on the 19th Amendment. Wisconsin women, though, still had to wait for 36 states to ratify the Amendment before they had the ability to cast their ballots in every election. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became that 36th state. The 19th Amendment went into effect on August 26, 1920, which is now celebrated as "Women's Equality Day."

²"How Wisconsin Beat All Other States on Suffrage," *Milwaukee Journal*, June 16, 1919.

Volunteer Spotlight

This year, National Volunteer Week is April 19-25, but we like to stretch out our celebration! As a way to show our appreciation, we welcome our volunteers to stop in for snacks anytime from April 7-30. Please check your folders for a certificate for a 20% discount in the Museum Gift Shop. As always, be sure to register for upcoming Volunteer Enrichment Programs and field trips posted in the Volunteer Office!



National Volunteer week was established by Presidential Proclamation 4288 in 1974 and gives the Museum an opportunity to celebrate our more than 225 volunteers. Hoard Museum volunteers greet our visitors who come from across the street and across the globe, assist us in the office, conduct research, help us inventory and reorganize our collections and archives, bake hundreds of cookies, maintain our gardens, and help with events ranging from the Mary Hoard Art Show to our annual 4th of July Ice Cream Social.

Join the Museum's Gardening Team in 2020

The Hoard Historical Museum is home to several beautiful gardens that enhance our grounds. Five main gardens—the Entrance Garden, Herb Garden, Fence Garden, Rain Garden, and the Roger F. and Sandra L. Anderson Intersectional Peony Garden—can make the museum a showplace in summer. The gardens are maintained by a dedicated group of Jefferson County Master Gardeners and Museum garden volunteers.



New garden volunteers are always welcome to help. Would you like to join the gardening team? The amount of time you give is up to you. For more information, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Tammy Doellstedt, at (920) 563-7769 or email tammyd@hoardmuseum.org.

Fort Atkinson Historical Society Annual Meeting

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

Each winter, the Fort Atkinson Historical Society hosts an annual meeting to share with its members the state of the Society and Hoard Historical Museum and to install new board members. After the Society's business is concluded UW-Whitewater History professor Dr. Kimberly Nath will give a brief history of women's suffrage and the passage of the 19th Amendment.

This year, the Museum is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment which gave American women the right to vote.

This year's meeting is catered by Bon Ton of Jefferson with desserts from Paddy Coughlin's Irish Pub. **Tickets are \$30 per person, and you must call the Museum to R.S.V.P. by Tuesday, February 18.**

All members are welcome to attend the Annual Business Meeting and Presentation at no cost, but must arrive after dinner at 6:45 p.m.



Theodora Youmans of Waukesha, president of the Wisconsin Women's Suffrage Association, in 1913.

The Jefferson County Union

VOLUME XLIX.

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NUMBER 4

The Suffrage debate given by the high school juniors between boys and girls was a big success. This was the young people's first experience along such lines but they carried on the work like old debaters. Needless to say the judges decided in favor of the girls. Of course one side must lose in a debate. So boys—why be angry over your defeat? Remember there is "Victory in Defeat". Perhaps your next question will be one that will give you a fairer chance to win. Suffrage has so many points for the affirmative that working up the negative is a decided task and almost sure of being defeated.

Jefferson County Union's "Neighborhood News" from Rome, WI, printed on February 15, 1918.

From the Archives

The Hoard Historical Museum has a large Archive that houses the area's local history. Part of this collection includes bound volumes of nearly every year of the Jefferson County Union from the 1890s to 2018. Needless to say, researchers and genealogists frequently use these papers.

Throughout 2020, the Hoard Museum will feature the history of women's suffrage at the local, state, and national levels. In preparation for this goal, our Archive volunteers have been scouring the paper for mentions and local notices about women's suffrage. One researcher found this interesting note in the February 15, 1918, edition of the Jefferson County Union. This note describes a junior class debate about women's suffrage, and the writer appears to agree with the winners of the debate.

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ Trivia Contest Fundraiser ☛

Saturday, February 15, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

Teams of 5-8 \$60 for Museum members / \$80 for non-Museum members

There's still time to register for the Trivia Contest on Saturday, February 15! Trivia Categories include science, general knowledge, sports, hot topics, and of course, history. There will be four rounds of trivia with a bonus history round. Snacks will be available for purchase along with a cash bar featuring beer, wine, and soda.



The Hoard Museum does not charge general admission to visitors of the Museum. This fundraiser will help fund programming for all ages, local history displays, and our annual events including the Mary Hoard Art Show, Dairy Day at the MOOseum, 4th of July Ice Cream Social, and Holiday Open House.

Call the Museum Office to register your team! Must register before the event.

☞ 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 teacher. Each month features a theme that focuses on a holiday, season, or Museum exhibit. Storytime is at 9 and 9:45 a.m. and crafts are available throughout the morning.



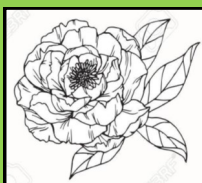
March 6 – Dr. Seuss Day April 3 – Celebrate Earth Day May 1 – Celebrate National Pet Week

☞ 2020 Garden Education Program ☛

The Master Gardeners of Jefferson County are will be back in 2020 to present on all aspects of gardens and their maintenance. There will be three garden education programs throughout the year for gardeners of all abilities and free to attend. We expect to have programs on Saturday, April 4; Saturday, June 6; and Saturday, November 21. There will also be a Peony Care Seminar in September.



Intersectional Peony Sale this Summer



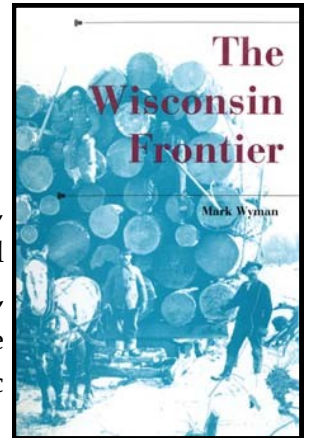
Roger Anderson developed two intersectional peony varieties, the Mary C. Hoard and W.D. Hoard. He named them after two well known residents and generously donated them to the museum to be sold as a benefit to the historical society. Museum members will be the first to be able to reserve their plants before the general public sale this summer. *Stay tuned!*

Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum

☞ 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 meets at the Museum every other month on the second Wednesday, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 13, and will discuss *The Wisconsin Frontier* by Mark Wyman. The book club is free to join, however, please contact the Hoard Historical Museum to sign up. Books are available in the Hoard Museum Gift Shop or available to check out at the Dwight Foster Public Library.



The formation of the Hoard Historical Literary Society was formed in 2019 by Museum volunteers Bonnie Geyer and Karen Gómez in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the Fort Atkinson Historical Society.

☞ 60th Annual Mary Hoard Art Show ☞

Co-sponsored by the Hoard Historical Museum and NASCO

Part One Opening Reception

Wednesday, April 1, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Kindergarten – 8th Grade

Part One Closes Saturday, April 11.

Part Two Opening Reception

Sunday, May 3, 1 - 3 p.m.

High School – Adult

High School Art Closes Wednesday, May 13

Adult Art Closes Saturday, May 16

Member Perk! Fort Atkinson Historical Society members may arrive at 12:30 p.m. to admire and purchase art before the public!



Mary C. Hoard in 1973
painted by Henriette Wyeth

Each spring, the Hoard Historical Museum seemingly overnight becomes the best art gallery in town. The Mary Hoard Art Show is in its 60th year. We are proud to continue the tradition started by Mary Hoard, Bob Hase, and many others in celebrating local artists. In honor of the 60th Anniversary, we will present a new annual award, the Robert Hase High School Artist Best in Show. This award will honor his years of service to the show and his lifelong career as an art teacher.

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 Fort Atkinson and Jefferson County. Information and registration forms are in the Museum office or at www.hoardmuseum.org.



Upcoming Events at the Hoard Museum:

- February 15: ♦ Trivia Contest Fundraiser, 6:30 - 9 p.m.
- February 27: ♦ Member Dinner of the Hoard Historical Museum and Fort Atkinson Historical Society, 5:30 – 8 p.m. *Call the Museum to reserve your spot!*
- March 6: ♦ Morning @ the Museum Pre-K Program, *Dr. Seuss Day*, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- April 1: ♦ Opening Reception of the Mary Hoard Art Show: Part 1 (K-8th Grade), 6-7:30 p.m. *Show Closes April 11!*
Rules and Registration at the Museum and on Museum website.
- April 3: ♦ Morning @ the Museum Pre-K Program, *Earth Day*, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- May 1: ♦ Morning @ the Museum Pre-K Program, *Nat'l Pet Week*, 8:30-10:30 a.m.
- May 3: ♦ Opening Reception of the Mary Hoard Art Show: Part 2 (High School-Adult), 1-3 p.m.
High School Show closes May 13, Adult Show closes May 16
Rules and registration at the Museum and on Museum website.

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