

MOTHERS' CLUBS

A POWERFUL FORCE BEHIND RURAL SCHOOLS By Arlo Paust

One room school houses were once on every country road—or so it seemed—in rural Mount Horeb. Many of the buildings still stand as familiar monuments to these important community centers, but are now homes. What most of us know far less about are the Mothers' Clubs that were so important to the working order of these schools.

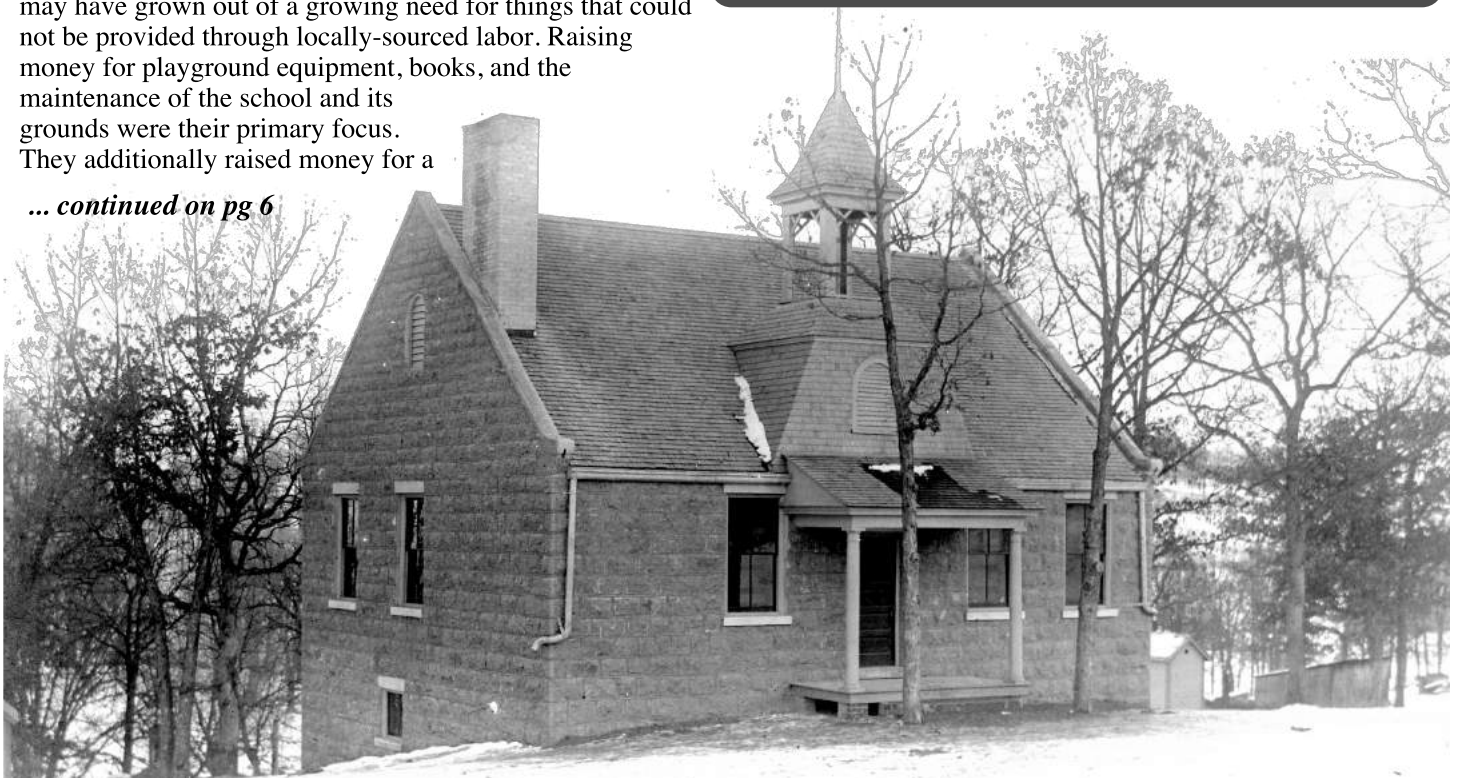
Mothers' Clubs seem to have grown out of a need to raise money for the comfort and wellbeing of the children attending school. The most complete information on these organizations in the Driftless Historium archives is from the Malone Mothers' Club of the Malone School on Hwy 92 between Mount Horeb and Mount Vernon. It was also, quite likely, the longest lasting Mothers' Club in the area.

Historically, women and mothers were accustomed to organizing for the good of local infrastructure, particularly with the Ladies' Aids and Kvindeforenings at the area churches. The exact origin and founding date of the Malone Mothers' Club is up for debate, but their formal organization may have grown out of a growing need for things that could not be provided through locally-sourced labor. Raising money for playground equipment, books, and the maintenance of the school and its grounds were their primary focus. They additionally raised money for a

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Malone Mothers Club, last day of school, May 1946.
Back row: Elaine Midthun (teacher), Maude Rindy, Helen Cocken holding Nyla, unidentified, Mrs. Corbin, Benunie Schwarz, Sena Lewis, Elsie Benedicts, Elsie Crimmins, Orpha Steinhauer.
Front row: Doris Fargo, unidentified, Margie Webber, Elsie Grinde, Lucille Zweifel, Sophie Johnson.



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LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTIES

By Jackie Sale, Mount Horeb Landmarks Foundation

Reflecting the mission of the Mount Horeb Landmarks Foundation, President Jackie Sale is contributing a series of articles about local properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since its inception, the main focus of the Landmarks Foundation, an all volunteer 501c3 non profit, has been the restoration and maintenance of the District #1 Old Schoolhouse (110 N 2nd St, Mt Horeb). But part of the organization's mission is to promote historic preservation. This second article is about the Herman and Anne Dahle home. Our previous issue featured the Opera House; future editions will include the Hoff Mall, the Sarah Dahle home, and the Academy Street school.



The Herman B. and Anne Marie Dahle House in its early days (above) and today (bottom); middle: Anne Marie and Herman, ca. 1885, 26 years prior to this home being built.

The grand Herman B. and Anne Marie Dahle House, with its two-story columns framing the front door and an eye catching round window above the large second-story bays, was built by a U.S. congressman whose family had long ties to the area, including Daleyville and Mount Vernon.

This home at 200 N. Second Street in Mount Horeb is one of 13 properties in the area and one of five in the Village with the honor to be named to the National Register of Historic Places. The Herman B. and Anne Marie Dahle House was added to the Register in 2003 for its architectural significance.

Designed by Madison architect James O. Gordon, it is an intact two and a half story Classical Revival home built in 1911, and it still appears, as it did 109 years ago, clad in narrow clapboard with frieze on the broad eaves. Inside, there are varnished oak floors, pocket doors, crown moldings, beamed ceilings, and a grand oak staircase.

Locally, the home has more than architectural significance. It was built for Herman B. Dahle and his wife Anne Marie, who, with the exception of a short stint in Washington, D.C., lived in the Mount Horeb area their entire lives and were active in the business and church communities. Herman Bjorn Dahle served in the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms as a Republican from 1899 to 1903. He was born in the Town of Perry in 1855 to Onon Dahle, a Norwegian immigrant, who ran a general store in Daleyville. Herman worked for his father in the store and then attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

After his marriage to Anne Marie Kittleson, also from the Town of Perry, he opened his own general store and mill in Mount Vernon. In 1887 they came to Mount Horeb

and opened the Dahle Department Store at the corner of Main and Second Street (now the home of Sunn Café and Bergey Jewelry). Herman was later joined in the business by his brothers Theodore and Henry. After Herman's unsuccessful reelection campaign, the Dahle Brothers General Store expanded greatly in 1905, erecting an addition to their store building that now houses four small businesses and bears the label: "The Dahle Bldg." In 1891 Herman, Onon and Tom Lingard incorporated the State Bank of Mount Horeb. Herman also served as postmaster, developed some creamery businesses and was active in the Lutheran Church.



Herman lived in the home for nine years, until he died in 1920 at age 65. Anne Marie lived here a total of 40 years, until 1951 when she died, aged 95. It continues to be a family home, and for some years it was the Arbor Rose Bed and Breakfast with hosts Don and Peggy Donaldson.

Editors Note: When the home was built, Herman and Ann Marie's three youngest daughters and a servant were living with them. At the time of Herman's death, the house was quieter, with just Anne Marie and their daughter Helen. By the 1930 census the home became much more lively with a total of 10 residents. Helen had moved out, but Anne Marie had invited not only her sister Elise to live with her, but also her daughter Agnes' family. Agnes had married the Norwegian Lutheran Reverend Joseph Green and together they raised six boys. Agnes remained here into old age. Later residents included jazz musician Richard Davis and WIBA broadcaster James Mader.



THE LIVING ROOM: AN EXPRESSION OF HOME



Left: One of four living room vignettes in the exhibit is this 1890s parlor. Its excessive ornamentation was a desirable attribute of the era's homes.



Right: The 1960s living room vignette features all good things from the decade, including fake fur flowers; wood paneling; a Peter, Paul, and Mary record; and a TV dinner tray.

We're excited to announce the opening of our newest special exhibit: The Living Room, An Expression of Home. This small-but-captivating exhibit explores the transition of the room we typically call the living room, and the cultural context in which those changes occurred, from the 1850s when Dane County was just being settled, through the 20th century, to today. To bring these ideas to life, the exhibit presents a series of vignettes using period-specific artifacts and images from families throughout the Mount Horeb Area. To our knowledge, this exhibit uses more objects from our own collections than any other special exhibit the Society has presented!

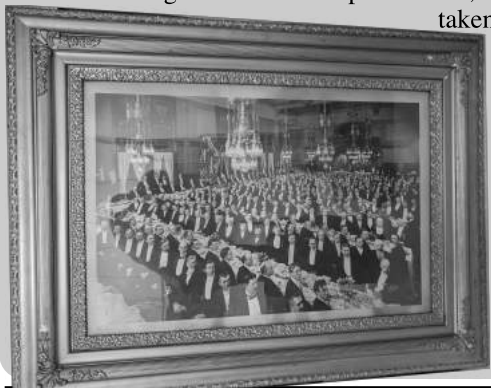
Like so many, the Driftless Historium is facing ever-changing public health guidance—and an understandable shortage of volunteer labor. This means that access to the museum and this new exhibit is limited. We hope you'll consider a self-guided tour by appointment. Remember that Members and their guests are free! (Learn more below.) Can't or don't feel comfortable visiting in person? We understand. Virtual tours and other potential avenues of bridging the COVID-19 gap are under consideration. The doors might be closed, but we're in here, protecting your history while history happens around us.

DAHLE DONATION

Coincidentally, the Driftless Historium has recently received a donation of objects once kept in the Herman B. and Anne Marie Dahle House, as featured on the previous page. The items included a massive gilded framed photograph of President McKinley and Wisconsin businessmen during McKinley's visit to Milwaukee in 1905 (pictured). We have located Herman Dahle among the men in this picture and, a month after it was

taken, McKinley came to visit Mount Horeb, via Dahle's invitation.

The remainder of the donation included a beautiful silver-plated coffee and tea set, family photos and documents, and a folding rocking chair.



TOURS! BY APPOINTMENT

Looking for a reduced-risk outing? The Driftless Historium is now Offering Tours by Appointment!

Ever had an ENTIRE museum to yourself? Book a self-guided tour by appointment. Starting at just \$25; Members and their guests FREE! Book your tour TODAY!

Each booking is private, with only museum staff and volunteer support on hand to assist visitors and supervise the collection and facility. Limited group sizes, required face coverings and increased cleaning protocol offer even more peace of mind. Behind-the-scenes peeks at collections storage and the archive included.

Thursday time slots are reserved for Members, with the general public encouraged to consider a Friday, Saturday or Sunday scheduled visit. To view available tour appointments, or to make your reservation, visit www.mthorebhistory.org and search "book your tour" or call 608-437-6486.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MEET WAYNE HEFTY

Wayne Hefty gets it done—and probably for about 57% less than you budgeted. Wayne has been an integral volunteer presence at the Driftless Historium for the past few years. He officially serves as a working member of the indispensable Building & Grounds Committee, and unofficially as Creative Problem Solver, Engineer, Carpenter and Prompt Responder to “Can you hang this?” inquiries—all of which, of course, are completely last-minute and accompanied by a dash of desperation.

Besides donating copious amounts of his time and talents, Wayne is also a financial supporter and repeat in-kind donor of materials and goods.

His contributions and craftsmanship can be found throughout the Driftless Historium—from custom-commissioned book shelves in the gift shop, to benches dotting the facility and offering visitor respite, to bathroom storage cabinets (that perfectly compliment the flooring), and the pandemic-prompted Walk-up Gallery walls and Plexiglas barriers (pictured above).

Most recently, he headed up the design and construction of the period room recreations in our newest special exhibit, “The Living Room.” His skill sets extend beyond handyman and donor. Wayne is a steady, quiet presence. His advice and perspectives are always methodical and logical. He is an invaluable organizational asset, and a pretty great human being!

Thank you, Wayne!—and, hey, while I have your attention, can you stop by later? I have this thing I need help with...

Write your own "job description" of what you do here at the Society.

Whatever needs to be done - plumbing, electricians, construction, repair, shopping for the best deals for building the exhibits.

How long have you volunteered for the Society?

15+ years, from when my wife, Lene, started the computerization of the museum records.

What is your favorite part of volunteering?

It keeps me young and active!

Who or what got you interested?

From Brian Bigler working with Lene, he found out what I could do. Then he requested my assistance with numerous projects.

Tell us about your family.

My grandparents started farming in the Town of Springdale in 1890: 160 acres for \$3500. I still own 75 acres of that original



purchase. When my wife Lene passed in 2016, I had more time to volunteer at the museum. I have three granddaughters, but none of them live around Mt. Horeb.

Tell us about your education and vocational background.

I attended the old elementary school in Verona and I graduated from Verona High School. I attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison. I was a member of the Air National Guard. I was on the Town Board

and the planning commission for the Town of Springdale. I started driving truck when I was 16, and I went back to driving truck for Paoli Clay in 2007 after 41 years at the local Caterpillar dealer.

Why is the Mount Horeb area the best place on earth?

The best place on earth is Mt. Horeb because only nice friendly people live in this beautiful Driftless Area of Wisconsin. Mt. Horeb is best because I have a great friendship with another museum volunteer.

MYSTERY FROM ACROSS THE POND

A Mr. Jackson, who now lives in Madrid, Spain, but was raised in England, recently sent us a curious enquiry. The house he grew up in, where he was born in 1951, has always had a plaque on its wall that reads: "Mount Horeb, 1859." Nobody



seems to know why, but he thought maybe we did. Do any of our readers know of a connection to a home located at 8 Weaver Road, Castle, Northwich, Cheshire, UK? It is possible that it is a reference to the biblical Mount Horeb, where our village also got its name, but we thought we'd slip this in here just in case it truly is a connection to our Mount Horeb.

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

By Arlo Paust

Here we are in another election year and it brings to mind the historical battles fought for the right to vote as a citizen of the United States of America. Exactly 100 years ago, most women were able to vote in a Presidential election for the first time, thanks to the 19th Amendment. Fifty years earlier, in 1870, suffrage was granted to men who were not white.* Less than one hundred years before then, the United States had declared its freedom from Great Britain. We are a young country.

The photo at right shows some local women campaigning for their right to vote back in 1916. The exact details of this picture are unknown, but from notes on the back we know that Olympia Lee "and friends" are in this photo at a camp at Lake Waubesa. Olympia was about 16, a Mount Horeb high school student, and a descendant of some of the first Norwegian families in the village. The women stand on a depot baggage wagon and appear to be dressed up, many in white (a color associated with the Suffrage movement), and wearing matching ribbons. The costumes may be



for a theatrical performance or a parade float and appear to represent different ages of women. They show their support for all women voting through the phonetically spelled "vimen," as if "women" was being said with a Norwegian or German emigrant accent. In the 1910s, Lake Waubesa was promoted as a "pleasant Sunday" or vacation spot. There were several different beaches and camps on its shores and 150 cottages, some of which could be rented for "week-end parties." Dances, tennis courts, boat rentals, and picnic facilities must have made it a wonderful place for an excursion. It looks like Olympia Lee (later Rue) had fun!

On a separate note, a newsletter reader informed us of a political advertisement once included in the November 1920 issue of *Kvinden og Hjemmet* (Women and Home), a popular Norwegian-American women's magazine. It was set in extra-large boldfaced type and ran in a triple-page spread, featuring the 1920 Republican presidential and vice-presidential candidates, Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge respectively, and signed by the Republican National Committee. At the time, Norwegian-Americans mostly aligned with that party, and this was the first election where women could partake.

FORDI:

Det har faaet Afsky for den skamløse Profittering, høie Priser, den forbryderiske Udsehed og de høie Skatter, som det er bleven paaagt i de syv Aar af demokratiske Styre.

FORDI:

Det ser hen til det republikanske Parti for at faa en Ende paa disse Forbandelser og gjenoprette Tilstande, som vil holde Fabrikkerne i fuld Gang, bringe Landets Farmere i Stand til at faa en rimelig Erstatning for deres Arbejde, sikre de amerikanske Arbeidere stadig Virksomhed til en god Løn og beskytte Forbrugere mod Udbytelse.

FORDI:

Det vil undgaa de Nykker og Faren, der følger med en svag og vaklende Enkeltmands-Regjering og er bestemt paa at gjenoprette den representative Regjering, som Konstitutionen bestemmer: En Regjering af Folket, for Folket og ved Folket, med fri Udøvelse af den konstitutionelle Frihed, Talefrihed, en fri Presse og fri Forsamlingsret.

FORDI:

Det modsætter sig bestemt fremmede Alliancer eller Forbund, der kan sende dets unge Sønner over de syv Have i Krig, ikke for at beskytte amerikanske Interesser, men for at tjene fremmede Maal, paa Befaling og under Ledelse af en Over-Regjering af fremmede Magter.

The ad, pictured at left, using the word *Fordi* (Because) as an attention grabbing thread, told of the disgust with the Woodrow Wilson administration and expressed several issues familiar to us today. They encouraged a change from "bad" to "good government," the elimination of "shameless profiteering, high price, criminal wastefulness, and high taxes," and promised to "keep factories in full operation, that will enable the farmers of the country to receive reasonable compensation for their work, secure the American worker steady work at a good wage and protect consumers against exploitation." They also wanted to "escape the whims and dangers that go with a weak and fickle one-man government and are determined to restore the representative government that the Constitution decrees: a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, with the free exercise of constitutional freedoms, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the freedom of assembly." They wanted "America to be as before, free, progressive, prosperous, with happiness and peace at home, but just, strong, and high-minded in its conduct with other countries." The ad concluded: "American voters, women as well as men, know what has to be done. They will respond readily to the call to do their duty as freeborn citizens, and they will cast their votes with the confident assurance that their will shall prevail."

The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, its staff, and volunteers do not endorse any political candidate or party, but we do encourage you to exercise your right of suffrage. VOTE!

*American Indians were not fully able to vote in every state until 1962. Yes—1962!

Mount Horeb Area Historical Society

continued from cover...

new radio in 1937. Schools felt the need to keep up with the latest comforts and their urban counterparts. Parents and school boards were determined to provide their students equal opportunity. The radio was particularly important in that it connected rural America to larger markets and education networks. Teachers utilized programming such as the University of Wisconsin's "School of the Air," broadcast by WHA, through which children could learn about topics such as art, literature, and music.

The Malone Mothers Club's first meeting records date to 1925, and they detail the many contributions made. That first year the women stitched a quilt that was raffled for \$34.70. This more than paid for some of the expenses of the next few years including a teeter totter (\$9.45), magazines, indoor ball, baseball and bat, basketball outfit, and, from the Sears & Roebuck catalog, a football (\$5.97). They continued to raise money and a big expense was for building a collapsible stage (\$65.02). This investment also brought in money, thanks to the ticket sales for plays conducted upon it. For the 1928-29 school year, they had enough cash-in-hand to purchase a phonograph for the school. In 1931, they purchased a watercooler and had new cupboards built to hold dishes.

Aside from their fundraising capabilities, the women were concerned about the atmosphere of their children's upbringings. As reported by Joy Martinson Green in her book about the Malone School, "The Mothers went to the school and planted shrubs and flowers, bought things to brighten up the school room and kept the school children supplied with softballs and other playground equipment through the years."



Above; Malone School, 1948-49. Back Row: Rosann Schwarz, Shirley Fargo, Wanda Fargo, Owen, Corbin. 4th Row: Steve Fargo, Joyce Fargo, Donald Moore, Charles Johnson. 3rd Row: Irv Steinhauer, Judy Bigler, Leslie Johnson, Sonja Lien. 2nd Row: Jim Bigler, Marilyn Anderson, Jim Crimmins. 1st Row: Jay Moore, Bob Sqeifel. Standing is LaVon Marty, teacher.

Bottom: Rhonda Hodgson, Mary Powell, Marilyn Ryman, Lola Quamme, Pat Hitchcock, Marlyn Grinde, Jean Stark, Shirley Martinson, Charlotte Sutter. These ladies were still meeting in 2017. This photo was taken in 2004 at Marlyn's 80th birthday.



Driftless Historium supporter Joan Sholdt, whose mother, Shirley Martinson, was a Mothers' Club fixture, has fond memories of the savory scent of simmering chicken noodle soup in the basement during her years at the Malone School. In 1954, the women had begun holding their monthly meetings in the school basement, rather than at each others' homes. In this way, their hot lunches could also serve the children on those days; this is the origin of Joan's memory of deliciousness wafting up into the schoolroom. Hot lunch programs were very rare for rural schools of the day. Another former student, Dorothy Schwarz Bliskey, recalled she "enjoyed going downstairs after school to see... what they had to eat! The smell of coffee perking and the tastes of their cakes are embedded in my brain forever."

In many ways, the Mothers' Club provided the "hygge" for the schools. If you happened to catch a successful virtual event recently hosted by the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, you may remember that "hygge" is a Scandinavian word that roughly translates to "care and comfort."

The cohesive Mothers' Clubs faced an uncertain future when most of the rural schools closed in 1962. A long time member of the Malone Mothers' Club, Pat Hitchcock recalled "The kind of caring and sharing which builds a real sense of

Mount Horeb Area Historical Society



Above: Baseball game, using equipment purchased through Mothers' Club funds, held the very last day the school was open, 1962.

Right: Benefactors Charles, Joan, & Cabel Sholdt paid homage to the Malone Mothers' Club via sponsorship of the one-room country schoolhouse vignette (in the Driftless Historium's permanent exhibit space) that contains a variety of locally sourced artifacts.

togetherness was not to be undone by the closing of the school." Women in the community got their own benefit out of the clubs, aside from the assistance to the schools. They appreciated the camaraderie with opportunities to socialize at in-home meetings, and special trips or meetings held in Madison.

Many of the Mothers' Clubs in the Mount Horeb Area morphed into Homemakers' Clubs. Some of the area organizations went by the names, "Springdale Busy Belles", "Vernon Valley Sals", "Glory Glows", and "The Gay 90's Gals". These clubs were directly connected to education outreach through the UW Extension program, all part of the Wisconsin Idea begun by the Mount Horeb area's own Robert M. La Follette. They focused on cultural arts, health, safety, citizenship, international affairs, housing, energy, environment, child development, and family management. The Malone Mothers' Club continued to meet well into the 21st century. It became an inclusive social club with newcomers to the area being openly invited.

Next time you are in the Driftless Historium, check out the rural school exhibit and think of those warm-hearted memories of comfort and care given by the area's Mothers' Clubs. ●



p.s. Our website, mthorebhistory.org, is an excellent resource for researching historic Mount Horeb area schools.

WALK UP GALLERY OFFERS SAFER VENUE TO SOAK UP ART AND CULTURE



Above: Visitors enjoying the walk-up gallery

Left: Artists Nicholson and Tweedy

Below left: A television interview at the Walk Up Gallery
Below: Photos from the "Driftless Strong" exhibit

The Driftless Historium invites you to tour the new Walk-up Gallery, a pandemic-era adaption of our Community Room that, until our unexpected closure, regularly hosted and highlighted new and emerging artists. This new venue takes advantage of the 1886 Gilbertson Hardware Store's large plate glass storefront display windows to provide an awning-sheltered, handicapped-accessible, outdoor opportunity for art appreciation.

In July and August, our inaugural "Student Spotlight" art show debuted in the Walk-up Gallery, featuring the work of Mount Horeb High School 2020 graduate Benjamin Jaramillo Nicholson and Junior Arianna Tweedy.



Nicholson and Tweedy chose the title, "Transformation & Reflection" for their art installation. This dual show was a natural fit, as both student artists have long relied on art-making for its cathartic and therapeutic properties. Tweedy noted that her eclectic

dabbling in acrylic painting, watercolors, colored pencils and ceramics is "a way to experiment with new ideas and emotions that are otherwise difficult to put into words," while Nicholson said that his linoleum block printing is a fitting symbol for many struggles for equality and acceptance, including his personal transition from female to male. "Transformative change," Nicholson mused, "rarely happens in one fell swoop," much like "turning a smooth block of linoleum into a work of art is the product of many small changes."

The Driftless Historium's "Student Spotlight" initiative is planned to be an annual art show celebrating the talent of area youth. This program, developed in partnership with Mount Horeb High School art educators Anna King and Dana Showers, provides young artists experience producing and promoting a public art

installation in a professional setting. An application process and work samples are used to guide student selection, with the final decision made by MHAHS with input from the art education team.



After hosting a popular photography show in August and September by local nature photographer and Librarian Melissa Roelli, the Walk-up Gallery is now showing "Driftless Strong: Facing Historic Times Together and Apart."

For this exhibition, we put out a call asking our friends and neighbors to submit images that will forever exemplify their new COVID-19 life. The Gallery displays forty photographs shared by eighteen Dane County residents, capturing the new routines, moments and emotions that make up 2020's unexpected and historic coronavirus era.

This community exhibit was envisioned as a way to create empathy and connections even while we are safer at home. It captures the understandable anxiety and uncertainty, moments of intimacy and the silver lining of family togetherness, and—especially—the resilience and strength of those who call the Driftless home.

All photograph submissions will also be added to the permanent archives of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society as a visual record of the pandemic.

Both the Student Spotlight and "Driftless Strong" community photos show drew wide media attention, and resulted in a total of four television interviews and two other news articles, as well as extensive coverage in our own Mount Horeb Mail.

"Driftless Strong" is viewable daily through Wednesday, November 11, 2020. To access a companion virtual gallery containing additional contributed images, visit the Driftless Historium website and search "Driftless Strong 2020." For information on these or future Walk-up Gallery shows, call 608-437-6486 or email mthorebhistory@mhtc.net



WHAT'S IN A NAME? : "RILEY"

By Jackie Sale



Above: The General Merchandise Store in Riley, 1908

Below: A plat map of Riley from the 1911 Dane County plat book

Do you ever wonder how streets, parks or places in our area got their name? Of course, some are obvious such as Blue Mounds, Ridgeview Road, Park Street, Lake Street, Parkview Street and even Vermont Township. Some are a little more mysterious like Springdale, Primrose, or Perry. Some places are named in honor of someone or something, but most likely names come from a person or family who was instrumental in the development or founding of a place, such as Grundahl Park or Donald Park.

We'll leave some of those places for later, but now let's consider Riley, which at one time was a bustling community with homes and commerce. It is now, literally, a bend in the road. It is at the spot where Hwy. J, Klevenville-Riley Road and the Military Ridge Trail meet in the Town of Springdale and is best known today for being the location of the Riley Tavern. With the help of Carol Riley Statz, a direct Riley descendent who wrote in the Town of Springdale History (1998), and the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society's records, here is some background about Riley.

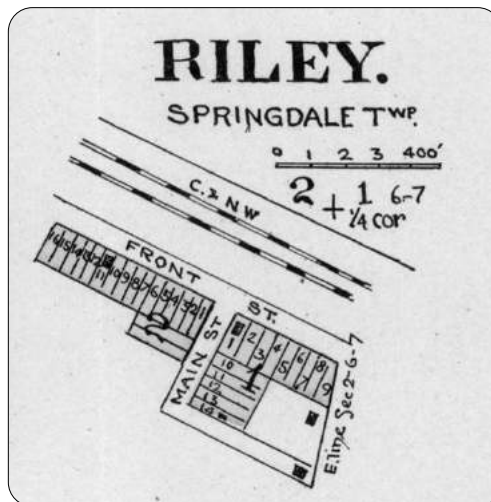
Richard and Mary Nichols Riley came to Springdale from New York in 1850 to settle in the area now called Riley. Two sons, William and Robert, came to Wisconsin with their parents, and so began the long line of Rileys to live in the

small burg—about seven generations with one family still living there today.

William Riley, a strong abolitionist, was chairman of the school board in 1868 and helped in rebuilding the Riley area school located at the village of Clantorf, one mile south of Riley. He was a farmer and owned the land which was chosen for the location of the tracks and station of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in 1882. At first the train station was known as the Sugar River Station and William and Robert Riley surveyed and recorded a plat with 32 lots around the depot and water tank. Renamed Riley, it became one of the first two villages established in Springdale, the other being Clantorf.

With the coming of the railroad a small town sprung up. In 1884 John E. Brown opened a general store, which is now the Riley Tavern. The Post Office was established in 1882 and a Baptist Church was built in 1896 by a local carpenter and minister, Elder Lincoln.

The church was struck by lightning and burned in 1920, but not before, as "Springdale Snippets" reported, the congregation "collected money to convert Italy to Protestantism." From the Town of Springdale history book, "Passenger trains went through Riley several times a day, with the schedule being printed in the Blue Mounds Weekly, later the Mt. Horeb Times and eventually the Mt. Horeb Mail. An extra passenger train was added in 1894 for travelers to journey to the World's Fair in Chicago. In 1909, there were four passenger trains a day going west through Riley, and two trains going east, as well as many freight trains that stopped there."



With all that activity, Riley became a place for commerce and entertainment. There were three taverns, a dance hall that was run by Forest Henderson and Charles Himself, a cheese factory just west of the current Riley Tavern, stockyards so farmers could send their livestock to Chicago, and a blacksmith shop run by a colorful character, Sam Ireland. Riley had its own baseball, basketball and rifle shooting teams and

people came from near and far to watch the farm boys play. The Riley school was destroyed by fire in 1950; the second school held classes until 1966 when students were consolidated into the Mount Horeb School District. The Riley School had its own school song, written by Cy Henderson, with part of the lyrics being: "Riley, Riley, Always Riley, If you cheer, just cheer for Riley, Because Riley is sure to win."

2019 COLLECTIONS DONORS

Thank you to the many individuals and families who donated documents and/or objects to the collections of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society during the 2019 calendar year. After seeing our collections, people often comment that we must have an example of just about every object we could ever possibly want. And then, every year, we are offered additional unique and wonderful pieces of history from our remarkable, history-oriented community. Thank you to everyone!

As in previous years, if you do not see your name on this list and feel it should be, please let us know. While we, of course, try to be diligent in our attention to detail, oversights during our multi-staged approval-cataloging-storage process are possible.

-Curator Johanna Buysse

Jeff Allen	Children of Jergen and Lally Greve
Diane Alny	Ron Johnson
Carl Arneson	Elizabeth Julson
Eleanor Arneson	Jeremy Kessenich
Eunice Field Bakken	Jeanette Kingery
Tim Barry	Winnie Lacy
Linda Barth	Lora Lee
Chad and Kimberley Berginnis	Mandy Lehman
John Beuchner	Ron Lofman
Brian Bigler and Ken Scott	Shirley Martin
Merel and Joel Black	Vergeane Martin
Alex Bledsoe	Betty Martinson
Jane Burns	Joy Martinson,
Holly Carnes	on behalf of
Barbara Crawford	Carrie Kahl
Leland Crimmins	Marilyn McFarlane
Mark Doherty	Middleton Area
Scott Eckel	Historical Society
Paulette Emberson	Duane Moe
Mike Feeney	Mt Horeb American
Matt Fiji	Legion
Diane Fink	Mt Horeb High
Fisher King Winery	School
Marietta Gribb	Mt Horeb Public Library
Marlyn Grinde	Mt Horeb VFW
Estate of Anita Gurda	Russell Jorgen Nelson
Steve and Joanne Hall	Kurt Nowka
Patrick Handrick	Ada Oimoen
Eileen Hanneman	Bruce Opsal
Grandchildren of	Evlynn Owens
Fred and Hazel Hanneman	Arlo Paust
Ruth Hanson	Joyce Powers
Lydia Haynes	Susan Powers
David Heller	John Ranum
Hazel Hermann	Ruth Richardson
Estate of Roger Hollfelder	Peter Riphahn
Robert Holland	Rebecca Ripp
Judith Hooks	John Rosenbaum
Nancy Gantz	Donna Rudolph

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Donation Spotlight: Mount Horeb's Funeral Family By Brian Bigler

In 1874 Andrew Thompson came from Vermont Township to the fledgling community of Mount Horeb to buy several lots for development. In 1876 he built a large residence and wagon shop and later enlarged the business to include the sale of furniture. Like most furniture stores of the era Thompson soon realized that selling just furniture would not provide enough income. With the availability of commercially made coffins – basically a form of furniture – Thompson had an in to become Mount Horeb's first undertaker.

Something else had already established itself in the United States by the time Thompson diversified his business – the wide and practical use of embalming. Although embalming, the process of injecting various chemicals into human remains to slow decomposition, was in use for millennia it had only began wide use in the United States after the Civil War where bodies of soldiers, who died miles from home, could be preserved longer and shipped by rail back to relatives in far places.

Also in the end of the 19th century American funerals became more elaborate and embalming gave mourners a greater chance to spend additional time with a loved one after their passing and to share their grief with relatives, neighbors and friends through a formal visitation.

When the railroad arrived in Mount Horeb Thompson moved his business to Main Street later passing through additional owners until James Gesme, from Vermont Township, became owner of the furniture store and undertaking business.

In 1896 Gesme completed a course in Clarke's School of Embalming at Milwaukee. He received his official certificate on May 22 of that year. According to his new degree he "qualified himself for Embalming and Preserving dead bodies by attending a full course of Instructions and Practical Demonstrations..."

Eventually Gesme became exclusively a funeral director. Bodies were prepared and laid out in the homes of the deceased, where they would remain for the visitation and later transported to the church for the service. Gesme often stayed overnight with families in rural parishes to be sure he would be there for the morning service.

In 1923, Gesme erected a small red brick building on East Main which still bears the family name. There he displayed caskets and prepared for visitations still held in homes. James' son Isaac eventually took over the business and opened Mount Horeb's first funeral home in the large T.G. Lingard house on Academy Street where



Above: James Gesme with a hearse ca. 1910

visitations and some funerals were then held. James Gesme died in February of 1936 and his son Isaac in April of 1980.

In August of 2019 Jeff Allen, a Gesme heir, donated several items relating to the prominent Mount Horeb family and their undertaking business including James' 1896 embalming certificate and a large framed portrait of Mr. Gesme (pictured below).





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Above left: The Mount Horeb House in the 1890s
Above: Skilled craftsman and MHAHS Board Member David Schmidt with the new little library.

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