

HOME IS WHERE THE HISTORY IS

HOUSE HISTORY RESOURCES

Depending on the interest of the landowner, house histories can be as short as a list of dates and previous owners, or they can be supplemented with community and biographical information that results in a richer, more vibrant history. The accompanying history of the property known locally as the “Skindrud House” (334 N. 8th Street in Mount Horeb) is an example of the latter, revealing a more complex history than the name alone implied. Despite being time-consuming, and frequently tedious when numerous land transfers are involved, house histories often reveal connections between neighbors and insights into the community that we would otherwise never see.

We’ve been working hard to make our property resources more accessible to researchers as we anticipate that house histories will become a more popular request. Thanks to volunteers like Marshallcontinued on pg 2



The Skindrud House was built by Ole A. Stolen at 334 N. 8th Street. Pictured is the house as it looks today (left) and c. 1925 (above)

HOUSE HISTORY REVEALED

The Skindrud House on N. 8th Street

By Johnna Buysse

The house at 334 N. 8th Street sits on land that was first purchased from the government as a 40-acre parcel by William D. Faraghan in 1849. Faraghan bought the property at a time when many parcels in the western part of Dane County were purchased by investors living in Madison or even farther afield. Most of these landowners, including Faraghan, are listed as non-resident owners in the tax records. The north-south road through this area (now N. 8th Street) was known locally as Black Earth Road because it was the main road north to that community. This section of road was also part of the Military

Road, installed in 1835 and 1836 to provide access to several American military forts:

Fort Crawford (Prairie Du Chien), Fort Winnebago (Portage), and Fort Howard (Green Bay). The Military Road itself followed an earlier American Indian trail through the area. Within a couple decades, the new community of Mount Horeb would develop along this road. Even before then, property along this well-traveled corridor was likely viewed as worthy of investment.

By 1850, William Faraghan expanded his property holdings to include the adjacent 40 acres to the east (most of it across the road), and then another 40 acres in Section 1 (to the north) by 1853, giving him a total of 120 acres. He held that property through at least 1859, still listed as a non-resident landowner.

In 1861, the small community locally known as “The Corners” was officially named Mount Horeb by postmaster Rev. George Wright; he owned a farm just east of the Military/ Black Earth Road (near today’s United Methodist Church).

By 1863, Faraghan had sold his property to a Norwegian immigrant, Amund Andersoncontinued on pg 2

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continued from cover... Ruegger and Megan Ince who are digitizing the tax records in our care, property owners will soon be able to tackle their own research, with guidance from us when needed.

Below are just some of the archival resources available for house histories and the type of information each can provide:

- **Access Dane (online):** provides the legal property description (the Public Land Survey System that uses township, range and section numbers) for all properties in Dane County.
- **Online Bureau of Land Management land patents:** records of the first purchase of a property from the government.
- **Historical tax records (MHAHS and WI Historical Society):** mid- to late-1800s to about 2000 (varies by location); shows ownership of the property at the time of the annual assessment (but does not provide every transfer of ownership); you can often determine whether a structure is present, or a new house was built; personal property, such as livestock, watches, radio and automobiles, was also recorded for certain years.
- **Local newspapers (MHAHS and Mount Horeb Public Library):** searching through them is time consuming, but you can sometimes find mention of when and by whom a specific house was built.
- **Plat maps (MHAHS and online):** show property ownership at the time specific maps were created (1961, 1873, 1890, 1899, 1904, etc.) and sometimes where a house was located.
- **Photographs (MHAHS, or previous owners):** occasionally we're able to locate photographs of farms, streets, or specific houses in our collection.
- **Local histories (MHAHS and Mount Horeb Public Library):** either family- or community-based local history publications often provide information that was passed down from previous generations.
- **Online federal and state census records:** wide range of information, including confirmation that the property owners lived on the property; who their neighbors were; and information about family members, such as how old they were, where they were born, and the professions in which they worked.
- **Online regional newspapers:** a search of owners in online regional newspapers sometimes results in interesting supplemental information.
- **Online 1937 aerial photographs of Dane County:** helps to determine previous road alignments and location of houses and farms.

Are you interested in the history of your property? House histories take anywhere from two to 20+ hours to complete depending on the age and location of the house. To find out more about our research policies, go to <https://www.mthorebhistory.org/research-services-fees.html>. We are happy to help you start your own investigation; if you would prefer us to do the research, our fees of \$28/hour will apply (up to a maximum of \$450). Call and talk to us about your options!*



Left: Lewis and Margaret Mennes, c. 1915

Below: 1873 plat map showing the "E. Thompson" property.

Opposite: Ole Stolen's promotional card for Dane County Municipal Judge, 1913

Opposite below: "Kleven Bros" trim board found at 334 N. 8th Street

continued from cover...

Hillestad (c. 1829-1885), who had recently purchased Rev. George Wright's farm. Amund and his wife, Anne, moved here with their family from farther north on Black Earth Road, near Vermont Lutheran Church.

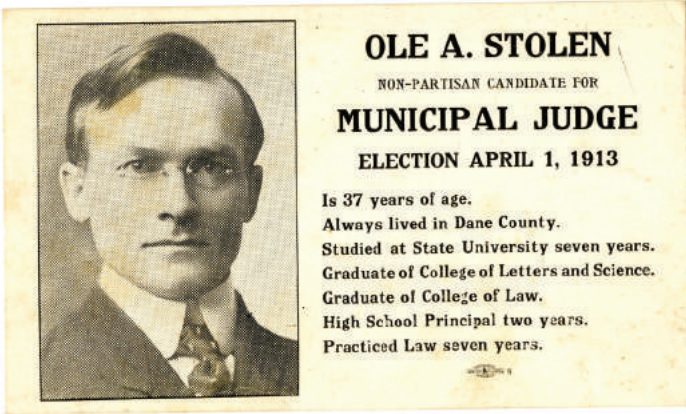
By 1865, Norwegian immigrant Torsten "Thomas" Erikson (1812-1881) purchased 20 acres, including the property in question, from Amund Anderson Hillestad. Thomas Erikson and Amund Anderson had been neighbors in the Town of Vermont; this relationship likely facilitated the sale. Thomas had three children who moved with him to the new property; Elick (1844-1908), Andrew (1851-1915), and Anne (1855-1900), all of whom were born in Norway.

Within a few years, another 80 acres was added to the farm, now owned jointly by Thomas Erikson and his oldest son, Elick Thompson (as in, Tom's son, the Norwegian tradition of taking a surname based on one's father's given name). By 1869, the 100-acre property was in Elick's name only.

It is likely that the first house on the property was built while the Erikson-Thompson family owned the property. Thomas Erikson was the first owner listed in the tax records as a resident owner, and the 1873 Town of Blue Mounds plat map shows a house here, near today's Gunderson Funeral Home—the area known to have held the original farmstead for this property.

The Erickson-Thompson family owned the farm for some time. The 1870 federal census shows that Elick's father, Thomas, was still living in the house, as were Elick's younger siblings Andrew E. (now age 19) and Anne (now age 16). According to the 1871 tax records, the family had two horses, 12 cattle, seven sheep, four pigs, and three wagons or similar vehicles. Thomas Erikson died





the original house and farm. They kept a five-acre parcel on the south side of the farm on which they built a new house (today this is 330 N. 8th Street). They lived in this house until they passed away, Lewis in 1921 and Margaret in 1933. Both Lewis and Margaret Mennes are buried in Union Cemetery.

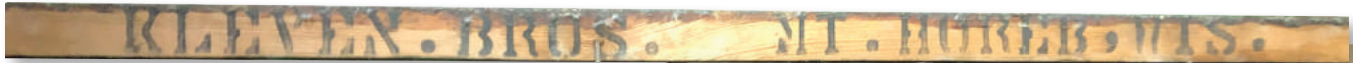
Simon Severson lived on the farm for several years, raising cattle as the Mennes family had before him.

By 1911, the farm, as well as the property in the Town of Blue Mounds that Lewis and Margaret Mennes had held onto, was sold to Ole A. Stolen; the farm now totaled just under 95 acres. One of the first things Ole Stolen did on the property was to have a new house constructed. An article in the Mount Horeb Times dated August 18, 1911, stated that the O. A. Stolen family would move into their new house in the following week (providing a building date of 1911 for the current house) and that the “new farm home...is a most beautiful location.”

Ole A. Stolen (1876-1962) was the sixth of 12 children born to Thor and Aaste Kittleson, both Norwegian immigrants. Thor had come to America as a boy in 1850 with his family,

in 1881 and was buried at East Blue Mounds Cemetery.

Mount Horeb was now a thriving community, centered at the crossroads of the roads leading west to Blue Mounds, south to Mount Vernon, east to Verona, and north to Black Earth. By the 1870s, the community had a general store, a shoe shop (that also held the community’s first public library), a couple of blacksmith shops, a hotel and saloon,



a wagon shop, a creamery, a doctor, two churches, and a schoolhouse. Today we refer to this area as ‘Old Town.’

By 1875, Elick’s brother Andrew had purchased 4.5 acres across the street, just north of the cemetery and Methodist Church. He soon built his house and a wagon shop on the property. Andrew Thompson would own Mount Horeb’s first furniture store and undertaking business.

By 1883, Elick Thompson sold his property to Lars “Lewis” O. Mennes. (The 1885 state census shows that Elick Thompson remained in the area with just under two acres and a house in Old Town. By 1900, Elick moved in with his brother Andrew and was working as a well driller. Elick died in 1908 and, like his father, is buried in East Blue Mounds Cemetery.)



Kleven Brothers construction crew, c. 1890. Knut is in the middle of the back row, and his brother Gilbert is third from the left in the second row.

Lewis O. Mennes (1855-1921) was from a large Norwegian family. His parents, Ole and Britha Mennes, arrived in the US sometime between 1852 and 1855 with Lewis’ two older sisters and settled in the Town of Springdale. Lars was the first of another seven children born in Wisconsin.

and Aaste in 1861 when she was 16 years old. They were married in 1865 and settled in the Town of Perry. Later, three of their six sons changed their surname to Stolen (after a place in Norway from which their father’s family had emigrated) because there were so many Kittlesons in this part of Dane County.

Lewis Mennes and Margaret Ann Moe (1854-1933) were married in 1875 and had ten children: Ole, John, August, Peter, Mary, Anna, Joseph, Lawrence, Bertine and Milo. They moved into the house along the Black Earth Road when their first two children were young and lived there for more than 20 years. Lewis and Margaret farmed the property until at least 1906, when the farm still consisted of 100 acres: 43.5 acres in the Town of Blue Mounds (in Section 1) and 56.5 acres in the Village of Mount Horeb (in Section 12).

Ole grew up on the family farm in Perry, and then went to Mount Horeb’s Lutheran Academy (which later became the first public high school in the area). A couple years later he graduated from the Normal School in Valparaiso, IN, where he trained as a teacher. He served as the high school principal in Mount Horeb for two years, then attended the University of Wisconsin, receiving a BA followed by a law degree in 1905. Ole married Amelia “Minnie” Severson in 1901 and they had three children—Robert (1902-1978), Lenore (1904-1984), and George (1910-2004). Ole worked as an attorney out of Mount Horeb during the early part of ...continued on pg 4

By 1907, Lewis and Margaret Mennes sold most of the farm that was within the Village of Mount Horeb (51.5 acres) to Simon Severson; this was the part of the farm containing

continued from pg 3... his career (in fact, he was one of the attorney's involved in the settlement of Elick Thompson's estate from 1908 to 1910). The family does appear to have raised cattle on the property in Mount Horeb; they were also the first family living on the property to own an automobile.

By December of 1912, Ole moved his family out of the house in Mount Horeb to take up residence in Madison where he practiced for many years. Ole A. Stolen became a successful lawyer, was involved in the very controversial trial surrounding the murder of young Annie Lemberger (detailed in the 1993 book *Crime of Magnitude*) and was elected a judge for Dane County Superior and Juvenile Courts.

Based on the stamp of "KLEVEN. BROS. MT. HOREB" on the back of a piece of building material found during recent renovations of the house at 334 N. 8th Street, it is very likely that the current house was built by the Kleven Brothers construction company, then based in Mount Horeb. The brothers were Knut and Gilbert Kleven, sons of long-time builder and namesake of the nearby town of Klevenville, Iver Kleven. It is not known how many structures Knut and Gilbert's company built in the Mount Horeb area, but we believe there were quite a few. The Kleven Brothers' lumber yard was located southeast of Front and 2nd Streets from at least 1894 to around 1912, after which they started the Wisconsin Silo and Tank Company. When Knut moved to Minnesota in 1914, the silo company was run by Gilbert. The house at 334 N. 8th Street was probably one of the later houses built by the brothers.

Once Ole A. Stolen settled his family in Madison, he sold the Mount Horeb farm to his older brother Knut H. Stolen (1867-1931). Like his brother, Knut was born and grew up on the Kittleson family farm in the Town of Perry. In 1891 he married Anne Helene "Lena" Kellesvig (1869-1937), who grew up on a nearby farm in York, Green County. She was the second oldest of eight children born to Anon and Turi Kellesvig (Kjellesvig). Knut and Lena had built a large, beautiful home on their Perry property, next door to Knudt's parents, and ran a successful dairy farm; that farm is still present today at 481 County Highway H. Knut and Lena had seven sons, six of whom lived into adulthood: Alvin (1894-1974), Ernest (1897-1975), Amos (1902-1982), Kermit (1904-1962), Willard (1907-1960), and Luther (1913-1988).

When Knut and Lena moved to Mount Horeb in 1913, they sold the Perry farm to Lena's brother Olaus Kellesvig. Their youngest son, Luther, was born while farming here in Mount Horeb. In 1916, Knut registered with Dane County the official farm name of "City View Farm." The 1920 federal census shows that Lena's mother, Turi Kellesvig, was living with the family; Turi died later that year. Knut and Lena both stayed on the farm until they



Above: Looking at the original farm from the porch of the house, c. 1925.



Left: Knut and Lena Stolen with five of their six children: Alvin, Ernest, Amos, Kermit, and Willard; their youngest son, Luther, had not been born yet. The photo was taken at about the time the family moved into the house at 334 N. 8th Street, c. 1913.

passed away, Knudt in 1931 and Lena in 1937. Both are buried in Mount Horeb's Union Cemetery.

In 1936, a year before Lena Stolen passed away, the parcel on which the house was located was designated "Outlot 53" by the Village of Mount Horeb. After Lena's passing, the property was owned by the "Stolen Brothers," presumably that refers to Knudt and Lena's sons. By 1944, they had sold the property, including the adjacent acreage in the Town of Blue Mounds (Section 1) to Thor Rossebo.

Thor Rossebo (1900-1988) and his wife Bertha (1903-1996) lived in the house for several years in the mid- to late-1940s. They were both Norwegian immigrants and had three children who were born in the U.S. Thor had a variety of jobs that took him to various places

around the country (including Chicago in the 1930s, Montana in the 1940s, and Kansas in the 1960s); it is not known what brought him to Mount Horeb. The personal property section of the tax records indicates they were farming during their time here and had over 20 head of cattle and several hogs. By 1950 they had sold the property.

The early 1950s saw at least two different owners of the property: Alden Hendrickson (1950) and Floyd Westfall (1951-1953). Westfall later had 22 head of cattle according to the tax records, although no personal property was listed for Alden Hendrickson.

By 1954, the house and property were owned by Jerome Skindrud (1919-1995). Jerome was the son of Martin and Bertha (Skogstad) Skindrud of the Town of Springdale. He married Alma Martinson (1919-2013) in 1943 and they had four children: Rick, Rebecca, William, and Roderick. For the first ten years of their marriage, Jerome and Alma farmed the Thompson-Skindrud family farm in the Town of Springdale at the corner of Town Hall Road and Highway S (today, this farm is on the National Register of Historical Places). After moving to Mount Horeb, Jerome drove trucks for Wisconsin Farmco Service Cooperative and for AMPI. ...continued on pg 5

HISTORY IN 3D SNEAK PEEK ASTOUNDS AND MESMERIZES!

Over 75 Members and supporters crowded the Driftless Historium on Friday, May 26 for a first look at the new exhibit, "History in 3D: The Stereoview Sensation." Guests donned special glasses to view dozens of historic images of 19th century southwest Wisconsin (most from the MHAHS collection)—



converted and enlarged from their original stereoview format to mesmerizing red-and-cyan anaglyphs. In the adjoining hall, a companion



Above: Ken Scott (far right), like the room full of exhibit-goers behind him, has just experienced history in a whole new way—and managed to look pretty darn cool while he was at it.

Left: Carol Quall and Carolyn Bierman peruse a sampling of Mr. Pecosky's stereoviews, using a vintage viewer from the MHAHS education collection.

Below Left: Eddie Goplin studies a panel featuring commercially-produced stereoviews, examples of educational and entertaining images sold by the thousands to eager 19th century consumers.



display of modern stereoscopic photographs by Mount Horeb's own Michael Pecosky extends the three-dimensional experience.

Since this spring's sneak peek event, hundreds of Historium tourists and visitors have enjoyed "History in 3D" and its fresh perspective on the past. Haven't had a chance to check it out? This special exhibit can be explored through Fall 2024 during the museum's open hours (Friday through Tuesday, 10am to 4pm), and is included in the cost of museum admission. For more information, call 608-437-6486 or email mthorebahs@gmail.com.



The Skindruds do not appear to have farmed the property, although they did own the full almost 95 acres.

By 1965 Jerome and Alma began platting the northern edges of the property (Skindrud's First Addition and Skindrud's Subdivision) creating what would become the entrance to the Nordic Hills subdivision. By 1967 Jerome and Alma Skindrud began selling lots but remained in their home on what was now just 6.5 acres. Jerome passed away in 1995 and Alma in 2013; both are buried in Springdale Lutheran Church Cemetery.

According to the tax records, the next owner of the property was Alfred J. Martin in 1990. He married Mount Horeb resident Lois Lindroth in 1964. Lois was an account clerk for the Board of Regents of State Colleges; Alfred worked at Messner's, a janitorial supply company in Madison. They had three sons: Todd, Timothy, and Thomas. Alfred and Lois only stayed in the house a few years, selling to the current owners in the late 1990s. The next time you drive by 334 N. 8th Street, notice the recent addition of the "City View Farm" sign on their front porch.

The history of the Mennes-Stolen-Skindrud property shows the type of biographical information that can be combined with property ownership to create an immersive picture of the landscape in which we live. It is an example of the rich story you can weave if you seek out the many threads of information available. There are doubtless hundreds of other stories waiting to be uncovered in our community! *

Wedding photo of Jerome Skindrud and Alma Martinson, 1943.

FRESH AIR CHILDREN by John Helmenstine



Here we have a photograph of children and adults in front of the Mount Horeb train station dated 1906. The children had just arrived from Chicago and were to be here for two weeks being placed with the Mount Horeb adults pictured. This Fresh Air program was part of a national effort to bring poor urban children into rural areas in the summer for a chance to breathe fresh, unpolluted air.

Arthur Bloland, the first boy on the left in the front row is the only person we can identify in the photo. He liked the Mount Horeb area so well that he came every summer that he could as a child, and as a young man he was a hired man for the Solvie family. He served as a signalman in the Navy during WWI. In 1922 he married local Sarah Hustad; they lived in Mount Horeb and had two sons. He worked at various jobs, including as a track worker for the railroad, and as a bridge builder in the surrounding area. Arthur and Sarah are buried in the Union Cemetery in Mount Horeb.

Bringing children from polluted cities into rural areas to enjoy clean fresh air was part of a trend that started in the 1870s and continued into the 20th century. In 1877, a congregational pastor in New York City started an effort to send tenement children on two-week vacations to a rural setting. The pastor's "Fresh Air Fund" grew in the following years into a hugely popular and celebrated cause as it fit into the child saving efforts of the Progressive era. More than 35 cities in 20 eastern and central states took part in some form of these programs.

The children's experiences varied widely. About half of the children returned to the same host or city for additional summers, but some programs never offered re-invitations. Only a very few offered visits longer than two weeks.

To further this effort there were several permanent facilities created at the county level in Wisconsin in the early

20th century. In Dane County, there was Lake View on Lake Mendota and Morningside in Monona Grove. The Muirdale Sanatorium in Wauwatosa had both a large hospital building and several nearby cottages. The facility at Wales, Wisconsin, was later converted into a school for boys. There were also similar facilities in Lake Geneva, Hickory Grove, De Pere, and Sheboygan.

Only in the mid-twentieth century was there an attempt made to include African American children in some of these programs. Unfortunately, the experience for these children was often not a happy or positive experience. Their hosts meaning to do well, generally reflected the negative attitudes of many white Americans. Author Tobin

Miller, in his book *Two Weeks Every Summer*, paints a very negative view of the programs for black youth.

In Europe, to combat tuberculosis, there was an "open air school movement" starting in 1904 in Charlottenburg, Germany. This idea spread to other countries in Europe, North America, and Australia where children were educated in tents or in buildings with large open windows. The movement was popular enough to spawn five international conferences on the subject. The introduction of antibiotics eventually made these schools obsolete.

In Chicago, an offshoot of the open-air idea took an unorthodox approach, keeping kids outside even in winter. Today treatment of tuberculosis is done with medication. But in 1909, doctors believed that plenty of light, fresh air and physical activities were the best cure. In August 1909, 26 Chicago school children with "light forms" of tuberculosis took part in a five-week experiment. This was the first "fresh air school" of any kind in America. The mostly outdoor school led by nurses and teachers emphasized physical activity and fresh air to combat the "white plague". All instruction and activities took place outside or in a tent. By 1911, there were at least four open air schools operating in Chicago. Support for the program soon ran out and all schools were closed.

But interest in providing opportunities for Chicago children continued through the 1920s with this Mount Horeb newspaper article from 1923: "Twenty-six children from Chicago arrived here Monday in an answer to an appeal made to the Mount Horeb people by ministers, the press, and others to give needy Chicago children a chance to visit in the country and enjoy a vacation from the blistering streets of the Chicago tenement districts. The children plainly showed their need for a vacation and good wholesome food as for the most part they were thin and in poor physical condition. Many of the children had never been to the country before or enjoyed the ordinary comforts of life, one boy had never seen a tree." *

A TREASURE HUNT ON OAK STREET

by Lori Midthun



to see if he had any connection with the home and could maybe tell me who owned it before the 1970s. With that call, I hit a treasure trove of stories that would connect me to a woman I would never meet but would come to admire.

Ron shared with me that yes, he certainly knew the home. He provided the information that not only had his father Walter (one of five Wirth children) grown up in the (one bathroom!) home, but it was originally built around 1914 for his grandmother, Christine Wirth, by her brother Henry Gerke. (Original owners: Earnest & Christine Wirth. Builder: Henry Gerke.) More importantly,

Left: The house on Oak St.

Below: The Wirth family, 1920

Below left: Christine Wirth in her garden

Ron shared the stories that went along with the home and the family who lived there. He shared

By the time we became the owners of the beautiful old four square, it was already over 100 years old and had decades worth of stories built into the walls. After bringing in the boxes, before I knew the Historium could help me gather my house's history, I headed to the Dane County Register of Deeds office in Madison to discover what I could about the secrets the old home holds. I went in search of the owners who had been the caretakers before me, maybe to discover the name of the original owner from the 1910s. I had no idea that a quick trip into the county archives would lead me down a path of discovery and even to a kind of reunion.

With some helpful advice from the staff and just a few clicks, I was able to find the names of the most recent owners and the years that the home changed hands. Over the course of a century, each owner contributed to the stories held in the home, and I wanted to know more.

I had questions about my new-old home: Who was the original owner? When was the attic finished into a playroom? Who built the home? What was the purpose of the 20" metal structure that we can't pull out of the back yard? Has the house always been this color?



The oldest record I found was the late 1970's, which wasn't as far back as I'd hoped to dig, but I felt the trip was a success, nonetheless. The names on my list gave me a treasure map of the place I now call home. The first name on the list was Wirth. I reached out to local resident Ron Wirth



the remarkable tale of his grandmother, Christine, who became a widow in 1925, not long after her fifth child was born. For the next five decades, Mrs. Wirth stayed in the home, raised five children, and lost one as a young teen. She worked as the head cook at downtown Olson's/Schubert's restaurant, took in laundry, and grew a robust garden to make ends meet. Ron shared memories of the Christmas stockings that hung on the railing of the stairs (right where my family also hangs ours); that he stored his belongings in Grandma's attic (then unfinished) when he was called into service; and that he treasures a bookcase in his current home, one that was originally built by his Great Uncle, Henry Gerke, as part of Christine's house. It wasn't until after Christine's death in 1977 that the family let go of the house that she had made a home. So many stories and so many of my questions answered. I put away the list of names in a kitchen drawer and resumed unpacking.

Months later, I was reading an article in the Mount Horeb Mail which highlighted a local business, and the founder, Dan Parent, was quoted as saying "...I grew up here in town, on Oak

Street...” That sent me dashing back to the kitchen drawer to excavate my list of owners. Sure enough! “Parent” is on the list! I reached out to Dan, hoping he would find my “I think I live in your childhood home...” query quaint instead of creepy. Would he be willing to have a conversation about the home? Luckily for this history treasure hunter, Dan not only confirmed that he grew up in the home and that he would be willing to come by, but suggested he bring his retired parents, who purchased & restored the home and had stories of their own to share. We made plans for the Parents to come to the house, I laughingly asked if he needed directions.

On a Saturday afternoon, three generations of the Parent family joined us in our (their? Christine’s?) home to share stories, laughter, and photos. We toured the home and yard together, my family listening intently to the adventures experienced by theirs. They were generous with their time and memories. By the end of the day, I’d learned:

- The house was white when they bought it in 1978 (they brought the original real estate listing photo, complete with the front door marked with “W” for Wirth!) and after refurbishing the siding, they painted it light blue (Another question answered!).
- The interior woodwork is original and was restored meticulously by Mrs. Parent, board by board.
- The mysterious metal structure (now the base of our bubbling bird bath because we could NOT get it out of the ground) is what remains of a 30’ tall TV antennae.
- The window of the bedroom upstairs was the best way to sneak out (through the window, onto the roof, down the aforementioned TV antenna, don’t tell the elder Parents!).
- The name “Kathy” signed into my driveway cement is that of a Parent child.
- The Parent family finished off the attic, where my children now love to play.
- The burn mark on the trim of my son’s bedroom window was put there when the sun reflected off a magnifying mirror on their daughter’s vanity.
- Where the family pets were buried (“Don’t dig too deep in that corner of the back yard...” cautioned the elder Mr. Parent).
- We should never try to move the backyard clothesline because the posts are buried in cement deposits roughly the size of Volkswagen Beetles. The Parent brothers



Right: The Wirth bookcase.
 Left: The Parents residing the house in 1979
 Bottom: Lori Midthun with her family.

learned that the hard way!

Another delightful collection of treasured stories was uncovered.

With a bit of digging, as well as some local outreach, I collected nearly 80 years of house history; all the way to 1992 when the Parents entrusted the home to the next owner. I learned more about not only my home, but about some of the other families who carved out a space in it. There are more owners to follow, and more stories to learn, and I’ll keep digging. These stories are part of the home, and they make my family’s time in the home richer.

One final note: not long ago, Christine Wirth’s grandson Ron called. He was moving, downsizing. Would I like the old bookcase that was original to the home? Another treasure! The bookcase has been reunited with its original home and is now nestled into my living room, ready to collect stories for another century. *



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WISCONSIN!

by Brian Bigler

This year marks the 175th anniversary of Wisconsin officially becoming a state (in 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state in the Union). The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society holds several important artifacts that show how communities in our area commemorated the state's various anniversaries, the most celebrated of which were the 50th in 1889, the 100th in 1948, and the 150th in 1998.



A



B

Here are a few of our favorites (left to right, top to bottom):

A. This commemorative envelope dated September 7, 1898, was sent to the postmaster at the Montrose Store (between Mount Vernon and Belleville) celebrating the state's semicentennial or 50-year anniversary. (MHAHS Archive, Postal History Collection)

B. Pennant from Milwaukee's Centennial Exposition honoring the state's 100th birthday in 1948. (Cat# 1998.019.0001)

C. Wisconsin flag commemorating the state's centennial in 1948. (MHAHS Cat# 1998.017.0001)

D. This photograph shows the Village of Blue Mounds' entry in Wisconsin's Centennial Parade held in Madison in 1948; the entry depicts the Blue Mounds Fort. (MHAHS Image 8x10.833)

E. Quilt wall hanging created by Hands All Around Quilt Guild commemorating the state's sesquicentennial (150 years) and the opening of a new exhibit at MHAHS's museum. (MHAHS Cat# 1998.84.1)

F. Program used by Robert Tollund of Mount Horeb when he attended festivities in Madison during the state's centennial in 1948. (MHAHS Archive, Subject File)

G. This pin-back, metal souvenir dating to 1898 commemorates Wisconsin's semicentennial; it was donated to MHAHS by the Zahler family. (MHAHS Cat# 1997.48.32)

H. Souvenir photograph of Beverly Birrenkott and Ralph Buechner at the Centennial Military Ball at the Park Hotel, Madison, in 1948; Beverly and Ralph were married the following year. (MHAHS Cat# 2021.029.0489) *



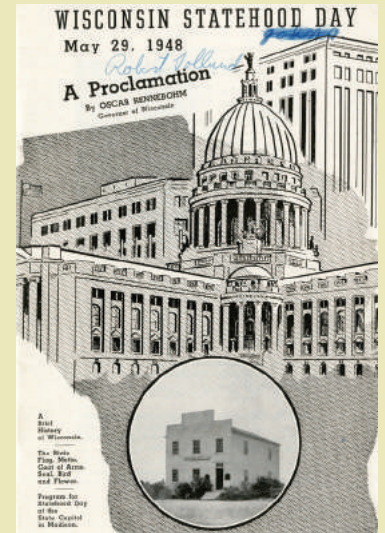
C



D



E



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H

2022 DONATIONS

We appreciate our donors! Literally 99% of our 2022 income came out of the pocketbooks of private citizens and local businesses. The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society relies on this generosity to continue our mission of saving and sharing the histories of Southwestern Dane County—the stories and stuff of your neighbors, family and community. It’s a task that’s never ending, in the best possible way. Thank you for trusting us with this important work.

Did we accidentally neglect to include a 2022 donation? Please let us know ASAP, and we will call out this oversight in the next newsletter. Reach us at 608-437-6486 or mthorebahs@gmail.com

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ANONYMOUS

Earmarked Grants

Mount Horeb Community Foundation
\$3,000: Walking Tours & Virtual Programs

Wisconsin Historical Foundation
\$685: Book Scanner

Melanie Tallmadge Sainz Birthday Fundraiser
\$405: 2022 Native Art Marketplace

ANONYMOUS
\$16,900: Collections Fund

**This listing reflects monetary donations received January 01 to December 21, 2022.*

Much-appreciated contributions in the form of Membership dues, memorials and honorariums are recognized separately.

19TH CENTURY MEET-AND-GREET

Have you ever wished you could step back in time –and talk to the characters who populate our history books? The Driftless Historium and the Cave of the Mounds are partnering to make it possible!

Join us for this two-part, first-person program where your entire family can chat and shake hands with the man who helped draw Dane County's borders and a frontier doctor who treated settlers, soldiers and scalawags in Michigan Territory (pre-statehood Wisconsin).



On Sunday, October 8 at 2:00 p.m., Cave of the Mounds (2975 Cave of the Mounds Road, Blue

Mounds) will host Rob Nurre as John Mullett, Deputy Surveyor of the United States General Land Office. Mr. Mullett will discuss what he observed nearly 190 years ago, in June 1883, as he walked the survey lines that crossed what is now the Cave of the Mounds parking lot.

Then, on Sunday, October 22 at 2:00 p.m., Frontier Doctor Mark Tully travels to the Driftless Historium (100 S 2nd St, Mt Horeb) for an often surprising, sometimes stomach-turning, always entertaining afternoon presentation about remedies, treatments and instruments used for common (and not-so-common) ailments of 19th century America.

The "19th Century Meet-and-Greet" sessions are free and family-friendly. Reservations are not required. For more information call 608-437-6486 or email mthorebahs@gmail.com.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MARSHALL RUEGGER

Marshall Ruegger is a respected man about town, a retired DNR forester, Korean War veteran and dedicated husband and father. Sometimes I wonder how he even fits us in, amongst his vibrant social calendar. But he certainly does make time for us—in fact, Marshall has been known to start his volunteer day at the museum before the sun rises, and is often heading home for his mid-morning nap break when I clock in for the day. (I sometimes wonder, actually, if he’s gunning for my job. But that’s crazy!!!.....right? Right???)

What is your favorite part of volunteering?: I have been a volunteer forever. If somebody needed their lawn cut, snow shoveled, or whatever, I was front and center. In high school I was the sports team’s manager. I enlisted in the army, after college I was a First Aid Instructor for about 3,000 students,



Three things Marshall loves to do: “eat, travel, and fish; anywhere, anytime.”

Left: Marshall eating chicken soup “several years ago.” He reported that “Dad and I always had a hot lunch when we were in the woods.”

Center: Marshall in Iceland standing in the rift between the North American and European tectonic plates. He claimed to be “holding up the North American plate with his hand.”

Top: At his favorite spot in the world, Isle Royale National Park in the early 1970s with some Lake Superior trout.

Bottom: Marshall and Pat at their wedding in 1970

Opposite: Marshall standing with rolls of barbed wire on the cover of *Barbed Wire Gazette*

Opposite bottom: Marshall and Pat in more recent years



From your military service, to a decades-long career protecting America’s public lands and people, to an ongoing spirit of volunteerism: Thank you, Marshall, for your lifelong commitment to bettering the lives of your neighbors, community, and country!

Write your “own” job description of what you do here at the Society:

I try and do the things no one else has time to do: scanning, copying, and filing photos has been the majority of the duties I have had. I have recorded the historic ownership of 338 homes, copied hundreds of newspaper clippings, made over 20,000 scans of tax books, and filed many photos.

How long have I volunteered for the Society: Over two years. I haven’t really kept track. I know I average 15-20 hours per week.

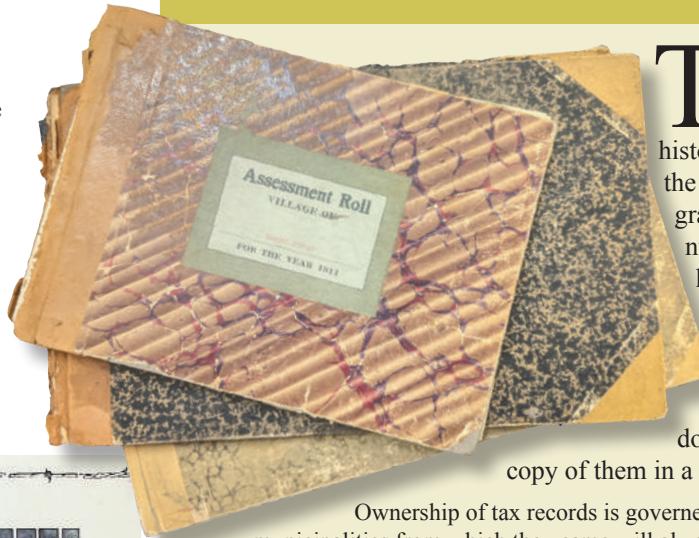
Lions Club president, Zone Chairman, and Deputy District (?). I was Town Chairman, Town Treasurer, County Board member and County Board Chairman. I ran a small park for the Township (350 acres), received over \$700,000 in grants. That was the same park my grandfather and father were in charge of. With the grants we built a 16 unit campground and put in several miles of hiking and cross country skiing trails along and adjacent to the Chippewa River. Currently, I am an active member of Post 113 American Legion and Post 9511 V.F.W., both in Mount Horeb.

Who or what got me interested: I came to the Historium to do a story for the American Legion Post 113 on their Auxiliary Unit. While working on that, my oldest daughter,

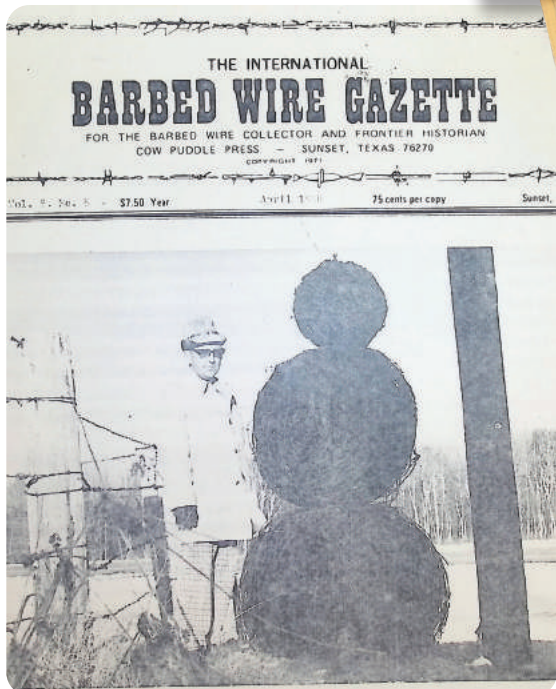
Rebecca, said she would like to know more about her house and its history. That got me started on doing several more homes and, 338 homes later, I have tracked the ownership of most of the old homes in the village.

Tell us about your family: I have one sister who is younger than me. My wife, Pat, and I have been married 53 years and have five children. Two are in Mount Horeb (Sara Jane and Rebecca); one in the Twin Cities, Samm; one in North Carolina, Jody; and one in Eau Claire, Jim. There are lots of grandkids and great grandkids. I love big families.

TAX RECORDS HELD BY MHAHS



Tax records are an invaluable resource for researching the history of a property. Over the years MHAHS has gradually increased the number of tax records we hold, thanks in large part to municipalities in our area who understand the value of preserving these historical documents and keeping a copy of them in a local, accessible location.



Ownership of tax records is governed by state statute, so the municipalities from which they came will always be the legal owners of these records. The Historical Society's role is to protect and preserve these records to the best of our ability, and to provide reasonable access to the information they hold (without compromising the records' preservation). In 2009, MHAHS became a repository for a set of historical tax records from the Town of Perry. Dating from 1857, these are some of the earliest documents in our archives. A few years later, in 2012, MHAHS became the official repository for the Village of Mount Horeb's historical documents; among the documents that we received from the village were village tax records that date from 1899 to 2000. Then, in 2016 we entered into an agreement with the Town of Primrose to hold various town documents, including tax records that date from 1860 to 1935 (though not all years were present).

More recently, we have been in discussions with the Town of Blue Mounds regarding their historical tax records. We are currently scanning the Blue Mounds tax records so that the town can have an easily accessible copy of the records. An electronic record of the tax books also means we can have access to the information without having to repeatedly use books that are, in some cases, over 150 years old.

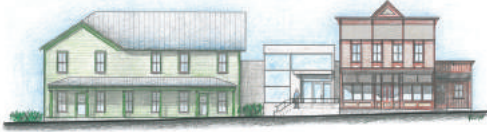
MHAHS also holds tax records from the Towns of Vermont and Springdale, as well as the Village of Blue Mounds, though these collections are not as extensive as the those discussed above.

These partnerships rely upon the professional staff and the specialized facilities maintained by MHAHS. Preserving these one-of-a-kind historical documents and helping people use them is an important service we are uniquely positioned to provide. Do you have records or photos that help tell the story of southwest Dane County? Let's talk about how MHAHS might be able to help save and share those stories. You might also consider donating to our Collections Fund. This money is earmarked for preservation supplies and projects.



Tell us about your education and vocational background: Winter High School Class of 1955, UW Stevens Point, 1962. Forest Ranger WCD which became DNR in 1969. I was the first DNR employee to attend the National Fire Academy in Emmitsberg, MA. Crew leader of first Wisconsin fire crew to the west. Member of the NFES (National Fire Equipment System). I was the representative of the 50 States' Foresters on fires and fire details in 27 states, acting Chief Forest Ranger for short time prior to retirement in 1992.

Why is the Mount Horeb area the best place on earth?: I really enjoy the folks who live here. We lived here as well as 5 or 6 other places and after leaving here in the early 90s, I began to realize what a great place Mount Horeb was, and with our daughters' help, we have returned. *



Mount Horeb Area Historical Society

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VOLUNTEER SPRING OUTING: THE HOUSE THAT BEER BUILT



On May 17, MHAHS Director Destinee Udelhoven and two carloads of the world's best volunteers took a road trip to Black Point Estate and Gardens, a Wisconsin Historical Society-owned and operated museum on the shores of beautiful and secluded Geneva Lake.

Site Director David Desimone and Lead Interpreter Michael Rehberg were our gracious hosts. They provided fantastic guided tours of the imposing Queen Anne-style mansion and its manicured

grounds, built in 1888 as a retreat for Chicago Beer Baron Conrad Seipp.



Volunteers are vital to the community services we provide at the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society. Join our team --and come along on our next field trip adventure! Call 608-437-6486 or email mthorebahs@gmail.com to learn more.