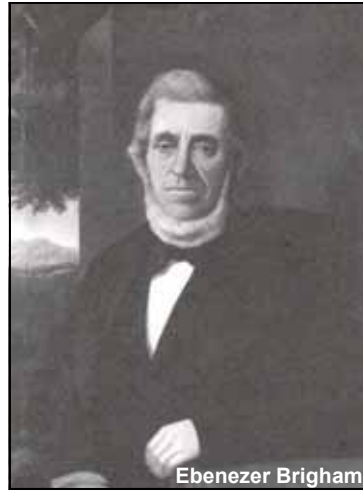


Rare Brigham Land Grant Added to Archive

An 1839 land grant once belonging to Ebenezer Brigham, Dane County's first permanent settler, has found its way back home via a rather circuitous route. The historical document was brought to Brian Bigler's attention by Tamara Funk, curator of Pendarvis State Historic Site, who had received an email from Iowa County Historical Society curator Janette Hartman. Hartman mentioned in her correspondence that Roger Morris of Duluth, Minnesota owned the land grant dated July 10, 1839, that entitled Brigham the ownership of lands in the Wisconsin Territory located near the Blue Mounds and that he wanted to gift it to an appropriate institution.

With much additional correspondence the document is now housed in the Society's archive. Mr. Morris purchased a collection of materials at an auction and found the historic land deed in the bottom of the box. Brigham registered his new acquisition at the land office in Mineral Point. To finalize the deal, Martin Van Buren, then president of the United States, signed the document twice.

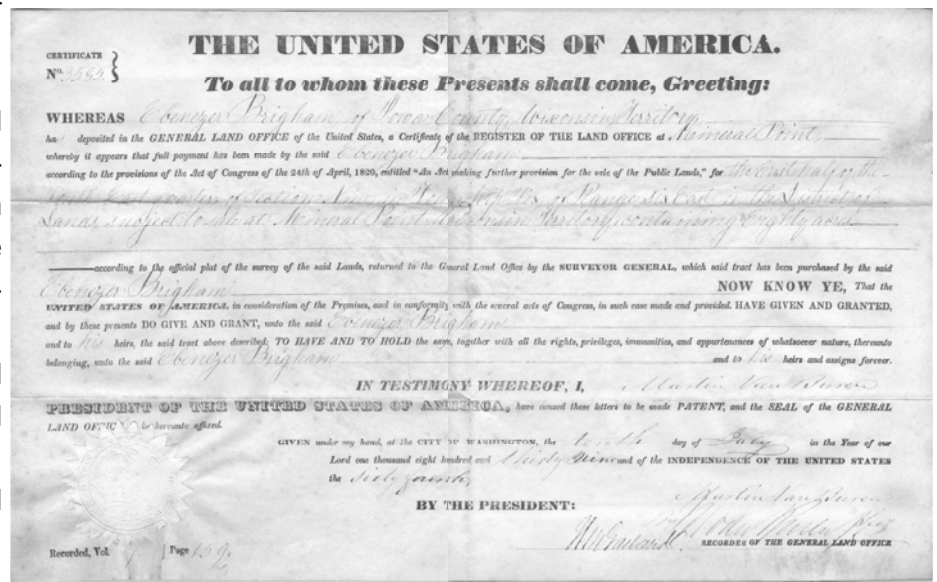
Ebenezer Brigham was born April 28, 1789 in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. In the spring of 1828, Brigham arrived in what would become Dane County to work in long since abandoned lead mines that were located on the edge of what was the United States' original rush for mineral riches. Besides digging for lead, Ebenezer established a tavern and



Ebenezer Brigham

store that also included an inn. Brigham discovered extensive deposits of lead and by 1839, the date on the deed, was well established monetarily providing him the means to expand his land holdings. Brigham was

honored by the Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass and appointed a magistrate. Brigham held the position of magistrate for four years, serving as justice of the peace, and from the winter of 1830-1831 until 1837, as postmaster of Moundville. Ironically, by 1846, just seven years after Brigham's deed signature increased his acreage, the lead boom hit bottom and the digging for ore became a sideline business. However, Brigham and his descendants used these lands to build up a sizable farming operation. Family descendants still live on part of Brigham's original holdings.



Certificate entitling Ebenezer Brigham to land located near Blue Mounds, WI, July 10, 1839

Little Norway to Close

By Brian J. Bigler

A letter created by Little Norway's fourth generation owner Scott Winner that appeared in the March 29 edition of the Mt. Horeb Mail publically announced the closing of the long-time popular attraction.



Little Norway is the inspiration of Isak James Dahle who was born in Mt. Vernon, Wisconsin in 1883. When Isak was 4 years old the family, which operated a mercantile business, moved to Mt. Horeb. Isak grew up surrounded by his Norwegian immigrant grandparents and a business-minded family. When Isak was young he was a voracious collector of stamps, butterflies, rocks and other objects which he placed in glass cases in a somewhat systematic fashion. Isak attended school at Mt. Horeb's Lutheran Academy, the Wisconsin Academy of Madison, and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1904. During Isak's college years his father became a representative in the United States Congress.

Following his college graduation, Isak was associated briefly with a Minneapolis flour company, but he spent the greater part of his life devoted to the life insurance business, first in Milwaukee, and then in Chicago. While in Chicago Dahle became involved in numerous societies, including the American Scandinavian Foundation, the Norwegian American Society and the Chicago Norske Klub.

Always interested in his Norwegian heritage, Dahle decided to take a trip to Norway with his mother in January 1926. The Norwegian folk museums and architecture that Isak encountered made an indelible mark on him. Approximately one year later, on New Year's Day, 1927 while visiting his family in Mt. Horeb, Isak's brother Otto took the Chicago businessman for an auto ride into the country to inspect some property that had come up for sale. Otto showed Isak the remains of an early farmstead that was situated in a beautiful valley just west of

Mt. Horeb. The setting with its rustic log structures immediately reminded Isak of what he had seen in Norway. Isak decided the place would make a great getaway and setting where his family and friends could gather during the summer months and bought it in that same year. Dahle appointed family members and friends to supervise his project, which he named Little Norway. Hugo Stikhevitz, a Latvian refugee, was hired to be resident caretaker.

Some of the buildings were torn down and rebuilt, while others remained in their original locations. Norwegian carpenters and painters from the area were employed. The buildings that once housed cattle, grain and the farmstead's original families, were slowly converted to cottages that contained screened-in porches, sleeping spaces, large stone fireplaces, dining rooms and kitchens. One building housed a library of books, another, with its "man style of decoration," was themed the hunting lodge, while another housed peacocks and other fowl. All the buildings were altered to look "Norwegian" with blue trims, built in beds and ornamental roof treatments similar to what Dahle experienced in Norway.



Hunting lodge with its large stone fireplace on the grounds of Little Norway c. 1928

To furnish the structures Isak placed ads in local newspapers. One ad titled "Have You Any Norse Antiques to Sell" went on to state "am especially anxious to get old furniture, paintings, dishes, wooden bowls, etc., in fact any Norwegian antiquity that will add to the interest of "Little Norway" (as it is being called)."

The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society

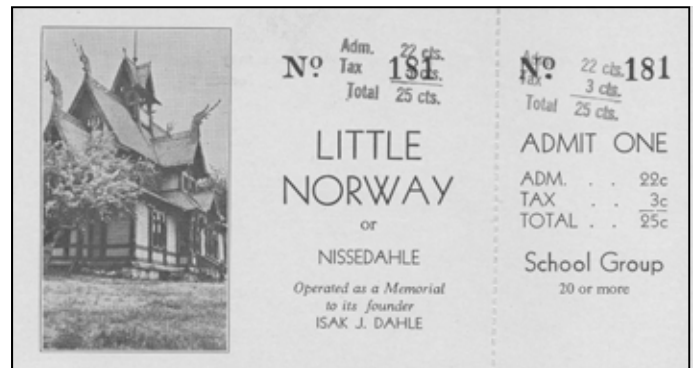


In addition to the newspaper ads Isak wrote family members requesting heirlooms to furnish the buildings. Jim Stavrum, an interior decorator from Chicago and friend of Dahle's, spent the summer of 1928 in Norway, gathering antique furnishings. Crates containing tables, chairs, a clock, tapestries and copper pieces began arriving at the Dahle family store on Mt. Horeb's Main Street where they were placed on display in the store's windows for a time. Other objects were created for Isak's summer home: a log chair on rockers, a kitchen table that made into a bed, daybeds and other beds. Norwegian painters including Per Lysine, a former Stoughton wagon pin striper, repainted cupboards, trunks and other objects to make them look more Norwegian.

The grounds on the 80 acre site were made over as well, with streams dredged and ponds created. Gardens for flowers, shrubs, and vegetables were created, with Birchwood bridges and rustic outdoor furniture complementing the setting. Hundreds of pine, willow and other trees were planted.

The curious public began to poke around the grounds uninvited and an occasional building appointment procured as a souvenir. Caretaker Stikhevitz was kept busy giving impromptu tours and policing the property. In July 1933 Isak visited the office of Philip K. Wrigley of chewing gum fame and discussed the prospect of acquiring the Norwegian Pavilion building that was Norway's official entry in the 1893 Chi-

cago World's Fair. The building had been moved to the Wrigleys' Lake Geneva property at the close of the fair, and Dahle had seen the building on visits to the lake. In 1935, Isak finally procured the Norway Building, had it dismantled, and reassembled at Little Norway. The addition of this building brought even more curious onlookers to what had been up to now a Dahle family respite. In June 1936 Isak created a detailed plan of what would be housed in the Norway Building. Much like in his childhood, Dahle laid out the building with systematic displays and cases dedicated to well-known Norwegians



Early ticket for admission to Little Norway. c. 1940

such as Professor Rasmus B. Anderson, composer Edvard Grieg, violinist Ole Bull, painter Emil Bjorn and others. These displays took on a museum appearance and on August 1, 1936, the Norway Building and Little Norway were formally dedicated and opened to the public. Dahle did not enjoy his now public setting for long as he passed away from cancer on November 24, 1937.

Visitors to Little Norway in the 1930's included Lyle and Hazel Johnson on the right



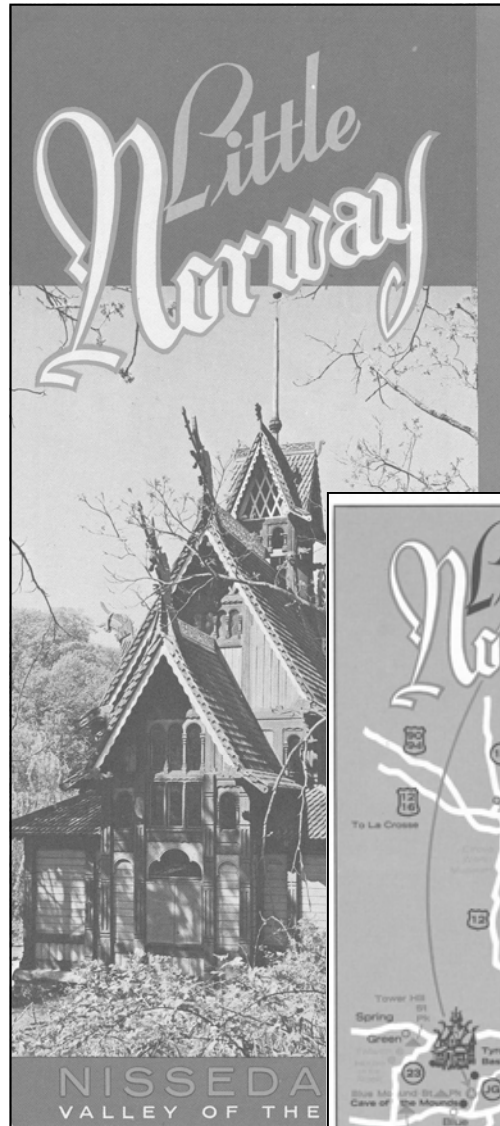
The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society

In Dahle's will he states that his desire was that Little Norway be "kept alive as a monument to the Dahle family," and named his brother-in-law, Professor Asher Hobson, as one of two trustees to "maintain and operate Little Norway until it is disposed of." Hobson, with his wife, Thea, sought out an appropriate institution to take over the museum, but no such entity was found. Isak's mother, Anne, who had spent her summers at Little Norway, was given a small endowment that enabled her to continue as matriarch at the farm. Dahle family members continued to plant vegetable and flower gardens and spend summers at the site, while Stikhevitz conducted tours. Mr. Hobson and the women of Little Norway added additional objects to the growing collection.

In 1951, Professor Hobson retired from his university position and took on full-time management of Little Norway, hiring additional guides and maintenance people to handle the growing attendance. In 1957 the Hobsons built a modern year-round home on the site. Eventually the Hobsons' children Merk and Marcelaine took over operations. Marcelaine's youngest son, Scott, took over the running of Little Norway in 1982.

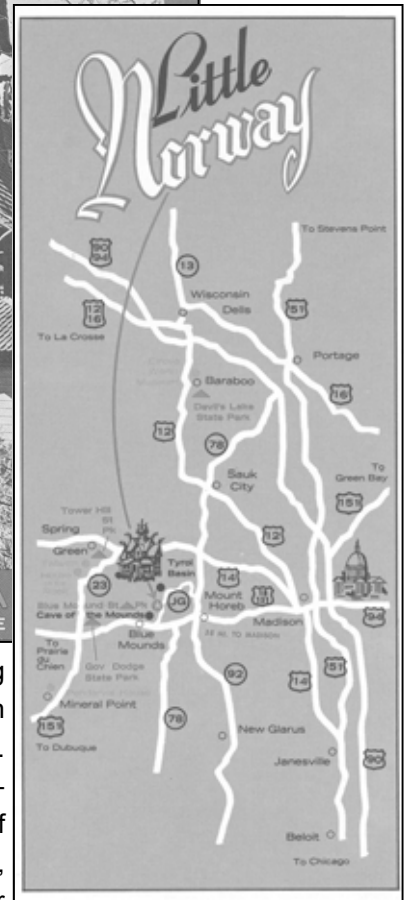


Through the years, hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world have ventured to Isak's Little Norway. The Royal Family of Norway visited – Crown Prince Olav toured the museum in 1939, followed by his son, Crown Prince Harald in 1965. In recent years the museum celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Norway Building in 1993, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Little Norway can be credited as a



1984 brochure for Little Norway with back page map prior to the bypass of high-way 18/151.

Below left: 1982 postcard with photo of Little Norway guides posing with artifacts in front of the Stave Church. The postcard was a direct mail piece advertising a January issue of Country Living Magazine with an article about planning a visit to the historic site.



major factor in creating the ongoing Norwegian identity of the Mt. Horeb area and for inspiring a long line of enthusiastic painters, woodcarvers and other

Norwegian-style crafters. The museum has employed dozens of area young and older adults who have enjoyed memorable summers working on the grounds, maintaining the buildings and grounds, staffing and stocking the store and immersing visitors in the Norwegian culture that so inspired Isak Dahle 86 years ago.

Civil War Relic Resides in Mt. Horeb Park

Mt. Horeb village officials are once again being united with the cannon at Boeck's Park. The base on the Civil War relic is showing its age and needs replacement. With the anniversary of the American Civil War now in progress the story of this park sentinel is timely. A visit to the Society's archive reveals that the cannon in Boeck's Park came from Fort Montgomery, at Rouses Point, N.Y. It is a cast iron, 24pdr Howitzer, weighing 1,476 pounds.

Under the provisions of an act passed May 22, 1896, condemned and obsolete ordnance were available for donation to communities throughout the country. In 1900, the Hon. Herman B. Dahle, congressman from Mt. Horeb, wrote to the Office of Chief of Ordnance U.S. Army as a reference for Andrew E. Arneson, village president who had applied

for a condemned cannon. Subsequently a list of available cannon was sent to Arneson for consideration. In August 1900 the cannon requested was approved and arrangements were made for its shipment to be paid by the village. The act allowing the donation of the guns did not include the carriages. However, in a letter to Dahle, A.R. Buffington, Chief of Ordnance stated "In this particular case the carriage has been turned over with the gun... This gun should not be used for firing purposes."

It is not known what happened to the original carriage, if it ever arrived with the gun. However, it is known that the citizens of Mt. Horeb did not listen to Buffington's request that the cannon not be fired as attested to in the July 11, 1901 edition of the Mount Horeb Times: "Another 4th of July has gone into history and it can truthfully be said that Mount Horeb had a very becoming and pleasant celebration from start to finish. The weather looked somewhat threatening in the morning but soon old Sol shone and promised fine weather. The village cannon was pressed into active service at sunrise and she roared patriotically both long and loud, reminding the citizens for miles around that it was the day on which to celebrate."

Left: Olympia Rue sits on top of the Civil War era cannon at Boeck's Park in 1917.

Right: And today, Marlyn Arneson Grinde standing next to the cannon that her great-grandfather, Andrew E. Arneson requested and approved for the village in 1900.



Blue Mounds Incorporated 100 Years Ago

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the Village of Blue Mounds. But, the village had its beginnings much earlier in the form of another community nicknamed Pokerville. Pokerville was located on the Iowa and Dane County line and had formed during the lead rush days in the mid-19th century. When the



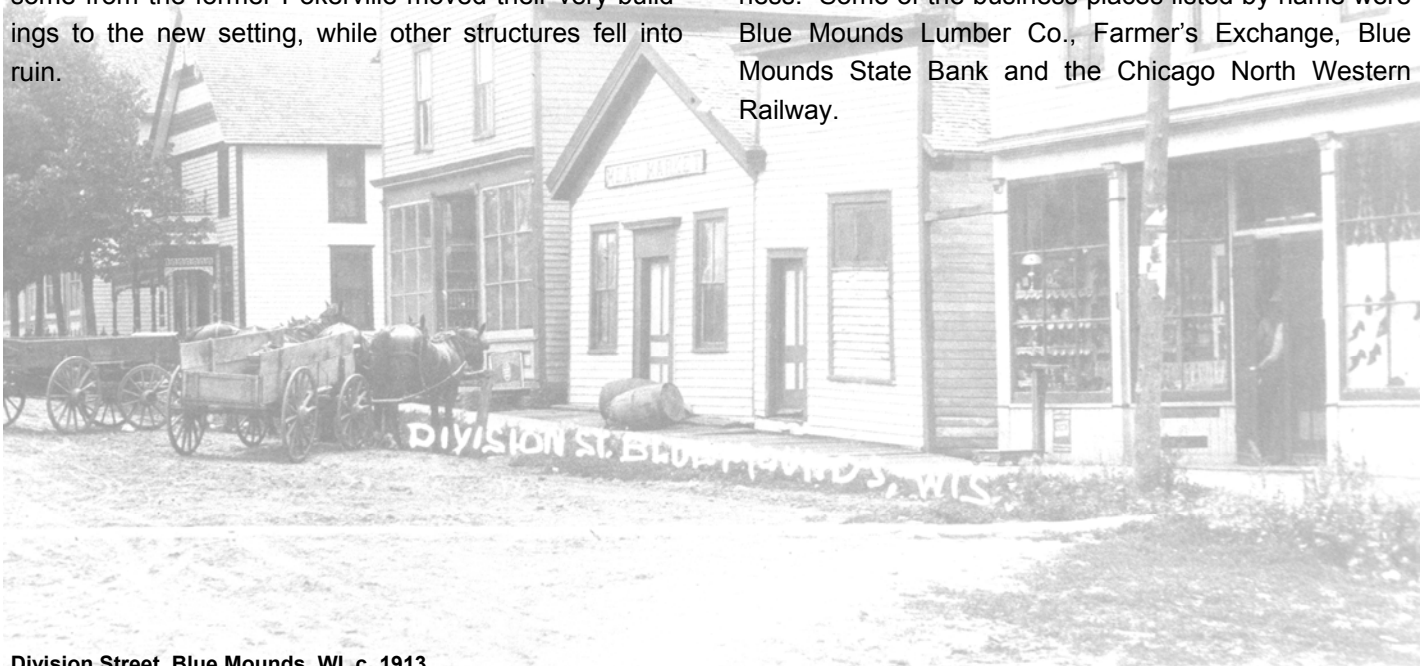
Chicago and North Western Railway decided to run its tracks and establish a depot site just east of Pokerville in 1881, the once thriving community met its death. Business owners knew that the best location was near the depot in the new town named Blue Mounds for its nearby natural wonder. The new town grew quickly and some from the former Pokerville moved their very buildings to the new setting, while other structures fell into ruin.

As the community grew a need was felt to become independent of the Town of Blue Mounds and talk of incorporation ensued. On July 9, 1912, the citizens petitioned the Clerk of Court to incorporate



Cover of the Tax Roll for the newly incorporated Village of Blue Mounds, 1913

and a formal vote to do so took place on September 19 of that year. Oscar M. Daley, the incorporated village's first clerk, filed the first property tax rolls in 1913 and these are housed in the Society's archive. In that year the Village of Blue Mounds had 45 horses, mules and asses, 58 neat cattle and 15 swine. There were 25 wagons, carriages and sleds assessed and seven automobiles. Total value of personal property was \$23,631 with bank stock coming in at \$9,520. The villages assessed land covered 320¼ acres. C. J. Dagenhart reported \$239.52 in highway assessments and \$138.41 was collected for the District Number 2 School. There were 117 taxable property owners including personal and business. Some of the business places listed by name were Blue Mounds Lumber Co., Farmer's Exchange, Blue Mounds State Bank and the Chicago North Western Railway.



Division Street, Blue Mounds, WI, c. 1913

The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society

Special May 19 event planned for Wisconsin Museum Week (May 12-20)

Wisconsin authors and UW professors James P. Leary and Janet Gilmore will host a jovial and interesting presentation **"Remembering Oleanna Cunneen: Norwegian American Folk Artist"** on May 19 at the Mt. Horeb Area Museum. Touching on Oleanna's incredible talent of interpreting her Norwegian heritage in garment sewing, troll crafting and rosemaking, Jim and Janet will add the humor of her joke telling that made her an unforgettable and endearing character in our local history. Starting at 10 a.m. when the museum opens, our featured guests will have slide and digital images along with a joke telling performance video available for viewing. The presentation will begin around 10:45. Leary will be happy to sign books for those who bring them and copies of his *"So Ole Says to Lena"* book featuring some of Oleanna's jokes will be available in the gift shop. *There is no admission charge for the museum or this event.*

Many Thank You's Due

A few donation acknowledgements were missed in our January issue of which included a general fund donation by Jim Kalscheur, a memorial for John Bigler by Jane Burns, and a new membership for Pixie Hiser. We thank you all so much for your support.

Thanks to volunteer John Pare, who has been busy in the archives with several projects including reorganizing our stamp and postal items collection, going through a large donation of newspaper clippings featuring local service men during WWII, and currently is organizing and categorizing postcards and photo postcards of which we have quite a collection. Thanks to

Gerry Glaeve who has recently also been a great help volunteering on a number of projects in the archives.

Great thanks for the monetary donation by the Cyril Burns family members Lori Brooks, Jane Burns, Lynn Burns and Sue Burns that was used for storage boxes to house the Burns photo collection. The collection is in the process of being organized by a group of volunteers directed by our archivist Shan Thomas. The volunteers include Jane Burns, Gerry Glaeve, Doug Nesheim and Sandra Roth.



Also thanks is in order for the monetary donations we'll be receiving from Dave Boyden and Donna Read for the upcoming purchase of a much needed new computer and software. We are grateful to Tony Zalucha for his time finding just the right equipment needed in addition to a printer and scanner.

Thanks to our moving crew for their help clearing out the front storage room to be used for gift shop backstock. The crew included Brian Bigler, Dave Boyden, Laurie Boyden, Jack Lyle and Doug Nesheim.

Museum Volunteer Sign-up Will Be Held on April 21 at 11 a.m.

Returning and **new volunteers** can sign up for the 2012 museum season that begins on May 4 and runs through December 16. Each volunteer is scheduled for a three-hour shift once a month on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If you have never been a volunteer and are interested in becoming one or need information, call Laurie at 437-8901. We are grateful to the volunteers who help us keep the museum open to all our visitors each year. See you soon!



Annual Membership in the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone () E-mail

Membership Levels (Renewal to be paid annually in January)

☐ \$20 Individual ☐ \$35 Household ☐ \$75 Contributing ☐ \$150 Sustaining ☐ \$500 Patron

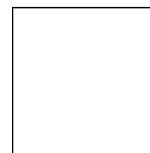
Additional Donations To:

Museum/Society Operations \$ Contingency Fund \$ Building Fund \$

Mail to: Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society, 138 East Main St., Mt. Horeb, WI 53572 *All contributions are tax deductible.*

We Depend On You! Thank you for your support.

Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society
138 E. Main St.
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572-2195
www.mounthoreb.org



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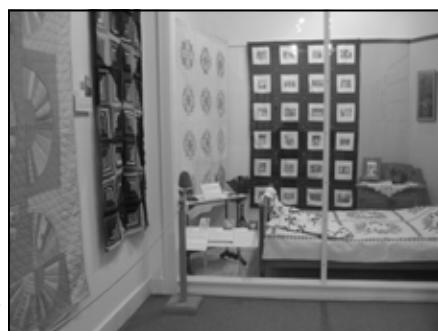
Archives Hours:

Museum Collections Research/Drop-off
2nd & 4th Wednesdays each month 12:30-3:00
Archival Collections Research/Drop off
Mondays Noon-4:00
3rd floor of the Municipal Building
138 E. Main St., Mt. Horeb, WI
608-437-6486

New website coming!

***Stories in
Stitches:
Quilts of
Southwestern
Dane County***

The quilt exhibit in the museum's Centennial Gallery will continue through



2012. Quilts dating from 1855-1998 were selected from the Historical Society's extensive textile collections for the poignant stories they tell us. These objects represent the technological changes and life experiences that occurred both nationally and in Southwestern Dane County. There are stories of anniversaries and reunions, settlement and war, mortality and the Great Depression revealed through the crafting of these everyday bed coverings and works of art.



**Purchase your
books soon in the
Museum Shop!**

Price:\$45

*If we happen to not be
open, the Prairie Book-
shop at the corner of
Main and 2nd has
copies for sale also.*

F. Y. I. FOR CURRENT MEMBERS: Your membership expiration date is printed on the mailing label of this newsletter. Please check to see if you are up to date through Jan. 13 or beyond. If not, your membership is due. Please fill out the form below and send it with your payment. We appreciate your renewal and don't want you to miss a single issue of our newsletter or any important information about Historical Society events.