



THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

December 2011

Vol. XXIII, No. 4

A newsletter by the Brown County Historical Society dedicated to the preservation of Brown County history.

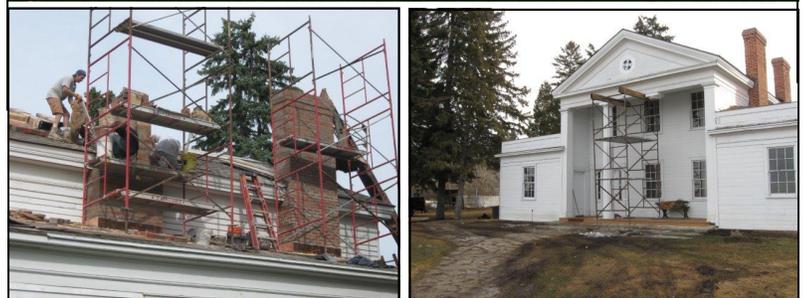
2010 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD WINNER

THE COTTON HOUSE

by Jerry Abitz

The Cotton House at Heritage Hill State Historical Park is a notable landmark in the Green Bay area. It was built in the 1840s by John Arndt for his daughter, Mary, and her husband, U.S. Army Captain John Cotton. Its location was at the intersection of Webster Avenue and Beaupre Street in Allouez. Eventually, ownership was transferred to the Green Bay Diocese. In 1938, they donated this structure to the Brown County Historical Society (BCHS) which moved it to its present location at the site of the military camp, Camp Smith, at Heritage Hill State Historical Park

Considering its age, that it was moved 1-1/2 miles from its original site, survived ownership by the Cotton and Woodruff families and the Green Bay Catholic Diocese as part of its orphanage complex, and continues as an historic home operated by the BCHS, it has weathered well. In recognition of its historic significance, the building was placed on the



The Cotton House (2010) — *Top*: Completed restoration of exterior. *Bottom left*: Chimney restoration. *Bottom right*: Restoration of columns. All photos courtesy of Heritage Hill State Historical Park photo collection.

National Register of Historic Places on April 28, 1970.

Scattered throughout the Green Bay area at different locations were a number of significant buildings such as the Tank cottage, buildings from the military Fort Howard, Hazelwood Historic House Museum, and others. Many thought they should be brought together to one location where they could be displayed and interpreted as a tourist attraction. But where should this be located?

When the Wisconsin Department of Transportation drew up plans for the construction of I-43 and its linkage to U.S. 41, Wis. 172 was routed through the farm operated by the Wisconsin Correctional facility, known locally as the Reformatory. This separated the farm from its workforce. The farm operation, the source of labor for many of the prisoners, was shut down. That area was then considered as a prime site for a state park.

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THE COTTON HOUSE

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An agreement between the DNR and the BCHS on May 1, 1974, brought about the formation of Heritage Hill State Historical Park. The Cotton House, already located there, thus became the anchor for this park, and a number of other historic buildings were moved in. Hazelwood, while considered for moving there, remained on its original site.

Anyone who has ever owned a home knows that maintenance is a fact of life—things deteriorate due to exposure to the weather, systems within wear out or become outdated, additions are added to provide increased space. No building remains static throughout its life span.

How does one interpret an historic building? Do you depict it as was when it was built? ...what it was when the BCHS acquired this property? ...or some alternative period in between? Should it be 1840s, 1890s, or 1940s? An arbitrary decision was made to interpret the building as it appeared internally when the BCHS acquired the building.

For some time, Heritage Hill had been aware of structural problems that needed to be addressed if this timber-framed building was to be preserved for future generations. For two years, various crews worked on the building. The foundation had to be stabilized; the first floor was re-leveled and reinforced with steel beams that supported the floor joists to accommodate visitor traffic. Deteriorated

chimneys were replicated, and rotted timber members were repaired or replaced. Frost-damaged window wells were stabilized and tuckpointed.

Energy efficient measures were incorporated into the building, temperature and humidity controls were added, and ultraviolet filters applied to the windows to aid in the preservation of the building and its contents.

New shutters were also replicated and installed; the roof



The Cotton House (2010) — *Top*: Kitchen fireplace after restoration. *Bottom*: Furnished parlour as visitors see it today. All photos courtesy of Heritage Hill State Historical Park photo collection.

was replaced and included appropriate gutters and downspouts. Two columns, emphasizing this building's Greek revival style, were restored, and the building was repainted. One thing they did not do was to use the original painting scheme—mint green with red trim. As garrulous as that seems, paint samples revealed this combination. According to Nick Backhaus, restoration manager at the Park, Greek temples in antiquity were painted.

This work was made possible by grants from Patricia Wood Baer, philanthropist extraordinaire. She has funded other projects at Heritage Hill, as well as the First United Methodist Church, the Bellin College of Nursing, UW-Green Bay, the YWCA, and others.

The result is a building that will be available to future generations as evidence of their heritage. For their work on the Cotton House restoration, Heritage Hill received the 2010 Historic Preservation Award for Building Historic Restoration.

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Spotlight on our Neighbors —



FOX-WISCONSIN HERITAGE PARKWAY

by Christine Mortara

There is a national exposure project pending in the U. S. Congress which highlights the route of Marquette-Joliet, opening Wisconsin and the rest of the West for trading and European expansion. The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway (FWHP) will highlight the vast history, recreation, culture, and conservation of both this waterway and the state.

The FWHP is well known by the Wisconsin agencies and historical sites throughout the state; however, for this Parkway to receive National Park Service (NPS) distinction, a grass-roots campaign must show the public's support for this project.

The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway is the 275-mile Fox-Wisconsin River corridor spanning the State of Wisconsin, and is currently a proposed National Park Service National Heritage Area. Legislation was submitted with bipartisan support by Sen. Herb Kohl and Rep. Steve Kagen in fall, 2010. There are 49 National Heritage Areas throughout the U. S.; this would become the first in Wisconsin, and one of just a handful in the Midwest.

The FWHP has received favorable response from the National Park Service to the feasibility study submitted in 2010. This exciting project is partnered by the Wisconsin Department of National Resources, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Department of Tourism, and the East Central Regional Planning Commission. Heritage partners include: Taliesen, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Fort Winnebago Surgeon's Quarters, Paine Art Center, Oshkosh Public Museum, Paper Discovery Center, Outagamie History Museum at the Castle, Neville Public Museum, Heritage Hill State Historical Park, Hazelwood Historic House Museum, and Chippewa Valley Museum.

To learn more about the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway, please visit our website: www.heritageparkway.org or call 920-737-2965.

UNLOCKING THE PAST

The Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway is researching the history of locktending on the Fox River, and is looking for additional information:

- Names of locktenders and their descendants
- Photos
- Newspaper articles
- Any other items of interest

Individuals also are needed to help with research. If you have information you would like to share or for more information, please contact Christine Williams (call 920-749-0415 or email williams@heritageparkway.org).



Lockmaster Edward Zuehls at the De Pere Lock, one of two locks in Brown County (circa 1930). Photo courtesy of Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway photo collection.

WITH OUR SYMPATHIES...

We extend our condolences to the family of Marion E. Sickel who passed away on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2011. Marion was dedicated to her community and supported many local organizations, including the Brown County Historical Society. In 2002, Marion donated a parcel of her family's property to the Society. Located at Red Banks in the Town of Scott, the property is said to be where Jean Nicolet landed. In 2005, it was dedicated as The Jean Nicolet Look Out with the objective to preserve the majestic view for future generations. The family donated the expense of yearly lawn maintenance at the site.



MORGAN L. MARTIN AND THE FOX-WISCONSIN WATERWAY

by Christine Dunbar

In the summer of 1856, English-born artists Samuel M. Brookes and Thomas H. Stevenson came to Green Bay to paint portraits of area residents. Before they left Green Bay, Morgan L. Martin commissioned them to paint a series of twelve sketches of the development of locks and dams on the Lower Fox River.

Martin was determined to improve the navigation of the Fox-Wisconsin waterway system from the time he first arrived in Green Bay in 1827. The appeals of Martin and other citizens brought in federal appropriations of \$2,000 in 1839 for a survey of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers, and an estimate of the feasibility and cost of improving their navigation. Thomas J. Cram, captain of Topographical Engineers, was commissioned to take the survey. His 1840 report was optimistic about improving the river, and recommended building a series of locks, canals, and dams as well as clearing and dredging in some areas. The cost of the work was projected at \$448,470.¹⁸

In 1845, Martin, Wisconsin Territorial delegate to Congress, proposed a bill authorizing a land grant be given to Wisconsin to fund the waterway project when it gained statehood. The bill passed and improvements were started in 1848, but progress lagged. In 1851, Martin proposed a bill to complete the improvements of the Lower Fox at Little Chute and Grand Kaukauna at his own expense, offering to be repaid through toll charges and land sales. A year later, newly-elected Governor Leonard Farwell opposed financing the waterway project, and a bill was passed to place the project in private hands. Martin and local investors incorporated The Fox Wisconsin Improvement Company, and agreed to complete the waterway in three years. The company was incorporated for \$500,000.²

Unable to raise the funds, The Fox Wisconsin Improvement Company investors were forced to turn to a group of New York speculators who agreed to finance the project with the condition they be given control of the company. As a result, Green Bay stockholders lost management of their company. Setbacks plagued the project; it was not until June of 1856 that the first steamship traversed the lock system—the Aquila steamed from Pittsburg by way of the Ohio, Mississippi, Wisconsin, and Fox Rivers all the way to Green Bay.³



A picture of the Grand Chute Lower Locks, one of 12 Brooks and Stevenson paintings commissioned by Morgan L. Martin in 1856. Martin's daughters, Sarah and Deborah, sold 11 of the paintings to the State Historical Society in 1909 for \$75. Now on display at Hazelwood, former home of Martin, this painting was discovered in the attic of a private home in Green Bay, and is on loan to the BCHS from the Green Bay-De Pere Antiquarian Society. Other images in the series can be seen on the Wisconsin Historical Society's website (www.wisconsinhistory.org).
Photo by Chuck Golueke.

Economic factors, including project setbacks, lack of funds, the financial panic of 1857, and the Civil War, worked against completion of the project. The New York speculators were able to force a sale of the Company, and regrouped under the title of Green Bay and Mississippi Canal Company. Martin was not included in the new company. The company's shrewd investors sold the navigational rights to the federal government, while negotiating to retain some of the land grants and water power rights. In 1872, the United States, through the Corps of Engineers, acquired management of improvements on the Lower Fox. Martin never recovered from the serious financial loss suffered through its failure, and wrote that the Fox-Wisconsin waterway venture was full of disappointment and financial disaster for its original promoters.⁴

Although the Fox-Wisconsin waterway project never achieved the economic success Martin envisioned, the locks are historically significant as unique technological artifacts, the only kind in Wisconsin, a historical treasure for us to admire and enjoy.⁵ George Nau Burrige wrote in 1997, "It remains to be seen if this ancient waterway can be restored and become a vital part of the recreational and historic life of Wisconsin."⁶

Both Martin and Burrige would be delighted with the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Parkway's venture to highlight the history of the waterway.

(For references, see page 7)

EVENTS

Join us for one or all!!

"A VICTORIAN HOLIDAY TEA"

2:30-5:00p — Sat., Dec. 3



Perhaps the greatest legacy of the Victorian era is the art of taking afternoon tea. On a cold winter's afternoon, what could be more agreeable than a steaming cup of tea shared with friends?

Indulge in dainty finger sandwiches, fresh scones and cream, and mouthwatering pastries and cakes. "The Victorian Lady Uncovered," a program by historic clothing expert Laurel Towns, and a tour of Hazelwood decorated for the holidays complete this memorable afternoon.

Reservations required. Space is limited.
Call 920-437-1840 to reserve your spot. \$15/person.



"T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS"
SUNDAYS, DEC. 4, 11, AND 18
SATURDAYS, DEC. 10* AND 17
AT HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE

Come in out of the cold, and assist in the busy preparations for the holidays. Take part in Victorian parlor games or take a seat by the fireplace as the story of a visit from St. Nick unfolds. Linger in the kitchen and discover how to make sugar plums. Make a Victorian holiday ornament, and enjoy cookies and cider.

*FEATURED CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

- . Anytime— Find a mouse hidden in every room of the house!
- . 1:00p— Sing along to a musical rendition of "Twas the Night before Christmas."
- . 1:30p— Join "Puppet Lady" Carolyn Verdonik, and make your own sock puppet.
- . 2:00 -4:00p— Visit with St. Nick.

Regular admission; members free.

Adults	\$4.00	Students (5-17)	\$2.50
Seniors	\$3.50	Children under 5	Free

*Celebrate
the season...*



Enjoy the magic of the holidays with a customized program at Hazelwood Historic House Museum created just for you! Visit during the day or evening.

Group and School Tours (10-person min.) includes

- . A guided tour of Hazelwood Historic House, festively decorated for the holidays
- . Adult chaperones admitted at no charge
- . Hot cider and cookies following the tour

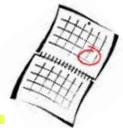
Tea Parties (10-person min. - 24 max.) includes

- . A guided tour of Hazelwood Historic House, festively decorated for the holidays
- . Victorian tea with sweet and savory courses
- . Tea and light dessert

To schedule a tour or tea, simply call the BCHS office (920-437-1840) weekdays, 8:30a-4:00p, or leave a message anytime and we will return your call.

Admission	Group Tour	Tea Party	Tea, dessert
Adults	\$4.00	\$15.00	\$10.00
Students	\$2.00	\$15.00	\$10.00

CALENDAR



DECEMBER

Saturday, Dec. 3, 2:30-5:00p — Holiday Tea

Relax and enjoy an elegant afternoon tea reminiscent of the 1880s. Indulge in authentic sweet and savory tea courses, entertainment, and a tour of Hazelwood, glittering in holiday decorations. Reserve early — only 25 spaces available; \$15/person.

Saturdays and Sundays, Dec. 4, 10, 11, 17, and 18, 12:00n-4:00p — "Twas the Night before Christmas"

Visit Hazelwood all decked out for the holidays! Join us for refreshments, and make a holiday ornament to take home. Regular admission applies; members free.

Saturday, Dec. 10, 12:00-4:00p —

A Children's Christmas — Special tours, crafts, and activities. Visit with St. Nick! Join puppeteer Carolyn Verdonik, and make a holiday sock puppet.

*Call us! Create a holiday tour, program
or Victorian tea for your group (920-437-1840).*

BOOKS BY MAIL

Available by mail using the form below.



VINTAGE WISCONSIN GARDENS

by Lee Somerville. Wisconsin Historical Society Press. 2011.

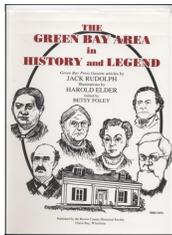
Soft cover, 200 pages, with color and black/white photos. Autographed. Special price—\$20.00.

HOT OFF THE PRESS in October! Gardeners will enjoy reading this book while waiting for spring. It is filled with practical tips, enchanting photos, and a great list of historic plants popular for today's garden. It is a perfect holiday gift for history lovers and gardeners. *Copies ordered through BCHS are signed by the author.*

REVIEW BY THE AUTHOR: If you've ever gardened at an historic site such as Heritage Hill or Hazelwood, you'll know what a difficult and time-consuming task it is to unearth information about the appearance and composition of the mid-western gardens that we tend. Garden history books are plentiful but, for the most part, they focus on the eastern seaboard, rarely addressing our uniquely Wisconsin gardens.

This book came about as a result of my questions about what was actually happening in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Wisconsin gardens. I saw the need for a "how-to" manual that would be helpful for anyone interested in local and regional garden and landscape history. So I gathered, compiled and analyzed all the available literature I could find on Wisconsin garden history, and used it to write an academic thesis during my recent three-year stint as a student in the Master's program in Landscape Architecture at UW-Madison.

Vintage Wisconsin Gardens is based on that thesis, and I'm grateful to the editorial and design team of the Wisconsin Historical Society Press for their help in transforming it into a more colorful and reader-friendly publication.



THE GREEN BAY AREA IN HISTORY AND LEGEND: GREEN BAY PRESS GAZETTE ARTICLES

by Jack Rudolph. Brown County Historical Society. 2004.

Hard cover, 375 pages; \$29.95.

Learn what the pioneers did for fun, how Green Bay sidestepped prohibition, how golf came to the area. Read about an ordinance to fence cows, the 1918 flu epidemic, a De Pere train wreck, the Green Bay Packers' winning predecessor, and profiles of long-forgotten heroes and heroines of an earlier era. Jack Rudolph's colorful columns, written between 1958 and 1970, and Harold Elder's whimsical cartoons appeal to readers of all ages. *The Green Bay Area in History and Legend* covers many familiar names—Jean Nicolet, Claude Allouez, Daniel Whitney, Morgan L. Martin, Henry S. and Elizabeth Baird, and others.

To Order: Please fill out below and return with payment or credit card info to:

Brown County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1411, Green Bay, WI 54305-1411

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HOLIDAY MEMORIES IN OLD GREEN BAY

Pioneer settler Elizabeth Baird wrote of the holidays, “The Catholic faith prevailing, special holidays of the church were observed with one’s family and friends. On Christmas Eve, praying and singing of psalms lasted until midnight, after which a reveillon (midnight treat) would be partaken of by all. This was the high feast of the season, and the food was as good as the family could afford. The meal, cooked on an open fire, included roast goose, smoked fish, wild rice, tortierre (meat pie), fruit preserves, small cakes and chocolate. Because Christmas was observed as a holy day, gift-giving was reserved for New Year’s Day.¹

Resident Albert G. Ellis recounted a Christmas celebration held at Fort Howard in 1824. Col. John McNeil, the commanding officer, learned that the French inhabitants of Green Bay made much of Christmas and issued an invitation for a dinner and ball to the entire population. Ellis recalled, “The table was spread the length of the room and plates laid for a hundred guests. The hall was filled with a variety of costumes from Parisian gowns to buckskins and moccasins.”² Ellis described dishes of venison, bear, porcupine, geese, ducks and an almost endless list of fish. Dinner was finished at 6:00 p.m., dancing began soon after and lasted until the small hours of the night.

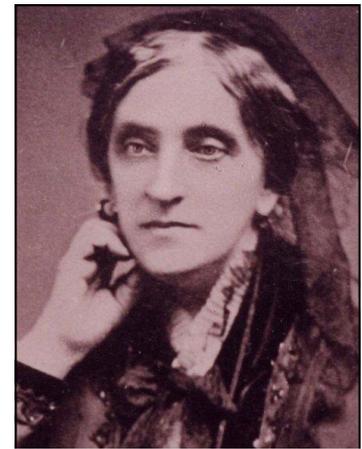


Hazelwood Parlor decorated for the holidays (2010). Photo courtesy of Kathy Kauth.

Elizabeth Martin observed the changes in holiday customs and traditions as the community grew from frontier settlement to bustling city. Writing in 1900, she remarked that the early times appeared like one prolonged holiday when sleigh bells were always on the jingle. For Elizabeth, the early times held cherished memories; she describes the Christmas tree of 1900 as “glowing

with myriad wax tapers, each branch festooned with loops of tinsel and the vanity of expensive toys. No princely materialistic Christmas tree can ever replace those magic stockings suspended from the chimney shelf and the daybreak delight to the little ones who spy in glad surprise their plethoric size.

The contents may be ever so simple—an apple, donut or citrus sweet cake in the shape of bird or fish, a bag of marbles or staring doll, each parcel holding the mysterious glow of St. Nicholas.”³ She commented that, in spite of all the changes in the Christmas celebrations, the importance of the birth of Jesus remained.



Elizabeth Martin (1817-1902). Photo courtesy BCHS archives.

¹Elizabeth Baird’s recollections. “Early Days on Mackinac Island.” *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. 14, pp. 20-22.

²Albert G. Ellis’ recollections. *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. 7, pp. 261-264.

³Writing of Elizabeth Smith Martin.

MORGAN L. MARTIN AND THE FOX-WISCONSIN WATERWAY

(Continued from page 4)

References:

- ¹ Smith, Alice E. *Nineteenth Century Wisconsin – An Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Samuel Marsden and Thomas H. Stevenson*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, March 1972, 5.
- ² Burrige, George Nau. *La Mystique du Renard: The Fox River and the Passage to the West*. Green Bay, WI: Brown County Historical Society 1997, 10.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ⁴ Smith, Alice E. *Nineteenth Century Wisconsin – An Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Samuel Marsden and Thomas H. Stevenson*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, March 1972, 13.
- ⁵ Burrige, George Nau. *La Mystique du Renard: The Fox River and the Passage to the West*. Green Bay, WI: Brown County Historical Society 1997, 14.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

WE NEED YOUR VOTE!!

At its regularly-called board meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 18, the BCHS Board of Directors unanimously voted to reduce the number of board members from 19 to 16. Following the board's approval, BCHS bylaws require a vote of the membership. The reason for the amendment is to make the board a more manageable size.

DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, DEC. 16.

If you support this amendment, please sign and date this form, clip it out, and return via mail to:

Brown County Historical Society
ATTN: Christine Dunbar, Exec. Director
P.O. Box 1411
Green Bay WI 54305-1411

Signature

Date



Cut here

Brown County Historical Society Proposed Bylaw Amendment

NOTE: Strikethrough indicates language removed; underline indicates language inserted.

Article III, Section 2(a) shall be amended to read as follows:

The Board of Directors shall consist of ~~fifteen (15)~~ twelve (12) directors-at-large and those officers to whom board status is imputed under the provisions of Article IV of these bylaws. The total number of members on the Board of Directors, including officers and directors-at-large shall be ~~nineteen (19)~~ sixteen (16).

Reason for Change: This amendment reduces the number of directors from 19 to 16, including officers and at-large directors.

Phone: (920) 437-1840

JANUARY – FEBRUARY
OPEN for group tours and programs by appointment.

Dec. 4, 10, 11, 17, 18 – 12:00n-4:00p –
"Twas the Night before Christmas" at Hazelwood
Dec. 3, 2:30-5:00p – Holiday Tea

DECEMBER
HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM

BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BCHS offices – 8:30a-4:00p, weekdays

HOURS for
DECEMBER 2011 – FEBRUARY 2012

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