



THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

December 2015

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

2014 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD WINNER

FORT HOWARD GUARDHOUSE AT HERITAGE HILL

by Jerry Abitz

The historic guardhouse once again controls the entrance to Fort Howard, although this time it looks over a mix of original and replicated buildings located at Heritage Hill State Historical Park.

Decommissioned in 1853, the Fort and grounds were sold to the Chicago Northwestern Railroad Company in 1868 and the buildings were either demolished or moved. The guardhouse, acquired by William VandenBrook, was moved to 410 Bond Street to serve as the family residence.

The majority of Green Bay residents passing this home had no idea

this abandoned and deteriorating home

had historic significance. Beneath the dilapidated siding stood a historic treasure, the Fort Howard guardhouse, built in 1833. The guardhouse came into the spotlight in 2009, not to celebrate its venerable history but because it faced a city Raze or Repair order. Alderwoman Celestine Jeffreys, whose 7th District included the site of Fort Howard and the guardhouse, did understand its significance and became a passionate advocate of saving the building. The result of her efforts was the building's move to Heritage Hill State Historical Park in December 2009, where it was temporarily placed to await restoration. For her efforts, Jeffreys received Brown County Historical Society's 2009 Historic Preservation Award.

Established in August of 1816, Fort Howard was part of the Government's military strategy to control and defend 4,000 miles of frontier. The Fort was a symbol of the government's power and ability to control the Fox Wisconsin waterway and to make room for settlers. The guardhouse was built as part of the Army's efforts to replace the deteriorating 1816 log buildings with timber frame structures. It was originally part of a larger, two-story structure, which included the guardhouse building, a

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Restoration complete — the reproduction Commanding Officer's office (left) and the restored 1830s' guardhouse (right), both set on a new reproduction foundation that includes (on the lower level) jail cells and an interpretive room, surrounded by a reproduction wood stockade in its new location as part of Heritage Hill's Fort Howard complex. *Photo by Nick Backhaus.*

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FORT HOWARD GUARDHOUSE

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twin Commanding Officer's office building, and an interconnecting deck on the second floor. The ground story consisted of stone masonry exterior walls with swinging wood door openings in the front and back walls with a wide interconnecting aisle. The front swinging gate served as the main entrance to the Fort. On either side of the aisle were jail cells.

Restoring the Fort Howard guardhouse provided various options for Heritage Hill – they could restore the building as is and add it to their complex of Fort Howard buildings, or undertake a major project and restore it in a manner that more closely resembled its original use and context.

They decided on the latter – to restore the guardhouse and set it on a recreated structure that included foundation walls and prison cells below and the CO's office above. This would reproduce the entire guardhouse/CO's office/jail cell complex along with the stockade to give the visitors a sense of what it was like to go through the main entrance of the Fort.

The obvious location for the new structure

would be south of the existing Fort complex which included the original hospital/ward building as well as the original company kitchen building (moved to the Park in 1975), a reproduction schoolhouse (1975) and a reproduction officer's quarters (1981-1982). When these buildings were moved/built, they were sited on the sloped grade of the Park, with the officer's quarters at the high side and the hospital at the low side. While the



Top: Enlargement of the 1865 Fort Howard photograph, with CO's office (left) and partially-obscured guardhouse (right). *Photo courtesy of Neville Public Museum of Brown County.* **Middle:** The former guardhouse, which had been moved to 410 Bond Street and converted into a residence, before its move to the Heritage Hill complex. *Photo courtesy of Heritage Hill.* **Bottom:** Aerial photo of the Fort Howard complex at Heritage Hill: CO=Company Officer's Office, GH=Guardhouse (circa 2012). *Photo by Don Kraft.*

new two-story structure would have its deck at nearly the same elevation as that of the officer's quarters to the east, it, unfortunately, would have towered over the hospital to the west.

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BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OUR MISSION – To preserve, present and share the heritage of Brown County history through preservation activities, exhibitions, educational programs and events.

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A Proud Past — An Inspired Future

BCHS' CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Our 2015 Capital Campaign was launched in early October. Our theme is "A Proud Past — An Inspired Future." The three-year campaign has a goal of \$1.6 million to fund: long-term Hazelwood operating and historic preservation expenses; one to three years' expenses for Hazelwood renovation, repairs, maintenance and program development; and long-term contract expenses for *Voyageur* magazine.

For more than 120 years, we have served as the premier resource for the history of not only Brown County, but all of Northeast Wisconsin. We have led the way in historic preservation and research, and continue to serve as a valuable source of information and referrals. Our prudent stewardship of Hazelwood Historic House requires infrequent appeals for support, but those appeals are necessary. We will be contacting members in early 2016. Together, through our leadership initiatives and your personal and financial support, we will continue to nurture an interest in our community's past and contribute to the development of our rich cultural heritage.

Thank you for being a part of our mission.

Please contact Chris Dunbar, executive director, at [920-437-1840](tel:920-437-1840), or Tori Rader, president, at [920-336-9408](tel:920-336-9408), to help with this campaign.



Our heartfelt thanks go to Khrome Agency for their generous donation of design services. They brought creativity, innovation and passion to the task of creating campaign materials that will help the Brown County Historical Society meet its goal.

K | H | R | O | M | E

www.facebook.com/BCHS

OUR MISSION

To preserve, present and share the heritage of Brown County history through preservation activities, exhibitions, educational programs and events.

OUR VISION

We envision a vibrant organization that connects the past, present and future and promotes knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history of Brown County.

OUR CORE VALUES

Collaboration, Education, Influence and Stewardship

GO GREEN!! HELP BCHS SAVE \$\$\$!! GO GREEN!!

INBOX...? OR MAILBOX...?



We want to continue to use all of our resources wisely, including the dollars you give so generously. Every member can help reduce costs of publishing the newsletters — paper, printing and postage — by opting to receive the *BCHS Historical Bulletin* in your Inbox.

**So we encourage each of you to
SWITCH TO THE E-VERSION!**

It's easy to sign up! Just email your request to Susan (skslk@centurytel.net); the next issue will arrive in your Inbox!

GO GREEN!! HELP BCHS SAVE \$\$\$!! GO GREEN!!

PRIVACY STATEMENT: Brown County Historical Society (BCHS) will NOT sell or distribute to any third party neither its donor list nor its membership list. Contact info will be used only to conduct the operation and support of the ongoing business of BCHS.

FORT HOWARD GUARDHOUSE

(continued from page 2)



(1)



(4)



(2)



(3)

Counterclockwise: (1) Moving the guardhouse into its final location. (2) Guardhouse raised and set on wood cribbing so the foundation could be constructed underneath. (3) Foundation walls being constructed under the raised guardhouse. (4) Guardhouse lowered on the new foundation and the CO's office being constructed. *Photos by Don Kraft.*

The only solution would have been to raise the hospital! As incredulous as this seemed at first, additional consideration revealed several other advantages that made this a more reasonable option. With the hospital at the low end of the sloped site, it was always subjected to water that flowed down the site and puddled around the building. Also, the sloped grade between the officer's quarters and the hospital made for a grassy area that was awkward to use for demonstrations and encampments. In the end, it was decided to raise the hospital about six feet and the school about two feet to unify all the buildings elevation-wise. For the first time since the Park was planned and built, this would unify the building elevations and create a level and more usable parade ground.

To make this project as authentic as possible, original photos of Fort Howard from 1851 and 1865 were used in making decisions. The building had been modified with the passage of

time. Detailed studies were made as to where the original openings for doorways and windows were located. Later openings had to be infilled. Conclusions also had to be made as to how the original space was subdivided. The guardhouse had six jail cells on the lower level while the upper level housed the guards on duty. Access to the main deck from the ground level was via an outside stairway.

Once these decisions were made, detailed plans were developed by Brander Construction Technology and submitted for DNR and state code approval. While Bain Housemoving of De Pere undertook moving and raising the building, and other contractors did the foundation work and earthwork, all the carpentry and restoration, including reproducing all the windows, doors, mouldings and some of the hardware, was performed by Heritage Hill's employees under the supervision of Nick Backhaus, Heritage Hill's restoration manager.

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EVENTS

Join us for one or all!

A DICKENS OF A CHRISTMAS! AT HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE



Join the Brown County Historical Society and Hazelwood Historic House as we celebrate "A Dickens of a Christmas!" Visitors will be able to see the house decorated with traditional Victorian Christmas decorations and visit with characters from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, including Ebenezer Scrooge, Jacob Marley's ghost, and Dickens himself! Guests will enjoy a tour of the house, learn about holiday traditions from the 1840s, and play classic games in the parlor with Scrooge's nephew, Fred, and his wife! This event will be fun for the entire family! For more details, visit www.browncohistoricalsoc.org or call (920-437-1840).

"A Dickens of a Christmas"

December 12: 12:00-4:00p and 5:30-8:00p;

December 13: 12:00-4:00p;

December 19: 12:00-4:00p and 5:30-8:00p; and

December 20: 12:00-4:00p.

Admission – \$6/Adults; \$5/Seniors (60+); \$4/Children (5-17). Brown County Historical Society members receive free admission!

Image above obtained from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Dickens-A_Christmas_Carol-Title_page-First_edition_1843.jpg. Retrieved Nov. 5, 2014.

Interested in a private tour?
Hazelwood Historic House
is open by appointment
for groups of 10 or more
during the off-season.
Field trips and Scout
groups are always
welcome! Call
920-437-1840
for more
information.



CALENDAR*

DECEMBER

Friday through Sunday, Dec. 4, 5, and 6, 1:00-3:00p –

Holiday Victorian Tea. See more details about Hazelwood's annual Holiday Tea on the back page of this issue!

Friday, Dec. 4: Christmas in Early Green Bay

Saturday, Dec. 5: Ancient Traditions in Modern Christmas Celebrations

Sunday, Dec. 6: Victorian Christmas Stories – A Christmas Carol and 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Dec. 12, 13 and 19, 20; Saturdays 12:00-4:00p and

5:00-8:00p, and Sundays 12:00-4:00p –

A Dickens of a Christmas at Hazelwood

*Events can be added, changed or cancelled without notice. To make sure you stay informed, make our website one of your Favorites – www.browncohistoricalsoc.org!



AT HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE!

The 2015 season is coming to a close, but plans are well underway for the 2016 season! Whatever your interest, we have a volunteer opportunity that fits your passions. We are always in need of people who would like to learn more about Hazelwood and the Martin family to be docents. BCHS has lots of other needs for volunteers throughout the year, including:

Baking – Make sweet treats for our special events! We are in need of cookies and other desserts for our Victorian Teas, Cemetery Walks, A Dickens of a Christmas, and other events throughout the year.

Actors – We always are in search of actors to portray Green Bay residents during our "If Tombstones Could Talk" cemetery walk series. We also have several other small acting opportunities available throughout the year.

Researchers – Our cemetery walks don't happen without lots of research! Want to be involved but are the "behind-the-scenes" type? Want to learn more about the history of Green Bay? Consider becoming a researcher!

Programming Committee – Our special events can't happen without a dedicated group of volunteers planning behind the scenes. Our Programming Committee meets monthly/as needed to set the details that make each of our great events a reality.

Interested? Contact Kat at bchsvolunteer@netnet.net.

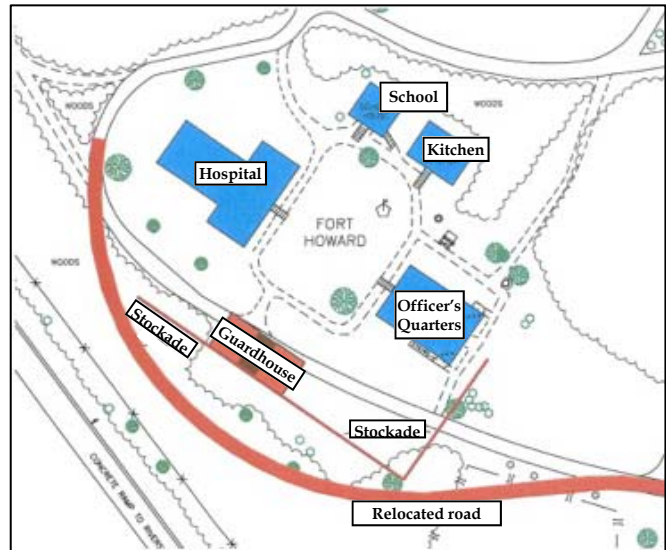


FORT HOWARD GUARDHOUSE

(continued from page 4)

To facilitate this entire plan, the southern loop road had to be moved somewhat to the south (*see site map in right-hand column on this page*). To construct the new building, new footings were poured, then the original guardhouse was brought over, set in position, raised up in the air, and set on wood cribbing. The new concrete foundation walls were then built below, allowing the guardhouse to be lowered and set and the new CO's office to be constructed on the new foundation. The concrete walls were faced with randomly-selected fieldstone veneer to resemble the original stone masonry walls. Extending east and west from the foundation walls is the construction of 240 linear feet of replica stockade, coated with whitewash.

With the completion of this project, visitors can now enter through the impressive front gate to discover an introductory interpretive room on the left and jail cells, clad on all sides with wood, on the right. (The original fort had six cells on each side.) Visitors exit through the portals, and see the additional Fort Howard buildings surrounding a parade ground unfold in front of them. A ramp was built to allow wheelchair and general access to the guardhouse, where soldiers on duty were quartered, and to the adjoining Commanding Officer's office.



Top: Looking from the frontage road on the south side of Heritage Hill, the reproduced stockade wall is part of the new "face" of Fort Howard. *Photo by Nick Backhaus.* **Immediately above:** 2014 site map of the Fort Howard area. *Site map of Heritage Hill grounds courtesy of Heritage Hill.*

A visit to Heritage Hill State Historical Park brings the history of Fort Howard to life, and it is now easier than ever to envision what life was like as an officer, hospital orderly or officer's wife at this isolated frontier post called Fort Howard.

Recognizing Heritage Hill's tremendous effort on this massive project, Brown County Historical Society presented them its 2014 Historic Preservation Award for Building Historic Restoration. Receiving the award for Heritage Hill was Nick Backhaus.

HISTORY'S MINUTE — WISCONSIN'S FIRST BANK

by Clete Delvaux

Have you seen this plaque? Do you know where it's located? Or who played a major role in establishing this early bank?

In 1835, the Michigan Legislative Council passed a bill incorporating the Bank of Wisconsin with a capital stock of \$100,000 to be divided into two thousand shares. Once a certain amount of shares had been sold, the bank would be able to issue legal tender. "At a Stockholders meeting in November of that year, Morgan L. Martin was elected as President of the 'Board of Directors of the Bank of Wisconsin,' owning, it was said, a controlling interest in the corporation, which position of doubtful glory and real worry he held for several years." Martin's brother, John W. Martin, and his cousin, James D. Doty, also were heavily invested.

In August 1835, "shares were opened and a sufficient number were subscribed to permit the establishment of the Bank at Green Bay and its doors were opened in the village of Astor in the fall of 1835." The bank was located in a building built by the Astor Fur Company, "a rambling two-story structure which extended the width of the block on the north side of Chicago Street between Adams and Washington."

Although the bank seemed to survive the Panic of 1837, by 1838 rumors of its insolvency became rife. There were investigations instituted into the bank's proceedings, spurred on by the fact that the official at the Bank of Wisconsin refused to open their books for inspection, a direct violation of its charter. The bickering and finger-pointing amongst directors didn't help matters.

By 1840, "regardless of who was really at fault, the result was the same. The property of the bank was advertised for sale. As one would naturally expect, all the directors and officers were heavily involved and suffered financial loss — and none suffered more than Morgan L. Martin." Though the building was torn down, the stone vault "which was built for this first bank in Wisconsin was still standing in 1899, its heavy door defying the corrosion of time."



Site of the first bank of Wisconsin (2014). Photo by Clete Delvaux.

Oh...! The location of the plaque! It's located behind Fire Station No. 1 on the south side of the Cadillac Building on Chicago Street where it meets Washington Street.



Sources:

- Emerson, Louise Lindsley. *Thesis seeking M.A.* 1922: "Morgan Lewis Martin, Wisconsin Pioneer." University of Wisconsin seeking M.A., p. 36-39.
- Hadden, Clarence Bernard. "History of Early Banking in Wisconsin" as published in *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, Vol. 10. Madison, Wis.: Democrat Printing Co., 1895.
- Martin, Deborah. *History of Brown County, Wisconsin, Past and Present*. Vol. 1. Chicago: J.S. Clarke Publishing, 1913.



TAKE OUR SURVEY ▶

The Brown County Historical Society strives to provide quality programming and events for the community. Please take a moment to fill out this short survey about BCHS' special events and Hazelwood Historic House! Your answers will help us continue to develop programs that fit this community's needs and interests. The survey can be found on our homepage at www.browncohistoricalsoc.org.

Thank you for your thoughts!

It's the
ANNUAL HOLIDAY TEA!
FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DEC. 4, 5 AND 6
1:00-3:00P

Learn about historic holiday traditions in early Green Bay, Victorian England, or the ancient customs that influence modern Christmas celebrations while enjoying a luncheon of tea, sandwiches, savory and sweet treats, all served with old-fashioned flair. Included in the price of admission is a special program on the history of Christmas. Participants also will tour Hazelwood Historic House, decorated with classic Victorian holiday splendor!

Friday, Dec. 4 – Holiday Traditions
of Early Green Bay

Saturday, Dec. 5 – Ancient Traditions'
Influence on Modern Christmas Celebrations

Sunday, Dec. 6 – Christmas in the Late 1800s –
Stories of Charles Dickens (*A Christmas Carol*) and
Clement Moore (*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*)



*Admission is \$20/person. Advanced reservations required.
For questions or reservations, call 920-437-1840.
For more details, visit www.browncohistorcalsoc.org.*

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HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM
See details for events on page 5 of this issue.
 Tours, programs and teas scheduled at your convenience
 by appointment throughout the year.

ADMISSION
 Adult \$5.00 • Seniors (60+) \$4.00 • Children (5-17) \$3.00
 Children under 5 are FREE. AAA discounts.

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 HISTORICAL SOCIETY & HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE