



# THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

March 2016

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

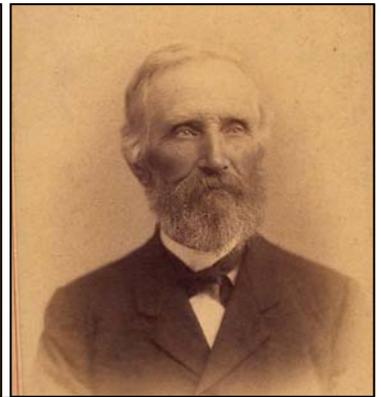
## A GLIMPSE INTO OUR PAST

# JAMES W. WOODRUFF — FARMER, LUMBERMAN, DAIRYMAN

by Dennis R. Jacobs

James W. Woodruff was born in Attica, New York, on March 22, 1819. He was raised on a farm in upstate New York until his parents, Allen and Roxanna “Roxy” (Hitchcock) Woodruff, moved the whole family to Wisconsin in the early 1840s. Both James with his young family along and his father Allen established farms in Waukesha County. James grew his farm from 40 acres, 7 head of sheep and 100 bushels of wheat in 1850 to 110 acres, 61 sheep and 300 bushels of wheat by 1860.

With the success of his farm, James was able to invest and joined J.W. Woodruff and Co., a partnership with H.H. Wheelock, J.S. Kendle and J.C. Dennison, all of Hartford, Wis. These businessmen purchased a lumber mill and forest lands in the Pine Grove area on May 8, 1866, for \$20,000. James, his wife, Almira (Dougherty) and three children — Herbert Eugene, Florence Adel and Walter Harold —



Left: Almira Woodruff. Right: James W. Woodruff. (c. 1885). Photos from Peggy Caraberis, Woodruff family archives. Below: Walter Harold Woodruff (c. 1875). Photo from Sara Mayer, Eastman family archives.



moved to the Green Bay area to manage the operations of the mill. In 1867, J.W. Woodruff & Co. built a lumberyard on Main Street, a block east of Pleasant Street (today’s Baird Street). Success in the lumber business allowed James to buy out his two business partners and take over complete ownership of the lumber operation. An additional mill was purchased at Lily Lake; this allowed him to produce cut lumber at the Pine Grove mill, and cedar post at the Lily Lake mill.

In 1870, J.W. Woodruff & Co. the company was awarded a contract to supply planks for the new Green Bay Manitowoc Plank Road which ran from the Mason Street Bridge at the East River to the Manitowoc County border. That same year, James and Almira build a new gothic-style home across from the lumber yard on Main Street. The Woodruffs, like many people, suffered some loss from the Peshtigo fire of 1871. Some of their timberland in the Town of Bellevue was scorched by the fires. After the fire, Woodruff tilled the burned over land and planted it with timothy and clover.

By 1880, J.W. Woodruff & Co. was supplying timbers, bridge planking and telegraph poles to the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. The mill also supplied oak lumber to Turner & Anderson, shipbuilders from Fort Howard. James Woodruff’s youngest son, Walter Harold Woodruff managed the mill operations, while his father operated

### Inside this issue:

James W. Woodruff <i>(cont.)</i>	2
A Proud Past— An Inspired Future BCHS’ Capital Campaign	3
Switch to E-version! Privacy Statement	
2016 Board Members New Interns for BCHS	4
2016 Annual Meeting	5
History’s Minute National History Day	6
Events Calendar	7
New Exhibit! Handmade: Victorian and Contemporary Craft	8

(continued on page 2)

## JAMES W. WOODRUFF

(continued from page 1)

Edgewood Farm which was established in Bellevue. Edgewood Farm was 250 acres and produced 100 tons of hay, 600 bushels of wheat, almost 1000 bushels of oats, stock animals and 1600 pounds of butter.

As Brown County was being deforested, J.W. Woodruff & Co. started to sell off their milling equipment. In July of 1881, the Woodruffs closed down the Lily Lake mill and sold the equipment to John and Eugene Bovee from Bovee Brothers of Pensaukee. A year later, former forest lands owned by Woodruff & Co. were up for sale as open farm land. By 1884, most of the lumbering operations in Brown County were closed down due to the lack of prime logs and forests.

Dairy farming became the new focus for the Woodruff family after they sold the lumber operation. Almira Woodruff was raised in Massachusetts, where she learned her buttermaking skills as a young girl. The *Green Bay Advocate* referred to her butter as "Gilt-Edge Butter," for which she was awarded first prize for the best butter in Brown County. Edgewood Farm had its own dairy building where Mrs. Woodruff produced her high quality butter.

In October of 1882, Mr. Woodruff erected an experimental silo for green feed storage. It measured 15½ feet by 11 feet. The lower section was

### 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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Green Bay WI 54301

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Bartels, President  
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Tony La Luzerne Jennifer Wolft

constructed with brick, top half was wood and tar paper. The silo held 15 to 20 tons of corn and green clover.

In November of that year, James and Almira rented Beaupre Place (Cotton House) from Mary Cotton. A year later, they purchased the Cotton Farm for \$4,500, renaming the property Hickory Grove. Walter Harold Woodruff moved to Edgewood Farm and continued to raise stock animals and produce Gilt-Edge Butter. A very dry summer in August of 1886 led up



Woodruff cottage, now Cotton House on Main Street (c. 1871). Photos from Shirley Primavera, Smith family archives.

to a large fire that threatened Edgewood Farm. Walter Harold staved off the flames due to having one of the only wells with water in that part of Bellevue. Other farmers in that area lost their homes and farms.

As the James and Almira got up in their years, they decided to spend winters in Florida. In November 1892, they moved to Avon Park. Once in Florida, the Woodruffs established a citrus farm. On December 12 and 13, 1894, Florida was hit with cold weather, known as the Big Freeze, which destroyed all their fruit trees. In spite of the loss, they remained in Florida. Eventually two of their children (and their families) also moved down to join them. James W. Woodruff passed away December 26, 1901. Almira Woodruff passed away April 5, 1915.



**Author's Note** – This article is based on four years of research about the Woodruff family. Before this project, the only mention of James W. Woodruff was names printed on the 1875 and 1889 Brown County plat maps and that he was the second owner of the Cotton House. After many hours of newspaper reading and record searching, a clearer understanding emerged of who James W. Woodruff and his family were and how they changed and added to the rich history of Brown County. A presentation is currently being created for a presentation at the Brown County Library East Branch on Friday, April 1 at 1:00p.

If you have any questions or would like to peruse some of the resources utilized for this article, please contact the author by sending an email to [dennerg@hotmail.com](mailto:dennerg@hotmail.com).



## A Proud Past — An Inspired Future

### BCHS' CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

*"As the oldest settlement in the State of Wisconsin, we must do all we can to preserve the history of our forefathers and those who came before us and called Green Bay home. I see Hazelwood as a local treasure, showcasing the rich and colorful history of our community. This history is detailed in pristine fashion through their books, journals, diaries, letters and other documents highlighting our past. Hazelwood is a local authority on Green Bay history and I encourage you to do your part and help preserve a critical historic resource right here in our backyard."*

—James Schmitt, Mayor of Green Bay



2015 was a year of new ventures as well as challenges. Armed with our recently developed strategic planning initiative, we embarked on a capital campaign to provide for short-term renovation and preservation of Hazelwood as well as to ensure the long-term financial foundation of Hazelwood and *Voyageur* Magazine through endowments. The capital campaign provides us the opportunity to seek new ways to make the study of local history more meaningful, and emerge from this process as a stronger, more vibrant organization. We continue to serve the community with valuable programs while we search for new and dynamic ways to increase audiences and stay relevant in a digital age.

Before starting the campaign, we asked ourselves and stakeholders difficult questions, such as: Why should the community support this effort? What is our role in the community? What do we want to accomplish? The process clarified challenges as well as illustrated the significance of Hazelwood, the popularity of *Voyageur* Magazine, and the important place the Society holds in preserving our past and creating links to the present.

By framing our challenges as new possibilities and opportunities, we are discovering what we can do differently and creatively to be an even more valuable resource to the community.

Since 1899, the Society has been a moving force in preserving and sharing the history of Brown County and the region. The history we preserve and the stories we share are vital to us as a nation and irreplaceable to us as individuals. By safeguarding Hazelwood, its artifacts and stories, we are linking our past to the future of the next generations.

With a grant from the Pivot Rock Foundation, we updated our website with a fresh, user-friendly look, and anticipate designing interactive material that will help us reach a wider audience. A successful campaign will allow us to revisit our permanent display, housed in the lower level of Hazelwood, and incorporate technology and interactive media to share stories, objects and ideas.

The capital campaign committee meets monthly and progress remains steady as we identify and approach potential major donors, foundations and corporations that identify with our mission.

By early summer, we will appeal to our stalwart members, patrons and friends who understand the value of preserving Hazelwood and sustaining *Voyageur* Magazine, a precious regional resource. Contributions to the Brown County Historical Society can be made easily and safely online through our website, mail or by contacting the Brown County Historical Society.

*We are deeply grateful for your support.  
We cannot do this without you.*

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](mailto: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.

## BCHS BOARD UPDATES —

### CLASS OF 2016-2017-2018



#### JUDY L'EMPEREUR GREEN BAY

Judy L'Empereur was born in Green Bay and is a life-long resident of this area. She received a high school diploma from Green Bay

West High School. Judy is married to Dennis L'Empereur and they have five grown children and 12 grandchildren.

Judy enjoys learning and teaching history. She currently serves on two committees of UWGB's Learning in Retirement program, and has been enrolled in history classes ranging from Early American History to the Civil War. Judy spent 15 years at Heritage Hill State Historical Park teaching grade school children to know and appreciate their past.

Judy is a past member of the Board of Directors and is returning for another term. She serves as chairperson of the Society's Program Committee and guides Hazelwood tours for ages ranging from seniors to school children. Judy also serves as a judge for the Wisconsin regional National History Day program which takes place at UWGB each spring.



#### MAT HOFFMAN DE PERE

For over 15 years, Mat has worked alongside his parents at Home Interiors Flooring, their family business.

Through his work and upbringing, he has developed a great love of history, interior design and historic places. Mat grew up in De Pere, and is currently researching the history of his former childhood home, the Crow's Nest. The stone house, oldest in Brown County, also was the site of his and his wife, Dawn's, wedding in 2014.

Mat believes people of every place and time deserve to have their story told, and he is ready to do his part in saving and sharing the history of Brown County.



#### TONY LA LUZERNE WEST DE PERE

Tony returns to the BCBS Board after serving from 2007-2014. He was born and raised in the Astor neighborhood, a few blocks from Hazelwood, and currently resides in West De Pere. He graduated from Green Bay East High School, UWGB, and has a Masters degree in Library and Information Studies from UW-Madison.

Tony is an Associate Academic Librarian at the UWGB Cofrin Library and also a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists. His interest in local history and genealogy stems from his ancestors' deep roots in Northeastern Wisconsin, dating back to the 1850s. He is a former board director of both the De Pere Historical and Historic Allouez societies and is an admitted "golf nut."

## BCBS WELCOMES NEW INTERNS



**MARK PETROSKI** — Currently going to school full-time at UWGB, I am majoring in Arts Management and Philosophy. I am married and have two adult children, and have worked part-time for the Green Bay Packers the past three years. I enjoy music, cooking and playing drums. I'm excited to be a part of the planning process for the upcoming month-long arts event, "Handmade: Victorian and Contemporary Craft," scheduled for this summer at Hazelwood Historic House (*see more details on the back page*). The event should prove to be both fun and educational. Hazelwood is truly a unique historical treasure for both the local community as well as the State of Wisconsin. I look forward to offering my assistance in the introduction of Hazelwood to a new audience.



**LIZ SCHROEDER** — I am both a History and Humanistic Studies major with an Ancient and Medieval emphasis. Graduating this May, I plan on going to graduate school for a degree in Museum Sciences. For my spring semester I will be interning with the BCBS, primarily working on the Cemetery Walk. I will be assisting with the research of historical figures to be used for the walk as well as helping create additional documents and performing other tasks related to the walk.

## 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

Brown County Historical Society members and guests gathered at the Rock Garden on Thursday, Feb. 11, to celebrate the previous year's accomplishments.

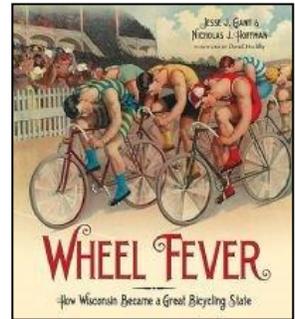
President Tori Rader thanked departing board member Tony Bellovary for his service, and introduced new and returning board members. Treasurer Dennis Wojahn reported on the finances of the Society, thanked members for their support and stressed the importance of meeting our capital campaign goals. President Rader thanked staff members Christine Dunbar, Kat Breese and Kent Crain, along with Professor David Voelker, editor of *Voyageur Magazine*, for their dedication.

Mary Jane Herber presented the **Local History Award of Merit** to Clete and Loretta Delvaux, acknowledging their long-standing service to the Brown County Historical Society. Both Clete and Loretta shared stories about their local history experiences. Loretta discussed the continuing success of the cemetery walks which she initiated in 2002.

The **2015 Historic Preservation Awards** were presented to:

- **Automobile Gallery**, 400 South Adams Street, Green Bay; William "Red" Lewis accepting.
- **Divine Temple Church of God in Christ**, 425 Cherry Street, Green Bay; Sharon Harper accepting.
- **Frankenthal Building**, 130 North Adams Street, Green Bay; Howard Frankenthal accepting.

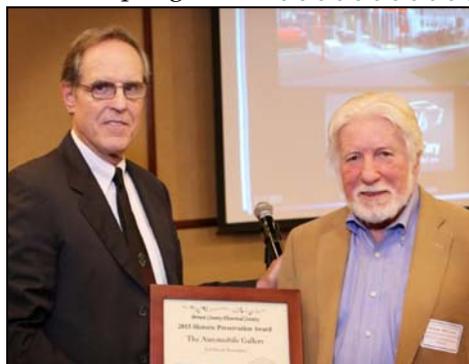
Our featured speaker this year was **Nicholas Hoffman**, who brought us "The First Bicycle Boom in Northeast Wisconsin, 1869-1900." Hoffman, Chief Curator at the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, Wis., engaged the audience with stories and images from his book, *Wheel Fever*, co-authored with Jesse Grant. His presentation highlighted the rich cycling history in Northeast Wisconsin from the velocipede in 1869 to the end of the bicycle boom around 1900. Hoffman along with Grant published *Wheel Fever* in 2013.



President-elect Mark Bartels closed the meeting with a thank you to Tori Rader for her valuable service as BCHS Board President.

## OUR GRATEFUL THANKS...

Mr. Howard Frankenthal followed his award acceptance by generously pledging, as a challenge match, \$18,000 to the Society's Capital Campaign. We profusely thank Mr. Frankenthal and ask you for your support in matching this pledge.



**Top Row, Left:** Don Kraft presenting Historic Preservation Award for Preservation Activities to Sharon Harper of Divine Temple Church of God in Christ. **Center:** Don Kraft (left) presenting William "Red" Lewis with a Historic Preservation Award in the category of Historic Preservation/Rehabilitation. **Right:** Don Kraft (right) presenting Howard Frankenthal with Historic Preservation Award in the category of Adaptive Reuse. **Bottom Row, Left:** Clete and Loretta Delvaux award winners for the Local History Award of Merit. **Right:** Nicholas Hoffman, speaker. *Photos by Chuck Golueke.*

# HISTORY'S MINUTE — THE DRY LAND OF PLENTY

by Kat Breese

The only remaining “dry” (alcohol-free) municipality in the state of Wisconsin may soon be changing its laws. There are two referendums on the spring ballot in Ephraim which would allow beer sales within the village limits and restaurants to serve wine.

The small community has its roots right here in Green Bay. When Otto Tank and his wife, Caroline, came to Green Bay in 1850, they purchased 800 acres of land in what is now west Green Bay, with the intentions of establishing a Moravian settlement. Twenty-five families traveled north from Milwaukee to this new settlement, which they called Ephraim or “Land of Plenty.”

Ephraim remained in Green Bay for three years until a conflict arose between Tank and the Moravian pastor Reverend Andrew Iverson over ownership of the land. The settlers were under the impression that Tank intended to sell them the land, while Tank saw himself as a benefactor who allowed the community to settle on the land he owned. When Rev. Iverson approached Tank about deeding the

land to the settlers, Tank “flew into a rage and refused to title us the land.”<sup>1</sup> Iverson took his flock north to Door County where the community resettled and kept the name Ephraim.

Ephraim has been a dry village since its founding in 1853. During this spring’s elections, Ephraim’s 300 residents will be given the opportunity to end the prohibition. But, don’t get too excited about possibly sipping a glass of wine while overlooking the Bay. Previous votes to allow alcohol sales within village limits failed in 1932 and 1992.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>“The Tank Family.” Heritage Hill Interpretive Materials. Courtesy of Heritage Hill State Historical Park.

## Sources

Associated Press. “Ephraim referendum would end ‘dry’ tradition.” WBAY. January 25, 2016. <http://wbay.com/2016/01/25/ephraim-referendum-would-end-dry-tradition/>

Holand, Hjalmar Rued. “Nils Otto Tank.” *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at its Fifty-Sixth Annual Meeting* (1908): 146-154. <https://books.google.com/books?>

[id=VMUTAAAAYAAJ&lpg=PA146&ots=SasIyWTkSi&dq=nils%20otto%20tank&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q=nils%20otto%20tank&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=VMUTAAAAYAAJ&lpg=PA146&ots=SasIyWTkSi&dq=nils%20otto%20tank&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q=nils%20otto%20tank&f=false) (Accessed January 25, 2016).

“The Tank Family.” Heritage Hill Interpretive Materials. Courtesy of Heritage Hill State Historical Park.

## NHD NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

Exploration, Encounter and Exchange in History is the 2016 theme for National History Day. The regional contest, coordinated by the Cofrin Library Archives on the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay campus took place on March 5.

The goal of National History Day is to promote the study of history by offering a creative forum in which students express their scholarship through the study of primary sources and firsthand accounts.

The Brown County Historical Society is proud to share with you the winners of the Society’s special awards which each year are given to one Junior and one Senior project that best relates to the history of Northeast Wisconsin.



This year’s Junior winner was Phaelan Schultz, a student at Bayshore Community Academy from the Oconto School District. Phaelan’s project, “The Peshtigo Fire: 1871,” was in the Individual Performance Category. See photo bottom left; Kent Crain presenting.

2016’s Senior winner, “Jean Nicolet,” was a Documentary group project by Presley Busch (not pictured), Abigail Dobbins, Courtney Novotny and Clara Welhouse from Green Bay Southwest High School. See photo below; Kent Crain (far right) presenting.

Congratulations to Phaelan, Presley, Courtney, Abigail and Clara for their excellent work! Both projects are regional finalists and advance to the State competition in Madison in late April or early May.



# EVENTS

Join us for one or all!

## A HEARTFELT THANK YOU ...



Program Manager and Volunteer Coordinator Kat Breese will be leaving her full-time position in mid-



L to R: Henry (in arms), Kat and Joey Breese

February to stay home with her new son, Henry Benjamin. Kat is thankful for her time and BCHS, and the opportunities and challenges the position has afforded her. We will miss her sense of humor, generous nature and excellent organizational skills.

Never fear, Kat still will be around to help plan some of the great special events that Hazelwood has to offer in 2016!

## HISTORY TREASURE TOUR MAY 19, 5:00P-8:00P

Explore Hidden Treasures and the unique history of Brown County in one exciting evening as eleven museums open their doors with special performances, behind-the-scenes tours, and exclusive access to expert staff during this public event.

### Participating Organizations:

The Automobile Gallery  
[www.theautomobilegallery.org](http://www.theautomobilegallery.org)  
 Brown County Historical Society  
[www.browncohistoricalsoc.org](http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org)  
 De Pere Historical Society  
[www.deperehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.deperehistoricalsociety.org)  
 Green Bay and De Pere Antiquarian Society  
[www.antiquariansocgbdp.org](http://www.antiquariansocgbdp.org)  
 Heritage Hill Historical Park [www.heritagehillgb.org](http://www.heritagehillgb.org)  
 Historic Allouez Society [Rita-Houston@thehistoricalallouezsociety.org](mailto:Rita-Houston@thehistoricalallouezsociety.org)  
 Howard-Suamico Historical Society  
[www.hshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.hshistoricalsociety.org)  
 National Railroad Museum  
[www.nationalrrmuseum.org](http://www.nationalrrmuseum.org)  
 Neville Public Museum of Brown Co.  
[www.nevillepublicmuseum.org](http://www.nevillepublicmuseum.org)  
 Oneida Nation Museum [www.oneida-nsngov/Museum/](http://www.oneida-nsngov/Museum/)  
 Pulaski Area Historical Society  
[www.pulaskiwhistory.com](http://www.pulaskiwhistory.com)

# CALENDAR



## MAY

May 19, 5:00-8:00p – History Treasure Tour. Free event.

May 21, 10:00a and 2:00p – Astor Neighborhood Walking Tour. \$5/person. Reservations.

## JUNE

June 2 through June 26 – Handmade: Victorian and Contemporary Craft. Regular admission.

June 3, 6:00-8:00p – Handmade Opening Night: Meet the Artists. Price TBA.

June 8 and 9, 6:30p – Fort Howard Cemetery Walk. \$7/person; \$14/family.

## JULY

July 16, 1:30-3:00p – Finding Fort Howard's Lost Roots: A Walking Tour. Free event.

July 30, 12:30-3:30p – Fairy Faire. Light refreshments. \$8/person.

## AUGUST

August 10 and 11, 6:30p – Allouez Catholic Cemetery Walk. \$7/person; \$14/family.

August 20, 1:30-3:00p – Finding Fort Howard: A Walking Tour of the Fort's Original Boundaries, Based on Surveying Techniques. Free event.

## SEPTEMBER

September 7, 8 and 10, 6:30p – Woodlawn Cemetery Walk. \$7/person; \$14/family.

September 17 – Downtown Walking Tour. \$5/person.

## OCTOBER

October 15, 21 and 22 – Poe Evermore at Haunted Hazelwood. Times and prices TBA.

## DECEMBER

December 2 and 3, 1:00-3:00p – Holiday Tea. \$20/person.

December 10, 11, 17 and 18 – A Dickens of a Christmas. \$6/person.

*\*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](http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org)!*

**NEW  
EXHIBIT!**

## Handmade: Victorian and Contemporary Craft

Victorian craft brought beauty and usefulness to everyday objects and was interwoven into everyday domestic life. Crazy quilts, hair wreaths, scrapbooks, intricate embroidery, paintings and hand-painted china are legacies of women's ingenuity, creativity and connection to society. Explore the connections between the past and modern art. This exciting exhibit pairs contemporary sculpture, paintings, photography, ceramics, wearable art, steam punk art and needlework with Victorian crafts set in Hazelwood's elegant Victorian interior.

*Workshops to engage your inner artist are currently being planned.*

**Meet the Artist Reception  
Friday, June 3, 6:00-8:00p.  
Details to be announced.**



Join artist Amy Eliason for a Paint-and-Palette afternoon at Hazelwood and paint these adorable birds!  
Call 920-437-1840 for details.

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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**HOURS for  
MARCH-JUNE 2016**

**BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
BCHS offices - 8:30a-4:00p, weekdays  
1008 South Monroe Street, Green Bay WI 54301 [MAP](#)  
Phone: [920-437-1840](tel:920-437-1840) / [www.BrownCoHistoricalSoc.org](http://www.BrownCoHistoricalSoc.org)

**HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM**  
Open Thursdays through Sundays, June 2-Aug. 28  
*See details for events on page 7 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.

LIKE US ON [FACEBOOK!](#) BROWN COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE

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