



# THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

December 2019

Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4

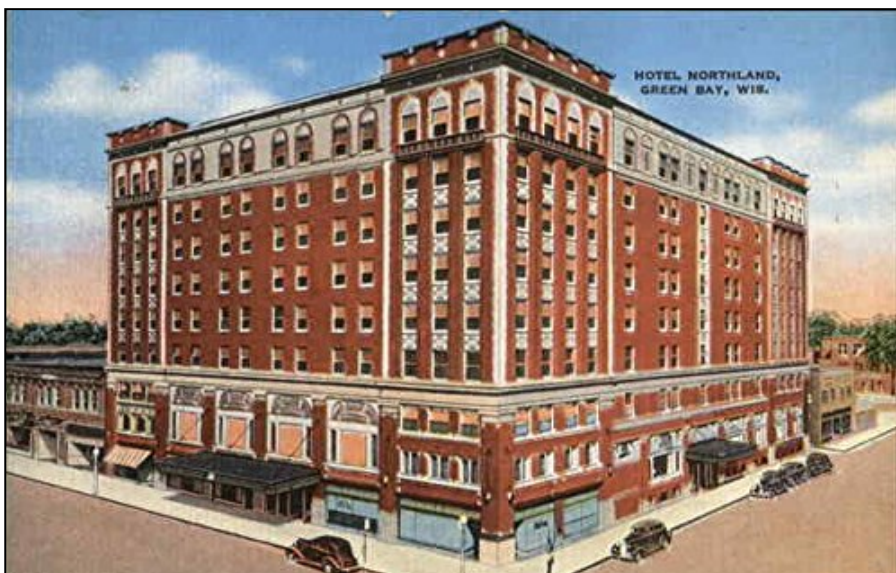
*A newsletter by the Brown County Historical Society dedicated to the preservation of history in Brown County, Wisconsin.*

## HOTEL NORTHLAND 304 NORTH ADAMS STREET, GREEN BAY

by Jerry Abitz

Around 1912, Walter Schroeder of Milwaukee decided to become a developer of fine hotels. In the 1920s, he built or acquired at least nine lavish hotels, including the Astor and Schroeder hotels in Milwaukee, the Loraine in Madison, the Retlaw in Fond du Lac, and, particularly, the new Hotel Northland in Green Bay located on the northeast corner of Pine and Adams streets.

Prominent Milwaukee architect Herbert W. Tullgren designed all of these hotels. Initially, local real estate dealer C.J. Williams met with Schroeder to discuss bringing better hotel accommodations to Green Bay. While Schroeder originally balked at building a new hotel in Green Bay, Williams subsequently succeeded in this endeavour. "Mr. Williams is one of the



Historic Hotel Northland (circa 1940s). Photo courtesy of BCHS digital archives.

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11:00a-7:00p Saturdays, Dec. 7 and 14	

most wide awake real estate dealers in the city, but his work in connection with the Northland was not so much as selling a piece of real estate as it was securing one of the most important developments of a quarter century for Green Bay."<sup>1</sup>

Banquets and dances announced the Hotel Northland's grand opening in 1924. The largest hotel in Wisconsin, boasting 260 rooms, it was nine stories tall. Billed as Green Bay's original "million dollar hotel," it quickly became Green Bay's business and social center. The hotel hosted many VIPs, such as John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Kennedy, Lon Chaney, Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson. It played a major role in Green Bay Packer football events, hosting a National Football League (NFL) conference in 1927 as well as Packer training camps in 1950 and 1959, and was the team hotel for visiting NFL teams.<sup>2</sup>

By 1972, however, the hotel had fallen on hard times. It was purchased from the Schroeder estate and converted into a mixed-use apartment building named the Port Plaza Inn. In 1979, it was converted again into subsidized low-income apartments and renamed Port Plaza Towers. Over the years, there was interest in returning the building into a hotel, but finding new housing for the subsidized residents was an obstacle. Finally, in 2011, the Port Plaza residents moved to a new housing development and, with the Northland building now empty, renovation talks began in earnest.

In 2013, a \$44 million renovation project was announced. Once development partners finally secured funding, renovation work began in January 2016. However, the project

*(continued on page 2)*



Top row, left: Renovating underway. Image obtained from <https://www.facebook.com/hotelnorthland>. Top row, right: Northland Hotel lobby. Image obtained from <https://www.thehotelnorthland.com>. Bottom row, left: Remodeled guest room. Image obtained from <https://www.thehotelnorthland.com>. Bottom row, right: Restored Crystal Ballroom set for a meeting. Image obtained from <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/grbak-hotel-northland-autograph-collection/?scid=bb1a189a-fec3-4d19-a255-54ba596febe2>

## 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.

1008 South Monroe Avenue  
Green Bay WI 54301  
Phn: (920) 437-1840 Fax: (920) 455-4518  
Executive Director: Christine Dunbar  
Website: [browncohistoricalsoc.org](http://browncohistoricalsoc.org)  
Email: [bcchs@netnet.net](mailto:bcchs@netnet.net)

*The Historical Bulletin*  
Production editor: Susan K. Slikkers  
*Voyageur*  
Interim Manager: Christine Dunbar  
Phone: (920) 437-1840

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## HOTEL NORTHLAND

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soon became mired in delays and cost overruns. When a bank was forced to pull its funding, work stopped later that year. New funding proved elusive and, in 2017, a receiver was appointed to rescue the project. Finally, in early 2018, it was announced that the Hotel Northland would become a Marriott brand hotel, managed by Greenwood Hospitality, with work performed by a new general contractor. With new funding by Octagon Credit Partners, debts owed to unpaid subcontractors were satisfied, and work ambitiously resumed toward a goal of beginning to reopen the hotel by the end of 2018.

The journey to bring the 95-year-old building back to its original use was longer than anticipated, but that made the celebration a little sweeter when the first guests were checked in on Thursday, February 14, 2019. After a long history of grandeur, then decline, then uncertain progress, the historic spaces of the Hotel Northland — including the Crystal Ballroom, the Walnut Dining Room, and the main lobby, restored to their former opulence — welcomed a new generation of visitors. The 160-room hotel features 18 suites. The Walnut Room offers fine dining and Poke the Bear is the hotel's take on a sports bar. The Crystal Ballroom highlights 11,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

The Hotel Northland received National Register designation on October 30, 2013. On December 11 of the same year, Governor Scott Walker signed the October Special Session Assembly Bill 4 into law at the Hotel Northland. The law doubled state tax credits from 10 percent to 20 percent on historic structures built before 1936. Walker stated “the passing of this legislation will

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## WHAT'S NEW WITH *VOYAGEUR* MAGAZINE

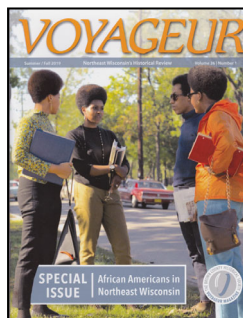
by Christine Dunbar

One of our subscribers, Nona Le Ferve, a subscriber since 1998 and 85 years old, wrote. "Thank you for putting together a magazine of this quality. It is amazing. I am so far behind in reading but saving them all for the future when I am in my rocking chair."

I agree with Nona it is remarkable magazine. Thank you to *Voyageur's* exceptional past editor David Voelker and welcome to our new editor Eric Morgan.

### A Note from the Past Editor of *Voyageur*

As many of you know by now, the Summer/Fall 2019, 35th-anniversary issue which focused on African American history, was my final issue as editor of *Voyageur* magazine.



During my nearly five years as editor of *Voyageur*, I was very fortunate to work with a wonderful team of authors, student interns, student graphic designers, art directors, associate editors, editorial committee members, and historical society staff. A list of all of the people with whom I collaborated as editor would take up much more space than I have here in this newsletter—a fact that speaks to how much producing *Voyageur* is a team effort.

I would like to thank all of the Brown County Historical Society staff, volunteers and members who support *Voyageur* in various ways. I think the magazine plays an important role in developing community in our region through the use of history. Given changing demographics in our region, I hope it can continue to become more inclusive of all members of our regional community.

I'm excited to see the energy that the new editor, Professor Eric Morgan, brings to the position, and I wish him all the best.

~~David Voelker

Professor of Humanities and History  
University of Wisconsin–Green Bay

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[www.browncohistoricalsoc.org](http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org)



## THANK YOU! AND BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAYS AND NEW YEAR

by Christine Dunbar

The holidays are just around the corner and another program-packed year is about to end. Thank you to all of you who contributed to a successful year at the Historical Society.

- ♦ To our Capital Campaign contributors, your extraordinary generosity allows us to begin some necessary renovation initiatives at the Hazelwood Historic House.
- ♦ To our volunteers, the gift of your dedication, energy and time are the reason our programs and events — including tours, educational and seasonal programs, special events and publications — are successful. We could not do it without you.
- ♦ To our members, subscribers, donors and sponsors, your commitment is remarkable and we cannot say thank you often enough for your support.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of the Brown County Historical Society, we wish you a festive holiday season and a happy new year!



## WHAT'S NEW WITH VOYAGEUR

(continued from page 3)

### A Note from the New Editor of *Voyageur*

I am honored to introduce myself as the new editor-in-chief of *Voyageur: Northeast Wisconsin's Historical Review*. I am an associate professor of Democracy and Justice Studies and History at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, and previously served as *Voyageur's* review editor and associate editor. I am extremely grateful for the work that my predecessor and colleague, David Voelker, accomplished during his five-year tenure as editor-in-chief, producing stellar issues, including our special 35th anniversary issue on African Americans in Northeast Wisconsin. We're now in a great position to move the magazine forward with exciting developments.

One of my major goals as editor-in-chief is to modernize the publication and create more opportunities for our readers to interact with the magazine. To do so, we've launched an entirely revamped website ([voyageurmagazine.org](http://voyageurmagazine.org)), created a stronger social media presence (find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), and have initiated a biannual Author Talk Series.

We held our first event in September at Fifth Ward Brewery in Oshkosh, with author John Harry delivering a fantastic talk on the history of the People's Brewing Company. Our next event will be held at the Barnes & Noble Green Bay on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020, at 7 p.m. Author Steve Frozena will deliver a talk on the infamous bank robber, Eddie Bentz, and the 1954 robbery of the Pulaski-Chase Co-Op. We hope many of you will be able to join us.

If you have any questions or comments about the magazine or if you would like to submit an article (we are *always* in need of new content!), please feel free to contact me at: [morgane@uwgb.edu](mailto:morgane@uwgb.edu). We love hearing from our readers!

~~Eric J. Morgan  
Associate Professor of Democracy and  
Justice Studies and History  
University of Wisconsin–Green Bay  
Email: [morgane@uwgb.edu](mailto:morgane@uwgb.edu)  
Website: [voyageurmagazine.org](http://voyageurmagazine.org)

## HOTEL NORTHLAND

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revitalize downtown districts across the state." Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt stated that this is what a real city is about: preserving history, creating something that is socially significant and offers economic development.<sup>3</sup>

Mark Steuer, in his article, "Green Bay's Million Dollar Hotel," discusses the significance of historic preservation and the hope that the Hotel Northland project will spur further efforts to attain Certified Local Government (CLG) designation for the City of Green Bay.<sup>4</sup> He cites Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation from 1993 to 2009. "There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here or there, but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody."<sup>5</sup>

The Hotel Northland is truly a historic landmark that embodies Green Bay's heritage and sense of place, while offering countless opportunities for the community's future.

The Brown County Historical Society presented the Hotel Northland with a preservation award for Building Restoration and Renovation at its February 2019 annual dinner.

### SIDE BAR

The City of Green Bay received Certified Local Government Status on May 8, 2019. A national preservation program initiated by the National Historic Preservation Act, it helps integrate historic preservation concerns with local planning and allows for the application of historic preservation grant funds.



### Footnotes —

- <sup>1</sup>"Williams was Big Factor in Getting New Hostelry Here." *Green Bay Press Gazette*, March 20, 1924.
- <sup>2</sup>United States Dept. of Interior National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places continuation sheet. October 22, 2009.
- <sup>3</sup>Mark Steuer, "Green Bay's 'Million Dollar Hotel.'" *Voyageur Magazine*. Winter/Spring 2017, Vol. 33, No. 2, p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup>Mark Steuer, "Green Bay's 'Million Dollar Hotel.'" *Voyageur Magazine*. Winter/Spring 2017, Vol. 33, No. 2, p. 28.
- <sup>5</sup>"Hotel Northland's Development Team Adds Experts in Historic Renovation and Hospitality Marketing." [www.hotelexecutive.com](http://www.hotelexecutive.com). June 17, 2014, in Mark Steuer's "Green Bay's 'Million Dollar Hotel.'" *Voyageur Magazine*. Winter/Spring 2017, Vol. 33, No. 2, p. 28.



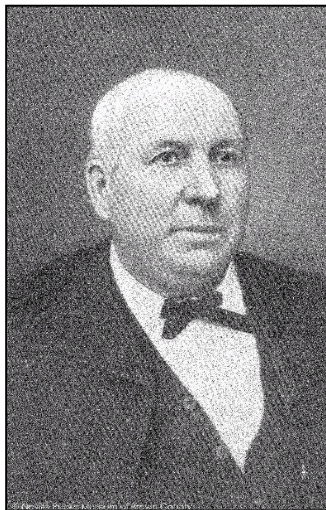
# SHARING OUR STORIES — SNOWBIRDS, PRESERVATION AND A BANK ROBBERY

by Christine Dunbar

Thomasville, Georgia, is a small town of about 20,000 population, acknowledged for its preservation efforts and historic downtown. Plantations, museums and historic homes are located throughout Thomasville and offer glimpses into the grand Victorian era, during which Thomasville was known as the "Winter Resort of the South."<sup>1</sup>

The City of Thomasville reached out to many of the Northern industrial areas to attract winter visitors from the 1890s onward. An article from the December 13, 1892, edition of the local newspaper states that more than ninety people from Wisconsin visited, including several political figures. Some of those people bought winter homes in Thomasville. One of them was David McCartney from Fort Howard, Wisconsin. McCartney purchased 1,163 acres in 1886 and, over the next six years, acquired a total of approximately 8,000 acres in the Thomasville area.<sup>2</sup>

The Society received an email from Christopher, a Thomasville resident involved in historic preservation projects. He was researching David McCartney who died at his winter home in Thomasville in 1898. His email stated that McCartney was a rather large figure in the Fort Howard (Wisconsin) community during the 1870-1890 timeframe. He mentioned his involvement in having a newspaper, interest in the electric plant, sawmills, streetcar lines, etc. He stated that McCartney's winter cottage in Thomasville is a showpiece of architecture and one of the many winter homes built by families from our region. Christopher was interested in learning more about McCartney and his home in Fort Howard.<sup>3</sup>



David McCartney (1814-1898). Image obtained from [www.firstpresgreenbay.org](http://www.firstpresgreenbay.org).

As it turns out, we portrayed David McCartney in our 2011 cemetery walk at Fort Howard Memorial Park so had some information. We also passed the request to the Local History



David McCartney's winter residence in Thomasville, Georgia. Photo by Christopher (last name unknown).

Department of the Brown County Library. Staff member Dennis Jacobs located additional information.

Christopher sent us the research he gathered about McCartney, some of it from the *History of Brown County* by Deborah Martin. Christopher compiled information to create a docent guide about McCartney's winter house for a successful walking tour called the "Spring Ramble" which had 40 homes open over a three-day period with attendance of 600.

Christopher stated, "We preserve the homes and names here but no one really does the research into who they were, where they lived up North or even gathers pictures of what they looked like which, to me, makes them more human and closer to us than just words or plaques."<sup>4</sup>

Through this email request, I discovered a particularly intriguing story about a local figure in the community. McCartney is described as a man of excellent business ability who recognized an opportunity and knew how to use it to the best advantage. After involvement in many business ventures, he established the McCartney Exchange Bank at Fort Howard in 1891. The following year it incorporated as a national bank. Three years later Fort Howard and Green Bay consolidated and it became the McCartney National Bank of Green Bay. In 1891, there was a substantial robbery at the bank. Rather than hiring detectives, McCartney put his trust in God. While wintering in Georgia he received word that most of the money was recovered at no cost to the bank. In gratitude, he resolved to do something for God. He purchased land and built a new brick church for The First Presbyterian Church of

(continued on page 6)



~2019~

## DECEMBER

Saturdays, Dec. 7 and 14, 11:00a-7:00p — Ethnic Christmas at Hazelwood. General admission.

~2020~

## MARCH

Friday and Saturday, March 13 and 14, 1:00-3:00p — Women of Early Green Bay: Afternoon Tea

## MAY

Saturday, May 16, 9:00a — Downtown Walking Tour

## JUNE

Monday, June 1, 6:00p, Inside\* — If Tombstones Could Talk: Fort Howard Cemetery Walk

Tuesday and Wednesday, June 2 and 3, 6:00p — If Tombstones Could Talk: Fort Howard Cemetery Walk

## JULY

Saturday, July 25, 11:00a-2:00p — Faeries & Wizards Fest

## AUGUST

Saturday, Aug. 1, 1:00-3:00p — Hazelwood Summer Tea

Tuesday and Wednesday, Aug. 4 and 5, 6:00p, Outside\* — If Tombstones Could Talk: Allouez Catholic Cemetery

Saturday, Aug. 15, 9:00a-4:00p — Brown County Historical Society Road Rally 2020 Fundraiser

## SEPTEMBER

Tuesday, Sept. 1, 6:00p, Inside\* — If Tombstones Could Talk: Woodlawn Cemetery

Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 2 and 3, 6:00p, Outside\* — If Tombstones Could Talk: Woodlawn Cemetery

## OCTOBER

Fridays and Saturdays, October 9, 10, 16 and 17, 5:00-8:00p — Hazelwood: CLUE!

## DECEMBER

Friday and Saturday, Dec. 4 and 5, 1:00-3:00p — Hazelwood Holiday Tea

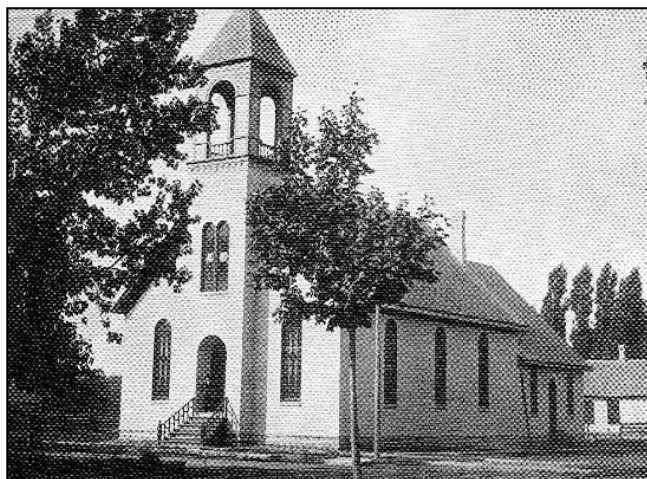
Saturdays, Dec. 12 and 19, 11:00a-7:00p — Hazelwood Holiday Event

\*We are offering indoor Cemetery programs at both Fort Howard and Woodlawn in 2020 to accommodate those who have difficulty walking. Space is limited and reservations are required.

\*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)!

## SHARING OUR STORIES

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The First Presbyterian Church (1892 to 1924). Image obtained from [www.firstpresgreenbay.org](http://www.firstpresgreenbay.org).

which he was a founding member. That church stood from 1892 to 1924 at 200 North Ashland when a new church was constructed.<sup>5</sup>

According to Christopher, it is so easy for the stories to get lost if we don't find ways of telling them to new generations. He plans to send us information about any other snowbirds from our area. We, in turn, will provide information about their lives in Wisconsin.

### Footnotes —

<sup>1</sup>Explore Georgia. City of Thomasville. <https://www.exploregeorgia.org/city/thomasville>. Accessed ????

<sup>2</sup>Email communication from [Christopher@knottedwillow.com](mailto:Christopher@knottedwillow.com) dated April 15, 2019.

<sup>3</sup>Email communication from [Christopher@knottedwillow.com](mailto:Christopher@knottedwillow.com) dated April 14, 2019.

<sup>4</sup>Email communication from [Christopher@knottedwillow.com](mailto:Christopher@knottedwillow.com) dated April 14, 2019.

<sup>5</sup>First Presbyterian Church of Green Bay. Our History. <http://www.firstpresgreenbay.org/history>. Accessed ????

<sup>6</sup>Email communication from [Christopher@knottedwillow.com](mailto:Christopher@knottedwillow.com) dated May 4, 2019.





## LOVE HISTORY?

Help history come alive  
at the Brown County Historical  
Society & Hazelwood  
Historic House!

Become a docent at Hazelwood,  
assist as a guide in our cemetery  
walks or help with special events  
and so much more!

By joining our team, volunteers  
will gain experience in public  
speaking, research and event  
design. Not comfortable  
with public speaking? We have  
other volunteer tasks  
that do not involve the public.

If interested in learning more  
about volunteering with us, please  
contact our volunteer coordinator,  
Brooke Uhl, at  
[bchsvolunteer@netnet.net](mailto:bchsvolunteer@netnet.net)  
or call 920-437-1840  
to set up a meeting.





## AN ETHNIC HOLIDAY AT HAZELWOOD 11:00A-7:00P, SATURDAYS, DECEMBER 7 AND 14

For centuries, families in the Czech Republic relied on one simple main course for Christmas Eve dinner — the common carp. But did you know...? The Christmas carp swam in the family bathtub for a day or two before becoming dinner! Join us this holiday and discover the rich diversity of holiday traditions brought to Brown County by the immigrants who settled here.

Hazelwood will be decked in festive greenery and decorated by local ethnic groups. Learn about holiday traditions like St. Nicholas, the Yule goat, the Norwegian Nissen, mythical gnome like figure), and the celebrations of Hanukah and Kwanza.

Try your hand at making a traditional craft, listen to songs and stories and possibly meet Krampus, a Christmas character from Central European folklore who punishes bad children. Enjoy a cup of warm cider and sample holiday treats made with traditional ethnic recipes.



Sponsored by Belgian Heritage Center, Casa ALBA Melanie, Kym Chandler, Pulaski Area Historical Society, James Rosenberg, Sons of Norway, and Wisconsin Czechs, Inc.

**Cost:** \$6/ Adults; \$5/Seniors (60+); \$4/ Children (5-17);  
Children under 5 – Free; BCHS Members – Free  
For more details, visit [www.browncohistoricalsoc.org](http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org)

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! BROWN COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE

AAA and Time Traveler discounts available.  
Children (5-17) \$4.00 • Children under 5 are FREE.  
Adult \$6.00 • Seniors (60+) \$5.00

### ADMISSION

Tours, programs and teas scheduled at your convenience  
by appointment throughout the year.  
*See details for events on pages 6 and 8 of this issue.*

### HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM

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

HOURS for  
DECEMBER 2019 — MARCH 2020

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