



# Old Sauk Trails

January/February 2012

## Woolen Mill Photo Surfaces

FOR the past several years as the Island Woolen Mill Office Building has been renovated for use as the Sauk County History Center, many have wondered what the interior originally looked like. We now know. This photo of the interior of the building was recently brought to the Society for scanning. The photo shows the first floor reception area looking southeast around 1919, shortly after the building opened. William McFetridge, one of the owners of the mill at the time, was involved in every detail of making the office building a pleasant and artistic space. The paint treatment on the walls, terrazzo floors, lavish use of woodwork and the use of classical art copies show the level of refinement achieved. When the Society acquired the building no trace of the detail in this photo was left, due to the ravages of time. This space will now be the reading room at the history center.

## Society Receives Anonymous \$10,000 Donation

THE Society received an unrestricted gift of \$10,000 from an anonymous donor in December of 2011. The SCHS Board of Directors has decided to put half of the money towards the Pillars of Progress Restoration Campaign for use at the history center and half toward general operations. The Society is grateful to this donor for their support of the Society and its mission to collect, preserve and share Sauk County history. This donor along with over 600 members has helped to keep the Society strong as it embarks on its 107th year of operation.

*Thank You!!*

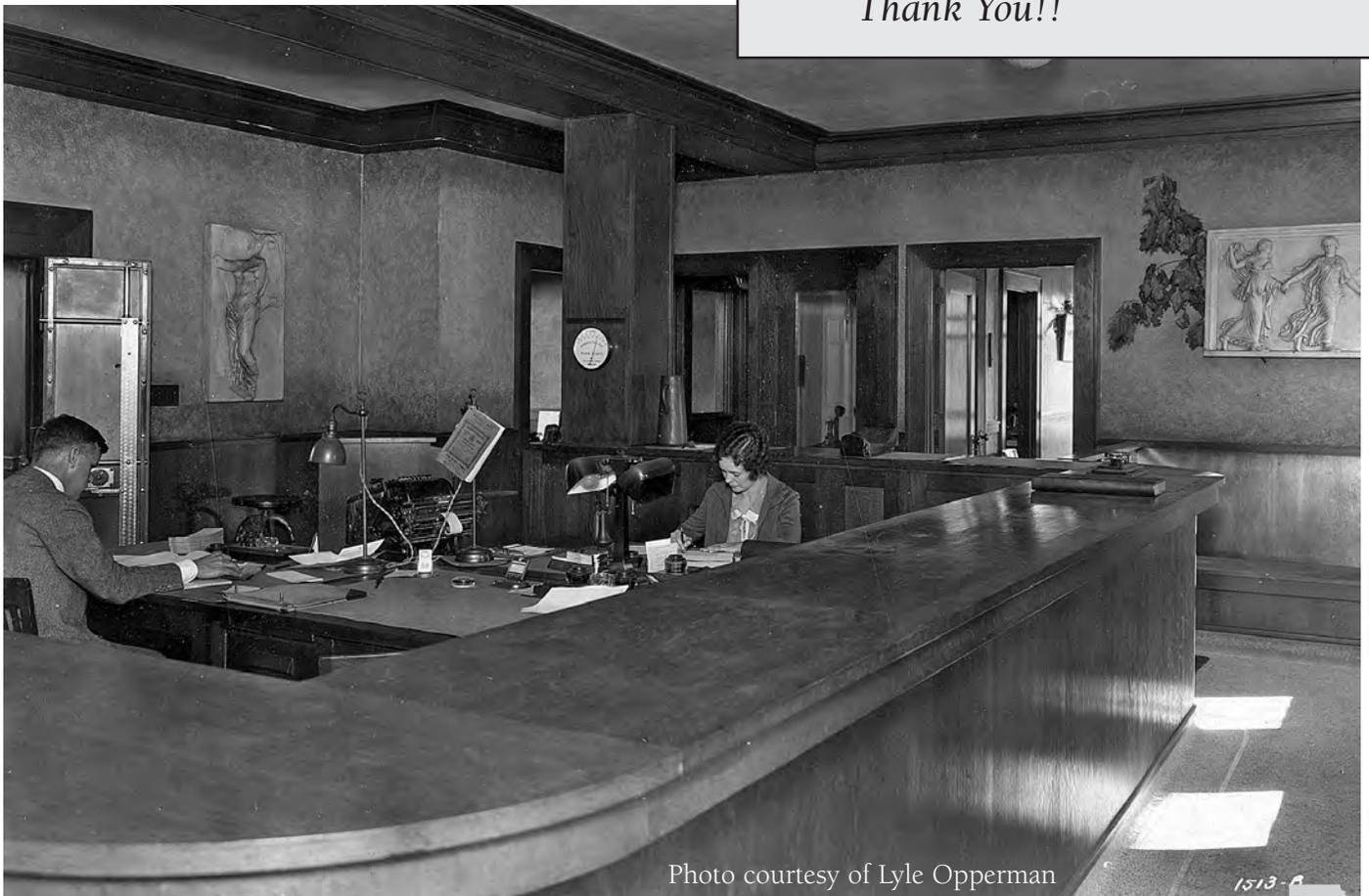


Photo courtesy of Lyle Opperman

(608) 356-1001

# Victorian Christmas Delights Hundreds

THE Society's twelfth annual Victorian Christmas Celebration enjoyed fair weather as over four hundred guests toured the Van Orden Mansion on December 10. Outside, the carriage rides were back this year and a 12 foot tree sat on top of the front porch roof. Inside, fifteen trees were decorated to the twelve days of Christmas—from a partridge in a pear tree to twelve drummers drumming. The gingerbread centerpiece on the dining room table was a replica of the historic Abner L. Harris House in Reedsburg and was made at the Little French Bakery by Susan Holding and Society volunteers. Live music throughout the day was played by area musicians as guests enjoyed homemade holiday treats. Upstairs, Dave Saloutos' 1950s Christmas room had two trees, a traditional 1950s tree and a "six geese-a-laying" tree complete with feathers and pink bubble lights. The Society would like to sincerely thank all of the volunteers involved in hosting the event, and the tree decorators, musicians and bakers who helped make the event a success.



*The historic Abner L. Harris house in Reedsburg was recreated this year in gingerbread. The "real" house was constructed around 1874 in the rare French Second Empire style and is now owned by Dr. Robert and Barb Mortimore.*



*Dave Saloutos captured the spirit of a 1950s Christmas this year complete with a working 1950s Philco television set. The 1960s will be Saloutos' theme next year. Society members are asked to dig out photos from the era and share them by scanning them or sending them in for scanning. [history@saukcountyhistory.org](mailto:history@saukcountyhistory.org)*



*The Society's prize winning entry into the 2011 Baraboo Christmas Light Parade entitled "Home of the holidays" included a giant dollhouse complete with yard, ice skating rink and gazebo. Special thanks goes to Senger Lumber of Baraboo for providing a truck, construction work space and storage space for the float.*

# President's Report

By Paul Wolter

ONCE again the holiday season has come and gone at the Sauk County Historical Society. This winter's exceedingly mild weather brought good crowds to Society events in December and made for easy take down in January. The end of the year also brought a very generous gift to the society of \$10,000 from an anonymous donor. This gift, along with all of the support for the history center and general operations this year, has made for another very productive year at the Society. With the dry wall up and painted at the history center the new facility is really taking shape. While there is a ways to go—including doors, carpeting, light fixtures and cabinetry—we have definitely come a long way. As more historic items are donated to the Society weekly, the new history center is more important than ever. I would like to personally thank everyone who has contributed to this project whether that is in-kind donations, time or money. As work is done at the building and especially when historic photos of the building emerge I am reminded of all the people that once worked at the Island Woolen Mill, including the hundreds of women. While only the office building is left, the mill complex was once humming with activity day and night as the largest woolen mill west of Philadelphia, and women played a big role in its success.

As we embark on our theme for 2012 of Historic Sauk County Women we will be looking at famous women from the County as well as the many women who changed it. From the women who fought the 1854 Whiskey War to the thousands of women who worked at the Badger Ordnance Works, women have shaped the world we live in today. I know I look forward to learning more about them and I hope you do too.

## Society Receives \$2,500 from Alma Waite Fund

THE City of Baraboo's Alma Waite Fund is providing \$2,500 toward the renovations at the Sauk County History Center. The money will be used to help carpet the archives room on the second floor. This is the second gift from the fund that the Society has received toward the project. The Society would like to thank the City of Baraboo for its support.

## Pillars of Progress Donors History Center donations since our last newsletter

(November 5, 2011 – January 9, 2012)

### Claude & Starck Associate

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# Teeth

by Rebecca DuBey, SCHS Curator

I am spending a lot of time looking through the collections and collection records during my first year at the Society. We have an amazing collection of things donated since 1905, and I never know what I will find. One particularly shiny object that caught my eye turned out to be a blood-letting lance. I put that away. By this stage in my career, I am familiar with many objects, and I'm not often surprised by what I find. Well, imagine my surprise when I opened a drawer to find a beautiful set of teeth set upright in paraffin wax inside a curved, aluminum moat.

The teeth were not quite so perfect, I discovered as I examined the object. While they were set perfectly straight and well spaced, each was filled with some improvement, beautifully executed, but filled, with a variety of metals. There were two such objects, the upper and lower jaw, each with the teeth of one side of a human mouth. While I marveled at the quality of the metal work, I was in for an even bigger surprise once I read the paper tag affixed to each set.

Each tooth had been carved by hand from deer antler to meet exact measurements of human teeth. Each curve, every facet and miniscule detail, had been reproduced here before me, each tooth different from its neighbor, and each representing a corresponding tooth in shape, size, and position. The tag explained it as sample dental restorations of gold and silver as of 1939. Hand made, by Bob Dewel, then a student of dentistry. When I spoke with Bob about them, he just laughed. But how, I wanted to know, does one even begin to replicate a tooth?



And then, to drill through it, how does one hold it steady without a jaw to hold it? He just laughed, his life having moved on since dental school.

I cataloged artifacts numbered 2010.111 point one and point two, the dental restorations. Although Bob had moved on with a life full of experiences since making this set, this one aspect, demonstrating such skill, patience, and hard work, remains here for us to admire, in case any body wants to. It made me happy to enter his work into our collection.

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### Old Sauk Trails • January/February 2012

The Sauk County Historical Society publishes

*Old Sauk Trails* six times each year.

Editor: Bill Schuette • Production: Bananaboat Ad/Grfx

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## Enduring Spirit – Historic Women of Sauk County

THE 2012 theme for programming this year at the Sauk County Historical Society will be historic Sauk County women. The lives of famous and work a day women will be presented in a variety of lectures given throughout the year. From Lou Ringling to Dolly Spencer, Sauk County's first female sheriff, the Society will showcase well known Sauk County women and others that aren't so well known. The effect of women on shaping our world will also be explored from the pioneer settler to the ammunition plant worker. The first of a series of lectures will be held Thursday, February 23 at 7 p.m. at the Van Orden Mansion with a look at the life of Emma Walsh of Baraboo, Wisconsin's "hostess with the mostess." Ms. Walsh was the hostess of the Wisconsin Building at both the 1901 World's Fair in Buffalo and the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Walsh was said to have been "endowed by nature with more than one mortal's share of grace, magnetism, tact and geniality." Come learn about this unique Sauk County woman who was Wisconsin's face to the world for tens of thousands of fair goers.

*For the reduced price of \$4 at the museum  
2012 SCHS Calendars highlighting historic  
Sauk County women are still available.*

# Hostess with the Mostess – Emma Walsh

WHAT do a Venetian style palazzo and a congenial Baraboo woman have in common? They were both in Buffalo in 1901 for the World's Fair of course! Believe it or not the State of Wisconsin constructed a Venetian style palazzo as its entry into the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. The building was designed by Milwaukee architects, Ferry and Clas, and was hosted by Mrs. Emma Walsh of Baraboo. Mrs. Walsh was so successful there that she was asked to be hostess at the next World's Fair – St. Louis 1904. And you guessed it, the Wisconsin building was again designed by Ferry and Clas. One circular describing the Wisconsin building at St. Louis had the following to say about Mrs. Walsh: "Mrs. Walsh, the hostess, has won golden opportunities for her charming and gracious hospitality. It is not too much praise to say that she is one of the most popular hostesses at the World's Fair, and there are many who declare that she is the most popular, without exception. She has always a smile and a warm handclasp for the visitor, whatever the state. No one who visits the cozy Wisconsin building goes away without the feeling that he has been perfectly at home. The lady from Baraboo makes all feel at home." Being hostess was hard work however and some times took its toll on Mrs. Walsh. Learn more about Mrs. Walsh and the World's Fairs at a lecture to be given **Thursday, February 23 at 7 p.m. at the Van Orden Mansion, 531 Fourth Avenue.** (and find out what's its connection to the World's Fairs is too)



*The Wisconsin Building at the 1904 World's Fair at St. Louis was designed by Milwaukee architects Ferry and Clas and hosted by Mrs. Emma Walsh of Baraboo.*

## Our Board and Staff

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### STAFF

Rebecca DuBey, Curator – Stoughton  
Linda Levenhagen, Museum Keeper – Baraboo  
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## We Care Program

The Sauk County Historical Society receives a percentage of all of the dollars spent by everyone who has SCHS designated on their Pierces Supermarket Reward Card. Pierces is having all their customers renew their cards so now is a good time to designate SCHS as the charity receiving your percentage. To do this, use the number 1092 as your charity when you fill out the enrollment.

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*Kitchen” with the caption: “Women’s expected roles in the 1800s were largely domestic, tending homes, families and farms.”*



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*This photo of the “new” Baraboo Post Office was taken in 1905, shortly after construction was completed on the \$39,200 building. Today, it is the Baraboo School District Administration building.*

January/February 2012

## The Sauk County Historical Society

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