

Society Receives the Hulburt Creek Garden Beds

By Beverly Vaillancourt

TUCKED away among the trees that line Birchwood Road near Highway H in the Town of Delton, and hiding under the winter's soft blanket of snow are 1000-year-old garden beds, one of Sauk County's best-kept historical secrets. At one time almost 200-acres of garden beds were home to a thriving Native American culture, with trails leading from the garden beds to places far into what today is Wisconsin. Corn, a companion plant of perhaps beans, and squash or pumpkins once flourished on these raised beds that long ago were constructed and managed by the toil of many. The building of County Highway H destroyed a large portion of this incredible cultural resource, but not all. The Sauk County Historical Society was made aware of the garden beds just last summer, and knew immediately that they must – somehow – be preserved.

Though the Hulburt Creek Garden Beds were a new discovery for the Society, they had been studied extensively by Dr. William Gartner, of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, as the topic of his dissertation in the early 1990s. According to Dr. Gartner's study, the Hulburt Creek fields are the oldest radiocarbon dated ridged fields in the Upper Midwest or Western Great Lakes regions (ca 1000 AD). At that time they also were placed on the National Register of Historic Places, after which they waited patiently to be rediscovered.

For years the land that carries the garden beds has been privately owned, and fortunately undeveloped. In late October 2008, landowner Bill Pierce offered to donate the garden bed land to the Sauk County Historical Society, setting into motion a flurry of activity. First the garden beds had to be located. Much to our surprise, two additional sections were discovered. Then the land had

to be surveyed and a new parcel created, which subsequently needed approval by the Town of Delton and Sauk County. On December 30 the deed to the land holding three intact sections of the Hulburt Creek Garden Beds was transferred from Bill and Phyllis Pierce to the Sauk County Historical Society. Efforts to attach an archeological covenant to the deed to protect the land as an archeological site in perpetuity are in motion. Long-range plans are for the land to become an educational site for area schools, the University of Wisconsin, and of course, the public at large.

Special thanks are extended to the Ho-Chunk Nation, Tom Gavin, Bill Wenzel of Orion Land Surveyors, LLC, Rob Roth of General Engineering, the Town of Delton Board of Supervisors, Rob Nurre, William Gartner, Beverly Vaillancourt and of course especially to Bill and Phyllis Pierce, whose generosity made this preservation effort possible.



Society President, Paul Wolter, left, receives the Garden Beds deed from Bill Pierce. Orris Smith, SCHS Executive Director, right, looks on.

President's Report

By Paul Wolter

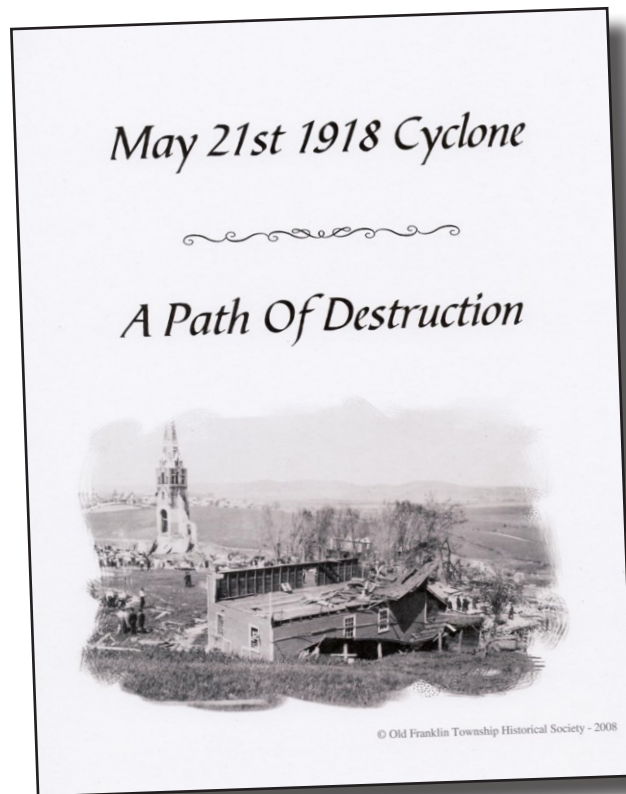
WELL, for better or for worse, 2008 is a year that will stand out in history. Notwithstanding the national and international scene, the year 2008 in Sauk County was one that will be talked about for years to come just for local events such as the record winter and the June flooding. The Society's 103rd year was marked by numerous activities, acquisitions and achievements. The Society's Man Mound Commemoration Event last summer was the highlight of the year that brought together the right people to not only commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Man Mound but also to discuss another historic property that should be saved, the Hulburt Creek Garden Beds in the Town of Delton. Relatively unknown and now exceedingly rare these ancient agricultural areas are some of the best remaining in the upper Midwest. After Dr. William Gartner spoke about the garden beds at the Society's annual meeting and banquet in October a course was pursued to see if some of these lands might be donated to the Society for preservation. Society Board Member Beverly Vaillancourt was in charge of the process and saw it through to completion a mere two months later. The acquisition of these lands is a fitting tribute to the people who worked very hard 100 years ago to save the Man Mound. The donation of this property by the Pierce's is one that will reap benefits to untold future generations. I would like to thank everyone who gave of their time and resources to make this land transfer possible in near record time and I would like to especially thank the Pierce's for making the donation. Their generosity will hopefully be celebrated 100 years from now when a future generation looks back to when the property was acquired and preserved and hopefully 2108 will be a lot less historic in the weather department.

History Center Donors (since last newsletter)

Helen SaLoutos (Second Century Sponsor)

If you are interested in making a gift to toward this important project, please contact the Society at (608) 356-1001.

New Book!



THE Old Franklin Township Historical Society through the assistance of a grant from the Sauk County Arts and Culture Committee would like to announce their book titled "May 21st 1918 Cyclone – A Path of Destruction." The book covers the cyclone from its start in the state of Iowa to its end near Poynette in Columbia County, Wis., where it hit the encampment of the 161st Artillery of 3,000 men on route to Sparta, Wis. Featured in the book is the damage in Lone Rock where much of the town was destroyed, destruction around and in the village of Plain where St. Luke's Catholic Church was destroyed and the destructive path across Sauk County. The book of over 300 pages contains a large number of postcards and photos submitted from the local area, as well as recollections of people who lived through the cyclone. We would like to thank the local communities for submitting all their photos and memories. Watch the Home News for listing of hours at the Old Franklin Town Hall in the Village of Plain when the book will be available for purchase. Copies are also available for purchase at \$30 plus shipping and handling \$5.00 through members of the Old Franklin Township Historical Society, 915 Wachter Avenue, P.O. Box 218, Plain, WI 53577

Website Wanderings

By Bill Schuette, Webmaster

IF, per chance, you missed our great Victorian Christmas Open house, you can still enjoy some of the beautiful decorations. Just visit our Web site, and click on “The Holidays 2008”.

Our special emphasis this year will be “Sauk County at War”. As a preview of some of the interesting documents and photographs that are archived at the SCHS, I have added a special section to our Web site. Included are letters home from Civil War and WWI soldiers, the Mexican conflict of 1914, and the history of Sauk County’s preparation and involvement in WWII, including information on the prisoner of war camp in Reedsburg. The Red Arrow Division is highlighted as it was activated for the Berlin Crisis in 1961. There is also information on the Viet Nam War and Desert Storm. If any of our members would like to share photos and stories on the Iraq War, I would be happy to consider their inclusion on the site. Just click on “Sauk County at War”. Please visit our Web site at www.saukcountyhistory.org. New additions are being added and updated frequently.



Record Crowd Attends Open House

THE holiday spirit hit an all time high at the Van Orden mansion this season. A record crowd of over 900 people attended the Society’s ninth annual Victorian Christmas Open House on December 13 which featured designer trees, carriage rides, live music and holiday refreshments. The thirty percent rise in attendance from the previous year was due in part to the favorable weather but also to the ever increasing awareness of the event which was even picked up in Milwaukee papers. The “Woolworth Room” created by David Saloutos was also a big draw and will remain up at the museum through January. The Society would like to thank everyone who has made this event another wonderful success including our tree decorators, musicians, raffle donors, cookie donors, event volunteers, staff, and you, the public for attending.



The historic 1889 Keysar home in Prairie du Sac was recreated in gingerbread this year with the assistance of Society volunteers, Cate Gasser, Baraboo High School’s Food Service Teacher, and Kay Salecker. A special thanks also goes to Clausen’s European Bakery of Middleton for donating the gingerbread dough.

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The Sauk County Historical Society publishes *Old Sauk Trails* six times each year.
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Indian Mounds in Sauk County

by Kenneth I. Lange

THE recent 100th anniversary of the commemoration of Man Mound Park has prompted me to review my notes on Indian mounds in Sauk County, especially those from the years 1971-1974 when I field checked the old surveys (for example Cole 1922 and Stout 1906) to see what mounds remained. I summarized my findings, with a two page map, in my county history (Lange 1976). I thought that it might be of interest to share some of my recollections and other information which I didn't mention in my history.

The first significant surveys of local mounds were those by William H. Canfield (1819-1913), Sauk County's pioneering historian, and Increase A. Lapham (1811-1875). Lapham attained prominence in a number of fields; he was Wisconsin's pioneering naturalist.


The greatest concentration of mounds in Sauk County was in the area where Baraboo is now located; in fact Baraboo once was called "Mound City." This appellation today would elicit only quizzical stares. Here are comparable numbers of mounds for then (the early surveys) and now (my field surveys) for 16 of Sauk County's 22 townships (I have no definite information for the remaining 6 townships): Baraboo - 230 and 25; Greenfield - 54 and 14; Fairfield - 82 and 7; Sumpter - 86 and 1; Merrimac - 142 and 12; Prairie du Sac - 69 and 15; Woodland - 2 and 0; LaValle - 20 and 1; Dellona - approximately 30 and 0; Delton - 87 and 9; Excelsior - approximately 30 and 0; Reedsburg - approximately 17 and 6; Ironton - 2? and apparently 0; Franklin - several and 0; Troy - approximately 45 and 5; and Spring Green - 52 and 9. For the 100 or so mounds still in existence, merely 3-4 per cent of the original number is in decent shape. Again and again in my notes I find the distressing

annotation, "destroyed" or "no trace" or "couldn't find them." It becomes almost a litany, so that the annotation, "still there," is like a breath of fresh air.

Most mounds were and are on private property, but without exception I was granted permission to enter private land, in fact sometimes the landowner joined me in the search. These were the extremes: one landowner saying, "All that information is in the Courthouse," and another landowner as an old man showing me mounds while informing me that as a child he accompanied his father when he showed Arlow B. Stout the mounds on the property.

So when I review my field surveys of over 30 years ago, what comes to mind? Sadness mainly, coupled with the thought that it was inevitable. The following rather casual note appeared in the Baraboo Republic for 4 October 1876: "We are informed that Mr. Hugh Edwards, living near Butterfield's Bridge [by the Lower Narrows along SH33], recently plowed down an ancient mound in which he found the remains of a number of human beings." As Oswald Ragatz, an early settler in Honey Creek Township, remarked, "I suppose we should not have destroyed them. But they were then regarded merely as obstacles to cultivation, and everybody plowed them down."

If you'd like to see mounds, stop at the Nature Center in Devil's Lake State Park and pick up a copy of the Indian Mounds Nature Tour, visit the Kingsley Bend Mound Group along the west side of US16 south of Wisconsin Dells, or stop at the Man Mound, on Man Mound Rd., east of Baraboo. And for detailed information on mounds, see the book, Indian Mounds of Wisconsin (Birmingham and Eisenberg, 2000).

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2009 Historical Theme – Sauk County At War

By Sue Teska, Curator

SAUK COUNTY can claim a connection to most of the major conflicts or wars that our country has been involved in. From the graves of Revolutionary War and Napoleonic War veterans to the men and women currently serving in the war in Iraq, Sauk County has seen its share of hardship and national pride during times of conflict.

This year, the Sauk County Historical Society is presenting Sauk County at War. Through expanded exhibits, added exhibits and public programs, we hope to present an intimate look at how war has affected the county and its citizens, both on the frontlines and on the home front. We will also be looking at conflicts that are uniquely local. Such conflicts as the Saw Log War in Reedsburg, the Temperance wars in the county and the Battle of Wisconsin Heights were conflicts that while local, had an impact on the development of our county.

To kick off this year's theme we are presenting our first in a series of winter lectures on the topic of Sauk County at War on January 23, 2009 at the Baraboo Public Library. This lecture will be presented by the Society President

Paul Wolter and will discuss the anti-German sentiment and book burning that occurred in Sauk County during WWI. This will be followed up by a lecture on the Saw Log Wars at the Reedsburg Public Library on February 26, 2009. Both presentations begin at 6:30 p.m. and are free to the public. We hope to see you this winter as you explore how past conflicts have shaped our county and history.



Sauk County Historical Society Receives Kohler Foundation Gift

THE Sauk County Historical Society has received a \$1000 gift from the Kohler Foundation, Inc. in support of the Society's Man Mound Stewardship Project. The dollars were awarded "to gather published and unpublished writings, surveys and photographs" surrounding Man Mound. Information gained from the study of existing documents will help the Society determine the scope and direction of its archeological study of Man Mound, and assist the Society in its efforts to preserve this unique Native American effigy mound located at Man Mound Park in Greenfield Township. The Sauk County Historical Society very much appreciates the generosity of the Kohler Foundation.



The Society's award-winning float for the 2009 Holly Jolly Light Parade in downtown Baraboo featured a German Christmas theme to fit the overall parade theme of Christmas Around the World. The float featured a revolving German Christmas pyramid in the center along with a wooden rocking horse, half-timbered house and nutcracker, courtesy of Cellox, Inc. in Reedsburg. A special thanks goes to Senger Lumber for float building and storage facilities and for transportation.

Coming Events

January 23, 6:30 P.M. Winter Lecture:
Baraboo Library, Sauk County At War, by Paul Wolter. Topic: Anti German sentiment and book burning during WWI.

February 26, 6:30 P.M. Winter Lecture:
Reedsburg Library, Sawlog War, by Peter Shrake. Highlighting the competition between Reedsburg and Baraboo.

April 7, Canfield Day

June 2, Society Summer Picnic

June, Baraboo Cemetery Tour

or more information, see:

www.saukcountyhistory.org

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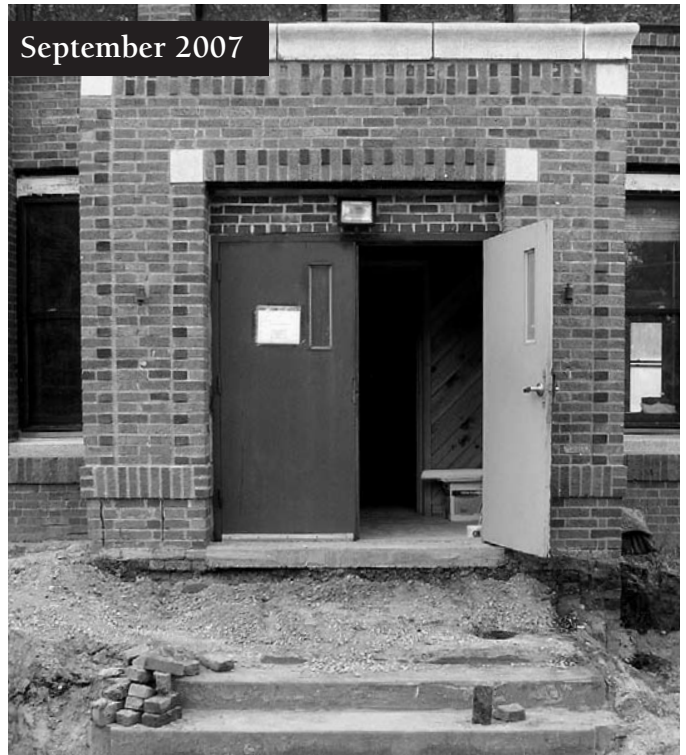
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September 2007



December 2008



The front entry at the Sauk County History Center has been restored with installation of a new front door, side windows and trim replicating the original design for the building. New capstones have been replicated for the two wing walls on either side of the stairs and will be installed in the spring. Work will now be concentrated on the interior. Funds are needed to install heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment so that other interior work can proceed. To find out more or to make a donation please contact the Society at 608-356-1001.

January/February 2009

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