

Mineral Point HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

Your MPHS: "Strong, Robust"

The Annual Meeting of the Mineral Point Historical Society celebrated a year of worthwhile accomplishments, with predictions of increased efforts to enrich the study of local history.

Marking his first year in office as the organization's President, **Jim Stroschein** cited as factors for a successful 2006 an active membership, a hardworking board of directors, a supportive Gundry family, and good relations with a generous Mineral Point community.

A standing-room-only audience filled the parlor at Orchard Lawn for Stroschein's progress report and a captivating slide show/lecture by **Emily Pfothauer**, "Furniture and Furniture-Makers in Early Mineral Point," the first lyceum in the 2007 lecture series.

"This place is alive with exciting events," said Stroschein. He pointed to record attendance at a MPHS lecture on Wisconsin Rock Art, the popular "Signs of the Times" exhibit, weddings in the Gundry gardens, a series of monthly free concerts on the Orchard Lawn front porch, an exuberant Founders' Day costume party, and the 5th Annual "Evening With Edgar Allan Poe."

"And in 2007," he said, "we plan on maintaining this momentum, plus more."

Stroschein also praised the efforts of board members and volunteers to add valuable insights into local history by launching an effort to catalog the Society's extensive collections of historic objects, starting a transcription of the diary of Margery Gundry King, and reviewing images from a photo album of Gundry family member **William Chase**. The album gives us new views of the house and grounds in the 1890s, the



time period chosen for the planned restoration of the Gundry lawn and gardens.

"We continue to stress the importance of communicating with our members and the public," said Stroschein. "Our new website helps us tell our story and our quarterly newsletter has become our voice in the city."

MPHS Treasurer **Nancy Pfothauer** reported positive results for the annual membership campaign, with strong response, increased new memberships, and record-setting financial support. "Membership revenue is 50 percent ahead of last year's figures," she said, "indicating that people know what we are doing and want to be a part of it."

Memberships: 231, representing approx. 350 individuals

New members: 35

Dues and additional gifts: \$11,335

Matching grant: \$5,776

Total dues, gifts, matching grant: \$17,111

96 members contributed additional gifts

A number of people who were members in 2006 have not yet renewed their membership for 2007; we invite these folks to send in their dues to support the MPHS and make sure they continue to receive the newsletter and other mailings.

"In 2006, there were two challenges we successfully met," said Stroschein. "First, too much work for the Society was being done by too few people; we added new organizational structure to spread the workload." He continued, "We also needed to work to replace the contributions of an Angel Donor with a more sustainable spread of donor support."

"We've raised almost \$750,000 for the two phases of the Orchard Lawn Restoration Program, which will be in full swing this year." Stroschein concluded, "When we're done, we'll have one of the best-documented estates in Southwest Wisconsin, ranking up there with Villa Louis in Prairie du Chien -- but finished without state funding." And finally, "This house will be here in 200 years, if our Stewardship Fund goals for planned giving are realized, and if our good volunteers continue to give us the help we need." ●

Ivey Family Auction to benefit the Mineral Point Historical Society

By Jim Stroschein

Harriet Ivey has generously offered many of the items from her parent's home to the Mineral Point Historical Society, which in turn has selected various items that will become part of its collection and/or used at Orchard Lawn. The remainder will be sold at auction with the proceeds benefiting the MPHS and its programs.

The items include fine furniture, antiques, glassware, pottery, silver, books, lamps, primitives, sleds, wood skis, vintage clothing, hand-painted dishes and much more.

Date: Saturday morning May 26, 2007

(Sat. of Memorial Day weekend)

Location: Comfort Inn (Mineral Point)

Your job: Mark your calendars now!

Watch the *Democrat Tribune* and the *Shopping News* for details. Go to our website www.mineralpointhistory.org for color photos and more auction items.

The Mineral Point Historical Society wishes to thank Harriet Ivey and her family for their generosity! ●



First row: Ava Fernekes hand painted wooden bucket with lid. Marble top stand. Matching marble top mahogany bureau (gorgeous!) with original drawer pulls. Early Zinc top table

Second row: Wood shaft golf clubs. Glass dolphin oil & vinegar set. Candleholders. Wicker High Chair. Hammered aluminum serving pieces. Mahogany chest of drawers

Third row: Books. Victorian parlor chairs. Hand painted Italian dishes. Compote, basket, vase. Vintage camera and original leather case.

Fourth Row: Miniature tea set. Green stemware.

Memorabilia and Memories Shared with Society

By Nancy Pfothenauer

An invitation to ride the Ferris Wheel at the Columbian Exposition, a fist sized lump of zinc shaped into a paperweight, and a photograph of Joseph Gundry reading his newspaper in the library at Orchard Lawn are just three items from the family collection of **Harry and Eula Jeanneret**, who are sharing these treasures with the Mineral Point Historical Society. Harry, as most of our readers know, is a great grandson of Joseph and Sarah Gundry.

My husband, Peter, and I spent a delightful afternoon with the Jeannerets at their Florida home early in February, looking through Gundry family scrapbooks, photo albums and other items. When we left, the Jeannerets generously bundled together everything we could carry and sent it back with us.

Their collection has already helped the Phase 2 restoration project; the image of Joseph in the library (which the family termed "the living room") is the only candid photograph we have of him enjoying his home, but it also shows us the curtains in that room.

All of the items add a rich dimension to the story of Orchard Lawn. The paperweight is a nice link to the past as it was undoubtedly used by Joseph at the house. The Ferris Wheel

ticket is one of those interesting details that remind us of an event that was the focus of attention by everyone in the country at the time.

As we collect more Gundry family items, the additions help us understand things we have had for years. The Jeanneret albums contain some of the same photos as in other albums, but these are labeled so now we know the names of the people in the pictures.

Shortly after we returned from Florida, we received another group of photographs from **Tibby Chase**, also a Gundry descendant. One shows **Will and Mary Gundry and Lady Alice Gundry Clifford** on the porch swing at Orchard Lawn. We knew there was a swing at one time and this picture not only shows us what it looked like, but proves it was there when the Gundrys lived in the house.

There are still a few Gundry albums we haven't seen. We're hoping to borrow them long enough to scan them and add to our store of knowledge about life at Orchard Lawn and in Mineral Point.

The Society is truly fortunate that Gundry family members have saved these things through the years and now are so generous in sharing them with us. ●



"A Distinctive Destination, Unique & Lovingly Preserved"

The Society's "Way to Go!" award goes to the entire city of Mineral Point, named one of "America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**.

The designation carries honor, prestige and immense promotional value. The National Trust is the nation's largest "heritage tourism" organization, and its publications and website attract a massive audience of potential visitors to the cities they feature as "destinations." (The internet address takes 300,000 "hits" per month)

Mineral Point was the smallest town named, one of only two cities from the Midwest. It was selected from a total of 63 destinations in 27 states, nominated by individuals, preservation organiza-

tions and communities. Chamber Director **Joy Gieseke** and preservationists **Jeanne Lambin** and **Arlene Byrne** led the effort to secure the designation, and voiced their pride at an Opera House news conference and a subsequent Town Party.

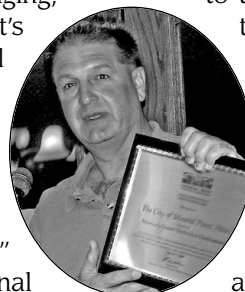
"A quintessentially American town with a strong sense of belonging; travelers savor Mineral Point's many charms," said National Trust **President Richard Moe**, adding, "Its welcoming attitude and tremendous community pride has achieved a standard many communities strive to emulate."

In the eight years the National Trust has announced its list, 96 Distinctive Designations

have been named, honored because, "Residents have taken forceful action to protect their town's character and sense of place by enacting good local laws and zoning codes, making downtown areas more walkable, enacting design standards, or taking some other major step that demonstrates a strong commitment

to their town and thus preserving the historic and scenic assets of their communities, with rewards that transcend town limits"

That's clearly a "Way to Go!" from the nation's biggest name in preservation. And the historical society at Orchard Lawn is happy to join in the chorus! ●



Mayor Gregg Bennet accepting plaque.

MPHS Lyceums Score Points With Crowds

The broad appeal of local history has once again been underscored, with the success of the Mineral Point Historical Society programs of the 2007 Lyceum Series.

Perhaps these Sunday afternoon lectures offer a pleasant and cost-free way to look back at a bygone era, perhaps they serve as an antidote to

Wisconsin's "winter blahs," but it's clear the sessions resonated with audiences that packed the meeting



informality as well as academic validity, with "stories spun" as well as "pertinent points presented."

rooms at all three Lyceums in January, February and March.

The good crowds are a continuation of a pattern established over the past few years. One of the lyceums last year set an attendance record, and this year's programs kept pace with the increased interest in historical programs that are characterized by



LYCEUM # 1

"Furniture & Furniture-Makers in Early Mineral Point"

As a feature of the MPHS Annual Meeting, a turnaway crowd in the parlor at Orchard Lawn watched and listened to a lecture by **Emily Pfothenhauer** (MA - Art History, UW-Madison '06), who worked extensively with the local historical society while completing her graduate work.

Now, as coordinator of the online **Wisconsin Decorative Arts Database**, Emily researches and photographs Wisconsin made furniture, ceramics and textiles. She has included several objects from the MPHS collection in the online database. Emily photographed and catalogued locally made furniture, ceramics and textiles for the online archive of 19th and early 20th century Wisconsin objects.

"My interest in this branch of art history is its focus on real objects in real people's lives," she said. "In the period I studied - 1830 to 1890 - Mineral Point was at the fore-



front of the frontier expansion into the American West. The work of local artisans changed over time," she said, "as farming replaced mining as the primary occupation, the railroads arrived and the population grew."

The emphasis was on "sensible and affordable furniture" for many of the early years. Only later in the century was there any thought of "fashionable home furnishings."

Emily showed slides of the work of local furniture makers, gathered from Orchard Lawn, Pendarvis and private homes in the city, and ticked off the names of Mineral Point craftsmen.

"You could call this local art vernacular," she concluded. "It was handmade, simple, practical, diverse, and used available materials and resources."

"But," she said, "it was always stylish, because it satisfied local tastes." ●

TO SEE Mineral Point furnishings, go to: <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/decorativearts>

LYCEUM #2 – “The Artistic Renaissance of 1975”

A trio of talented Mineral Point artisans traveled back in time to the mid-1970s, to recall with fondness a magical time when a number of struggling young artists found a welcome home for their creative energies. Many of them still live and work in the city.

Joel Duncanson, Bruce Howdle and **Roland Sardeson** were drawn to Mineral Point by its topography, and by the old stone buildings that dotted the rolling hills and wandering streets. They were aware of an earlier infusion of artists, inspired by the ambitious **Edgar Hellum/Bob Neal** Pendarvis restoration and **Al Felly’s** enterprise at Shake Rag Alley. They knew that **Max** and **Eva Fernekes** were established local artists, as were a handful of other artisans.

The big reason for the 1970s artistic renaissance was practical economics — the cost of living. Mainly, it was affordable housing during a time of high inflation.

And, oh yes, some sort of mysterious attraction to a rundown old town with natural beauty and friendly people.

Howdle rented a \$50 unheated room/studio at **Bud Wahl’s** artistic commune, now the Foundry Bookstore. He remembers Commerce Street as a rough area featuring a row of taverns and occasional cattle herds on the pavement. “Just so much potential here,” he said, “and so much beauty in the buildings.” Howdle said Mineral Point was late in recovering from the Great Depression of the 1930s. “And the city’s unique stonework survived because most of the nation was tearing down old structures in the 1950s and 60s, and rebuilding, but landowners here couldn’t afford to do so.” Further, “they didn’t want to replace old stone with new vinyl.”

In 1974, Duncanson was tipped off about the availability of the fabled John Clowney woodshop, and came to the city to

launch a successful career. “This was unlike any small town I’d ever been in,” he said, “tolerant and accepting so long as you worked hard.”

Sardeson set up his potter’s wheel in the barn at Shake Rag Alley, chopped wood to heat his space and joined a small fraternity of young artists. “In 1975,” he said, “the spirit here was simply electric! We just fed off of each other’s raw energy.” It was a time of bartered work, pot luck suppers, with “fishing and drinking” leading the list of recreational pursuits.

With Howdle, Sardeson became involved in restoring the row of storefronts and apartments where the two men now work and live. A stonemason, Sardeson speaks of the use of natural and local building materials, which produces “a patina on the stone, like an outer layer of history.”

The three artists mentioned name after name, celebrating artistic colleagues who were here both before and after the so-called Mid-70s Renaissance. Some of those fellow artists were in the audience for the Lyceum at the Alliant Center auditorium, and the dialog went back and forth in good-natured spirit.

Everyone seemed to agree that, in a time of national turmoil and economic hard times, some magical spark touched off a flood of inspired art in Mineral Point. The big cities were too expensive for young artists, and the focus in the cities was on political concerns. But in a rural town in the hills of Southwestern Wisconsin, a town with a colorful history of boom and bust, there was a collision of time and happenstance that made Mineral Point an incubator for talented people. Today – 30 years later – their work and their spirit is very much alive in the workshops and galleries of the city. ●



Bruce Howdle, Roland Sardeson and Joel Duncanson.

LYCEUM #3 – “Mineral Pointers Remember”

In a repeat performance for this popular MPHS forum, moderator **Jim Stroschein** introduced longtime residents **Delmer Grange, Ruth Jungbluth** and **Tony Nardi**, and kicked off a lively round of conversation between the participants and the audience at Orchard Lawn.

The audience, in fact, was very much a part of the Lyceum, and a rather feisty group tossed some of the topics around the room, once they were presented by one of the panelists.

Among the topics on this energetic stroll down Memory Lane: characters from Mineral Point history, their names and their nicknames, the long walk to Ferndale School on Suther’s Road, and life in the city in good times and bad.

The Great Depression weighed heavily on the discussion. Jungbluth remembered, “The Depression really started when the bottom fell out of farm prices, and then the zinc plant closed.” She added, “By the time the Government called it a Depression, Mineral Point was pretty acclimated to being depressed.” (Laughter from the audience)

Other Depression stories recalled the practice of taking apart hand-me-down clothing from relatives in Madison,

washing all the pieces, and then cutting new clothing from the fabric. There were memories of big home gardens and coming home from school to snack on a shared quart of tomatoes, when garden produce was put up by women who canned “everything, including squirrel!”

Grange spoke of watching long ore trains pull through the valley to the zinc plant. There was a slight grade in that rail bed, and when the locomotive couldn’t pull all the cars, a railroader with spiked shoes would climb a telegraph pole to send a message. A little later another engine would chug out from the depot to help pull the train into town.

Nardi also recalled the zinc plant days, the worker’s barracks, the flow of the fires in the furnaces, when Mineral Creek ran orange and dust-covered men sorted and bagged the ore. He described his childhood as, “Just like Huckleberry Finn’s” — fishing the creeks with a willow pole, and picking mushrooms while wandering the hills around his Mineral Point home.

The three panelists knew each other and enjoyed each other’s company, which added to the fun at the event. It was “living history,” presented with sharpness, wit and affection shared by the speakers and the audience alike. ●



Tony Nardi, Ruth Jungbluth, Delmer Grange.

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

From the Editor

Today's technologies make assembling this newsletter an easy process. As an example, the adjacent article by Cliff Krainik was constructed on our computers in Virginia and Mineral Point, with e-mail messages flowing back and forth, until we had a final draft.

For a guy who learned his craft on a beat-up old typewriter, the new way to put words together and choose a photo is almost beyond comprehension. But electronic miracles lack a few qualities. As a journalist who cares about history, I know that some news items are more important than others. So I'm uncomfortable with constant explosions of information that demand attention as the "Most Important Story of the Moment." I also like the tactile feel of paper, the jumble of images and words on a page, that force the reader to make choices — and then sit for a moment and think.

So, next month, we will publish a newspaper with the look and feel of a bygone time, and with a historic focus, but with today's news. This publication will be an extra edition for our readers, in addition to the quarterly MPHS newsletter.

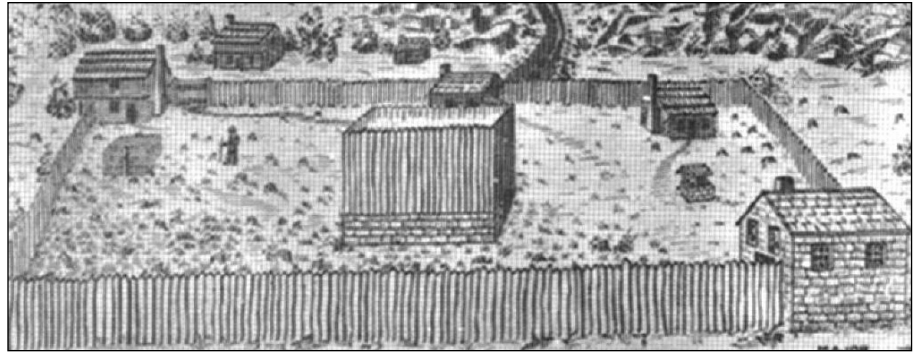
More pages, more columns, and tabloid size will give this paper the space needed for expansive accounts (you really can't cover everything in 200 words!). And the photos will run a bit larger too.

Most important, we will expand our editorial gaze to include "all things historic" in the area, taking a regional approach to coverage. You'll read about upcoming events by our historic partners, Pendarvis, the Railroad Depot, Shake Rag Alley, the Opera House and many others, as well as what's happening in the galleries and cafes and business places. In short, we'll try to capture the variety and excitement of life in this remarkable little corner of the world.

Old time Pointers should enjoy our newspaper.

And weekend visitors will also find it useful.

It won't win a Pulitzer Prize. But for folks who appreciate "a sense of place," this new publication should be a great way to begin the Summer Season. ●



Postcard, circa 1850, of a line drawing.

Mineral Point in the Black Hawk War

Our January treatment of the Black Hawk War generated comment and question, centering around the role of Mineral Point, and its stockade, Fort Jackson.

To get authoritative answers, we turned to **Cliff Krainik**, of Falls Church, Virginia, whose knowledge of the 1832 prairie conflict is profound, and who admits to a fondness for the city.

Here is his personal note: "I was first guided to Fort Jackson in Mineral Point in the Spring of 1984, through the pages of **William Stark's** magnificently illustrated book, *Along the Black Hawk Trail*:"

"With the outbreak of hostilities, the miners and settlers in Mineral Point, using logs, hastily erected Fort Jackson at what today is the intersection of Commerce and Fountain streets. The site is presently occupied by a service station and is not marked."

My interest increased, and I became concerned that this important historic location remained obscured. Working with **Dean Conners**, then President of the Mineral Point Historical society and owner of Foundry books, together with my wife **Michele**, it was decided to erect a marker at the site, to coincide with the 170th anniversary of the War. With financial support from the MPHS and the **Old Lead Region Historical Society**, we turned to the State of Wisconsin for a permanent marker. **Harriet Story** gave permission to allow the new sign on her property, and the marker was dedicated by **Judge William Dyke** on May 4, 2002.

It reads:

"In June of 1832, an alarm spread throughout the mining region that Black Hawk and his band were on the march north from Illinois. Hastily built stockades were erected throughout the lead region. Fort Jackson was built on this site using vertically placed logs arranged in a square that enclosed cabins housing the garrison and their families. Two story blockhouses fitted with gun ports were installed on the southeast and northwest corners. Fort Jackson served mainly to distribute military supplies during the Black Hawk War and was dismantled shortly thereafter."

No graphic depiction of Fort Jackson is known to exist. Illustrated above is a stockade erected in Galena, Illinois in 1832 that probably used the same general design and materials as those at Fort Jackson. Note the tall rough-hewn spiked logs that formed the perimeter walls and the incorporated block houses. ●

Cliff and Michele Krainik are independent historians, appraisers and dealers in antique photography, rare prints, books and documents. They are currently writing the biographies of Mineral Point artists, Max and Ava Fernekes. The Krainiks presented the premier exhibit, "The Legacy of the Black Hawk War," at the opening of the Gundry House in 2002.

To commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Black Hawk War the Krainiks will be guest curators for an exhibition of their collection entitled, "The Transformation of Black Hawk: Frontier Terrorist to Advertising Icon, Sainthood and Beyond," at the Apple River Fort Historic Site, Elizabeth, Illinois. Lecture and Exhibition opening on May 4 through the autumn of 2007. For further information please call 815.858.2028 ●

Notes from the President

By Jim Stroschein, President, Mineral Point Historical Society

Sitting Down and Stepping Up.

It's a nice problem to have.

Our Winter Lyceum series, which concluded in March, was so popular it created a problem for some of our attendees at Orchard Lawn: there was no place to sit! Emily Pfothenhauer's presentation regarding 19th century Mineral Point furniture and last month's Mineral Pointers Remember played to standing-room-only crowds – forcing some to sit on the floor.

During the Phase II restoration planning, we brainstormed various ways of accommodating larger audiences, including rearranging furniture, moving the stage from the north parlor to the south parlor and even adding a closed circuit TV system so overflow crowds could watch the action from the library. The answer now seems obvious: our educational programs have outgrown the double parlor at Orchard Lawn and we must move them to another venue. We have several ideas in mind and consider this latest challenge a small price to pay for our membership's growing appetite for history.

On the other side of town we have a different challenge: too many empty seats. Recently, due to declining enrollment, the Mineral Point School Board has been forced to enact some deep cuts in staffing and programs. These decisions are always painful and never easy. Our students need more opportunities, not less.

This has caused the historical society board to step up our plans to create a way to partner with the local schools.

A few years ago there was a competition among elementary school age kids from various communities in southern Wisconsin. Each child was asked to stand up and say their name and where they were from. One stood up and said that they were from "historic" Mineral Point. A judge from the competition asked, "What's historic about it?" The child looked back at him and started to cry. She didn't know.

Obviously this wasn't a high school student but, nonetheless, we think the society, as an educational organization, is uniquely positioned to help make sure that when our high school seniors graduate, they have a deeper understanding about their hometown and why it's on the map.

I've asked **Diane Palzkill**, whose skills working with young students are highly regarded, to work with us to develop a program that accomplishes these goals.

For many years, students have come up to Orchard Lawn to collect leaves for their school projects. Today, we think our growing organization can do more, much more, to help the next generation understand and appreciate "historic" Mineral Point. ●



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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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Mineral Point Historical Society Membership Form

January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007

All members receive the newsletter
and free tours of Orchard Lawn.

Please check one:

- Individual (\$15.00)
 Family (\$25.00)
 Business (\$50.00)

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Make checks payable to the
Mineral Point Historical Society
and return this form to:

Mineral Point Historical Society
P.O. Box 188
Mineral Point, WI 53565

Thank you again for your support!

Sarah's Sorting and Stitching

A big thank you to volunteer **Sarah Burkhardt Sable**, who is sorting through our extensive collection of clothing, attaching collection numbers, and storing the items in archival boxes. She says the clothing collection is a thrill to work with and there are literally hundreds of items, from cotton underthings to sequined evening gowns. The collection includes clothing that belonged to the **Jones** daughters as well as a dress worn by **Willa Cather**, author of *My Antonia*. Many thanks to Sarah for the hours she has already put in, and those yet to come. ●

Can You Guess Where This Is?

Still with us, this was one of the early homes in Mineral Point. It is shown on the 1872 birdseye map of Mineral Point, on what was then North Street. The board fence in front was in the process of becoming a picket fence, as shown in later photos. It was probably the home of Fred Vivian, the creator of many of the photographs in the MPHS glass plate negative collection. Can you guess where it is? Answer in the next newsletter. ●



Mineral Point
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

P.O. Box 188 • 234 Madison Street
Mineral Point, WI 53565

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 26

Ivey Family Auction

June through mid-September

Orchard Lawn opens for Tours

June 8

"Jammin' on the Porch"
with Dr. Eric and Billy G

July 13

"Jammin' on the Porch" with Point Five

August 10

"Jammin' on the Porch"
with Dave Hopper Trio

September 14

"Jammin' on the Porch"
with The Fly Rights

July 26

Founders' Day takes you
"Back to the Forties"

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