

# Mineral Point HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

## Orchard Lawn's First Christmas

The holiday snows added an inch or two to the white-covered ground each day, and snow on frozen roadways meant good sleighing. The farmers worked hard to clear the streets, however, so Mineral Point was bustling in the second week of December, 1868.

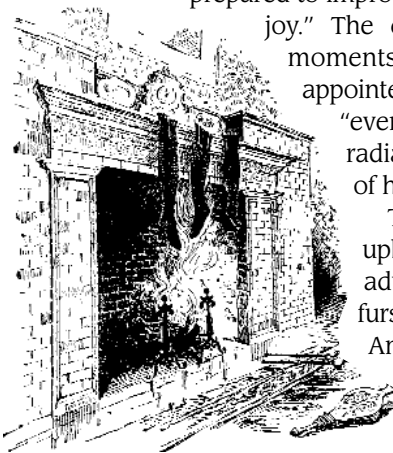
A Festival sponsored by the **Literary Association and the Good Templars** was slated for that week, featuring Christmas gifts, songs, tableaux, oysters and ice cream, etc., promising "one of the most pleasing social gatherings of the season." E.G.

**Ingram**, the famous Linden landlord, announced a grand social dance on Christmas Eve at his hotel, inviting "all who love to trip the light fantastic toe and would partake of a splendid supper." Tickets were \$2.50 each. The men of **Lodge #1**, the oldest **Masonic** order in Wisconsin, held a meeting to install officers, with a reception for all families, and for widows, sisters and daughters of deceased Masons. It was a pot luck supper, with a special tax on bachelor food portions of oysters.

Christmas trees became quite popular among the Sunday Schools of the city. Four churches—the **M.E. at Lenahan's Hall**, **Trinity**, **Presbyterian** and

**Primitive**—lighted little tapers on their trees, at public displays.

The *Mineral Point Tribune* spoke of "ye merrie tyme," as "young and old prepared to improve the licensed time of joy." The children counted the moments until the hour appointed for Santa Claus, and "every face one met was radiant with anticipation of holiday pleasures."



The merchants were upbeat, too. One store advertised a variety of furs as gifts for ladies.

Another store, **Pulford's**, offered fine presents. The newspaper said "**Joe Cartright** has either bought out or robbed old grandfather Santa Claus, and has the most elegant lot of Christmas gifts in the city—watches, clocks, jewelry, silverware, etc., and those toilet seats of his are beauties."

It was a prosperous year in postwar Mineral Point, which had become a market center as well as one of the nation's leading zinc mining sites. Every day found the four rough roads into the city crowded with wagons that carried loads of grain, hogs, wood and hay.

The telegraph line was completed to Mineral Point in 1868, allowing the community to share the news of the day with larger cities. One news flash was

that **Sam Grant**, our Illinois neighbor, was elected President of the United States. He got the good news on election night at his home in Galena, and it was said he celebrated until after midnight.

And at 234 Madison Street, the **Joseph Gundry** family prepared for the holidays in their new home, Orchard Lawn, atop the wooded hill overlooking the town. The family and servants moved in on June 1, capping a busy year of construction on the big house and the outbuildings. Not counting the architect's \$100 fee, the total cost of the project was said to be almost \$15,000! Mr. Gundry purchased his fourth mercantile store a year before, and he and his partners were active in the successful zinc company, down by the railroad depot.

During the 1868 holidays, **Joseph, Sarah** and the children enjoyed the heat of the wood stoves in the mansion's rooms, prepared the food for holiday gatherings and looked ahead to Spring 1869, when the landscaping of the eleven acres would be the major focus for the family.

Little **Margery** was only a toddler, and her activity sometimes shattered the quiet of the household. However, from every account, the Gundrys relished their first Christmas at their "farm within the city." ●

*This story was compiled from 1868 newspaper accounts in the Mineral Point Democrat Tribune.*

Thank you for filling your Christmas stockings with the historic gifts offered at our **2005 MPHS Christmas Store**. A good response from the community, during two days of holiday shopping, may make this gift bazaar an annual event, to benefit the Society's ongoing educational, research and restoration activities. ●

# New Year's Resolution: An Oral History Project

by Frank Beaman

*"Think of what is stored in an 80- or a 90-year-old mind. Just marvel at it. You've got to get out this information, this knowledge, because you've got to pass it on."*

*Studs Terkel*

Chicago legend **Studs Terkel** has been described as a historian, an activist, and a sociologist but he prefers to call himself a "guerrilla journalist with a tape recorder." Terkel has built a career on the hunch that pretty much everyone is worth talking to. He has interviewed hundreds of people, and produced a series of books filled with oral histories that tell the stories of uncelebrated Americans: laborers, farmers, steelworkers, sales clerks—and a host of ordinary citizens in small towns and crowded cities.

He approaches his subjects with innocent curiosity and poses a simple, honest question in the hope of getting an honest, simple response. As an example, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning chronicle, *The Good War*, he placed the common soldier in a rich historic setting by asking, "What's it like to be a kid at the front lines?"

Terkel's books are more than thousands of words; they are the sound of a nation that spontaneously unburdened itself to the first person who thought to ask.

There is an urgency in preserving history, Studs' style. Oral history is important, because we live, from generation to generation, enriched by our personal stories, by tales that reveal the language, personalities and mood of the era.

It's more than a mere chat with an interesting person who has good powers of recall. Oral history is spoken history, valuable social history, which reconstructs the fabric of daily family and community life for which written evidence is often scarce.

Oral history is subject to all the biases and vagaries inherent in human recall; yet it is not substantially different from other historical sources (diaries, letters, news accounts, etc.) which may be distorted, partial, and viewed through the screen of contemporary experience.

The good news is that producing an oral history is something almost anyone can do.

You'll need a willing subject, a quiet place, a tape recorder, and a few hours at the computer.

That's about all you'll need. The secret to the charm and authenticity of an oral history is that the words are recorded as they flow from the speaker, verbatim—no fancy questions and no orchestrated responses. In a day of overproduction and hype, it's rare to encounter this kind of simplicity, but it's important to the "feel" of the history.

If you'd like to tackle an oral history project, please see the "How To" section on page 3 of this newsletter.

The final product may be a collection of pages or a full-fledged memoir, to which photographs might be added. You may discover, at the end, that Mom or Dad, Uncle or Grandmother, has revealed something brand new, never heard before. But, even without such a revelation, an oral history sheds new light on a person, or on a family and its moments both sad and glad, and on the age in which they lived. ●



*Joyce Buckingham tapes a few memories.*

# How to do Oral Histories

- 1. Gather your tools:** Get a cassette tape recorder (with recording meter) and condenser microphone to attach to the collar, pre-labeled cassettes, batteries, pad and pencil.
- 2. Get an agreement up front:** Make clear the purpose and nature of the interview, how it will be conducted, and what final use will be made of the recorded words.
- 3. Do your homework:** Have a sound general background in the subject, times, and topics to be explored, and then put together a question-outline to give you confidence during the interview and keep things moving in the right direction. But don't make the outline an inflexible blueprint because wandering into new pathways may be the best part of the interview.
- 4. Make telephone contact:** Call ahead to arrange for a quiet place where the interviewee is comfortable, and schedule no more than two hours of interview time. Share the general thrust of the interview outline—you may want to send it along to the interviewee, to stimulate old memories.
- 5. Break the ice:** Make sure everyone is comfortable by chatting easily while setting up equipment; then move into the interview as soon as possible.
- 6. Start the session** with enjoyable, welcome questions and let the interviewee run with them, to establish a pattern of in-depth responses and recollections. Ask open-ended questions which can be developed at length by the interviewee. The interviewer's unobtrusiveness and attention are essential. Remember, the ideal interview is a directed monologue and not a conversation.
- 7. Use general questions, not "leading questions."** Don't use traps to pull the interview into sensitive areas, and don't pose multiple-part questions. Don't interrupt — jot down new questions as they are triggered, but hold them until the end of the narration and say, "I'd like to know more about..." The interview should seem relaxed and unhurried.
- 8. If asking about mistakes or failures, broach triumphs and successes first.** When the narrator goes off on a tangent, steer him/her back on course gently and firmly. Refrain from making value judgments.
- 9. Deal with shaky testimony in a matter-of-fact way, such as:** "I have read in such-and-such or someone else told me just the opposite of what you have just told me. Could you help me to resolve this contradiction?"
- 10. After the interview is completed, edit out repetitive passages and information that doesn't advance the topic.** But take care to keep the "flavor" intact. Decide, with the interviewee, how the material will be used. The possibilities include a library or some other permanent archive, an educational setting, or simply the family's treasured space.
- 11. If the end use of the interview is in any sense "public," obtain permission** to use the information by means of a simple release form.
- 12. Because verbatim transcription of tapes is a costly and time-consuming process** (one hour of tape equals 50 pages of typescript and 8-12 hours of labor), most volunteer projects have chosen to **provide detailed indexes** for each tape, using the digital counter found on most recorders. An index and an ongoing general index for the collection of tapes is an acceptable alternative for making the oral history usable for researchers. ●

Check out "Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History" by Judith Moyer:  
[http://www.dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html](http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html)

# Railroad Depot Award

Congratulations to the Mineral Point Railroad Depot Museum for a well-deserved award from the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, which recognized the local organization's restoration of the building and its creative use of space as Wisconsin's "Best Interpretive Site." Richmond Powers, the Depot's Creative Director, summed up, "This is



an endorsement of the hard work and commitment that went into our efforts to treat a rich history in a tangible way, to

give the public full access to enjoy the museum."

The award was presented at Lawrence University in Appleton in October. ●

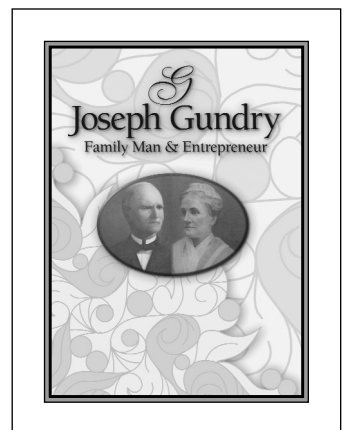
## Joan Young's Book is Gundry with Gumption

One of the Gundry descendants, Joan Emerson Young, has written a lively and thorough account of the life of *Joseph Gundry, Family Man & Entrepreneur*.

The author visited Orchard Lawn on the opening day of the touring season this year, where she thrilled her audience with a poignant reminiscence about her days in the Gundry home as a child.

Her new book, printed with funding from the Mineral Point Historical Society, reflects her love for the house and the family. She carries that spirit into the book's well-ordered pages and presents a rich collection of drawings, maps and photos.

We recommend it as a colorful and pleasant reading experience, and are offering a copy of the book as a premium for 2006 Society members who enroll at the \$100 Sponsor level. ●



# Notes

## from the President

By Jim Kackley, President, Mineral Point Historical Society

**A**fter an active year we're about to move into a quiet period at Orchard Lawn. But it will be quiet only in terms of public events. Inside there will be a lot happening. Confident we will meet our \$310,000 Phase II fund-raising goal, our House Restoration Committee will be working this winter to complete as much of the interior restoration as possible before we reopen the house next May. At the same time our Grounds Committee will be working on tree repair and other projects best done in winter.

Jim Stroschein will take us through the results of the Phase II Campaign at our annual meeting on January 29 and an update on our exciting restoration plans.

To all those who've contributed to Phase II, my deepest thanks. You've made a great difference.



As you will note on page 7 of this newsletter, we're starting the Gundry Legacy Society. It's an opportunity for each of us to recognize the MPHS in our wills and estate plans. We can set aside some funds that will keep the Society and Orchard Lawn as strong and vibrant as they've been. I hope you'll each decide to join Gundry Legacy Society.

Our last newsletter had a form for those who would like to volunteer. I was very pleased with the response. Having additional volunteers makes the job of managing Orchard Lawn a good deal easier. For the volunteers it's fun and a worthwhile endeavor. I hope each of you chooses to volunteer as you renew your membership.

As we come to the end of 2005, my deepest appreciation to all of you who made the MPHS such a great institution and, truly, the Living Room of Mineral Point. ●



## Thank You to the Members who supported the MPHS in 2005.

*(An asterisk \* indicates those who have already signed up, as of November 30, for 2006 membership; and L indicates Life Members)*

These are the supporters who make our good works possible:

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Mick Ahlgrimm  
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 Wallace Winter  
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 Joan Young <sup>L</sup>



## Welcome to New Members for 2006

Ann Cabezas  
 Mary Jo Ceniti  
 Arnold & Shirley Chambers  
 Gary & Laura Cisler  
 Joe & Sue Dickinson  
 Brian & Mary Kay Engelke  
 Shari Fisher  
 David & Dana George  
 Nancy Hamilton  
 Nancy Harker  
 Don Hawkins  
 Therese Hess  
 Jack Hodgson  
 The Mineral Point Hotel  
 James Johnson  
 Robert Schulte & Julie McCoy-Schulte  
 Lisa Stone & Don Howlett  
 Holly & Bill Tierney-Bedord  
 Julie & Tom Tredinnick  
 Sally Young

Is your name on our membership rolls? If not, isn't it time to join MPHS for 2006, and keep the historical momentum rolling?



# Potter's Project Shows the "Way to Go"

A warm day in October—a good day to do a little patching and painting on the cornice above the storefront windows. Besides, the storeowner's father-in-law was on hand to do the work on the ladder.

But, as **Bob Potter** puts it, "The project got a little out of hand."

The Historical Society applauds historic preservation that "gets out of hand," so **R. F. Potter Antiques Restoration** at 35 High Street takes this month's honors in the MPHS' informal "Way to Go!" competition.



The old stone building was merchant *Joseph Ken Wilson, aloft.* Gundry's third store, selling groceries, dry goods and other necessities from 1857 to 1871. It then served as a hardware emporium before Potter bought the place in 1970. Over the years of his ownership, Potter has removed some of the stucco to reveal the original work of stonemason Richard Thomas.

Next year, Potter says, he hopes to replace stone window sills, add exterior shutters on the second story, and get to work on tuckpointing the building.

"Of course," he admits, "those items have been on my 'To Do' list for several years."

Let's hope this month's momentum will continue, to complete the work, giving Mineral Point another point of historic pride. ●

And "Wow!" to **Mitchell Hardware**, and paint-picker Peter Erbach, for the bright and cheerful historic color scheme on the 1905 building's facade.

## MPHS Annual Meeting Set

The Historical Society will hold its Annual Meeting on January 29, 2006, at Orchard Lawn. President Jim Kackley will present the annual report for 2005 and the budget for the coming year, and Vice President Jim Stroschein will reveal the total amount raised by the MPHS in the fundraising campaign for Phase 2 restoration work. The Society was attempting to raise \$155,000 to qualify for the challenge grant offered by the Jeffris Family Foundation. The totals were not available at the time this newsletter was printed. Please plan to be with us at 2 p.m. on January 29—we'll have refreshments and a relatively short agenda, including the election of the 2006 MPHS Board of Directors. ●

## A Portrait in the Parlor

MPHS Board members **Jim Stroschein** and **Nancy Pfothauer** met at Orchard Lawn to open a big box that had arrived there one day, as a surprise. Inside was a wonderful gift—a portrait of **Margery Gundry**, the youngest daughter of **Joseph** and **Sarah Gundry**.

The large portrait was a donation from **Henry King Jeanneret**, a grandson of Margery who now lives in Florida. Mr. Jeanneret said he felt the portrait "just belonged at Orchard Lawn" and he was making the gift to the MPHS so that others could enjoy it.

Margery was two years old when the family moved to the newly-built Gundry home in 1868. She was married there in 1889 to **Harry Wheelock King** of Cleveland, Ohio, a partner in his family's business, the King Bridge Company.

Margery moved back to Orchard Lawn in 1934 after her sister Mary's death and lived there with her brother, Will, until his death two years later. She and her niece, **Nancy Lambertson Campbell**, eventually deeded the property to the newly-formed Mineral Point Historical Society in 1939. She died in 1950.

We're grateful to Henry Jeanneret, whose thoughtfulness has provided a charming addition to the front parlor at Orchard Lawn. ●

# GUNDRY LEGACY SOCIETY

## Board Creates Legacy Society

The MPHS Board of Directors has created a new vehicle to help fund the organization's good works in education, research and restoration. It's the **Gundry Legacy Society**, designed to encourage, enroll, recognize and honor donors who have remembered the Historical Society with planned gifts or significant contributions of time and/or money.

An October Board vote brought the Legacy Society into being, and the early months of the fledgling society will be devoted to drafting a membership made up of generous supporters. The society will welcome those who have made large monetary contributions, or have provided extraordinary service as volunteers to the MPHS, or have arranged for their estate to pass along a thoughtful legacy.

Members of the Gundry Legacy Society will be saluted at a new event in 2006, a Founder's Day Banquet scheduled for July 28, commemorating the day in 1939 when the MPHS took the deed for Orchard Lawn and launched its mission "to facilitate the investigation of historical, scientific, literary, industrial and agricultural subjects."

In coming months, the society will provide information on the mutual benefits of planned giving, and will invite members to gather useful knowledge about investment and estate planning opportunities that would support our historical objectives and goals.

The simplest way to leave a legacy, of course, is to draft a memorial gift or bequest into your will. Only 30 percent of Americans have wills, and only 20

percent of those wills include a charitable gift. A few words in the document can serve a wonderful purpose, as testimony for a nonprofit organization you hold dear. And there are many other ways to make a donation that will provide needed support for a favorite charity while at the same time providing tax benefits, wise asset allocation, and even the possibility of

guaranteed income while you are alive. All of the avenues offer the satisfaction of having done something beneficial to Orchard Lawn and the Mineral Point community.

Legacy society members may self-nominate, or be nominated by others. For more information, contact MPHS Executive Director **Therese Hess** at the society's office. ●

### *The President:*

*I'm delighted we're starting the Gundry Legacy Society. It's both a recognition of those with a strong interest in Orchard Lawn and a way to fund our long-term educational programs. By making a provision for MPHS in our wills and estate plans, we help insure the continued success of Orchard Lawn and the Historical Society.*

*Jim Kackley*

**2005 MPHS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Jim Kackley, President, Treasurer  
Jim Stroschein, Vice President  
Phyllis Bennett, Secretary  
Therese Hess, Executive Director

### BOARD MEMBERS

Frank Beaman  
Parmley Harris  
Jeanne Lambin  
Lucille May  
Nancy Pfothenauer  
Peter Pfothenauer  
Allen Schroeder  
Mark Speltz  
Gary Tibbits

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

**Frank Beaman** • ©Copyright MPHS 2005

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## Mineral Point Historical Society Membership Form

January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006

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

### Please check one:

- Individual (\$15.00)
- Family (\$25.00)
- Supporting (\$50.00)
- Sponsor (\$100.00)
- Patron (\$500.00)
- Benefactor (\$1,000.00)

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



## Acquisitions

**H**elen Terr provided holiday cheer with a gift of a seven-foot artificial Christmas tree to the Historical Society, along with several strings of Christmas lights. Thank you, Helen! ●

## About the Photo Last Time

Both Kandy Keuler and Pat Murphy think this might be the old Penhallegon Dry Goods Store at 141 High Street, now the home of White Pickett Mercantile. Pat says her mother worked there before her marriage. Pat remembers the wooden floor, the long counters, and the open stairway to the 2nd floor.



## From the MPHS Photo Collection

"Jail Alley." This was before 1912, when the courthouse was demolished to make way for the present day municipal building, and after 1891 when the electrical lines were installed.



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

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Mineral Point, WI 53565  
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Email: [mphistory@mhtc.net](mailto:mphistory@mhtc.net)

### 2006 CALENDAR MPHS UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 29 . . . 2 p.m. • Membership  
Annual Meeting
- Feb. 19. . . 2 p.m. • Lyceum - David Lowe  
on Wisconsin Rock Art
- Mar. 19 . . . 2 p.m. • Lyceum - Mineral Point  
History Panel
- May 14 . . . Opening Day of Tour Season  
and celebration of "Signs of the  
Times"
- June . . . . . Weekend Tours
- July. . . . . Weekend Tours
- July 28 . . . 6 p.m. • Founder's Day  
Celebration
- August . . . Weekend Tours
- Sept. . . . . Weekend Tours
- Sept. 3 . . . 7 p.m. • Jammin' on the Porch
- Oct. 20, 21, 27, 28  
. . . . . 7 p.m. • "An Evening  
with Edgar Allan Poe"
- Mid-October Closing Day for Tours