

Stoughton Historical Society Newsletter

Winter / Spring 2025

The Depot Dilemma



Pictured is the Depot in 1990, before the Stoughton Historical Society restored the exterior and interior with a total volunteer effort. No taxpayer money was used.

At the end of November, the Stoughton Historical Society learned that a group called the Smet Foundation had proposed a Depot Hill revitalization. The proposal has several components with one being the sale of the Cities RR depot which would be turned into offices.

This information came to us out of the blue. To confirm this, on November 21, Nancy Hagen, (President of the Stoughton Historical Society) called Mayor Swadley and Chamber President, Sarah Ebert, to find out the details. A very vague Smet Foundation proposal was given to the Society. A request was made at this time that the Stoughton Historical Society would like to be part of the discussions. This request was recognized by the Mayor and Chamber.

On December 10, our Historical Society officers attended the City Council's meeting where we were allowed to make a two minute public statement opposing the sale of the depot. Later that night, the Council met in a closed session and confirmed a deal that allows the Foundations 120 days to explore the possible purchase of the Depot.

We the Stoughton Historical Society need to be heard.

We have organized a public forum on January 21, 2025 at 6:30, at the Senior Center annex building. Snow date is set for January 22, same time and place. The depot will also be open from 4:30 to 6 o'clock for any interested parties that would like to see the building before our meeting.

We will be inviting the Chamber, City Council, R.D.A., Landmarks Commission, Smet Foundation and public to attend.

A short presentation will be made by the Stoughton Historical Society with time allowed for discussion, questions and answers. Hope to see you then.



Stoughton Historical Society presents...

Stoughton Century and Sesquicentennial Farms

at
Sons of Norway- 317 South Page Street, Stoughton
on
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Stoughton Historical Society member, Darlene Arneson, will present a program highlighting Stoughton area farms that have been awarded their Century or Sesquicentennial Farm status at the Wisconsin State Fair. Jill Albanese, Wisconsin State Fair, will give a background on the program. They will also have some of the recipients share the history of their farms and what being a Century or Sesquicentennial Farm means to their family. Refreshments will be served! Everyone is welcome and no reservations needed!

Please contact Darlene Arneson at arnesonfamily5@gmail.com or 608-873-7209 for more information. Mandt Lodge is handicapped accessible with a lift located on the south side of the building. There is parking on the street, public parking lot behind the Stoughton Senior Center, or in the Livsreise parking lot **if their building is closed.**

The public is always welcome to attend Stoughton Historical Society Programs!

New Display - "Uncle Sam"

Bill Leppien, who lived from 1922-1981, devoted 25 years to this Country and its children by portraying "Uncle Sam" in over five thousand parades and countless children's and veterans hospitals. He was a welcomed addition to our Syttende Mai parade for years. In his "Uncle Sam" role he delighted viewers in 49 States and marched in five presidential inauguration parades.



Bill, a WWII Army Veteran and Commander of Madison's American Legion post stated "I do it mainly for the kids to give them some thought of patriotism of this Country not just being land but people too."

We are delighted and honored to add Bill's "Uncle Sam" collection to our main museum.

Central Campus Remembered

With the loss of the Armory and Community building, a committee was formed to educate all about the history of Central Campus.

Stoughton Historical Society, Landmark Commission, Redevelopment Authority and Stoughton Area School District worked together to save a bit of the past. This permanent sign, located on the NE corner North and Forrest St. is now installed. Take a stroll and enjoy this reminder of what use to be. Our history is worth saving.



Vintage Sale



Pictured organizer Gwen Drury and musicians Sid and Andrew Borrsmo.

Over twenty tents filled Division St. and the pioneer grounds.

Our biggest 2024 fundraising event was the Vintage Sale (Retro on the River) on September 7 at our Pioneer house and surrounding area.

Board member, Gwen Drury, took on the task of organizing a first ever pop up tent event in town. Her motivation was inspired by a childhood memory of her family visiting vintage sales.

The idea grew as Gwen spoke to many groups including the City, Police and Street Department. Closing Division street allowing more participants a safe environment to shop, eat and enjoy a variety of entertaining events from a bouncy house, Tesla electric charging car to historic walks.

We so appreciate Gwen's vision and incredible organizing efforts. Thanks again to Gwen, participants and all the volunteers who helped make this day a memorable event.



October 1, 2024 Annual Meeting

Our delayed Annual Meeting, due to a blizzard in April, was certainly worth the wait.

The topic was “Norse Rosemaling - Past to Present” and was presented at the Sons of Norway Lodge with a panel of 5 presenters discussing some aspect of this beloved art form.

We thank Chris Milligan Ciha for moderating and organizing this event along with the presenters and their flexibility for coming back at a delayed date. We also appreciate the Lodge for hosting our Annual Meeting.



Mark you calendar for 2025

JANUARY 21 at 6:30 - Senior Center Annex.
Presentation and discussion on our RR Depot. (Snow date: January 22.)

JANUARY 21 - (snow date January 22) 4:30-6:00
Tours of the Depot.

APRIL 1 - Annual Meeting at Sons of Norway Lodge. 6:30 - “Centennial Farms”. Presenter: Darlene Arneson.

APRIL 12 - Museum spring clean.

JUNE 14 - Raise the Flag fundraising Volunteers needed.

SEPTEMBER 6 - “Museum Comes Alive”
More info. to Come - Fundraiser.

Let there be light!

Have you driven by the museum at night lately? We have a bright new look thanks to volunteer Bruce Gomplen.

First, Bruce replaced wiring and added a new spotlight illuminating our flag and steeple.

A master electrician, Bruce took on another challenge of getting our old clock in front lit and running. We so appreciate these outdoor improvements.

Thanks Bruce, your a valued volunteer.



Welcome New Members

Steve and Ruth F, Susan H. and Ralph P.

Special Thanks

Lily Tuttle, our High School volunteer.

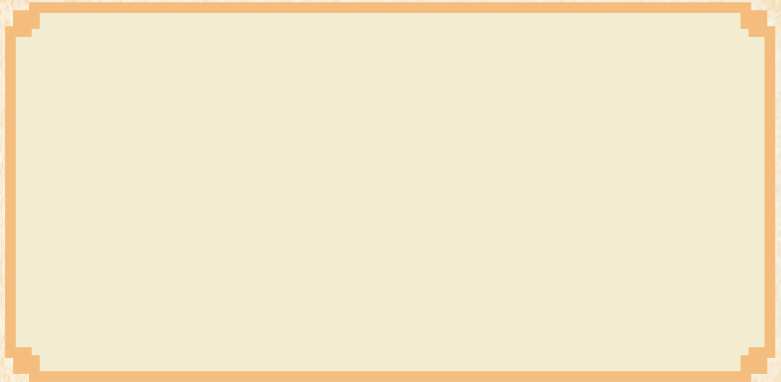
Bryant Foundation for grant to repair rotten wood at the Pioneer House.

All our 2024 volunteers. We couldn't have done our successful 2024 season without you.

Check out our web page: www.stoughtonhistoricalsociety.org for items for sale.
We have books, t-shirts, notecards and more.



www.stoughtonhistoricalsociety.org



facebook.com/cityhistory.org



Stoughton Historical Society
Stoughton, WI 53589

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**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEERED THIS SEASON.
WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!**