



3505 Halverson Road
Stoughton, WI 53589

www.stoughtonhistoricalsociety.org



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Stoughton Historical Society Newsletter

Winter / Spring 2026

Oak Opening II

It was quite a gift for our Stoughton Historical Society when new member, Brad Jackson, wrote on his membership form “ I like to do research”. That was an offer we couldn’t refuse.

A meeting took place with us asking if he would like to create an updated history of Stoughton and area. This history hadn’t been updated since 2005 from our museum. Brad was willing and went to work using old Hubs, museum archives, and other research.

After months of work, an interesting, well written and very complete overview of our area’s past 20 years was created.

A little about Brad. In 2024, Brad retired from a 40 year law career where writing was part of his job. Born and raised in Michigan, he and his wife, Susan Schadewald, moved to Pleasant Springs in 1996 where they raised their two children.

Buying the historic Grimsrud farm, tragedy hit when the infamous 2005 tornado destroyed their home. The couple loving the area and history of their property, rebuilt their home to its original grander.

We are so grateful to Brad and his willingness to help us keep our history alive and growing.

Oak Opening II will be available for sale at our museum and webpage sale page. This new publication is part of our 2026 funding campaign for a new build at the Luke Stoughton Pioneer property which will house the remaining Depot artifacts.



Enjoy Stoughton’s History

Take a stroll and check out just a few of our local history displays.

The public library house’s a fantastic local history section located on the main floor of the Carnegie mezzanine. Wonderful records to enjoy.

Main St. (north side of the library) honors local veterans with several memorial plaques.

Check out our museums railroad bike on loan at 229 E. Main. This bike was once housed in our Depot museum collection and will find its new home in our new build at the Pioneer house.

In front of City Hall, is a downtown informative sign, telling about our Downtown Historic District.

On the corner of North Forest and North Street is another narrative sign, describing the long lost central campus.

This is just a sampling of what’s out there. Be adventurous. There’s so much to see and more to learn in our beautiful town.

Items for Sale

Fundraising continues for the Society. Pictured are two items that were made for the museum. We will have them for sale at the Expo and our main museums. Hopefully our Oak Opening II will also be ready in April.



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

Wadham's Mobil Oil Bulk Plant Fire, June 19, 1952



Bulk Plant Fire Whipped in Four Hour Fire Fight.

Bulk Plant Fire Whipped in Four Hour Fire Fight. "Stoughton experienced the most threatening fire in decades Thursday night when sparks from a welding torch touched off a blaze at the Wadham's bulk station, 300 East South street, about 6 p.m. It was 10 p.m. before the fire department stopped its all-out pouring of water and chemicals and in the interval had the assistance of fire departments from Oregon, Edgerton, Madison and Blooming Grove.

Black smoke ascended straight upward a half mile high. As dusk neared, the red flames illuminated the sky and attracted thousands of motorists to Stoughton. The five fire departments were forced to string hose so that the C. M. & St. Paul R. R. was blocked, and trains delayed."

"It was regarded as nothing less than a miracle that homes and other property in the vicinity of Wadham's bulk plants were saved Thursday night. The major factor which aided the firemen was lack of a wind. Powdered foam was used to fight the unusual blaze. The Stoughton supply quickly was exhausted. County traffic officers and tank trucks rushed to Stoughton with a reserve supply. There are seven storage tanks in the colony of tanks. The capacity of each ranged from 10,000 to 20,000

gallons. Three were damaged. Two were empty."

"One motorist and inspector here Thursday night was from Monticello - 43 miles away. He stated that he had been painting, and saw the smoke, and believed it was at Attica, which is five miles from his home. He kept on traveling in the direction of the fire, and finally landed here - over 40 miles from where he first sighted the smoke which indicated a fire of major proportions."

"Airplane pilots who took their planes up to get a view of the fire from the air said that the smoke from the fire extended 2,500 to 3,000 feet high."

See our website, stoughtonhistoricalsociety.org for this and other historic downtown fires.

Excerpts from: *Stoughton Courier Hub*, June 20, 1952

New Artwork

A beautiful addition, which came from the Depot, can now be found at our main museum. Coordinated by Jennifer Olson for her masters degree, eight local artist were commissioned to paint a taste of our local history representing a combination of folk and fine art.



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

Of Interest

Did you know that since Stoughton Historical Museum was established in 1960, there has been visitors from every continent except Antarctica. Who knows, maybe this year we'll get a visit from a penguin.

2025 Attendance: We had a good year: 266 Students, 407 at Syttende Mai and 135 Saturday visitors. Total visitors- 808.

Repairs

Major repairs needed to our museum steeple. This \$27,000 repair project will be added to our 2026 fundraising campaign.



Upcoming Events:

- Chamber Expo - April 9 - 4:30 - 6:30
- Annual Museum Spring clean - April 18 - 9:00am.
- Norwegian Day at the Mandt lodge with third graders - April 21.
- Syttende Mai - Museum opens:
Friday, May 15 - 1:00-5:00.
Saturday, May 16 - 10:00-5:00
Sunday, May 17 - 11:00-1:00, 3:00-5:00
(call 873-1943 if you want to volunteer)
- Museum open for 2026 season: Every Saturday
May 23-September 5 11:00-3:00. (Volunteers needed)
- Raise the flag - June 14
- Teletget of America museum tours. July 15-18.
Times not set yet.
- Retro on the River - September 12 -Mandt Park.
Details to come.

Building the Future

Dear Stoughton Historical Society members.

After the vote to sell the Depot on January 28, 2025 by the Stoughton's City Council to the Smet Foundation, our Society has been donating, selling, storing and saving artifacts from the Depot museum collection.

We are now starting Phase 2 of our new build plan. We have chosen to build a barn style garage on the Stoughton Pioneer home property. This structure will be a little over 700 ft.² and has been unanimously agreed upon by our board on January 15, 2026.

On February 10, 2026, the Stoughton City Council allocated \$80,000 from the sale of the Depot to the Stoughton Historical Society for this project. We are grateful for this donation. The cost of the new build was quoted at \$133,000 with additional miscellaneous expenses.

We will be grant writing, fundraising, and asking for donations to cover the additional cost for this project. Any money left over from the campaign will go for the Museum's steeple repair fund, quoted at \$27,000 and a new roof fund on the Museum's carriage house, quoted at \$10,000.

Our Society only survives because of the generosity of our members, community, fundraising and grant writing.

Can you help us with this tax deductible donation for these upcoming projects? If yes, please fill out the bottom form and mail to:

Stoughton Historical Society
Catherine Haynes, Treasurer
121 S. Page Street, Stoughton, WI 53589

Or an online contribution to:
Stoughtonhistoricalsociety.org

We appreciate your consideration and support.
- *Stoughton Historical Society*

Yes, I want to support the Stoughton Historical Society.

_____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$150
_____ \$200 _____ \$500 _____ Other