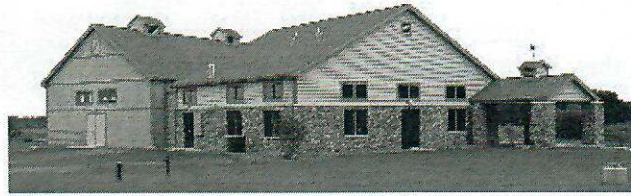
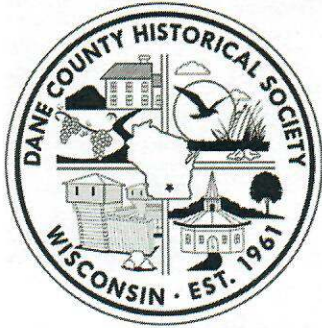

DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



The Dane County Historical Society Office and the Otto Schroeder Records Center are located in the lower level of the Lussier Family Heritage Building on Lake Farm Road just south of the Beltline near Lake Waubesa.

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Who Was Mary B.?

Donald P. Sanford



*The Mary B racing on Lake Mendota,
Courtesy Marianne Hobbins*

On January 29, 1950, Madisonians wandered into the kitchen, filled their coffee cups, fried a couple of eggs and turned to the sports section of the Wisconsin State Journal. Sharing some of the valuable space above the fold with the headline proclaiming Jack Dempsey the greatest fighter of the past half-century was another--“Mary B Wins Pair of Races.”

During the 1950s, this headline or something like it appeared dozens of times in both Madison dailies. Mary B was fast, really fast, but just who or what was she? A racehorse, track star or maybe a downhill skier? None of the above—she was an iceboat. Thirty-nine feet long and weighing in at around 2,000 pounds, she was not just any iceboat. She was the dream of one of Madison’s largest electrical contractors and public-spirited citizens, Orvin “OT” Havey. Though he wasn’t much of a sailor himself, OT loved the sport and he loved Madison. This love affair launched him on a mission to bring the Hearst and Stuart cups, the most important trophies in the sport back to his hometown.*

To do this, Havey needed a brand-new boat, something fast, a winner. For that he turned to Frank O. Tetzlaff and Carl Bernard, two of the greatest iceboat designers and sailors of the day.

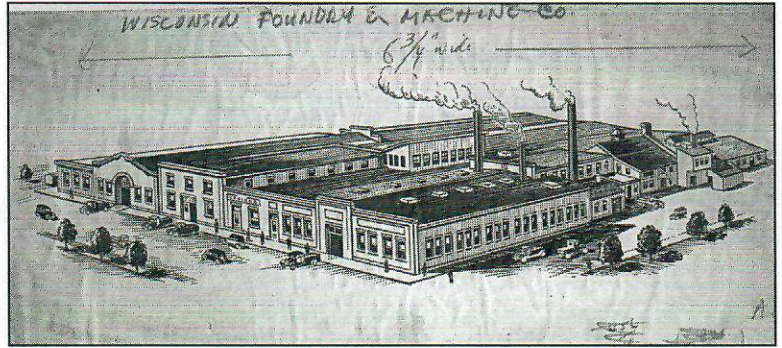
A master carpenter, homebuilder and contractor, Tetzlaff was acknowledged by Marshall Erdman as the only person capable of realizing Mr. Wright’s plans for the First Unitarian Meeting House. An iceboater in his spare time, he raced, designed and built several iceboats including the Fritz, a winner of both the Hearst and Stuart.

Bernard was a third-generation Lake Mendota boatman. In the 1920s, Carl was well-known in the Midwest as a champion outboard hydroplane racer. And by the mid-1940s, he’d won almost every local, regional and national ice boating trophy.

OT had his team. Ice Boats are built of Sitka spruce, a tree that grows in the distant forests of the Pacific Northwest. Prized for its lightweight, flexibility and strength, it is the preferred material for airplanes, gliders and iceboats. Havey ordered a boxcar full of the stuff. For an iceboater, opening the door to this car must have felt like opening the vault at Fort Knox. Tetzlaff and a helper spent days inspecting each piece of these 40-foot boards, rejecting any with even the slightest flaws.

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All of Mary B's hardware, except for a few pulleys, was fabricated at the Wisconsin Foundry and Machine Company located in the 600 block of East Main Street. The Botham family, owners of the business, were sailors, and though they specialized in massive rock-crushing machinery, they were happy to lend their talents to anything boat-related.

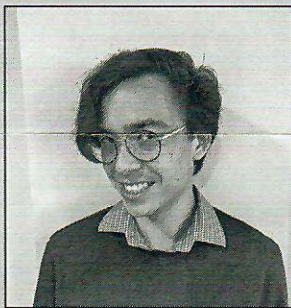


*The Wisconsin Foundry and Machine Co.
Courtesy Dane County Historical Society*

On March 22, 1948, after nearly three years of building, Mary B was christened on Lake Mendota's ice by her namesake, Mary Bernice Havey. As OT planned, the B was a champion, bringing the Hearst, Stuart and Challenge Pennant to Madison time and time again. She became a legend, eclipsing that of her owner and, to some extent, the men who sailed her cementing Madison's reputation as the Ice Boating Capital of the Universe.

Since 2016 she has been owned and maintained by the Iceboat Foundation, LLC, a non-profit dedicated to preserving classic iceboats like the Mary B.

** The Hearst (as in William Randolph) and Stuart cups date back to 1904. In 1881, iceboaters on the Hudson River established what is now the granddaddy of all ice boating trophies, the Ice Yacht Challenge Pennant of America.*



Announcing Our New Summer Intern!

The Dane County Historical Society is pleased to announce that Evan Lee will be an intern for us this summer. Evan is currently a senior at UW-Madison and wanted to intern with DCHS out of a desire to work with history, to help in public education, and have hands-on experience with historical materials. Currently, Evan studies history and is working towards certificates in German and European Studies. After graduation, Evan plans to enroll in graduate school and is writing his senior thesis. Ultimately, he hopes to work with history in the public sphere, in education, or academia.

The basic objectives for our internship will be three-fold: research, appraisal/reappraisal and assistance with establishing new archival capabilities.

Our first research project will focus on the The Madison Mozart Club, a singing society founded in 1901 and disbanded in 1959. Recently, DCHS accepted two of the Club's ledger books that will be added to our existing extensive collection. (More about the Club in this newsletter's article Recent Acquisitions.) The research we develop can be used in a number of constructive ways, including developing finding aids, producing newsletter articles, and in setting priorities for affirmative efforts to collect, fundraising, conservation, digitization, etc.

In terms of appraisal, DCHS has a small backlog of donated collections that need to have an initial appraisal undertaken. Evan and DCHS staff and board members will work in tandem to make the initial appraisal of the newly-donated materials. In addition our intern will work hand-in-hand with current staff to start an ongoing reappraisal of DCHS collections. The objective here would be to take a second more intensive look at our current collections to assess their potential for additional research, conservation, digitization, and fundraising.

Lastly Evan will assist the DCHS in establishing two new workstations, one for digitization and one for humidification. Because DCHS has an established website that includes a large online catalog, it makes sense to digitize some of our collections and then post them on our website. This would make these collections easily available and more useful to possible researchers. The humidification station would help us conserve collections that are currently tightly rolled and therefore difficult to use or digitize. These include our extensive collections of architectural drawings and maps.