



Portage Historical Society

The Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Road • Portage WI 53901

January 2024 Newsletter

Juliette Breese-Bennett Relatives Visit



By: Sarah
Mautz, docent

One quiet afternoon near the end of October 2023, two visitors came to the Museum at the Portage - Constance Monroe from Scottsdale, Arizona, and her daughter, Poppi, wished

to tour the house and to seek more information on her “Aunt Juliette Breese” who was adopted by William Llewellyn Breese and his first wife, Jessie (Blackman) Breese.

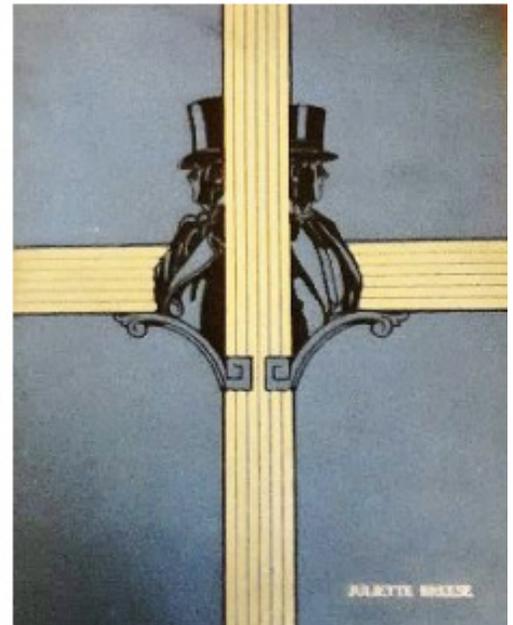
Coni is Juliette’s niece, and Poppi is researching and writing their family history. Until that day, I was not aware that Juliette had siblings and was surprised to learn that she had two sisters - Coni being the daughter of one of them. Sadly, the three sisters were put up for adoption when first their mother, then their father passed away. At that time, their first and last names were changed in the adoption process.

Coni remembers coming to Uncle William & Aunt Jessie’s home at a very young age, so it was meaningful to her to once again walk through and recall memories. Her most vivid memory is of sitting in Zona’s chair at her desk in the study, though she doesn’t have a distinct memory of Zona probably because she had already passed away.

After their visit, I connected a few dots and recalled

that among our collection of five University of Wisconsin yearbooks, we have one belonging to Juliette Breese (“The Wisconsin Badger”, Volume 47, copyright 1932; Editor-in-Chief is Jack Thompson; Business Manager is Gerhard Becker). Juliette’s name is stamped in the lower right corner of the cover.

Side Note: I learned from my search on the UW Library website that there were two “Wisconsin Badger” yearbooks published in 1932. The other one is Volume 46, published by the Junior Class of the University of Wisconsin. It has a plain cover which is tan in color and trimmed with black.



In Juliette’s yearbook, bears an inscription: “For Juliette Breese from Glenn Frank” under his photo in the Administration section - Glenn Frank was President of the University of Wisconsin at the time.

Juliette’s name also appears in the index on page 382 - in the “Campus Groups” section of the yearbook. “Villa Maria” is on that page, beginning with a black & white photo of what seems to be a sitting room with a piano in one corner, a comfy chair, desk, fireplace, and a small table. There are no photographs of the Villa Maria Campus Group members. However, below the featured photo the members are listed

Juliette Breese-Bennet Relatives Visit continued from Page 1

by name - there were two “Officers”, a President, and a W.S.G.A. Representative [Women’s Student Government Association]. Next is a listing of “Members in University,” starting off with graduates - Juliette Breese is one of three ladies listed there. Below that are listed 14 ladies in the Class of 1932; 20 ladies in the Class of 1933; 18 ladies in the Class of 1934; and 17 ladies in the Class of 1935. Not knowing anything about campus groups or Villa Maria, I did a bit of research on the internet. The Wisconsin Historical Society website has a property record for Villa Maria at 615 Howard Place in Madison. It was built in 1926 as a student rooming house/apartment building. Frank Riley of Madison was the architect.

It is a part of the Langdon Street Historic District in Madison and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (June 26, 1986) and the State Register of Historic Places (January 1, 1989). Citation: *Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory, “Villa Maria,” City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, Reference Number: 145929.*

It was a pleasure to be the docent that afternoon and to meet these two delightful relatives of Juliette Breese. I thanked them for adding to my knowledge of the Breese family who lived in this house back in the day, and I wish them the best as they continue to compile their family histories.

Curator Corner

By: Sara Oostdik, curator

The Collections Team would like to thank everyone who donated items to the museum this year - 23 items in 2023! Your donations are vital in helping us tell the story of Portage and its residents.

Over the past year, enormous steps were made to improve our collections storage. Volunteers, Debbie Rohrbeck and Sandy Nachreiner, sorted hundreds of objects by type (all the metal items together, all glass bottles together, etc.) and then stored these items in new archival containers.

To make room for metal shelving obtained by the museum, Jim & Mary Gorman and Vicki Vogts removed the two long center rows of old library wood bookcases from the basement. The acidity of the wood shelves and their shallow depth did not allow for safe storage of our collection items. The new

metal shelving created space for larger clothing and textile boxes to be placed in one room which freed up space in another storage room.

Alongside the metal shelving, we added a work table with a photography area (not pictured) and an area for archival supplies to be stored. Three new dehumidifiers and box fans are set up throughout the basement storage area to keep the environment suitable for long-term storage.

This basement reorganizing project began in February 2023, and less than a year later, we’re excited to share that the majority of items that have been sorted can now begin the next step of updating each item’s location in our computer system, making our collections more searchable for research and display.



Before:
Feb. 2023



After: Dec. 2024

EXHIBIT SPOTLIGHT

“Portage Families” - Robert & Ada Bain

By: Peggy Malone

The Museum at the Portage has an exhibit that will feature a family from the Portage area. The current exhibit focuses on the Robert & Ada Bain family.

In late 2021, Nancy, the granddaughter of Elizabeth (Bain) Seville, donated a 1905 Portage High School diploma belonging to Elizabeth. I obtained more information, items, and photographs from Nancy to create this exhibit.

Elizabeth (Bain) Seville grew up on a farm located in Fort Winnebago on a property they named “Maple Grove Farm”. In September, Nancy and her husband, Mike, with two traveling companions came to Portage to see the exhibit and to visit the farm. The current owners of the farm were very gracious in welcoming them into their lovely home and sharing historic items from the property.



Nancy’s grandfather, Frederick Seville, grew up in Lodi, Wisconsin. The owners of his childhood home also opened their doors to the relatives of the people who built this pretty house. The owners noted that many past residents visit their home. Frederick and Elizabeth had a daughter, Jean, who is Nancy’s mother.

Nancy and Mike live in California in the house that Frederick & Elizabeth Seville built in 1936. This exhibit all started with a 1905 Portage High School diploma!



Bain family in the early 1900’s (Elizabeth Bain-Seville standing in the back row wearing black dress).



Nancy & Mike outside of Frederick & Elizabeth Seville’s California home built in 1936

MEMBERSHIP

We are excited to announce our Membership Renewal Drive! This is the perfect opportunity for you to join our community and take advantage of all the benefits that come with being a member. Our membership offers you exclusive access to our events, resources, and discounts that are not available to non-members.

By becoming a member, you will be joining a group of like-minded individuals who share the same passion and interests as you. You will have the chance to network and connect with professionals, experts, and enthusiasts in your field. You will also have the chance to be a part of our initiatives and projects that aim to make a positive impact in our society.

Membership Levels

<i>Level</i>	<i>Donation</i>	<i>Store Discount</i>	<i>Genealogy Research</i>
Pierre Pauquette	\$25-\$49	15% off	
Ansel Clark	\$50-\$99	20% off	
Zona Gale	\$100-\$249	25% off	1 hr free
Julia Rusch	\$250-\$499	30% off	2 hrs free
Frederick J. Turner	\$500+	35% off	3 hrs free

Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to join our community and take your passion to the next level! Sign up for our Membership Drive today and start enjoying all the benefits of being a member. Join online!

<https://portagemuseum.org/membership/>

THANK YOU to our 2023 members:

RUSCH LEVEL

Peggy Brown*
Margaret Amend
Dennis & Maribeth Dorn
Dan Roecker

GALE LEVEL

Ted & Barb Chesney
Ron & Debbie Dorn
Dave & Judy Eulberg
Ann Marie Fuerst
Janice Gifford
Bob & Bobbie Goodman
Dave & Sandy Gunderson
Elayne Clipper Hanson
Bonnie Hibner
Steve & Natalie James
Joan Johnson
Barbara Kaiser
Mike & Robin Kvalo
Richard & Sally Lillie
Manoucher & Pat Madani
Sean & Peggy Malone
Yvonne Marshall *
John & Kathryn Miller
Gary & Barbara O'Hearn
Darrell & Mary Parker
A. Gail Phillips
Pete & Jan Price
Nan Rebholz
Scott & Sara Reindl *
Ray & Hazel Rogers
Richard & Kathleen Rowley
Frank & Barbara Sandberg
Florence Schieber
Amy Schleiss *

Dr. Stewart & Melody Brooks-Taylor
Dean & Judy Traut
Vicki Vogts
Bill & Eleanor Voigt
Lila Waldman
Thad Whiting

CLARK LEVEL

Peggy Alf-Sechtig
Mike & Caroline Bolgrihn *
Dennis Brown *
Mark & Laurie Deakins
Katie Fleck *
Jim & Mary Gorman
Jeff & Janice Grothman
Jerry & Joan Indermark
Sally Kipfer
Nancy Kreier
Gary & Judy Larkin
Mona Larsen
Edith McElroy
Jeanne Mundt
Mary J. Parker*
Warren & Delores Rebholz
Debbie Rohrbeck
Nancy Schaper & Jim Jordan
William Welsh
Ronald & Linda Wendt
Lucille Wheeler
Russell Wyman

PAUQUETTE LEVEL

Pat Atkinson
Gary & Ann Bisping
Jane Considine

William Stroud Eulberg
Fred Galley
Martin Havlovic
Carol Heisz *
Larry Heitke*
Ruthann Helmann
Suzi Hemler
Kay Jenkins
Veronica Kamrath
Bob Koch*
Sheril Lannoye
Ken & Beth Manthey
Sarah Mautz
Marie Moe
Sandra Nachreiner
Kristi Rickey *

CORPORATE LEVEL

Historic Indian Agency House
Pflanz Mendrala Funeral Home

HONORARY MEMBER

Idella Anacker
Marjory Margelowsky
Dorothy Schultz
Gilbert Schwantes

VOLUNTEERS

Steve LaFave
Arlene Rasmussen *
Henry Shortreed
* New in 2023

IN MEMORY

We lost members that have been long-standing supporters of the Portage Historical Society as members and/or board members - may they rest in peace.

Idella Anacker
Elayne Clipper Hanson
Warren Rebholz
Gilbert Schwantes

BRICK FUNDRAISER



The Portage Historical Society has installed a brick paver memorial garden as you walk out the front main entrance of the Museum at the Portage. It's an opportunity to have an engraved paver honoring an individual, family or business. Engraved pavers will serve as a lasting tribute to those - past and present - who established Portage as a cultural center since 1854 and those who continue to serve the City of Portage. The paver memorial garden will be updated in the spring and/or the fall depending upon the number of pavers purchased.

Pavers are available in two sizes: 4" x 8" for \$125 (pictured above) or 8" x 8" for \$150. Your support of the museum will ensure our history will live on for generations to come. When ordering online, you can pay with PayPal, a debit or credit card. Want to pay with a check? We do have paper forms available at the museum or you can email us at museumattheportage@gmail.com so we can send you a form that you can mail back to us with your check.

ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER

April 23, 2024 (Tuesday)

THE BALLROOM

112 East Cook Street, Portage

4:00 pm - social hour

5:00 pm - dinner (sandwich buffet)

6:00 pm - presentation



Speaker: Dr. Amy Rosebrough is the leading expert on effigy mounds in Wisconsin. She has her PhD in the Department of Anthropology and works for the State Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Vicki Vogts, *president*
Suzi Hemler, *vice president*
Peg Amend, *secretary*
Dave Eulberg, *treasurer*

Peggy Brown
Ann Marie Fuerst
Fred Galley
Jim Gorman
Mary Gorman
Nancy Kreier
Peggy Malone
Sean Malone
Kathy Rowley
Florence Schieber
Heather Smith
Melody Brooks-Taylor

Curator:
Sara Oostdik

Docents:
Judy Eulberg
Sarah Mautz
Linda Wendt

Hours of Operation:
Opening May 2024
Thursday - Saturday at 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Website: www.portagemuseum.org
Email: museum@portagehistorical.com
Facebook: Portage Wisconsin Historical Society

Museum at the Portage
804 MacFarlane Road
Portage, WI 53901
(608) 742-6682 (only during open hours)

Portage Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 727
Portage, WI 53901