



Portage Historical Society

The Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Road • Portage WI 53901

July 2024 Newsletter

Brick House with an Interesting History

By: *Kathy Taylor (story) &
Peggy Malone (photographs)*

Local history at its best occurs when a family member, as in the case of Lulu Tanke Fuller, with well-documented photo albums is able to fill in missing information, correct earlier assumptions, and show us copies of Lulu's artwork.

Lulu Tanke was born in 1888, the eldest of four children of August and Mathilde Tanke of Caledonia, Wisconsin. Her father never recovered from a freight car accident in 1895 and died at the age of 34 when Lulu was 8. Mathilde's fourth child was born shortly thereafter at 730 West Edgewater Street in Portage, where the now impoverished family was able to keep a cow and chickens. Mathilde grew grass along the Wisconsin River and sent the children into town to sell the brooms she made from it.



730 West Edgewater Street in Portage, WI

Through a series of legal actions, Royal Fuller (whom Lulu later married) purchased the land adjoining her mother's lot from Mathilde, and titled it back over to Lulu. She is acknowledged to have "preferred the ways of high society" and while visiting an aunt in Illinois had seen and fallen in love with a house she saw there. With a May 1924 mortgage, Lulu started building a house on the 724 lot identical to the one she had fallen in love with in Illinois "down to the last brick". She did not marry Fuller until August 1924.

Zona Gale returned to Portage in 1911 at the age of 37. Although Lulu, who lived down the street was 22, there is only the recollection of their mutual friend,



Susan Gamble standing in front of 724 West Edgewater Street in Portage, WI

Hazel Sanderson, that they were indeed friends. The Pulitzer Prize winning "Miss Lulu Bett" was published in 1921 when Lulu Tanke was 32 and beginning her emergence. There remains, however, as with so many of Gale's characters, only a suggestion of a connection to someone in the community.

The economic crash of 1929 came hard on the heels of Lulu's not only having built an extraordinarily expensive new home, but of having furnished it lavishly. Tax arrears appeared by 1928 and two more mortgages ensued.

In 1935, Lulu and Royal's only child, Bobbie, suffered a tragic fall at Durwood's Glen leaving him with multiple compound arm and leg fractures and hospitalized for months. Mounting hospital bills, the country's deepening depression, and the insurmountable three mortgages against the property forced them into foreclosure in 1936.



Although the foreclosure was on the 724 and 730 homes, the Fullers retained the much neglected 730 home and Zona Gale became the owner of the 724 home. It was after her son's accident that Lulu began

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painting with an irrepressible joy for flowers. Although forced to move back into the house where she had grown up in poverty at 730, Lulu continued to paint for many years. Their telephone listing in 1937 at 730 in view of the house of their dreams was 376-R.

In 1941, T.H. Sanderson & Hazel Sanderson purchased the home at 724 and lived there until Susan Gamble purchased the home in 2003. Susan recently obtained the original abstract for the property and allowed the museum to copy it for our collection. Zona Gale's Will is also printed in the abstract since she owned 724 at the time of her death.

Correction:

May Edition, 2024
"Exhibit Spotlight"

Clara Breese was William's
sister-in-law, not his sister.

Curator Corner **Bob's Barbershop Collection**

By: Sara Oostdik, curator

This spring, museum volunteers were busy updating exhibits throughout the building, including our Barbershop Exhibit on the main level. Along with simplifying what was displayed inside the barbershop, a new case was added outside the barbershop to highlight a special collection we received. In August 2023, Bob Thalacker's daughter, Deb Puterbaugh, donated his collection of barbering tools, which hung for many years in his barbershop downtown at 218 West Cook Street. The collection includes numerous tools of the trade - shaving mugs and brushes, curlers, clippers, and sharpeners, as well as his collection of 48 straight razors. We hope you will come check out this wonderful piece of Portage business history and the other new displays at the museum.



HIAH Speaker Series

2024 Theme - "Trails"

co-sponsored by the Portage Historical Society

Tuesdays at 6:30 pm - Free Admission

Indian Agency House
1490 Agency House Road
Portage, Wisconsin



Dr. Rob Harper – August 13
UW-SP Prof. of History; Native Amer. Studies Coordinator
Sovereign Waterways: Indigenous Persistence and Wisconsin Rivers in the Nineteenth Century
The role of Wisconsin's riverine network in Indigenous survivance

Dr. Stephen Kantrowitz – Sept 10
UW-Madison Plaenert-Bascom Professor of History
Citizens of a Stolen Land: A Ho-Chunk History of the 19th Century United States
A Nation's journey through the Ho-Chunk Trail of Tears

Dr. Patrick Jung – October 8
Milw. School of Engineering Prof. of History & Anthropology
The Old Military Road: An Historic Highway Winding Through a Bigger Story
A key frontier thoroughfare with weighty ramifications

Member Appreciation Night

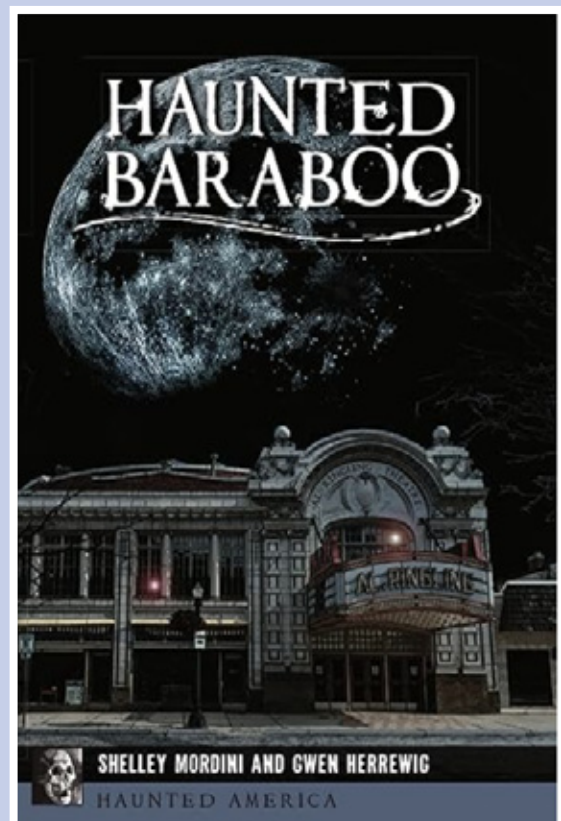
October 22, 2024 (Tuesday)

5:00 pm - social time

6:00 pm - presentation by Shelley Mordini

For decades, ghosts have been known to inhabit some of Baraboo's most prized historic locations. Buildings and mansions built by the Ringling Brothers at the height of their circus empire now harbor apparitions of unidentified children, horse trainers, and other circus workers. Residents throughout the Downtown Baraboo Historic District describe disembodied voices, footsteps, and items moving on their own. Now Shelley Mordini is now getting stories for her newest book, "Haunted Portage"! Shelley Mordini and Gwen Herrewig are the founders of Baraboo Tours.

Bring a friend - If they sign up to be a new member of the Portage Historical Society, their membership will be active through December 2025



Zona Gale ∞ Friendship Village



UPCOMING EVENTS

33rd Annual Celebrating Friendship Village AUGUST 17, 2024

10:00 am - Program presented by Jeff Grothman
Museum at the Portage, 804 MacFarlane Road

2:00-4:00 pm - Pie & Ice Cream Social
Women's Civic League, 506 W. Edgewater Street

Come & enjoy a fun-filled day.

Jeff's program will be on John Baptiste DuBay, appointed as the Indian agent at Fort Winnebago in 1840. DuBay was illiterate but knew four Indian languages and was involved in many treaty negotiations. In 1857, shot a man in a property dispute. Come hear "the rest of the story" of this sensational historic figure in Portage's past.



SANDRA SNOW, STATE REGENT OF THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY, NSDAR

cordially invites you to attend the

COMMEMORATION

of our Old Military Road Markers.

AUGUST
SATURDAY **17** 2:30 PM
2024

This commemoration honors the 189th Anniversary of the completion of the Old Military Road in 1835. As well as being used by explorers, settlers, hunters, and trappers for trade, the road was used to transport garrisons and supplies between Fort Crawford, Fort Winnebago, and Fort Howard in Wisconsin pre-statehood.

THE DEDICATION WILL OCCUR AT THE ROAD SIGN
JUST OUTSIDE THE OLD FORT WINNEBAGO CEMETERY
ON COUNTY ROAD EE, TOWN OF FORT WINNEBAGO, WI

Memoriam

Patricia (Neesvig) Madani

Patricia Madani passed away on Monday, July 8, 2024. Patricia was born October 6, 1943, the daughter of Margaret Wilhelmina “Peg” and Burton Oswald “Ted” Neesvig. Pat always liked to draw, write stories, and create art presents for friends and family. She attended Wisconsin High School on the UW campus graduating in 1961, and then graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1965 with a degree in Art Education. She taught elementary and junior high art for seven years in Wichita, Kansas, and in Northlake, Illinois. Pat wrote two books (one about her experiences in Iran and the other, a family cookbook) and a monthly column in a local paper, “The Observer”.



On February 24, 1966, she married Manoucher Madani. After living in Iran for two years, the couple moved to Portage where they opened the Trail’s Lounge, which they ran for over 47 years. Pat is survived by her husband, Manoucher, and three children: Tahminae Madani, Rodman Madani, and Taranae Madani, son-in-law, Martin Heathcote, and grandson, Arman Heathcote.

Become a Member

The Museum at the Portage is maintained by the Portage Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It was founded in 1995 and is dedicated to preserving the history of Portage and surrounding areas. Your support of the Portage Historical Society will ensure that future generations will continue to learn about Portage’s historic past. Join today!

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

BRICK MEMORIAL TERRACE



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 or 8” x 8”

for \$150. Your support of the Museum at the Portage will ensure our history will live on for generations to come.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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Heather Smith
Melody Brooks-
Taylor

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Sara Oostdik

Docents:
Judy Eulberg
Sarah Mautz
Linda Wendt

Thank you to Peggy Brown (June 2023) and Veronica Kamrath, Sandy Nachreiner and Deb Rohrbeck (July 2024) for joining the Board of Directors. Your knowledge and experience will be invaluable to our board.

Find us on
Facebook



Be sure to "LIKE" us
on Facebook and enjoy the
changing posts about Portage's
history. You can add comments
about your own experiences or
information about each post.

Hours of Operation:
Tuesday - Saturday at 1:00 - 4:00 pm until Labor Day

Website: www.portagemuseum.org
Email: museumathportage@gmail.com

(608) 742-6682 (call only during open hours)

Museum at the Portage
804 MacFarlane Road
Portage, WI

Portage, WI 53901

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