



# THE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

June 2018

Vol. XXXVII, No. 2

A newsletter by the Brown County Historical Society dedicated to the preservation of history in Brown County, Wisconsin.

## 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD WINNER

# FERGUSON FAMILY YMCA (F/K/A THE DOWNTOWN YMCA) 235 NORTH JEFFERSON STREET, GREEN BAY

by Jerry Abitz

If you have not been inside the newly renamed YMCA located at Pine and Jefferson streets lately, you are in for a big surprise. Members of the Historic Preservation Committee were recently taken on a guided tour by an architect, Steve Srubas, from Berners-Schober Associates, Inc., the firm which undertook the design work. Thirteen million dollars were spent in this renovation. What had appeared from a distance to be a dated building has been turned into one where, when you see the changes, you cannot stop thinking, *Wow!* It's almost like the fairy tale of the ugly duckling being transformed into a beautiful, graceful swan! While this building certainly was not ugly, its transformation is amazing!



Exterior Jefferson Street view of the renovated YMCA with the new glass façade on the 1968 south addition. All photos in this article courtesy of Berners-Schober Associates, Inc.

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To accomplish this takes a resourceful design team who, despite the many challenges, can ideally conceptualize changes needed to maintain the building's function; a board willing to stick out their necks and make a firm commitment to raise the funds for this miracle; and a community proud enough to respond and make it happen. This restoration and retrofitting have breathed new life into a 93-year old building, enabling it to serve future generations. To encourage large contributions, naming rights were offered to the largest contributor. Larry and Kayleen Ferguson rose to the occasion. This relatively new family to Green Bay had lots of competition. The official name became the Ferguson Family YMCA on May 1, 2017.

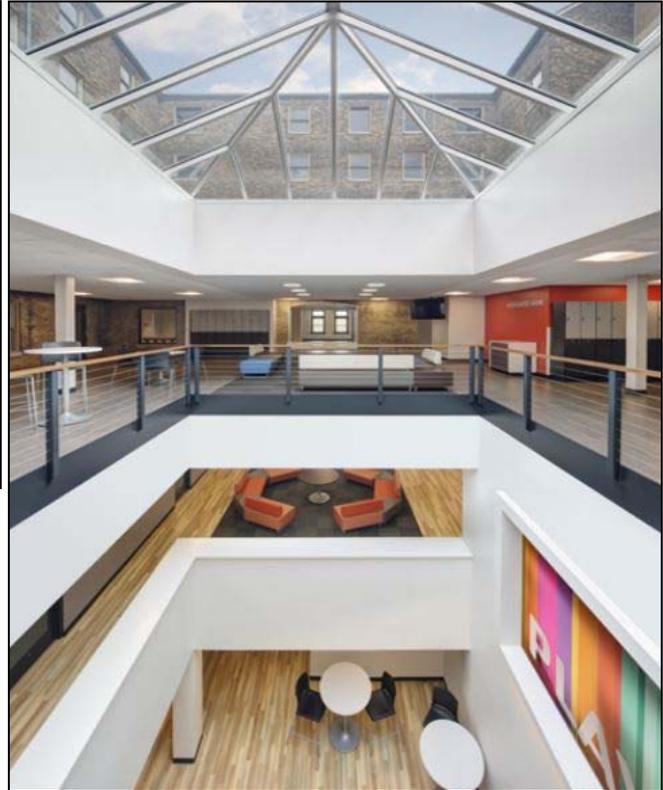
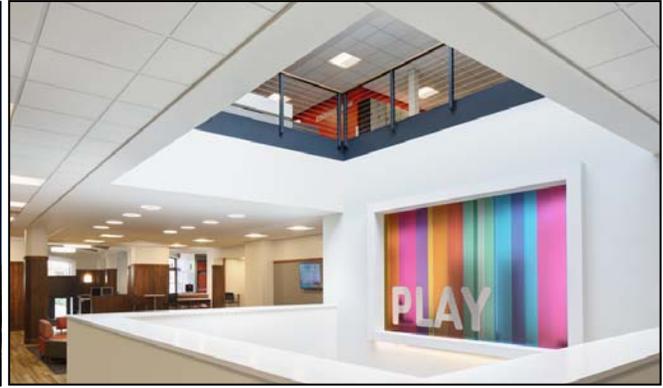
The history of the YMCA goes back to an unofficial YMCA group that built a small building at Third and Chestnut streets in Fort Howard Village, now the west side of Green Bay, in 1870. That first building, which since has been relocated to Heritage Hill, involved Madame Tank. A new organization was formed in 1887 and a larger building built at West Walnut and Chestnut streets in 1891 with a generous gift from William Fisk. It burned in 1908. Finally, under the leadership of Mitchell Joannes, the present location was purchased in downtown Green Bay. There they built a building, designed by the architectural firm of Foeller, Schober & Stephenson, which was dedicated in 1925.

This 1925 building has served Green Bay well for almost a century. During this time, two additions were added as usage, attendance and demand grew. As part of this

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# FERGUSON FAMILY YMCA

(continued from page 1)



restoration, Berners-Schober Associates nominated this building to be entered onto the National Register of Historic Places which is now an anchor for the newly formed historic district. Any external restoration had to follow the guidelines set forth by the National Register.

## BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**OUR MISSION** – To preserve, present and share the heritage of Brown County history through preservation activities, exhibitions, educational programs and events.

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The exterior masonry was tuck-pointed and refurbished wherever there was deterioration but otherwise basically remains the same except for the wall of glass façade of the 1968 south addition which overlooks Jefferson Street. In spite of the additions, one can move seamlessly from the original building into its annexes without

being aware of any transition. Next to the main entrance on Jefferson Street at the sidewalk level is an ADA-approved entrance for the handicapped. The architect brought about many changes by bringing more ambient light into the interior of the building while preserving the feel of what was basic in this historic building. A multi-story atrium with comfortable seating areas was created by opening up space to the new, large, overhead skylight. To sustain the idea of openness, walls of glass are strategically located in a number of places.

**Above Left:** Jefferson Street façade prior to the renovation (March 2015). **Above Right:** Interior view of the new interior lightwell below the skylight. **Bottom Left:** View of the new check-in area (note the restored original floor in the foreground and light from the new lightwell in the right background). **Bottom Right:** View of the new skylight and lightwell.

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## THE "BROWN" IN BROWN COUNTY

by Christine Dunbar

The names we give places tells us much about the people and places that make up our historical record. Counties, cities and towns were often named after political leaders with no relationship to the location.

Following the War of 1812, population in the Great Lakes region increased dramatically. New territories were created from old, and the most populous ones became states. Wisconsin was successively part of the original Northwest Territory (1788-1800), Indiana Territory (1800-1809), Illinois Territory (1809-1818) and Michigan Territory (1818-1836) before it became a territory in its own right (1836-1848). In 1818, Illinois attained statehood and remnants of land beyond the new state boundary were added to Michigan Territory. Lewis Cass, Michigan's Territorial governor, divided the land into three counties. What is now the Upper Peninsula of Michigan was called Michilimackinac; what is currently Wisconsin was divided into two counties: Brown and Crawford. Brown County, along Lake Michigan, spanned the entire eastern half of the state and Crawford County, on the Mississippi River, spanned the western half.<sup>1</sup>

In the enthusiasm following the war, it is fitting that part of the newly opened frontier was named for Jacob Jennings Brown.

Jacob Jennings Brown was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on May 9, 1775, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1790. He taught school and, in 1798, moved to upstate New York. Brown founded the Village of Brownville on Lake Ontario in New York. He served in its state legislature and as a county judge until 1809.<sup>2</sup>

Brown's military career began in 1807 with a commission as Captain in the 108th Regiment of New York Militia, followed two years later with a promotion to Colonel. By the start of the War of 1812, Brown was a Brigadier General in the New York Militia. Brown did not support the War, although he organized the militia defenses in the Great Lakes Region. Brown defeated the British at the Battle of Sacket's Harbor on Lake Ontario, May 29, 1813, resulting in promotion to Brigadier General in the regular army. He

won four of nine American victories in the war, giving him the status of most successful battle commander of the War of 1812. This earned him a Congressional Gold Medal and status as a national hero.<sup>3</sup>

In 1821, U.S. President

James Monroe made Brown the commanding General of the Army. Brown reorganized the army to make it more professional and created advanced training schools for the artillery and infantry.

As part of his duties, Brown visited the Fort Howard Military Post at Green Bay in 1820. Colonel Smith, commanding officer of the fort, complained to Brown of the swampy location of the fort and requested the fort be moved to the high ground on the east side of the Fox River. In April 1820, Brown gave orders to begin work on a permanent stone fortification on the east side of the Fox River. Later that year, due to government cutbacks, the work order was cancelled and the troops returned to the original site where the fort remained.<sup>4</sup>

Major General Brown died on February 24, 1828, of lung fever (pneumonia), complicated by a stroke. He was honored for his fifteen years of military service with an imposing funeral procession down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. President John Quincy Adams and the whole of the government joined the procession.<sup>5</sup>

### Sources —

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-014>
- <sup>2</sup> Morris, J. D. *Sword of the Border: Major General Jennings Brown, 1775-1828*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Prucha, Francis Paul. *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest 1815-1860*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953.
- <sup>5</sup> Elting, John R. *Amateurs to Arms: A Military History of the War of 1812*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 1991.



Jacob Jennings Brown Image obtained from finda-grave.com

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Christine Dunbar

The Brown County Historical Society welcomes two new board members. Peter Reinhart and Jamie Rosenberg joined the board in February. They bring a strong interest in history as well as extensive business knowledge.

At the Historical Society, we are working on strategies to connect to a changing and diverse audience. I am very excited about our recent opportunity to work with two University of Wisconsin–Green Bay classes.

Ioana Coman, a new BCHS board member, enlisted her Communications class to create marketing plans for both Hazelwood and *Voyageur* Magazine. Our mission-based strategic priorities for Hazelwood include promoting events, increasing awareness and attracting a younger audience. The *Voyageur* group took on creating a media kit as well as developing initiatives to increase magazine advertisers and subscribers.

Additionally, an Advanced Web Design class, taught by Ashley Fuchs, worked on various designs for *Voyageur* Magazine; other efforts include a phone app, website design, a game design and a new system for submitting articles online. Students in both

classes performed surveys, SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) and developed tools for future use.

Both classes felt that in order to connect history to a younger generation we need a stronger digital presence. We'll focus on their ideas to deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

## VOLUNTEER TODAY!

Join the fun! Become a Brown County Historical Society volunteer! Volunteers are a vital part of our programming and help us build a successful future. Get involved and experience a unique look at history.



Photo courtesy of BCHS photo archives

FIND YOUR PASSION IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

♦ Special Events and Programs ♦ Interpreting Hazelwood Historic House ♦ Guides and Actors for Cemetery Walks ♦ Gardening ♦ School and Scout Tours ♦ Research ♦ Newsletter ♦ Office Help

To get started, contact Brooke Uhl (920-437-1840 or [bchsvolunteer@netnet.net](mailto:bchsvolunteer@netnet.net)).

## FERGUSON FAMILY YMCA

(continued from page 2)

Twentieth century blends handsomely with the twenty-first century in this interior rendition.

Although the exterior had few alterations, the interior was updated. The mechanical systems were modified to utilize modern technology. Expanded programs required larger spaces and, in some cases, new spaces had to be created. A new family locker room was added and an expanded two-floor Wellness Center came into being.

Carpeting residue was removed to reveal the original ceramic tile floors in the lobby and the Founders Room. Much of the wood paneling remains in place, but a glass wall was installed to separate the Founders Room (used as a meeting room) from the main lobby.

While the original building once housed a cafeteria in the lower level and also dormitory rooms on the top two floors, changing times have eliminated the cafeteria, nor are there any rooms for rent. At this point, the upper level rooms are being used for storage and have not been renovated.

While working out, one is able to enjoy the sights of the downtown cityscape by looking through the south wall of windows. In addition to the traditional locker rooms, young families now have a family locker room available in which to change and shower together. All of these are brand new. There are three pools available — a traditional six-lane competition pool for swim team meets, a warm water therapy pool and a whirlpool. There is a gymnastic center, and a brand new sauna and steam rooms available for both men and women. The giant, colorful, multi-storied slide should really impress the kids. There are new family-friendly areas such as Kids Korner, Youth Activity Center and a Family Adventure Center.

For its efforts, the Ferguson Family YMCA received the BCHS 2017 Historic Preservation Award for Building Restoration and Renovation.

Having this building as one of the anchors in the newly formed downtown historic district also is a plus in keeping this area viable and worth visiting. Take a virtual tour of this updated facility by visiting this website: <https://www.greenbayymca.org/about/facilities/ferguson-family-ymca/>.

# EVENTS

Join us for one or all!

## *Fashioning Our Identity: 200 Years of Style*



Photo courtesy of BCHS photo archives

*In 1924, bathers at Bay View Beach were told they would not be permitted to parade about the park in swimming suits unless covered by a bathrobe or other clothing due to complaints by picnic parties.*

What does fashion tell us about society and history? Quite a bit. Delve into the stories fashion tells us about our community from the early 1800s through the present day. Original and reproduction men's and women's clothing, along with artifacts and images, highlight this exhibit. Fashion changed from the flowing fluid lines of the early 1800s to the elaborate undergarments and deforming corsets that reflected women's restricted roles in society in the Victorian era. Flapper dresses of the 1920s signified a new found independence for many women. Discover the fashion features through the decades with a particular look at Brown County.

**EXHIBIT WILL RUN  
FROM JULY 12 THROUGH AUGUST 31  
THURSDAY THROUGH SUNDAY  
FROM 12:00-4:00P  
AT HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE**  
*Regular admission applies. Members no charge.*

## **FAERIES & WIZARDS FAIRE** Saturday, July 21, 2018; 1:00-4:00p at Hazelwood Historic House

Join us for an afternoon in Hazelwood's magical backyard. The adventure begins by decorating crowns or wizards hats. Embellish a wand! Learn how to make potions and wishing powder. Create bubbles! Have your face painted, and join the faerie Princess and Wizard in creating a faerie house! Lemonade, sandwiches and desserts will be served on the back lawn. This event is geared towards children ages 4-8 and their parents.



*Faeries, make sure to bring your wings!  
Wizards, come in your best summer robes!*

**BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS:**

## **HISTORY TOUR**



**CELEBRATING  
200 YEARS OF  
BROWN COUNTY**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25  
VOYAGEUR PARK IN DE PERE**

**9:00-10:00A: CHECK-IN**

**10:00A-4:00P: HISTORY TOUR ROAD RALLY**

**4:00-10:00P: AWARDS, RALLY BASH & BBQ**

Calling all BCHS members! Come out for the History Tour Road Rally on Saturday, Aug. 25! Take a drive to celebrate Brown County's 200th anniversary! Gather your family and friends and assemble a team (2-4 people). Explore hidden gems of our county. Have fun, play games, solve clues, take pictures, enjoy scenery, and discover history! Photos and selfies are a part of all the fun – digital cameras or camera phones are required!

After completing the tour, come back to Voyageur Park for more fun at the Award Ceremony, Rally BASH & BBQ! Prizes, music and Southern BBQ with all the fixin's! Come one! Come all! Support your local historical organization!

**>> EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JULY 10  
\$40/Person, \$20/Kids (16 and under)**

**>> AFTER JULY 10**

**\$45/Person; \$25/Kids (16 and under)**

**Payment Registration Non-Refundable after July 25**

For more details, <http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org/history-tour-road-rally/> or call 920-437-1840. Follow Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/231884707368679/>

# CALENDAR

## EVENTS FOR 2018\*

### JUNE

Wednesday and Thursday, June 13 and 14, 6:00p – “If Tombstones Could Talk” Fort Howard Cemetery Walk. \$8/person.

### JULY

Thursdays thro’ Sundays, July 12 thro’ August 31, Noon-4:00p – Fashioning Our Identity: 200 Years of Style. Regular admission.

Saturday, July 21, 1:00-4:00p – Faeries & Wizards Faire. Reservations requested. \$7/person.

See promos for these two July events on page 5

### AUGUST

Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 1 and 2, 6:30p – “If Tombstones Could Talk” Allouez Catholic Cemetery Walk. \$8/person.

Thursday, Aug. 16 – Hazelwood Backyard Membership Picnic (see event promo above right).

Saturday, Aug. 18, 1:00-4:00p – Fashioning Our Identity: 200 Years of Style Tea Party. Reservations required. \$22/person.

Saturday, Aug. 25, 9:00a-4:00p – Historic Tour Road Rally: Celebrating 200 Years of Brown County with Rally Bash and BBQ to follow from 4:00-10:00p at Voyageur Park, De Pere. See event promo on page 5 of this issue for more details.

### SEPTEMBER

Wednesday (6:00p), Thursday (6:00p) and Saturday (4:00p), Sept. 5, 6 and 8 – “If Tombstones Could Talk” Woodlawn Cemetery Walk. \$8/person.

Saturday, Sept. 15, 10:00a – “If These Homes Could Talk.” Sponsored by Astor Neighborhood Association and Brown County Historical Society. Reservations required. \$16/person.

### OCTOBER

Saturdays, Oct. 6 and 13, 4:30-9:00p – Haunted Hazelwood. \$15/person.

### NOVEMBER

Friday, Nov. 30, 1:00-3:00p – Hazelwood Holiday Tea, \$22/person.

### DECEMBER

Saturday, Dec. 1, 1:00-3:00p – Hazelwood Holiday Tea. \$22/person.

Saturdays, Dec. 8 and 15, 11:00a-7:00p – Hazelwood’s Ethnic Holidays. Regular admission.

**Save the date!**

BCHS ANNUAL PICNIC

Thursday, August 16,  
5:30p, on the grounds of  
Hazelwood House.

Bring a lawn chair  
and your appetite!

RSVP requested — 920-437-1840

We'll be there!  
You?

\*Events can be added, changed or cancelled without notice.  
To make sure you stay informed, make our website  
one of your Favorites — [www.browncohistoricalsoc.org](http://www.browncohistoricalsoc.org)!

## MEET OUR INTERN!

My name is Rachel Scray, a History, Humanities and Arts Management student studying at UWGB. This spring semester, I have had the wonderful opportunity of interning at Hazelwood Historic House. The Hazelwood Historic House is currently working on an exhibit that celebrates 200 years of Brown County through fashion, “Fashioning Our Identity.” Fashion and historical events shape our identity in a multitude of different ways – from the colors we pick, the stores we frequent, and the social and political environment in which we live. Who we are is ingrained in our style.



During the semester, I have been researching the history of Brown County as well as the history of fashion trends that have developed throughout our history. Throughout the semester, I spent my time researching and finding photos that showcase historical moments and fashion trends of Brown County. The University Archives has been an excellent resource to find amazing photos that encapsulate who we are as a county and individuals. The Brown County Library also has been a great resource to find historical information and background for each town that makes up our county.

It has been an amazing experience – researching, and collecting images and clothing that have influenced our identity. I am so excited to continue my internship with the Hazelwood Historic House throughout the summer and exhibit the research we have collected.

## EARLY DAYS IN BROWN COUNTY

by Christine Dunbar

The year 2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Brown County. Renewed interest in genealogy and discovering our roots make it an ideal time look back at Brown County's fascinating history.

Three major world powers have laid claim to the territory originally populated by the Great Lakes Indian tribes. The region served as a fur trade stronghold for the French and then the British empires from the mid-17th century to the end of the War of 1812. In 1717, the French built Fort St. Francis on the west side of the Fox River, but was abandoned by the French at the end of French and Indian War. The fort was occupied from 1761 to 1763 by the British and renamed Ft. Edward Augustus. The area was not garrisoned again until the War of 1812.

Following the American Revolution, Great Britain ceded what became the Northwest Territory to the United States. Ultimately, five states – Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin were organized from this land. The boundaries were hazy and Congress had little time to devote to this vast wilderness. The British continued to trade and maintain fortifications. Jay's Treaty of 1795 was drafted to put an end to the British fortifications in the Northwest Territory. The American Government did not have the manpower to control the lands; therefore, the fur trade remained pro-British until after the War of 1812.

The Treaty of Ghent, signed on December 24, 1814, ended the war which compelled the English and Americans to revert to acceptance of pre-war boundaries.

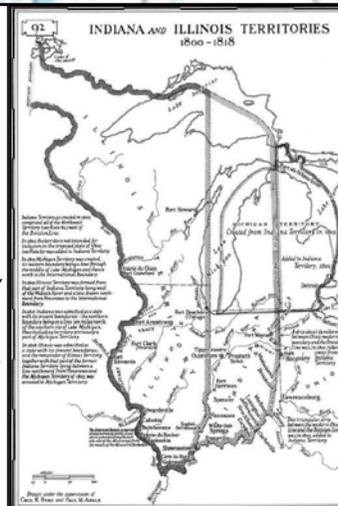
The War of 1812 affected the area that became Wisconsin in several ways. It broke the power of the Indian tribes of the old Northwest, set the stage for their removal, and ended the control of the British fur trade. Military posts located at Fort Howard at Green Bay, Fort Winnebago at Portage and Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien served to solidify the government's power and prepare the areas for American settlement. On August 8, 1816, 500 soldiers, including two companies of the 3rd Infantry along with a rifle regiment and artillery soldiers, arrived in Green Bay from Mackinac Island. They were met by a mainly pro-British population who were not looking forward to the military's arrival.

In 1816, approximately 40 families lived in cabins abutting the Fox River, engaging in a relaxed system of fur trade. War left this community in the hands of the Americans and drastically changed the life of the traders. John Lawe served in the War of 1812 on the



**Above:** Between 1818 and 1833, Illinois and Indiana became states. The unincorporated land from their territories, plus a handful of other townships, were made part of Michigan Territory. Image obtained from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/category:1818-in-Michigan\\_Territory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/category:1818-in-Michigan_Territory)

**Right:** Another map of the early Indiana and Illinois territories. Image obtained from [Johnson-publications.org](http://Johnson-publications.org).



British side. Anti-British sentiment after the war prevented Lawe from expanding his fur trade business into other parts of the territory. He later took an oath of allegiance to the United States and, in 1820, became an associate justice in Brown County. Lawe wrote, "I always live in hope, but I am, at last, beginning to despair the good times is no more, that pleasant reign is over and never to return any more."<sup>1</sup>

This lament from John Lawe was written to Mrs. Hamilton, the part-Ojibwa wife of his close friend, Robert Hamilton, in Ontario in 1824. What Lawe saw passing away was a unique way of life, a regional fur trading community that, for three-quarters of a century, was mainly simple and undisturbed, but now unraveling in the changing economy. Our history was now to be dominated by the restless frontier and the boundless optimism of the Yankees who were moving here.

Fort Howard remained the cultural backbone of Green Bay for decades. It served as a social, political, military, economic and policing center, and ensured safety for the influx of immigrants.

### Sources —

<sup>1</sup>"The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1812-1825." *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1911) XX:351

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEIGHBORS —



## WISCONSIN CZECHS, INC.

by Sally Teresinski, Historian

Celebrating its 40th birthday this year, the Wisconsin Czechs, Inc. was incorporated in July 1978 as a nonprofit organization with a 501c3 tax status. Wisconsin Czechs, Inc. recognizes its ancestry and culture of the nation of Czechoslovakia, established in 1918 through 1992 and included the states of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Selesia and Reuthenia. On January 1, 1993, the states split and became the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. We honor the total history.

A quarterly newsletter keeps members aware of our programs and other news. Our quarterly membership meetings (arranged and coordinated by various members of the board) include the *masopust* (mardi gras) on the Sunday before Lent. The organization has a scholarship program

and each year recognizes four area high school graduates with parents or grandparents who are members. We sell two cookbooks, the proceeds of which are used to fund the scholarship program.

In August, we come together for the *pout'* (a pilgrimage) as a harvest festival. The Christmas party is in December. At all of the quarterlies, we recognize the history and culture of our ancestry with various programs of speakers, demonstrations and music offerings. We take part in other Czech festivals with displays, costume (*kroje*) pageants; we attend concerts and conferences, and conduct sessions on various subjects. We study the language. The Wisconsin Czech Choraliers sing, in English and Czech, for groups who request Czech folk music.

Anyone may join our group. We are made up of some 260 members, most from Wisconsin, with members in about 15 states and two foreign countries. We have a website: [www.wiczechs.com](http://www.wiczechs.com), and have deposited our materials at the UW-Green Bay Archives. This information is available on campus and anyone can use the collection on site and through interlibrary loan.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! BROWN COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE

Adult \$6.00 • Seniors (60+) \$5.00  
Children (5-17) \$4.00 • Children under 5 are FREE.  
AAA and Time Traveler discounts available.

### ADMISSION

Tours, programs and teas scheduled at your convenience  
by appointment throughout the year.  
*See details for events on page 5 and 6 of this issue.*

HAZELWOOD HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM

Phone: 920-437-1840 / [www.BrownCountyHistoricalSoc.org](http://www.BrownCountyHistoricalSoc.org)  
1008 South Monroe Street, Green Bay WI 54301 MAP

BCHS offices — 8:30a-4:00p, weekdays  
BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HOURS for  
JUNE — SEPTEMBER 2018

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