

Iowa County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume XXX

No. 3

July 2005

Potpourri

The Wisconsin National Register Review Board recently approved the listing of the Dodge Mining Camp Cabin on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Society is both gratified and honored with the designation. More later.

Amazing ... We all but missed the celebration of National History Day here in Iowa County, Wisconsin. It was April 26th. Somehow we missed the boat but its a good thing our ancestors didn't as they are the people to whom we owe our good fortune. To show history as the most exciting story in the world instead of the soul deadening event it is in some classrooms is the national goal. To know the stories of history, the heroes, the villains and the agonizing differences of opinion possible among people of good will, is to make the past live. Learn science and computers sometime but never forget that "history" gave us what we have today. The considered, principled and brave actions of men and women who dared to be different, sometimes at the risk of their lives, is what America is all about.

The Society is going digital. Please read the cataloging article by Boyd Geer on page 4. If you would like to do a favor to the future, call for details about helping.

A satisfying event in April '05 was welcoming and touring the British officials from Oakham, UK. They were winned, tired and run ragged with Wisconsin hospitality from Dodgeville to Mineral Point. We hope they return. See page 7.

The April Newsletter included a message from ICHS President Alice Griffiths describing the need for a museum addition. We have contacted many of our faithful members asking for support. If we missed you or if you have questions call, write or email anytime. See page eight for the ICHS email address.

Ice Cream Social
July 14, 2005
4:30 to 7 p. m.
At the museum
1301 N. Bequette Dodgeville

ICHS Directors

Alice Griffiths, Pres.	935-0574
Boyd Geer, VP	930-9084
John Hess, Sec.	588-7082
Marie Sersch, Treas.	935-5752
Melva Phillips	924-5508
Helen Radtke	987-2892
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OTTER CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

One hundred fifty years a parish in 2004

In 1851-1854 Pastor A. C. Preus held several services at the Baker Church (north of Edmund) for this area of the western settlement which ran along Otter Creek Valley and was defined as the Otter Creek Congregation. The Eastern Settlement was north of Dodgeville along the ridge, now Highway 23 North.

During the period from 1854-1858 Rev. J. S. Munch held services at the Baker Church (north of Edmund) for this part of the western settlement. Services were held about once a month, often two months apart. Communion, baptisms, last rites and confirmation played a part in these services.

The hilly country, north of Dodgeville, was still a frontier. Most settlers cabins were too small for services. A few neighbors might join together at a home for occasional informal worship services, (Records are scant in this matter.) but in general they hoped to organize with a pastor to lead them.

During the mid and late 1800s there was strife among Norwegian Lutherans over doctrinal interpretation. Neighbors and even members of some families became involved in heated disputes. Not bound by a State Church as in Norway, the settlers studied the Scriptures and read about different views of other Lutheran ministers and scholars. They used this new found freedom to decide for themselves what, to their way of thinking, was the correct way to worship God. This caused much distress to the Norwegian Lutheran ministers.

When Pastor Munch visited the **Otter Creek Congregation** in March of 1857, he found that ten families in the immediate neighborhood of a partially constructed church had decided that a school house was more important and had ceased construction of the church. He wrote: "*Now the congregation is split ... May the Lord have mercy on the obstinate ones.*" For a period of time due to doctrinal conflict, in 1857 Pastor Munch said "farewell for the present" to both the western and eastern settlements. He later returned to Norway.



Historic Otter Creek Churches ... artists conception

In late 1857 a break-away Otter Creek group, with over 40 members, started construction of an eight sided log church building. on an acre of land deeded to the parish by **Andrew and Caroline Christopherson** on March 19, 1858 for the sum of \$5.00. This new congregation was the beginning of the Otter Creek Norwegian Lutheran Church. Pastor Munch, visiting in the late winter of 1858, found the northern members busy constructing their log church. The fact they would separate from the southern members without seeking his advice greatly angered him. He wrote, "*I will not serve these northern members until there is a reconciliation with the southern members. They must be brought under Christian discipline.*" Although upset about the new congregation, in time he accepted it serving until 1859 while ministering to other churches in southwest Wisconsin.

The southern members briefly joined the **North Dodgeville Congregation**, who by this time had built their own church (**now known as the Old Rock Church**). Later, the southern members rejoined the northern members in the log church on the hill. An altar and chancel were added in 1865.

The octagonal log church had served well as a place of worship but the growing congregation felt the need for a new church. On April 6, 1871 they voted to build a new church of stone. Construction started in 1872 with several years required to finish the new house of worship. This beautiful rock church, along with the adjoining cemetery, is now an historic landmark frequently visited by the descendents of the early Norwegian settlers.

In 2000 due to the shortage of ministers, the Otter Creek and Fairview Lutheran Churches, together with the Presbyterian Churches of Highland, Muscoda and Pulaski, formed a cooperative ministry. This five church union is named **God's New Field Parish**. In 2004 the Otter Creek Congregation celebrated 150 years as a parish, one of the oldest and most persistent of the early lead region congregations. *This article includes information provided through the courtesy of Dorothy Anderson. Historic photographs are available at ICHS.*

Rewey ... A Late Start at Incorporation

by Neil Giffey

"Why hurry" must have been the early day slogan of the little towns of the Iowa County Lead Region. For example **Mineral Point** organized by voice vote in 1837 as a Borough, which designation lapsed after 1839. Mineral Point officially became a village under territorial ordinance in 1844. That date was way ahead of neighboring **Dodgeville**, incorporated in 1859. However, Dodgeville was not governed as per the articles of incorporation until a later date. **Barneveld** incorporated in 1906 after colonizing the area in 1885. Interestingly, 315 area residents petitioned to opt out of the limits of the proposed village of Barneveld. **Hollandale** organized in 1910 and the little lead and zinc mining town of **Rewey**, our subject in the this article, made themselves a legal entity in 1902.

A glance at the faded reproduction copy of the Inspectors of Election for the Village shows that **Gustav Miller** and **Charles Bainbridge** were entrusted with the task of supervising the election on 18 October, 1902 with a strong majority favoring incorporation. Becoming a village or city, as the case may be, provided legal protection for the officers of the village and gave the force of formal law to the ordinances created by the elected officers of the community. Most citizens of the settler generation came to Iowa County from eastern jurisdictions which had been governed according to written law for several generations. They valued the advantages of local governance.

Referring to the **Rewey Centennial book**, "**In The Shadow of the Mines**," published in 1980, and other sources, we find that the village founder, **Jefferson W. Rewey**, (1835-1905) born in Tioga County, New York, came west in 1844 with his father, engaged in a variety of occupations which included cutting and selling cordwood, teaching school, farming, operating a hotel then farming again in about 1864. Before 1880 Rewey had also been a general merchandiser in Mifflin Town when opportunity reared its head. He became a farmer with a tract of land a few miles from Mifflin and he soon offered free prairie land to the incoming **Chicago and Tomah** railroad (a division of the Chicago and Northwestern) where a depot was immediately built. Rewey then platted the tract which became his namesake village. Rewey was the first depot agent, an oft elected village official, founded a bank with his son, served as a state legislator and as an Iowa County Board member and chairman. In his spare time he was a leading Masonic Lodge member. In general Rewey lived a long and exhausting life of service to the Mifflin-Rewey Community.

The election of village officers was held on 10 November, 1902. **Gustav Miller** and **Charles Bainbridge** announced the following men as the first elected officials of the new Village of Rewey: **John W. Griffiths**, President; **Charles Miller**, **W. H. Elgar**, **Charles G. Martin**, **Frank Lininger**, **William H. Temby**, **John Eustice**, Trustees; **David Thomas**, Clerk; **Jefferson W. Rewey**, Treasurer; **C. I. Cushman**, Assessor; **O. G. Rewey**, Supervisor; **D. L. Greene**, Police Justice; **Harvey Cushman**, **Francis White**, Justices of the Peace; **R. S. Dobson**, Constable. Mifflin-Rewey deserves a detailed history, perhaps a history which follows the migration to and from the mining region. Volunteers please contact the Editor.

State of Wisconsin,)
Iowa County,) SS.

Charles Bainbridge and Gustave Miller,
being duly sworn, does each for himself depose and say that they are the Inspectors of Election, duly appointed by the Circuit Court of Iowa County in the order of incorporation of the village of Rewey, dated the 27th day of September, 1902, and that in pursuance of said order and of the statutes of such case made and provided, they gave due notice as prescribed by the statute, of a meeting of the electors of the territory described in said order, to determine whether or not such territory should be an incorporated village. That such meeting was held in pursuance of said notice on the 18th day of October, 1902, and that at such meeting the whole number of votes cast was 59, of which there was 55 ballots in favor of the incorporation of such village and 4 ballots against such incorporation. That such election resulted in favor of the incorporation of the village as aforesaid.

Subscribed and sworn to before me,
this 18th day of October, 1902.

Notary Public, Iowa County, Wisconsin.

Thomas Barn Ages With Grace

by Neil Giffey

A picture worthy of a gilt edged frame. That's one view of the proud and impressive Welsh stone barn on the **Harold Thomas** farm on US 151-18 just west of Barneveld. Daily, thousands drive past at high speed; few of them (fortunately) study in detail the great graceful stone barn. Built in 1881 by the Welsh immigrant grandparents of the present occupant Harold Thomas and currently farmed by Harold's son **Doug**, the old barn stands sag free, a tribute to the skill of those long ago masons and to their foresight in laying the first course of stone on bed rock.

Sunday, April 24, 2005, was a cool and windy day. That did not deter at least a thousand people from streaming in, around and almost on top of the great structure. With a solid timber hay mow floor, ten Dutch doors on the south side, two beautiful stone arched haymow doors on the north side, a bedrock foundation and the graceful old barn is ready to do another one hundred years. All it needs is a bit of roofing repair at this time.

Noted author, **Jerry Apps**, spoke to an attentive crowd about his youth on a "farm with a barn" and the culture in which he grew up. He emphasized the urgent need to save our historic and more placid past. Apps is a proven master at recording, between the covers of a book, the colorful and humane history

of the old buildings of Wisconsin.

The program began with **Conservancy Director Doug Cieslak** presenting the **Driftless Area Land Conservancy** as a means for ordinary citizens to do

their share in preserving open space, stunning natural views, and farmland for the future. He stated that it is almost ordained that all of the Lead Region's natural beauty will vanish within a generation or two at the present rate of "improvement." The Conservancy has worked to purchase easements on rural property in which the Conservancy pays an agreed upon sum to the landowner who in turn

agrees to preserve, in perpetuity, his or her property as nature intended. The land continues to be farmed using sensitive soil friendly methods and the ownership remains with the landowner. The property may be sold to others or inherited by descendants of the original conserver and the agreement remains part of the property, a generous and forward looking way to help save the earth for generations to come.

The Driftless Area Land Conservancy office, **Doug Cieslak**, Executive Director, is located in the Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce building at 338 North Iowa St., Dodgeville, WI 53533-0338. Interested visitors are welcome.



Thomas Barn ... south view

D.A.R. Members Tour ICHS

Members of the **Daughters of The American Revolution** met Director Melva Phillips and Curator Dorothy Anderson at the local Country Kitchen on May 14. After a good meal they journeyed to the ICHS museum where Melva Phillips presented a slide show on local history and a tour of the museum. They were a delightful group and the Society was gratified to have them as guests.

New at the Museum

The Dodge Cabin (*with Colonel Dodge posing in his famous buckskin garb*), painted by **Iowa County Circuit Judge William Dyke**, is available in note card format. They are colorful and you still do notes, right? Pick a pack and write to a friend.

As Usual ...Books for Sale ... 30 Titles

Work continues on the Iowa County Cheese Factory Book.

An Iowa County Witness Irene Thelma Olson Rowe

An interest in family history prompted Eileen Olson and Alison Olson of Dodgeville to call the reminisces and genealogy of Irene Thelma Olson Rowe to my attention. Irene, married to Ralph Rowe for over sixty years, died in 2004 but left behind a detailed and well written set of observations about rural life mostly in Highland Township, Iowa County.

We all had our after school jobs. The smaller ones would carry wood for the wood box, split kindling and place in the oven to dry for morning. Then empty the pots, carry in water, wash lamp and lantern chimneys and fill the reservoir on the range. We would hold the lantern for the older ones when they went into the haymow to put down hay. No tractor or manure spreader so manure was hauled out in wagon or sleigh box and stacked in the fields for spreading after the spring rains. Leaving it in stacks helped to prevent loss down the creek. If the snow was too bad to get to the fields, manure was wheeled out by wheelbarrow. Boards were placed onto the pile so the wheel would not cut in, if you kept your balance and did not run off the board. Sometimes the board ends would pop up and down and splash you. Since there was not time for much clean up after chores, we usually went to school smelling real pretty.

In the wintertime I wore four buckle boots and black leggings that came to my knees. The leggings had so many buttons the teacher would let me free a few minutes early so I could get everything buttoned up in time to go home with the others. I wore wristlets, which were home knit to keep the wind from getting in between your mitts and coat sleeve. The kids teased me about them so I would hide them in a stump on the way to school and then pick them up again on the way home. We each had one pair and Pa saw to it we wore them each day. I had to wear boy's long underwear as it had a higher neckline and was supposed to help prevent chest colds. All underwear then was equipped with a three-button trap door in the back. Long black stockings covered the underwear and when the legs of the underwear bagged a bit, we folded them over making a bulge up your leg under stockings. I always wanted a lined overall jacket like the boys had but out-

side of underwear and four buckle boots, we wore no boys' clothes away from home. No blue jeans or slacks then. Black bloomers that came below the knee were the style then and since I loved to climb trees, I often heard a song: "I see London, I see France, I see Irene's underpants." We had one pair of shoes for church or school and as soon as school was out, we went bare foot, many a stubbed toe or stepped on nail.

No tetanus shots then so the turpentine bottle was kept handy.

Mom had all her babies at home, most with the help of a midwife. We did not go to the doctor or dentist unless in very bad shape. If anyone went to the doctor, the telephone would be buzzing with thoughts of whether or not he might survive. One time when I rode on the milk wagon to open gates, I stepped on a manure fork in the grass. One of the tines ran between my toes and into my foot. My foot and leg swelled so bad I could not walk. When the raw turpentine hit the open sore, you really had to hang onto your chair. Then came the bread and

milk poultice. Daniel once ran a rusty nail into his hand and got blood poison. By the time it was decided to go to the hospital, he nearly lost his arm. When Aden broke his leg, he got a licking for being careless. This was supposedly God's punishment for something which you did. Sympathy was not offered.

John Tolerude was one who often would sit up nights with someone who was sick. He was quite a story teller and would sing songs in Norwegian to help ease the pain for the sick.



Irene Thelma Olson Rowe

***** "Once Upon a Hex"

Society member **Dennis Boyer** has again tapped the wellspring of myth, folk and family tales handed down for centuries by his Germanic ancestors. In "Once Upon a Hex" he reaches back for centuries in Northern Europe and brings it to his Pennsylvania homeland. Read a few of the collected stories to the kids. They will remember the folk wisdom and the flights of fancy.

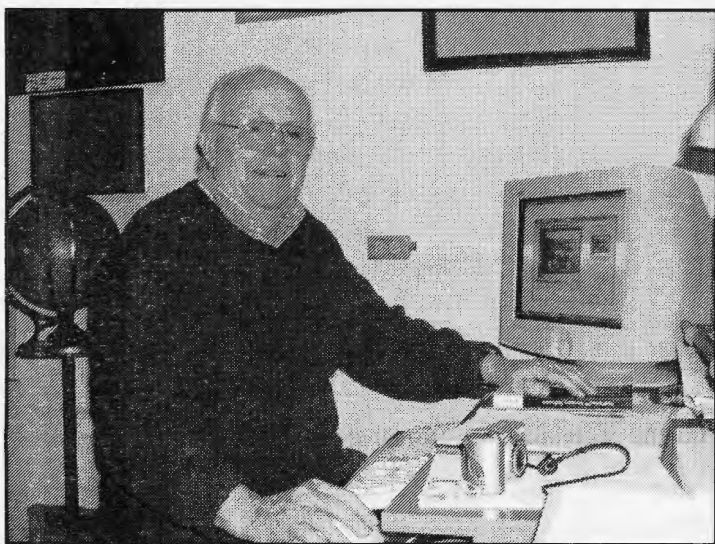
"Hex" is available at **Fine Line Framing and Books**, Dodgeville and **Foundry Books**, Mineral Point.

PROJECT UNDERWAY

by Boyd W. Geer

A new project underway at the Museum involves the accessioning and cataloging of the collection. To accomplish this daunting task, we have acquired the museum software known as **PastPerfect**. It is designed to meet the needs of small historical societies like ours who rely on volunteers with little or no training in collection management.

An **accession** is one or more **objects** acquired at one time from one source, constituting a single



Boyd Geer at the controls entering data in the "PastPerfect" software which will help describe Society possessions for future genealogists and historians.

transaction between the museum and a source. To register an accession a number is assigned, the name and address of the source is recorded and the **object(s)** is described, providing as much information as possible. For a newly acquired donation, the computer will generate a thank you letter and two copies of a **deed of gift**, one to be signed and returned to the Society.

Cataloging involves a detailed description of each item in an accession. First it must be decided if the item falls within one of four categories: **Objects** (*art, artifacts, natural history, history objects*), **Photo** (*photographic record of people, places, events, architecture*), **Archives** (*unpublished manuscripts, oral histories, videotapes, personal papers*) or **Library** (*books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, recordings*). An object identification number, which is based on the accession number, is assigned and data about each object is developed – name, description,

dimensions, creator, etc. – which will distinguish the object from every other object in the collection.

An important section of the catalog entry is that which identifies the **People, Subjects, and Search Terms** relating to the object. This information is vital when, at a later time, the computer is put in the search mode and it is used to retrieve the catalog record. Finally, we have the capability of **recording a digital image** of the object as part of the catalog record which can be enlarged and printed.

To get started on this project we chose to work on the **Sawle Collection** which consists of over 100 items donated to the Society in 1998 by the estate of **Winifred Sawle**. These are mostly objects such as decorative bowls, pitchers, plates, etc. but also several items of furniture. It has been interesting to catalog Winnie's collection of commemorative pressed glass plates which have the images of late 1800s and early 1900s political figures. There are several photographs of family members and paintings of scenes that relate to them. Of particular interest is the original marriage certificate for **William S. Sawle, Sr.** and **Jeanette Hodgson**. The marriage took place in Arena or March 9, 1889. We can also add to our library catalog the professionally produced videotape titled *The Sawle Family: From Cornwall to Rosevale*.

We have also gained experience in this project by keeping up with the new donations that seem to be coming in almost weekly. Check the New Acquisitions list in the Newsletter to see the kinds of interesting donations we have received. It is apparent that we will need more help if this project is to progress. **Joan Mish**, retired Dodgeville Middle School librarian and computer instructor at the public library, has learned how to use the software and will be available to teach other volunteers later this year. We urge you to call to learn more about volunteering.

We take seriously the knowledge that someday we will pass on this collection to its next caretaker and it is our responsibility to hand over the collection and its records in good condition.

Almost unnecessary to mention but as you probably guessed, Boyd Geer has spent countless hours setting up the PastPerfect software and by so doing is providing the Society volunteers a way to become more knowledgeable about our collections for the benefit of the membership. Editor.

From the Past ... A Few Things to Ponder

by Neil Giffey

Dodge House Site May Get Marker

The *Milwaukee Journal* for July 16, 1922 advises that the site of the permanent home of the late Governor Henry Dodge will probably be marked by an appropriate tablet. *It took the Double Five Club of Dodgeville to install and dedicate the granite marker in 1927. The site is between Dodgeville and Mineral Point. Editor.*

Newspaper Microfilm at ICHS

Arena Wis. Star, 1874-1876 and 1877-1886, becomes Dodgeville Star in 1883-1886, becomes Rural Eye, 1887-1887
The Eye and Star 1893-1895 become
The New Star, 1895-1896
Rural Eye of Arena, 1887-1888 and 1888-1889 becomes
The Eye and Star, 1890-1893
Index to Wisconsin Miscellaneous Newspapers
New Star, 1896-1897
New Star, 1898-1900
Dodgeville Chronicle, 1862-2004
Barneveld Banner, some issues missing
The Hollandale Review, some issues missing

Arrange for an appointment at ICHS. We

can take your messages 24-7. We will reply as soon as possible. Leave your name, telephone number, mail address and/or email address for fast service. **Call: 608-935-7694 or email: ichistory@mhtc.net**

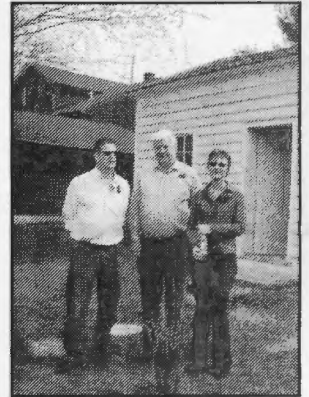
Historical Society in 1927?

The *Waukesha Freeman* for July 7, 1927 mentioning the marker dedication, states that, "*organization of an historical society is being contemplated*, justified by the need to preserve Iowa County's pioneer relics."

The late **Gerald Fieldhouse** tried to start a local society in 1942. We salute the incorporators of July 1976.

Oakham UK Officials Kept Busy in Iowa County

Four officials of the city of Oakham, Rutland County, UK, were the guests of Mineral Point and their twin Dodgeville for four very busy days in April. They were lead by Mayor **Maureen Dodds**, and included City Clerk **Richard White**, **Stevie Jackson** of the Oakham Town Partnership and Rutland County council member **Roger Begy**. They were feted with toasts, food and the stateside version of the English language and withstood our eager attentions with grace. Right: White, Begy and Jackson at the Dodge Cabin



Membership Application

Iowa County Historical Society
MAIL TO: MARIE SERSCH
106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533



Individual-annual	\$10.00	5 year	\$40.00
Couples-annual	\$15.00	5 year	\$60.00
Historian-annual			\$25.00
Master Historian-annual			\$50.00

Membership dues and categories as of July 1, 2005

Membership year is July 1st—June 30th



Name _____ Street _____ P. O. Box _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Membership Period _____ Amount enclosed _____

*I am interested in making a tax deductible gift to the
Iowa County Historical Society. Please contact me at the above address.*

Signed _____

Volume XXX No. 3 July 2005

Iowa County Historical Society

1301 N. Bequette St.

P. O. Box 44

Dodgeville, WI 53533-0044

MEMBERSHIPS

MAIL TO: MARIE SERSCH

106 E. Pine St., Dodgeville, WI 53533

Individual-annual \$10.00 5 year \$40.00

Couples-annual \$15.00 5 year \$60.00

Historian, annual \$25.00

Master Historian, annual \$50.00

Membership year is July 1st-June 30th

ICHS SERVICES ... GENEALOGY

HISTORIC RESEARCH

The Society has extensive archives for Iowa County:
history-cemeteries-obituaries-newspaper microfilm-artifacts

Open May-September

Monday-Friday

10 am-Noon and 1 pm-4 pm

Other times by appointment

Phone us 24/7: 608-935-7694.

email: ichistory@mhtc.net

Web site: iowacountyhistoricalsociety.org

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Calendar of Events



Ice Cream Social

Thursday, July 14

4:30 to 7 p.m.

At the museum

1301 North Bequette

Dodgeville

Bring the kids!

Meal, music, ice cream

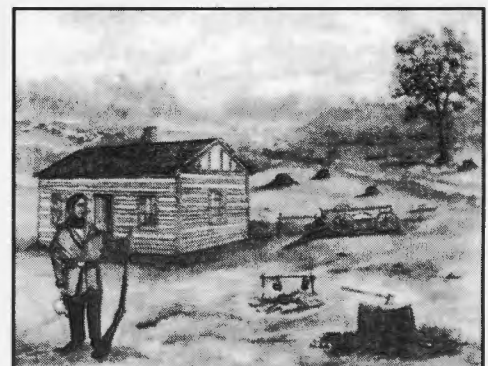
*See the ICHS at Farmers Appreciation Day
July 10. 2005 ... Harris Park-Dodgeville*

**Annual Meeting 7:30 p.m. Tue. Oct 25
Dodgeville City Hall**

**Mineral Point City Band at Orchard Lawn (Gundry
House) 2 p.m. July 24th.**

Cornish Fest Sept. 23-25 at Mineral Point

*To Our Members ...
Please remember the Society
building program
Now is the time to help
Thank You*



*Note cards for sale at museum - color
by Iowa County Judge Bill Dyke
Dodge Cabin with
Col. Henry Dodge in residence*