



Creators, Collectors & Communities

Creators, Collectors & Communities

Making Ethnic Identity through Objects

MOUNT HOREB AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MOUNT HOREB, WISCONSIN

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Part V. Guardian Spirits

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Overview

Artistic objects rooted in places and cultures reveal something special about communities.

Since 1975, the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society has consciously collected examples of locally produced and locally owned works of art. Considered chronologically, these artful artifacts illustrate continuity and change in the identities of Southwestern Dane County's ethnic communities—Norwegian-Americans especially.

From rosemaled trunks and handcrafted mangle boards cherished by first-wave immigrants, to artifacts hailing from the Little Norway site and the Song of Norway pageant, to the whimsical gnome-like carved citizenry of the (now trademarked) “Troll Capital of the World,” the artistic transformation of area ethnicity is evident.

PART I

The Old World in the New

Southwestern Dane County was settled by diverse immigrants in the latter half of the 19th century. Irish, Swiss, Scots, Norwegians, Germans, English and Eastern Yankees all took up residence in the rolling hills and glens of the Driftless region.

These transplants brought centuries-old material forms of ethnic expression that adapted their European, Old World heritage to their New World homeland.

The pieces in this section are some of the oldest in the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society collection. All were carefully transported from locales across the globe—for reasons both sentimental and practical, decorative and utilitarian—by immigrants preparing for a new American life.

Trunk



Trunk
Norwegian
Maker unknown; decorated by Ole Haugen, 1835
Wood, metal, paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker
Charitable Trust
MHAHS 2014.073.0020

Decorated Norwegian chests served as vessels from a distant homeland for families making the long journey to America. They were transformed from a decorative yet functional container to an enclosure protecting the personal, the practical and the sentimental. They embodied psychological and physical security. Decorated approximately 20 years before arrival in America, this particular chest brought a family's possessions to Perry Township in the mid-1850s. Having been passed down in the family, the chest was proudly offered to Little Norway by Guri

Jeglum as a memorial to her Norwegian ancestry. Rosemaling, a specialized form of stylized floral painting with centuries-old roots in Norway, decorated these chests and many other household items that you will see in this exhibition.

Object Study: Trunk

By Jenna Madsen

Once the decision to emigrate was made, the Norwegian farmer and his family coming to the United States for a better life had to separate their personal belongings into what to keep and what to permanently abandon. The objects that were selected themselves became vessels of nostalgia, as each object was a memory of their heritage.

Trunks that transported those items of importance made it through thick and thin on their voyage to the United States. Across oceans on ships and ox carts to the Midwest, you can read the stories in the scrapes and dings. Not all trunks were originally made for immigration, many of them were actually dowry chests that were made for young women to store their belongings in preparation for marriage. These dowry chests were often used for storage as the tradition began declining toward the height of immigration. When new trunks were constructed, they were specifically rosemaled for the journey to the United States.

The addition of rosemaling had the purpose of assigning the Norwegian folk art symbol of identity. A way of reminding them forever of where they came from, and to keep their homeland with them no matter where they traveled. Since they had to leave so much behind when they left, rosemaling gave immigrants a chance to bring much more than belongings with them. Dates were painted on the chests to mark important dates like emigration, or marriage on the dowry chests. Property like livestock, homes, and land had to be sold or auctioned off, as it could not be taken with to the new world. In *The Trauma of Moving: Psychological Issues for Women*, the feeling of loss experienced by immigrants is described as follows, “Leaving behind whatever embodies special memories and experiences— can feel like an amputation. It is the loss of a segment of family continuity, of personal history, the loss of a fragment of self.”¹ This is why chests themselves became so important to the Norwegians.

What Norwegians put in their chests gave them the ability to control something in the midst of all of the separation. The chests kept their most important belongings safe on their journey. Every. Single. Object. That was packed was touched by the emigrant, thus adding an intimate connection to the objects that were packed. Emigrants had to pack for a country that they knew nothing about, which added to the difficulty of what to leave behind. *True Account of America* by Ole Rynning, a guidebook for Norwegians coming to the United States, was published in 1838, and it provided advice that would be used on the trip and what was needed in the new world. Types of food, medicine, toiletries, durable goods for the home: bed clothing, furs, vadmél (a heavy woolen cloth used to make basic male and female traditional dress), artisan tools, items that would be unavailable to buy in the

1. Audrey T. McCollum, *The Trauma of Moving: Psychological Issues for Women*, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990), 71.

United States: spinning wheels, bakstehelle (a round flat iron plate for baking flatbread); things that could be sold in America to raise money: silver goods, tobacco pipes, rifle.²

In other words, it was recommended that Norwegians bring items that were rare, or expensive in the United States. Tara Bohn interviewed children of the immigrants to create lists from memory:

Mr. Nicholas Gunderson, also of Madison, remembers the following Norwegian items from his childhood home: huge decorated chests for clothes and food, a spinning wheel, ale bowls, a quantity of smaller chests and boxes, brass candlesticks, sleigh bells, silver brooches and other jewelry, a heart-shaped smelling-salts case, and a large silver spoon. Among the various books that were brought along, he remembers especially well Tresehow's *Predikener over høimesse-texterne*, published in Copenhagen in 1787.³

These chests carried more than just belongings. They carried memories, dreams, and hope of what a new world may bring. They are reminders of where emigrants came from, reminders of Norwegian roots that lived on through generations, constant reminders of the Norwegian ethnic identity.

2. Jon Gjerde, "The Immigrant's Luggage: Observations Based on Written Sources." in *Norwegian Folk Art: the Migration of a Tradition*, ed. Marion Nelson (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), 186
3. Tara Bohn, "A Quest for Norwegian Folk Art in America: Immigrant Mementos in Private Homes." *NAHA // Norwegian-American Studies*: 129, http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume19/vol19_6.htm, 129

Spinning Wheel



Spinning Wheel
Norwegian
Maker unknown, c.1840
Wood, metal
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2014.050.0081

Spinning wheels were vital, if ordinary, objects that a family often brought from Norway to America. Spinning thread to make yarn was an important way that women contributed to family life during early immigrant days. Like the mangle board on display, these items were utilitarian. But by adding traditional Norwegian motifs and decorations, like the acanthus leaf carving seen here, another level of meaning is bestowed on these pieces that would become heirlooms for Norwegian-American families. Of unknown origin, this spinning wheel was

acquired by Little Norway creator Isaak Dahle and displayed in the museum's Norway Building for more than 80 years.

Snuff Box



Snuff Box
Norwegian
Maker attributed to Gude, Norwegian sculptor, c.1800
Wood
Gift of Nancy Pearson
MHAHS 1978.004.0001

For Norwegian immigrant Arne Kulterstad, a settler in the Mount Horeb area, this snuff box was more than just a gift from one of Norway's greatest authors. It was a gift from the man who had saved his life. Before leaving Norway, Kulterstad had been found guilty of murdering his landlord when the author Børnstjerne Bjørnson heard of the case. Without Bjørnson's public appeal for leniency, Arne Kulterstad would have been executed. Instead, he served time in jail before starting a new life in the United States. This delicately-carved snuff box, once a practical item for storing tobacco, became a sentimental object with a story to tell subsequent generations.

Trunk



Trunk

Norwegian

Maker unknown, 1821; decoration attributed to Per Lysne, c. 1930

Wood, metal, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker Charitable Trust

MHAHS 2014.073.0019

This chest, dated 1821, was brought to “Madison:Visskonsin” by S.A. Bolstad who hand-lettered his name and destination on the back panel. Although little is known about Bolstad, we do know that this piece was one of the first furnishings acquired for local tourist attraction Little Norway. The rosemaled design on the chest, attributed

to artist Per Lysne, was likely added at the time of that acquisition. Little Norway displayed the chest for more than 80 years.

Mangle Board (Mangletre)



Mangle Board (*Mangletre*)

Norwegian

Maker unknown, 1806

Wood, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker Charitable Trust

MHAHS 2014.073.0025

This object is an extraordinary example of the way Norwegians produced beautifully crafted practical household items. The mangle board, or *mangletre*, was made with a flat finished bottom and a carved painted top. When used in combination with a kind of rolling pin, a woman could iron her family's linens.

Centuries-old cultural signs can be seen in the mangle board's decorations. The overall landscape scene includes many European symbols and stories that were widely shared long before this board was made. Some specific signs linked to the blessing of a marriage are in the form of animals: swans (eternal love) and storks (childbirth). So, too, the figure of a horse (used here as a handle) was a long-time symbol of strength and virility throughout Scandinavia. Orange, green, yellow, red, and blue added depth and vibrancy.

Box



Box
Norwegian
Maker unknown, c.1848
Wood, paint
Gift of Ella Mavis
MHAHS 1987.024.0001

This Norwegian storage box was turned from a single log in the first half of the 19th Century and decorated in traditional Norwegian motifs. It was brought to Dane County by one of the first Norwegian immigrant families to settle in the area. The initials “GOD” painted on its lid are believed to stand for Guri, Daughter of Ole. This treasured heirloom was passed down through the Thompson family.

Traveling Box



Traveling Box
Norwegian
Unknown, 1841
Wood, metal, paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond &
Margaret Vicker Charitable Foundation
MHAHS 2014.073.0005

Once the decision to emigrate was made, the Norwegian farmer and his family had to separate their personal belongings into what to keep and what to permanently abandon before embarking to the United States for a better life. Some objects they selected were practical items needed for surviving in their new lives, while others were sentimental items. But each might become a vessel of nostalgia and a memory of heritage. Small boxes like this

one were used for food on the voyage or for the most personal of belongings. This trunk was passed down in the Langland family before it was gifted to Little Norway by Knud Langland, Isaak Dahle's cousin.

Walking Stick



Walking Stick

Irish

Maker attributed to Michael Casey, c.1850

Wood (blackthorn)

Gift of Veronica (Sally) & Demi McGinley

MHAHS 2004.062.0006

A shillelagh (pronounced shi-LAY-lee) is a walking stick, but it could also be used as a club. When needs arose, a whack from the knob end could pack quite a punch! Shillelaghs have a long history in Ireland where receiving one was part of a young man's transition into adulthood and continuing to carry it was part of being a man. Men leaving Ireland, like Michael Casey, often brought their shillelaghs with them to America. Like the shamrock, the shillelagh/walking stick has become closely associated with Ireland and Irish-American identity.

PART II

Made in America with Foreign Parts

Some newly-minted Americans, like Norwegian immigrant Aslak Lie, found personal satisfaction and financial profit in gracefully and capably adapting Old World traditions.

A second generation of ethnic-influenced but homegrown artistry soon emerged.

Others, two or three generations removed from initial settlement, built upon a cultural framework ingrained in their family lives and communities to produce artwork which blended ethnic traditions, their own burgeoning American identities and trends in popular culture.

Norwegian Wafer (Krumkake) Iron



Norwegian Wafer (*Krumkake*) Iron

Norwegian-American

Torgrim Fjeld/Field, c.1870

Metal (iron)

Museum acquisition

MHAHS 1991.044.0001

For many Norwegian-Americans, *krumkake* represents the sweet flavor of Christmas served with their favorite hot drink, coffee. After the batter is cooked in the krumkake iron, the delicately stamped cookie is rolled into the shape of a cone while still warm. Once cooled, the crisp cookie is filled with whipped cream or fruit.

Torgrim Fjeld, a Norwegian immigrant and Mount Horeb blacksmith, designed this iron. It features an ornate relief image of a sheaf of wheat encircled by the biblical prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," written in Norwegian. The text may reveal Fjeld's religious response to the prominent wheat farming industry in his new home.



Torgim Fjeld's blacksmith shop in Mount Horeb, c. 1870. MHAHS.

Chairs (Kubbestols)



Chair (*Kubbestol*)

Norwegian-American

Maker unknown, c. mid-1800s

Wood, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker
Charitable Trust

MHAHS 2014.073.0003



Chair, child-sized (*Kubbestol*)

Norwegian-American
Maker unknown, c. mid-1800s; decoration attributed to Per Lysne,
c.1927
Wood, paint
Little Norway Collection Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker
Charitable Trust
MHAHS 2014.073.0009

The *kubbestol* is a traditional Norwegian chair carved from a single section of a green log, or *kubbe*. It is first hollowed out and carved to shape the chair's back. Then, after allowing the log to cure for several months, a piece of wood is cut and fitted into the hollow to form the seat where the chair back begins. The full circumference of the log is almost always left intact, with the trunk base used as a sturdy chair seat support, in lieu of legs. The diminutive size of the smaller chair displayed here is particularly unusual.

Kubbestols were traditionally set aside for the head of the household. But due to their large size and weight, they were not considered a necessity for immigration. These *kubbestols* were almost certainly made here in Wisconsin by recently settled immigrants.

Fiddle and Dulcimer



Hardanger Fiddle

Norwegian-American
Martin Cliff, 1895
Wood (maple, spruce, ebony), mother of pearl,
metal, bone
Museum acquisition
MHAHS 2003.028.0001



Hammered Dulcimer

American
Orrin Sweet, 1857-1858
Wood, metal
Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate
MHAHS 2002.001.0147
Photograph by Emily Pfothenauer.

Ellen Sweet Donald and other family members played this dulcimer at social and community gatherings. The creator of this instrument, New York cabinet-maker Orrin Sweet, traveled through Dane County in the 1850s making and selling dulcimers to settlers.

The Hardanger fiddle was made by carpenter Martin Cliff from the Town of Blue Mounds. Without formal training, Cliff made this folk instrument for his own enjoyment, incorporating traditional Norwegian Hardanger motifs and decoration.

Both instruments speak to the central role of music in this young community. Where the Hardanger fiddle possesses a long Norwegian cultural history shared by many in the Mount Horeb region, dulcimer players required little to no formal training and could easily accompany other, more traditional, instruments.

Cupboard



Cupboard
Norwegian-American
Aslak Olsen Lie, c.1860
Wood (pine), glass, metal
Gift of Ella Mavis
MHAHS 1984.011.0001

Diamonds were a hallmark of the furniture-maker Aslak Olsen Lie (pronounced LEE), appearing across the many styles of his work. Lie was born in Norway and spent the first thirty years of his career there. When he emigrated, he brought with him the skills and thinking of a mature craftsman. Lie's family was one of the first Norwegian families to settle in the Blue Mounds region. He quickly adapted to making both American and Norwegian styles

of furniture. The Norwegian cut-out ends on this stepback cupboard show how Lie would also mix those styles. The result was furniture that is distinctly Norwegian-American.

Compare the unusual interior decoration of this cupboard with that of the traveling box in the previous area of this exhibit.



Aslak Olsen Lie (second adult from right) poses with family members in front of the home he built with his brother after immigrating from Norway in 1848. WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WHS-27635.

Object Study: Cupboard

By Peter Thurlow

In an advertisement he took out in a Blue Mounds area newspaper, Norwegian immigrant Aslak Olsen Lie promoted his cabinetmaking business on his ability to make furniture according to American and European fashions. But while the advertisement seems to suggest that Lie alternated between working in one style or the other, the reality is more complicated. Examination of Lie's post-emigration furniture shows that he regularly mixed forms and stylistic elements from his native Norway with those popular in the United States. The stepback cupboard that he made around 1860 for the Skindrud family is one example of such blending. Considering this piece within the greater context of his life and career sheds light on Lie's own formation of immigrant identity.

Aslak Olsen Lie's career as a cabinetmaker spanned over six decades and straddled the Atlantic Ocean. Lie was born in the Valdres district of south-central Norway in 1798. As a young man in Norway, Lie learned the techniques involved in making furniture and developed an aesthetic sense for Norwegian design. As a cabinetmaker in rural Norway, he developed his own variations within the decorative traditions of that culture. A fifty-year old man when he emigrated in 1848, Lie came to Wisconsin an already mature craftsman. His family was among the first from Norway to settle in the Blue Mounds area and was a central figure in establishing a stream of immigrants from Valdres to Blue Mounds. In Wisconsin, Lie had to both adapt to the tastes of his new, American, clientele, as well as continue to appeal to other Norwegian immigrants. Lie's resultant work varied based upon the taste of each client. However, the majority of Lie's work in Wisconsin shows some degree of hybridization – synthesizing the two influences to create a distinctly Norwegian-American style of furniture.

The stepback cupboard made for the Skindrud family displays characteristics of Lie's hybrid of styles in his work in Wisconsin. Stepback cupboards are an American form that have a shallow upper casement that "steps back" to produce a shelf where the deeper base juts out. Cupboards of this form, particularly those with glass upper casement doors, often emphasize straight lines and angularity. In contrast to this American form, the cupboards Lie made while in Norway were dominated by the use of dramatic curving ornamentation. In the Skindrud cupboard, Lie flanked the shelf with scrollwork ends. In doing so, he incorporated Norwegian curvilinear design into the angular American form. Additionally, the red exterior and patterned blue paint inside the cupboard draw upon the Norwegian tradition of decorating furniture with bold colors.

Aslak Lie's hybridization of furniture styles reveals an active formation of immigrant identity. Lie created new designs out of elements he knew from both Norway and America. He was still able to show creative self-express-

sion through his cabinetry. When designing a piece of furniture, Lie knowingly selected what he wanted to take and incorporate from Norwegian and American decorative traditions. In form and style, Aslak Olsen Lie's post-immigration works display a great variation as he interpreted his neighbors' and his own ethnic identity. As a case study, Aslak Lie demonstrates how the process of acculturation and hybridization among first generation immigrants is an active process. Lie consciously shaped and used ethnic character to navigate his new market. By so doing, he pushed his own artistic boundaries, as well as both Norwegian and American furniture to new forms.

Cradle



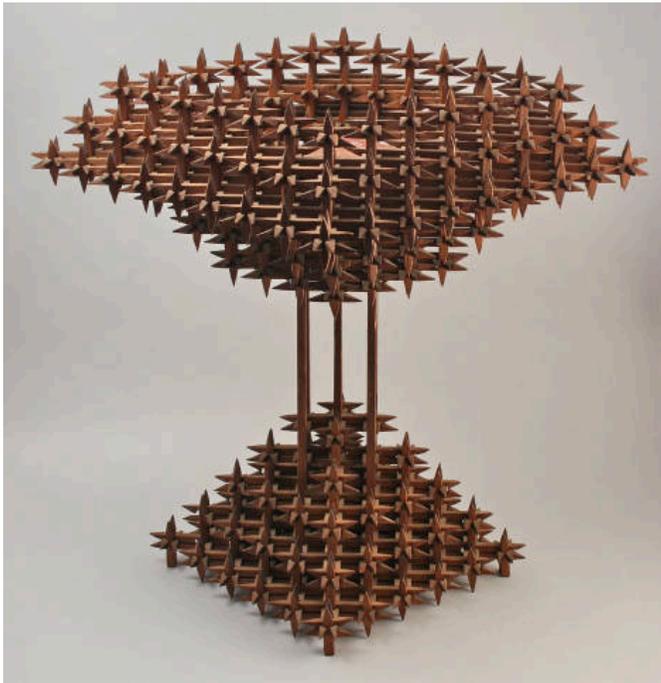
Cradle
Norwegian-American
Sever Syverson, 1855
Wood (pine), metal
Museum acquisition
MHAHS 1992.036.0001

Created in a distinct Norwegian style, this well-loved cradle has witnessed a long life as evidenced by its numerous repairs. The date 1846 is carved into its headboard. But this date differs from a 1920s photograph from the Society’s archives. A handwritten note on the back of the photo states: “This cradle was made in the year 1855 by uncle Sever Syverson at Black Earth Wisconsin.” Often times, family lore and family history present contrasting dates and stories.



In about 1920, descendants pose with the cradle and another furniture piece handcrafted by Sever Syverson. MHAHS 4×6.04075.

Tramp Art Stand



Tramp Art Stand
Norwegian-American
Martin Cliff, c.1910
Wood (used cigar boxes)
Gift of Lila Martin
MHAHS 1980.001.0006
Photograph by Emily Pfothenauer

With ingenuity and skill, even cast-off materials like cigar boxes were transformed into unique and artistic household items. This skillfully executed stand in the “Crown of Thorns” pattern contains hundreds of hand-carved wood pieces held together without the use of glue or nails. A popular vernacular art form, this style is dubbed Tramp Art because of the romantic association with homeless workmen who might trade this work for food. Martin Cliff, the maker of this piece (and also the Hardanger fiddle in this exhibition), was known as an “artist farmer.” He drew his inspiration from both his Norwegian heritage and the popular arts and crafts of the period.

Outhouse Wall



Outhouse Wall
American
Decoration attributed to either Anton or Albert Bruflat, 1905
Wood (pine)
Gift of Bob & Vicki Applegate
MHAHS 1986.040.0001

This carved interior outhouse wall is a remnant from the Bruflat family’s homestead. The artist, likely one of the Bruflat sons based on the initials “AB”, incised a dove with an olive leaf and a scroll, possibly inspired by religious motifs from their local Perry Lutheran Church or common design themes found in religious publications. It is interesting to contemplate why they chose to decorate such a mundane space with an elegant carved scriptural reference.

Music Cabinet



Music Cabinet

Norwegian-American Made by Erick Goli; decorated by, Margrethe and Amanda (Chestelson) Goli, c.1910

Wood (pine), paint

Gift of Fredrick & Loraine Hanneman

MHAHS 1984.009.0009

In Norwegian mythology, dragons are guardians of sacred places and precious goods. Dragons incised on this cabinet's door protected a church organist's treasure—her printed music. Music was an important community-builder in Norwegian-American settlements; Kristine Goli played in Perry Lutheran Church for a remarkable 69 years.

Three members of the Goli family contributed to the creation of this cabinet. Kristine's father, Erick Goli, was the cabinetmaker. Her sister Margrethe added the incised dragon and chrysanthemum details. Kristine's sister-in-law, Amanda Goli, painted the lake scene typical of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Finally, an over-painting of yellow paint and stain was applied to the entire cabinet, presumably to accentuate the detailed incising.

Object Study: Goli Music Cabinet

By Larissa Cangussu

Despite its simplicity, the Goli music cabinet has a great background story and relevance, not only due to its artistic attributes but its history: it belonged to an active member of the society and it came from a family that represents well the community life of the Norwegian-American people early established in the Midwest. This object encapsulates the importance of traditions, ethnicity and cultural manifestations in music and religion. The collaborative process of making of this piece is an interesting aspect of this distinct piece.

Constructed of pine, this music cabinet has a curved backboard and sides and an arched apron. The wooden interior of the cabinet is unfinished and there are three internal shelves that fit with standard music sheets size. An original hardware pull to open the cabinet door and a lock to secure the music inside are missing. The object's exterior is painted in yellow-mustard color that could be milk paint with a layer of varnish due to its glossy finish. This rather plain surface ornamented with traditional pigments created a simple backdrop to a later striking painted design, an oval vignette that depicts a tropical landscape with a couple of swans on a lake surrounded by mountains and palm trees. The upper front corners, backboard and sides have incised floral motifs (acanthus flowers) and dragons. The dragons are important symbols to Scandinavian ancient people and are often viewed as guardians of treasures. The presence of this element on the music cabinet's door is coherent: music sheets can be considered precious goods. The acanthus flowers, very popular in Norwegian culture, can be seen in many other artifacts with rosemaling painting and wood carving. Both dragons and flowers were added with the traditional Norwegian decorative technique known as *kolrosing*, constantly used on folk art wooden utensils like spoons and caskets. In *kolrosing*, the pattern is scribed into the wood surface with a knife tip and then rubbed on a dye that adheres to the etched lines. The mustard color paint on the surface obscured these earlier details of *Kolrosing*, exemplifying one possible update on the music cabinet.

This cabinet is a unique folk art piece with a peculiar combination of the decorative elements that don't seem to belong in the same context, but since this is a collaborative piece, these singular elements appear to be more independent, generated between the three makers with different temporal artistic tendencies. Each maker worked in a different stage of this fluid process and the influence of new aesthetics could be interpreted as an attempt to make it more modern. Analyzing the aesthetics as a whole, the Music Cabinet does not have immediate features expected in a Norwegian-American piece of furniture, although it does have a naïve charm and individual expressiveness. Nonetheless, the traditional Norwegian decorative technique is not the focal point of the music cabinet.

The object's dramatic centerpiece added by the object's third maker is the oval landscape vignette. The couple of swans painted in opaque and dull colors could be a representation of the cabinet's owner love for music and the scene can be associated with the artistic Naturalism movement that focused in landscapes and rural themes, responding to economic and political changes in Norway.

According to the records of the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society, this music cabinet was constructed by Erick Goli between 1900 and 1920, for his daughter Kristine Olava Goli (1886-1985), by that time, a piano apprentice. His other daughter Margrethe Goli (1883-1971), the second maker, was a pianist at the Perry Lutheran Church. She was the one responsible for adding the *kolrosing* adornments. The third maker, Amanda Goli, sister-in-law of Kristine, was married to her older brother Martin, painted the central element of the cabinet inside the oval shape line done also in *kolrosing*, by Margrethe. Kristine Goli was a piano teacher, church organist for 69 years and the director of the Perry Lutheran Church choir.



The Goli Family, c. 1905; Kristine Goli is standing at left, Margrethe Goli is standing in center, Erik Goli is seated at right. PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN HANNEMAN.

Decorated Spoon



Decorated Spoon

Norwegian-American

Maker unknown, mid 1800s; decoration attributed to either Carrie H. Larsen or Lars Bakken, c.1900

Wood, paint

Gift of Brian Bigler & Ken Scott

MHAHS 2016.012.0001

In 19th century Norway, utilitarian items such as spoons were carved from wood and used on a daily basis. When packing for a trans-oceanic voyage to America, immigrants included spoons like this as necessary objects of daily use. Decades later, a landscape painting typical of the American Arts and Crafts movement was added to this Norwegian spoon. And in a manner reminiscent of traditional Norwegian decoration, the names Carrie H. Larson and Lars Bakken were also added. This spoon shows how notions of utility, beauty and heritage evolve in ethnic objects as they move between places and times.

Magazines – Making Art by Making Do



Cover of *The Girl's Own Paper*, March 19, 1898.

From about 1860 forward, and particularly during America's "Gilded Age," a surge in mass-produced magazines spread artistic and craft trends to households across America.

These inexpensive publications could be found in the hands, parlors, sewing rooms — and smoking rooms — of all Americans, whatever their social class, ethnicity, or region. Their articles, richly illustrated with step-by-step instructions, tips, and recommendations, made popular art accessible to and executable by nearly anyone.

Encouraging the re-use, modification, and decoration of otherwise unused and unserviceable, though sometimes sentimentally valuable, household items, such magazines appealed to limited budgets and frugal sensibilities, while providing a wide-ranging palette for domestic creativity.

This pervasive "Make Do" movement inevitably affected the traditional repertoires of ethnic artists.

Cutlery Box



Cutlery Box

American

Decoration attributed to Donald family, c.1880

Wood, paint

Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate

MHAHS 2002.001.0165

The kitchen, positioned physically and figuratively at the heart of the home, is where family members gathered at the table to share a meal and spend time together. In the late 19th Century, everyday household objects were decorated to enhance the space in which these social encounters occurred. In the early 1880s when John S. Donald brought his city bride, Vona, to his farm in the Town of Springdale, the house was updated and redecorated in

the popular late Victorian style of the period. Even this utilitarian cutlery box received a newly decorated surface, ornamented with painted stencil designs to compliment the new décor of the Donald farmhouse.

Decorated Butter Paddle and Painted Wood Panel, Framed



Decorated Butter Paddle

American

Decoration attributed to Vona Donald, c.1910

Wood (maple), paint

Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate

MHAHS 1997.038.0001

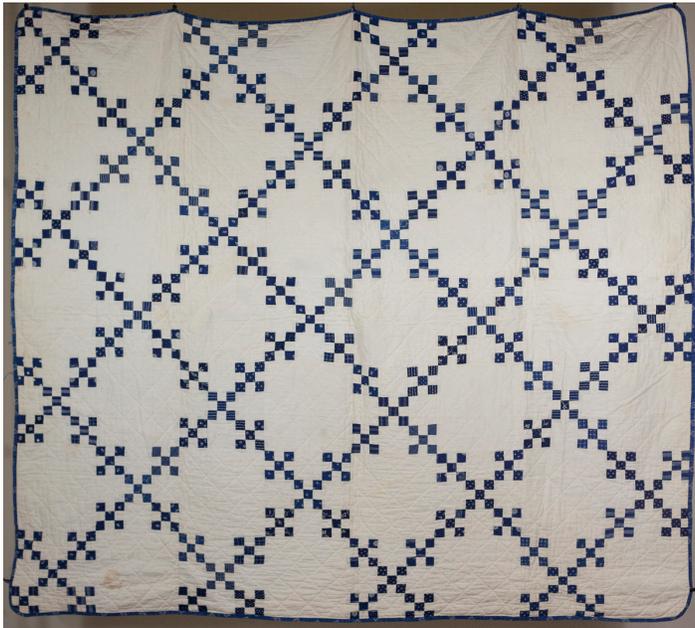


Painted Wooden Panel, Framed

American
Attributed to Donald/Sweet Family, c.1890
Wood (pine), paint
Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate
MHAHS 2002.001.0063

Repurposed objects such as a butter paddle or a wood panel became the canvas of a folk artist. Making her home more inviting and following the Victorian magazine arts of the time, Vona Donald chose bucolic rural winter scenes to enhance and decorate her environment. With paint and inspiration, the rural landscapes brought character to these daily objects.

Quilt



Quilt
American
Ellen Sweet, c.1865
Cotton
Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate
MHAHS 2002.002.0367

Late 19th century women's magazines promoted household craft and decoration in a reactionary movement against the Industrial Revolution's factory-line production of undifferentiated, machine-made items. Young ladies were expected to master these domestic skills, and common household goods often became their palette for artistic expression. Parlors and family spaces were filled with this kind of craft, like this 1865 quilt created by the young Ellen Sweet of the Town of Springdale.



Ellen Sweet Donald, 1870.
MHAHS 2×4.00578.

Plant Stand, Basket, and Frames



Plant Stand

American
Neighbor of Stugard Family, 1899
Wood (willow sapling)
Gift of Lucille (Stugard) McKee
MHAHS 2001.101.0121



Basket

German-American
Henry Haberland, c.1910
Wood (willow sapling)
Gift of Marlyn Grinde
MHAHS 2011.112.0001



Frame

American
Attributed to the Donald/Sweet Family, c.1890
Wood, walnut shells
Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate
MHAHS 2002.001.0073



Frame

American
Attributed to the Donald/Sweet Family, c.1890
Wood, snail shells, seeds
Gift of Delma Donald Woodburn Estate
MHAHS 2002.001.0067

The willow plant stand, basket and ornamental frames are surviving examples of the “make-do” endeavors of rural community members around the turn of the 19th Century. By using local resources, they created unique, artistic home decorations with lasting sentimental value. At the same time, the larger British and American Arts and Crafts movement heralded such artistic production in response to the Industrial Revolution. Making hand-crafted items reinforced a return to more ideal economic times and better moral health of communities. Such sentiments survive in today’s non-professional, Do-It-Yourself culture and professional crafts that market the decorative appeal of rustic furnishings and home adornments.

Object Study: Stugard Family Plant Stand

By Courtney Anderson

This 1899 *Plant Stand* exemplifies rural handicrafts in the Midwest circa 1900 while commenting on 19th century do-it-yourself, or D.I.Y. culture, not entirely different from our own in 2017. Today, a web search for willow or twig furniture returns dozens of do-it-yourself samples from popular craft sites such as Etsy, Pinterest, and HGTV announcing nostalgic descriptors such as “homemade” and “rustic”. Woven into the twists and folds of willow furniture is a craft tradition still alive today, sustained by practiced craftsman or by novice consumers drawn to the rustic charm of unrefined accessories.

Such 19th through 21st-century craftsman share common experiences involved in gathering and utilizing resources from the land in aesthetic and utilitarian ways that contribute to a sense of place-connectedness and to community prosperity. Some 19th century writers advocated for the transformative power of crafts for the well-being of the entire rural community. At the same time, the craftsman’s individual talent and character was essential to their practice. Commentator on the American Arts and Crafts Movement, Zueblin says, “thus are fashioned objects to be cherished and valued on account of their personal feeling and character, and such are the fireside arts done by talented individuals.”¹ Such sentimental writings on the Arts and Crafts movement expresses the romance such objects held for people in 1903.

Twig furniture, occasionally referenced in 19th and 20th century home fashion magazines, is typically associated with anonymous craftsmen and rustic styles, appealing to consumers’ desire for local and natural materials. In the case of the Stugard plant stand, the craftsman is unidentified; even their sex and trade are unknown, shrouding him or her in a degree of mystery. Though the plant stand’s anonymous maker leaves viewers with little indication of his or her personal biography, the plant stand, a neighbor’s wedding gift preserved for over 100 years, likely possessed the “cherished and valued” personal worth Zueblin describes. Furthermore, the Zueblin connects rural handicraft with ties to both nature and personal feeling along with the satisfaction of working out technical problems and skill development.

In addition to speaking to the 19th and early 20th century philosophies on the qualities of a prosperous rural town dependent upon the participation and skill specialization of its population, the plant stand is an interesting impression of a much larger 19th and early 20th-century interest in wicker or rattan furnishings often made from willow

1. Zueblin, Rho Fisk. “The Arts and Crafts Movement: The Production of Industrial Art in America II.” *The Chautauquan; A Weekly News-magazine (1880-1914)* 37 (April 1903): 59.

twigs, reeds, and other pliant twig plants. In her book, *Rustic Furniture*, Sue Honacker Stephenson argues that twig furniture possesses a “decorative symbolism” that functions as a rebellion against commercial and industrial excess, an ideology directly referencing and responding to the Arts and Crafts Movement. She goes on to interpret the furniture as a statement against modern consumption through the objects’ denial of industrial manufacture and its embrace of unfinished material. “As a decorative symbol, a rustic seat is astonishingly literal, being constructed of the bare roots of trees.”² Richard Saunders claims that wicker furniture “captured the mood of the times to a ‘T,’ reveling in the adoration of the home as an island of refuge that celebrated any handmade or eclectic decoration.”³ Likewise, countless primary sources, from advertisements to articles on home decoration, emphasize the appeal of willow furnishings. Between 1911 and 1915, the periodical *Art & Decoration* published articles by various authors titled “The Informal Note in Summer Furniture,” “The Use and Beauty of Willow Furniture,” and “The Adaptable Willow: Its Appeal of Structure Line and Form.”⁴ At the same time, advertisements use language such as “The Final Note of Comfort,” “Hand – Wrought Willow Furniture commands a place in even the most lavish home,” “no other investment insures artistic results at such a low cost,”⁵ and “see these unique pieces to realize the home-like atmosphere they impart.”⁶ Advertisements highlight desirable qualities inherent in willow furnishings including being handmade, artistic, and low cost.

Handmade willow plant stands demonstrate the resourcefulness and skill of the 19th century rural community and the anonymous individuals that contributed to binding and supportive relationships that created a prosperous community unit. Aesthetically appealing wicker furnishings introduced nature to the home through its rustic, natural finish and simple, plantlike structure, resonating with both ideals of natural beauty and tranquility as well as contemporary home fashions with its class implications. In developing and exercising their skill, rural craftsmen supported both the utilitarian as well as aesthetically moralizing needs of his or her community.

2. Stephenson, Sue Honacker. *Rustic Furniture*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1979.

3. Saunders, Richard. *The Collector’s Guide to American Wicker Furniture*. New York: Hearst Books, 1983.

4. Price, Matlock. “The Adaptable Willow: Its Appeal of Structural Line and Form.” *Arts & Decoration (1910-1911)* 1 (October 1911): 482-483.; McCall, D. D. “The Use and Beauty of Willow Furniture.” *Arts & Decoration (1910-1911)* 1 (March 1911): 221-222.; Marke, Mortimer. “The Informal Note in Summer Furniture.” *Arts & Decoration (1910-1918)* 10 (April 1915): 232-233.

5. “Back Matter.” *Arts & Decoration*. (September 1911): 456.

6. Advertisement by Joseph P. McHugh & Son of New York.

PART III

Heritage Memorialized

With varying degrees of distance from the experience of immigration, many mid-to-late 20th century artists and collectors revived traditional forms of artistry and imaginatively memorialized their ethnic roots.

Nearby summer-home-turned-cultural-destination Little Norway and the costumed pageantry of the long-running Song of Norway performances evoked pristine peasant Norway, nudging the Mount Horeb area towards a romanticized folk cultural façade.

Motivated variously by nostalgia, familial allegiances, and economic savvy, Southwestern Dane County residents invested both artistic talent and money in the revitalization and re-invention of ethnicity.

The Creation of Little Norway

Little Norway, located just west of Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, was an open-air museum of an idealized 19th century Norwegian homestead that operated for over 75 years.



Little Norway began through the efforts of Isaak J. Dahle who was born in Mt. Vernon, Wisconsin, February 1, 1883. As a child Dahle was fascinated with collecting objects, displaying his finds in cases in his bedroom. After college, he became a successful businessman in Chicago. In 1926 he took his mother on a first-class tour of Europe, including the country of their ancestors, Norway.

Inspired by farms in Norway, Dahle purchased a small run-down farm west of Mt Horeb in 1927, intending it to be a summer retreat for his friends and family. Over the next few years he hired carpenters, painters and stone masons to renovate the property into an idyllic Norwegian farm. Some of these craftsmen were out of work during the Depression and most, like painters Per Lysne and Olaf Colberson, were of Norwegian decent. Dahle advertised locally for ethnic antiques to furnish the buildings, and a Chicago interior decorator he hired toured Norway and shipped crates of artifacts back to America. Additionally, rustic log furniture was constructed from trees on the property and plain antiques were made “more Norwegian” with the application of ethnic decoration.

In 1933 Dahle purchased the Norway Pavilion from the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair and had it moved to his summer retreat. The building’s arrival intensified the interest of curiosity seekers who were often found wandering the site. Interest in the property led to the opening of “Little Norway” to the public in 1934.

Over the years Little Norway attracted visitors from all over the world. In 1998 the site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In the summer of 2012, due to a decrease in attendance and increased costs, Little Norway closed its doors. Thankfully, a number of artifacts were generously donated to and acquired for the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society.

Mural, Painting on Masonite



Mural, Painting on Masonite

Norwegian-American

Olaf Colberson, 1928

Masonite, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner

MHAHS 2016.040.0001

Norwegian-trained painter Olaf “Ole” Colberson immigrated to Black Earth, Wisconsin. At one point in his life, he was committed to the Wisconsin Hospital for the Insane. He was later released by petitions from his Norwegian community of devoted friends. They provided him a new home and began purchasing his artwork. His talent was later recognized by Isaak Dahle who commissioned Colberson to adorn one of Little Norway’s buildings with a series of murals. Each mural depicts a quiet rural scene in the Norway home region of Dahle’s grandfather.

Artist Story: Olaf Colberson

By Alyssa Kowis

Olaf Colberson was a trained painter who learned his trade in Norway before moving to the Midwest, described by one contemporary as “—not only a house painter, but an artist who created beautiful pictures.”¹ He is remembered best for his paintings that decorated the halls of Little Norway. Most of what can learned about Colberson comes from his funeral and wake, where his closest friends spoke about who he was as a person, his talents, and his family. Much of what we know about Colberson’s personal life comes from a touching eulogy delivered shortly after his death by Anne Sinley.² She provides information about his family, his time in Mendota mental hospital, information about his training, and his influence within the community.

She starts her letter by detailing how she came to meet the Colberson family, they were neighbors in Black Earth, Wisconsin, and because of their shared immigration experiences the families became friends. It was sometime after this move that Colberson’s life took an interesting turn.

Sometime about 1922 or 1923, we heard that Colberson was at Mendota, supposedly a mental case. My brother, Ole, was just then taking a degree in Psychology. He and my father went to Mendota to see our old friend. It seems that while he was undergoing some minor surgery, devious means had been implemented to get him committed to Mendota. He was listed as manic depressive and with good reason. He had been completely disowned and deserted by his wife, daughter and son-in-law and stripped of his home and all of his assets.³

The people who should have cared for him the most abandoned Colberson, and society had shunned and temporarily forgotten about him.

Anne Sinley then describes how her father obtained a one-month temporary release for Colberson, and when the community saw that he did not have any ongoing mental health illnesses, the governor, Phillip LaFollette, obtained a permanent release for him. According to Sinley, LaFollete then purchased a house for Colberson to reside back in Black Earth, and the community helped assist him get his life back together. While rebuilding his life Colberson started with redecorating. He kept himself busy and spent his time creating artworks, and was even hired by others in the community to create art for their homes. The community was re-embracing him, and he was asserting himself back into the community. It was at this time when Little Norway was searching for a person to

1. Simley, Anne. "Remembrances of Olaf Colberson." 1931.

2. The Sinley name is ambiguous due to document spelling and alternative spellings of her father’s name. As stated previously, many immigrants’ names had spelling changed during translation.

3. Simley, Anne. "Remembrances of Olaf Colberson." 1931.

help decorate some scenery of the owners' family background. They wanted someone who could paint in a traditional Norwegian style, and they commissioned Olaf Colberson after observing his work displayed throughout Black Earth.

The people of Little Norway began driving him back and forth between Black Earth and Little Norway for the entirety of his commission, and his work was very well received. The Mount Horeb Historical Society has in its possession a letter from Little Norway exclaiming, "Your effort is a marked contribution to the attractiveness of Little Norway and receives very high commendation on all sides...I can imagine no artist but one of Norse birth who could have done this work as they could not have gotten into the spirit of it."⁴

The four artworks displayed here are landscapes that portray scenes from Isak Dahle's, the creator and commissioner for Little Norway, childhood; Mr. Colberson was locally considered a renowned landscape artist, however some of the pieces also included images of animals, people, or buildings. Each of the images had nail holes throughout the center of the images, and was informed that the frames were not original to the paintings. So these were not hung, but were pinned.

Colberson passed away around Thanksgiving in 1931, and his obituary kindly remarks, "Mr. Colbertson [sic], as well as being a musician, was a hand painter of unrecognized ability. Landscape scenes were his specialty and he produced original work."⁵ He felt and faced the stigma of mental illness, and how difficult it is to move on with one's life once they have been labeled—even incorrectly. Art can be a therapeutic representation of a community or one's self, and through Mr. Colberson's landscapes we can see a man who was represented by his ethnicity and his community. There is a story and a message in Olaf Colberson's life and artwork, he can be representative of many groups of people: immigrants, traditional folk artists (Norwegian folk artists), those condemned to a negative label, those redeemed through perseverance, and those who loved and were loved by their community.

4. Little Norway Records. "Letter of Thanks and Recognition." August 9, 1928.

5. "Ole Colberson Found Dead In His Home." *Mt. Horeb Times*, December 1931.

Door (Armoire)



Door (Armoire)

Norwegian-American

Maker unknown; decoration attributed to Per Lysne, c.1930

Wood, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Beth Burke

MHAHS 2016.043.0001

Isaak Dahle, the grandson of Norwegian immigrants and the founder of Little Norway, commissioned artists and workers to complete his vision of the Norwegian pioneering spirit. This door, which came from the “Bachelor’s Cabin” on the property, was made for an armoire and reflects a sense of immigrant resourcefulness and frugality. Though unconfirmed, the sophisticated style points to Per Lysne, the so-called father of American rosemaling.

Olaf Colberson, Little Norway's mural painter, is another possible artist. No matter who created the pattern, the rosemaling welcomes you into a world of Norwegian heritage.

Log Rocker (Kubbestol)



Log Rocker (*Kubbestol*)

Norwegian-American
Maker, workmen at Little Norway; decoration attributed to Olaf
Colberson, c.1930
Wood (oak), paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2015.021.0004

Kubbestols, traditional Norwegian log chairs, were created from the trunks of trees, their typically over-sized bases making them appear almost rooted to the ground, immovable. *Kubbestols* are a source of national pride in Norway and symbols of Norwegian heritage in America. This ethnic tradition is completely transformed when rockers, typically associated with movement, are added. Although this combination is rare, this rocking *kubbestol* made for Little Norway is a clear example of the reinvention of ethnicity.

Object Study: Log Rocker (Kubbestol)

By Laura Schmidt

Often, chairs are considered utilitarian above all other characteristics. We need them for an easy way to sit down, we need them to sit at the table, we need them in crowded theaters, and we prefer different styles based on our comfort needs. However, chairs represent much more than a resting position. They communicate our identity and our lifestyle. Think of a rocking chair, a stool, and an office chair. These are clearly not interchangeable, but they all chairs and it matters which one you are sitting in.

Created in the early 18th century, the rocking chair is a distinctly American invention. One of the most comfortable chairs ever created, the rocking chair is so soothing that people often use it to calm infants. When sitting in a rocking chair, the chair matches your center of gravity and keeps you in an unstressed position. It is a chair that refuses to sit still, but carries out its motion in a soft and serene way, shifting back and forth slowly, lazily, as if lulling you to sleep.

On the other hand, when you sit in a kubbestol, you are rooted to the ground. The other kubbestols in the exhibit vary greatly in size, but this Norwegian chair demands its presence be felt. It represents power and an immovable, proud sense of self. Comparing a rocking chair to a kubbestol is nearly impossible, which is why this object in the exhibit is so rare.

Observing the kubbestol rocker in the exhibit, the details come to life. Scars cover it, traces left by the axe used to carve this rocker out of a giant log. Though this chair is hollowed out in the center, one would not be able to tell upon moving this massive weight, which demands it stay rooted in one spot. Paint on the end of the seat has worn away from use, showing that this was clearly a loved object even though it was made for Little Norway. Olaf Colberson, an artist with a tragic past, did the large and swooping rosemaling along the bottom of the chair. Horseshoes carved on either side of the chair can be easily scanned over in one's haste to study the rest of the object. A large crack traces the left side of the chair, showing the wood expanding with age, stretching out and making its presence known.

Then there are the rockers. How did they come to be on this kubbestol? This powerful, heavy mass of a chair seems like it would smash the rockers into the ground. This beast of a chair could not possibly move the way the rockers imply. Who thought this was a good idea? Marrying this uprooted tree to such a fluid, calming idea of a rocking chair seems ridiculous and yet it is perfect for this exhibit. Mount Horeb was a community of immi-

grants that wanted to pass their culture down to their future generations and they clearly succeeded when you look around the Historical Society. However, this Norwegian culture does not remain untouched. Children of these immigrants not only cared for their Norwegian roots, but they also wanted to grasp the shifting nature of American culture. Both the rocking chair and the kubbestol are symbols of the nostalgia that is a focal point at Little Norway. Combining these two chairs by placing rockers on a kubbestol, this object represents a cultural hybrid of idealized identities, highlighting a theme of reinvention and cultural fusion often practiced by Norwegian-American immigrants.

Table



Table

Norwegian-American
Workmen at Little Norway, c.1930
Wood (oak)
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer
Winner
MHAHS 2015.021.0003

Similar to the kubbestols in this exhibit, the pedestal of this table is made from a single oak tree trunk. The solid piece is finished into an octagonal shape and the top is formed from a large cross-cut section of a tree. Workmen at Little Norway made this table to represent their vision of an authentic Norwegian home. The sawed indentation along the table's edge and the line that runs to the core appear to have occurred during the manufacture of the piece, and probably fit a later generation's idealized image of a rustic homestead.

Sending Basket



Sending Basket

Norwegian-American

Maker, Olav H. Dokka; decorated by Olga Edseth, 1991

Wood, paint

Gift of Olga Edseth

MHAHS 2003.020.0002

This white basket tells the story of two artists separated by an ocean and generations of immigration, yet united in passion for Norwegian ethnic art. In 1988, Olga Edseth visited a folk museum in Boi i Telemark in southeast Norway. While there, she bought this wooden, “weaved” basket from ninety-five year old carver Olav H. Dokka. Three years later, Edseth rosemaled the basket in Mount Horeb. “19 O.M.E. 91” indicate her initials and the date. This basket symbolically joins two artists through their craft, and rosemaling transformed it from a Norwegian souvenir to a hybrid of Norwegian-American folk art.

Decorative Plate



Decorative Plate

Norwegian-American
Maker, Earl Edseth; decorated by Olga Edseth,
c.1946
Wood (recycled fruit crate end), paint
Gift of Olga Edseth
MHAHS 1983.048.0001

This piece was Olga Edseth's first venture into Norwegian folk painting, an interest deeply rooted in the traditions of her Norwegian immigrant mother and grandparents. Edseth's husband Earl turned this plate on a wood lathe from the end of an orange crate. Edseth then rosemailed the surface, drawing inspiration from a design on a post-card her mother acquired on a trip to Oslo, Norway. Edseth attained notoriety over her sixty years of rosemailing by applying self-taught painting talents throughout the Mount Horeb area. The Sons of Norway later presented Edseth with an International Heritage Award.

Shoes



Shoes
Norwegian-American
Decorated by Olga Edseth, 1998
Recycled shoes, paint
Gift of Olga Edseth
MHAHS 2003.056.0001

Clothing often expresses ethnic identity, and these hot pink pumps with two-inch heels make a size eight cultural fashion statement. In 1998, Olga Edseth purchased this pair of leather shoes at a Dodgeville garage sale for fifty cents. Norwegian folk painting has a rich tradition of rosemaling a variety of surfaces. The decoration of these particular functional objects not only draws on this practice, but gains new life and symbolic meaning through Norwegian folk painting. These shoes become heritage “on the go.” In addition to signing and dating her work on the shoes’ soles, Olga lists the price she paid and notes that these are, “The first pair of shoes I ever rosemaled.”



Olga Edseth poses in bunad. MHAHS 8×10.00320.

Trunk and Wall Cabinet



Wall Cabinet
Norwegian-American
Olin Ruste, 1965
Wood (pine)
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2015.021.0010



Trunk
Norwegian-American
Olin Ruste, 1968
Wood (pine)
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2014.050.0082

Retired farmer Olin Ruste used his woodworking skills to explore his Norwegian heritage. In the mid- to late-1960s, Ruste constructed and decorated in carved relief this wall cabinet and chest, both for his own personal use. The wall cabinet proudly displays his name carved in the lower front panel, while the chest incorporates not only the Norwegian Coat of Arms, but also the motif from the main building at Little Norway where he acted as a guide. After honing his skills, Ruste went on to successfully tackle the construction of a full-size Norwegian *stubur*, or storehouse, at Little Norway in 1969.

Mangle Board (Mangletre)



Mangle Board (*Mangletre*)

Norwegian-American

Edward Barsness, 1989

Wood (basswood)

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Raymond & Margaret Vicker Charitable Trust

MHAHS 2014.073.0027

While made for a woman's practical role of ironing her family's clothes, mangle boards were also deeply symbolic of love and marriage. In Norwegian tradition, a male suitor carved and placed a board on his love's doorstep. If she shared his ardor, she brought the board inside and their courtship began. If she rejected his proposal, he would have to move on and carve a new board.

This mangle board was created for Little Norway by pastor-turned-woodworker, Edward Barsness of Black Earth, Wisconsin. In semi-retirement, Barsness studied woodworking at Vesterheim's heritage center in Iowa and also in Norway. The elegant acanthus carvings seen on this piece are just one of the Norwegian motifs Barsness utilized in his creations.



Ed Barsness poses with his carvings at Mount Horeb's Fall Festival in 1990. MHAHS 5×7.00914.

Painting on Masonite, Model Swiss Chalet, and Lawn Windmill



Lawn Windmill

Swiss-American
Karl Minnig, 1975
Recycled metal, electric conduit, wood, paint
Gift of Fred & Hilda Bigler
MHAHS 1986.042.0001



Model Swiss Chalet

Swiss-American
Karl Minnig, 1972
Wood (recycled cheese boxes), glass, stones, fabric, plastic
novelties
Gift of William Garfoot
MHAHS 1986.025.0001



Painting on Masonite
Swiss-American
Karl Minnig, 1968
Masonite, paint
Gift of Merel Black
MHAHS 2014.068.0001

A proud Swiss immigrant and notable Wisconsin cheesemaker, Karl Minnig enjoyed making ethnic crafts to sell alongside his cheese. Three examples appear here: a “whirly gig” lawn ornament, a small-scale replica of a Swiss chalet and a detailed painting of a Swiss farmyard. The fact that both Karl and his older brother were employed as cheesemakers in Wisconsin suggest an identity rooted in farming and particularly dairying. Karl’s heritage deeply influenced the objects he created and they, in turn, reveal his love and passion for a place, a culture, a memory and an identity.

Chair



Chair

Norwegian-American
Maker unknown; decoration attributed to Per Lysne, c.1930
Wood, paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2014.050.0049

The revival of rosemaling in the United States is credited to the painter of this small chair, Per Lysne. Born in Norway in 1880, Lysne was trained in Norwegian decoration by his father. After immigrating with his wife to Stoughton, Wisconsin in 1907, he was initially employed as a wagon painter. In search of work during the Great Depression, he returned to traditional Norwegian decoration. Having faded from popularity, rosemaling reached

astounding new heights in Lysne's skilled hands. In addition to non-traditional items such as plates, Lysne also decorated traditional Norwegian objects including trunks, wooden boxes and three-legged chairs. The original owner of this chair was Agnes (Dahle) Green of Mount Horeb. It was later donated to Little Norway and exhibited for many years.

Costume (Bunad)



Costume (Bunad)
Norwegian-American
Irene Gilbertson, 1969
Wool, cotton, brass
Gift of Irene Gilbertson
MHAHS
2015.011.0001



Irene Gilbertson poses in her bunad with husband Otto, 1969. MHAHS 5×7.01294.

This decorated dress is a costume known as a *bunad*, a Norwegian rural folk garment. Irene Gilbertson created this particular outfit to wear when she took tickets and was a host at Mount Horeb's annual performance of *The Song of Norway*, a play based on the life of Edvard Grieg. Begun in 1969, the popular production became an outlet for local talent and a way for the community to attract visitors to the area. Irene Gilbertson's paternal grandpar-

ents emigrated from Norway. She was a pillar of the community and involved in many different groups, including being a long-time participant of *The Song of Norway*.

Ale Bowl



Ale Bowl

Norwegian-American

Trygve E. Thoresen, c.1960

Wood, paint

Gift of Forest & Doris Johnson

MHAHS 1998.087.0001

Ale bowls come in many forms, but in the twentieth century those carved with dragon heads became especially popular on the souvenir market. Buyers were attracted to the form's resemblance to the famous dragon-prowed longships of the Vikings. Norwegian immigrant, Trygve Thoreson, Sr., utilized Norwegian identity as a marketing tool when he named this bowl "Old Norse." Decades before Mount Horeb branded itself "the Troll Capital of the World," Thoreson decorated his home with rosemaling, named it "the Norway House," and made it into a business providing food and lodging to tourists.

Painting on Board



Painting on Board

Norwegian-American

Patricia Edmundson, c.1975

Wood, paint

Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner

MHAHS 2014.050.0041

Local artists played a large role in the display of ethnicity at Little Norway. They also supported the tourist economy by producing artwork for sale. Patricia Edmundson created this piece to sell in the gift shop during the late 1970s, but the site's owners removed it from sale to become part of their permanent collection. This rosemaled board features the popular Telemark style with a vibrant color pallet, from the creamy background accented in blue to the burned orange flower petals. Edmundson's signature is visible near the center on a green acanthus leaf.



Patricia Edmundson demonstrates rosemaling at a folk festival in Mount Horeb, 1989. MHAHS 5×7.00917.

Bowl



Bowl

Norwegian-American

Decorated by Patricia Edmundson, 1991

Wood (maple), paint

Gift of Patricia Edmundson

MHAHS 1991.047.0001

Created in 1991, this bowl commemorates and memorializes the life of Richard “Dick” Horn and was dedicated at the 25th season of Mount Horeb’s annual play, *The Song of Norway*. The play presented a fictional account of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg and drew widely from local and professional actors and craftsmen. It also

attracted visitors from throughout the region. Horn served as a board member for both *The Song of Norway* and the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society. The phrase “The Biggest Happiness One Can Have is To Make Another Happy” appears along the outer rim of this Telemark rosemaled wooden bowl. Translated from Norwegian, the lettering is delicately painted in white, utilizing a stylized Gothic print.

Object Story: Bowl

By Jared Schmidt

This rosemalled wooden bowl represents both Mount Horeb, Wisconsin resident Patricia “Pat” Edmundson’s artistic talents and command of the Telemark technique and her dedication to the community’s performance of Norwegian-American identity. Beginning in 1966, Mount Horeb hosted an annual outdoor pageant featuring local and professional actors presenting a fictionalized account of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. This play, titled *The Song of Norway*, operated as a cultural performance of Norwegian identity and heritage from which Norwegian-Americans could draw inspiration as professional actors and members of the community viewed on stage. The annual production provided a strength to what Norwegian-American identity in the community meant through the tradition of performance and connected residents to the larger story of Norway and the role many of their ancestors played in the narrative of immigration to America.

Critical to the story of any successful community event is the dedication of individuals, and when it came to *The Song of Norway*, Richard “Dick” Horn was among the most significant contributors. Horn (1941-1990) served as the pageant organization’s president and vice president. Additionally, he was as a board member for the Mount Horeb Historical Society for fifteen years and operated as a curator for the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison for twenty-six years. In recognition of the play’s 25th anniversary, Edmundson painted this intricately decorated wooden bowl in commemoration of and dedication to his memory.

This wooden bowl, which stands at 12” wide x 13.5” long, is arguably at the most intricately rosemalled piece currently held in the museum’s collection of Edmundson’s work. The rich blue Rococo C stems delicately interweaves with the rust and green floral motifs against a stark black background. This central design, with Edmundson’s signature tucked into the center bottom, is bordered first by a blue circle, around which a continuous print echoes the focal point’s design motifs in an embracing, concentric pattern. The acanthus leaves and yellow scrawls highlight Edmundson’s skills with fine, sharp lines on the upwardly curved surface. In contrast, the inner lip of the bowl is painted with rectangles using shades of blue in the Rococo C stems.

Wrapped around the outer lip of the bowl in white paint, Edmundson wrote in Norwegian the phrase which, translated into English, reads, “The Biggest Happiness One Can Have is to Make Another Happy.” The use of Norwegian both harkens to the mother tongue of many of Mount Horeb and the Driftless Area’s Norwegian immigrant ancestors, but also to the language which would have been spoken by the characters featured in *Song of Norway*. The letters are written in a Gothic style, reminiscent of the work by Stoughton, Wisconsin artist, teacher and

renowned rosemarler Per Lysne who utilized this font to write Norwegian messages on the walls of homes and on other pieces of art.

Bucket (or Firkin)



Bucket (or Firkin)
Norwegian-American
Decorated by Patricia Edmundson, c.1977
Wood (pine), paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2014.050.0042

Created by Edmundson as a gift for Little Norway in the late 1970s, this wooden stave bucket, or sugar firkin, demonstrates the range of rosemaling application and the artistic infusion of ethnic identity into everyday items. Firkins store dry, nonperishable cooking materials. The fitted lid creates a tight seal, bent wooden bands provide structure and a bentwood handle offers ease for domestic transport. The rosemaling, set against a red-brown base, covers the flat lid and curved side. These elegant designs demonstrate the incorporation and significance of identity, both the celebratory and the mundane.

Painting on Plywood



Painting on Plywood

Norwegian-American

Patricia Edmundson, c.1980

Plywood, paint

Gift of the Village of Mount Horeb

MHAHS 2014.017.0001

Few stories have captured the imagination of successive generations of American children as much as the whimsical nursery rhymes of Mother Goose. Nostalgia for characters like Humpty Dumpty, Little Bo Peep and that athletic cow who jumped over the moon are captured here by Patricia Edmundson. Painted for the Mount Horeb Public Library, this painting speaks to the ability of libraries to transport the imaginations of children into the fantastic, much like the goose ferrying gleeful youth. Plucky little trolls and a heavy robed *Nisse* greet the children, inviting them to learn the folklore of the town—quite possibly the same stories of their grandparents' youth.

Chair



Chair
Norwegian-American
Decorated by Oljanna Cunneen, c.1970
Wood, paint
Gift of Ella Mavis
MHAHS 1989.054.0001

Rosemaling not only makes it possible to give new life to old objects, but, in this instance, brings joy where once there was pain. This spindle-backed chair was built c. 1910 and used in the Mount Horeb hospital on Main Street. Although the bentwood handles look inviting, this seat was occupied by those having their tonsils removed. Ella

Mavis of Mount Horeb acquired the chair after the hospital closed, and in 1970 she requested it to be rosemaled by local artist Oljanna Cunneen. Through ethnic art the chair became an instrument of warmth and hospitality.

Dress



Dress
Norwegian-American
Oljanna Cunneen, late 1960s
Wool
Gift of Nancy Vogel
MHAHS 1990.014.0003

This mini dress made by Oljanna Cunneen for Nancy Vogel in 1970 merges ethnic folk tradition and contemporary fashion. The most distinct feature of the rust colored bonded wool dress is the multi-colored rosemaled design of crewel embroidery ornamenting the neck and hemlines. The A-line mini-dress style, with modish lines and raised

hems, had rocked the fashion world and Vogel's choice to include Norwegian design demonstrates her personal identity and business savvy at her Mount Horeb store, Open House Imports. When compared to the *bunad* costume made by Irene Gilbertson, both women used tradition—but quite differently.

Object Story: Dress

By Bree Ann Romero

Oljanna Cunneen made a dress for Nancy Vogel in 1970. A-line in shape and hemmed above the knee, the rust bonded wool dress features multi-colored rosemal designs of crewel embroidery. A close study of it suggests that while it held different meanings for Oljanna and Nancy, it represents both women—their sense of self and desires—as well as a time and place that looked to the past and the future. The rosemal dress then shows how an object can be both static and dynamic and help us understand individuals, society, and the ways they engage tradition.

For Oljanna, the dress was a form of both fashion and custom, a practice through which the Norwegian-American expressed her identity. Born in the rural Dane County community of Vermont, Wisconsin in 1923 to Henry Venden, the son of Norwegian-born parents, and Gerharda Forshaum, who emigrated from Norway in 1908, Oljanna was hence the daughter of a kind of “mixed marriage” of Old World and New, as was her art. Her talents ranged from sewing, embroidering and knitting to painting, creating miniature troll figures, and rosemaling. Considering her body of work, it is easy to see that creating such objects was a means through which Oljanna constructed and shared her heritage. Moreover, Oljanna joined a community of Norwegian-Americans who shared her interest in a common ethnicity. In this way, the dress makes known the ways in which Oljanna identified as a member of an ethnic group. At the same time, the dress reveals how Oljanna stood apart from other rosemalers. When Oljanna rosemaled the dress, she adapted folk art to fashion in a way that was uniquely her own. Viewed in this framework, the rosemal dress reveals how creative traditional expressions of heritage can be.

For Nancy Vogel—a non-Norwegian in a Norwegian community—this dress represents her desire to merge a traditional ethnic sensibility with 1960s fashion. Uncomplicated and thus ideal for mass production, the A-line mini dress was a staple of ready-to-wear. But since the rosemaled dress was made, rather than mass produced, it falls outside of the ready-to-wear category. Surely, Nancy could have asked Oljanna to embroider a bought dress, but the fact that Nancy commissioned Oljanna to construct *and* embroider the dress suggests that Nancy preferred the whole creation.

The popular A-line mini dress was also a symbol of style that signaled a new feminine ideal, which assumed a young and economically independent woman for whom fashion was pleasurable, but time was limited. This subject was active, employed, and desired male attention. For such a woman, the A-line mini dress represented a new feminine ideal defined apart from motherhood. By 1970, Nancy was a 38-year-old mother and wife, placing her

outside this new ideal. But as a working woman, Nancy fit squarely within the model. Seeing the rosemaled dress and its wearer as neither wholly aligned nor entirely separate from the 1960s notion of femininity shows how flexible the category was. Finally, considering Nancy's involvement in the community, marked by dedication to a Norwegian heritage that was not her own, it is easy to imagine that she valued Mount Horeb, the people of it, and her place in it. Within that context, the dress can be seen as one of many efforts Nancy made to belong.

Painting on Masonite



Painting on Masonite
Norwegian-American
Oljanna Cunneen, 1969
Masonite, paint
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2015.021.0008

Mount Horeb knew Oljanna Cunneen for her rosemaling and trolls. Created for her private display, this piece unites these trademarks from her artistic repertoire. The large, brightly rosemaled pattern frames a snowcapped scene as a troll couple sits beside a small fire. Although surrounded by the cold, the scene evokes inviting warmth as a teapot is lovingly heated. Cunneen painted her signature on the woman's skirt beside the tankard and oranges. After her passing in 1988, Cunneen's family donated this piece in her memory to Little Norway where she served as a guide and entertained countless visitors.



Oljanna Cunneen poses with her troll sign, 1987. MHAHS
8×10.00501.

PART IV

Trolltown, USA

Recent artists far removed from immigrant roots have served both commerce and community by playfully constructing and then marketing locally-endorsed ethnic symbols.

Inspired by the popularity of Little Norway and the Song of Norway and the success of such nearby culture-centered communities as New Glarus and Stoughton, a core group of local artists have successfully used Norwegian imagery and icons to crystallize Mount Horeb's already-simmering identity as a Scandinavian stronghold.

Business Sign (Painting on Masonite)



Business Sign (Painting on Masonite)
Norwegian-American
Artist unknown, c.1965
Masonite, paint
Gift of Dr. & Mrs. Abner Kjervik
MHAHS 1988.012.0001

This rosemaled sign was part of early efforts to promote Norwegian heritage in Mount Horeb. The unusually painted Gothic lettering on the sign reads, “Dr. Kjervik Sykehus.” Dr. Abner Kjervik, whose father emigrated from Norway in 1900, had offices in the Buckner Hospital building on East Main Street through the early 1970s. The Norwegian word “Sykehus” translates to “sick-house,” or hospital—an inside joke for those who knew the Norwegian language.

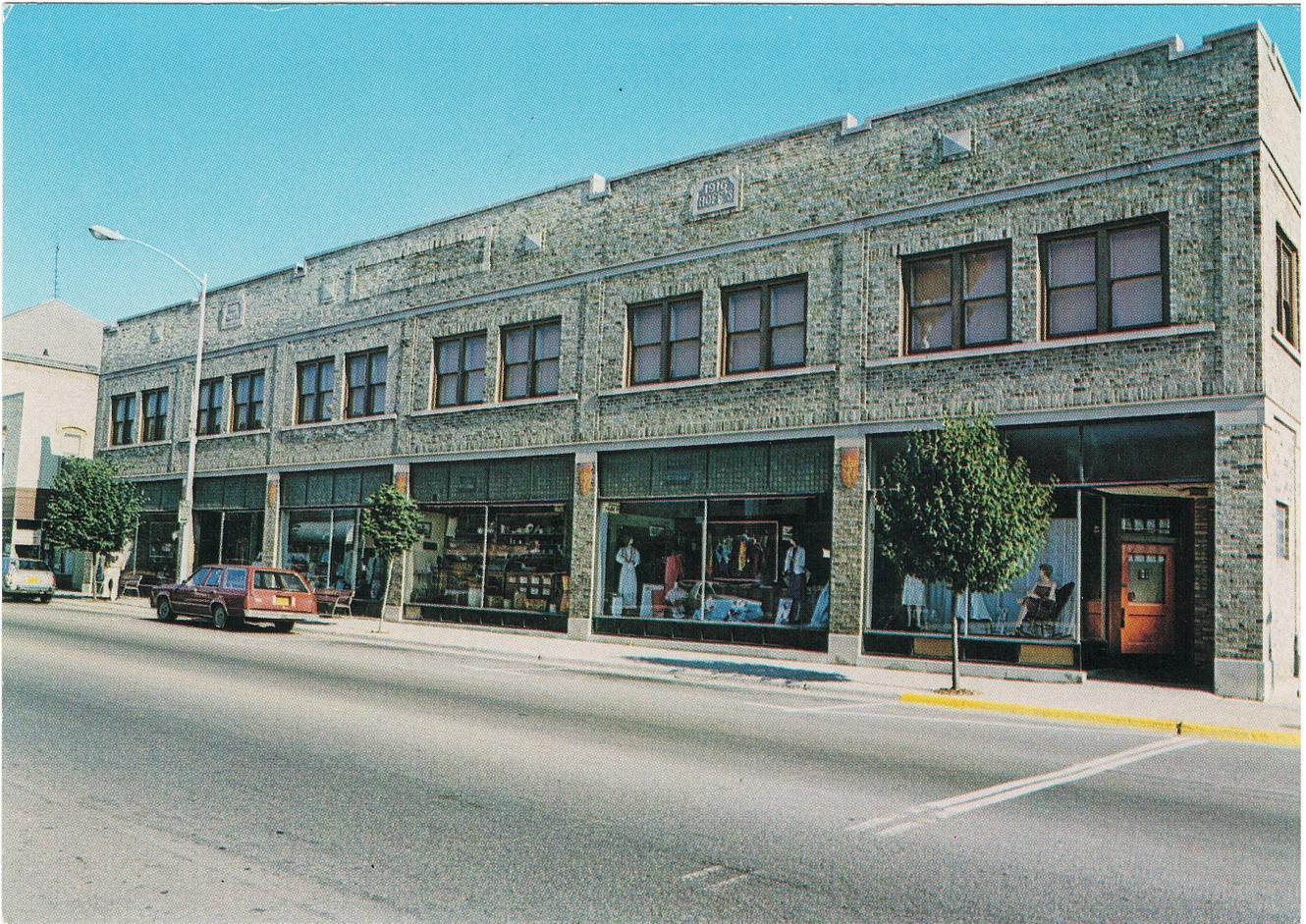
Business Sign (Painting on Wood)



Business Sign (Painting on Wood)
Norwegian-American
Attributed to Lyle Johnson, c.1970
Wood, paint
Gift of Hoff Mall Antiques
MHAHS 1989.059.0001

Lyle Johnson, the owner of Hoff's Store, painted this sign in about 1970. Along with three matching signs, it hung on the front of his business at 101 East Main Street from the 1960s to about 1985 when the building was remodeled. This coincides with the time period when Mount Horeb businesses began promoting a Norwegian theme in its outdoor décor. Similar to Ruste's chest presented earlier, Hoff's shield-shaped sign is inspired by the Norwegian Coat of Arms and is a popular motif used in traditional Norwegian art. The coat of arms motif can be found

in Mount Horeb today, such as on the side of the Mount Horeb Telephone Company building at Main and Second streets.



Hoff's General Store in the 1970s; note the shield-shaped signs on storefront. MHAHS Postcard Collection.

Troll Doll



Troll Doll
Norwegian-American
Oljanna Cunneen, c.1960
Fabric, copper wire, polymer clay, wood, fur, other on hand materials
Little Norway Collection, Gift of Scott & Jennifer Winner
MHAHS 2015.021.0009

Oljanna Cunneen was making trolls long before the creation of Mount Horeb’s “Trollway.” Already an avid painter, storyteller, seamstress, and rosemalar, Cunneen used doll-making as one of many art forms to celebrate her Norwegian heritage. Cunneen’s figures were typically made using a copper wire armature that was padded to create the body and limbs; she then molded and painted the clay hands and faces. This doll is an example of her earliest work.

Troll Diorama



Troll Diorama
Norwegian-American
Oljanna Cunneen, 1982
Fabric, copper wire, polymer clay, wood, fur, other on hand materials
Gift of Richard & Mary Wells
MHAHS 2015.063.0002

Echoing her community-minded and outgoing personality, Cunneen frequently made dolls inspired by friends and community members. This couple depicts Cunneen's friends who enjoyed working outdoors on their property. The couple also owned the electrical company from which she acquired her copper wire. Note the evolution of her trolls: the softer facial features and the playfulness evident in the diorama reflect the enjoyment she had making and presenting these characters.



Oljanna Cunneen posing with two of her creations in 1987. MHAHS 8×10.00412.

Troll Diorama



Troll Diorama
Norwegian-American
Oljanna Cunneen, 1985
Fabric, copper wire, polymer clay, wood, fur, other on hand materials
Gift of Henry Eckle
MHAHS 1996.014.0001

For many years this large troll, known as “Knute, Guardian of the Girls,” watched over the tellers at the State Bank of Mount Horeb. This was one of the largest of Cunneen’s troll diorama’s and manifests the same playfulness and adherence to traditional troll legends so common in Cunneen’s work—note the bird’s nest in this guardian’s hair. When the highway was rerouted around Mount Horeb in the mid-1980s, a loss of tourist traffic

through the community was expected. Village leaders began a deliberate attempt to attract visitors to the downtown area. The “Trollway” was born and Cunneen found a ready market for her three-dimensional creatures in the many individuals who sought out her work.

Carved Troll

Carved Troll

American

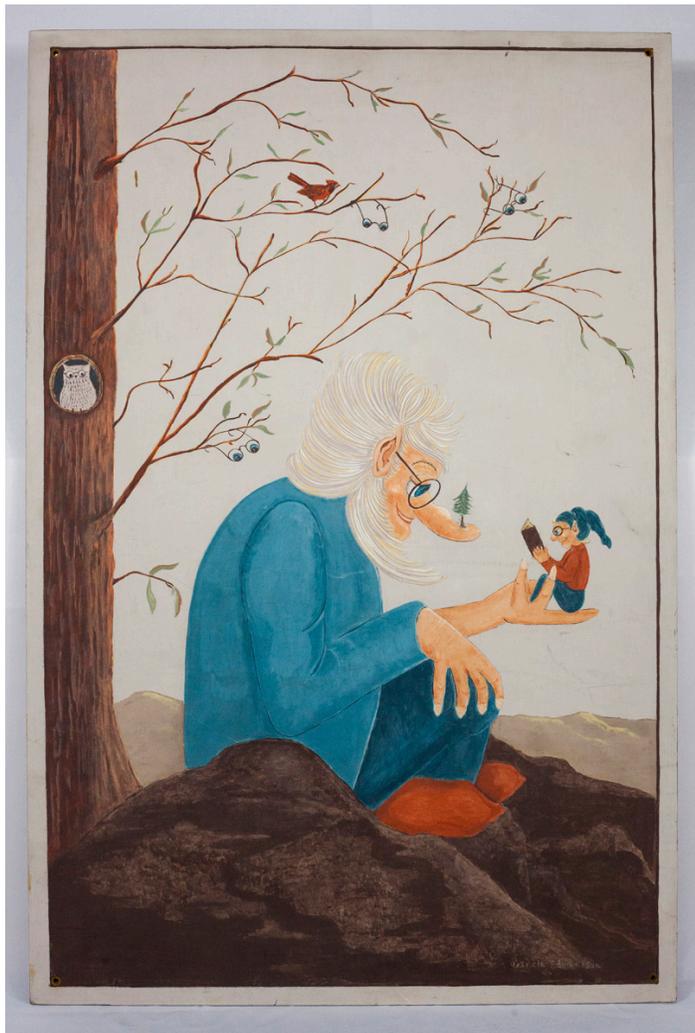
Mike Feeney, c. 1990

Wood (log)

Loan, Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce

Carved from a single tree stump, the “Treasure Chest Troll” created by sculptor Mike Feeney represents the evolution of Mount Horeb’s troll theme. Beginning with his first Main Street creation in 1988, Feeney captures the relationship between the uncharacteristically friendly trolls introduced by earlier Mount Horeb artists and this mythical creature’s traditional connection with the natural world. Feeney’s trolls, some of which are based on actual town residents, harbor distinct and unique personalities.

Optometry Business Sign (Painting on Wood)

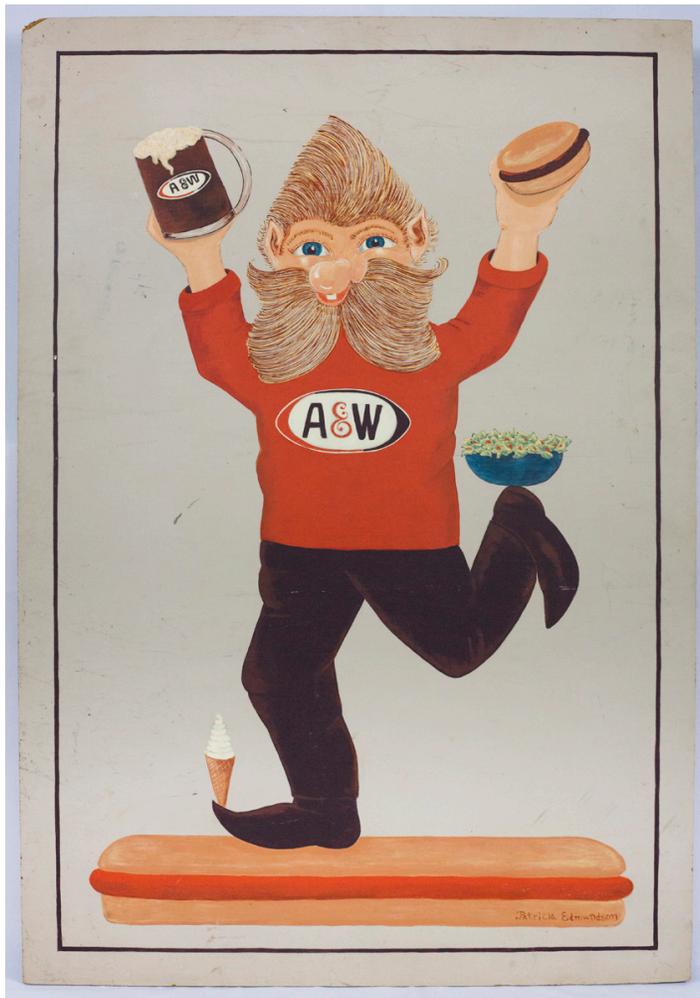


Optometry Business Sign (Painting on Wood)
Norwegian-American
Patricia Edmundson, c.1984
Plywood, paint
Gift of Duane Sutter
MHAHS 2009.029.0001

This sign exemplifies many that were created to promote the Mt. Horeb “Trollway.” Patricia Edmundson decorated a simple piece of plywood to advertise the office of optometrists Guenveur & Sutter. A white, wispy-haired

troll sits on the ground wearing wire-rimmed glasses. The tree growing out of his long nose is a common troll art motif. A girl sporting glasses reads a book on his outstretched left hand. Eyeglasses hang from a tree's branches and a spectacled owl peeps out of its hollow. A whimsical way to sell vision improvement, the sign demonstrates the business community's commitment to its Norwegian branding.

A&W Business Sign (Painting on Plywood)



A&W Business Sign (Painting on Plywood)
Norwegian-American
Patricia Edmundson, c.1984
Plywood, paint
Gift of Ralph & Darlene Richardson
MHAHS 1999.098.0014

Trolls in Pat Edmundson's signs, like this one for the local A&W Restaurant, were humorous reminders of the community's Norwegian identity. In this sign, a troll balances on a long horizontal hot dog with a vanilla ice cream cone precariously perched at the tip of his pointed shoe. A bowl of salad is poised on the other upturned foot and a burger and a glass of A&W Root Beer rest in his hands. The troll sports the iconic orange A&W sweater. Edmundson here links a national brand of fast food with her unique, magical, fun-loving figures.

Promotional Sign (Painting on Plywood)



Promotional Sign (Painting on Plywood)

Norwegian-American

Oljanna Cunneen, c. 1984

Plywood, paint

Gift of Mount Horeb Area Chamber of Commerce

MHAHS 2003.116.0003

Who best to greet visitors to the “Troll Capital of the World” than a smiling, one-toothed, white haired troll? Painted on plywood by Oljanna Cunneen, this double sided, four toed troll served as a promotional piece along Main Street. With a crowned girl tucked into his hair and a bird perched on his hands, this dapper fellow reflects

both Cunneen's sense of humor and her tireless promotion of the area's Norwegian-American identity. More than a dozen of these plywood cutouts once adorned Mount Horeb's Main Street, dubbed the "Trollway" in the mid- to late-1980s.

Object Study: Troll Business Signs

By Megan Roessler

These paintings are a few examples of many created to promote the Mount Horeb “Trollway.” During the 1980s, when construction of the bypass Highway 151 began, Mount Horeb residents and local artists like Patricia Edmundson, Lyle Johnson, and Oljanna Cunneen knew that they had to do something to make sure that their historic town would not be forgotten. These artists wanted to bring joy to Mount Horeb to keep local residents happy, while also bringing the joy of Mount Horeb to tourists. The Chamber of Commerce in Mount Horeb decided to bring out the town’s Norwegian-American legacy to bring tourism. Mount Horeb would now be called the “Troll Capital of the World,” with Main Street becoming the “Trollway.”

You can find trolls, and other Norwegian elements all throughout Mount Horeb as depicted on these signs. Trolls, rosemaling, and the Norwegian language itself often make appearances around Mount Horeb. The personalization of the trolls to each business is what makes these trolls special. You have a troll dressed in traditional A&W clothing, a troll wearing glasses, and many other trolls that make Mount Horeb an extraordinary example of the blending of Norwegian-American culture. There is traditional Norwegian imagery throughout the town as well, such as rosemaling and the Norwegian crest so there is some seriousness to being a Norwegian-American town. The trolls are adaptations of their environment and welcome visitors with a warm welcome that is sure to put a smile on your face that one just has to stop and see.

Roadside attractions are a never-ending tradition throughout the United States. Small towns, like Mount Horeb, have been able to remain big names because of roadside attractions. This is great for small towns as it is a way to gain publicity and even economic benefits, allowing them to sometimes build and expand as Mount Horeb has done. Roadside attractions tend to be humors to draw people into see the ridiculousness that they just cannot miss on their way from town to town. However, these very same humorous attractions are also commemorative pieces to the local history, and folklore. In this case, the Mount Horeb trolls commemorate the local history and folklore of its Norwegian history.

It would take talented artists like the ones mentioned earlier to make the Mount Horeb trolls and other Norwegian identities successful. These caricatures of everyday life of locals in Mount Horeb were captured for eternity in these signs and paintings. The creativity is evident in all of the signs, from eyeglasses to hot dogs to the sykehus, local Mount Horeb artists more than succeeded in painting a legacy of Mount Horeb.

Trollway Banner



Trollway Banner
American
Designed by Holly (Van Camp) Stoenner, c. 1990s
Printed on Canvas
MHAHS 1997.007.0001

This banner, designed by Holly Van Camp and printed on red canvas, was the first of its kind to specifically promote the troll theme in Mount Horeb. Hung from light poles along Main Street, the stylized trolls beckoned visitors to explore the “Trollway.” The last artifact of the exhibit, it is an eye-catching exemplification of the area’s distilled ethnicity. And current local marketing strategies indicate the troll is here to stay. In fact, in August 2016, the Mount Horeb Chamber of Commerce filed for a U.S. federal trademark for the moniker, “Troll Capital of the World.” Trunk to trolls—oh, what a long way we’ve come!

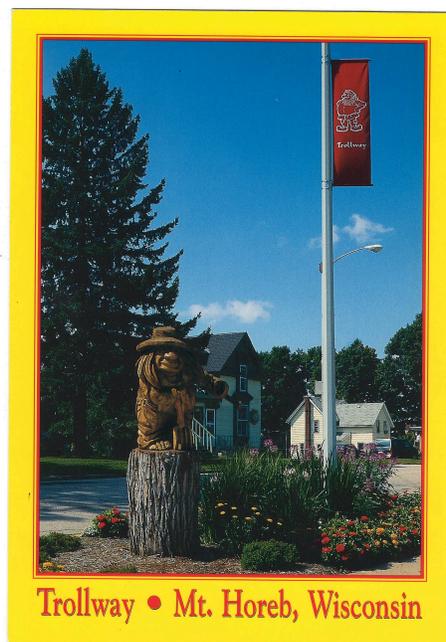
PART V

Guardian Spirits

Today's vibrant and unique citizenry—and an equally vivacious artistic atmosphere and legacy—have emerged from an astounding conglomeration of cultures and ethnicities. To those who know the area's diverse immigrant origins, the iconic trolls of Mount Horeb seem to tell just one of many cultural tales.

Yet this artistic examination through time illustrates that these grumpy figures are actually the end result of a complicated and rich multi-ethnic conversation.

In an era when fast-paced urban development dooms many small towns to mainstream, cookie cutter suburban status, Mount Horeb's trolls stand as protective sentinels and tangible reminders of the persistent importance of ethnic identities to the people of Southwestern Dane County.



Promotional postcard from the 1990s. MHAHS Postcard Collection.