

Stories in Silk: The Artistry of Patricia Hable Zastrow

From 1995-2000, Sun Prairie based artist Patricia Hable Zastrow hand-dyed and constructed a series of 24 silk vests, each adorned with one of Aesop's fables and illustrations, bringing ancient stories to life through fashion. Visit the Museum's featured exhibit, open now through January 21, 2026.



New Research Materials Online

The [SPHLM Collections Database](#) now includes “[Featured Maps](#)” - plat maps dating from 1873 to 1926 that have been meticulously indexed by Museum volunteers to help researchers. The Museum has also partnered with Recollection Wisconsin to share 65 manuscripts online. Visit the [SPHLM landing page](#) to view 1,000+ pages of historical Sun Prairie petitions, phone books, and more.



“Sun Prairie Scandals” Nominated for Award

The Museum rounded out its summer speaker series with a thrilling collection of scandalous stories from Sun Prairie's past, researched by volunteers and staff. This event has been nominated for Outstanding Program at the Wisconsin Parks and Recreation Association Awards with results announced in February 2026.



A Fresh Take on Mission, Vision, and Values

From June through September of 2025, Museum staff, volunteers, and Board members worked together to develop a newly focused mission, vision, and values. Stop by the museum to learn more about this change!

Mission: We connect Sun Prairie with its history, cultivating community pride and shared knowledge.

Volunteer Spotlight

Ron Tobia

Do you ever wonder who has owned the land where you live? Or how land came to be “owned” in the first place? The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum’s (SPHLM) collections include “land abstracts” that capture the history of land ownership dating to the assignment of the land by the US government to private owners. Abstracts are summaries of “title searches” on properties that ensure that the seller of the property has legal ownership and rights to sell the land.

The US Government established the Public Land Survey System to divide unsettled land into townships and sections. The Sun Prairie area was first surveyed in 1834[1] and then offered for sale by the Government Land Office in the early 1840s. All property in the Sun Prairie area can be traced to the original owners who obtained “land patents” for \$1.25 per acre. These original land patent documents along with the land surveys are available online at the Bureau of Land Management website.[2]

Original land patent owners purchased the land in large parcels, with each patent ranging from 40 to 160 acres. These parcels were subdivided and sold. Many of the abstracts in the SPHLM collection trace this subdivision history.

The abstracts also contain personal details of landholders over the years. They contain amounts and dates of early business transactions for land which were often opened and closed within a few years.

Some abstracts include the legal will of the landholders, detailing the division of land and other belongings. There are also plenty of tax, business and marital disputes that end up as legal judgements and liens against the property owner.

Names and holdings of notable individuals in Sun Prairie history are sprinkled throughout the abstracts collection. Jones, Bird, Angell, Flint, O’Keeffe and Williamson can be recognized for the streets and parks that carry their names.

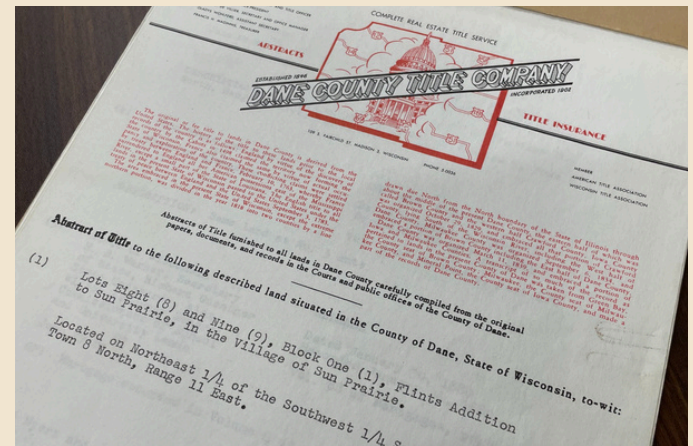
If interested in the history of your property, type the address or street name into the SPHLM database[3] within quotes to determine if a related abstract is part of the collection. In many cases, abstracts associated with addresses close to the one you’re interested in will have the same early patent and landholding records. Submit a Research Request Form[4] to view an abstract at the Museum.

[1] [Survey Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

[2] [Search - BLM GLO Records](#)

[3] [SPHLM Collections Database](#)

[4] [SPHLM Conduct Historical Research](#)



Thanks to volunteers like Ron, more than 450 abstracts can now be searched by street address.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Georgia O’Keeffe Tea

Celebrate O’Keeffe’s 138th birthday with a free tea at the **Crosse House**! Register at crossehouse.com/events
Sat., November 15th at 2:00pm

Artist Talk:

Patricia Hable Zastrow

Enjoy a morning talk with our featured artist, including clips from a 1996 interview.
Sat., November 22nd at 10:00am

Santa Saturday and Fire & Lights Parade

Kick off the holidays with a festive craft (11am-4pm), meeting Santa (12-2pm), and the annual parade at 6pm.
Sat., November 29th

Special thanks to volunteer Cassie Bohn for helping make this newsletter possible!