# Badger Ordnance News

Autumn 2022

**Badger History Group Inc.**
**POB 113**
**Prairie du Sac WI 53578**

**Affiliate of the**
**Wisconsin Historical Society**

**Member of Sauk Prairie Area**
**Chamber of Commerce**

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**608-448-0244**
**www.badgerordnancehistory.org**

**Museum off US Hwy 12**
**Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area**
**(SPSRA is the property of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)**

*The mission of the Badger History Group, Inc. is to collect, preserve and share the histories of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant and the Sauk prairie. We help each other learn from the past, engage with the present, and guide our shared future..*

## Board of Directors

Orie Eilertson, Merrimac
Verlyn Mueller, Prairie du Sac
Michael Mossman, Leland
Sandy Stiemke, Sauk City
Heather Sonntag, Madison
Dan Halling, Prairie du Sac
Frank Wolf, Mazomanie

Newsletter Editor
Michael Goc

**MUSEUM OPEN AGAIN**

**TUESDAY- SATURDAY 10:00-4:00**
**MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING OPTIONAL**

# Lecture Series Begins

## September 8, 2022, 7:00 PM
## At the museum and on Zoom
## Carolyn Dallmann

*Working at the Badger Lab: An Employee's Perspective, 1966-2014.*

Carolyn was 18 years old when she applied for a laboratory technician job at BAAP in 1966. With both photographs and stories she will recall her childhood on a local family farm, the work she conducted to test propellants and contaminants, and her thoughts about Badger and the 1960s antiwar movement.

Carolyn worked at BAAP for over 30 years, until the plant closed in 2014. She holds a B.A. in Mathematics, is a certified systems and process auditor, and author. Her story of work at BAAP appeared in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, and her book *North Freedom* was published in April 2022.

# A New Season of Lectures

**Lectures are on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00-8:00 PM at the Museum and on Zoom**

**September 8, 2022**

Carolyn Dallmann
*Working at the Badger Lab: An Employee's Perspective, 1966-2014.* See Page One

**October 13, 2022**

Frank Wolf
*BAAP Rocket Propellant Production*

Frank will describe how rocket propellant grains were manufactured at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, using pictures and descriptions of the many buildings, equipment, control systems, personnel, and safety requirements. And a few stories.
BHG board member Frank Wolf is a 56-year veteran of the energetic material industry, including 31 at Badger as a chemical engineer and Chief Modernization Engineer. He is a font of knowledge on the production processes of the Plant, and on the history of nearby Mazomanie.

**November 10, 2022**

Matt Carter
*Wisconsin WWII German POW Camps*
During World War II, more than 400,000 European prisoners of war were housed in U.S. communities, where they worked to offset the wartime labor shortage.

There were many in Wisconsin, including nearby Camp Reedsburg. Come learn about this role our area played on the home front! Matt Carter is executive director of the Dakota County Historical Society in South St. Paul, MN. His interest in POW camps started when he grew up in Reedsburg and learned of the camp there. Matt has a B.S. in Public History and an M.S in History, and lives in Menomonie, WI with his wife, two children and their dog.

**December 8, 2022**

Scott Lothes
*The History and Development of South-Central Wisconsin's Railroads*

**January 12, 2023**

Mike Mossman and Heather Sonntag
*Hidden Gems: Excerpts of Interviews from the BHG Digitization Project*

**February 9, 2023**

Heather Sonntag
*Woods Around the Plant: From Logs and Lumber to Orchards and Plantations*

**March 9, 2023**

Verlyn Mueller
*Who Were Those People Who Lived Here Before March 1, 1942?*

**April 13, 2023**

Dan Halling
*Badger's Champion Trees*

**May 11, 2023**

Michael Goc
*From Sword to Plowshare: The 1970s at BAAP*

# From the Archivist

**Verlyn Mueller**

Ever wondered if there were ghosts at the site of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant? Based on two different stories I heard from different visitors to the museum in July, I think I can safely say maybe.

A family told me that on a previous visit they were at the Main Gate and heard footsteps but no one was there, and then the fence rattled and there was no wind.

A couple visited the museum a week after the above family and told me that they had ridden their bikes on the trail and on some of the roads. This prompted me to ask if they had encountered any ghosts and their immediate response was yes. They were riding the Great Sauk State Trail when they reached an area that was unexplainably uncomfortable.

I am not surprised by these experiences. From what I have learned from other people's experiences in locations other than BAAP, from what I have read, and some TV programs relating paranormal experiences in other locations, I believe that these two incidents are real, not just imagination. There have been deaths on site of people working at BAAP. From my understanding it is possible that these people are still there.

So, if you are hiking, riding your bike, or just driving the roads and have one of these unexplainable experiences I would like to hear about it. I would like to know where it occurred, what was the experience, time of day, anything you can tell me about it. I want to document it as best I can and let's see if BAAP has some ghosts.

**No ghosts were spotted at the Annual Meeting, but Jeff Albers and Sandy Stiemke were there to supervise Verlyn as he put out cups for the coffee to go with the cookies served.**

# Annual Meeting

Out annual meeting was held on July 24 with attendance larger than it has been in recent years. In person attendees included all board members plus Jeff Albers, Donna Albers, Carolyn Dallmann and her husband David, Jack and Sue Heinzelman, and Lisa Hartman. Joel Green and Karl Gutknecht Zoomed in. The meeting ended with a lively discussion about the agenda item concerning the county's interest in building a Visitor Center and reviewing a design that Verlyn has worked on for several years.

# A Tree and A Tour

Our board member Dan Halling and his faithful, four-legged assistant Charlie spent last February, March and April walking the entire Badger property in search of the largest trees they could find. They measured the largest trees by circumference at breast height and recorded 117 "champions." The team is pictured with the largest cottonwood on the premises. It is 22 feet around. The largest eastern cottonwood on the WDNR list of Wisconsin champions measures 24.5 feet. Dan will tell us the story of this champion and others he has found in April, 2023.

# MAMGA Tour

No politics here, just gardeners. On July 13th, Board members Heather Sonntag, Mike Mossman and Frank Wolf co-led a three-hour tour on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant for the Madison Area Master Gardeners Association (MAMGA). Originally arranged through a fellow Badger stakeholder, the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance, the tour was suspended first because of Covid concerns and then the Alliance's extended search for an Executive Director. BHG stepped up to organize and offer the tour this summer, with an emphasis on history. It was a total hit!

We gathered with the 34 MAMGA members at the museum, then headed out on a Lamers school bus, stopping at three points of interest -- the Ho-Chunk Nation's Sacred Earth Reservation, *Maa Wákąčąk,* to learn about their active prairie restoration and acknowledge the changes that have taken place on the land over the past 2 centuries; the moraine overlook to hear about geological history of the surrounding landscape and the ice age formation of the Badger moraine and outwash plain; and Kern's Corner and Pioneer Cemetery.

At all places attendees also learned about the settler-colonial and subsequent eviction histories, the formation and operation of the plant during the war eras, contamination and cleanup efforts, deconstruction, and implementation of the Re-Use Plan with Badger partners. Questions and discussion about the overlapping histories were incessant on all topics. Frank's detailed description of smokeless propellant production gave a sense of which buildings were where on the prairie, and his personal experience was particularly intriguing to the group.

The tour ended at the Museum, and participants were all invited to peruse the exhibits. Thanks to Randy Poelma for arranging waivers to get us onto *Maa Wakacak* land, to SPCA's Charlie Luthin for turning the MAMGA folks on to Badger at their 2020 annual meeting, and to folks who attended from US DFRC and the SPCA, especially new Executive Director Marla Steele.