After a month of diligent preparation and hard work, the new museum exhibit has opened in time for the centennial celebration. Our exhibit “Wedded Bliss: Bridal Wear through the Ages” showcases bridal attire from the past to the present.

More than 40 dresses are on display, along with stories of their history and wearer. Photographs of the bride wearing the dress on her wedding day are included in many displays. Accessories such as purses, jewelry, and -- in one case -- pressed flowers from the bridal bouquet accompany several of the dresses.

The dresses range from the 1870s through the 1980s. The oldest dress in the collection belonged to the daughter of one of our town’s earliest settlers, and was worn for her 1873 wedding.

Many turn of the century dresses also are on display. Fashions range from high-necked, full-sleeved Victorian gowns to sleek and short dresses worn in the 1920s and early 1930s. Some of the dress displays include copies of the bride and groom’s marriage license. Of special interest are the wedding dresses worn during the war. Fabrics were in short supply at that time, which is reflected in the short sleeves and noticeable lack of embellishment on wartime wedding dresses.

Curator Roger Breman says, “A wedding dress is such an intensely personal artifact. It adds immediacy and a poignant human dimension to history.”

Special thanks go to Becky Ruiz and Sharla Tant for their work in acquiring the gowns and to Leslie Simone and our tireless band of volunteers.

New Artifacts

Some intriguing new artifacts have been added to the museum’s collection. The estate of Randall Frank donated part of his Civil War collection to the museum. New additions include an officer’s uniform jacket and several letters written by soldiers during the war.

Beth McHenry presented us with her collection of Barbie dolls. Original cases, outfits, and accessories were included with her dolls, which were manufactured from 1959 to 1965. They provide exquisite examples of high fashion during those years.

Four heirloom quilts were found by a Historical Society renovator during work on an 1800s house. Packed in an antique trunk, the quilts are in remarkably good shape, especially because they seem to be untouched during the home’s 30-year vacancy.

Next Month’s Issue…

Tour the Genealogy Library and meet the staff!