



New book revives legend of Dan Patch

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The first book in half a century on famed local pacer horse Dan Patch is set to hit bookstore shelves June 21.

The Great Dan Patch and the Remarkable Mr. Savage is written by St. Paul author Tim Brady, a former writer for Twin Cities Public Television and currently a writer for the History Channel Magazine.

Brady said his aim was to paint a picture of the pacer horses career, the life of owner Marion W. Savage, the history of harness racing, and turn-of-the-century American life.

If its equine minutiae youre craving, though, Bradys book might not be the ticket. It may be apparent to horse lovers that Im not a horse expert, said Brady, whose bailiwick, understandably, is history.

Brady did much of the research for the book at the Heritage Room in the Savage Library. Local historians also played a role in the research process as Brady consulted members of the Dan Patch Historical Society for source material.

One source of information Brady found particularly useful was the catalog put out by Savages livestock feed operation, the International Stock Food Co. The annual catalogs featured biographical information on the horse.

Savage purchased Dan Patch in 1902 for \$60,000. Brady likened Savages acquisition of Dan Patch to Babe Ruth getting traded from the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees: Dan Patch, like Ruth, was already famous, but achieved greater fame after the transition.

By the time Dan Patch had arrived in Minnesota he had a well-established career, Brady said. Once he arrived in Minnesota he never really raced competitively against other horses he raced against the clock in timed exhibitions.

Under Savages ownership Dan Patch went on to set the world record for the mile, clocking in at 1 minute, 55 seconds, at the Minnesota State Fair race track in September 1906.

One topic that arose, almost from day one of Bradys research, was the burial location of Dan Patch. According to Brady, the exact burial spot is, and will remain, a mystery.

By Bradys account, heres how the plot unfolded: Dan Patch and Savage died within 32 hours of each other in July 1916. Savage had originally given instructions for Dan Patch to be stuffed, but

someone in the Savage family, probably his wife, decided to forego the stuffing and had the horse buried beneath an oak tree by a pair of trainers.

Those two guys took the knowledge of his exact burial [site] to the grave, Brady said.

Book signing

Brady will be signing copies of *The Great Dan Patch* and *the Remarkable Mr. Savage* on June 24 at Dan Patch Days in Savage. You will be able to purchase a copy of the book at the event.

The book can also be bought on the Dan Patch Historical Societys Web site, www.danpatch.com. A portion of the profits from the books sales will benefit the historical society.

The book, being published by Minneapolis-based Nodin Press, comes with a DVD featuring old film clips of Dan Patch in action.

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