

SAVAGE Pacer

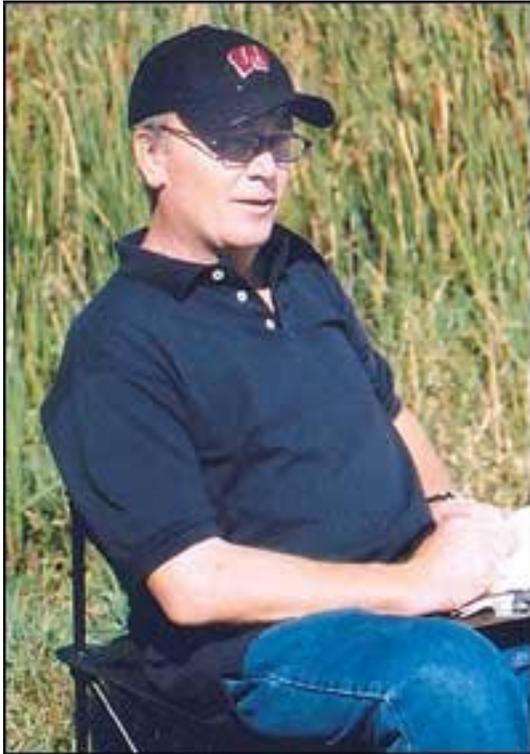


Author strives to find true story behind legends

By Tom Schardin, Staff Writer, Savage Pacer, Friday, August 05, 2005

(The process for the book to be written, was championed by the Dan Patch Historical Society, which is not mentioned in this article.)

Dan Patch's name is synonymous with the city of Savage and now St. Paul author Tim Brady is writing a book that digs deeper into the pacer's legend.



"Turning Dan Patch into a flesh and blood creature again has been an interesting challenge." --Author Tim Brady

The 300-page book is more than halfway complete and will be released next year, just before the city's Dan Patch Days and in time for the 100th anniversary of Dan Patch's world record of 1:55 at the Minnesota State Fair.

"There are not a lot of books about Dan Patch," said Brady, an author and freelance writer for more than 20 years. "The most recent one is about 50 years ago. There have been many articles written about Dan Patch, but not many books.

"This book will be a history – a life and times of the famous pacer," continued Brady. "The book is aimed to capture the story of the horse's career, the story of his owner Marion Savage, the story of the harness racing world at the time and the story of turn-of-the-century life and the culture and why Dan Patch was such a prominent figure in it."

Dan Patch was born in 1896 and Marion W. Savage bought the pacer in 1902 for the sum of \$60,000. Savage established his roots in Minnesota in 1886 and soon after became the center of "expanding dairy, farming and livestock industries." He also founded the International Stock Food Co. in Minneapolis.

Mr. Savage bought 750 acres of farmland along the Minnesota River in what was known then as Glendale Township. It was there he built the International Stock Food Farm, an elaborate horse farm nicknamed the Taj Mahal, and two races tracks – one outdoor and one indoor. Then he started buying horses, including Dan Patch.

Brady's goal in the book is to dig deeper into the life of Mr. Savage and Dan Patch.

"A lot of people know the name Dan Patch," said Brady. "But very few know many of the details. The story is 100 years old now. That's a long time to have anything but a passing recollection of the horse.

"Right now, Dan Patch is a name and a marketing product," continued Brady. "He has gone into the collectible and the antique area. There's where a lot of knowledge of him comes from. Turning Dan Patch into a flesh and blood creature again has been an interesting challenge."

Brady said he's spent extensive time at the Scott County Historical Society, the Savage Library and the Minnesota Historical Society researching the legend of Dan Patch, as well as Mr. Savage.

"It hasn't been easy," he said. "Primarily, there are a number of layers that need to be peeled back to get to the real story. I'm trying to unveil the real circumstances of the horse and owner's lives. That's been the most difficult aspect in the research.

"There is not a lot of physical evidence left of Dan Patch," continued Brady. "It's all pretty much gone. The farm is gone. The old Savage home, which was in Bloomington, is now a Masonic home. There is not much left of Dan Patch's life or Savage's presence either. There's not a lot to see out there, so that's the goal of this book – to bring them back to life."

The book is being published by Nodin Press in Minneapolis. Owner Norton Stillman asked Brady to write the book, which he started more than a year ago.

Brady is no stranger to Minnesota history. He was a former public broadcast writer for Twin Cities Public Television. He was a writer/researcher on the Peabody Award-winning series called "Liberty, The American Revolution."

His most recent series, "Minnesota, A History of the Land," is a story of the "people and landscapes of Minnesota."

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