



Historic Argyle is excited to announce the 30-year anniversary edition to Argyle's cherished history book, *Second to None*. Originally printed in 1994 for Argyle's sesquicentennial celebration, this book was the culmination of years of meticulous research and interviews of local residents by author Dennis Dillon.

The title *Second to None* was inspired by one of Argyle's earliest residents, D.B. Ellsworth. In 1848, Ellsworth built a combination general store and dwelling near the Pecatonica River and became a vigorous promoter of the new town. A letter he wrote on December 14<sup>th</sup> of that year, now stored in the archives of the Darlington library, beautifully extols the region's potential. In elegant script, Ellsworth predicted that Argyle would one day be "second to none" in the state.

The book is a story of people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs who came together to build an enduring community grounded in a strong belief in themselves and the possibilities of a better future. Dennis was uniquely suited to this task. Growing up in Argyle, his parents were actively involved in village life and he knew virtually every family, business and farm in the area.

In high school, Dennis participated in forensics and music, teaching himself how to play the harp, and served as the class president of Argyle High School's class of 1961. After high school, he attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he majored in history. He then pursued a Master of Divinity degree at Illif School of Theology, adjacent to the University of Denver.

Following his graduation, Dennis served as a pastor in Spencer and Rossie, Iowa for seven years before embarking on a different path. He spent the next seven years traveling across country, playing harp and piano at various hotels, including three years at the historic Kahler Hotel in Rochester, MN. He later obtained a certificate in piano tuning and repair from Grayson County College in Sherman, Texas, and traveled frequently throughout Mexico, tuning pianos along the way. In declining health, Dennis returned to Argyle to help write the history of the village. He regarded *Second to None* as his crowning achievement, describing it as a "story of people, of visionary pioneers, hard-working tradesmen and merchants, dedicated preachers, priests, teachers and doctors and all others who shaped Argyle's character and future". Sadly, Dennis passed away in November, 1993, months before Argyle's big 150<sup>th</sup> celebration in August, 1994.

While Argyle's history shares similarities with other towns, it also possesses a unique charm. Nestled in Wisconsin's driftless area, with its picturesque Pecatonica valley, Argyle's history spans from the lead mining days to a thriving dairy and cheese industry. The diverse cast of characters, each contributing to the community over the years has shaped its distinctive identity.

As we reviewed *Second to None*, chapter by chapter and line by line, we often paused in awe of Dennis's achievements. We aim to honor his legacy and the town's rich history with this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, hoping to inspire future generations to continue preserving and celebrating Argyle's heritage. The 30-year anniversary edition will be made available for purchase and distribution toward the end of this year.

**Historic Argyle is seeking new members. If you are passionate about preserving the rich heritage of Argyle for future generations, please think about joining our dedicated group.**

**You can reach out to any current member or explore our website at [www.historicargyle.org](http://www.historicargyle.org). Your commitment to our community is fundamental to our mission.**



The Saxton House requires a new roof, with matching funds available toward the total expense of \$12,000.00. Your donation would greatly support the necessary renovations of Fighting Bob La Follette's boyhood residence. Donations can be made through the QR code on the back page or they can be sent to Historic Argyle, Inc. at P.O. Box 101, Argyle, WI, 53504. We are a current and valid non-profit 501(c)3 organization in accordance with the standards and regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



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**Argyle, WI 53504**

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**Membership**  
 Individuals: \$20 per year  
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 Lifetime Membership: \$100  
**New Members are Welcome**

*Be sure to visit our website:*  
**[historicargyle.org](http://historicargyle.org)**  
 Also find us on Facebook!

Historic Argyle is a non-profit organization created to preserve, protect and promote the cultural heritage and architectural history of the people and places of the Argyle, Wisconsin area. Incorporated in 2000, for the primary purpose of acquiring and restoring Argyle's "Saxton House", the boyhood home of Robert M. La Follette from 1862-1870.