



The Newsletter of the Marathon County Historical Society

2023 | Issue No.1

NEW EXHIBIT OPENING SOON!

peek
inside

"PEEK INSIDE: WHAT WE COLLECT AND WHY"

By Kathy Volkmann and Linda Forbess, Curators/Exhibit Designers

The Marathon County Historical Society has been collecting three-dimensional artifacts, photos, documents and more for 65 years. They have been invaluable in exhibits, displays, educational programs, and research local history and genealogy. But most of the tens of thousands of items we have collected have never been seen by the public. Some are very interesting or unusual, and some are everyday items commonly used during a particular era. Some tell stories of our ancestors, and some were made by local businesses. All of them tell the history of people in our county.

Unfortunately, most have just never fit the theme for one of our exhibits or been used by a researcher. In our newest exhibit, Peek Inside: What We Collect and Why, which opens in March 2023, visitors will see some favorites of our curators and archivist, and will learn more about how and why we select things to add to our collections.

...continued on page 4

WISCONSIN HISTORIANS ROCK!

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President

The Marathon County Historical Society is a proud affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society (officially known as the State Historical Society of Wisconsin). The WHS was founded in 1846 to maintain, promote, and spread knowledge relating to the history of North America. Its library holds over 4 million volumes, making it the largest library in the world devoted exclusively to North American history.

The world owes much to WHS historians. Have you ever visited Kings Mountain National Military Park in South Carolina? This site was witness to a stunning patriot victory, of immense strategic importance, over loyalist forces in October 1781. The battle was fought in the back woods, far from colonial-era newspapers; it might have been lost to history, but for the efforts of Lyman Draper, the first director of WHS. Theodore Roosevelt's preface to "The Winning of the West Volume 3: The Founding of the Trans-Alleghany Commonwealths 1784-1790" refers to Draper's work and the library –

"The material used herein is that mentioned in the preface the first volume, save that I have also drawn freely on the Draper manuscripts, in the Library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, at Madison. For the privilege of examining these valuable manuscripts I am indebted to the generous courtesy of the State Librarian, Mr. Reuben Gold Thwaites; I take this opportunity of extending to him my hearty thanks."

Speaking of whom, MCHS has won the Reuben Gold Thwaites Trophy for Local History twice, first in 1958 and again in 1989. Having made great progress in digitizing many of our archives for free accessibility, we might just apply for a third. We are certainly well-known at WHS, as three MCHS presidents have also served as WHS presidents: David Clark Everest, Gerald D Viste, and Greg Huber. It's important to note, however, that while we enjoy the esteem of WHS, it does not give money to its affiliate county historical societies.

We are justifiably proud of our many assets. We have multi-talented staff and volunteers who oversee the preservation and display of our artifacts and exhibits, who perform research on request, who prepare and give stimulating presentations, and who lead tours of our Yawkey House Museum.

We are dynamic! In 2022 we...

- o Gave 60 programs through the Marathon County Public Libraries that were attended/viewed by 6,123 people;
- o Held 53 events and programs for other groups and organizations;
- o Participated in 6 community events attended by 9,160 people; and,
- o Added 8,206 free records to our website

We serve people of all ages throughout the largest geographical county in Wisconsin.

Due to our nimble response to COVID, our reach has expanded electronically far beyond Marathon County's borders. And we are physically open six days a week, as well as offering Yawkey House tours six days a week. Few county historical societies can match our scope and scale of operation.

We could not operate as we do without our talented staff, many volunteers, and loyal members. A special word of thanks must be said to our many individual and institutional donors, Marathon County, and the city of Wausau.

Thank you for your support!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Wanigan is a quarterly publication sent as a benefit to the members of the Marathon County Historical Society.



The Marathon County Historical Society is supported in part by the City of Wausau Room Tax Funding & the B.A. and Esther Greenheck Foundation

THE WANIGAN PRODUCTION

Editor - Janet Klutterman Design and Editing - Alison Coady

Photo Selection and Colorization - Ben Clark Co-Editors and Authors - MCHS Staff

The mission of the Marathon County Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and exhibit materials related to the history of Marathon County, and to use these materials to help people learn about North Central Wisconsin, connect with their roots, and explore their own historical connections.

JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR SPRING TEAS!

Marathon County Historical Society
presents

Photo Fun

Sweet Treats

Children's Craft

A Valentines Family Tea

Join us for an afternoon of fancy fun!
dress your best or come as you are

Saturday
Feb 11, 2023
2:00 pm

Tickets: \$5/Child with an adult
 \$20 max charge per family

Tickets available in advance, or at the door.
Please call 715-842-5750 to buy tickets.

The Woodson History Center - 410 McIndoe St Wausau, WI 54403

MARATHON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
presents

24TH ANNUAL

A VINTAGE SPRINGTIME TEA

MARCH 30, 2023 - 2:00PM

TICKETS
\$30/Member \$35/Non-Member
Limited Seating - Reservations Required

Enjoy an afternoon of
sweet and savory treats, served
with a little bit of history.

410 McIndoe St Wausau, WI 54403
www.marathoncountyhistory.org
(715)842-5750

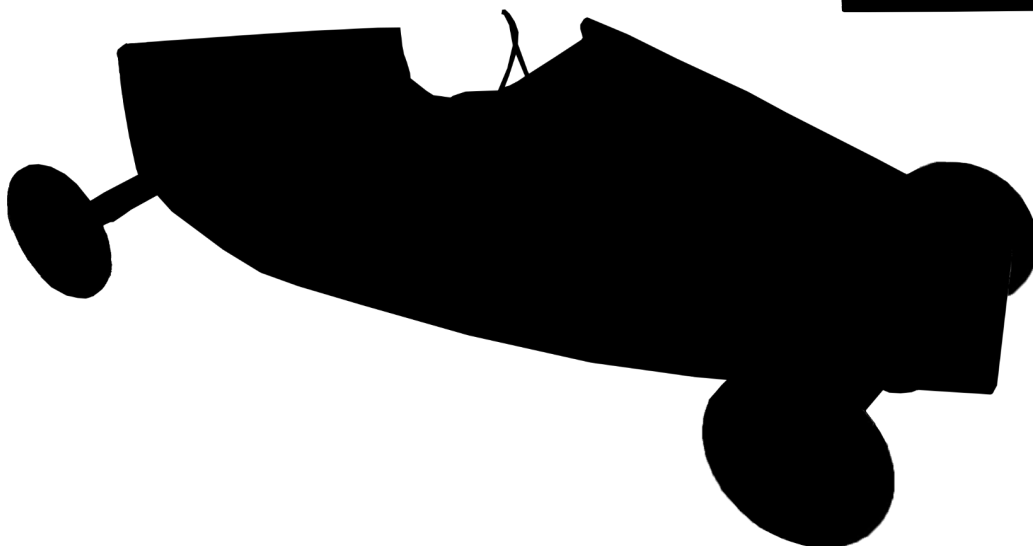
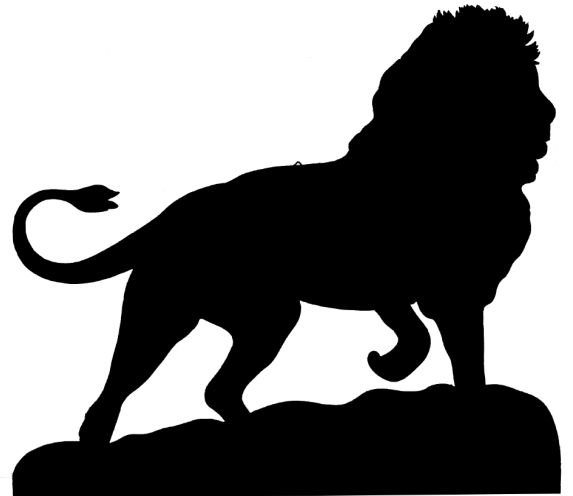
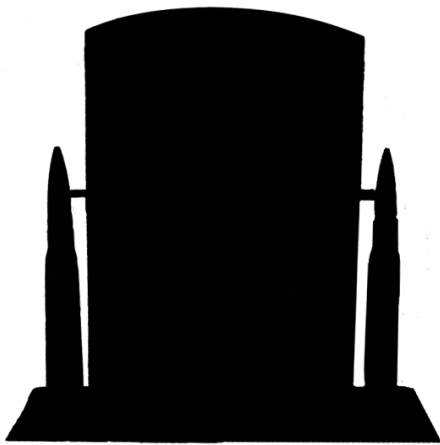
"PEEK INSIDE: WHAT WE COLLECT AND WHY"

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People may think we've collected just about everything needed to represent our history. The reality of most history museums is that collecting never stops. Interesting and important items are always being offered by the public, and "new" history is being made every day. We do collect items that reflect important life or community events, those associated with prominent families or large businesses, or that were expensive or elaborate. However, we also collect things that were common in their era and things used by people from all walks of life. Some of our favorite artifacts are everyday items that are now rare because they were intended to be discarded, and thus so few survived.

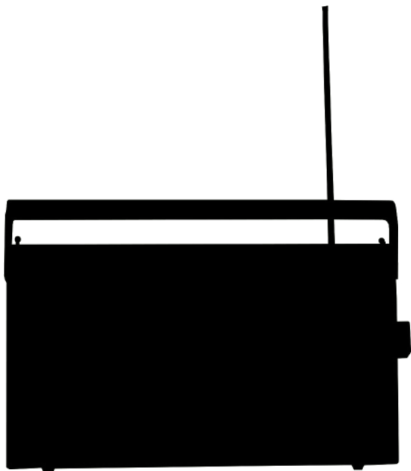
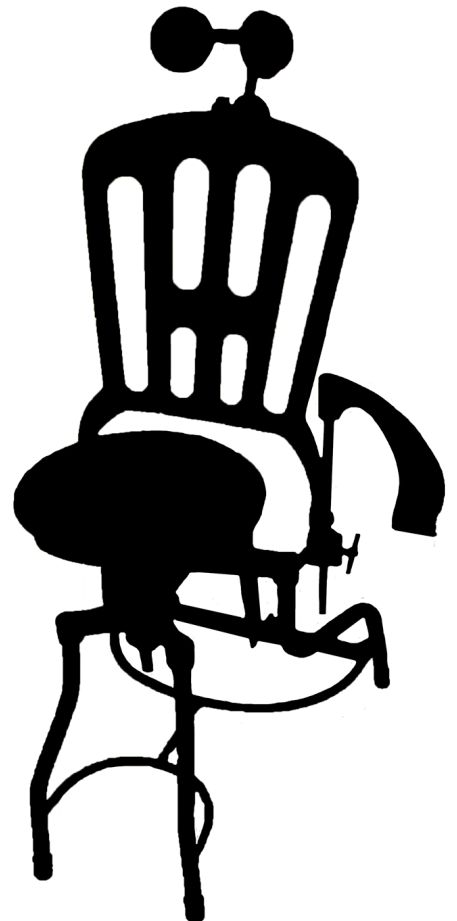
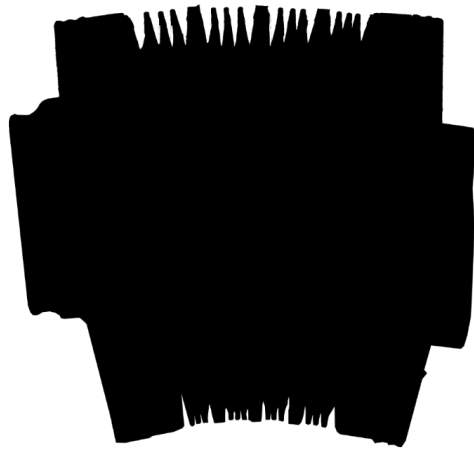
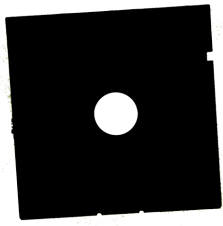
Peek Inside brings out a great cross section of our collections and shows the breadth of categories we collect. You'll hear audio clips from oral interviews and local musicians, see the original Sir 7 suit of armor from WSAU-TV, and a switchboard from the Mosinee Telephone Company. A soap box derby car from Wausau, an 1860s wedding dress from the Town of Berlin, and panoramic photographs of the Alexander Airport and of the Kickbusch Grocery Company and their delivery trucks fill the walls. A fondue pot from the Town of Weston, a water ski made by a Wausau company, pharmacy bottles from Athens, a quilt from Poniadowski, and many, many items connected to no particular place or person but that are great examples of everyday items, rest on our shelves. The exhibit includes toys, photos, cameras, clothing, advertising, product packages, books, textiles, and many other interesting and unusual items. See what you recognize as part of your life or that of your ancestors.

Watch our Facebook page, e-newsletter and website in March for when we announce the official opening date.



OBJECTS NO LONGER HIDDEN

Take a look at the silhouettes on these two pages. Can you identify the objects? All of these items are being revealed in our new exhibit! Stop by to check your answers and see many of the items no longer hidden in our archives and collections.



DOWNSIZING THE COUNTY BOARD

By Gary Gisselman, Librarian/Historian

Below is a photo of the Marathon County Board in front of the old court house which stood on the 400 block in downtown Wausau. It was a time in our history when the County Board had 72 members. Today, the Marathon County Board has 38 supervisors. So, what happened?

Well, this story starts with a decision of the United States Supreme Court in Baker v. Carr, 1962 which stated that every vote should carry equal weight, no matter where the person voted. With this decision, the concept of one man one vote was established. In the early 1960's, for instance, in Marathon County, cities had 42 percent of the population, but had only 25 percent of representation on the County Board. Baker v. Carr stated that there must be more equality in voting representation.

The effects of Baker v. Carr soon

found its way into Wisconsin when the Wisconsin Supreme Court decided the case of Sonnenborn v. Sylvester on January 5, 1965.

This ruling declared that the law under which Wisconsin County Boards are organized was unconstitutional. Noting the large disparities in county-board representation, the Supreme Court asked the Wisconsin Legislature to establish a system of county government meeting constitutional standards as reflected in Baker v. Carr.

To formalize the decision of the supreme court into Wisconsin Law the Wisconsin Legislature passed and Governor Warren Knowles signed Wisconsin Senate Bill 1 which became Chapter 20 of the Laws of 1965. The act read "The county board in each county shall establish and number supervisory districts, after a public hearing, in such a manner that each supervisor shall represent as nearly as practicable an

equal number of persons...." It further set the number of supervisors per county. "Counties having a population of less than 100,000 but at least 50,000 shall have no more than 39 supervisors."

The Marathon County Board soon established a reapportionment committee to make a study of the new legislation. By July, the committee recommended to the entire Board that there be 37 supervisory districts and the city of Wausau would have 14 districts of that number. This passed the Marathon County Board July 7, 1965. The last meeting held with 72 county board supervisors was March 29, 1966. With the spring election of April 19, 1966, Marathon County now had 37 County Board Supervisors.

Now, the Marathon County Board of Supervisors is smaller, and fairer, and continues to serve the needs of the people of Marathon County.



THANK YOU DONORS!

Ann and Bruce Chopp
In honor of Russ Wilson's Birthday

Victor and Helen Geisel Foundation
In support of digitization and website projects

Bob Wylie
In support of digitization

Judith Kort
Mary Jane Hettinga
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In memory of Donald W. Zielesch

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Barbara Harness
B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation
In support of general operations

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Frank Rubino, Kevin Podweltz, Brock Wojtalewicz, Lynn Eby, Katherine Sparks

Join the club!

ANTIQUÉ STUDY CLUB MEETINGS

The Wausau Antique and Collectibles Study Club welcomes everyone to join them for their monthly meetings and programs, held on the third Tuesday of each month at 11am in the Lower Level of the WHC.

February: "Games of the Past"
by Club Members

March: "What We Collect and Why"
by Linda Forbess

You can help us win BEST MUSEUM IN MARATHON CO.

The Wausau Daily Herald's annual "Best Of" Awards are here and you can help us win the "Best Museum" category. Please go online, between now and Feb 22th, and nominate us for the prize. If we can snag a nomination, voting will open in April.

Read history with the CIVIL WAR BOOK CLUB

Join us at 7:00pm at the Woodson History Center (410 McIndoe St.) on the fourth Thursday of each month to discuss that month's book and the history connected to it. February's book is "Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause" by Ty Seidule. For questions, please contact Gary Gisselman at 715-842-5750.

We need your help with OUR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Do you know someone with lots of stories? Have you lived in Marathon County your whole life? Did a friend witness a historic event? We are looking for people who have a story to tell. Both the mundane and the sensational. If you know someone who you think we should interview, (or want to be interviewed yourself!) please contact interviewer Bill Coady at (715) 446-4337, or by email at w.bill.coady@gmail.com

Join us online for HISTORY CHATS & HISTORY SPEAKS



History Chats are 20 minute presentations that are livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook every Thursday at 12:30pm. All programs are recorded and can be viewed later.

Upcoming History Chats . . .

February is a trip back to civics class. On the 9th, 16th and 23rd, our historians will chat about the governing bodies of Wausau and their legislature.



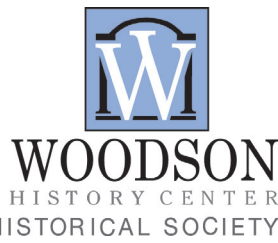
History Speaks is a 1-hour program presented by a guest speaker each month at 2pm at the Woodson History Center. Programs are recorded and can be viewed on our YouTube and Facebook.

Upcoming History Speaks . . .

Mar. 25th: Sidewalks, Trolleys and Motorbuses presented by Ben Clark

History Chats and History Speaks are co-hosted by the Marathon County Public Library.





Marathon County Historical Society
410 McIndoe Street
Wausau, WI 54403
715-842-5750
www.marathoncountyhistory.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- Feb 2, 9, 16, 23: History Chats
12:30pm Online on YouTube and Facebook
- Feb 4: History Speaks
2pm at Woodson History Center
- Feb 11: A Valentines Family Tea
2pm at Woodson History Center
- Mar 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: History Chats
12:30pm Online on YouTube and Facebook
- Mar 9: Storytime at the Museum
11:00am at Woodson History Center
- Mar 25: History Speaks
2:00pm at Woodson History Center
- Mar 30: A Vintage Springtime Tea
2:00pm at Woodson History Center

PHOTOS FROM . . .

OUR WINTER EVENTS



*Celebrating at
HOLIDAYS AT THE
HOUSES, & HOLIDAY
MEMBER RECEPTION*

Thank you for joining us at our holiday events! We hope you had as much fun celebrating the winter holidays and our members as we did.

