

Living History Walking Tour in Downtown Wausau

LAW AND DISORDER



7 STORIES OF JUSTICE & CRIME

SUN. MAY 21

NOON - 4PM
Walking Tour
Start at 400 Block, Wausau

\$15

Join us at the Elks for a Prohibition Beverage
Questions? Call Jane Janke Johnson 715-297-1946

FICTION ENHANCES HISTORY

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President

Some folks read fiction exclusively. A telltale sign is often seen in book reviews where “books” seems to mean “books” (of fiction). Many other readers plant their feet firmly in the non-fiction camp. But as E.O. Wilson (no relation to me, don’t I wish!) described in *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, knowledge dwells on a spectrum from the hardest of the “hard” sciences through the physical sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts, all the way to the performing arts. Think *Hamilton*. When read together, well-researched and written fiction and history synergistically elucidate one another.

The Night Watchman and *The Sentence*, two of Louise Erdrich’s novels, describe with poignancy the brutal oppression to which American Indians have been subjected and their tenacious resistance to it. *The Night Watchman*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, revolves around the 1950s era political movement to terminate reservations. In reality, Erdrich’s own grandfather played a key role in defeating that particular stratagem of cultural annihilation. Fact and fiction also mingle in *The Sentence*, which explores the interior life of a Native woman who sells books like no other in an independent, Native-focused bookstore (whose owner is named Louise). Book and bookstore lovers will yearn to visit that other-worldly shop. But wait, we can actually do so in the real world! Birchbark Books is located at 2115 W 21st Street in Minneapolis. It’s on my list to visit. You can also visit online at birchbarkbooks.com.

Speaking of bookstores, MCHS has one! Well, it’s a spinning rack in our admittedly small gift shop, but it has some gems for sale, published by the Wisconsin Historical Society. (So far as we know, though, ours is not haunted by the ghost of an annoying customer as in *The Sentence*, which you really ought to read if you haven’t done so. You’ll NEVER think of a bookstore the same way again.) The titles of two of our gems are self-descriptive: *Wisconsin Indians: Revised and Expanded Edition* (2002) by Nancy Oestreich Lurie and *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*, 2nd Edition (2013) by Prof Patty Loew. Nancy Oestreich Lurie, who died in 2017, served as the curator of the Milwaukee Public Museum. Many of our members will recognize Patty Loew from Wisconsin Public Television. Her website is pattyloew.com. These two historical works are indispensable to an understanding of American Indians in Wisconsin – and they make great gifts!

The setting for the fictional and historical works I have mentioned so far are North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, but let’s now turn to a much bigger picture. *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America* by Pekka Hämäläinen captures the formidable Native resistance against Spanish, French, British, and American colonialism over the course of four centuries all over the North American continent. To say this work offers a fresh perspective on Native Americans is an understatement of, well, continental proportions.

Here I confess to lapsing into superlative, because the scope of *Indigenous Continent* is nothing short of stupendous. A mountain of scholarship supports the author’s sweeping narrative. The footnotes are awesome to admire. A typical paragraph, packed with storytelling at its best, concludes with a footnote, which in turn lists multiple citations. What I find remarkable is how recent so much of the research is. Some sources date to about 1980, but many references were published since 2000. Clearly, contemporary historians have a keen interest in Indigenous Americans. (Of course, many older authorities are also cited, including Lyman Draper and Reuben Gold Thwaites of Wisconsin Historical Society fame.)

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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 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.

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"Fiction Enhances History" continued from page 2

Hämäläinen has mastered an enormous body of research and he has marshalled it into a narrative of epic scale. The new perspective Hämäläinen presents is the stunning depth, reach and sophistication of the Indigenous peoples. Their geographical ranges and migrations, their trade, communication, strategic alliances, agriculture, and diplomacy. In a word: culture. Don't be put off by its scope, Indigenous Continent is so engagingly written that it reads swiftly. And unless you are a footnote nerd like your-truly, you don't have to read or admire them. There is nothing dry or unsubstantiated about this storytelling.

Taken together, these fictional and historical narratives do indeed elucidate one another and reward the reader.

A WEEKEND ROADTRIP

By Gary Gisselman, Librarian/Historian

It is time to take a trip. Rural Marathon County is rich with historical landmarks and historical sites that point to the history and culture of the county.

Start in southeastern Marathon County and head for the Polish Heritage Trail. Following County Rd Y up from Portage County, this trail is that route that early Polish settlers found their way into Marathon County. Along the road you will see sacred shrines and crosses constructed by the local Polish community. At the intersection of Highway 153 and County Rd Y is the community of Bevent. Take note of St. Ladislaus Catholic Church. This lovely little building was an early worship center for these Polish settlers who would take to farming the surrounding land.

From Bevent, continue driving up County Rd Y to the Eau Claire Dells County Park. In addition to being a county park, it is on the National Register of Historic Places. The granite outcropping, the water falls, and the walking trails are spectacular. It is worth time just to take in the natural beauty of this place and treasure it as part of Marathon County. The park also contains a beach and some shelters. If you have not seen this park, be sure to find time to visit - it is truly a "must see."

Back on County Rd Y, continue north into the town of Hewitt and find County Rd G. Take a left and you will drive through an area of that put Marathon County on the map. Now abandoned, many quarries in this area produced a very brilliant red granite. This red granite was used in many places around the county, but you are now most likely to find it at local cemeteries.

Enjoy the trip. Explore other Marathon County historical sites that detail the broad fabric of the county's past. The Marathon County Historical Society can help.



St. Ladislaus Catholic Church

The Dells of Eau Claire



CATCHING A PERMANENT WAVE

By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts

Our new exhibit, *Peek Inside: What We Collect and Why*, includes hundreds of interesting and sometimes unusual artifact we've collected over the last 68 years. It's a great look at the breadth of categories we collect, from photos and documents to clothing, toys, housewares, electronics, farm tools, and more. One of the more unusual items is spotlighted in this article. Certainly considered a technological advancement in its time, its popularity fizzled fairly quickly.

Looking rather scary, the purpose of this large machine with its many dangling electric cords is to put a permanent wave in the hair of beauty shop customers. The machine used water, chemicals and heat to curl otherwise straight hair. The beautician applied a solution to each curl, secured the sections with metal clips, then turned on the machine to heat the curl. While popular in the 1930s, their use faded when salon "cold perms" and home perms, which relied only on chemicals and not heat, became available in the 1940s.

Wausau resident Mercy Volkmann remembered having a machine perm in the early 1930s. After being connected to the machine, she was worried there would be a fire in the salon and she wouldn't be able to escape because she was tethered to the machine. She never had another machine perm.



Visit our Peek Inside exhibit to see this permanent wave machine and many other intriguing artifacts. There are many everyday items that are rare now because they were intended to be discarded, and so few have survived.

THE ONLY
Union Beauty Shop
IN THE CITY

NEW NESTLE
Permanent Wave Machine

The only machine of its kind in the city. It's the last word in fine equipment. Take advantage of our introductory offer.

Reg. \$5 Wave for two weeks only **\$3**

Other Permanent Waves \$2 to \$8
SHAMPOO & FINGERWAVE . . 50c

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
Evelyn Sommers Wilichowski, Owner and Manager
VIVIAN BARAVETTO, Operator.

American Beauty Shop
OPEN DAILY 9:00 to 6:00
301 1/2 Third Street (Across from Winkelman's) Phone 6131
OPEN TUESDAY AND FRIDAY NIGHTS

Left: A 1930s advertisement for machine perms from the Wausau Daily Herald.



Right: A woman getting her hair set in a permanent wave machine.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

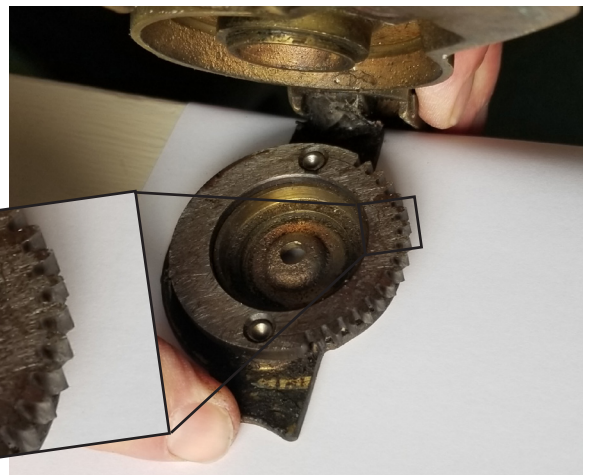
Thank You 

April is national Volunteer Month, and we want to celebrate all of our hardworking and talented volunteers! Over the last year we have had 220 people volunteer with us (some multiple times!) and they have logged a cumulative 1,197 hours! Some of the projects worked on include: digitizing our vast collection of photographs and documents, assisting at our many events, and more. If you have ever volunteered with us, Thank You.

One such project was the talented work of Gary Forbess, who was able to help us fix the aging windows in the Woodson House. The windows in the historic living room had been broken for some time - they would not stay open. Unfortunately, the window crank mechanism was both old and unique, so new parts could not be bought to make the needed repairs. This is where Gary came in. He was able to precisely recreate the worn down gears for the 12 damaged cranks. Thank you Gary, for sharing your awesome metal working skills with us! Check out the photos below to see his fine work.



This is the window crank. Note how the gear on the top half has only two teeth left - the rest have been worn smooth.



This is one of the new gears Gary made for us. Look at all those sharp, clean, new teeth!

Just a few of our fabulous volunteers hard at work!



And, of course, we cannot celebrate volunteer month without recognizing our most prolific volunteers: Linda Forbess and Kathy Volkmann. In charge of our textiles collection and our artifact collection respectively, these two women have been preserving history with the society for over 35 years. From exhibit design and construction to programs and talks, both can do just about everything, and they probably have. We are so thankful to have them as part of our team!



About this issues' header

THOSE FLAPJACKS OF BROWN'S

By Ben Clark, Archivist/Historian

On September 14, 1917, people from across the United States came to Wausau to pay their respects to the late Neal Brown. Among the crowd that gathered that afternoon, there were lawyers, civil servants, and politicians; businessmen, merchants, and industrialists; journalists, poets, literary critics and humorists; deer hunters and trout fishers; and just about anyone else who could find room on the lawn of Brown's palatial Wausau home.

In the weeks following Brown's death, newspapers across the country attempted to capture the nuance of a complicated and multifaceted life. But the memorial to Brown that most stuck out was that of "B.L.T." of Chicago, who chose to memorialize the late Brown, by re-publishing a poem "inspired by the incomparable and unforgettable flapjacks of the Hon. Neal Brown."

Five years earlier, in 1912, Bert Leston Taylor of the Chicago Daily Tribune, came up to Wausau and visited Neal Brown at his fishing cottage on the Plover River. On the surface, B.L.T. and the others claimed they were going to try and convince Brown (a lifelong Democrat) to cross the aisle and nominate Theodore Roosevelt at the upcoming Republican National Convention in Chicago... but there was never much chance of that happening. Still, when presented with the chance to spend a weekend fishing with Neal Brown, they jumped at the chance.

After returning back home, having enjoyed his time, B.L.T. wrote and published a poem about the fond memories made with Neal Brown. He knew Brown was a reader of the newspaper, and wanted to ensure he recognized how much they appreciated the trip. And over the next few months, the Honorable Neal Brown's momentous flapjacks became a running theme of the column. But the legend of Brown's fabled flapjacks appears to have gone far beyond the newspaper. Years later, it was remembered that for generations of fly fishing enthusiasts, the act of consuming Brown's flapjacks guaranteed acceptance at any fishing club in the country. Not just because the flapjacks themselves were good (although they probably were), but because to have eaten a flapjack breakfast with Neal Brown, was to have communed with greatness.

"Fond Memories"

*Oh, light as the foam on the Plover,
That mottles that magical stream;
Oh, light as the vows of a lover
And the sighs of a summer night's
dream;
Ay, light as the gossamer stuff of
Salome's impalpable gowns,—
Are the flapjacks I can't get enough of—
Those flapjacks of Brown's.*

*A cure or the cares that beset us,
Each cake a separate joy;
Gold-brown as the sweets of Hymettus,
But lacking their classical cloy;
Brown-gold as the burr-oak in Autumn,
This masterpiece cookery crowns,
They are served with the trout (when
you've caught 'em)—
Those flapjacks of Brown's.*

*They come piping hot from the griddle;
And you tuck away tier upon tier.
An ecstasy seizes your middle,
A sense of ineffable cheer.
Each stack that you tenderly butter
The maple juice lovingly drowns,
And you eat, till no word you can utter,
Those flapjacks of Brown's.*

*Oh cakes of alluring complexion!
Oh dainties as light as the dew!
Oh flapjacks that fond recollection
Will always present to my view!
They're like you will never discover;
All vainly you quest them in towns.
They are born on the banks of the Plover—
Those flapjacks of Brown's.*

CONGRATULATIONS JERRY VISTE!

The Marathon County Historical Society's longest serving board member, Jerry Viste, recently celebrated his 100th birthday!

We would like to wish Jerry a happy birthday and say "thank you" to him for his contributions to the society over the years!



THANK YOU DONORS!

Dave and Lori Torkko
in honor of Jerry Viste's 100th Birthday

Luann Spanton
in honor of Cathy (Spanton) Luktala

Douglas Hosler
in support of general operations

Kay Gruling and Tim Buttke
in honor of Rick Lohr's Birthday

Forward Electronics
for two metal cabinets

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 April 25th to cast your vote for us!

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. April's book is "Fire Within: A Civil War Narrative from Wisconsin" by Kerry Trask. For questions, please contact Gary Gisselman at 715-842-5750.

Bring in spring with WAUSAU AREA GARDEN CLUB'S ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Featuring annuals, hanging baskets, herbs, and more!

Friday, May 12th from 11a-5:30pm
Saturday, May 13th from 9a-1pm
at the Yawkey House Museum Carriage House. (403 McIndoe St.)

Join the club! ANTIQUe 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. Stop by to see the full list of summer topics.

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 . . .

May is Historic Preservation month. On the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th, our historians will chat about Wausau history and how the society works to collect and preserve that history.



History Speaks features a guest speaker on a Saturday at 2pm at the Woodson History Center every month. Programs are recorded and can be viewed on YouTube and Facebook.

Upcoming History Speaks . . .

May 6th: The Vietnam War: One Veteran's Story presented by Gil Buettner

July 15: Shipwrecked and Rescued presented by Larry Jorgenson

History Chats and History Speaks are co-hosted by the Marathon County Public Library, and sponsored by Janke Bookstore.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

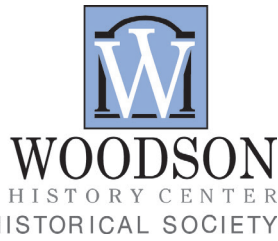
Annette Crass, Jerry Umhoefer,
Mary Utecht Johnson, Calla Buttke,
Michael and Juliane Washburn,
Ruth Klee Marx and David Wille,
Darci Hibard, Kimberly Heller
Scott Schutte

Play the night away at VINTAGE GAME NIGHT!

Join us at 5:00pm at the Woodson History Center (410 McIndoe St.) on May 18th, June 15th, and July 20th, to try your hand at our collection of vintage board games. Game night is free for all ages.

Springtime is a perfect time for STORYTIME IN THE GARDEN

As the flowers start to bloom, Storytime is back in the Yawkey House Garden. At 11am on May 11th, June 8th, and July 13th, join us for a story or two and a fun craft. Free for all ages.



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

- May 6: History Speaks
2pm at Woodson History Center
- May 11: Storytime in the Garden
11am at Yawkey House Garden
- May 18: Vintage Game Night
5pm at Woodson History Center
- Jun 8: Storytime in the Garden
11am at Yawkey House Garden
- Jun 10: My Dolly & Me: A Garden Party
1pm at Yawkey House Garden
- Jun 15: Vintage Game Night
5pm at Woodson History Center
- Jul 13: Storytime in the Garden
11am at Yawkey House Garden
- Jul 15: History Speaks
2pm at Woodson History Center
- Jul 20: Vintage Game Night
5pm at Woodson History Center

PHOTOS FROM . . .

OUR SPRING TEAS



Fancy fun at our
**VALENTINES FAMILY TEA &
 VINTAGE SPRINGTIME TEA**

This year's spring teas were well-attended and well-received! With record high attendance at both events, we couldn't have been happier, and hope everyone who attended had a great time!