
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARATHON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • 2020 No. 1

The Marathon County Historical Society
Invites You To Attend Our
21st Annual Valentine Tea



Thursday, February 13, 2020

At 2:00 pm

Woodson History Center
410 McIndoe Street, Wausau



Relax & enjoy an elegant afternoon tea with delicious sweets & savories, flowers, linens and a special program to top off your afternoon.

Members \$30.00

Non-members \$35.00

Space is limited

Reservations are required

Call us at 715-842-5750
and talk to Sara or Janet
about reserving your
spot today!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Russell Wilson, President
John Hattenhauer, Vice President
Patrick Gosz, Treasurer
Jane Janke Johnson, Secretary
Brett Barker
Bill Bertram
Sandi Cihlar
Robert Hagge, Jr.
Jim Hampton
Laurel Hoffman
Greg Huber
Richard Lohr
Dorothy Maxfield
Brian Williams
Kelly Zagrzebski
DuWayne Zamzow

STAFF

Mary Forer, Executive Director
Gary Gisselman, Librarian/Archivist

PRINTING OF THE WANIGAN

Editor: Sara K. Goetsch
Co-Editor: Anna Chilsen-Straub

Valentine Trivia

According to History.com, the oldest record of a valentine was a poem Charles Duke of Orleans wrote to his wife when he was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1415.

Esther Howland is the first manufacturer of Valentines. She became known as the "Mother of the American Valentine" for the artistry and sentiment of her designs. Before Howland commercialized them, American valentines were less romantic and more comic. Her inspiration came from the thoughtful and sweet greeting cards that were circulating in England and she decided to sell similar designs in the U.S. They took off: During the 1850s she earned \$100,000 annually, which is about \$3 million today, according to *Time*.

Today, millions of greeting cards are purchased every year. We're talking *144 million* greeting cards being exchanged industry-wide every year for Valentine's Day in the U.S. alone, according to Hallmark.

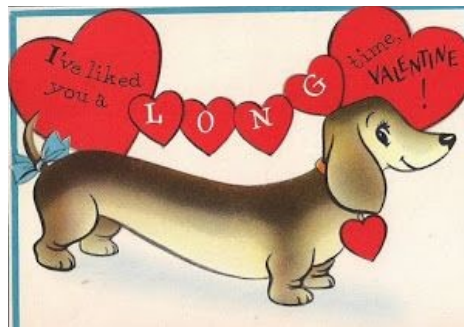


Welcome to our New Members

Kyle Utecht
Patricia Herbert

• THANK YOU •

- ◆ Thank you our volunteers who helped decorate our two historic homes for the holidays.
- ◆ We appreciate our re-enactors & the traditions they told for our Christmas at the Houses event.
- ◆ Thank you to our other volunteers who helped with the Christmas at the Houses event and our Members Holiday Reception.
- ◆ To Christine Martens for the beautiful Mid-Century glass she displayed at the Woodson House over Christmas



• GIFTS RECEIVED •

- ◆ In memory of Patty Grimm by Char Creske, Thomas & Christine Maier, Beth O'Malley, and Marcia Smith.
- ◆ In memory of Jean Erickson from Mary Jane & Allen Hettinga.
- ◆ Donation in honor of Janke Book Store's 100th anniversary by Sharon & Richard Rayborn.
- ◆ Donation in honor of Nick & Gail Smith by Norm & Joan Berndt.
- ◆ Donation in honor of Rob & Elke Hagge by Bert & Leigh Tuckey.
- ◆ A donation from the H.J. Hagge Foundation Fund as administered by Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin.
- ◆ A donation from the Robert S. Hagge Foundation Fund as administered by Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin.
- ◆ A donation from Lorraine Hornung
- ◆ A donation from Colleen Jowett
- ◆ A donation from Barbara Harness
- ◆ A donation from David Torkko
- ◆ A donation from George Tanner
- ◆ A donation from David Weigel

Misc.

The Beer That's SUPERFINE!!

Marathon City Brewery was founded in 1881 by Franz Sindermann, a trained brewer from Germany, his brother August, and Charles Klein. Within a short time, Franz purchased the interests of his brother and Mr. Klein but when Franz died only five years later, the brewery became idle. Over the next 25 years the brewery had a string of owners who each had trouble continuing the operation. Problems with ice storage, faulty equipment, bankruptcy and a devastating fire in 1912. Nicholas Veese rebuilt the brewery and began producing beer again in May 1913.

As happened to many breweries during the Prohibition era, Marathon City Brewing closed, but reopened in 1933 after Prohibition ended. The brewery was sold in 1965 and less than a year later it was permanently closed. Some of the popular brewing brand names used over the years by Marathon City Brewing included Imperial, Tannenbaum, Marathon Beer, Marathon Bock, Little Willy, Superfine, Marathon Old Lager, Marathon Holiday, Sportz Club and Ruffs Imperial.

To the delight of local beer drinkers, Bull Falls Brewery in Wausau revived the Superfine brand in 2009. After a lengthy and unproductive search for the original recipe, they were thrilled when a man walked through their door with the 1954 brewer's log book from the Marathon City Brewing, allowing them to recreate this beloved beer.

Want to learn more about Marathon City Brewing and see a large selection of their beer labels, signs, bottle openers, photos and more?

Visit <http://www.marathoncitybrewery.com>.

~Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts



The Marathon Superfine Premium Beer bottle shown here is one of six that were donated to the Marathon County Historical



Close-up view of Marathon City Brewing Superfine label.

The 20's the First Time: Prohibition

America tried one of the craziest experiments in its history when on January 16, 1920, the 18th Amendment became law, making liquor, beer and wine illegal. The law never stood a chance. Not only did Americans continue to make, barter for, and hold onto alcohol, many drank even more of it! Women, who in the past had never been allowed in bars, trooped into the new, secret salons, where they tried out the latest fad - mixed drinks known as cocktails.

The black market boomed and by 1925, there were thought to be 100,000 speakeasies in New York city alone. Moonshining became big business as well as smuggling. Enforcement of Prohibition was tepid at best, led by an overworked group of just 1,550 federal agents, who may or may not get help from the local authorities. Many times they looked the other way with a bribe from the bootleggers. Speakeasy owners said it cost \$1,370 to operate a month—\$400 of which was paid to the feds, police and district attorneys.

In Texas, just a few months after the start of Prohibition, an operating still was discovered on the farm of Senator Morris Sheppard, one of the authors of the 18th Amendment. It was turning out 130 gallons of whiskey a day. The failed experiment of Prohibition ended on December 5, 1933.

Winter Reflections by Sara...

Snow, Snow, Snow...

Just those three words usually brings to mind the song “Snow” from the movie White Christmas, where Bing Crosby, Danny Kay, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Allen are on a train headed to Vermont. The word snow is used **24 times** by those four actors singing in that dining car.

Around here, there is no shortage of snow these last couple of winters. For those who love skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, tubing, and other outdoor activities, the snow is a blessing. Some, if they have a plowing business, see those flakes falling as dollar signs, some as just more white stuff to move. Then there are those like me who are DONE with winter! I can't wear my flip flops in the snow, so it can start warming up any time now.

We have to inch out of our driveways, carefully pull out at intersections, hope our tires don't slip and slide if we have to drive up a hill. Then we can think back to what it was like for residents of Wausau when there weren't any snow plows. It seems like there was a lot more snow “back then” as well, so how did they get around?

The trolley still ran, which meant the tracks had to be cleaned off. You can see from the photo there was a big plow used for that purpose. But many times since the tracks were the only cleared path, people tried driving on them, only to get their wheels stuck and had to be pushed off. You can also see by the pictures there was a lot of shoveling done by hand, and from the size of the snow banks, I have a feeling it took a long time!

I guess I can be thankful our snow isn't piled quite so high and our driving is certainly made easier with plowed streets. That doesn't mean I'm not sick of putting on layers and boots, scraping ice off my car and letting it warm up before I can even drive it, and then driving slow because there's SNOW. I can't wait for the day when instead of snow, snow, snow, I can sing beach, beach, beach!

Think spring and be thankful our snow banks don't touch the top of the utility pole!



New Exhibit Coming

Looking for Park Stories

A Century ago this year, back in 1920, the Marathon County Parks Commission was established by the County Board, to establish and maintain a parks system for the County. To mark the occasion, MCHS will be partnering with the Marathon County Parks Department to celebrate a Century of County Parks.

As part of this celebration, we are planning an exhibit to tell the histories of the Marathon County Parks and celebrate the many ways people have enjoyed spending time in them over the last century.

One of the exciting things about parks as a subject for an exhibit, is that there is no one way to spend time at any of the parks. Whether we visit a park for a picnic with friends and family, to play some horseshoes, softball, or on the playground, to go fishing or boating, or just to get away from things for a bit and enjoy the fresh air, everyone has had their own experiences with the county parks.

As we develop the exhibit to celebrate the parks, we want to hear your stories and experiences with the County Park System! We are also looking for pictures and objects to include in the exhibit, so if you have any physical items about parks, we would love to borrow them.

We would also especially love to know more about some of the smaller, less central parks. Over the years we have amassed many stories about the fair at Marathon Park, but we don't have many stories about visiting Cherokee Park, AMCO Park, Mission Lake Park, Rib Falls Park, or Big Eau Pleine Park. (Although if you have an amazing story about Marathon Park, we'd still love to hear that too!).

If you have a story you would like to share with us—or if you have a really great object related to park-going experience that you would be willing to lend us for the exhibit—please let us know!

Email Ben Clark (at bclark@marathoncountyhistory.org), call us at 715-842-5750, or stop by the museum to tell us in person.



Future Events

Mother & Child Tea

Saturday, February 15, 2020
2:00 pm Woodson History Center

Children are invited to bring their favorite adult for a special Valentine afternoon. Learn proper tea etiquette, make a unique Valentine craft to take home with you and enjoy gummy Valentine treats.

\$15 per adult & \$10 per child.

Reservations are Required and can be made by calling Sara or Janet at 715-842-5750.



History Speaks in Your Town

Mon., March 23, 2020: 3:30 p.m. **History Speaks in Spencer: Cultures and Conflict on the Roof of the World: China and Tibet 2020**, with Rick Lohr. Free. At Marathon County Public Library – Spencer Branch, 105 S. Park St., Spencer.

Some details TBD: Mon., April xx, 2020: x:30 p.m. **History Speaks in Edgar:** exact title TBD, with Brett Barker. Free. At Edgar High School.

Mon., May 11, 2020: 6:30 p.m. **History Speaks in Rothschild: History of North Central Health Care**, with Michael Loy, CEO. Free. At Rothschild Village Hall Community Room, 211 Grand Ave., Rothschild.

Remember When Writers

Group provides encouragement and practice in writing family stories. Drop-ins welcome. Hosted at 10:30 a.m. monthly on second Thursdays by the Marathon County Historical Society, 410 McIndoe St., Wausau.
Meetings: Feb. 13, March 12, April 9, May 14.



Vintage Board Games



21+: **First Thursdays**, 7 p.m. **Feb. 6, March 5, April 2;** at Limerick's Public House, 121 Scott St.

ALL AGES: **Fourth Fridays**, 7-10 p.m. **Jan. 24, Feb. 28, March 27, April 24.** Woodson History Center.

More Valentine Trivia

Candy hearts were originally medical lozenges. In 1847, Boston pharmacist Oliver Chase invented a machine that simplified the lozenge production process, resulting in the first candy-making machine, according to *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*. After identifying an opportunity to revolutionize the candy business, Chase shifted his focus to candy production with Necco wafers.



Upcoming Speakers & The Civil War Book Club



The Marathon County Historical Society continues its popular lecture series *History Speaks*, which includes a wide variety of topics presented by local experts and history enthusiasts.

All lectures are presented at the Woodson History Center, have no admission fee, and no registration is required. However, donations are always appreciated. **All presentations begin at 2 pm, unless otherwise noted.**

Rescheduled due to the snowstorm:

Saturday, February 1st, 2020: Looking Through the Past: The Window Makers of Marathon County, Ben Clark

Saturday, February 22, 2020: American Indians in the Civil War, Brett Barker

Sunday, March 15, 2020: Early Schools in Marathon County, Gary Gisselman

Saturday, April 25, 2020: Circuit Riders in Marathon County, DuWayne Zamzow

Civil War Book Club 2020

Woodson History Center
410 McIndoe Street Wausau, WI 54403

Always the last Thursday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

January 30

Williamson Murray and Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh, *A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War.*

ISBN-10: 0691181098

ISBN-13: 978-0691181097

February 27

Matthew E. Stanley, *The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America.*

ISBN-10: 0252082249

ISBN-13: 978-0252082245

March 26

James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865.*

ISBN-10: 0393347753

ISBN-13: 978-0393347753

April 30

Jonathan W. White, *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War.*

ISBN-10: 1469652080

ISBN-13: 978-1469652085



Marathon County Historical Society
410 McIndoe Street
Wausau, Wisconsin 54403

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Wausau, WI
54403
Permit #550

Our Mission Statement

To collect, preserve, advance, and disseminate the knowledge of the history of Marathon County and the State of Wisconsin

LOCATIONS AND HOURS

WOODSON HISTORY CENTER

410 McIndoe St., Wausau, WI 54403
Office: 715-842-5750 Library: 715-848-0378

Fax: 715-848-0576

Library Hours: Tuesday through Friday
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Web site: www.marathoncountyhistory.org

YAWKEY HOUSE MUSEUM

403 McIndoe St., Wausau, WI 54403

Hours: Tuesday through Friday

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday

1:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Yawkey House tours are offered on the hour,
last tour starts at 3:00 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and Holidays.

