

The Wanigan

The Newsletter of the Marathon County Historical Society

No.2 Spring 2022



LIVING HISTORY WALKING TOUR IN DOWNTOWN WAUSAU

TALES BETWEEN



TWO DEPOTS

AND THE STORIES IN BETWEEN
AS TOLD BY EYE WITNESSES

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2022

SPONSORED BY



HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President

I've finally achieved the spirit of St Patrick's Day. Not being of Irish ancestry, my experience of St Patrick's Day has seemed hollow. I've long known that my Scots-Irish forbearers would not have worn green; their color was orange, the color of the oppression in Ulster. So when drinking Guinness and eating corned beef brisket, cabbage, and Irish potatoes with friends on March 17th, I wore the colors that made me feel hopeful. In my tiny measure of support, I wore my bright yellow tee shirt and my bright blue sweater.

Do you remember when our area hosted Ukrainians when their democratic government was in its infancy after the Berlin Wall fell? They came here to learn about our democratic institutions. When Ukrainian lawyers arrived, Ruder Ware (probably known then as Ruder, Ware and Michler), hosted them, and I gave the presentation on environmental law. They were impressed with the power of our federal and Wisconsin law to cause contaminated land to be cleaned up. And I remember asking what it was that the Ukrainians cherished most under Soviet rule. "Education!" was their emphatic response. I then asked if it was true that all Ukrainian high schoolers had calculus. This prompted a discussion between the lawyers and I could make out words that sounded like "derivative" and "integral". The translation then summarized that all the students received a "basic form" of calculus while others had more advanced study.

My only contact was with the lawyers, but I recall that agriculturalists, healthcare providers, and educators came, but my memory is sketchy. I suspect other professions were represented. Local government officials perhaps? And who organized the program? The Chamber? Marathon County? NTC? Please send us the facts, your stories and your memories!

To think that people of instillations here in Marathon County played a role in transforming a Soviet "republic" into a fledgling democracy! As I write this article right after St Patrick's Day, let us hope and pray that Ukrainian democracy - and democracy itself - survives, thrives, and prevails.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Russ Wilson, *President*
John Hattenhauer, *Vice-President*
Patrick Gosz, *Treasurer*
Andrew Dudley Shannon,
Secretary

Brett Barker
Bill Bertram
Sandi Cihlar
Robert Hagge, Jr.
Jim Hampton
Laurel Hoffman
Greg Huber
Jane Janke Johnson
Richard Lohr
Dorothy Maxfield
Brian Williams
DuWayne Zamzow

STAFF

Mary Forer, *Executive Director*
Gary Gisselman, *Librarian/Historian*
Janet Klutterman, *Administrative Director*
Ben Clark, *Archivist/Historian*
Anna Chilsen Straub, *Curator of Education*
Sheryl DelConte, *Curator of Events*
Erick Konop,
Curator of Yawkey House
Alison Coady, *Front Desk Manager*
Martina Kostreva, *Assistant Archivist*
Mike Bresnahan, *Maintenance*
Kathy Volkmann, *Curator of Artifacts*
Linda Forbess, *Curator of Textiles*

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.

MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

By Ben Clark, Archivist/Historian

About the Wanigan Header. . .

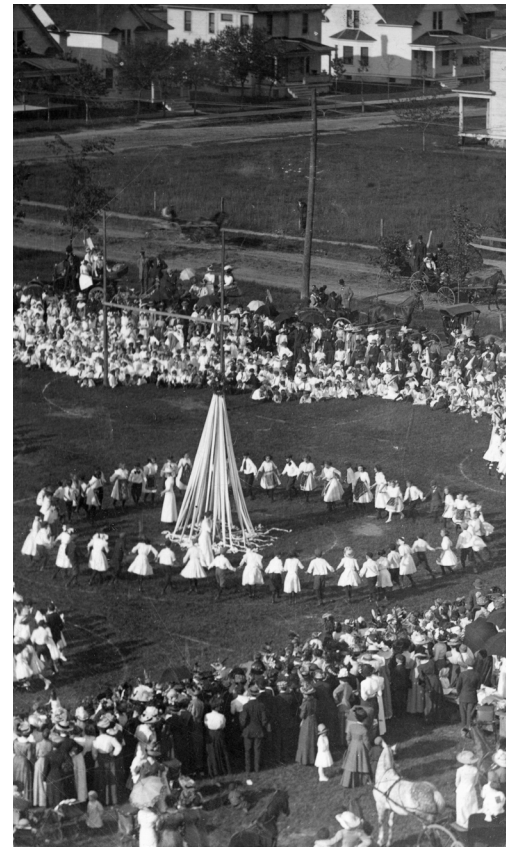
Around the turn of the twentieth century, the school children in the City of Wausau began putting on an annual spring festival for the community. These May Festivals (or Fetes) were typically held on the grounds of the High School, but in later years they might be staged at Marathon Park or other locations.

The format of the festivals changed over the years, but usually had some combination of dancing, flowers, costumes, and always featured a maypole. The wooden pole, or poles were the central space for a choreographed dance that saw the participants grab strands of fabric and weave them around the pole to create an elaborate decoration when the dance finished. (The top picture shows them in the early stages of the dance before the strands were picked up).

Despite the close association between maypoles and May Day (May 1st), these school festivals were generally planned at the end of May, to coincide with the end of the school year. Over the winter months, the teachers used the festivals as a way to teach kids about traditional folk practices. And the fact that May Festivals had roots in Celtic, English, Norwegian, German, Flemish, and Scandinavian cultures meant that teachers could and did use the upcoming May Festival to teach their students about those cultures and traditions.

Because it wasn't just a tradition of one group of people, it allowed these May School Fetes to be a larger celebration of the diverse backgrounds and heritage that made up the Wausau-area community. But it also had a distinctly American flourish, which was to have a pageant to crown a Queen of the May. Plus the festival let everyone enjoy the fresh, spring air after spending months cooped up indoors.

In the mid-1910s, the May School Festivals went on hiatus for a while. And despite a few attempts to revive the annual tradition in the 1920s, the schools decided it wasn't worth the effort to organize every year and the tradition ended. Although other groups in Marathon County have occasionally put on a May Fete with Maypoles in the decades since.



A TALE OF TWO DEPOTS

By Gary Gisselman, Librarian/Historian

It is unusual for a city like Wausau to have two remaining railroad depots.

Through the years the people of Wausau have felt attached to the history of these depots and the owners have always been able to find a good use for them.

These depots - the Chicago & Northwestern depot on West Washington Street and the Milwaukee Road depot on Grant Street - are not the original depots. These two brick clad depots replaced the original wooden depots in the early part of the 1900's.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad line ran east and west in Marathon County, starting in Eland in Shawano County and coming west through Ringle, Hatley, Wausau, Marathon City, and Edgar and then coming into Marshfield. The Milwaukee Road line ran north and south in Marathon County coming from Junction City, through Dancy to Wausau and eventually to Merrill.

*Milwaukee Road Depot
Depot c. 1950*



These two railroads played an important part in the economic, social, and demographic history of Marathon County. They provided an alternative way of bringing timber to the sawmills and of sending the finished lumber to the large markets rather than using the waterways that were slow and dangerous. The railroads also were a major element in bringing new settlers into Marathon County. The railroads provided a scheduled trip from the big cities to Marathon County instead of by stagecoach or by simply walking from Milwaukee or Sheboygan.

The Milwaukee Road depot at 720 Grant Street was built in 1902 by Chicago architects Charles Frost and Alfred Granger. It has gone through a variety of owners and is now owned

by the Timekeepers Distillery. The profile of the depot was used by the Wausau Insurance Companies as their logo for long lasting marketing campaign.

The Chicago & Northwestern depot at 209 West Washington Street is on Clarke Island in the middle of the Wisconsin River. Passenger service left Wausau in the 1950's and since then there have been many businesses that have called it home including Marathon Travel and Billy Moy's One Word Inn restaurant.

The railroads brought the freight and the people into central Wisconsin. The depots were that gateway into the new life that awaited new settlers. The depots provided the platform for sending the young people of the community off to war. The depots were also the platform to greet people like President Coolidge, General Eisenhower, and Wendell Willke. These depots reveal a strong part of the story of Marathon County and the city of Wausau.



*Chicago & Northwestern
c. 2020*

Calling all book lovers,
**AUTHOR TALK WITH
 JANET NEWMAN**

Join us on May 14th at 2:00pm
 for the launch of a new historical
 book!

The Marathon County Historical
 Society welcomes author Janet
 Newman to the Woodson History
 Center, as she discusses her
 new book, *Letters from Clara:
 One Intrepid Woman's Travels
 on the Eve of War, 1936-1939.*
 Clara Pagel was a Wausau local
 who traveled the world. Books
 will be available for purchase
 and signing after the talk.

This event is brought to you by
 the Wisconsin Historical
 Society Press &
 Janke Book Store.

*An afternoon in the Garden with
 MY DOLLY AND ME*

The Yawkey Garden welcomes
 you and your doll or stuffed
 friend to take part in a
 garden party. There will be
 refreshments, games and
 a craft. A perfect event for
 enjoying summer weather
 together. This event is suitable
 for children ages 4-13 with an
 adult chaperone. Please call
 715-842-5750 for tickets.

June 18th at 1:00pm
 Yawkey House Museum Garden

TALES BETWEEN



TWO DEPOTS

AND THE STORIES IN BETWEEN
 AS TOLD BY EYE WITNESSES

SUNDAY
 MAY 15
 2022

TOURS FROM
 12PM
 UNTIL
 4PM

ADMISSION
\$15
 PURCHASE YOUR TICKET
 AT ANY LOCATION
 ON DAY OF EVENT

LOCATIONS INCLUDED IN THIS TOUR

HIAWATHA TRAIN DEPOT
 NOW TIMEKEEPER
 720 GRANT STREET

**HIAWATHA
 RESTAURANT & LOUNGE**
 731 GRANT STREET

**UNIVERSALIST
 UNITARIAN CHURCH**
 504 GRANT STREET

STEWART INN
 521 GRANT STREET

WAUSAU CLUB
 NOW WAUSAU MUSEUM
 OF CONTEMPORARY ART
 309 MCCLELLAN STREET

**LANDMARK HOTEL
 TOUR NEW APARTMENTS**
 NOW LANDMARK APARTMENTS & SHOPS
 221 SCOTT STREET

WAUSAU RAILROAD DEPOT
 FORMERLY BILLY MOY'S RESTAURANT
 & BATES LEGAL SERVICES
 209 WASHINGTON STREET

WALK THE ROUTE IN ANY ORDER - OR - HOP ON/OFF THE KOLBE & KOLBE TROLLEY!

MAKE YOUR
 LAST STOP
 @ 4PM

HISTORIC CLARK'S ISLAND
ENJOY A COMPLIMENTARY BIG BULL FALLS GOLD BEER
 LOCATED ON THE RIVER BEHIND THE WAUSAU RAILROAD DEPOT ON WASHINGTON ST
 FORMERLY WPS HEADQUARTERS & WAUSAU PAPER CORPORATE OFFICES

THIS FUNDRAISER IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE MARATHON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS CAN BE ADDRESSED TO JANE JANKE JOHNSON @ 715-297-1946

"Tales between Two Depots" on Sunday, May 15th from Noon-4 pm is a self
 guided walking tour that will take everyone past seven of Wausau's most iconic
 historic buildings. At each stop participants will meet characters from Wausau's
 past who will give a brief overview of each building and tell stories of the people
 and events that made the building an important part of our history and shaped our
 community into what it is today.

A HOUSE FULL OF HISTORY EVENT MAY 14TH

By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts

The history of a community is often told by the things that are left behind. Since the 1950s, the Marathon County Historical Society has been collecting these “things” and using them to tell the stories of farm wives, factory workers, children, business owners, and more. What we collect is a visual narrative of our lives and history. As Wausau celebrates the 150th anniversary of receiving their city charter, the work of the historical society is even more important.

At any given time, a very small selection of these artifacts, photos, and documents are on display in our permanent or rotating exhibits. There are tens of thousands of other items that are rarely, if ever, seen by the public. They're not a secret, we're just waiting for the right time to introduce you to them.

On Saturday, May 14th from 1 - 4:00 we're hosting our House Full of History open house event. We're throwing open the doors of several storage areas and letting you in to take a look (but not touch). You'll see how our artifact curators and archivists work diligently to collect, preserve, and store the objects entrusted to the historical society. You'll have the opportunity to see what's behind the locked doors, ask questions about what our staff does, see what we collect, and more.

To make things more interesting, we'll be bringing out some of our oldest, most unusual, and more interesting items for you to see. A dress from the 1840s, a mourning pin for Abraham Lincoln, a Wausau Fire Department fire call ledger, historic photos and postcards, a variety of unique scrapbooks, the mummified squirrel from the Yawkey House (our most frequently asked about artifact), and other things. If there's something in particular that interests you, let us know and we'll see if we have it.

No matter your age (kids are welcome!), you'll enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at what the historical society collects and how we preserve the history of Marathon County and the people who called this home.



THANK YOU DONORS!

James and Barbara Force
in honor of Jerry Viste

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Brenda Everson, Alyson Pederson,
Robert Pittman, Jerry & Marlene Kort

Enjoy the summer weather at **STORYTIME IN THE GARDEN**

Join us every month this summer for stories and playtime in the beautiful Yawkey House formal garden. Enjoy the flowers and sit under the pergola to hear a book or two.

Storytimes are at 1pm on June 9th, July 14th, August 18th, and September 8th.

Miss History Chats this week? **WATCH US ON PUBLIC ACCESS!**

Our History Chats programs will now be broadcast on public access television! Tune in to see recordings of our recent History Chats, at least one a day - maybe more!

April is the month for **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION!**

It's a month of appreciation and a time to thank all of our wonderful volunteers - both past and present. Sharing your talents and time with us makes the work the Historical Society does possible, and we certainly couldn't do it without you!

Come visit us at **WAUSAU PRIDE FEST**

The MCHS will be celebrating pride this year at Wausau Pride Fest! Stop by our booth at the 400 Block on Sat, June 4th 11am-3pm to say hello and pick up some fun goodies.

Join us online for **HISTORY CHATS & HISTORY SPEAKS - LIVE!**

History Chats

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

Upcoming History Chats . . .

In May, we will discuss some more *Places You Should Know*. Join us on the 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th to hear about some of the remarkable places in Marathon County.

History Speaks

with the
Marathon County
Historical Society

History Speaks is back in person! *History Speaks* is a 1 hour program presented by a guest speaker each month at 2pm, and is currently presented in person, as well as live streamed on YouTube and Facebook.

Upcoming History Speaks . . .

Apr. 23: Who Were the Wausau Group? presented by Erick Konop

May 21: Marshfield: 150 Years and More presented by Don Schnitzler

Jun 11: Tuba Ted: A Documentary presented by Susan Reetz

Jul 23: Conscious of a Brilliant Future: 150 Years of the City of Wausau presented by Ben Clark

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

PLANT SALE

Herbs • Annuals • Hanging Baskets



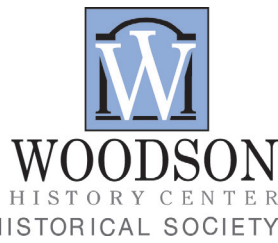
Wausau Area Garden Club

Yawkey House Museum

Friday, May 13th
Noon-5pm

Saturday, May 14th
9am-1pm

Free Parking available at First United Methodist Church and First Presbyterian Church



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

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

Return Service Requested

Looking for weekend plans?

A HISTORIC SATURDAY ITINERARY - MAY 14TH

Start off your day by joining the **Tales Between Two Depots tour** as they travel from the Hiawatha Depot to the Wausau Depot. Next, head over to the **Woodson History Center** at 1pm to tour the archives and see their most unique artifacts at **A House Full Of History**. While you are there stop by the lower level at 2pm to hear **Janet Newman's Talk** about her book, *Letters from Clara*. After that, you can finish your day by getting a ticket for the 3pm **Yawkey House Museum** tour.

It's sure to be a full day - but learning about history is always worth it!

PHOTOS FROM . . .

A VINTAGE SPRINGTIME TEA 2022



A Big Thank You for
A VINTAGE SPRINGTIME TEA

After lots of planning and pushing back the date, our annual Valentine Tea was transformed into A Vintage Springtime Tea, and it was a huge success! We welcomed 37 guests who enjoyed three courses of sweets and savories, and learned from our guest presenter, Carol Knuth, all about the history of tea. If you joined us - Thank You, the support of our members means the world to us. If you were one of our volunteers, we can't thank you enough for all you do - only the best people will wash that many dishes for free!