

From the President

Many Ways to Connect with Local History

I invite everyone—members of the Marathon County Historical Society and nonmembers alike—to open our website at www.marathoncountyhistory.org, look at the yellow banner alerting the reader to our COVID-19 response, and click on the red “Click here for more information” link.



Russ Wilson

Once you have done that, three avenues are available for your inspiration and education.

First, you will see that our staff remain hard at work despite the temporary closure of the Yawkey House and the Woodson History Center to the public.

Second, you can scroll down to “Our Latest Work,” under which are a multitude of links to our new content developed during the pandemic. There you will find history additions, online exhibits, and presentations on our YouTube channel. Just a glance will let you know that you can spend hours reviewing this wide-ranging, interesting, and informative content. We could not be more proud of the excellent work our staff have achieved.

That brings us to the third avenue: You can donate online to add (or even increase) your support, without which MCHS would not be the dynamic, robust history center it is.

Now for just one more link to explore. In preparation

-President, please turn to Page 2

Inside:

- 3:** Schuette Metals donates shelving
- 5:** History Speaks goes virtual
- 7:** Curators Desk: Athens Store plate



Find out about life before electricity, and a wealth of other local information, in the online exhibit at our website, www.marathoncountyhistory.org.

-President, continued from Page 1

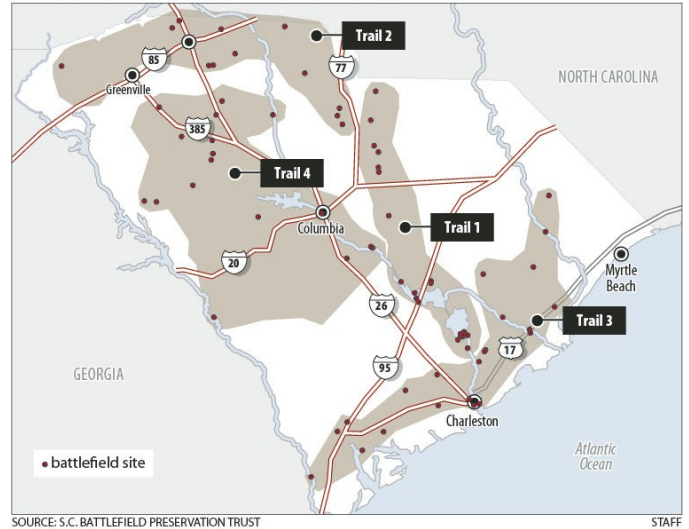
for our previous Wanigan issue (2020 No. 2, mailed in early May), I wrote a piece that was intended, at the time of the writing, to appear in that issue. COVID-19, however, intervened. Does that ever seem as if it were a year ago! The piece, about the Liberty Trail, was meant to celebrate National Historic Preservation Month, which was May. So if you would like to suspend your attention to the press of current reality and pretend for a moment to return to the time before COVID-19 struck, I invite you to check out the Liberty Trail. Here's how you can find it: On our website's home page, scroll down to Recent Posts and click on the map of the Liberty Trail.

As we prepare our reopening plans, we look forward to seeing our members, visitors, volunteers, and all those with which MCHS partners.

Stay safe and healthy!
Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President

The Liberty Trail

At least 69 sites of SC battles, skirmishes to be included in an app of American Revolution trails as the fights approach their 250th anniversaries.



SOURCE: S.C. BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

STAFF

Map by *The Post & Courier*, Charleston, South Carolina, online at www.postandcourier.com/

Welcome to our New Members

Thomas Backer Judith N. Beier
Steven & Jane Gjerde Jayne Cronin
Cassandra Glassford & Kristofor Bucholtz

Gifts Received

In honor of Dr. John Hattenhauer's birthday by Carol Jamieson

In memory of George Alafouzos from:
Scott & Theresa Miles Dr. John Hattenhauer
Charles & Christine Frieberg Patrick Gosz

In memory of Shelley Dodge Green from:
Patrick Gosz

In memory of Deanna Zernicke from:
Julie White & Joey Holzem

In memory of Allen Hettinga from:
Denny & Mary Richmond Bev & Dave Smith
William & Nancy Bradley Jim & Mary Forer
Robert & Rose Koehler Ila Brister
Geri Turner & Family Gary & June Beier
Peter & Nancy Hessert Joan Miller
Clay & Gail Stebbins Rita Crooks
The Backer/Newberry Fund of Vanguard Charitable

Additional donations from:
William Amsrud Paul Tushner
The John & Alice Forester Charitable Trust

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Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts
Linda Forbess, Curator of Textiles

THE WANIGAN

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



The Marathon County Historical Society is supported in part by City of Wausau Room Tax Funding.

A BIG THANK YOU!

New donated shelves increase MCHS artifact storage capacity

By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts

A HUGE thank you goes out to Schuette Metals for fabricating a dozen new shelves for a very old shelving unit in our artifact storage area. While our artifact collections continue to grow, our storage space does not. This means we have to be creative in how we use our existing, very old, shelving. Our inquiry to Schuette Metals about the cost of making more shelves was met with an offer to produce them at no cost to the Historical Society.

Tony Schmidt, Director of Education & Safety, got the ball rolling with plant manager Justin Danielski. Their engineering intern Eric Breitenfeldt created a computer model based on the one spare shelf we had. The metal was laser cut by Jon Hunholz and removed from the skeleton by Armando Alcione. Central Wisconsin Finishing, a sister company to Schuette Metals, powder coated the metal. Gary Lavigne then formed the flat metal into the shelf shape, and it was spot welded by Taylor Eckard.

Thanks to this great team at Schuette Metals, we've greatly increased storage space on the large shelving unit that holds our "technology" artifacts—typewriters, radios, televisions, telephones, computers and more. According to Schmidt, the Schuette Metals and Central Wisconsin Finishing teams are proud to support the Marathon County Historical Society in their mission to preserve the history of our county.



Tony Schmidt (left) and Justin Danielski from Schuette Metals visit the MCHS collections room with Russ Forbess, curatorial assistant.



Russ Forbess, curatorial assistant, places a vintage radio on one of the new shelves.

Contact MCHS

Phone: 715-842-5750 - **Email:** info@marathoncountyhistory.org
Website: www.marathoncountyhistory.org

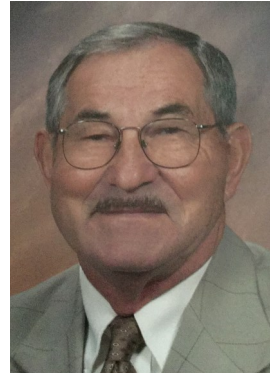
Social Media



NEWS AND INFORMATION

In Memoriam

Allen Hettinga, who passed away in June, was a tireless volunteer for the Marathon County Historical Society. In 1995, after the purchase of the Woodson House, Allen spent a month helping his wife Mary Jane (then librarian; later she became Executive Director) move the library from the third floor of the Yawkey House to the first floor of the Woodson House. Because Allen had retired in 1992 he had time to help sort, organize, rearrange and clean the new space. He searched out inexpensive lumber and built shelves for the archival collection.



Allen Hettinga

Allen knew the county like the back of his hand. It was so helpful for him to drive Mary Jane out and about when she needed to photograph farms or landmarks in the small towns and villages. It was especially helpful when Mary Jane participated in organizing the Barn Workshop, one of the Wisconsin Historical Society's initiatives. Allen drove while Mary Jane photographed for the slide show she would present.

When the Mosinee Public Library decided to donate their archives to the MCHS, Allen helped to pick up all of their collection. He was always available for the heavy lifting! Before the restoration of the Yawkey House, Allen removed all of the cupboards in the kitchen to save the Society the expense.

Over the years,, Allen helped with many events, including our ice cream socials, Living History Festivals, Christmas events, and numerous members gatherings. He had a very friendly demeanor and made visitors and members alike feel welcome and at ease.

Allen believed in the mission of the MCHS and was always eager to help in any way he could. It's volunteers like him that make the Society successful in its mission.

Help choose next 'Postcards from the Past'

MCHS is launching a participatory video series this fall entitled "Postcards from the Past." Each video will feature a postcard from our Photo Collection, to explore an aspect of Marathon County's past. At the end of each video, we will invite viewers to help decide on a postcard to talk about the following week.



The postcard image reprinted here is one that we know almost nothing about, beyond what you see. It was never mailed, and no messages were written on the back. It was donated anonymously back in the 1970s.

And yet, there are a lot of interesting things going on in this picture. You might notice the clothing the people are wearing, or the make of the automobile, the children's facial expressions, or even the craftsmanship that went into the house in the background.

As much as we enjoy sharing topics that interest *us*, we want to give you, our supporters, a chance to weigh in on what kind of topics and stories you want to learn about and explore. Watch our YouTube Channel and Facebook page to see when the next video goes up, and how you can take part in choosing the next topic.

HISTORY SPEAKS



New topics & format for History Speaks

One hundred years ago—in August 1920—the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified and became law, giving the full vote to Wisconsin women for the first time. By the mid-1920s, Marathon County had even elected two women, including one of three women elected to the State Assembly.

So how did the Cause of Women's Suffrage develop here in Central Wisconsin, over the decades leading up to the 19th Amendment? And what did the women of Marathon County do with the vote once they had it?

To find out, join us for History Speaks on the Air, at 2 p.m. on September 19, 2020. This presentation, by archivist Ben Clark, will be streamed on the Marathon County Historical Society Facebook page and YouTube channel. It will be available for viewing later on both platforms, and is jointly presented by the Historical Society and the Marathon County Public Library.

The Historical Society is grateful to Janke Book Store and to Compass Properties for their sponsorship of the History Speaks series.

In Conjunction with
the Marathon County
Public Library



History Speaks

on the Air

Additional topics:

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858, with Brett Barker; October 17, 2020, 2 p.m. A history of the Great Debates of 1858 between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, two of the greatest public speakers of the age.

At Rest: Death and Mourning Customs, with Kathy Volkmann; October 31, 2020, 2 p.m. A social history of how we have dealt with death and mourning.

History Chats: School stories at mid-day

Join librarian Gary Gisselman Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. for a short presentation (10-15 minutes) and discussion on a chapter of history from Marathon County. September's History Chats will look at different aspects of school history from across Marathon County.

September 10: Early Schools of Wausau
September 17: Rural Schools of Marathon County
September 24: Church Schools in Marathon County
October 1: Marathon County Schools in the Twentieth Century



Tune in on the Historical Society's Facebook Page for Facebook Live History Chats. They will be recorded and available for later viewing on our YouTube channel.

Century-old plate advertises Athens store

By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts

At the turn of the 20th century, many local merchants advertised their stores or services by distributing useful (and sometimes not so useful) items such as plates, pitchers, thermometers, letter openers and mirrors. The Athens Farmer's Store in Athens, Wisconsin, distributed this plate during the first decade of the century. The center of the china plate is adorned with an image depicting a beautiful woman and "With Compliments of Athens Farmer's Store Co." While not very useful as plates, they were likely used as decorative items in many farm houses.

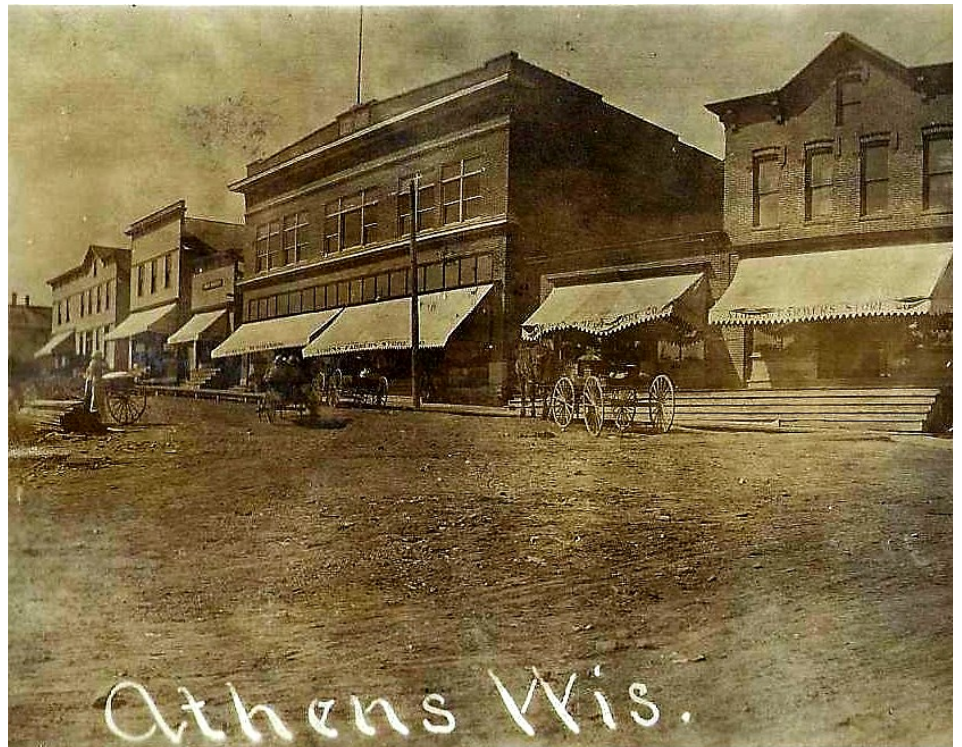


Plate from the Athens Farmer's Store was useful as an advertising item and a decorative item.

According to the *Athens, Wisconsin, 1890 - 1990 Centennial Book*, The Athens Farmer's Store was located on at the site of the present Athens IGA (101 Alfred Street). It was organized to meet a demand for good quality, moderately priced commodities for local residents. Their billhead proclaimed "Dealers in General Merchandise - We Buy All Kinds of Farm Produce". It was incorporated in 1900 with William Lehman as president, Reinhold Paersch as secretary, Ferdinand Lonsdorf as secretary/manager, and directors Gustav Lueck, Charles Dietrich, Gustav Doering, Carl Vetter and August Fiedler.

Quickly outgrowing the space, a new store building was constructed next to the original structure. In later years, store patrons recalled that when purchases were made and change was needed, money was moved from the first floor store to an upstairs office via a system of covered containers that traveled back and forth on wires.

During the Depression years, the Athens Farmer's Store filed for bankruptcy and was closed.

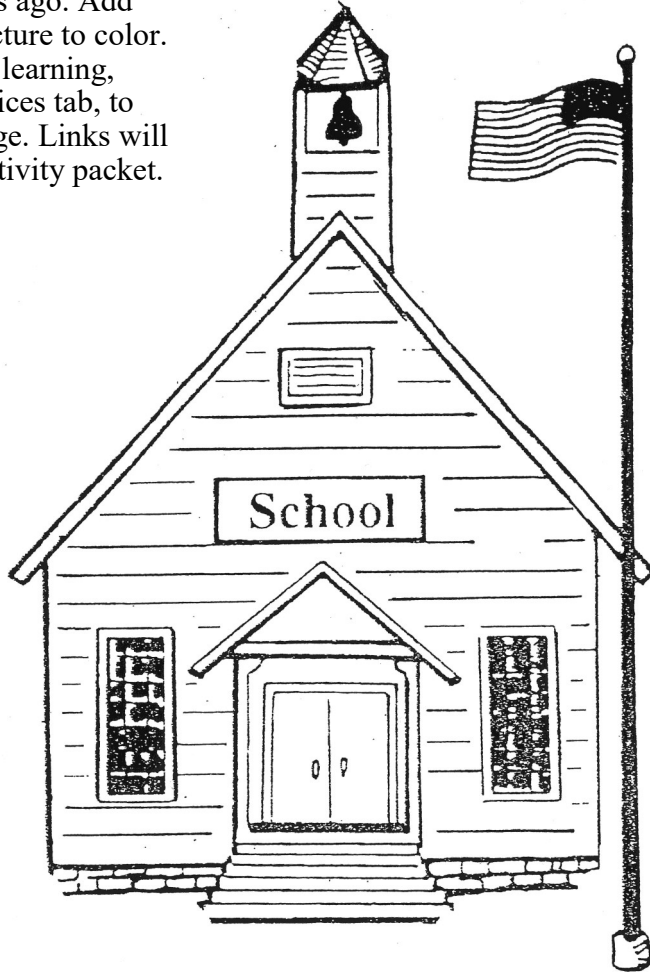


Postcard photo from about 1910 shows the Athens Farmer's Store.

This c. 1910 postcard shows the original store building on the corner, which had previously housed the John Munes & Son general merchandise store. The large building to the left was built to accommodate their increasing patronage. Although the store had already moved into the larger location at this point, both buildings (and the small storefront between them) have Athens Farmer's Store awnings. All of these buildings remain today.

Back to school!

In the 1900s, children often learned in one-room schools. Imagine yourself 120 years ago. Add yourself and your friends to this picture to color. For more one-room school fun and learning, check out the MCHS website, Services tab, to find the Little Red Schoolhouse page. Links will take you to video lessons and an activity packet.





Marathon County Historical Society
410 McIndoe Street
Wausau, Wisconsin 54403

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Membership Matters!

Your participation makes a difference!

The Marathon County Historical Society depends on memberships and other financial donations to continue our important work of preserving local history and sharing it with the community.

Becoming a member is easy! Visit our website www.marathoncountyhistory.org/about-us/membership to donate online, or email info@marathoncountyhistory.org to have membership materials sent to you.

If you already are a member, thank you! Please consider giving a gift membership.

Mark your calendar

History Speaks On the Air topics:

September 10: Women's Suffrage in Central WI; Ben Clark

October 17: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858; Brett Barker

October 31: At Rest: Death and Mourning Customs; Kathy Volkmann

MARATHON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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.

WOODSON HISTORY CENTER YAWKEY HOUSE MUSEUM

410 McIndoe St., Wausau, WI 54403

Office: 715-842-5750 Library: 715-848-0378

Web site: www.marathoncountyhistory.org

***We are closed temporarily because of the COVID-19 virus,
but our website is always open!***