



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARATHON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • 2021 No. 3 SUMMER

PRESERVED FOR GENERATIONS PARK EXHIBIT OPEN

By Ben Clark, Archivist / Historian

Some of you may remember a Wanigan article from a few years ago announcing that we were working on a new exhibit and asking for your stories, pictures, and artifacts from Marathon County Parks. Actually, it was in the spring of 2020, but it certainly doesn't feel like a single year has passed. And now, after a year on hold during the pandemic, the exhibit is finally open.

Whether the parks have been a place to get away for a walk in the natural world or to get together with friends — the parks have been the setting for more than a century of stories. And this exhibit hopes to capture some of those stories by telling about the County Parks themselves and the many visitors who have spent time in one over the last century.

Preserved for Generations is open to the public on the second floor of the Woodson History Center. Out of an abundance of caution, we will not be hosting a members opening reception for this exhibit.

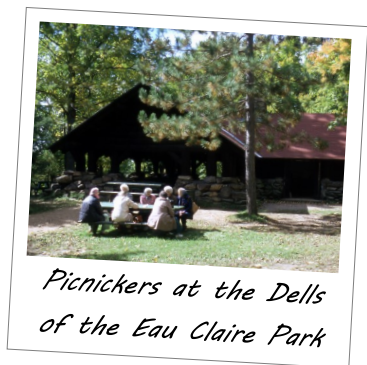
The public is invited to submit photos sharing their park experiences and memories. The images will be added to a video display. To become a part of the exhibit, email digital images to bclark@marathoncountyhistory.org or drop off physical photos (to be scanned and returned) at the front desk.

To mark the 100+1 Anniversary of Marathon County parks, the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department will be celebrating with live music, food trucks, games and fireworks on Saturday, August 28th from 3 pm to 9:30 pm at Marathon Park.



Preserved for Generations: A Century of the Marathon County Parks System tells the story of the creation of the Marathon County Parks and how they've changed to fit the needs of the generations of visitors in the last century.

Parks have provided opportunities to get away and to get together. Parks have been places to have a picnic, to camp out, to play some games or hold a sporting event, to go fishing and boating, and more. Over the last century, the institution of our County Parks (and all the activities held there) have helped to bind the County together.



FAREWELL AND WELCOME

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President



Russ Wilson

It feels so good to begin the process of reopening! Please come see us at the Woodson History Center. We expect to reopen the Yawkey House Museum soon- once we return to full staffing.

We say a fond farewell to Gary Walters, who has retired as Curator of the Yawkey House after serving MCHS for many years. I always admired the baseball team fortunate enough to have the "utility fielder," that rare person who could play third, second, first base, outfield, maybe even catcher. Gary was our highly valued utility player who could, and did, do just about anything to make our visitors' experiences pleasant and memorable. Thank you, Gary, and here's the best to you in the future.

We are excited to have two new faces as we reopen. Our new Curator of Events and Volunteer Coordinator is Sheryl Del Conte. Sheryl is a Connecticut native who earned her Advertising and Marketing degree at Syracuse University. Sheryl did educational event planning at Greenheck for over seven years and is very active in the Wausau area community. Her enthusiasm is infectious.

And our new Front Desk Manager is Alison Coady, who graduated from Wausau East and UW-Stevens Point in 2019 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design. Alison did a stint in London working for a marketing company before COVID brought her home. Alison will greet visitors, answer questions, do graphic design, and handle our venue rentals. We are very fortunate to have these talented women on our team. Please join us in welcoming Sheryl & Alison.

No longer at the front desk, Administrative Director Janet Klutterman has moved upstairs, but remains Membership Coordinator. Janet is dusting off her Marketing and PR skills from her many years in Chicago theatre to help promote MCHS.

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

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

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.

THE EAU CLAIRE VILLA: A SCHOFIELD LANDMARK

By Ben Clark, Archivist / Historian

In the early decades of the twentieth century, if you rented a boat to take it out to enjoy the water or go fishing, chances are you rented it from the Eau Claire Villa in Schofield.

The Villa was started by Frank and Margaret Fullmer in 1905 and it was located on the flowage of the Eau Claire River in Schofield. The Fullmers had run a general store in Schofield for a decade previous to that.

The Fullmer's beach and boat livery would be well placed for the sharp increase in the development of Schofield that took place in the 1910s and 1920s. With the building of the new Rothschild paper mill and the creation of the electric trolley line to it from Wausau, the area became the thriving community.

And as new additions were added to Schofield, the Villa remained something like the local park for the area. Before the embrace of parks systems by the County and local villages like Schofield, these kinds of private, commercial parks were quite popular (another being the nearby Rothschild Park).



Wausau Daily Herald June 12, 1926



This was the era in which there were no public (or private) pools or beaches for people to cool off in the height of summer. The rapid and dangerous currents of the Wisconsin River made it dangerous to swim, especially as this predated swimming lessons, and many people were not strong swimmers. But the Fullmers personally kept an eye on visitors to their bathing beach, to ensure everyone stayed safe.

Visitors to the Eau Claire Villa also made use of the Fullmers' flotilla of canoes, rowboats, and some of the County's first motorboats. The Villa was located on the calm Eau Claire flowage, which emptied out into the Wisconsin River. Especially with the damming of the Wisconsin River for the paper mill in 1910 and the resulting creation of Lake Wausau, the Villa was a favorite starting point to get out to the whole area.

By the 1930s, the popularity of the Villa declined. But it remained a handy landmark in the area, in part because it became a favorite place to ice skate during the winter. In fact there were regional hockey and speed skating competitions held there, such as some events as part of the Wausau Winter Frolics.

But in 1936, the Fullmers sold the Villa, which became a gas/service station. The Moelzberger Gasoline Company of Antigo operated the oil station in the former boathouse until 1940, when a fire destroyed the Schofield Landmark.

TAKE A RIDE

A SUMMER DRIVING TOUR AROUND MARATHON COUNTY

By Gary Gisselman, Librarian / Historian

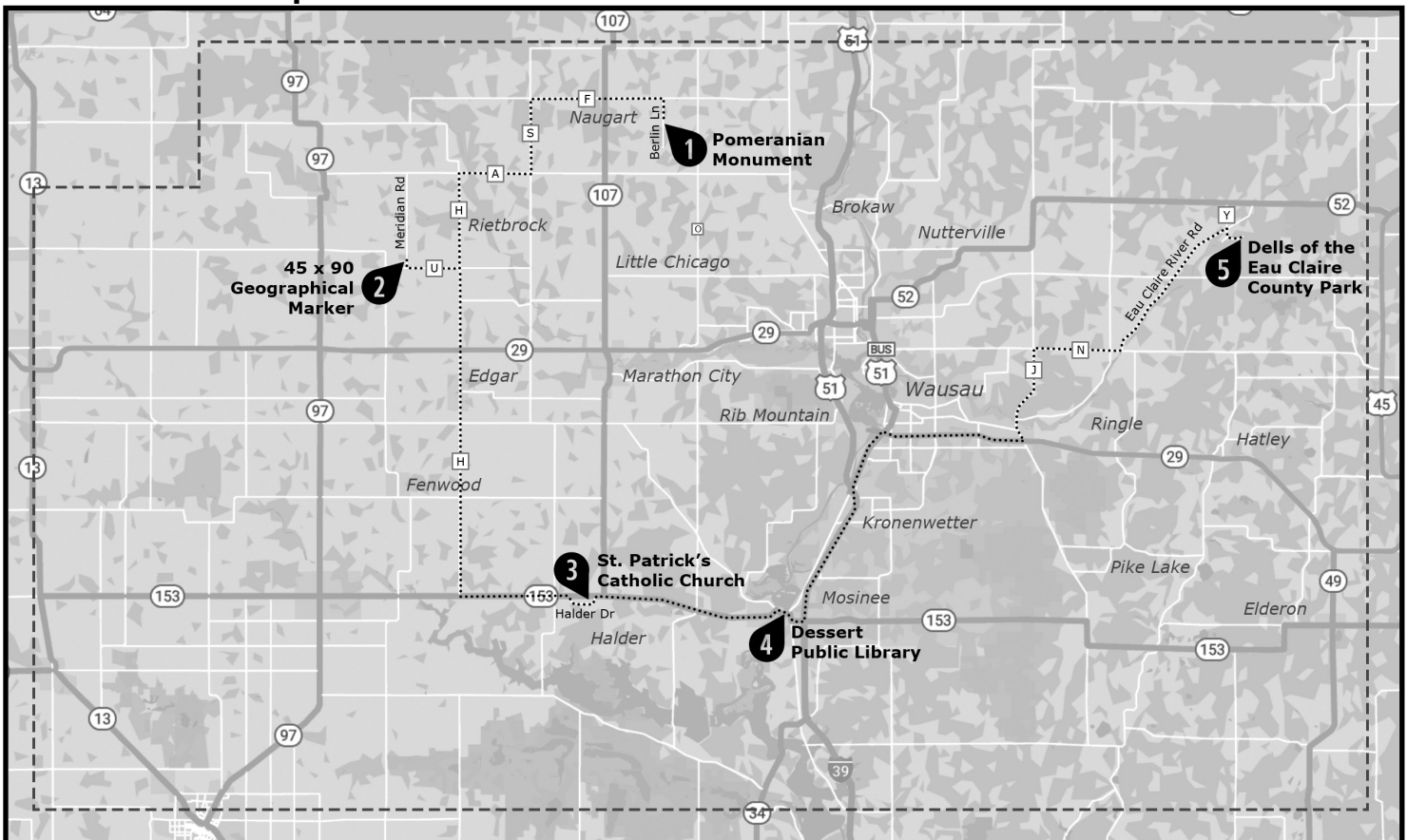
Summer days are a good time to discover some of the historical sites of Marathon County. As one travels through the county, one comes upon a variety of large and small stories that contribute to the larger story of Marathon County history. Take a ride around Marathon County this summer. If you cannot make it now, wait until the fall when the rich colors of the trees give the trip an added treat. Here are five stories that tell a little of the history of Marathon County:

1- Pomeranian Historical Marker

As you travel west in northwestern Marathon County on County Road L take a little side trip going south on Berlin Lane to the little crossroads of Naugart. Here, on the land of the Town of Berlin town hall, there is a red granite monument to the settlers of Marathon County from Pomerania. Pomerania was a part of northern Germany, located south of the Baltic Sea. Currently it is now part of Germany and Poland. These Pomeranians settled in this north western part of Marathon County and also in the city of Wausau. A very influential group of people mostly associated with the growth of many Lutheran Churches.

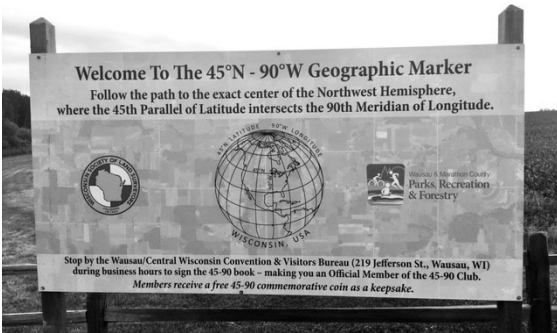


***Please note– map is not to scale**



2- 45x90 Geographical Marker

A small Marathon County Park marking the intersection of the 45th Parallel of Latitude and the 90th Meridian of Longitude. This point is halfway between the north pole and the equator and a quarter of the way around the earth from Greenwich, England. This spot is important because there are only four of these points on the planet Earth and the one here in Marathon County is the most accessible. Two other points are in the ocean and one is in remote China. This small area has a parking lot, a pathway, benches, and signage to make this a very pleasant visit. It is located on Meridian Road, north of Highway 29 in the Town of Rietbrock. After your visit to the marker, head to the office of the Wausau / Central Wisconsin Convention and Visitor's Bureau in Wausau to claim your commemorative coin and sign the book that entitles you to become a member of the 45X90 Club.



3- Halder

A little west of the junction of Highway 107 and Highway 153 is the small community of Halder. You have to make a little jog off of 153 to view the picturesque St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Halder and St. Patrick's was the center of the Irish communities in Marathon County. The first wooden frame church was dedicated in 1872. As the "Irish settlement" continued to grow the need for a larger church became a necessity. The present brick, stone and tile church was built in 1908



4- Dessert Library in Mosinee



On Highway 153 off of Highway 39 and 51 is the city of Mosinee. At 123 Main Street is the Dessert Public Library. It is one of the few buildings in Marathon County outside of Wausau that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It was built in 1898 and designed by noted Milwaukee architect Alexander Eschweiler. The building was given to the city of Mosinee by Joseph Dessert for use as a library. Mr. Dessert operated a sawmill in Mosinee and had extensive lumber holdings throughout Marathon County.

5- Dells of the Eau Claire

On a separate trip, or to make this trip complete, travel to the east side of the Wisconsin River and find yourself on County Road Y in the town of Easton and discover "one of the most beautiful places in Wisconsin" the Dells of the Eau Claire County Park. The solid granite rock formations make this the landmark that it is. This park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. In 1924, the Dells were added to the Marathon County Park System and it was further developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The foot bridge, walking trails, and the north park entrance sign were added in the 1930's. Of all destinations in Marathon County, the Dells of the Eau Claire should be required visiting.



Swimming for Everyone!!!

By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts



Into the early years of the 20th century, women's fashion for the beach typically consisted of a neck-to-ankle ensemble of wool bloomers covered by a tunic, stockings, canvas shoes and a cap. These modest styles were not intended for swimming - the mass of wool could act as a weight if it was drenched, causing the wearer to drown. Instead, they were meant for "bathing", which consisted of relaxing on the beach protected from the sun by an umbrella, or splashing about in shallow water. A proper woman would never expose too much flesh when wearing a bathing suit or engage in the strenuous activity of swimming.

The 1920s unleashed a new era of style, exposed skin and freedom in swimwear, especially for women. A leader in the burgeoning swimwear industry was Jantzen, a company founded in 1910 that made more fashionable, and less modest, one-piece knit wool suits. In 1921 Jantzen launched "the suit that changed bathing to swimming" with a one-piece "swimming suit" that clung to the body yet still moved freely for the wearer. Often sporting bold colors, stripes and geometric designs, the suits were fashionable, and functional for swimming.

A rectangular advertisement with a black border. The text reads: "Learn to Swim" in large letters, followed by "under expert supervision" in smaller text, and "WITHOUT COST" in large, bold letters. Below that, it says "The Y. M. C. A. Annual Learn to Swim Campaign" and "June 11 to 14". To the right of the text is a small illustration of a woman in a swimsuit sitting on a beach. At the bottom, it says "CLASSES DAILY BEGINNING AT 2 P. M. OPEN TO BOYS TEN YEARS OR OLDER" and "Membership in the 'Y' not required." and "Watch for registration blank in this paper or call at the Y. M. C. A."/>

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From the outset, Jantzen swimsuits were intended for athletic use. The company started a marketing campaign to convince consumers to embrace swimming as a leisure activity, which in turn would increase sales. To promote this concept they began free "Learn-to-Swim-Week" campaigns for people of all ages, complete with graduation certificates, competitions and department store tie-ins. Swimming clubs sprang up across the country and the company assisted with overseeing swimming pool construction projects. To further encourage swimming in public waterways, the Jantzen Swimming Association promoted clean water programs to provide healthy environments for swimming.

5/22/1923 Wausau Daily Herald - While it's not known if this YMCA program was part of the Jantzen "Learn to Swim Week" effort happening at this time, it was part of the growing trend to promote exercise and water safety by teaching children to swim.

Jantzen's "Red Diving Girl" logo (above) was emblazoned on the front hip of millions of Jantzen swimming suits over the decades. The arched-back female sporting a Jantzen suit herself embodied the American ideals of youth, grace, sex appeal and athletic prowess.

Our curators thank all who donated wooden hangers. Collections now has more than enough of them for the preservation of our military, police and fire uniforms.

The next step is to pad the hangers, and we are requesting donations of polyester quilt batting. (No wool or cotton, please.) If you would like to donate, please call 715-842-5750 to arrange a drop-off time, or bring it to the Woodson History Center. Thank you for supporting the Marathon County Historical Society!

History Chats

Join us Thursdays at 12:30 pm for **History Chats**. Gary Gisselman and Ben Clark livestream a 20 minute presentation on Facebook and YouTube. Programs are recorded and are available for later viewing.

History Speaks

at the Woodson History Center

August Chats feature More Park Stories

August 5– Rib Mountain State Park

August 12– Stewart Park

August 19– Rothschild Park

August 26– Behind the Scenes of our new *Preserved for Generations: A Century of the Marathon County Parks System*

Join Christine Kadonsky on Saturday, August 21 at 2 pm for our next

History Speaks– From Wheat to Dairy Farming: How Wisconsin became America’s Dairyland

In this livestream presentation, Christine will explain how Wisconsin transitioned from wheat to dairy farming in the 1800’s, and the difficulties homesteaders faced establishing farms in Marathon County.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

-From Yvonne Schuster in memory of Adele Blair
-From Harlan & Elaine Grinde in memory of Ronald Beckman
-From Jacob & Marsha Klein in memory of Ronald Beckman
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John & Alice Forester Fund as administered by Family Office Solutions LLC
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Thank you to Ole’s Locksmith for the donation of keys.

Thank you to Leigh Presley, DeAnn Schubring, and Clear View Nursery for donating and planting the beautiful annuals in the planters, around the Yawkey House fountain, and in front of the Woodson History Center.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Tim Lyga, Eileen Riehle, Tom Rodemeier, and Susan Schilder

2021 VOICES FROM THE PAST: PINE GROVE CEMETERY TOUR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Make plans to join costumed reenactors exploring local history through the stories of its residents. Watch for details.

Please contact Sheryl Del Conte if you’d like to volunteer for this event.

sdelconte@marathoncountyhistory.org or
(715) 842-5750

THANK YOU GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

Weeding and thinning is necessary to reap beautiful rewards, but not the most glamorous job in a garden. So to our garden volunteers, a hearty “thank you”. When you drive or walk by our gardens, please admire the beauty and appreciate all their hard work.



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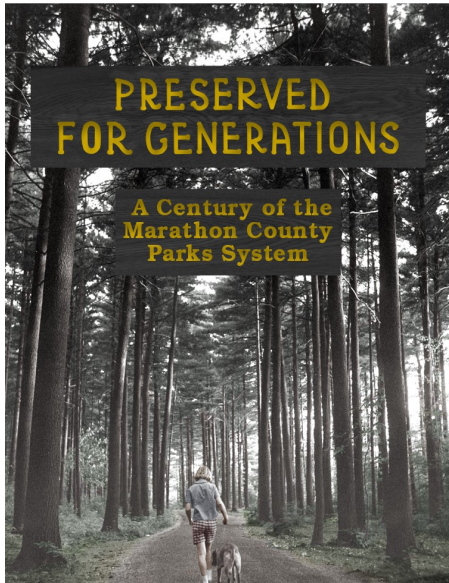


Exhibit Now Open!
Woodson History Center
Tuesday—Friday
9 am—4:30 pm
Saturday & Sunday
1—4:30 pm

