

The WANIGAN

The Newsletter of the Marathon County Historical Society

No.3 Summer 2022

THE YEAR IS 1872, WHO WILL YOU MEET IN THE
BRAND NEW CITY OF WAUSAU?



pieces

FROM THE PAST

LIVING HISTORY CEMETERY TOURS

SEPT 25, 2022

PARTNERING WITH THE CITY OF WAUSAU TO CELEBRATE



More information on page 6

MY VERY SHORT GRATITUDE LIST

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President

Perhaps you've seen Jimmy Fallon's "Thank You Notes" skit. Laced with satire, it's a riot. My thank yous aren't funny, but they are sincere. Here follows a very short list of things high on my gratitude scale. There's this cognitive bias known as "loss aversion" because human beings experience loss at about twice the intensity that we experience gain - according to, among others, Nobel Laureates Daniel Kahneman and Richard Thaler. In my view, a consequence of this finding is that we may fail to appreciate what we have.

Case in point - the weather. Often throughout the year we complain about how cold it is, how dreary, how cloudy . . . and so on. So "Thank you, Jet Stream" which during the summer of 2022 has veered just below Wausau to give us gloriously pleasant sun and relatively low humidity for outdoor recreation. I'd guess that 99% of the U.S. population, who are sweltering in triple digit heat indexes and extreme storms, would give their eye teeth to ride their bicycles in the fabulous weather we've been having (at least as of this writing).

Also, "Thank you, Wausau Wheelers" for a range of road and gravel biking opportunities that don't exist in other communities. I've met riders from Wisconsin Rapids, Plover, Medford, Shawano, and Rhinelander who ride with the Wheelers because their communities don't offer what ours does.

"Thank you, Wausau Nordic Ski Club" for offering a comparable range of cross-country ski activities. Let us hope that the Jet Stream will deliver abundant snowfall to Nine Mile this coming season!

If the pain of loss is felt twice as intensely as gains, might there be a philosophy that teaches us to minimize the bad and appreciate the good? Oh yes, there is. "Thank you, Seneca" for your exquisitely articulated writings on Roman Stoic Philosophy, and "Thank you, William B. Irving", Dayton University professor of philosophy, for your championing the resurrection of Seneca's writings that had been lost to our popular history for the last two thousand years. To read his philosophies for yourself, check out these works by Professor Irving: *A Guide to the Good Life* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *The Stoic Challenge* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2019).

To round out this very short list, "Thank you, MCHS - including it's staff, volunteers, directors, donors and supporters" for being the unique place that presents the history of Marathon County. This year our programming highlights have included A Vintage Springtime Tea, My Dolly and Me: A Garden Party, Kid's History Day and more. Come see our exhibits, come use our research library, and come stroll or sit in the Yawkey House garden. What a great place in which to take mental account of those things which inspire our gratitude!

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.

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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.

THE COLOR OF TROLLEYS

By Ben Clark, Archivist/Historian

About the Wanigan Header. . .

In 1906, the Wausau Electric Streetcar Company finally established trolley service in Wausau. Before long the line was extended up to the foot of north hill and down to the Rothschild Pavilion (also owned and operated by the Streetcar company), and also crossed over the bridge to the west side. And until 1940, when the trolleys were retired in favor of a fleet of brand-new buses, they were present for some of the most iconic and memorable pictures taken in the Wausau area.

A few years ago, I had the realization that all the pictures we had of the trolleys in Marathon County were in black and white, so what color would they have been? The handful of

colorized postcards we have showed trolleys colored with an eye to what would make a good scene, not necessarily a consistent color scheme. Out of town colorists decided to make our trolleys green, orange, yellow, and brown in those postcards—which really doesn't answer the ongoing question here.

So, I did some digging over a few months and I eventually found that the correct answer was that, in fact the Wausau-Schofield trolleys were yellow. It was probably a bright yellow that leaned more towards a yellow-orange (like the iconic, school bus yellow color you will be familiar with). And depending on the model, a trolley might

also have orange-maroon painted accents on doors and trim.

The idea that the trolleys were yellow was actually what led me to start learning how to colorize images in Photoshop—to see how a trolley scene might have looked. I've learned a lot since that first attempt, and I decided to take another quick pass at colorizing a trolley postcard again, which is the header for this Wanigan.



Check out our VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

We are built on the hard work, generosity, and creativity of our volunteers. Thanks you to each and every person who has helped us out over the years.

To that end, our volunteers have put in an impressive number of hours in the past two years - despite a global pandemic! In 2020 there were 1,522 hours. In 2021 there were 2,426 hours. And in 2022 there have been 466.5 hours - and more are added every day.

On June 5th, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation event to celebrate! Do you want to be invited next year? Call Sheryl Del Conte at 715-842-5750 to find out how you can help.

A PREVIEW OF OUR CEMETERY TOUR

By Gary Gisselman, Librarian/Historian

The Cemetery Tour on September 25th this year gives the Historical Society an opportunity to tell the story and visit the burial sites of people that were influential in the life of Wausau during its 150 years of being a city. Re-enactors will present the stories of people that came to Wausau in its early years and made Wausau the city that it is today. One of the people that the tour will feature will be August Kickbusch, the first mayor of the City of Wausau. Kickbusch was born in Colberg, Germany in 1828. He came to America in 1857 and soon after to Wausau. He would eventually own a merchandise store on the corner of First Street and Washington Street. He was village president and when Wausau became a city in 1872 he was its first

elected mayor. August Kickbusch was involved in many civic organizations and businesses during his life in Wausau. He died May 28, 1901.

Another early settler featured on the tour will be George Werheim. Werheim was born in Germany in 1834. In 1855, he came to the young settlement of Wausau. He soon became associated with Frederick Kickbusch, the brother of August, and formed the firm of Werheim & Kickbusch. This partnership ended in 1880 as Werheim started his own sash and door company along the railroad tracks on 3rd Street. The Werheim Manufacturing Company operated until 1911. In addition to his business life, he was also a village of Wausau trustee, city alderman and treasurer and county corner. George Werheim died in 1926.

Kickbusch and Werheim are just two of nine people whose stories will be told by re-enactors.

Pine Grove Cemetery features the burial sites of many people who have lived, worked and made Wausau the community that it is. City mayors, entrepreneurs, military heroes, immigrants, and factory workers are all part of the landscape of Pine Grove Cemetery.

Join the Marathon County Historical Society on Sunday September 25, 2022 at Pine Grove Cemetery on Grand Avenue. Tours start at 11:00 a.m. and the last tour starts at 2:00 p.m.



FAMOUS FIGURE TRIVIA: FROM MARATHON COUNTY TO HOLLYWOOD

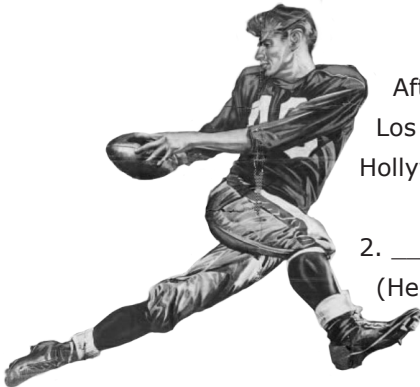
By Ben Clark, Archivist/Historian

Test your knowledge with our famous figures trivia! All of the famous people in this round are from Marathon County. You can check your answers at the bottom of the page - to keep you from peeking, we have turned them upside down.

The Wausau-born Thomas T. Moulton receiving his fifth and final Academy Award (out of 15 total nominations) from Marilyn Monroe in 1950 for his work in *All About Eve*. For what category did he win the award?



1. _____



After Elroy Hirsch made a name for himself as a star player for the Los Angeles Rams, he turned to acting. He starred as himself in the 1953 Hollywood film about his life. Do you know the name of that film?

2. _____

(Here's a hint: the title was also his nickname, which he was giving while playing high school football here in Wausau.)

In 1945, Virginia Welter (stage name Virginia Welles) made her debut as a star for Paramount Pictures in *Kiss and Tell* alongside Shirley Temple. Two years later, she was the romantic lead in *Ladies Man*, and even came back to Wausau for a special screening. What theater was the screening played at?



3. _____



After years of touring on the Vaudeville circuit, Charlie Winninger found success on radio and Broadway, most famously playing the role of Cap'n Andy Hawkins in the original run of *Show Boat*. In 1954, this Athens-born character actor appeared on what television show playing the role of Barney Kurtz?

4. _____

Answers:
1. **Sound Engineering**. He was also nominated for "Best Visual Effects" on four projects, but didn't win. 2. **Crazylegs**. 3. **The Grand Theater**. Her father, Frank Welter, was the manager of the theater for many years. 4. **I Love Lucy**. He played the old Vaudeville partner of Fred Mertz (William Fawley).

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, October 9th

History at the Grand Theater.

Watch out for details on this evening event - it's sure to be fun, elegant, and, of course, historical!

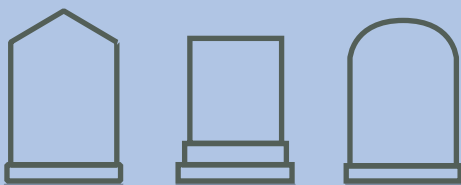
VOICES FROM THE PAST: LIVING HISTORY CEMETERY TOURS

Continued from cover

Join us on Sunday, September 25, 2022 at Pine Grove Cemetery (1501 Grand Avenue) for our annual cemetery tour: Voices from the Past.

Costumed re-enactors will tell stories from Marathon County's past as groups of visitors walk a guided route through Pine Grove Cemetery. With the 150th Anniversary of Wausau becoming a City, we have chosen historical figures that represented different aspects of Wausau at that time. We'll highlight a business owner, a farmer, a teacher and several others that made Wausau the strong community that it was then and has become.

Tours start at 11am and the last tour starts at 2pm. Suggested donation of \$5/person.



ANTIQUe STUDY CLUB'S 50TH YEAR

By Laura Gall, ASC Photographer



This photo was taken at the November 2021 meeting. At this meeting Kathy Anderson, sitting in the middle of the photo and holding the large sock monkey, gave an informative and entertaining presentation on sock monkeys.

What do you know about this interesting, diverse group of women? Here are some facts:

- The Wausau Antique Study Club was "born" in 1971 at the YWCA.
- In September 2012, the club moved to its current location, making this the 10th anniversary of meeting at the Historical Society.
- In 2015, the club renamed itself to Wausau Antique and Collectible Study Club to better reflect the interests of its members.
- On May 17, 2022, a belated 50th Golden Anniversary Party celebrated the club's 50th year (belated one year because of COVID).
- The Club meets monthly from September through May on the third Tuesday of the month from 11:30am until about 1:30pm
- Lunch is enjoyed followed by a business meeting and a program.
- Programs are presented by members and professionals sharing their knowledge relating to antiques or collectibles.
- Typically, the club takes an annual one-day bus trip to visit antique shops in other communities.
- Dues are \$15.00 a year (membership in the Historical Society is also required).

We are always interested in new members and welcome anyone to visit a meeting. For more information call the membership chairperson, Nancy Dolenshek at 715-843-7892 or email: nancy.dolenshek@gmail.com

THANK YOU DONORS!

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Donation
in memory of Cathy (Spanton) Luktala

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in memory of Joanne Powles

Carol Reitz
in memory of Gary Thomas

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Paula Graveen-Brainard

The last chance to see **THE EXHIBIT: MILKING TIME**

Our exhibit, Milking Time: Evolution of the Dairy Industry in Marathon County, will be closing at the end of the summer. Whether you have seen it before, or haven't had the chance - this month is the last time to see it before it's gone!

This exhibit traces the development of dairying as an industry. As logging declined in the late 1800s, farmers arrived, removed tree stumps and created fields for crops to support herds and families. The exhibit shows how herd improvements combined with electrification and other innovations to increase profitability.

In the fall, our curators will be putting away artifacts, and pulling out new ones as they build our next exhibit. We can't tell you the topic yet, but we'll give you a hint: *it's very timely.*

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 channel 980 to see recordings of our recent History Chats, at least one a day - maybe more!

Come visit us at **HARVEST FEST**

Wausau Events presents their annual Harvest Fest on Saturday, October 8th from 10 am-2 pm on the Wausau 400 Block. The MCHS will be there too! In addition to our Fall-themed children's craft, other event activities will include the kid's tractor pull, petting zoo and over 1,200 free pumpkins. We hope to see you there!

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

Join us one last time before the summer ends 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.

The last Storytime for this year is at 1pm on Thursday, September 8th.

The 16th Annual **LOCAL HISTORY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE**

The Wisconsin Historical Society's yearly conference is coming to Rothschild! Join them in person at The Convention & Expo Center, or online. The conference runs Oct 12-14th. Registration is required. Visit wisconsinhistory.org/ conference for a full list of offerings, registration and hotel information.

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



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 . . .

August is all about Villages! Join us on the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th to learn more about what makes these villages in Marathon County unique.

In September, we'll be covering some Monumental History.



History Speaks is a 1-hour program presented by a guest speaker each month at 2pm at the Woodson History Center, as well as livestreamed on our YouTube and Facebook.

Upcoming History Speaks . . .

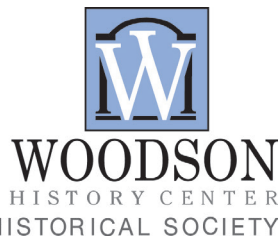
Aug. 27: Powder, People and Place presented by Michael Goc

Sep. 17: The Hidden Tragedy of Modern Myanmar presented by Rick Lohr

Oct.: Hmong History

Nov. 12: The Dick Bong Story - Ace of Aces presented by Michael O'Connor

History Chats and History Speaks are co-hosted by the Marathon County Public Library.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- Aug 4, 11, 18, 25: History Chats
12:30pm Online on Youtube and Facebook
- Aug 27: History Speaks
2pm at Woodson History Center
- Sep 1, 8, 15, 22, 29: History Chats
12:30pm Online on Youtube and Facebook
- Sep 8: Storytime in the Garden
1pm in Yawkey House Garden
- Sep 17: History Speaks
2pm at Woodson History Center
- Sep 25: Voices from the Past
11am at Pine Grove Cemetery
- Oct 6, 13, 20, 27: History Chats
12:30pm Online on Youtube and Facebook
- Oct 8: Harvest Fest
10am at the 400 Block

PHOTOS FROM . . .

**MY DOLLY AND ME:
 A GARDEN PARTY**



Fun in the Garden
MY DOLLY AND ME

With all the flowers in bloom, we were ready to hold a garden party! We invited everyone to bring a doll or stuffed friend, and dress in their best clothes. On June 18th, children and their parents accepted our invitation and joined us for storytime, a historical doll presentation, a craft and a snack. We had lots of fun, and hope you did too!