



The Wanigan

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARATHON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY • 2021 No. 4 AUTUMN



VOICES FROM THE PAST: A DISCOVERY WALK THROUGH PINE GROVE CEMETERY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2021



By Paul Svetlik, MCHS Volunteer

The personal stories of nine people who rest in Wausau's Pine Grove Cemetery will be unearthed and shared during Marathon County Historical Society's biannual cemetery tour.

Guests will experience history through the eyes of those who lived it thanks to dedicated volunteer reenactors stationed at each of the eight gravesites. These reenactors, dressed in time-period appropriate attire, will provide detailed accounts of the individuals they are portraying.

On the tour, attendees will be introduced to Nellie and Hermione Silverthorn. These sisters were born in the late 1800's and lived extraordinary lives. Nellie became the first librarian of the Wausau Public Library; Hermione attended Columbia University and taught kindergarten classes. Together, they participated in a number of social clubs and hosted events at their home on Grand Avenue.

Charles Single, an early pioneer in Wausau, will also be featured. Born in England in 1822, Charles eventually made his way to America and then to Wausau. He was a sheriff, owned and operated a business with his wife Elizabeth, and enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War.

In addition, guests will visit with Edward Baerwald (1869 – 1928), William Bernhard (1873-1929), Jeanette Coates (1870-1963), Frank Dana (1856-1919), Otto Muenchow (1873-1963), and Helen Ohm (1896-1966). Collectively, their *voices from the past* will shed light on the history of our community.

To learn more about these individuals and the history of Wausau, please join us rain or shine at Pine Grove Cemetery, 1501 Grand Avenue. Tours begin at 11 am, ending with the last tour at 2 pm. Suggested donation is \$5.



WELCOME!

By Russ Wilson, MCHS Board President



Russ Wilson

We introduce with great pleasure two newly hired staff members: Curator of the Yawkey House Museum Erick Konop, and Assistant Archivist / Tour Docent Martina Kostreva.

Recalling his visits to museums as a child, Erick "always intended to be an historian of some sort." He logged over 3,000 volunteer hours at the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay before the age of 18, and was involved in lending the Dwight D. Eisenhower Locomotive to the National Railway Museum of York, England in 2013. Erick earned his B.A. in History and Philosophy in 2016 from St. Norbert's College. His undergrad research project included an overview of the history of the campus, that, in partnership with other organizations, culminated in several campus buildings being placed on the National Historic Register.

Erick was employed at Heritage Hill State Park in Green Bay for three years, serving as a blacksmith, firearms expert and restorationist, grounds keeper, restoration assistant, and costumed interpreter. In addition, he was the pilot program tester for several of their educational programs until the site closed due to COVID. His many talents will be an asset throughout the Historical Society.

Martina was awarded her B.A. from UW-Whitewater in December, 2018. During college, she served an internship in collections at the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay. Martina secured an archivist position at the Forest County Potawatomi Museum in Crandon in February, 2020, where she worked for a year and a half before the museum scaled back due to COVID.

Martina performs critical service at the heart of our mission: she makes our treasures, our archives, *findable and accessible*. I watched Martina work on an online finding aid about W.C. Landon of the Barker-Stewart Lumber Company. There is a box for Mr. Landon filled with loose sheets and photographs. As the result of Martina's work, we will be able to look online to quickly find that box and find out what's in it. This is the great time consuming task of our mission- to make our vast archives readily accessible. Martina is not only "thankful to be back in a museum setting," but also "happy to be *here*."

We are thrilled that Erick and Martina are here, and we are sure that you will be too!



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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.

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.

Burn `Em

By Ben Clark, Archivist / Historian



In 1924, an article appeared in the *Wausau Daily Herald*, proclaiming that “raking and burning leaves is the great outdoor sport these autumn days for the residents of the city.” It then went on to report that “in any part of the city at almost any time of the day the odor of burning leaves may be detected.” There was a time where the “pungent scent of burning leaves” was so common, that it became a seasonal feature in places like Wausau; it was the smell of October in the city.

While some folks might have been burning their leaves much earlier, it really gained traction in the cities during the early twentieth century. Especially in the 1910s and 1920s, keeping leaves out of the city streets became a major concern. While the old horse-drawn transportation was not inconvenienced by a layer of leaves, new modes of transportation were. Masses of wet leaves were dangerous hazards to automobiles that needed traction with the pavement, and trolley cars were occasionally de-railed by piles of leaves, muck, and mud on the rails.

The city created and later expanded its Street Department to handle the strain of excess leaves on the roads, as well as clearing snow and ice in the winter (also a new concern thanks to automobiles). But there were a lot of leaves falling from a lot of trees across the city. And so in order to keep the streets safe and reduce damage to the city sewers and infrastructure, city officials asked Wausau residents to burn the leaves from their yard.



In 1927, Mayor Otto Muenchow told his constituents to “Burn `Em.”

The city of Wausau asks the co-operation of all citizens in getting rid of the leaves which are now falling and littering up the streets. Unless this is done there will be considerable expense which the taxpayers must bear in opening up clogged catchbasins and sewers. Rake the leaves and debris from lawns and gardens, then burn it, taking care that the fire is not allowed to spread. Permission to do this is hereby given.

But for other city officials tasked with maintaining public health and safety the “burn `em” attitude seems to have created some justifiable concern. The Fire Department made sure to teach caution at fire prevention events and bulletins. And Police Chief Malone occasionally published warnings to remind the city of the rules.

It is prohibited by the city ordinances to build any open fire on a street or lot in the city within two hundred feet of a dwelling house. Complaint is made that many persons are burning leaves, rubbish and refuse where it constitutes a danger or a nuisance. This must be stopped as the ordinance will be enforced.

Thomas R. Malone
Chief of Police



The idea that burning was the solution to the annual problem of leaves gradually fell out of favor. The danger that these burnings could get out of control in cities like Wausau—destroying property and sometimes killing and injuring people—was not worth the benefit of leaf removal. And it helped that other options were developed for leaf removal. The Wausau City Street Department started collecting leaves in the 1930s, establishing the now-familiar practice of raking your home’s leaves to the curb for pickup.

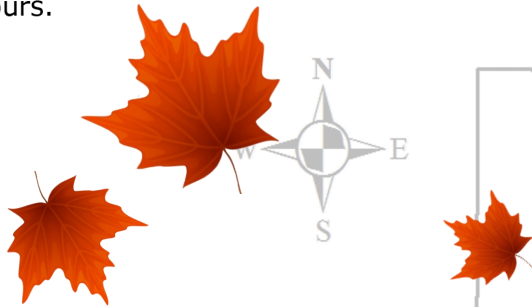
By the 1950s, new techniques to more efficiently deal with piles of leaves were adopted by the Wausau Street Department, and it was picked up by other regional villages and cities by the 1960s. And while you can still smell the odor of burning leaves in rural parts of the County from time to time, it is no longer the same staple of the October season in the city as it once was.

MARATHON COUNTY CEMETERY CRUISE

Marathon County is home to over 100 cemeteries that date back as far as the 1850s, some with only a few burials and others with many thousands. Rural cemeteries make up the majority of burial grounds in the county. Like many families did a century ago, you can enjoy a family picnic at the cemetery or spend time strolling through the monuments, thinking about those who came before us. This driving tour takes you around the county but it can easily be split into several tours.

Town of Halsey

There are three cemeteries in adjacent, creating expansive grounds to wander through - C Village and Trinity Lutheran. C is associated with St. Anthony Church, and was established in gifted by Fred and Helen Reithb Village Cemetery has the large the three sites and is overse Cemetery Association. Trinity Cemetery was originally asso Trinity Evangelical Lutheran C now overseen by the Luthera Association. These cemeterie family history researchers as directory onsite (maps and a binder) listing all burials. Find these cemeteries at the corner of Degner St and Cemetery Rd in the Village of Athens.



Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery

Town of Cassel

In 1886 about 30 families, primarily of Polish origin, banded together to form the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Carl and Frances Lepak donated 4 acres of land on which to build the church and develop a cemetery. Walk about halfway back and look for the red granite Urmanski monument that has porcelainized photos of Mary and Mateusz. These are often found in cemeteries used by families of Polish ancestry. Find this cemetery at 222761 County Road S, southwest of Marathon City.



Town of Day Cemetery



Town of Day

In 1883, two acres of land were deeded to the Town of Day for use as a cemetery. Many communities in the county had cemeteries associated with churches, but not all had a burial ground that was open to all residents. This cemetery has served the Town of Day for almost 140 years. Find the cemetery at 124900 County Road C, just east of Rozellville.




By Kathy Volkmann, Curator of Artifacts /

Cemeteries 

Athens that are
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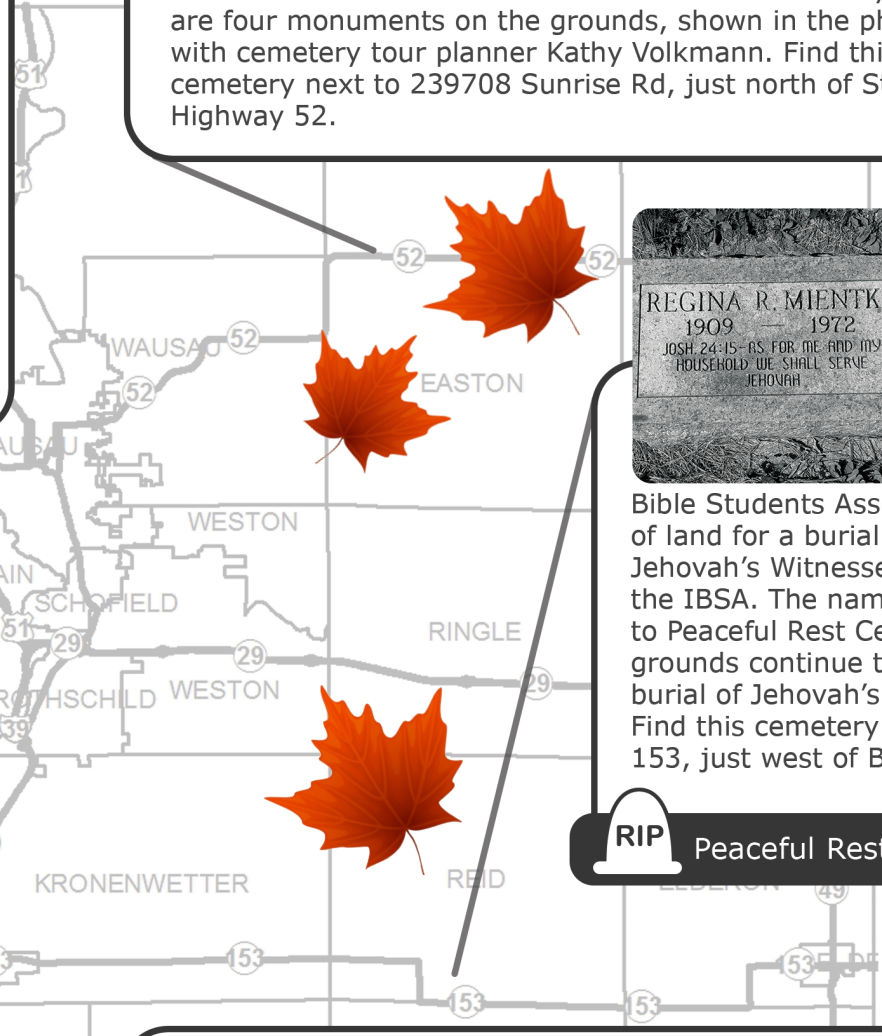


Cemetery Enthusiast 

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery 

Town of Hewitt

One of the smallest cemeteries in Marathon County, at least for the number of monuments, this burial ground was established after St Peter's church was built in 1906. The congregation, consisting of only 14 families, disbanded in 1910 and the church building was moved. Seven burials were made in the cemetery and over time surrounding farm fields encroached on the grounds and monuments were plowed under. Because the cemetery was abandoned, it was taken over by the Town of Hewitt about 20 years ago. The original church property was cleared of overgrowth and several monuments were unearthed and reset. Today there are four monuments on the grounds, shown in the photo with cemetery tour planner Kathy Volkmann. Find this cemetery next to 239708 Sunrise Rd, just north of State Highway 52.



This small cemetery was established about 1916 when the International Bible Students Association purchased one acre of land for a burial ground. In 1931, the Jehovah's Witnesses originated as a branch of the IBSA. The name of the site was changed to Peaceful Rest Cemetery in 1970 and the grounds continue to be used primarily for burial of Jehovah's Witnesses members. Find this cemetery at 168812 State Highway 153, just west of Bevent.

 Peaceful Rest Cemetery Town of Reid



These cemeteries are located across the road from each other. St Francis Xavier Cemetery (see photo) began when the church was organized in 1858. Almost a century later, in 1953, road construction resulted in the relocation of some burials to a new cemetery nearby that was given the same name. Knowlton Cemetery began in 1862 and is the final resting place of John Baptiste Dubay (1810-1887), whose large, red granite monument is near the back. Dubay was an early settler who operated a large trading post. Both cemeteries are located on a hillside and sections of the grounds are terraced to provide level burial sites. Find these cemeteries on County Road DB, a half mile south of County Road C.

Knowlton Cemeteries  Town of Knowlton

Back to the Schoolhouse

By Anna Chilsen Straub, Curator of Education



It's September in Marathon County! That means that 4th grade students and their teachers, from schools throughout the county, are making final preparations for their "Day at the Little Red Schoolhouse".

This very popular program saw its beginnings in 1987, as a pet project of the Altrusa International of Wausau. The Altrusa had established a school museum in the former Spooner School, donated to the Parks Department by the Wausau School District and moved to Marathon Park in 1964. The Altrusa then provided funding to the Marathon County Historical Society and we developed the programming for the students who would be attending the Little Red Schoolhouse.

Youngsters are immersed in a Living History program when attending their Day at the Schoolhouse. This starts by dressing in period school clothing and packing a typical lunch from a 1904 household. (Lard sandwiches were a staple!) The lessons featured are those taught as they were in the early 1900's, including recitations from the McGuffey Readers, using slates and chalk for arithmetic, and dip pens and ink for penmanship. Lessons also include a spelling bee and geography. Recess with period games and cleanup chores are part of the experience as well. All of this activity makes for a fun filled day, which we often hear reported as the favorite memory the students have from their grade school years!



Approximately 1,800 students spend a day at the Schoolhouse annually, with sessions held in both the Spring and the Fall. When we closed our doors to visitors in March 2020, we were faced with the challenge of how to continue the Little Red Schoolhouse experience for the students. Teaching materials for the classes planning to attend the Schoolhouse were already in place on our website. We recorded one of the Schoolhouse teachers, dressed in costume, and running through the lessons of a Day at the Schoolhouse. Classroom teachers could then view the lessons through YouTube, and use them for their virtual classes. Finally, we had to matchup the materials with the recorded lessons, and upload them to the Website, for the teachers to access them. As you may guess, this took a lot of collaboration of staff at MCHS to make this all happen!

As the Fall of 2020 approached, it was decided that the Schoolhouse program could not safely hold sessions onsite, so the virtual programming was a great tool to already have in place. Mid Fall session, after a few teachers had asked if they could borrow a few pens and slates and readers, I realized it was time to create the "Little Red Schoolhouse Virtual Adventure Tubs". These Tubs contain McGuffey Readers, slates and chalk, dip pens, ink and paper, and favorite playground toys and games. Schools scheduled for the Spring session of 2021 eagerly signed up to borrow the tubs to use with their classrooms, and filled all available dates.

We are so pleased that we could make the adjustments to accommodate the 4th grade classes as they enjoyed the "Little Red Schoolhouse" experience through these challenging past months. Many classroom teachers report that they are thrilled with the materials and tubs provided, and they continually share that the students were so excited to be able to still have their Little Red Schoolhouse Adventure!

And it is with great anticipation that we welcome students and teachers back to experience their Day at the Schoolhouse in person, with safety protocols in place. Or the option for virtual programming is still available. We look forward to ringing the bell to start a new day at the Little Red Schoolhouse!

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

September Chats are Monumental!

September 2– The Cutler Post Statue
September 9– World War Memorial
September 16– The Hmong-Lao Veterans Memorial
September 23– The Pine Grove Mausoleum (with Kathy Volkmann)
September 30– The Pomeranian Settlement Marker

October Chats will feature Even More People You Should Know!

Join Professor Brett Barker on **Saturday, September 18 at 2 pm** for our next **History Speaks– *The Grand Army of the Republic: Union Veterans & America’s Most Powerful Veterans’ Organization***

In this livestream presentation, Prof. Barker explores the Civil War veterans’ organization that dominated the political landscape of the North for the next 50 years.

Saturday, October 23 at 2 pm, we will livestream Paul Whitaker’s **History Speaks on Apples, Botany & Cider**

This presentation will trace the story of the apple from its humble origins in central Asia to the diversity of apples we find in supermarkets today.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

From the Ronald Beckman Trust in memory of Ronald Beckman

Alice Woodson Smith
Lois Steffenhagen
Staff of the Marathon County Health Department

Robert S. Hagge Foundation Fund as administered by the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin

Thank you to Jim Bogie at Quality House & Carpet Cleaning for donating his services to sanitize the Little Red Schoolhouse so we can safely bring back our students and teachers.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

James Bartelme, June Czarnezki, and Janet Hulleman

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

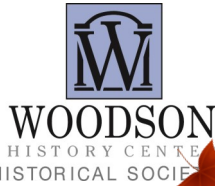
Thank you to our devoted volunteers who helped us make historic showings at the Wisconsin Valley Fair, Childrens Fest and Marathon County Park Department’s 100+1 year Anniversary Celebration.

Our Curators thank Mary Jane Grabowski for padding hangers and sewing hanger covers for our men’s suits collection, and for making fabric pads to protect fragile glassware.

If you’d like to become a MCHS volunteer, please contact Sheryl Del Conte at sdelconte@marathoncountyhistory.org
715-842-5750

HOLIDAY AT THE HOUSES SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021

Make plans to join costumed reenactors as they explore holiday and cultural traditions throughout the Woodson History Center and Yawkey House Museum. Watch for details.



Marathon County Historical Society
 410 McIndoe Street
 Wausau, Wisconsin 54403
www.marathoncountyhistory.org
Return Service Requested

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**VOICES FROM THE PAST:
 A DISCOVERY WALK THROUGH
 PINE GROVE CEMETERY**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

FIRST TOUR AT 11 AM, LAST TOUR AT 2 PM
 RAIN OR SHINE

\$5.00 PER PERSON SUGGESTED DONATION

COSTUMED RE-ENACTORS



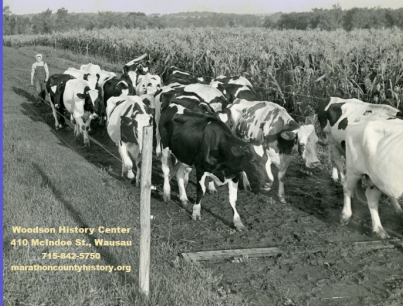
WELCOME BACK!
**THE WOODSON HISTORY CENTER
 AND
 YAWKEY HOUSE MUSEUM ARE OPEN!**
Exhibits, Research Library, Tours



The Marathon County Historical Society
 Presents the Exhibit

Milking Time

Evolution of the Dairy Industry
 in Marathon County



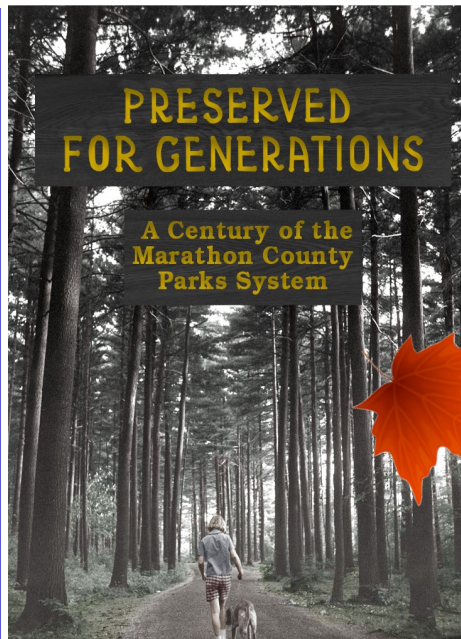
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**PRESERVED
 FOR GENERATIONS**

**A Century of the
 Marathon County
 Parks System**



The Marathon County Historical Society
 Presents

OUR STORIES

The History of Marathon County
 Marathon County's history as told through the memories of its people
 Some stories are almost forgotten, others are retold from generation to generation
This exhibit captures the echoes of all Our Stories



Woodson History Center
 410 McIndoe Street, Wausau



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