



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

2013-15 Biennial Report
October 15, 2015



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Dear Governor Walker, Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, and Citizens of Wisconsin:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Historical Society, I am pleased to present our report on the performance and operation of the Society during the 2013-15 biennium as required under s. 15.04(1)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Founded three years prior to statehood in 1846, the Society is Wisconsin's premier storyteller. In 1853 we became the first historical society in the nation to receive state funding, and since then we have been directly accountable to the citizens of the state.

Today, in addition to administering a world class library, archives and network of museums and historic sites (including Wisconsin's first State Capitol), we perform a wide array of functions and services from archeology to historic preservation. As one of my predecessors observed, we are "a state version of the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Smithsonian Institution, all rolled into one." These are time-honored functions central to the spirit of our American democracy.

The dedicated public servants of the Wisconsin Historical Society are wholly committed to the mission you have entrusted to us: to collect, preserve and share the history and heritage that bind us together. It is our privilege to serve you, as you write the next chapter in the history of our great state.

Sincerely,

Ellsworth H. Brown, Ph.D.
The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director

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2013-15 Review of Performance and Operation by Division

Division of Historic Preservation-Public History

The Division of Historic Preservation-Public History helps people preserve places of enduring value and presents a fresh perspective on history through publications, programs and services.

Education and School Services

- The fourth-grade textbook published by the Society, *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*, continues to be the primary Wisconsin history text in use throughout the state, presently used by more than 40,000 students.
- The Spanish edition of *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story* is in use by students in Milwaukee, Madison, Waukesha, Randolph, Racine, and other districts.
- More than 25,000 students are using the interactive whiteboard resources for *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*.
- Society staff surveyed teachers and curriculum specialists to guide the development of the second edition of the textbook, *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*. This new edition will be available in both print and digital formats, and in both English and Spanish in Spring 2016.
- The Society produced updated and expanded editions of Patty Loew's *Indian Nations of Wisconsin* (for secondary students) and *Native People of Wisconsin* (for elementary students). Both books were updated to include new information about the tribal nations and an additional chapter on urban Indians.

Field Services

- The Local History and Historic Preservation Conference provided networking and educational opportunities for 516 participants in 2013 and 641 in 2014.
- Staff partnered with the Library-Archives Division to provide disaster planning and emergency preparedness training for local museums and archives, reaching 322 people statewide.
- Web-based training programs reached 939 people.
- There are now 450 subscribers from among statewide historical organizations to the Society's online technical assistance resources.

- Training sessions provided expertise in volunteer recruitment and audience development to 772 participants at 20 regional meetings.
- Staff worked with local applicants to erect 10 new state historical markers.
- The Society awarded 47 mini-grants of up to \$700 each and totaling \$29,200 to affiliated local organizations.
- A partnership with the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire placed public history students in internships at 20 local museums and historic preservation organizations.
- The Division received over 13,000 annual visits to its online database of 392 affiliated local history organizations statewide.

Historic Preservation Program

During fiscal years 2013 through 2015, the Division:

- Approved 72 income-producing rehabilitation projects with investments totaling \$454 million. These projects will return \$90.8 million in federal income tax credits and \$90.8 in state income tax credits to Wisconsin taxpayers.
- Approved 478 historic home rehabilitation projects with investments totaling \$11.1 million. These projects returned \$2.8 million in state income tax credits to the homeowners.
- Processed 52 National Register of Historic Places nominations across 28 counties; 575 buildings were approved for state and federal income tax credits.
- Recorded 4,973 new historic buildings and 691 archaeological sites in the Society's historic property database; updated 4,087 existing archeological records and cataloged nine human burial sites.
- Approved 2,496 federal, state, and local government projects after conducting reviews for potential effects on significant historic and prehistoric properties.
- Added 15,367 new images to the online historic building database for a total of more than 230,846 photos.
- Added over 100 pages of information to the Society's website regarding the care and upkeep of historic buildings.
- Awarded \$195,000 in historic preservation grants to 17 communities.
- Offered training seminars and workshops to private sector preservationists and archaeologists.

National History Day

- This program reached over 15,000 students in over 150 schools.
- Staff delivered in-class instruction to over 6,000 students and curriculum packages were provided to over 750 teachers.
- Over 4,000 students attended one of the seven annual regional contests during this biennium, and regional workshops assisted over 500 student participants.
- National History Day engaged over 1,500 adult volunteers.
- 120 students attended the Kenneth E. Behring National Contest in Washington, D.C. 14 student projects advanced to the final round, placing these among the top projects in the nation.

Wisconsin Historical Society Press

- In 2013-2015, the Wisconsin Historical Society Press published 30 new books for general and young readers and 70 e-books.
- The Press converted nearly all backlist titles to digital e-book format.
- Thirteen backlist titles were digitally republished in short runs with new covers.
- Two new audio books were produced in collaboration with Wisconsin Public Radio.
- The Press processed 152 book proposals and contracted for 34 new titles.
- Press titles earned 36 book awards during the biennial period including the Gambrinus Prize for *Studying Wisconsin: The Life of Increase Lapham, Early Chronicler of Plants, Rocks, Rivers, Mounds, and All Things Wisconsin* by Martha Bergland and Paul G. Hayes; this book also won 5 other awards. The American Association for State and Local History Award of Honor was given to *Wheel Fever: How Wisconsin Became a Great Bicycling State* by Jesse J. Gant and Nicholas J. Hoffman; this book was the winner of six other awards.
- Among many active collaborations with agencies and institutions across the state, the Society partnered with Wisconsin Public Television on the production of companion programs for two Press titles, *Wisconsin's Own: Twenty Remarkable Homes* and *The Quiet Season* by Jerry Apps.
- Outreach activities conducted by the Press included 636 book events (book launches, author signings, and other presentations) in 157 Wisconsin cities. The Press also partnered with the Wisconsin History Tour in providing authors for talks at locations all across the state to general audiences, families, and young readers.
- The Press garnered national attention at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, at the American Library Association national conference, at the American Association for State and Local History national conference, and with a

traveling exhibition based upon *Risking Everything: A Freedom Summer Reader* edited by Michael Edmonds.

- The Badger Biographies series for young readers grew to 25 titles including a bilingual (Spanish and English) book about Cris Plata, a musician of Mexican heritage who began his life in Wisconsin as a migrant worker.
- Since the Autumn 2014 issue, the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* has been available in a digital format. The magazine's reach has expanded through the Society's use of social media.

Division of Library-Archives

The Library–Archives Division acquires, preserves and provides access to documentary evidence about the history of Wisconsin, the United States and Canada. With over 4 million items, our genealogy and history collections are among the largest and most comprehensive in the world documenting North American history. The Society's Library and Archives is also the American History Library for the University of Wisconsin–Madison; an official depository for local, state and federal government publications; and the State Archives which preserves state and local government records of historical importance. The Area Research Center Network, a unique alliance between the Historical Society and the four-year campuses of the UW System, makes most of the archival collections available within easy driving distance of all state residents.

Acquisitions and Cataloging

During this period, the Division of Library-Archives:

- Contacted over 250 private manuscript donors and prospective donors.
- Acquired 315 new manuscript collections, totaling 507 cubic feet. These private collections document all aspects of Wisconsin history and selected areas of national history. A sampling of prominent collections includes the Rayovac Corporation records, the Harold “Bud” Jordahl papers, Wisconsin State Old Cemetery Society records, legendary disc jockey Bob “Beatle” Barry, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s “American System-Built Portfolio Series.”
- Added 3,067 cubic feet of public records from state agencies and local governments, contained in 216 accessions.
- Assisted 31 state agencies with 189 requests for record services.
- Expanded our program to preserve state and local government web sites and web-based information through an electronic harvesting and cataloging procedures.

Over the past two years, more than 21 million web pages from over 536 web collections have been “crawled” for preservation and access.

- Added 15 Terabytes of historically important local government records to our electronic records inventory.
- Expended \$902,000 in endowed and public funds to acquire new research resources for the users of the Library and Archives. This included 10,800 books and pamphlets; 21,900 government documents, publications, and electronic databases and digital collections; and subscriptions to over 4,700 periodicals, chronicling all areas of American history.
- Cataloged 27,611 library publications.
- Secured over \$125,000 in private funds to catalog 4,977 historic maps; a majority of these items have been made available digitally.
- In preparation for the planned State Archives Preservation Facility, barcoded over 230,000 archival units and surpassed over 200,000 government publications destined for the state-of-art facility, scheduled to open in 2018.
- In cooperation with the Wisconsin Historical Foundation, secured new endowment totaling \$659,000.

Digital Services

During the 2013-14 biennium, this Division also:

- Earned \$360,416 in digital lab and genealogy services revenue, profits utilized to digitize and share more content on the agency’s Website.
- Shared digitized maps, manuscripts, rare books, and other historical documents with researchers more than 4 million times via the agency Web Site.
- Digitized 7,635 Sanborn Perris Fire Insurance Maps showing details about every building in the downtown neighborhoods of more than 250 Wisconsin cities and towns between 1874 and 1923; these maps are viewed more than 400 times each day.
- Developed and coordinated a travelling exhibit about 1964's Freedom Summer campaign, hosted by 30 Wisconsin schools and libraries and viewed by more than 50,000 K-12 Wisconsin students and undergraduates. The Freedom Summer exhibit circulated to museums and libraries around the nation including the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, a Youth Summit in Ferguson, MO, Princeton University in New Jersey, and Miami University in Ohio. All told, in Wisconsin and across the nation, the exhibit was viewed by more than 100,000 visitors at 50 venues in 31 cities.

- Researched and published a 115-page guide to teaching the civil rights movement in Milwaukee and the nation and, with private funding, sent free copies to more than 1,300 teachers around the state.
- With the Wisconsin Black Historical Society, co-coordinated a program in Milwaukee's black neighborhood that gathered oral histories from residents about the effect of plant closings on the city's African-American families.

Preservation Services

The Division of Library-Archives:

- Rehoused and surveyed 64,000 reels of preservation master microfilm in preparation for the relocation of this material to the new State Archives Preservation Facility.
- Secured \$17,940 from the National Film Preservation Foundation to preserve at-risk films, including an exceptionally rare footage of the Wisconsin National Guard training at Camp Douglas in 1916 and home movies of Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne at "Ten Chimneys."
- Digitized 360 rare Audograph discs, 250 magnetic media recordings, and 47 early oral history collections.
- Reformatted 868,407 pages of brittle newspapers and documents onto archival microfilm, generating \$91,767 in royalties and \$173,019 in microfilm sales.
- Secured \$50,000 in private grant funding to conserve rare atlases in the Society's collections.
- With a \$237,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, coordinated instructional workshops for 600 library and museum professionals and volunteers statewide, in person and online.

Division of Museums and Historic Sites

The Division of Museums and Historic Sites collects and preserves the material culture of Wisconsin and interprets the state's history and prehistory for the public. The division fulfills its educational role through exhibitions, tours and a variety of public programs conducted at the Wisconsin Historical Museum in Madison, and at historic sites and other venues throughout the state.

In 2013-15 the Division of Museums and Historic Sites:

- Hosted 597,372 visitors resulting in \$11,529,814 in earned revenue.
- Received a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Grant from the National Park Service to continue work with Wisconsin's eleven Nations and Tribes.

Black Point Estate, Lake Geneva

- Attendance to Black Point Estate has doubled since the Wisconsin Historical Society began operating the site on January 1st, 2013.
- A new interpretive site plan includes annual special events and outreach programs.
- Over 3,000 objects were inventoried and accessioned including the Seipp family papers and extensive photograph collections, which are now available for public research.

Circus World, Baraboo

- Circus World launched new programs including the Center Ring membership program, Adopt-A-Wagon, and an enhanced season pass program.
- The "Big Top" tent is back to host summer programming after being absent for a decade.
- Circus World staff built and launched the first major new interactive exhibit, "Caught in the Act," which allows our visitors to step up to and into the vibrant world of the circus.
- An oral history program was launched.
- 1,097 items (including photographs, heralds, posters and archival finding aids) were digitized and are now available online.

H.H. Bennett Studio, Wisconsin Dells

- The H.H. Bennett Studio celebrated its 150th anniversary and Henry Hamilton Bennett's impact in making Wisconsin Dells one of Wisconsin's premier tourist destinations. Site visitation continues to increase with 9,226 visitors to the museum during this period.
- Private funding supported the installation of a new steamboat and 3-dimensional interactive exhibits. The Lenticular 3-D displays, the first in the Midwest, allow visitors to experience Bennett's photography without the need for 3-D glasses.

Madeline Island Museum, La Pointe

- Several Ojibwe programs were offered with support from the Pace Woods Foundation, including weekend Ojibwe artist residencies and Anishinaabe Cultural Days.
- The exhibition *Powwows: Performing Identities* installed with objects relevant to the Bad River and Red Cliff Bands of Lake Superior Ojibwe.

Old World Wisconsin, Eagle

- A new interactive visitor experience, *Catch Wheel Fever!*, explores Wisconsin's 1890s cycling boom.
- A new Village General Store experience was introduced.

Pendarvis, Mineral Point

- The site participated in the 23rd annual Cornish Festival with a "Crowdy Crawn" event.
- A new self-guided expands visitor access to Pendarvis, the Merry Christmas Mine, and surrounding grounds.
- Two temporary art installations featured works created at the town-wide Paint Out event and works by local artist Max Fernekes.

Reed School, Neillsville

- A new one-room school exhibition opened to the public.
- Programs included demonstrations on the use and history of one-room schools.
- The site attracted 2,410 visitors during the biennium including participants in the school immersion programs.

Stonefield, Cassville

- Programs during this period included a Wild West Steampunk Festival and an authentic 1880s Wild West Show.
- The site participated in the Great River Road Festival with support from a Department of Tourism marketing grant.

Villa Louis, Prairie du Chien

- Observance of the bicentennial of the War of 1812 Battle of Prairie du Chien set attendance and revenue records with a total attendance of 2,263, an increase of 33 percent over the 2013 reenactment event.
- A new exhibit showcased twelve garments from the collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society worn at Villa Louis in the 1890s.

Wade House, Greenbush

- Paid attendance increased 47 percent with the 2013 opening of the new Visitor Center and Wesley W. Jung Carriage Museum.
- The site began offering year-around programming for the first time in its 60-year history and welcomed more than 49,000 guests during this period.
- The Hearthside Dinner series expanded and a new day of sporting driving for enthusiasts of historic carriages was introduced into the event calendar.
- Private events and rentals increased earned revenues by nearly 300 percent during this period.

Wisconsin Historical Museum, Madison

- In spring 2015 the museum opened the exhibition, “Shifting Gears: A Cyclical History of Badger Bicycling,” curated in conjunction with the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton.
- Nearly 60,000 students visited the Museum on class tours during this period.

Curatorial Services

This Division also:

- Assisted in the completion of the design of the new off-site State Archive Preservation Facility (SAPF), slated for construction in 2016-2017. To prepare for the move of collections to the new facility, staff inventoried more than 486,000 objects at two locations, completed packaging of 380,000 archaeological specimens, and prepared 34,729 collection objects for relocation.
- Received 403 new accessions totaling 6,648 objects, accepted 51 incoming loans totaling 125 objects, initiated 105 outgoing loans involving 495 objects, and deaccessioned 339 objects.

- Fielded 611 reference requests, and provided access to 7,772 historical objects and archaeological lots serving 81 research requests and 1,561 people.
- Migrated to a cloud-based platform the Division's collections management software system cataloguing 533,677 object records, nearly 218,000 collection images, and 37,013 records documenting collection activities.
- Adopted a revised tiering system for collections development and preservation, and initiated new protocols for education collections as part of a new sustainable model for management of the Society's permanent collections.

Museum Archaeology Program

- Field research was conducted in 54 Wisconsin counties including 1,076 projects. Professional services were provided to the departments of Transportation (DOT) and Natural Resources (DNR) through cooperative agreements to aid in compliance with federally funded or licensed projects (per Wis. Stats. 44.40 and Wis. Stats 157.70).
- 69 new archaeological sites were discovered and 98 previously recorded sites received additional study; 60 historic buildings and building complexes were studied.
- Staff supported the Society's Maritime Preservation Program with content for several Maritime Trails Markers and nominations to place shipwrecks on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Information on statewide archaeological excavations was provided to over 500 people.
- Staff helped curate an exhibition at the Polk County Historical Society and Museum.
- Wisconsin archaeology-themed activity kits were loaned to Wisconsin teachers and youth groups across the state.
- Undergraduate and graduate students engaged archaeological collections at sites in Door, Jefferson, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Portage, Sauk and Waupaca counties.
- Staff conducted annual listening sessions for the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Preservation Project, hosted by the Oneida Tribe and by the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. Staff also participated in the Annual Tribal Transportation Conference hosted by the Ho-Chunk Nation and by the Oneida Tribe.

2013-15 Historic Sites Revenues and Expenditures

Historic Site/Museum	FY14 Revenues	FY14 Expenses	FY15 Revenues	FY15 Expenses
Black Point Estate	222,341	182,571	229,221	204,979
HH Bennett Studio	63,749	83,278	66,762	89,434
Madeline Isl.	297,598	308,151	327,716	284,054
Old World Wisconsin	2,274,916	2,195,524	2,180,636	2,213,818
Pendarvis & First Capitol	242,522	230,705	209,698	234,022
Reed School	23,350	24,381	33,269	29,808
Stonefield	197,407	216,926	185,659	210,402
Villa Louis	292,971	279,013	356,105	325,880
Wade House	591,289	548,110	538,629	710,566
Wisconsin Historical Museum	1,553,135	1,560,784	1,642,841	1,636,265

Division of Administrative Services

The Division of Administrative Services provides organizational, human resources and financial support to the program Divisions to help them fulfill the Society's service mission.

Flexible Work Schedules and Alternative Work Patterns

Pursuant to s. 230.215, Wisconsin Statutes, the Wisconsin Historical Society currently supports and implements flexible-time schedules and other alternative work pattern programs. As a result, the Society has many permanent and part-time employees using flexible-time work schedules. The Society has found that implementing alternative work patterns serves the needs of the state by offering consistent and reliable service to the public, increasing efficiency and maximizing employee productivity. The Alternative Work Patterns policy complies with the requirements of the state Alternative Work Patterns Policy and Procedures Outline.

To further the achievements gained under the Alternative Work Patterns Policy, the Society is currently developing has developed a Telecommuting Policy to allow employees to occasionally work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for a

portion of the regular workweek. The Society anticipates realizes that, in appropriate circumstances, this policy will promote productivity, conservation of resources, and better service to the public while also offering a benefit to suitable employees.

2013-15 Budget

	2013-2014	2014-2015
State Tax Monies		
Staff and Support	9,842,500	9,844,200
Wis. Black Historical Society	84,500	84,500
Utilities and Fuel	921,300	946,000
Debt Service	3,243,600	3,263,700
	\$ 14,091,900	\$ 14,138,400
Other Funding Sources		
Earned Revenue	3,116,500	3,116,500
Federal Revenue	1,263,800	1,264,000
Gifts and Grants	503,900	503,900
Endowments	600,000	600,000
Transfer Revenue	2,241,700	2,245,600
Other Revenue	50,200	50,200
Sub-total	7,776,100	7,780,200
Total:	\$ 21,868,000	\$ 21,918,600

2015-17 Programs, Goals, Objectives and Activities

FY 2015, 2016 and 2017 Goals

Program 1: History Services

Goal: Increase public access to primary resources and the public record on the history of Wisconsin and North America.

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of all collections that are cataloged in on-line catalogs.¹

Objective/Activity: Increase the percentage of archival and library collections that are prepared for transfer to the State Archive Preservation Facility (“SAPF”) in 2017.²

Objective/Activity: Increase the number of researchers served through the library and archives.²

Goal: Increase the general public's knowledge and appreciation of the history of Wisconsin.

Objective/Activity: Increase public participation in the historic sites' programming.

Objective/Activity: Increase the public participation in the museum programming.

Objective/Activity: Increase the number of new historical books sold or distributed through the Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Objective/Activity: Increase the distribution of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.

Goal: Encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures throughout the state.

Objective/Activity: Increase the number of buildings rehabilitated using the state and federal historic building rehabilitation tax credit programs.

Goal: Provide increased access to society services and resources.

Objective/Activity: Increase the level of access to society services and resources by increasing the amount of information, resources and applications available on the society's Web site locations.

Goal: Enhance and improve statewide education curriculum efforts to increase student knowledge of history.

Objective/Activity: Increase student participation and interaction with the society's museum program offerings.

Objective/Activity: Increase statewide student participation in the National History Day program.

Objective/Activity: Increase the number of Wisconsin Historical Society Press student titles and textbooks sold and distributed across the state.

¹ Objective/activity is outdated and will not be measured beyond FY 2014.

² New objective/activity for 2015-17 biennium.

Performance Measures

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2013	Goal 2014	Goal 2015
1.	Percentage of all collections cataloged on-line.	46.5%	47.1%	n/a
1.	Total historic sites attendance.	166,000	167,660	177,000
1.	Total museum attendance.	75,000	75,000	75,000
1.	Number of historical books sold or distributed.	51,000	44,000	45,000
1.	Total distribution of <i>Wisconsin Magazine of History</i> .	50,750	49,400	49,400
1.	Number of buildings receiving tax credits.	205	215	250
1.	Number of unique visits to the society's Web site locations.	3,150,000	3,500,000	2,150,000
1.	Attendance of school-age children at the museum.			
	- Education units	54,000	53,000	56,500
	- School-age children	30,900	28,500	29,500
1.	Student participation in National History Day.	9,500	10,000	11,500
1.	Number of student titles sold or distributed.	17,000	14,000	13,000

Note: Based on fiscal year.

¹ Actuals differ from goals due to launch of a new website in 2014. Content was reduced by 75% due to software conversion processes and resource constraints. Phase II of the website launch is currently underway where the goal is to increase content to 50% by the end of 2015.