June 2011 #20

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News of the Day

Announcement

We have moved the WHO resources wiki to a free and freely open version. The old wiki, wilsnet-wiheritage.pbworks.com, will close after **June 19**. Please begin to access the new wiki at wisheritage.pbworks.com. You don't need a login to access the new wiki, but you can request a login if you want the option to edit and comment on wiki pages.

Harvesting Update

The amount of content accessible through the WHO portal has nearly doubled in the past two years, with more than **90,610 records** from **27 content providers with 75 collections** now available online. In late fall 2010, using LSTA funds contributed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the UW-Madison Shared Development Group revised and improved their data harvesting programs and began harvesting new collections into the portal. SDG tech whiz Jim Liedeka conducts a "refresh harvest" of existing collections on a monthly basis and will harvest more new collections later this year.

Collections to be harvested include four new projects supported by the Nicholas Family Foundation grant--Iowa County Historical Society, New Berlin Historical Society, La Crosse County Historical Society, and the Whitefish Bay Public Library—as well as student newspapers and the Wisconsin artists collection from Carroll University, yearbooks and the Owen J. Gromme Field Notes collection from Edgewood College, artifacts from the Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beloit College, UW-Milwaukee's Sanborn maps, and the Wisconsin Historical Society's Civil War materials.
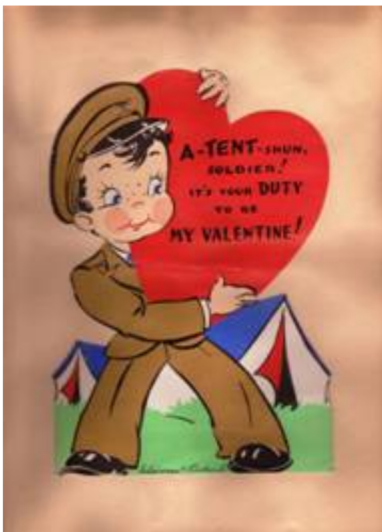
Featured Collections

A Scrapbook History of the North Shore

The Whitefish Bay Public Library has partnered with WHO to digitize the Mimi Bird Historical Collection. A resident of Whitefish Bay since the age of four, Mimi Bird began to research the history of the community and of Milwaukee's North Shore in the 1980s. She compiled newspaper clippings, census records, and other materials; photographed homes, businesses and landmarks; and organized it all into a set of thirty-nine volumes which she donated to the Library. The volumes cover a wide range of topics from early settlers in the Town of Milwaukee to Whitefish Bay's centennial celebrations in 1992 to "Trees of the North Shore area."

To make this popular resource available online, the Whitefish Bay Public Library outsourced the document scanning to Northern Micrographics, an imaging firm based in La Crosse. Next, a team of catalogers at the library created detailed metadata for each volume. Finally, WHO staff loaded each volume to a CONTENTdm collection hosted by the Milwaukee Public Library. The digital collection is fully searchable and will be an invaluable resource for genealogists and local history enthusiasts in the North Shore area. Browse the collection here.

One Man's Wartime Story

The Brekke Collection at the La Crosse County Historical Society represents the things that one man saved as mementos of his service in World War II. Kermit Brekke was raised on a farm outside of Blair, Wisconsin to parents of Norwegian descent; he was 23 years old when he enlisted in the US Army in 1942. While stationed in Oregon his fiancee came out to see him and they were married there. Kermit served in North Africa and Italy as a rifleman and a radio operator and repairman. All of this is recorded in a scrapbook his wife, Evelyn Brekke, compiled after the war, filled with photos, telegrams, newspaper clippings, menus, leave passes, greeting cards from family and friends, ration cards, newsletters of the 363rd Infantry, and his handwritten notes on radio operation. Kermit also saved uniforms, including his wool great coat and work dungarees, and souvenirs from Italy such as silk scarves produced for sale to tourists.

La Crosse County Historical Society curator Peggy Derrick and intern Becky Putzer, a recent graduate of UW-La Crosse, worked with WHO to photograph objects, scan each page of the scrapbook, and organize the materials into a digital collection hosted by the Milwaukee Public Library. Peggy highlights the significance of this collection for the local community and beyond: "The La Crosse County Historical Society is proud to be the caretaker of the Brekke Collection, which constitutes the material expression of world history as lived by one man." Explore the collection [here](#).

Project News

Students Help New Projects Take Off

This summer, three undergraduate students at UW-Madison will partner with three local historical societies around the state to help get new digital projects off the ground. The positions are sponsored by the Material Culture Program at UW-Madison, with funding provided by a grant from the Caxambas Foundation.

WHO is working with Dr. Ann Smart Martin, professor of American decorative arts and director of the [Material Culture Program](#), to encourage a "service learning model" for these summer opportunities.

The three summer partnerships are:
1) [McFarland Historical Society](#)
Katie Dreps, a history major, will work with Dale Marsden at the McFarland Historical Society to photograph, research and catalog selections from McFarland's extensive collection of early Norwegian and Norwegian-American artifacts assembled in the mid-20th century by collector Albert Skare.

2) [Portage Historical Society](#)
Portage has already worked with WHO to digitize the "[Tales of Old Portage](#)" collection, a group of newspaper articles published by local historian Dorothy McCarthy. This summer, they will work with art history major Andrea Hudson to scan, research, and catalog photographs of historic buildings in Portage. Peggy Amend, Judy Eulberg, and Joan Indermark are the local supervisors.

3) [Three Lakes Historical Society](#)
Breanna Norton, a recent graduate of the anthropology program at UW-Madison, will work with curator Alan Tulppo on photos and documents related to the history of camps and resorts in Three Lakes.

Early WHO members start new projects

Two of our earliest Content Providers, the [Neville Public Museum of Brown County](#) and the Central Wisconsin Digitization Project, are about to take on new digital projects. The Neville, in Green Bay, is nearing the end of an extensive project to digitize photographs and records from the Brown County War History Committee. [This collection](#) now includes information about more than 1,400 Brown County soldiers who served in World War I.

The Neville's next project will build on an exhibition currently on view at the museum: [Badger Boys: Northeast Wisconsin and the Civil War](#). This exhibit and the corresponding digital collection focus on the stories of the local people who lived through the war.

The [Central Wisconsin Digitization Project](#) is a collaborative endeavor of numerous libraries and historical societies in the north-central part of the state including the Marathon County Historical Society, Marathon County Public Library, UW-Marathon County, T. B. Scott Free Library, and the Merrill Historical Society. CWDP is currently wrapping up their [Railroads of Lincoln and Marathon Counties](#) project. The next project centers on the community of Rib Lake and the surrounding area. Bob Rusch of the [Rib Lake Historical Society](#) has compiled thousands of photographs and documents from area residents and will work with the Rib Lake Public Library and UW-Marathon County to catalog these materials and share them online.

WHO Resources

WHO Wiki Has Moved!

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Events to Note

Debbie Cardinal, WHO manager since 2005, retires, really, in mid-June

Dear colleagues from libraries, historical societies and museums,

I expect I will remember the rest of my life how fulfilling, satisfying, and fun it was to work with so many of you on laying a foundation for Wisconsin Heritage Online or setting up a new digital project. Thank you all for your time, thought and enthusiasm over the years.

- Debbie

Emily Pfotenhauer

Emily is fully funded by the Nicholas Family Foundation through December 2011. If you would like to talk with her about a digitization project contact her at 608 265-2138 or [epfotenhauer@wils.wisc.edu](#).

Principal writer and editor, Debbie Cardinal. Contributions from Emily Pfotenhauer.

Wisconsin Heritage Online | Wisconsin Heritage wiki