WHONews

FORWARD THROUGH OUR PAST

April 2010, #15

News of the Day

Metadata harvesting slated to resume

The Wisconsin Heritage Online Technology Committee has been working hard since June 2009 to learn more about the costs of metadata harvesting and options to reduce these costs. Thanks to the committee's efforts, we have great news to announce! Later this spring, the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) at UW-Madison will resume harvesting metadata from digital collections previously harvested for the WHO web portal wisconsinheritage.org. This is referred to as "refresh" harvesting and will pull metadata for new items added to existing collections since July 2009. This process will also update any new server information or URL changes since July 2009. UW-Madison DoIT and the UW-Madison General Library System will not charge for this refresh harvest.

In a second stage, funded by donated monies from several sources, new collections created since July 2009 will be harvested into the WHO portal. This will occur after UW-Madison DoIT develops new computer routines to smooth, simplify and improve error handling and to clean up runtime configuration. The exact date for harvesting new collections is unknown, but we are delighted at the prospect that harvesting for the Wisconsin Heritage Online portal will resume in 2010!

Twitter Update: We score 300 followers; an East Coast genealogist scores a big Wisconsin find

For the past several months, Wisconsin Heritage Online has used Twitter to share new additions to digital collections and to follow updates from libraries, archives, and museums both large and small. As of early April, 300 people and organizations across the country are following our Tweets. Thanks to the Warrens Cranberry Festival (@WarrensCranfest) for becoming follower #300!

Using Twitter has allowed us to connect with new audiences outside the state. Recently a genealogist in Washington, D.C. tweeted to let us know she'd made an exciting find through the WHO research portal:

> "Having so much fun searching through the records I've found through @ WiHeritage. Thank you for posting these online! genealogy

Thanks to @WiHeritage , I've been able to locate my Hans J HANSON in an 1800's plat map of Akan Township, Richland Co., Wisconsin! genalogy."

You can follow us on Twitter under the username @WiHeritage. Don't use Twitter? You can still read our posts by visiting twitter.com/wiheritage New to Twitter? Take a look at this guide to *Twitter for librarians* from Internet consultant Phil Bradley.

Featured Collections

Richland County History Room

Grace Johnson Carter, first Richland County nurse

The Richland County History Room, part of the Brewer Public Library in Richland Center, has posted a first group of 81 historic photographs to their CONTENTdm collection, hosted by the Milwaukee Public Library. The project, led by Richland County History Room historian Crystal Foley and Dr. Aharon Zorea, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Richland, will eventually include over 1,000 photographs depicting people and places throughout Richland County.

This digitization initiative is part of the "Richland Heritage Project" at UW-Richland. Project coordinator Dr. Zorea writes: "Our campus started the Richland Heritage Project in the fall of 2007, and it has been working in cooperation with the Richland County History Room since its inception. The Richland Heritage Project has received partial funding from the Richland County Historical Society. It also includes a student internship program where students receive college course credit for their work on the project. Each term, 2-3 students are working as interns — usually for a period of two or more terms. As of this year, we have had 10 students pass through the internship."

McMillan Memorial Library

Andy Barnett, Assistant Director at McMillan Memorial Library in Wisconsin Rapids, is a long-term advocate of digitization in Wisconsin. He's had digital versions of local history texts and photographs available on his library's website for over ten years. But these kinds of HTML-based digital collections can be difficult to maintain and control. Andy wanted a way to organize his digital collection in a web-accessible database, which provides better control of metadata and images and allows more options for the re-use and display of digital content. Andy will continue to load digital content to the library website hosted by the server at South Central Library System.

Story of a raftsman's life on the Wisconsin River: Earning their money

Andy chose the hosted CONTENTdm service from the Milwaukee Public Library. Available through membership in Wisconsin Heritage Online, the hosted service means that McMillan Memorial Library does not need to purchase content management software or run a computer server themselves. And, because of WHO's Outreach and Training Grant from the Nicholas Family Foundation, the training and support Andy needs to move his digital content into CONTENTdm are free!

Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum

Untitled (Balcony)

Milwaukee's Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum has begun to digitize its Cyril Colnik Archive, consisting of over 300 blueprints and original drawings created by Cyril Colnik, a master blacksmith in turn-of-the-20th century Milwaukee. Jenille Junco, Curatorial Assistant at the Villa, is currently working to scan and catalog each image. When the collection is complete, it will serve as a valuable resource for blacksmiths, collectors, and fans of this popular craftsman's work throughout the country.

Project News

Regional library systems work with member libraries

Outagamie-Waupaca Library System and Nicolet Federated Library System plan to host digital collections for their member libraries using the CONTENTdm server license owned by OWLS. They have developed a training plan and have started outreach to libraries in their systems. WHO Outreach Specialist Emily Pfotenhauer traveled to Appleton in February to meet with staff at OWLS and the Appleton Public Library to review WHO metadata guidelines and the use of CONTENTdm.

Two new WHO members

Whitefish Bay Library and the Old Main Historical and Community Arts Center in Galesville are the newest members of Wisconsin Heritage Online. **Whitefish Bay Public Library** is digitizing and will add to the server at Milwaukee Public Library a unique collection of scrapbooks called the Mimi Bird Historical Collection. The collection consists of 39 volumes of research compiled by local historian Mimi Bird, each bound in a three-ring binder. The content covers roughly what was formerly known as the Town of Milwaukee, including the communities of Glendale, Fox Point, River Hills and Bayside, in addition to Whitefish Bay.

From the library's website: Mimi Bird was a resident of Whitefish Bay since the age of four. In the 1980's Mimi researched the history of the community during which she compiled materials on the area, photographed homes, businesses and landmarks, and organized it all into a set of thirty-nine volumes which she donated to the Library.

The Milwaukee Historical Society recognized Mimi for her outstanding work and in her Milwaukee Journal Sentinel obituary she was praised as "the undisputed expert on local history, both in the village and the greater North Shore area"

In 1976, Wade Britzius, with the support of the Trempealeau County Historical Society,

photographed historic sites and everyday life throughout the county. He is now working with the **Old Main Historical and Community Arts Center** and the Arcadia Area Historical Society to digitize these photographs in order to share them with new audiences.

Langlade County Historical Society

The Langlade County Historical Society in Antigo signed on as a WHO member this winter in order to share their collection of over 750 photographs by Arthur. J. Kingsbury, a professional photographer who traveled throughout northern Wisconsin in the first two or three decades of the 20th century. His photographs were used to create picture postcards of local scenes including lumber camps, resorts, and railroads as well as both posed portraits and candid images of Ojibwa and Menominee Indians of the region.

Joe Hermolin, Langlade County Historical Society president, is working with students in the Tribal Libraries, Archives and Museums (TLAM) course in the School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) at UW-Madison. The TLAM students are exploring appropriate controlled vocabularies for cataloging Native American archival materials and are investigating contacts at tribal archives in the region in hopes of identifying some of the people and places depicted in the images. In March, Professor Nancy Marie Mithlo of the Art History and American Indian Studies departments at UW-Madison visited the class to share her work with the Poolaw Photography Project and to examine the issues surrounding photographic representations of Native subjects.

Blanchardville Historical Society takes on first project

In late February, WHO Outreach Specialist Emily Pfotenhauer traveled to southwest Wisconsin to train new WHO member Blanchardville Historical Society in scanning and cataloging. Last fall, Blanchardville was awarded a mini-grant from the Wisconsin Historical Society to fund the purchase of a scanner in order to share their collections online. In the grant application, they wrote: "We believe that access to the collection is a vital part of the preservation of history and are working toward making that possible by digitizing our collection and getting it up on the web. Given our staffing limitations, this is the most efficient way to reach the most people with our collection."

The group's first project is the digitization of two popular local history books: *A History of Blanchardville, Gem of the Pecatonica* and *Memories of Blanchardville*.

WHO Resources Wiki

PBWorks Wiki Content

The wiki contains a lot of information about digitization: planning, organizing, content management systems, metadata, scanning – a LOT of information. If you are not yet a Wisconsin Heritage Online member and your organization is getting serious about digitizing your valuable and fragile collections, this is the first place to start. We update the wiki frequently with revised documentation, links to useful web sites, the WHO News and anything else we think our members will use. Wisconsin Heritage Online membership is $50 annually for small organizations; $100 for large organizations or collaboratives.

PastPerfect Museum Software is one of the most popular content management systems

used by historical societies and museums in Wisconsin. In March, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Wisconsin Federation of Museums hosted an introductory workshop for new PastPerfect users around the state. During this daylong session, Emily Pfotenhauer offered a brief overview of how local historical societies and museums can use PastPerfect to make their collections data and images available online through WHO. To access the recording, visit the WHO wiki: wilsnet-wiheritage.pbworks.com

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

Wisconsin Heritage Online

Wisconsin Heritage wiki