



In this presidential election year, Archives Week features electoral politics and all the campaign and voting activities that sweep Wisconsin every four years. From the anti-slavery agitation in the 1850s, to women's suffrage in the early twentieth century, to today's hot-button tax issues, Wisconsin voters have made themselves heard on local, state and national issues. Many kinds of historical documents show us how Wisconsinites campaigned and voted in

election years—newspapers, photographs, campaign speeches, news film, posters, diaries and letters. Archives Week 2004 takes place from October 17 to 23 and provides everyone an opportunity to examine and enjoy documents from earlier election years that deepen our understanding of current state and national campaigns.

Activity Suggestions

"Wisconsin Votes" opens the whole history of state electoral politics for your programming possibilities in 2004! But the main purpose of Archives Week is for your institution or organization to participate. So if you don't have collections about election campaigns and voting, organize your program around any theme that shows off your collections or your archival interest to best effect. Once you start thinking about what you can do you will develop great ideas for your own collections and your own community. Find other institutions and groups to work with: chapters of the League of Women Voters might be particularly interested in this year's theme.

Wisconsin county clerk's offices are other possible partners, since they administer elections in Wisconsin. The Archives Week Planning Guide, included in this document, is available to help you publicize your project and to work with your local media.



Organize a classroom project for Archives Week. This can be as simple as arranging to do a show-and-tell for students, using items from your collection. It can involve student projects that you could develop in cooperation with a teacher. Here are some more specific suggestions: Give an educational presentation for students on how to use primary sources. Visit the classroom or



invite the class to your archives for a talk and a tour. Collaborate with a classroom teacher who is instructing students about electoral history. A good project could be collecting copies of the historical sources about a local election.

Help students put on a dramatic reading that uses campaign speeches or debates. A high school drama teacher could help plan and organize the reading. Sponsor a public debate between candidates in a 2004

election in conjunction with a display of historical election documents from your collection. Do you have election posters, TV news film, newspaper articles, or candidate literature that might highlight the same issues of today's campaigns? Displaying those items at the debate allows your audience to draw parallels between past elections and current campaigns.

Collect historical records about elections and voting in your community so the surviving documents are not lost to benefit future generations. Use Archives Week to publicize the collecting. Ask your local newspaper to print stories during Archives Week soliciting donations to your organization.

Arrange talks to community groups about your collecting effort and publicize the talk in your local media to spread the word. Tape record reminiscences of your community members who participated in and who remember local election campaigns. Their recorded memories can be your most precious historical records.

Write and publish a series of stories in your local newspaper that begin during Archives Week or that appear each day of Archives Week. The articles can highlight different kinds of historical records. You can offer your newspaper historical photographs from your collection to publish with your stories. Good images usually increase readers' interest. Create a small exhibit using the election campaign documents in your collection and items that you borrow from other collections. Move the exhibit from your own institution to other public spaces such as the post office, a school exhibit case, a county clerk's office or a mall.



Planning for Archives Week

An Introduction

Archives Week is an annual celebration of the value of Wisconsin's historical records, the original documents about our families, communities, business and civic organizations, and government institutions. The theme for Archives Week 2004 is "Wisconsin.Votes". The idea here is to hold public programs that use historical photographs, newspapers, TV news film, speeches, campaign posters, buttons, ribbons and other memorabilia and show how your archives documents state elections, candidates, political parties and their conventions, and voters' decisions. In this election year, every Wisconsin group and institution working with historical records can publicize the many ways that our historical records give us helpful perspectives on electoral politics.

Why Should You Participate in Archives Week?

Archives Week helps the general public and resource allocators such as trustees, administrators and legislators appreciate and understand that historical records have a contribution to make to modern society. By participating in Archives Week, you show off your collections of historical records to your community, colleagues, and donors, demonstrating the value of the records and the significance of the work you do with them. If your institution or group regularly uses historical records as part of your work, Archives Week is an opportunity to hold public programs that highlight your work and the ways historical records make it happen. Similarly, if your business or organization creates records that in time become valuable for understanding our history, Archives Week is the best time to call attention to your role as a creator of historical records and your contributions to saving important evidence of the past.

Who Sponsors Archives Week?

The Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board (WHRAB)—a volunteer board appointed by the Governor of Wisconsin—and the Wisconsin Historical Society sponsor Archives Week. We would like to thank [Demco, Inc.](#), [Spacesaver Corporation](#), and the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) for their generous support of Archives Week 2004.

