



Wisconsin Topics for 2015-2016

Shirley Abrahamson, First Woman on the Wisconsin Supreme Court: A nationally recognized social worker, community organizer, activist, and political leader, Menominee Ada Deer is a champion of Native rights. Deer led the successful campaign to restore federal recognition of the Menominee Tribe. As head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, she participated in the development of U.S. policies on international human rights and advocated the rights of indigenous peoples everywhere. How have her actions helped to change the lives of other Native people in Wisconsin?

Charles Van Hise and the Wisconsin Idea: The Wisconsin Idea is based on the philosophy that the universities in the state should serve the people of the state and improve the quality of life for all those living within it. This idea expanded beyond education to influence politics and Progressive reforms. How does this idea govern the state today? How does it encourage encounter and exchange between Wisconsinites?

Ada Deer and Native American Rights: Ada Deer was born in Wisconsin as a member of the Menominee tribe in 1935. She dedicated her life to protecting the rights of Native Americans and led a successful campaign to restore federal recognition to the Menominee tribe. She later became the head of the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. How did her exploration of Native American rights lead to an exchange of laws and political discussion? What obstacles did she encounter on her mission?

Alonzo Cushing, A Civil War Hero: Alonzo Cushing was born in Delafield, WI and died at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863 after his heroic actions that led to his being awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor ever in 2015. As an officer, Cushing had to explore the best options for his men to follow in battle. How did Cushing exchange orders from his superiors to his men? How did he encounter the enemy?

John Muir and America's Natural Place: Born in Scotland, Muir began his life in Wisconsin by working on his family farm. Nearly going blind from a factory accident, Muir walked from Indiana to Florida, trying to experience as much nature as possible. In California Muir began working to preserve nature, founding the Sierra Club, publishing articles, and promoting conservation, eventually leading to the foundation of our National Parks Service. How did Muir's exploration lead to the National Parks Service? How do people encounter natural places differently because of Muir?

Golda Meir: Israel's First Female Prime Minister: In 1907, Golda Meir was one of the many new immigrants to Milwaukee. Although her time in Wisconsin was brief, it was influential in her later quest to establish a homeland for Jews in Palestine. She moved there in 1921 with her husband, and was active in many Zionist organizations and the Israeli government. She was elected as Israeli Prime Minister in 1969 and served until 1974. How did her encounters in Wisconsin shape her future in Palestine? How did her exchanges with Palestinians shape her leadership in Israel?

Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company: Harley-Davidson produced the first motorcycle with founders and friends William Harley and Arthur Davidson in the early 1900s. After their first model was built in 1903, the company saw increased demand for their machine with the unique V-twin shaped engine. How did this machine change transportation? How did it impact how people were able to explore? What kind of new encounters do people have on these bikes? What sort of exchange of culture has resulted from the motorcycle?

"Fighting Bob" Robert M. LaFollette: (1855-1925) La Follette developed his fierce opposition to corporate power and political corruption as a young man. A Republican almost his entire career, he went from Congress to WI governor to the U.S. Senate. His support for progressive reforms, rousing oratory, and frequent clashes with party leaders earned him the nickname "Fighting Bob." How did his encounters with the people of Wisconsin lead him to fight for political reforms? How did he explore different options for what issues he should tackle? What exchanges inspired his movement?

Want more Wisconsin topic ideas? Contact NHD in Wisconsin at historyday@wisconsinhistory.org or visit the Wisconsin Historical Society Website at www.wisconsinhistory.org.