



Welcome to the February 2026 edition of *Capitol Connections*—your source for the latest news and updates from the Wisconsin Historical Society. Our mission to collect, preserve and share stories is made possible by continued support from the Wisconsin Legislature and administration. Thank you!



America at 250: Wisconsin's Role in a Historic Celebration

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding. We're marking the occasion with special programs and events, civics education resources, stories and more that highlight our state's unique place in national history. We are excited to support educators, cultural organizations and local history affiliates to ensure that this year of reflection deepens public understanding of both Wisconsin's heritage and our role within the broader American experience.

Share these resources with partners in your community and check back for more information about a special celebration happening this summer at Old World Wisconsin!

250th Resources



Made for Winter: New Capitol Exhibit Celebrates Wisconsin's Winter Sports

An all-new exhibit at the Wisconsin State Capitol invites visitors to celebrate the sports that thrive when temperatures drop! **"Made For Winter: Celebrating Wisconsin's Rich Tradition of Winter Sports,"** now on display in the east wing of the third floor, explores cold-weather pastimes ranging from curling and ice hockey to snowmobiling, the American Birkebeiner and the Inter-Tribal Snow Snake Festival.

Featuring vibrant images and fascinating objects from our collections, the exhibit highlights how winter has shaped recreation, culture and community across the state—and offers the perfect way to kick-start your enjoyment of the Winter Olympic Games!

Upcoming Events

On Feb. 11, history advocates from around the state will gather at the Capitol for **History Advocacy Day**, celebrating the important work of organizations that collect, preserve, and share Wisconsin's stories. Thank you for taking the time to meet with advocates from your districts to discuss the generational importance of these state and local efforts.

And this **Black History Month**, check out the "Lead Between the Rhymes" exhibit, developed in partnership with Pyramidal Productions, at the Society's headquarters in Madison.

More Events:

Feb. 10: [Author Talk on "American Birkebeiner" with Jerome Poling](#) (Eau Claire)

Feb 12: [Rituals of Romance: A History of Courtship and Weddings](#) (Green Bay)

Feb. 14: [Over the River and Through the Woods at Wade House](#) (Greenbush)

Feb. 21: [Wisconsin Genealogy Day](#) (Online)

March 4 - May 27: ["We Take Our Football Seriously" Collections Highlight](#) (Hurley)

March 5: [Author Talk on "Bear Tracks" with Sherman Funmaker](#) (Wisconsin Rapids)

[Click here](#) for a complete listing of Society events!

In The News

BizTimes: [Wisconsin 275 Influential Leaders – Christian Overland](#)

Telegraph Herald: [Jerry Apps, chronicler of Wisconsin history and rural life, dies at 91](#)

Spectrum 1: [2 ancient canoes found in Lake Mendota being preserved](#)

WMTV 15: [1776 artifacts come to Overture Center with Hamilton performances](#)

The Cap Times: [He "made Madison a better place": Leaders reflect on Frautschi's legacy](#)

Wausau Pilot & Review: [Riverside Elementary students explore history with expert researchers](#)

Wisconsin Public Radio: [A brief history of sleigh travel in Wisconsin](#)

Far & Wide: [These 17 Midwest Cities Deserve Your Attention](#)



Photo: A diver surveying the wreckage of the steam barge Thomas H. Smith in Lake Michigan.

Recent Listings

National Register of Historic Places:

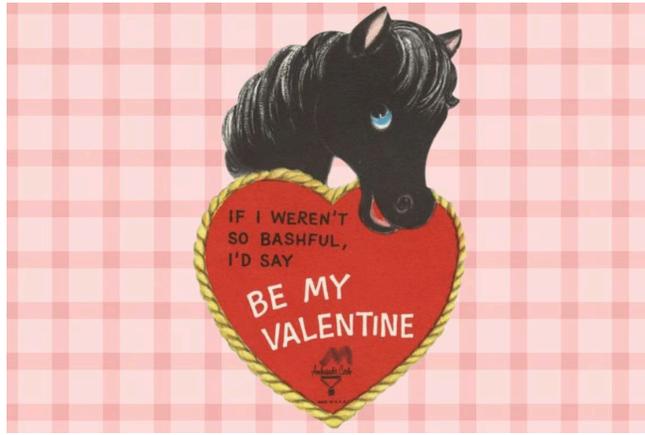
- [Mount Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church](#) (Milwaukee County)

State Register of Historic Places:

- [Thomas H. Smith Shipwreck](#) (Racine County)
- [Jennibel Shipwreck](#) (Door County)

Explore Our Collection: Valentine Cards Through the Ages

From sweetly sentimental to delightfully unusual, Valentine's Day cards have been spreading love (and laughs) for generations. With Cupid's favorite holiday just around the corner, explore our collection to see how hearts, humor and handwritten affection evolved from the 1800s to modern times, one charming card at a time. [Click here](#) to explore the collection!



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