



19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL | OCTOBER 15-17, 2025

# Local History & Historic Preservation Conference

Ho-Chunk Gaming & Conference Center, Baraboo



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



**Common Threads: Weaving  
Stories Across Time & Place**

For more information visit  
[wisconsinhistory.org/conference](https://wisconsinhistory.org/conference)  
or email [lhhpconference@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:lhhpconference@wisconsinhistory.org)



What to Expect

Welcome to the Wisconsin Historical Society’s 19th annual Local History & Historic Preservation Conference! This year, we are excited to travel to Baraboo and the Dells region for our fully in-person experience featuring dynamic speakers, interactive workshops, and engaging breakout sessions.

Registration includes access to all conference sessions and workshops, as well as networking and some tour opportunities. Workshops with limited space require advanced registration. Registration also includes breakfast, snacks, and lunch provided at the conference center. Additional fees and registration are required for off-site tour excursions.

Join colleagues from around the state and beyond as we exchange ideas and share our experiences with supporting local history and historic preservation efforts in Wisconsin, the Midwest, and the nation. Under the theme of “Common Threads: Weaving Stories Across Time & Place,” we will explore how history practitioners weave together the stories of the past with our present, centering community voices as essential threads in the fabric of our shared histories.

Check our website at [wisconsinhistory.org/conference](http://wisconsinhistory.org/conference) for updates about local events and tours, announcements, and more!



The 2025 Local History & Historic Preservation Conference is presented in partnership with AIA Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions, the Wisconsin Council for Local History, and the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board.



AIA Wisconsin is a Registered Provider for the AIA Continuing Education System (CES). AIA members will earn AIA/CES learning unit hours by participating in the designated sessions. Participants must attend the entire session to receive AIA/CES credit.

William Naąwacekǵize Quackenbush

Ho-Chunk Deer Clan  
Tribal Member  
Tribal Historic  
Preservation Officer  
Cultural Resources  
Division Manager  
Ho-Chunk Nation



William Naąwacekǵize Quackenbush began a career in the Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department in 1999 as a land specialist focusing on realty, land-into-trust applications, and cultural and natural resource management. In 2004, Quackenbush became the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Ho-Chunk Nation, spearheading the creation of the Nation’s THPO program to address tribal preservation needs. Since 2006, Quackenbush has served as both the THPO and the Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department & Cultural Resources Division Manager.

Quackenbush will present “Indigenous Oral History: Is It Relevant Today?” The oral history of the Ho-Chunk People reflects upon a direct connection to their ancestral territories, which encompass much of Wisconsin as we know it today. Stories referring to the last glacial episode speak of the Ho-Chunk residing in what they referred to as a place of refuge—what we now know as the beloved Driftless Area. As the glaciers receded to the north, the Ho-Chunk orally memorialized the environmental change taking place and how they adapted to the environment we now find ourselves experiencing. Listen in as the Ho-Chunk Nation’s Tribal Historic Preservation Officer answers the question of how relevant of a role—if any—indigenous oral history plays in the 21st century.

Melanie A. Adams, PhD

Interim Director  
Smithsonian American  
Women’s History Museum



Melanie A. Adams, PhD, currently serves as the Interim Director of the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum. She was previously the Roger Ferguson and Annette Nazareth Director of the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum. Before joining the Smithsonian, Dr. Adams served as the Deputy Director for Learning Initiatives at the Minnesota Historical Society, overseeing the state’s 26 historic sites. Prior to Minnesota, she spent 12 years at the Missouri Historical Society as the Managing Director for Community Education and Events. Dr. Adams is an active member of the museum community. She currently serves on the board of Museum Hue and served on the board of the American Association for State and Local History and the Association of Midwest Museums.

Dr. Adams will present “Weathering Times of Change: How Museums Can Serve Their Communities.” In today’s rapidly changing environment, museums are at a crossroads as they try to navigate the cultural landscape in their community. There are many common issues such as audience development, fundraising, and how content is interpreted and shared. This keynote will be a conversation that addresses these issues as well as how museums can set themselves up for success and serve the needs of their community.





Christian Overland

The Ruth and Hartley Barker  
Director & CEO  
Wisconsin Historical  
Society



Christian W. Overland is the Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Overland spearheads the Society’s mission to connect people to the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories. Under his leadership, the Society has energized public support for a world-class history center that is set to open in late 2027. Before joining the Wisconsin Historical Society in 2018, Overland was the Executive Vice President and Chief Historian at The Henry Ford, an internationally recognized history destination in Dearborn, Michigan.

Overland earned his undergraduate degree in American Studies and Art History at the University of Minnesota–Minneapolis and his master’s degree in American History and Museum Studies at the State University of New York College at Oneonta and New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, N.Y. He has received many awards for his work and contributions throughout his career, including a National Honor Award for a New Century of Service by the U.S. Forest Service, two Outstanding Achievement awards from the Themed Entertainment Association, as well as a Dibner Award for Excellence in Museum Exhibitions. Overland is a member of the Governor’s Council on Tourism in Wisconsin.

| WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15 |  |   |   |   | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15   |  |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| 3:30 - 4:30 P.M.      | Wisconsin Council for Local History Board of Directors Meeting, Sauk County Historical Society History Center, 900 2nd Avenue,Baraboo (WCLH Board Members Only)    |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 5:00 - 6:00 P.M.      | Welcome Social Hour, Sauk County Historical Museum at the Van Orden Mansion, 531 4th Avenue, Baraboo   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 4:00 - 6:00 P.M.      | Conference Packet Pick-Up, Lower Dells Atrium  |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16  |  |   |   |   | THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16  |  |  |   |
| 7:00 - 9:00 A.M.      | Registration and Breakfast Buffet, Upper Ballroom<br>Resource Center Open, Upper Ballroom  |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 8:00 - 9:00 A.M.      | OPENING PLENARY: Welcome and Wisconsin History Center Update with Christian Øverland, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|                       | Session A - Lower Dells A  | Session B - Lower Dells BH  | Session C - Lower Dells E   | Session D - Lower Dells FG  | Workshop 1 - Lower Dells I  | Workshop 2 - Lower Dells CD  | Workshop 3 - Lower Dells Salon AB  | Workshop 4 - Upper Salon  |
| 9:15 - 10:15 A.M.     | Reclaiming History, Reviving Community: The St. James Social Story                | The Why and How of Designating Local Landmarks  | Indigenous Peoples’ Day in Sauk County                            | Jumpstart Digitization on a Budget  | Developing Collections Care Policies and Procedures: Strategies for Small Museums | Boost Your Web, Social, and Email Skills: Interactive Workshop           | Planning to Plan: Envisioning Your Local History Organization’s Future with Strategic Planning | Papers, Pictures, and Patrons: Managing Archives in Cultural Heritage Organizations |
| 10:15 - 10:45 A.M.    | BREAK: Resource Center Open, Snacks Served, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 10:45 - 11:45 A.M.    | Save Your Stones: Cemetery Preservation Basics   | Preservation Strategies with Local and National Designation   | NAGPRA 101  | Putting the Family Back Into the Story: H.H. Bennett Studio and the Wisconsin Dells |   |  |  |   |
| NOON - 1:00 P.M.      | LUNCH & KEYNOTE: Indigenous Oral History – Is It Relevant Today? with William Quackenbush, Upper Ballroom  |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|                       | Session A - Lower Dells A  | Session B - Lower Dells BH  | Session C - Lower Dells E   | Session D - Lower Dells FG  | Session E - Lower Dells I   | Excursion 1 - Off-Site   | Excursion 2 - Off-Site   | Excursion 3 - Off-Site  |
| 1:30 - 2:30 P.M.      | Historic Preservation and Latinx History   | Lessons in Small and Scrappy Historic Preservation  | Making a Meaningful America250                                    | Creating Connections: What Every Good Fundraiser Should Know                        | Local Government Records and Local Repositories                                   | H.H. Bennett Studio Experience   | The Restoration of Ringlingville at Circus World   | Sacred Sites Tour   |
| 2:30 - 3:00 P.M.      | BREAK: Resource Center Open, Snacks Served, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.      | Heritage Tourism: Cultural Identity in Wisconsin Architecture                   | Lights On! Renovation of the Historic Auditorium in St. Croix Falls  | How to Design a Traveling Exhibit for Little Money and Big Impact | No Money, No Mission  | Level Up Learning with PBS Wisconsin Education                                    |  |  |   |
| 4:15 - 5:15 P.M.      | Campfire Conversations, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.      | SPECIAL EVENING EVENT: America@250: The American Revolution Sneak Peek & Panel, in partnership with PBS Wisconsin<br>AL. Ringling Theatre, 136 4th Avenue, Baraboo |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17    |  |   |   |   | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17  |  |  |   |
| 7:00 - 9:00 A.M.      | Conference Packet Pick-Up and Breakfast Buffet, Upper Ballroom<br>Resource Center Open, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 8:00 - 9:00 A.M.      | KEYNOTE: Weathering Times of Change: How Museums Can Serve Their Communities with Melanie Adams, Upper Ballroom  |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|                       | Session A - Lower Dells A  | Session B - Lower Dells BH  | Session C - Lower Dells E   | Session D - Lower Dells FG  | Workshop 1 - Lower Dells I  | Workshop 2 - Lower Dells CD  | Workshop 3 - Lower Dells Salon AB  | Workshop 4 - Upper Salon  |
| 9:15 - 10:15 A.M.     | Truths and Myths of the National Register Program  | Case Studies in Local Design Review                                  | Outdoor Interpretive Signs: Concept to Completion                 | The Art of Archival Appraisal   | What’s the Big Idea? Creating An Effective Exhibit for Your Visitors              | Building a Bigger Tent: Thinking Inclusively to Broaden Community Access | Saving Private Ryan’s Uniform: Textile Care for Small Museums                                  | Local Treasures, Global Reach with Digitization                                     |
| 10:15 - 10:45 A.M.    | BREAK: Resource Center Open, Snacks Served, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 10:45 - 11:45 A.M.    | Wanna Buy a Bridge? Truss Bridges in Wisconsin   | Prescriptive Standards: An Alternative to Using Design Guidelines as Standards  | Unlocking the Treasures of the Father Gaertner Diaries            | Wisconsin Adventures: Roll for Initiative!  |   |  |  |   |
| NOON - 12:30 P.M.     | LUNCH & PRESENTATION: Awards Recognition & Closing Remarks with Society Staff & Christian Øverland, Upper Ballroom   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |
| 2:00 - 3:30 P.M.      | PRESENTATION & TOUR: The Restoration of the AL. Ringling Theatre with Paul Wolter, AL. Ringling Theatre, 136 4th Avenue, Baraboo                                   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |



Wednesday, Oct. 15  
Wisconsin Council for Local History Activities

3:30 – 4:30 PM  
Wisconsin Council for Local History Administrative Committee Meeting

(WCLH Board Members only)  
Sauk County Historical Society History Center, 900 2nd Avenue, Baraboo

5:00 – 6:00 PM  
Conference Welcome Social Hour

(All attendees welcome)  
Sauk County Historical Museum, Van Orden Mansion, 531 4th Avenue, Baraboo

Join us for an evening of camaraderie and connection with fellow enthusiasts of public history and historic preservation, hosted by the Sauk County Historical Society and Wisconsin Council for Local History. Whether you're new to these fields or a seasoned pro, everyone is welcome to relax and bond over shared stories. Enjoy light refreshments at the 1903 Van Orden Mansion, home to the Sauk County Historical Society since 1938, as you make new connections with like-minded folks from around the region. It's a great chance for emerging professionals to sharpen their networking skills and learn from seasoned veterans in a social environment. Don't miss out on this opportunity to grow your network and enhance your conference experience! All attendees are welcome and encouraged to join and connect.

4:00 – 6:00 P.M.  
Early Conference Packet Pick-Up

(All conference attendees)  
Pick up your nametag and conference packet, including session and workshop room assignments

Thursday, Oct. 16

7:00 – 9:00 A.M.  
Packet Pick-Up & Registration

Pick up your nametag and conference packet, including session and workshop room assignments.

7:00 – 9:00 A.M.  
Breakfast Buffet

Opening Plenary Session  
8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

Welcome & Wisconsin History Center Update  
Christian Øverland, The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO, Wisconsin Historical Society



Join Christian Øverland, the Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO of the Wisconsin Historical Society, for the opening session of the 2025 conference. Øverland will share updates on the Wisconsin Historical Society's key initiatives, including the commemoration of the US 250th anniversary in 2026 and the opening of the new Wisconsin History Center in late 2027. The US 250th and new Wisconsin History Center are critical pieces of achieving the Society's strategic goals to expand the stories we collect, preserve, and share and strengthen and sustain connections to history statewide—and beyond. Learn more about the ways individuals, communities, and organizations can join in partnership with the Society to make history together.

Resource Center  
Stop By a Booth

Visit tabletop exhibits and informational booths from historical and preservation groups around Wisconsin in this popular networking opportunity!  
The Resource Center is open during registration and conference breaks. Gather for refreshments and networking discussions with representatives from a variety of organizations.



Thursday Morning Sessions: 9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

Reclaiming History, Reviving Community:  
The St. James Social Story

Annalisa Bermel, Cofounder & Owner, St. James Social  
Cody Bermel, Cofounder & Proprietor, St. James Social  
What happens when a neglected historic building in the heart of a small community is rehabilitated and revitalized? This session tells the story of the conversion of an 1880s commercial building in Bayfield, Wisconsin, to St. James Social, a boutique hotel and restaurant. Using historic tax credits, WEDC and REAP grants, PACE financing, and community vision, Annalisa and Cody Bermel transformed the building into a catalyst for year-round tourism, job creation, and renewed local pride. Learn how their team overcame financing and construction challenges on a tight timeline to support economic growth through historic rehabilitation.



The Why and How of Designating Local Landmarks

Jason Tish, Certified Local Governments Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Local designation of historic properties is often a tense political process. In this session, we will discuss the reasons communities use this unique zoning tool and the typical process for designating properties under a local code.

Indigenous Peoples' Day in Sauk County

Paul Wolter, Executive Director, Sauk County Historical Society  
Kristin White Eagle, Board Member, Sauk County Historical Society  
Indigenous Peoples' Day in Sauk County celebrates native people, culture, history, and tradition every year in October. In 2018, Kristin White Eagle, Ho-Chunk legislator and then-member of the Sauk County Board of Supervisors, led efforts to get official county recognition of the day. Since then, seven celebrations have been planned and executed through the partnership of the Sauk County Historical Society, the Ho-Chunk Nation, and Sauk County at various sites throughout the county. At each event an informational panel has been unveiled to leave a lasting legacy. Find out more about how these events started and continue to grow.

Jumpstart Digitization on a Budget

Lindsey Hillgartner, Digital Production Manager, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Brandon Watson, Digital Imaging Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Want to digitize your collections, but working with limited resources? Not sure where to begin? This presentation will equip you with practical tools to launch a cost-effective and sustainable digitization program. You will learn tools for planning and scoping digitization projects and designing efficient workflows; insights into budget-friendly equipment and software; and strategies for metadata creation and access. You will walk away ready to "jump start" a digitization program at your organization—without breaking the bank!

Thursday Morning Sessions: 10:45 – 11:45 A.M.

Save Your Stones: Cemetery Preservation Basics

Jarrod Roll, Owner, Save Your Stones Cemetery Preservation Services  
Join us for an insightful session on cemetery and gravestone preservation, where we'll explore the vital reasons behind this important work alongside ethical considerations and essential safety practices. Delve into the fascinating world of stone types and the historical significance embedded in gravestone shapes and their meanings. Learn practical strategies for cemetery preservation planning, including how to prioritize cleaning and resetting efforts, manage cemetery landscaping, and thoroughly document all preservation work. The session will also feature valuable visual demonstrations illustrating the correct techniques for gravestone cleaning, highlighting both the dos and don'ts, as well as a demonstration on the proper methods for gravestone resetting.

Preservation Strategies with Local and National Designation

Jason Tish, Certified Local Governments Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society  
For historic properties, local designation as a landmark and federal designation in the National Register of Historic Places function in radically different ways and have very different implications for properties and their current owners. In this session, we'll discuss the differences and how to employ these different tools toward long-term goals.

NAGPRA 101

Jackie Pozza Reisner, Curator of American Indian Collections & NAGPRA Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Navigating the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) can be a daunting endeavor, especially with the 2024 updated regulations added to the mix. This crash course, 60-minute presentation will boil down the legalese to discuss the requirements of NAGPRA. We will review procedures for the repatriation and return of Ancestral remains and cultural items, overview new timelines and required documents, and have plenty of time for questions and answers. Helpful handouts and resources will also be provided. Even if your institution has never interacted with NAGPRA before, no prior knowledge is needed!

Putting the Family Back into the Story:  
H.H. Bennett Studio and the Wisconsin Dells

Leah Penzkover, Architecture and History Inventory Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Jenna Winters, Box Office Manager, Wisconsin Historical Society  
Learn about the history of H.H. Bennett Studio and the family that brought some of the first tourists to Wisconsin Dells. While "Hank" was taking photographs of area landscapes and members of the Ho-Chunk Nation to sell at their shop and abroad, wife "Frank" and their three children worked at the studio taking portraits and keeping the business running. Following Frances' early death, Henry married another excellent businesswoman, Eva. Eva ran the business with their two daughters after Henry's death. It was the descendants of Eva and Henry who donated the studio to the Wisconsin Historical Society 100 years later.





Thursday Morning Workshops:  
9:15 – 11:45 A.M.

Workshops provide opportunities to develop or refresh skills and discover resources through extended, focused presentations with expanded opportunities for Q&A.

Developing Collections Care Policies and Procedures:  
Strategies for Small Museums

Danielle Benden, Owner, Driftless Pathways, LLC

Do you struggle with deciding which museum objects to keep, what new items to accept, or which forms to use for documenting and managing collections? If you need help developing better policies and procedures for collections management, this workshop is for you. Learn how to establish a workflow and process for accessioning and cataloging new collections and deaccessioning existing ones. Participants will learn the basics of a sound collections management policy and leave with templates for a variety of forms (e.g., Deed of Gift Accession Form) to carry out your policy.

Boost Your Web, Social, and Email Skills:  
Interactive Workshop

Emily Ruyle, Marketing Manager, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Yvonne Muller, Lead User Experience Designer, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Sara Noonan, Social Media Manager, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Boost your digital presence! Join us for an engaging and practical workshop designed specifically for local historical societies, museums, and local history organizations looking to enhance their outreach, visibility, and engagement online. This interactive workshop will provide hands-on guidance in marketing, website development, and social media strategies to help you connect with your community and grow your audience. There will be hands-on exercises, live demonstrations, and Q&A time with experts. Bring your own laptop to the workshop!

Planning to Plan:  
Envisioning Your Local History Organization’s Future  
with Strategic Planning

Laura Damon-Moore, Library Strategist & Consultant, WiLS

Melissa McLimans, Library Strategist & Consultant, WiLS

Join planning consultants Melissa McLimans and Laura Damon-Moore from Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS) for an interactive, hands-on workshop about partnering with your community to imagine and plan for the future of local history organizations. Workshop attendees can expect to learn what a strategic plan is, why and how it is a helpful process and communication tool, and how it can help them and their communities think about the future of their local history organizations. Attendees will create a community map and will learn about some different information-gathering techniques to help lay the groundwork for an inspiring and forward-looking strategic plan.

Papers, Pictures, and Patrons:  
Managing Archives in Cultural Heritage Organizations

Greg Kocken, Archivist, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Peter Shrake, Archivist, Circus World Museum

Revised for 2025, this long-running conference workshop is perfect for organizations that are just beginning to start an archives program and for those that are ready to grow and expand their archives. The presenters will share valuable tips and tools for building and growing archival programs. The workshop features engaging activities and will share critical information on a variety of topics that will help transform your archives into a vital component of your organization.

Thursday Luncheon and  
Keynote  
Noon – 1:00 P.M.

Indigenous Oral History:  
Is It Relevant Today?

William Naq̓wacek̓gize Quackenbush,

Ho-Chunk Deer Clan Tribal Member, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer & Cultural Resources Division Manager, Ho-Chunk Nation



Listen in as the Ho-Chunk Nation’s Tribal Historic Preservation Officer answers the question of how relevant of a role—if any—Indigenous oral history plays in the 21st century. The oral history of the Ho-Chunk People reflects upon a direct connection to their ancestral territories, which encompass much of Wisconsin as we know it today. Stories referring to the last glacial episode speak of the Ho-Chunk residing in what they referred to as a place of refuge—what we now know as the beloved Driftless Area. As the glaciers receded to the north, the Ho-Chunk orally memorialized the environmental change taking place and how they adapted to the environment we now find ourselves experiencing.

Thursday Afternoon Sessions: 1:30 – 2:30 P.M.

Historic Preservation and Latinx History in Wisconsin

Dr. Cheryl Ana Jiménez-Frei, Associate Professor of History & Co-Director of the Public History Program, UW-Eau Claire

Sierra Ramker, Public History Graduate Student, UW-Eau Claire

This session will share the results of a collaborative project between UW-Eau Claire, the Wisconsin Historical Society, and the National Park Service to create a comprehensive context study on the history of Latinos in Wisconsin. Funded by an NPS Underrepresented Communities Grant and the Society’s State Historic Preservation Office, this project aims to diversify the nominations listed in the National Register of Historic Places to better represent the state’s history. Presenters will share the goals and processes of researching and writing the context report as well as an overview of the marginalized histories uncovered through the project.

Lessons in Small and Scrappy Historic Preservation

Brian Finstad, Board Member, Gordon-Wascott Historical Society & Douglas County Historical Society

Robert-Jan Quené, Volunteer, Gordon-Wascott Historical Society

In this session, Brian draws upon decades of involvement in solving historic preservation conundrums of small-scale buildings, speaking to examples and strategies that work and lessons learned through trial and error. In particular, this presentation will focus on a case study of the preservation of a 1937 catalog order gas station in Brian’s hometown of Gordon, Wisconsin.



Making a Meaningful America250

Christopher Kolakowski, Director, Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Cody Schreck, Executive Director, Ephraim Historical Foundation

America’s 250th birthday is coming up in less than a year. Join two presenters involved with Wisconsin’s America250 Commission to learn more about what the commission is doing and how Wisconsin’s museums can join in to celebrate and commemorate this important anniversary. The presentation will share resources for museums and communities and ideas being used across the country that might inspire your community to create your own events.

Creating Connections: What Every Good Fundraiser Should Know

Kristin Borst, Development Director, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Joe Kollar, Development and Planned Giving Officer, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Sara Arnas, Grant Writer, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Bonnie Byrd, Exhibition Manager, Wisconsin Historical Foundation

Catherine Orton, Director Emerita, Wisconsin Historical Foundation, &

Attorney, Curran, Hollenbeck & Orton, S.C.

Join Wisconsin Historical Foundation leadership and professional staff for a presentation about the important aspects of a strong fundraising program, including working with donors on major gifts, writing and managing successful grants, encouraging donors to make gifts through their estate plans, and more. Demystify fundraising practices, learn how to approach donors, and build key relationships through real-world examples from our staff and other attendees through an open Q&A at the conclusion of the presentation.

Local Government Records and Local Repositories

Andrew Baraniak, Local Government Records Archivist, Wisconsin Historical Society

Most of us know what local government records are, but do you know if there are any legal issues with having them in your collection? In this session, you will learn about the various types of historical local government records, how public records laws still apply to them, and what you can do if you have records that may have restricted information under these laws.

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board

Thursday Afternoon Sessions: 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Heritage Tourism:

Cultural Identity in Wisconsin Architecture

Carol Cartwright, National Register Assistant,

Wisconsin Historical Society

Traci Schnell, Architectural Historian, tes | Historical Consulting, LLC

New Glarus and Eagle River have incorporated cultural identity into their local architecture to promote and reignite tourism in their respective communities. From the 1950s-era construction of Swiss chalets to the 1970s-era application of a “Northwoods Rustic” aesthetic, learn how these mid-to-late-twentieth-century design decisions were found to be either architecturally or historically significant in their own right, as well as their impact on the historic preservation of each community’s commercial downtown.



Lights On! Renovation of the  
Historic Auditorium in St. Croix Falls

Quentin Collette, Director, New History

The Historic Auditorium was erected in 1918 as a vaudeville theater on the St. Croix River. The current owner purchased it intending to rehabilitate the building while retaining as much of the historic design and materials as possible. The project required new construction to accommodate accessibility, additional seating and storage space, and a loading dock for the stage. All design and construction had to meet Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation because the project was financially supported by Historic Tax Credits. This presentation will address the reuse, financial, programmatic, design, and construction challenges associated with the Historic Auditorium renovation project.



How to Design a Traveling Exhibit  
for Little Money and Big Impact

Rick Bernstein, Executive Director, Dane County Historical Society

The Dane County Historical Society sponsored a traveling exhibit about the history of racial covenants on land deeds in Dane County. The costs were rather modest, but the impact has been substantial. Learn more about how this exhibit was developed, assembled, and managed and how your organization could do something similar.

No Money, No Mission

Wes Mosman Block, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, Wisconsin Historical Society

Dave Desimone, Site Director, Black Point Estate and Gardens

John Harry, Executive Director, Portage County Historical Society

Your organization’s ability to fulfill its mission is dependent on its financial health. This session will introduce strategies and a planning methodology for driving financial sustainability and growth that can be applied to organizations of all sizes. The panel will discuss applications and case studies from organizations with different size budgets and funding models, highlighting similar and unique challenges.

Level Up Learning with PBS Wisconsin Education

Mia Forslund, Education Engagement Specialist, PBS Wisconsin

Looking for ways to offer more robust learning experiences for school and community groups without breaking the bank? PBS Wisconsin Education makes free media resources that can enhance pre-visit and post-visit plans and spark conversations and connections with your audiences. Join us to explore our local history collections that cover a range of topics, time periods, and locations, and discover how you can plug them into your programming today!



1 LU/HSW



## CONFERENCE AGENDA

**NEW! Thursday Afternoon Excursions: 1:30 – 4:00 PM**

In this new opportunity for 2025, hop on a bus for an educational excursion to a local historical site. An additional fee of \$20 per person and advanced registration are required to participate. Please note that there is **no membership discount** for excursions, as costs cover transport. Capacity is limited!

### H.H. Bennett Studio Experience (Capacity 20)

**Jenna Winters**, *Box Office Manager, Wisconsin Historical Society*  
**David Rambow**, *Former H.H. Bennett Site Director & Historic Photographer, Wisconsin Historical Society*

**H.H. Bennett Studio, 215 Broadway, Wisconsin Dells**

Through this excursion experience, you'll learn more about the Bennett family within the building in which they worked and the important role photography played in making the Wisconsin Dells area "famous." In the Bennett family's 1875 historic photography studio, you will witness firsthand where and how portraits were "struck." You'll discover the photos that brought the landscape of the Dells to a national audience and how they are a time capsule to a past that is no longer visible today.



## The Restoration of Ringlingville at Circus World (Capacity 35)

**Julie Parkinson**, Site Director, Circus World Museum  
**William Bahr**, Facilities Manager, Circus World Museum  
**Omar Armendariz**, Capital Projects Manager, Wisconsin Historical Society  
**Stacey Keller and Steve Mar Pohl**, InSite Construction Architects  
**Jessica Hansen**, Capital Projects Construction Representative & Researcher

**Circus World Museum, 550 Water St, Baraboo**

Circus World is a Wisconsin Historical Society cultural resource that includes the original winter headquarters buildings of the Ringling Brothers Circus (1884–1918), known as Ringlingville. The buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Historic Landmark. It is a unique site, representing not only the achievements and success of the brothers, but also a record of the great American Circus. With support from the Save America's Treasures Grant program and State of Wisconsin funding, the Society has taken on several restoration projects to bring the site back to its 1915 period of significance. This excursion will provide a private tour with the architects and state facility managers to explore the recently constructed Ringling Brothers Office Building, the under-construction Wild Animal House #2, and the in-progress design project of the Baggage Horse Barn.



### Sacred Sites Tour (Capacity 35)

**Paul Wolter**, Executive Director, Sauk County Historical Society  
**William Naqawacekǵje Quackenbush**, Ho-Chunk Deer Clan Tribal Member,  
 Tribal Historic Preservation Officer & Cultural Resources Division Manager,  
 Ho-Chunk Nation

**Man Mound State Park, E13097 Man Mound Rd, Baraboo**

Man Mound is the only effigy mound in the state with National Historic Landmark status; it is also believed to be the only mound of its type left in existence. The ground it sits on was purchased in 1907 and is currently owned by the Sauk County Historical Society (SCHS) and managed in partnership with the Sauk County Parks Department. Visit the mound and learn about its history, preservation, and public-private management. Nearby is the Yellow Thunder Memorial, which was constructed by SCHS in 1909 to honor Chief Wakajaziga and his spouse, Haakejanjhejga. Both were resistance leaders during the 34-year period of forced Ho-Chunk removals. The memorial site has been transformed with help from the Sauk County Parks department with prairie plantings, new interpretive signage, and a sculpture created by Ho-Chunk artist Chloris Lowe III.



## CONFERENCE AGENDA

**Thursday Afternoon Networking:  
4:15 – 5:15 PM**

## Campfire Conversations

Take some time to sit for a burning conversation on a focused topic. Each “campfire” will have a facilitator who will provide questions to ignite the topic. Campfire Conversations are an opportunity for focused, collaborative, roundtable discussions around current issues to share experiences and explore ideas. A full list of topics and the final schedule will be provided in your registration packet.

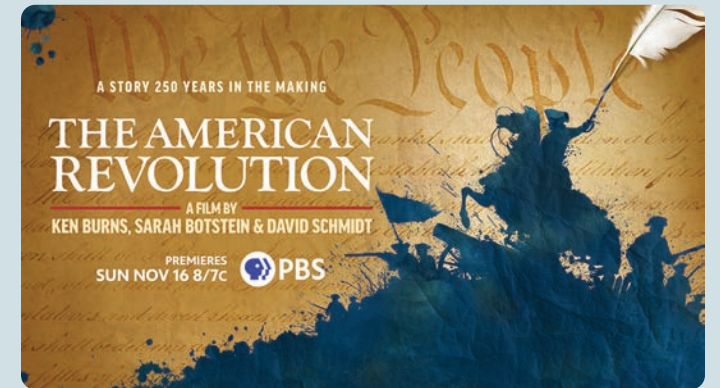


## Thursday Special Event:

## America@250: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION Sneak Peek & Panel

**AL. Ringling Theatre, 136 4th Avenue, Baraboo**  
**6:30 PM - Doors Open**  
**7:00 PM - Program**

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, join PBS Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society for an evening of community and reflection. The night will include a special preview screening of the all-new documentary series *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*, directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein, and David Schmidt; the premiere of two new episodes of *The Look Back* produced by PBS Wisconsin Education; and a panel conversation exploring themes and untold perspectives related to the Revolutionary War era.



This event is part of a statewide America@250 initiative led by PBS Wisconsin in partnership with the Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Public Radio, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, and the Center for Community & Nonprofit Studies at UW-Madison.

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Friday, Oct. 17

7:00 – 9:00 A.M.  
Packet Pick-Up and Registration

Pick up your nametag and conference packet, including session and workshop room assignments

7:00 – 9:00 A.M.  
Breakfast Buffet

Friday Breakfast and Presentation  
8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

Weathering Times of Change: How Museums Can Serve Their Communities

Melanie Adams, Interim Director, Smithsonian American Women's History Museum



In today's rapidly changing environment, museums are at a crossroads as they try to navigate the cultural landscape in their community. There are many common issues such as audience development, fundraising, and how content is interpreted and shared. This keynote will be a conversation that addresses these issues as well as how museums can set themselves up for success and serve the needs of their community.

Friday Morning Sessions: 9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

Truths and Myths of the National Register Program

Elizabeth Hilton, National Register Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society

This session will detail the National Register Program, including the process of listing individual properties and historic districts, implications of what listing does and does not entail, the myths, the truths, and tax credit opportunities for listed properties.

Case Studies in Local Design Review

Jason Tish, Certified Local Governments Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society

Stephanie Hummel, Planner, City of Green Bay

Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, City of Madison

Tim Askin, Historic Preservation Planner, City of Milwaukee

Andrew Stern, Historic Preservation Planner, City of Milwaukee

Evaluating proposed alterations to historic properties is the core duty for Historic Preservation Commissioners. Practice and experience help us make better decisions. In this panel discussion, preservation planners from three Wisconsin cities will present case studies of project reviews that illustrate difficult, common, and successful design reviews under local design standards.



Outdoor Interpretive Signs: Concept to Completion

Paul Wolter, Executive Director, Sauk County Historical Society

Adam Novey, Executive Director and Curator, Historic Indian Agency House

Outdoor interpretive signs can be impactful tools for outreach. If you've been considering using signage at your historic site, this is an opportunity to begin thinking through the steps involved from start to finish. Using examples from the Sauk County Historical Society and the Historic Indian Agency House, contemplate the unique roles outdoor exhibits can play; investigate text and layout development; weigh physical installation factors; evaluate handy guidelines; and more. The work that is invested in the steps between concept and completion will be reflected in the finished product—a product that will work for you 24/7!



The Art of Archival Appraisal

Jacob Riehl, State Records Archivist, Wisconsin Historical Society

Jennifer Skarbek, Collection Development Archivist, Wisconsin Historical Society

Archives appraisal can be intimidating at times, but do not fear! We are here to provide strategies for local historical societies and other institutions as well as to answer questions you may have about the acquisition and appraisal process of new incoming records or collections. Our hope is that after this presentation, you will feel more confident and comfortable tackling the matter and have the tools available to make difficult decisions when it comes to collecting and preserving your stories.

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Records Advisory Board

Friday Morning Sessions: 10:45 – 11:45 A.M.

Wanna Buy a Bridge? Truss Bridges in Wisconsin

Katie Kaliszewski, Cultural Resources Team, WisDOT

Erin Kelly, Historian, Mead & Hunt

Truss bridges were a special engineering solution to an age-old transportation problem. But the technology has been replaced, and these distinctive structures are being dismantled and removed. WisDOT and other partners are working to preserve the history of this unique transportation infrastructure. Come learn about their history and steps you can take to help save them.

Prescriptive Standards:

An Alternative to Using Design Guidelines as Standards

Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, City of Madison

When the City of Madison updated its historic district standards, preservation staff planned to take the traditional preservation approach of using basic standards supplemented by design guidelines. At the advice of our City Attorney's Office, we ended up adopting what would traditionally be design guidelines as our actual standards of approval. Learn how this approach has been working for Madison's Landmarks Commission.

Unlocking the Treasures of the Father Gaertner Diaries

Dr. Michael Holstead, Director of the Center of Norbertine Studies, St. Norbert College

Dr. Jonathan Singerton, Assistant Professor of Global Political History, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

Paul Wolter, Executive Director, Sauk County Historical Society

In 1846, Father Maximilian Gaertner, a Norbertine priest from Austria, came to southern Wisconsin to serve in a Catholic mission. For 12 years, he recorded his experiences in seven diaries which contain a wealth of local history, including fascinating anecdotes about daily life. To date, only one of these diaries has been translated into English. An international effort is underway to "unlock" more of the diaries, which are filled with local history. Dr. Jonathan Singerton of Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Dr. Michael Holstead of St. Norbert College, and Paul Wolter with the Sauk County Historical Society will present on the diaries and translation efforts.



Wisconsin Adventures: Roll for Initiative!

Kurt Griesemer, Manager of PK-12 Education Initiatives, Wisconsin Historical Society

Reach new levels of engagement by incorporating the legends and lore of your community into your educational programs! Wisconsin Adventures combines the myths and legends of Wisconsin's past with the deep learning opportunities of fantasy roleplaying games. Proven education foundations and dragon-slaying go hand in hand! Together we'll take a short stroll through the history of the game before diving into the nuts and bolts of how to build your very own Wisconsin Adventure.



Friday Morning Workshops:

9:15 – 11:45 A.M.

Workshops provide opportunities to develop or refresh skills and discover resources through extended, focused presentations with expanded opportunities for Q&A.

What's the Big Idea?

Creating An Effective Exhibit for Your Visitors

Danielle Benden, Owner, Driftless Pathways, LLC

This hands-on workshop is for people interested in learning how to create engaging exhibits in small museums. Bring your enthusiasm and exhibit ideas and leave the workshop with new skills and a plan for your next exhibit. Attendees will learn about: (1) the basic steps for effective exhibit planning and implementation; (2) how to develop an effective "Big Idea;" and (3) different types of exhibit labels and how to effectively write them. Participants will receive an exhibit design resource manual that they can take with them.

Building a Bigger Tent: Thinking Inclusively to Broaden Community Access

Daniel Soulier, Outreach & Partnership Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society

Joe Corbine, Tribal, School & Community Liaison, Ashland High School

Roxana Turner, Teacher, Ashland High School

Panelists will describe some common challenges they've experienced in spaces and organizations that are working toward more inclusion. They will provide examples of including families and community members in planning, developing, and building a roadmap for change. They will discuss the value of building buy-in at every level and methods they've used to accomplish this—and some mistakes along the way. They will also offer suggestions for positive change and give examples of successes. They invite participants to join conversations, ask questions, discuss concerns or frustrations, and think together about ways to share stories more inclusively in community.

Saving Private Ryan's Uniform: Textile Care for Small Museums

Tamara Funk, Curator, Wisconsin Historical Society

Does your local history organization face the challenge of preserving delicate clothing and other textiles? Join Wisconsin Historical Society curator and textile specialist Tamara Funk as she demonstrates practical preservation techniques, budget-friendly storage solutions, and more during this 2.5-hour workshop. Learn how to care for fragile textiles and leave with knowledge of important stewardship techniques. The program will conclude with discussion of solutions for examples from your collections. Participants should bring objects or images of objects to share with the group.

Local Treasures, Global Reach with Digitization

Kristen Whitson, Digital Specialist and Consortia Manager,

WILS/Recollection Wisconsin

This interactive workshop will guide you through the key steps of planning a successful digitization project, from initial idea to long-term access. Using the Digital Project Planning Worksheet, we'll touch on the major components: planning a project, obtaining permissions, digitizing materials, creating descriptions, sharing content online, preserving digital files, and evaluating your project. While we'll cover the full process, we'll focus most on digitizing (scanning) and describing (writing metadata). After registering, participants will be invited to share what they most want to learn, and the session will be tailored to reflect those interests. You already hold the knowledge needed to begin!



Friday Luncheon, Awards Recognition, and Closing Remarks:  
Noon – 12:30 P.M.

2025 Board of Curators Awards

Wisconsin Historical Society Local History & Historic Preservation Staff

Join us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of the organizations and individuals recognized by the Board of Curators for excellence in sharing Wisconsin's stories and preserving historic places.

Closing Remarks

Christian Overland, The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO, Wisconsin Historical Society

Mr. Overland will share closing remarks highlighting inspirations from this year's conference and encouragement for the year ahead.



Friday Presentation & Tour:  
2:00 – 3:30 P.M.

The Restoration of the AL. Ringling Theatre

Paul Wolter, Executive Director, Sauk County Historical Society

AL. Ringling Theatre, 136 4th Avenue, Baraboo

Learn about the history and restoration of the 700-seat AL. Ringling Theatre, built in 1915 by AL. Ringling. Ringling, along with four of his brothers, founded the world-renowned Ringling Brothers Circus. The theatre was designed in the opulent style of grand 18th-century French opera houses. Now owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society, the theatre was restored in 2015-2016 by the AL. Ringling Theatre Friends. The \$3.2 million project brought the theatre back to its original nickname, "America's Prettiest Playhouse." Attendees should plan to travel to the theatre and park independently.



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Ho-Chunk Gaming & Conference Center

The conference will be held at Ho-Chunk Gaming & Conference Center, S3214 County Hwy BD, Baraboo, WI 53913. All conference sessions and workshops will take place in the hotel's conference center and ballrooms. Onsite parking is available.



Hotel

A block of hotel rooms has been organized at Ho-Chunk Gaming & Conference Center with special rates for conference attendees. Reservations are available by calling (800) 746-2486 and asking for the Wisconsin Historical Society room block (Group ID 14048) or by visiting [wihist.org/2025LHHP-Hotel](https://www.wihist.org/2025LHHP-Hotel).

For more information, contact [lhhpconference@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:lhhpconference@wisconsinhistory.org).

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