



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

# Making History at 250: Resources for Commemorating the US Semiquincentennial

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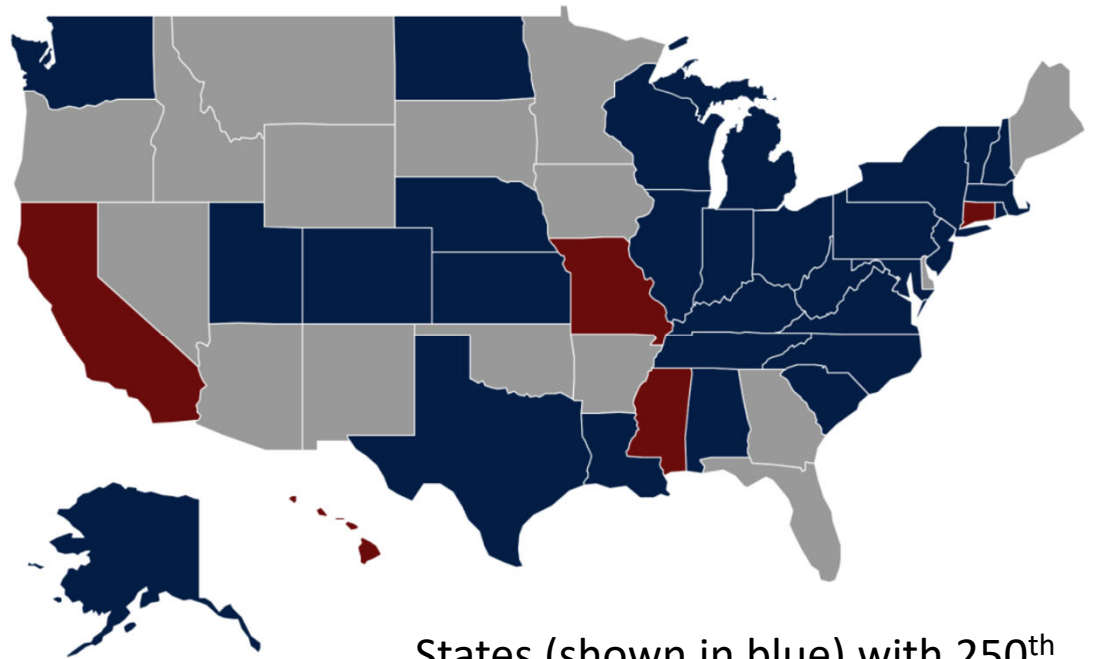
# Session Goals

- Provide an introduction to 2021 WISCONSIN ACT 95.
- Share an early vision for how Wisconsin Historical Society plans to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup>.
- Share the “Making History at 250” framework by the American Association for State and Local History.
- Gather your ideas for local and state programming and commemorations.



# 2021 WISCONSIN ACT 95

“An Act to create 13.625 (11), 15.495, 19.56 (3) (g), 44.015 (8), 44.02 (29) and 45.13 of the statutes; relating to: establishing the Wisconsin commission for the United States semiquincentennial commission to coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.”



States (shown in blue) with 250<sup>th</sup> Commissions as of July 2022.

*Source: 2022 Annual Update on Semiquincentennial Planning*



Wisconsin Historical Society

## Section 2: Commission Membership

- (a) The speaker of the assembly, or his or her designee.
- (b) The senate president, or his or her designee.
- (c) The senate majority leader, or his or her designee.
- (d) The senate minority leader, or his or her designee.
- (e) The assembly majority leader, or his or her designee.
- (f) The assembly minority leader, or his or her designee.
- (g) The governor, or his or her designee.
- (h) The chief justice of the supreme court, or his or her designee.
- (i) The director of the state historical society.
- (j) The director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.
- (k) The director of the Tourism Federation of Wisconsin.
- (L) A member of a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band in this state.
- (m) A member of the Wisconsin Society Daughters of the American Revolution.
- (n) A member of the Wisconsin Society Sons of the American Revolution.



# Section 6: Commission Requirements

## **45.13 Wisconsin commission for the United States semiquincentennial commission. (1)** (a) The Wisconsin commission for the U.S.

semiquincentennial commission shall plan, coordinate, and implement a program to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and specifically highlight the role of Wisconsin in that event and the impact of its people on the nation's past, present, and future.

(b) The commission shall hold public meetings to solicit the input of citizens throughout the state in developing programs for the semiquincentennial.



## Section 6: Key Programmatic Elements

**(2)** The commission shall coordinate with federal, state, local, and private agencies on infrastructural improvements and on projects to welcome regional, national, and international tourists.

**(3)** (a) The commission shall plan and prepare educational events and opportunities relating to the semiquincentennial for use by public, private, and tribal elementary and secondary schools throughout the state. The commission shall provide informational materials about events and opportunities planned and prepared under this paragraph to the department of public instruction for distribution to public, private, and tribal elementary and secondary schools.



## Section 6: Key Programmatic Elements

(b) Each public elementary or secondary school, including each charter school, shall provide at least one event or educational opportunity under par. (a) to pupils in the 2025-26 school year.

(c) For each public elementary or secondary school in a school district, the school board of the school district and, for each charter school established under s. 118.40 (2r) or (2x), the operator of the charter school shall report to the department of public instruction the event or educational opportunity that the school held to satisfy the requirement.



Field trip to Old World Wisconsin.





# WHS Program Concepts for 250

- Creation of curriculum with an emphasis on civics education. The effort will include a new state history textbook.
- Enhanced PK-12 education programs across the state and especially at our 12 historic sites and museums.
- Outreach support and resources for affiliates to develop commemorative programs.
- Creation of an exhibition in the new state history center aligned to the 250<sup>th</sup>.





# A Vision for the Semiquincentennial

**“We hope all communities and organizations will participate in this commemoration, seizing the chance to use history to shape our future.”**

**–Making History at 250**

## Guiding Themes:

- Encourage inclusive, relevant histories and provide cohesiveness to a multi-faceted, grassroots commemoration.
- Acknowledge our nation’s many tensions and ambiguities and that informs our present and future.



# AASLH Call to Action: Beyond the 250th

- Everybody sees their story included as an important part of American history and understands the value of inclusive narratives about the past.
- People value history for its relevance to modern challenges and use historical thinking in their approach to societal problems.
- History organizations of all types and sizes emerge stronger, better supported, engaged with their communities, and using inclusive, sustainable practices.
- History education, both formal and informal, is promoted, enhanced, and restored to a place of prominence in American life.



# POWER OF PLACE

- **What** was happening in your community during the Revolutionary Era? **How** has your “place” changed over time?
- **Who** has historically lived in your community and how did they experience major events in our past?
- **How** can Indigenous peoples’ past and present connection to places and environments inform our understanding of historical developments and contemporary challenges?



Ojibwe woman Francis Mike harvesting  
wild rice on Totogatic Lake.  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Image ID: 24509

# Your Ideas: Power of Place

- Crowdsourced ideas



# WE THE PEOPLE

- **How** did diverse people experience and influence the events of the American Revolution in different ways?
- **How, when, and why** have definitions of “the people” and ideas about belonging changed in the United States, in your state, or in your community?
- **When and how** did different groups of people gain the status of citizenship and what rights and responsibilities did that include?



Citizenship ceremony in Milwaukee in 1963.  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Image ID: 23550



# Your ideas: We the People

- Crowdsourced ideas





# UNFINISHED REVOLUTIONS

- **How** have America's founding documents been used to press for social, political, and economic change?
- Beyond the Revolution itself, **what** were other revolutionary moments in the history of our country, our states, and our communities?
- **When** have members of your community advocated for liberty and equality? **How** have those with power responded?



Milwaukee NAACP Youth Council at the Lincoln Memorial.

Wisconsin Historical Society

Image ID:119131

# Your ideas: Unfinished Revolutions

- Crowdsourced ideas



# AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

- **How** was your local and state government organized and what were key moments in its evolution? Who did it serve—and who does it continue to exclude?
- **When** has the U.S. Constitution, your state's Constitution, or other organizing charter changed? **How** and **why** did those changes happen?
- **How** can understanding the origins of government inform civic engagement in the present?



Map of Wisconsin drawn in 1846.  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Image ID: 89881

# Your Ideas: American Experiment

- Crowdsourced ideas



# DOING HISTORY

- How do history professionals use different kinds of sources— written records, oral traditions, material culture, archaeological evidence, folkways—to make sense of the past?
- Whose stories have been collected in archives and museums and whose have been excluded? How has that influenced the way history is typically told?
- How can we use evidence from the Revolutionary era to uncover and discuss the lives of individuals traditionally silenced by the written record?



Students examine the bookcase that was the original WHS library of the 1850's.  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Image ID:40286



# Your Ideas: Doing History

- Crowdsourced ideas.





# Next Steps: Communication

## **Wisconsin Historical Society:**

- Creation of a landing webpage for the Semiquincentennial in Wisconsin.
- Rollout of workshops to help develop local commemorations.
- Share updates about statewide resources as they become available.
- Begin curriculum development for PK-12 civics education.

## **National Resources:**

### **American Association for State and Local History**

Making History at 250 - <https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/>

### **National Endowment for the Humanities**

“A More Perfect Union” - <https://www.neh.gov/250>

### **National Park Service**

250<sup>th</sup> Preservation Grant Program -

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/semiquincentennial.htm>





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# Thank you!

To learn more visit  
[wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org)

