

WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Stories Since 1846

# Biennial Report 2007-2009

[wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org)



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# Overview



# Map: The Society Around the State



# Wisconsin Historical Society Strategic Framework

## MISSION

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*The Wisconsin Historical Society helps people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories.*

## Guiding Principles

1. To reach out and partner with the broadest possible public
2. To present and promote sound and authentic history
3. To share our riches of staff, collections, and services in ways that captivate and respect our many audiences
4. To collect and safeguard evidence of our diverse heritage according to the highest standards of stewardship

## STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

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- 1. Achieve high visibility of the Society among target audiences**
  - Create a compelling Society brand identity
  - Substantially increase awareness of the Society
  - Create and execute an integrated approach to marketing the Society
- 2. Create a fully audience-focused organization**
  - Undertake a coordinated, Society-wide approach to collect, analyze and respond to audience feedback
  - Provide products and services that meet or exceed audience expectations
- 3. Meet our stewardship responsibilities for historic buildings and collections**
  - Improve the capability to protect and interpret Society collections
- 4. Realize financial support to meet existing and future audience demands**
  - Create the case for and increase financial support from public and private donors
  - Create an entrepreneurial mindset among staff and encourage their ideas
  - Develop a diverse range of revenue sources and grow revenues
  - Identify and take advantage of partnership opportunities
- 5. Create a culture to attract and retain quality staff**
  - Foster job satisfaction and recognize staff accomplishments
  - Provide opportunities for personal and professional growth
  - Develop and implement a succession planning strategy

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# Wisconsin Historical Society Business Overview

## Organization

1. Formed as a membership organization in 1846 and was chartered by the Legislature in 1853
2. Governed by a 36-member Board of Curators, with 24 elected by the membership
3. Organized into five divisions and Director's Office (which includes Information Technology)
  - a. Library-Archives
  - b. Historic Sites
  - c. Museum
  - d. Historic Preservation-Public History
  - e. Administrative Services
4. Wisconsin Historical Foundation — fundraising and membership support
5. Circus World Museum Foundation — operates Circus World
6. Historic Preservation Review Board and the Burial Sites Review Board
7. Friends groups

## Staffing Resources

1. Permanent and project positions — 142.54 full-time equivalent positions
2. Limited-term employees — majority at the historic sites
3. Volunteers — about 250,000 hours annually (i.e. the equivalent of another 120 FTE positions)

## Financial Resources

- |  |                     |                    |               |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Operations Funding                  |                     | <u>2008 – 2009</u> |               |
| a. State tax revenues                  | \$14,742,900        |                    | 64.7%         |
| b. Earned revenues                     | \$3,987,700         |                    | 17.5%         |
| c. Revenues from other agencies        | \$2,438,300         |                    | 10.7%         |
| d. Federal revenues                    | \$1,188,700         |                    | 5.2%          |
| e. Gift revenues                       | \$435,300           |                    | 1.9%          |
|  | <b>\$22,792,900</b> |                    | <b>100.0%</b> |
| 2. Facilities Funding Sources          |                     |                    |               |
| a. Building Commission monies          |                     |                    |               |
| b. Division of State Facilities monies |                     |                    |               |
| c. Gift monies                         |                     |                    |               |

## Facilities

1. The Society owns and operates nine historic sites and owns but does not operate Circus World Museum. It is operated by Circus World Museum Foundation under a lease-management agreement with the Society.

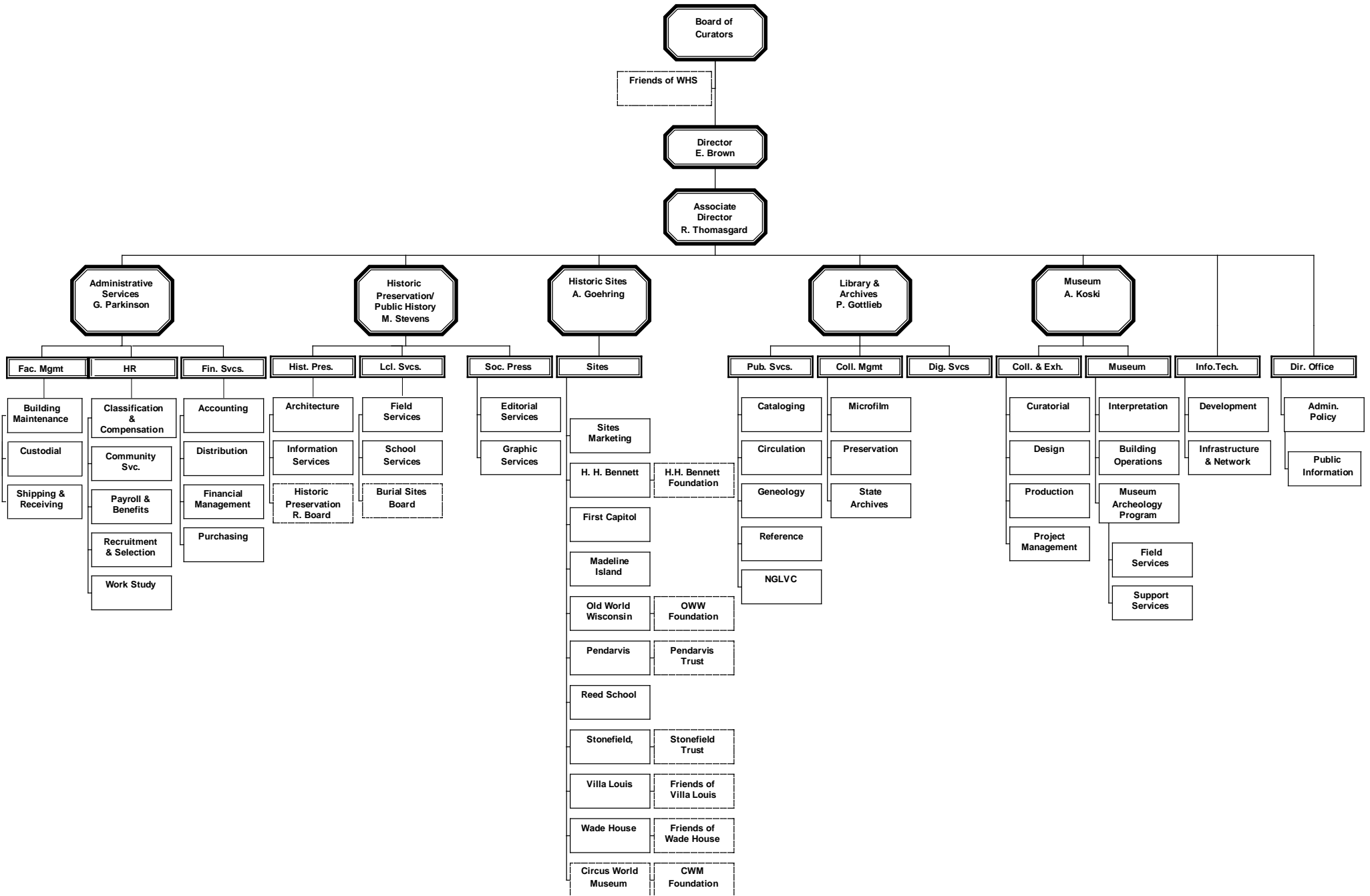
<u>Historic Site</u>	<u>Location</u>
Circus World	Baraboo
Old World Wisconsin	Eagle
Wade House	Greenbush
Madeline Island Museum	La Pointe
Villa Louis	Prairie du Chien
Stonefield	Cassville
H. H. Bennett Studio	Wisconsin Dells
First Capitol	Belmont
Pendarvis	Mineral Point
Reed School	Neillsville

2. The Society owns two major buildings in Madison – the Headquarters Building and Wisconsin Historical Museum — plus 225 additional buildings located at the 10 historic sites:

<u>Historic Site</u>	<u># of Buildings</u>
Circus World	39
Old World Wisconsin	84
Wade House	9
Madeline Island Museum	5
Villa Louis	17
Stonefield	54
H.H. Bennett Studio	1
Reed School	1
First Capitol	5
Pendarvis	<u>10</u>
	225

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# Wisconsin Historical Society Organization Chart





# Budget



**Wisconsin Historical Society**  
**Final 2007-2009 Budget Bill**  
**Authorized Expenditures and Positions<sup>1</sup>**

**GPR Funding (65%)**

	<u>2007-2008</u>		<u>2008-2009</u>	
Fuel and Utilities	\$ 827,200		\$ 862,200	
Debt Service	2,031,600		2,716,600	
Wisconsin Black Historical Society <sup>2</sup>	90,000		90,000	
Storage Facility Preparation	- 0 -		127,600	
Program Operations	<u>10,945,200</u>	(106.15)	<u>10,946,500</u>	(106.15)
	<b>\$13,894,000</b>		<b>\$14,742,900</b>	

**Other Funding (35%)**

Earned Revenues	\$ 3,987,700	( 13.53)	\$ 3,987,700	( 13.53)
Federal Revenues	1,188,700	( 6.36)	1,188,700	( 6.36)
Gift Revenues	442,200	( 1.50)	435,300	( 1.50)
Transfers from Other Agencies	<u>2,246,100</u>	( 15.00)	<u>2,438,300</u>	( 15.00)
	<b>\$ 7,345,700</b>		<b>\$ 7,345,000</b>	
<b>Totals (All Funding Sources)</b>	<b>\$ 21,758,700</b>	<b>(142.54)</b>	<b>\$22,792,900</b>	<b>(142.54)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Positions in parentheses

<sup>2</sup> Pass-through funds

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## Wisconsin Historical Society State Funding Sources

### 1. State Tax Revenues (designated as GPR)

Within this funding source, the state authorizes expenditures of monies for three main Society purposes — general program operations, utilities and debt service. General program operations include monies for personnel (e.g. salaries and fringe benefits for permanent and non-permanent employees) and supplies and services (e.g. travel, telephone, security, etc.) About 85 percent of state tax revenues received by the Society for general program operations are for personnel costs. GPR is separately authorized for (a) utility costs for Society-owned-and-operated buildings (including in the biennium, Circus World Museum) (b) debt service costs for Society building projects financed with bonds backed by state tax revenues and (c) in the second year of the biennium costs to prepare Society collections scheduled for relocation to the Storage Facility.

### 2. Earned Income Revenues (designated as SEG)

Within this funding source, the state authorizes expenditures of endowment and earned income monies. The Society's endowment income can be unrestricted or restricted as to its use. A Board of Curators policy controls the maximum expendable amounts in each category annually. The Society's sources of earned revenues include monies from admissions, sales and services and Department of Natural Resources monies to cover a portion of the Society's operational costs at the Northern Great Lakes Center in Ashland.

The Society is authorized to expend an estimated SEG total that, in the case of earned revenues, can be exceeded only if more revenues come to the Society than originally estimated.

### 3. Federal Revenues (designated as PRF)

Within this funding source, the state authorizes expenditures of monies received from federal agencies for ongoing program operations (e.g. the Historic Preservation program) and special projects (e.g. the grant to preserve the H.H. Bennett glass plate negatives). The Society is authorized to expend an estimated PRF total that can be exceeded only if more federal grant monies come to the Society than originally estimated.

### 4. Gift Revenues (designated as PRO)

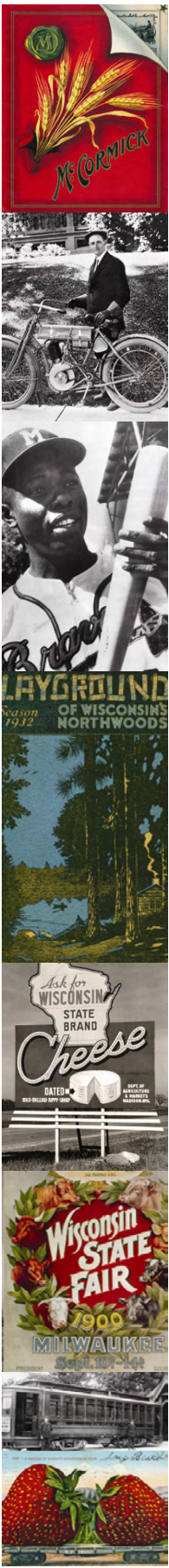
Within this funding source, the state authorizes expenditures of monies received by the Society directly and indirectly (e.g. collected by the Wisconsin Historical Foundation and Friends groups and, subsequently, given to the Society). The Society is authorized to expend an estimated PRO total that can be exceeded only if more gift monies come to the Society than originally estimated.

### 5. Transfer Revenues (designated as PRS)

Within this funding source, the state authorizes expenditures of monies received from other state agencies. In the state's accounting system, the PRS designation applies to expenditures in the "receiving" organization to differentiate them from expenditures in the "providing" organization. The Society receives PRS monies from (a) the Department of Administration to cover a portion of the Society's operational costs at the Northern Great Lakes Center in Ashland through the Library-Archives Division and of our Burial Sites program through the Historic Preservation-Public History Division, (b) the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for archaeological services for highway projects through the Museum Division and (c) preparation to move collections into the Storage Facility. The Society is authorized to expend an estimated PRS total that can be exceeded only if more transfer monies come to the Society than originally estimated.

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# Reports



Wisconsin Historical Society  
Review of Performance and Operations  
Historic Preservation-Public History

## Historic Preservation Program

In 2007-2009, the historic preservation program:

- ✓ Reviewed 1,966 new government projects for potential effects on significant historic and prehistoric resources.
- ✓ Processed 90 National Register nominations across 35 counties, resulting in the listing of resources as varied as shipwrecks, a locomotive, a Northwoods resort, and a brewery bottling works.
- ✓ Qualified more than 339 buildings for state and federal income tax credits.
- ✓ Certified \$96.1 million of new investment in historic preservation projects in Wisconsin and certified \$17 million in federal tax credits that will return to Wisconsin taxpayers.
- ✓ Approved 28 income-producing projects with investments totaling \$56.4 million in FY08 and another 14 income-producing projects with certified investment of \$29 million in FY09.
- ✓ Certified 232 residential projects totaling \$5.9 million in investment in FY08 and 177 residential projects with \$4.8 million in FY09.
- ✓ Recorded 659 new archaeological sites, made updates to 4,233 existing archaeological records, and cataloged 150 burial sites providing these special places the maximum protection available.
- ✓ Continued its public education efforts with over 100 presentations throughout the state and expanded the Maritime Trails program to foster wider public appreciation of the state's rich maritime history.
- ✓ Hosted 62 volunteer members of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Commissions for a two-day training workshop known as the Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program presented by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.
- ✓ Used a \$150,000 Preserve America grant in April 2008 from the National Park Service to digitize its collection of more than 200,000 images of historic buildings in Wisconsin and to share those with the public through its Web site.
- ✓ Received a second Preserve America grant of \$250,000 in January 2009 to create online training materials for historic preservation commissions, historic homeowners, owners of historic commercial buildings, and local preservation advocacy groups (that grant was eliminated in the federal FY09 appropriation bill but is included in the FY10 federal appropriations bill currently under consideration by Congress).
- ✓ Received recognition by the National Park Service for its Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database, which met 16 of 26 recommended best practices, more than any other state, for preservation data management among State Historic Preservation Offices. Wisconsin received commendation for its program that provides public, online access to as much unrestricted historic property information as possible.

Also designated by the federal government as the State Historic Preservation Office, the Division of Historic Preservation-Public History's historic preservation program:

- **administers** Wisconsin's portion of the National Register of Historic Places in partnership with the National Park Service.
- **manages** the State Register of Historic Places.
- **nominates** places of architectural, historic, and archaeological significance to the registers, reviews federal, state and local projects for their effect on historic and archaeological properties.
- **certifies** historic building rehabilitation projects for state and federal income tax credits, archaeological sites for property tax exemptions, and historic buildings as eligible for the state historic building code.
- **identifies and promotes** underwater archaeological sites, administers the historical markers program, and administers the state's burial sites preservation program.

Wisconsin Historical Society  
Review of Performance and Operations  
Historic Preservation-Public History

## School Program

In 2007-2009, the school program:

- ✓ Completed the groundbreaking new fourth-grade Wisconsin history textbook, *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*, and its accompanying Teacher's Edition and Student Activity Guide, which utilize an inquiry-based model and include images and artifacts from the Society's rich collections. The textbook won several regional and national awards, including an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.
- ✓ Completed *Thinking Like a Historian: Rethinking History Instruction*, a pedagogical guide for teachers, which has received national recognition.
- ✓ Provided 892 history curriculum packets to teachers at no cost to districts. Retooled print materials into a digital curriculum CD, enabling the delivery of more teaching materials with a significant cost savings to the Society.
- ✓ Hosted workshops throughout the state for new and participating teachers.
- ✓ Increased annual participation in the National History Day program from 6,600 students at the end of the previous biennium to 9,000 students in 2008-9, with 115 schools participating across the state.
- ✓ Had 16 National History Day projects place in the top 14 in the nation in their category, including one first-place senior paper.
- ✓ Increased teacher workshop participation, with over 100 teachers attending workshops specifically for National History Day and an additional 255 attending introductory presentations as part of other conferences.
- ✓ Provided interactive presentations in classrooms for National History Day, making 57 school visits and giving presentations to 5,125 students.

The Division of Historic Preservation-Public History's school program:

- **offers** instructional materials and programs to schools and teachers through its Office of School Services.
- **assists** teachers and school districts in teaching of Wisconsin history.
- **coordinates** the National History Day program in Wisconsin.
- **provides** year-round support services, interactive classroom presentations and teacher workshops to promote high-quality history education for the state's middle and high school students.

Wisconsin Historical Society  
Review of Performance and Operations  
Historic Preservation-Public History

## Local Assistance Program

In 2007-2009, the local assistance program:

- ✓ Expanded its offerings, resulting in increased attendance and participation, including the annual Local History and Historic Preservation Conferences, which offered training to interested citizens. Attendance increased more than 50 percent, from 200 in 2007 to more than 340 in 2008.
- ✓ Continued its partnership with the Wisconsin Federation of Museums and offered four joint workshops each year, drawing a statewide audience of local history volunteers and museum professionals.
- ✓ Offered three workshops on collections management software and two oral history workshops.
- ✓ Held 10 regional meetings each year to facilitate networking and training opportunities at the regional level, facilitating communication between meetings through a local history list serve, which local societies use to share event and program news, solicit advice and seek technical assistance.
- ✓ Administered the Wisconsin State Historic Markers program and worked with local applicants to erect more than a dozen new state historic markers.
- ✓ Awarded 35 mini-grants (maximum award of \$700) to local organizations seeking to improve collections care.
- ✓ Partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to offer workshops on preserving historic houses and theaters.
- ✓ Partnered with Wisconsin Public Television to help produce *Wisconsin Hometown Stories* and *Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories*.

The Division of Historic Preservation-Public History's field services program:

- **serves** groups and individuals interested in preserving Wisconsin's history and heritage.
- **aids** local history and historic preservation organizations throughout the state.
- **provides** assistance and technical information, on-site visits, and training programs.
- **offers** its outreach services to northern and southern regions of the state from offices located in Eau Claire and Madison.

Wisconsin Historical Society  
Review of Performance and Operations  
Historic Preservation-Public History

## Wisconsin Historical Society Press

In 2007-2009, the Wisconsin Historical Society Press:

- ✓ Published eight issues of the popular *Wisconsin Magazine of History* and 29 new books for both general readers and young readers.
- ✓ Won both regional and national awards for its titles, including
  - *Old Farm* by Jerry Apps
  - *Mountain Wolf Woman: A Ho-Chunk Girlhood* by Diane Holliday
  - *On the Hunt: The History of Deer Hunting in Wisconsin* by Robert Willging
  - *Fill 'er Up: The Glory Days of Wisconsin Gas Stations* by Jim Draeger and Mark Speltz
  - *Finding Josie* by Wendy Bilen
- ✓ Published the award-winning Wisconsin history textbook, *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*, mentioned in the school and local assistance programs.
- ✓ Grew the Badger Biographies series to 12 titles, publishing visually appealing and historically accurate histories of many important Wisconsinites for young readers.
- ✓ Increased book sales with unit sales of 31,008 in fiscal year 08 and 34,099 units in fiscal year 09, a significant increase over unit sales of 21,483 in fiscal year 07.

The Division of Historic Preservation-Public History operates the Wisconsin Historical Society Press. The Press:

- produces the quarterly *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.
- edits and publishes history books for both a general and school audience.



## Historic Sites Attendance and Revenue

In 2007-2009:

- ✓ During the biennium paid attendance at the 10 historic sites totaled 276,362, and total attendance (i.e. all activities at the sites) totaled 464,860.
- ✓ During 2007 paid and unpaid attendance at the sites rose by 9.1 percent and fell by 7.4 percent during 2008.
- ✓ Continued targeted marketing to school groups and programming offered for fourth graders resulted in a school group increase of slightly more than 1 percent over the biennium.
- ✓ During 2007 earned revenue rose by 4.6 percent and fell by 11 percent during 2008.
- ✓ State general purpose revenue accounted for 51.8 percent of the division's operating costs. Earned revenue, gifts and grants, and endowment interest accounted for the remainder.
- ✓ Hours of operation and program offerings remained fairly constant.

The Division of Historic Sites provides seasonal interpretive, living-history programs and year-round public outreach at 10 state-owned historic sites:

- **Villa Louis** in Prairie du Chien opened in 1952.
- **Wade House** in Greenbush and Stonefield in Cassville opened in 1953.
- **Circus World** in Baraboo opened in 1959 (Circus World Museum is owned by the Society but operated independently by the nonprofit Circus World Museum Foundation, Inc. under a lease-management agreement).
- **Madeline Island Museum** in the Apostle Islands opened in 1968.
- **Pendarvis** in Mineral Point, opened 1972
- **Old World Wisconsin** near Eagle opened in 1976.
- **First Capitol** in Belmont opened in 1994.
- **H.H. Bennett Studio** in Wisconsin Dells opened in 2000.
- **Reed School** in Neillsville opened in 2007

## Historic Sites Highlights

In 2007-2009:

- ✓ Wade House electrified the vertical "muley saw" at the Herrling Sawmill so low millpond water levels no longer preclude its operation by waterpower, allowing an ongoing working exhibit for the public. That year Wade House also added the Greenbush Cupboard café, serving lunchtime fare to site visitors and the neighboring public.
- ✓ The year 2008 brought the 50th-anniversary celebration of the opening of Madeline Island Museum. A ceremony honored the occasion and recognized the museum's founders, Bella and Leo Capser, by opening a new exhibit celebrating 20th-century life on Madeline Island.
- ✓ A newly restored caboose and boxcar were displayed at Stonefield with an exhibit of early 20th-century hobo carvings. A sawmill was also restored.
- ✓ Circus World returned to its traditional roots with a classic one-ring circus performance while the site received national media coverage in the weeks leading up to The Great Circus Parade, staged in Milwaukee in July 2009.
- ✓ Old World Wisconsin increased live, first-person dramatizations in response to research indicating that live dramas are a favored method for learning. Exploring this avenue resulted in scenarios featuring the Peshtigo Fire at the Autumn on the Farms special event in 2008.
- ✓ Three sites honored the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth with special events. These were "Music for President Lincoln" at Old World Wisconsin, "Lincoln's Frontier" at Villa Louis and the "19th Annual Civil War Weekend" at Wade House.
- ✓ A Society branding initiative resulted in new logos for each of the sites, and new Web sites were launched in 2008 with content kept up-to-the-minute with site events and information. The Historic Sites Division also launched an electronic newsletter in 2008.
- ✓ A very special promotion, "Free Mondays in June," engendered excellent community goodwill and public relations opportunities at the beginning of the 2009 season. More than 14,700 visitors toured the sites, not including Circus World, on these Mondays, reinforcing the public's interest in visiting Wisconsin's historic sites.
- ✓ The Country School Association of America selected Reed School as one of only 10 country schools that have met the criteria for listing on the National Schoolhouse Register.

The Division of Historic Sites:

- **Maintains** a substantial physical plant and stewards important collections, including historic buildings and artifacts.
- **Manages** 221 facilities including 108 historic structures (12 National Register of Historic Places properties and four National Landmarks). Of the 108 historic structures, 81 do not have heating or cooling.
- **Operates** 115 buildings that provide visitor services, maintenance and administrative support functions (84 do not have heating or cooling).
- **Encompasses** 922 acres of land in 10 historic sites across the state.
- **Preserves** about 155,000 historic collection objects.

## Library-Archives Overview

### The archives:

- ✓ Collects manuscripts and artifacts from private individuals and organizations.
- ✓ Holds the Draper manuscripts, which document early American exploration and settlement.
- ✓ Maintains several collections of national scope, including the mass communications history center, social action collections, and the U.S. labor history collection.
- ✓ Serves as the official depository for important state records.
- ✓ Holds extensive visual and sound records, including more than a million historical photographs, posters, oral history recordings and motion picture films.
- ✓ Operates a network of 13 area research centers located at University of Wisconsin campus libraries throughout the state, at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland, and at the Superior Public Library, allowing members of the network to borrow collections housed in Madison for use by their local patrons.

### The library:

- ✓ Serves as the state historical library as well as the U.S. and Canadian history library for the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- ✓ Holds more than 3.8 million printed and microform items on history, genealogy and related topics in North American history.
- ✓ Maintains a newspaper collection that dates to Colonial days and is second only to the Library of Congress in numbers of issues.
- ✓ Is designated as an official documents depository by the governments of Wisconsin, the United States and Canada.
- ✓ Holds extensive U.S. and Canadian history and genealogical materials.
- ✓ Provides reference and information services in person, over the telephone, through the mail and on the Society's Web site.
- ✓ Lends most of its materials to users in person and to other libraries throughout the state and the nation through interlibrary loan.

### The Division of Library-Archives:

- **comprises** the Society's major research collections of books, newspapers and periodicals, microforms and manuscripts within a single division.

### During the biennium, the division:

- **made** its collections easier to find and use.
- **served** tens of thousands of individuals at its locations in Madison and through a network of Area Research Centers outside of Madison.
- **added** important materials to both its archives and library holdings.
- **continued** preservation programs.
- **obtained** grant funding for work to strengthen collecting and to care for digital materials.

## Library-Archives Public Services and Access

In 2007-2009, the Library-Archives Division:

- ✓ Served 107,635 users in person and through mail and email correspondence through the headquarters library and archive location and 13 Area Research Centers across the state.
- ✓ Hosted 5,076,599 unique visits to the Division of Library-Archives Web pages.
- ✓ Gave 167 tours and instructional sessions for groups of users at the headquarters building in Madison.
- ✓ Made its collections easier to use by adding 14,564 new catalog records to the MadCat (library) and ArCat (archives) online catalogs. Of these added records, 10,441 records gave researchers and users information about newly acquired collections and 4,123 records made it easier to find collections acquired in the past. Special funding in the Library-Archives to help prepare collections for eventual relocation to a new storage facility made possible most of the progress in cataloging items acquired in the past.
- ✓ Added 1,063 online finding aids to archival collections to the finding aids Web site hosted by the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections program (<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/wiarchives>).
- ✓ Sent 43,741 books from our holdings of monographs and Wisconsin state documents to Google through the Google Book Project for scanning. This completed the scanning of our family history, African American, Native American, and history of North American Christianity volumes. It also represented about one third of our labor history books and a significant percentage of our Wisconsin state documents, increasing access to these important collections.
- ✓ Became a founding member of the Hahti Trust, a consortium created in October 2008 of university libraries from the Big Ten universities and University of California participating in the Google Book Project. The Hahti Trust launched over 2 million digital volumes and approximately 750,000,000 pages from digital copies of books and documents given to the University of Wisconsin in accordance with the 2005 contract with Google. In 2009, 16 percent of these volumes are in the public domain and available to read online. Rather than leave it up to Google to make our scanned books accessible according to its own policies, the consortium of universities supporting the Hahti Trust wants to assure access to all the books each institution has loaned to Google, particularly government documents.

The Division of Library-Archives selected, digitized and published online nearly 100,000 pages and images, including:

- 80 Wisconsin county histories.
- 17 World War II manuscript collections.
- 18 rare books and manuscripts on endangered Native American languages.
- several letters by author Laura Ingalls Wilder's family in the popular Turning Points in Wisconsin History collection.
- 12,500 historical images.
- 24 oral histories, photographs and manuscripts from the Wisconsin Survivors of the Holocaust \* collection.

\* The complete Survivors digital collection will go live on the Society's Web site during the 2010 fiscal year and was achieved with additional grant funding from the Bader Foundation.

## Library-Archives Acquisitions and Preservation

In 2007-2009, the Library-Archives Division:

- ✓ Added 12,266 items to its library holdings, including books, pamphlets, serials, compact discs, microfilm and digital publications. Most of the additions of these library materials are purchased; relatively few are gifts.
- ✓ Grew its archival holdings by a total of 1,600 cubic feet almost entirely by outright gifts and donations.
- ✓ Negotiated with the Wisconsin Newspaper Association to acquire the association members' publications in digital format. These negotiations progressed well and were nearing a successful conclusion as the biennium ended.
- ✓ Developed a plan for an off-site Preservation Storage Facility that the State Building Commission has enumerated and that was included in the 2009-2011 capital budget. The plan provided spaces for library and archives collections storage in excellent preservation environments as well as work spaces to move collections to and from the building.
- ✓ Completed an endowment in conjunction with the Wisconsin Historical Foundation for the division's preservation program, funded by a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by private donors to support a full-time, permanent preservation coordinator and annual preservation operating costs. The coordinator and the annual operations funding will help the division address its most critical collection preservation needs, including the growing challenge of ensuring access to digital materials for hundreds of years.
- ✓ Continued preservation work on the division's materials at a significant level. Staff gave conservation treatments to 752 volumes and pamphlets. Staff sent 4,685 library items out for commercial binding; microfilmed 1,091,652 pages of newspapers, journals, and historical records; and digitally scanned 9,588 photographs and other visual materials.
- ✓ Joined the Persistent Digital Archives and Library System (PeDALS) — a national, grant-funded project to develop procedures for digital documents that can accomplish what archivists have previously done with paper documents: accession, manage, preserve and share with users. Library-Archives staff worked with partners at the state archives of Arizona, New York, Florida and South Carolina to write and test automated computer procedures for handling large volumes of digital documents. All phases of development made progress, and the prospects appeared good for implementing a functioning digital repository.

The Division of Library-Archives undertook several special projects, including:

- the renovation of the library reading room, which began during the 2008-09 fiscal year.
- all services for the public continued in limited space in one part of the main room while construction started in the lobby area and in the vacated part of the main room.

The division's Wisconsin Records Assessment Project, supported by a federal grant, started in April 2008, resulting in:

- a statewide survey of archives that determined what topics in post-World War II Wisconsin require more collecting.
- the project staff's review of many repositories' collections and interviewed archivists.
- the project staff's invitation to 50 stakeholders to a symposium in April 2009 to discuss gaps indicated by the survey in order to share ideas on how to fill the gaps.

## Museum Attendance and Earned Revenues

- ✓ During the biennium the museum achieved great success in terms of overall attendance, tallying 136,942 visitors, exceeding the goal of 128,500 by 7 percent.
- ✓ A trio of highly popular exhibitions, *World Series Wisconsin*, *That's the Ticket: A Parade of Presidential Elections* and *Odd Wisconsin*, coupled with reinvigorated programming and a unique museum store, helped drive museum attendance up by 9 percent during the biennium.
- ✓ School tour attendance at the museum was particularly successful, serving 53,389 students and exceeding the goal of 50,200 by 6 percent. A revamping of tours based on the new Wisconsin Historical Society Press textbook *Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story* engaged children to think like historians about why history matters, and was very well received by teachers and parents. School tours were up 16 percent from the prior biennium and represent 39 percent of the museum's attendance. Children received 82,615 educational instruction hours in Wisconsin history, exceeding the goal of 65,300. This represents a 27-percent increase in student participation and interaction with the museum's program offerings. School groups came from more than 75 percent of the state's counties.
- ✓ The museum's programs, special events and outreach initiatives served another 26,118 visitors by increasing public participation in museum programming. Outreach programs took staff to nursing and assisted-living homes, educational facilities (elementary to college level), local historical societies, clubs and statewide conferences. Visitors could select from numerous programs: public lectures, film series, demonstrations, workshops and dinner series, with hands-on projects for children offered throughout the year.
- ✓ Earned revenue, essential to museum operations, continues to grow with store revenues up by 7 percent. The museum's online, in-house and "on-the-road" store sales efforts helped generate more revenue through tough economic times.
- ✓ During the biennium admission donations were also up 23 percent. An increased commitment to public relations and marketing, as well as to high-quality programming, played a role in this growth.

The Wisconsin Historical Museum, located on Madison's Capitol Square, provides educational opportunities for visitors through exhibitions, tours and public programming.

- The museum contains permanent exhibits on Wisconsin Indians from prehistoric times to the present day, including galleries devoted to the first inhabitants, the era of exchange, and the day-to-day activities of Indians through the seasons in 19th-century Wisconsin.
- Additional permanent exhibits document the history of Wisconsin agriculture, environment, industry, tourism, political history, and Wisconsin's settlement by European immigrants.
- The first floor houses changing exhibits, the museum shop and an orientation theater.
- A second changing exhibit gallery is located on the fourth floor.

## Museum Exhibitions

- ✓ A photo exhibit, *Private Soldiers: A Year in Iraq with a Wisconsin National Guard Unit*, chronicled events from the unique perspective of three of the soldiers who served in the Guard's 2-127th Infantry Battalion's year in Iraq. Designed as a traveling exhibit, *Private Soldiers* is appearing at venues throughout Wisconsin.
- ✓ *That's the Ticket: A Parade of Presidential Elections* ran through the 2008 presidential election and highlighted past races for the White House.
- ✓ *Chris Farley Remembered* featured television and movie clips and mementoes from this Wisconsin comedian.
- ✓ The exhibit, *Odd Wisconsin*, provided a way for the museum to share many of its unusual collections. It was so well received by visitors and the media that it continues to run into the next biennium.
- ✓ Smaller exhibits included *Ojibwe Fish Decoys*, *Native American Moccasins*, *'Tis the Season*, which featured aluminum Christmas trees, and an exhibit on Wisconsin's historic gas stations based on the Wisconsin Historical Society Press book, *Fill 'er Up*.
- ✓ Renovations continue in the Native American Gallery, which opened to the public 23 years ago, with the opening of a fur trader's cabin. This gallery continues to be one of the most popular with school groups.

Several major museum exhibits opened during the biennium, including *World Series Wisconsin*, which marked the 50th anniversary of the Milwaukee Braves' 1957 World Series victory and the 25th anniversary of the Milwaukee Brewers' 1982 American League pennant. Visitors thoroughly enjoyed the authentic memorabilia and original radio and television clips.

## Museum Collections

- ✓ During the biennium the museum's curatorial staff increased the percentage of collections in online catalogs by 54 percent. There are currently 4,550 objects accessible on the Society's Web site. This biennium 1,599 objects were added to the online collections tours for Native American moccasins (162), dolls (1,196), samplers (64), and Wisconsin ceramic arts (177). Still more museum objects are accessible in 13 online exhibits. The museum added 79 online essays about specific artifacts with supporting images in its "Curators Favorites" section of the Web site.
- ✓ Curatorial staff continued to document the collections and more than 250,000 objects are now entered into ARGUS, a collections computerized database.
- ✓ During the biennium the museum accessioned 1,700 new acquisitions of historical objects into the collection. A few highlights include:
  - **Oscar Mayer Wiener Banjo-Ukulele** used by jingle composer Richard Trentlage in the first recording of the Oscar Mayer *Wiener Song*, 1962
  - **Liberace's Performance Jacket**, an elaborately beaded jacket worn by pianist, performer, and Wisconsin native Liberace during his performances in the late 1970s
  - **"Rosie the Riveter" coveralls** worn by Teresa Kuykendall while working in a factory in Beloit during World War II
  - **African American bowling shirt** designed, made and worn by Earlene Fuller of Milwaukee, c. 1995

- The museum's collections include over 500,000 objects representing 12,000 years of Wisconsin history. Those artifacts not on exhibit at the museum are housed at the Society's headquarters building on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, where its curatorial staff works to catalog and conserve the collection
- The museum loaned 130 objects to 58 offices in the State Capitol during this biennium.
- Museum staff worked to complete an inventory project in preparation for a move to an offsite preservation storage facility. The project captured 76,000 digital images and updated 86,000 object locations in the ARGUS collections database. The imaging represented approximately 75 percent of the museum's historic objects, with the rest set to be digitized by the end of 2009.



## Museum Archaeology Program

- ✓ The Museum Archaeology Program staff provided archaeological and historic architecture professional services to the departments of Transportation and Natural Resources through cooperative agreements for compliance with federally funded or licensed projects and Wis.Stats. 44.40. The program is based at the Atlas Avenue Archaeological Laboratory.
  - ✓ Museum Archaeology Program staff worked in 58 Wisconsin counties, discovering and studying more than 80 archaeological sites and historic structures.
  - ✓ The staff participated in public programs and workshops throughout Wisconsin, describing the results of their research.
  - ✓ In partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, program staff designed and installed a permanent outdoor exhibit, *Trails Across a Changing Landscape*, near Middleton.
  - ✓ More than 1,800 visitors to the Montello Historic Preservation Society/Montello Museum viewed a traveling exhibit, *Community Life in La Crosse 500 Years Ago*, and archaeology activity kits for children developed by program staff.
- The museum operates a museum archaeology program, which is an active field research program providing archaeological, architectural and historical research services to other state and federal agencies.
  - A designated museum staff member also serves as the Society's official liaison with Wisconsin's 11 Native Nations and Tribes on matters pertaining to the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA).
  - Staff also provides information on the Wisconsin burial law ([Wis.Stats. 157.70](#)), museum standards and information on Native American objects in the museum collection, and information on resources and collections throughout the Society.

## Alternative Work Patterns

- ✓ The Wisconsin Historical Society currently has many permanent and part-time employees using flexible-time work schedules. The Society supports the use of these and other alternative work pattern programs, which have been successfully utilized by its staff since 1991. The Alternative Work Patterns policy complies with the requirements of the state Alternative Work Patterns Policy and Procedures Outline. The Society is currently drafting a work-at-home policy.

# Contacts



## Wisconsin Historical Society

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# Board



## Wisconsin Historical Society

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