



June 2015

## In This Issue

[An Interview With...](#)

[New from the Press](#)

[Wisconsin History Tour](#)

[Yours in Education](#)

[The Museum on the Square](#)

[Down at the Villa](#)

The Wisconsin Historical Society Educator Update curates news from the Wisconsin Historical Society and beyond for the community of educators in Wisconsin.

## Yours in Education

[Kurt Griesemer](#), Director of Education

## The Summer's Here and the Time is Right...

Looking for a chance to make an impact on "Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story" student activities? If you've used our textbook activities in the past, or if you haven't and want to let us know what we can do to improve them, please consider taking our survey! Contact [Ted Maust](#) for more information.



## An Interview with Paul Olson, Volunteer Coordinator with the Wisconsin Historical Society



## Like Us on

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Like our [Facebook page](#) to see highlights and tips for educators. Catch the latest "[#tweetinghistory](#)" image or follow us on Twitter (@WHSEducation) to see the latest quips and bits!



# The Museum on the Square

*Tell us a bit about yourself*

As a former Middle School history teacher I feel right at home here at the Wisconsin History Museum. Why you may ask? Because there are moments of chaos mixed in with people who are passionate about history. The energy that surrounds the students and teachers here at the museum is palatable and fun to swim through. It's like being back in my old middle school without having to grade the students. It has always been fun for me to talk with others about the stories in our pasts. I feel happy to be able to share in the creation of a story telling experience for the students and adults who come to visit us.

*What the best part of your job?*

As the Volunteer Coordinator I have found people who care about history and are willing to give their time to keep the stories about Wisconsin alive and available for all to hear. Sure, this is a different role for me and a difference experience than teaching in a classroom but both jobs still boil down to telling stories. I've turned the page in my life's story and landed in a great chapter.

Contact Paul with your volunteer-related inquiries [here](#).

## New from the Press

### Whispers and Shadows

## Joins Us for History Sandwiched In, Summertime Fun, and Much More!

### Summertime Fun

Summertime Fun is an eight-week environmental-themed series for families filled with crafts, experiments, stories, and history. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Each program in the series runs for one week. See our [website](#) for schedules and fees. First up: The Ice Age!



### History Sandwiched In: The History of Miniature Golf

Author June Melby gives an entertaining and informative talk on the history of miniature golf, exploring how the whimsical sport was invented quite by accident during the 1920s, and then went on to become one of the great money-making ventures during the Great Depression.



Learn how mini golf became so popular that movie theater owners worried they would be put out of business. Using storytelling, photographs and researched facts, author June Melby will chronicle miniature golf's unexpected rise, unfortunate decline

and rise again in the decades that followed.

June Melby is the author of "My Family and Other Hazards," (Henry Holt 2014), a memoir about her own family's miniature

## WHISPERS and SHADOWS



A NATURALIST'S MEMOIR

JERRY APPS

By: Jerry Apps

In these times of technological innovation and fast-paced electronic communication, we often take nature for granted--or even consider it a hindrance to our human endeavors. In "Whispers and Shadows: A Naturalist's Memoir", Jerry Apps explores such topics as the human need for wilderness, rediscovering a sense of wonder, and his father's advice to "listen for the whispers" and "look in the shadows" to learn nature's deepest lessons.

Combining his signature lively storytelling and careful observations of nature, Apps draws on a lifetime of experiences, from his earliest years growing up on a central Wisconsin farm to his current ventures as gardener, tree farmer, and steward of wetlands, prairies, and endangered Karner blue butterflies. He also takes inspiration from the writings of Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, Henry David Thoreau, Sigurd Olson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir, Barbara Kingsolver, Wendell Berry,

golf course in Waupaca, Wisconsin. A book signing will follow the presentation.

For more information on this and many other events, check out our [event calendar](#).

## Down at the Villa: The War of 1812



The War of 1812 was an international conflict that unfolded across two primary arenas: the Eastern Seaboard of North America and the Old Northwest. The Old Northwest stretched from the Western Great Lakes to the Upper Mississippi River. In this theater were two conflicts: a U.S. - British War and U.S. - Indian War. These conflicts merged on July 17, 1814, at the Battle of Fort Shelby in Prairie du Chien. The battle took place on what are now the grounds of the Villa Louis, making this the only War of 1812 battlefield within the present boundaries of Wisconsin.

Prairie du Chien had been an important gathering place for the fur trade since the 1750s. It was a mixed community of French-Canadians, British-Canadians, and Native Americans, all with strong social and economic ties to Lower Canada. In June 1814, United States troops from St. Louis arrived in Prairie du Chien to establish Fort Shelby. They hoped to destroy British influence in the region and to prevent British- Indian forces from attacking American settlements in Illinois and Missouri.

Word of the American presence in Prairie du Chien quickly spread

Richard Louv, and Rachel Carson.

With these eloquent essays, Jerry Apps reminds us to slow down, turn off technology, and allow our senses to reconnect us to the natural world. For it is there, he writes, that "I am able to return to a feeling I had when I was a child, a feeling of having room to stretch my arms without interfering with another person, a feeling of being a small part of something much larger than I was, and I marvel at the idea."

[Available](#) now from the Wisconsin Historical Society Press! And don't forget to reserve your seat @ the [Wisconsin Historical Museum](#) to see Jerry talk about his latest book!

to Mackinac where British authorities in command of the region authorized a military expedition for the relief of Prairie du Chien. A force was raised under the command of Lt. Col. William McKay, veteran militia officer and former partner in the Northwest Fur Co., a man well-acquainted with Wisconsin. Made up largely of voyageurs and other men employed in the fur trade, its ranks were swollen with numerous bands of Wisconsin Indians. An army of some six hundred men arrived in Prairie du Chien on July 17th, and a two and a half day siege followed. British and Indian forces ultimately prevailed, the American troops surrendered, the British ensign was raised and the fort was renamed in honor of Colonel McKay.

The Villa Louis War of 1812 event includes numerous activities that explore the Battle of Prairie du Chien, day to day life in the 1814 army, and the diverse culture of the Upper Mississippi fur trade.

Activities take place on the parade ground between the British and American Camps, on the Battlefield near the Block House, and on the West Lawn. Food and beverages will be sold by the Friends of Villa Louis near the Battlefield each day.

For more information, visit our [website](#) or call 608-326-2721.

## The Wisconsin History Tour

As the Wisconsin Historical Society



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

embarks on the "Wisconsin History Tour: Sharing Wisconsin's Stories One Community at a Time," we have hopes to spend time and share stories of the past with communities throughout the state. The "Tour" represents a major, multi-year outreach effort.

During the stay the Society will bring a handcrafted exhibit in order to share pieces of collections we have gathered since our founding in 1846-ranging from a Civil War soldier's letter home, to early 20th Century photographs of Door County, to maps dating back to 1513, to the Racine story of malted milk, to maritime stories of shipwrecks on the Great Lakes.

Thank you for reading our newsletter. Have a wonderful summer!

**Sincerely,**

[Kurt Griesemer](#)

Director of Education

Wisconsin Historical Society

The statewide trek is currently in Superior at the [Douglas County Historical Society](#). For more information on the Wisconsin History Tour, please visit our [website](#).

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Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Stories Since 1846