FALL 2026

North Wood County Historical Society NEWS

MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Autumn!



President Brad Allen

Greetings everyone and a very happy, healthy Autumn to you! I have been feeling a little guilty as of late having to spend time away from the house and putting some duties on pause. The last month and a half I have been remodeling and finally got moved into my new residence. I'd like to thank Kim and my fellow board members for understanding and filling my shoes while this transition took place. I am back at it now and looking forward to the next couple events on our schedule.

We have our Trick or Treat at the Upham on October 29th and look forward to seeing all the costumed kiddos. The Chestnut Center for the Arts will be having their Haunted Hallway going on at the same time. They do an excellent job with their displays and events. We will also be having our Christmas open house as well as our annual membership meeting and potluck.

Speaking of events, the Central Wisconsin State Fair display we had this year was a real treat. It was great to sit and talk with folks who viewed the many informational and historical boards we had out. It is always fun to hear people's comments such as, "Hey, that is picture of my grandpa!" or "I didn't know we had this or that in town". I am happy to see our display continues to bring more awareness of the importance of keeping history alive and relevant in our area. Another couple notes on events: Dairy Fest and Hub City Days are a staple for our organization, and I really enjoy having the community come out and enjoy the house. We have had record numbers of people go through the house this year, and I hope to see more volunteers step up to help as those events happen, the more the merrier! We always have fun and always enjoy answering questions and showing our incredible displays.

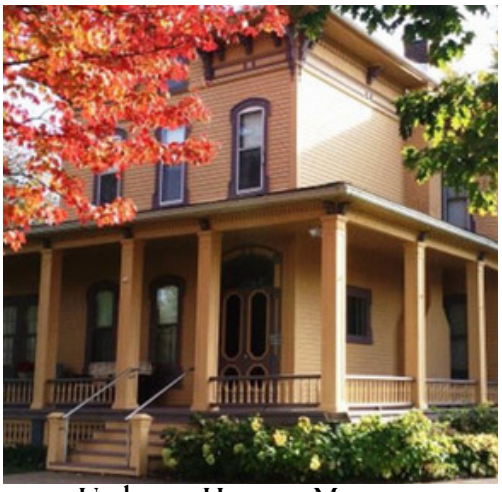
As we move forward, we are in need of a paint job on our biggest artifact, the Governor Upham House. It has been about 12 years since the last paint was applied, and it is in very rough shape. We are hoping to do a more thorough renovation instead of just painting. There is wood that needs replacement and a lot of miscellaneous items that need attention soon. We will be getting estimates as well as researching grants and organizing a large community fundraiser as this is sure to be an expensive endeavor. We have had great response and support in the past and are hoping to see that continued enthusiasm for maintaining one of the great gems of our area for years to come.

As I close, please remember to observe Veterans Day November 11th in honor of our military members both past and present. We would not be the nation we are without their sacrifice and dedication to freedom.

Thank you all for your continued membership and support!

Sincerely,

Brad Allen



Upham House Museum

NWCHS Board of Directors
President - Brad Allen
Vice President - Don Schnitzler
Secretary - Mike Meyers
Treasurer - Melissa Sinha
Past President - Tom Witzel

Directors
Laura Ptak
Shelby Weister
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Rick Kellar
Connie Michalski
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Coordinator/Museum Educator
Kim Krueger

Consulting Rosarian
Tom Ptak

Tour Hours:
Wednesdays 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Saturdays 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM
Or by appointment

Office Hours:
Mondays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Wednesdays 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Thursdays 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Contact Us:
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A Home Worth Saving: The North Wood County Historical Society's 1976 Campaign to Preserve the Upham Home

In September 1976, the North Wood County Historical Society took a decisive step toward preserving one of Marshfield's most significant historic homes. After negotiations dating back to April 1975, the Society signed an option on September 28 to purchase the former home of Wisconsin Governor William Henry Upham. Funds for the purchase itself had been committed by private donors, but acquiring the property was only the beginning.



In the library, just off the parlor, historical society president, Dennis Nelson points out a brownish-hewed lithograph of Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet reading the Emancipation Proclamation hanging just above the marble fireplace. Nelson also pointed out that William Upham became the first enlisted man in history to be appointed to the U. S. Military Academy by a president following his near death in the first Civil War Battle of Bull Run.

Before exercising the option, Society president Dennis Nelson explained that several important questions had to be answered. The Society needed firm estimates for renovating the mansion, a commitment of assistance from the City of Marshfield, and evidence that the community truly supported preserving the property. Restoration was estimated at approximately $60,000 to $65,000.

The Society quickly went to work. It sought restoration bids, appealed for broad public participation, and invited city officials to tour the mansion. The October tour helped demonstrate both the possibilities and the challenges. The heating system represented the largest anticipated expense, while repairs to portions of the ceiling, foundation, chimney and porch were also identified, along with the need for an accessible entrance.

Throughout the effort, the Society stressed that success could not depend upon a handful of generous donors. Preserving the Upham Home would require community participation through both financial contributions and volunteer effort. The foundation providing the purchase funds likewise required evidence of broad-based support and assistance from the city for renovation and operation.

By December, those efforts had produced results. The city had agreed to provide $10,000 annually for two years, local donors had contributed, and more than $45,000 of the approximately $60,000 needed for renovation had been raised. On December 7, Dennis Nelson announced that the mansion was expected to become Society property within the following week, bringing the nearly two-year pursuit of the home to its culmination

But preservation of the house was never the final goal. The Society envisioned an "active, usable museum." Some rooms would be restored to reflect the Upham era, while other rooms would display artifacts, documents and relics telling the broader history of the area. The museum was also envisioned as an educational resource for schoolchildren and a place where longtime residents, newcomers and visitors could discover the community's heritage.



Eighth Ward Alderman Dennis Schulhauser points to a sectioned wooden ceiling in the dining room of the Upham Mansion on W. Third Street during an October 1976 tour for city officials. Mayor Ray Tippelt, Sixth Ward Alderman Art Schirpke and North Wood County Historical Society President Dennis Nelson, who conducted the tour, look on. The floral wallpaper, lace curtains and latticed door in the background are typical of the building's old-fashioned elegance. The dining room set in the foreground was built in a furniture factory operated by former Wisconsin Gov. William Henry Upham, original inhabitant of the house. (News - Herald Photo)

What began with an option to purchase in September 1976 became, by December, the realization of an ambitious community preservation effort and the beginning of a new chapter for the North Wood County Historical Society.

Nearly fifty years later, that vision continues to be realized. The Upham House welcomes more than 2,000 visitors annually, while the North Wood County Historical Society's community outreach reaches another 2,000 people each year. Beyond the museum walls, the Society's online sharing of local history attracts more than 500,000 views yearly, extending Marshfield's stories to an audience far beyond the community. Together, the historic home, its collections, educational programs, outreach activities, and growing digital presence demonstrate the important role the Society continues to play in preserving, interpreting, and sharing our community's historical heritage for present and future generations.

NWCHS 3rd Quarter Events

Hub City Days

On Saturday, July 25, 2026, during Hub City Days, many visitors came to the Upham House Museum to enjoy a bit of respite during the very busy event. The North Wood County Historical Society hosted John Berg and Evan Reusch (shown to the right), who provided blacksmithing demonstrations on the Upham Lawn. Many of those visiting the property also took time to read the historic photo boards that lined the front walk to the house.





The North Wood County Historical Society also served lunches and root beer floats (shown left). Those who came not only enjoyed the activities, but they also often lingered, enjoying the shade, the lawn, the front porch, and, most of all, each other. The Upham House Museum, its welcoming grounds, and the bonhomie they inspire offered an oasis amid all the car show activity in the Downtown.



Annual Members' Picnic



Each summer, the North Wood County Historical Society invites members, volunteers, and friends to gather for our annual picnic—a time with no agenda, no fundraising, and no specific activity other than simply enjoying one another's company and appreciating all the wonderful people who make the North Wood County Historical Society what it is.



On Monday, August 17, 2026, we were blessed with beautiful weather, no bugs, and nearly 40 people who enjoyed a true smorgasbord of delicious food and good fellowship.

Thank you to everyone who came and helped make this year's picnic such a special occasion!

It's a Wrap - Alder Film Project

Filming for the Adler Movie has wrapped up. The film, based on Kris Leonhardt-Kob's book "Showstopper", highlights the life and legacy of early Marshfield theater owner "J.P." Adler.

The movie used some local talent and many various locations throughout the city for filming, including the Upham House Museum, shown to the right. The project is now in the editing phase with the release expected in 2027.



Local History Display Draws Strong Interest at Central Wisconsin State Fair



The Local History Display at this year's Central Wisconsin State Fair proved once again that interest in our community's heritage remains strong and vibrant. More than 1,000 fair goers visited the exhibit during the fair's run August 26-30, 2026, with some stopping briefly to browse while others spent considerable time carefully examining each panel of photographs and historical information.



One of the most rewarding aspects of the exhibit was the many conversations it inspired. Visitors shared memories, asked questions, and discussed the local businesses featured throughout the display. Many were curious about businesses not included on the panels as well, leading to questions about where they were located, when they operated, and who owned or managed them. These discussions highlighted the important role local history plays in connecting generations and preserving community memories.



Expanding into additional space this year, the exhibit was larger than in previous years, allowing for more photographs, stories, and historical content to be shared. The increased size made it possible to showcase a broader range of topics while providing visitors with a more engaging and informative experience.



The exhibit was truly a collaborative effort. Special recognition is extended to the North Wood County Historical Society, the Marshfield Historic Preservation Association, the City of Marshfield Historic Preservation Commission, the Marshfield Public Library, and the Forest History Association of Wisconsin. Their partnership, dedication, and commitment to preserving and sharing local history made this successful exhibit possible.



We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Central Wisconsin State Fair Board of Directors for hosting another outstanding fair and for providing the opportunity to share our community's rich history with so many visitors. Their continued support helps ensure that local history remains an important part of the fair experience.

The enthusiastic response from fair goers demonstrates that preserving and sharing our local stories remains a worthwhile endeavor, and we look forward to building on this year's success in the future.

Collection of Artifacts Continues to Grow

Each year, people from the community and the surround area bring historic items to the Upham House Museum. These items are donated to the North Wood County Historical Society, so they may be preserved and shared as part of the history of Marshfield and the surrounding area.

These items are reviewed by Kim Krueger, if they meet specific criteria, they are then accepted, catalogued, and carefully stored for future research and possible display at future themed displays and events. The first twenty items that have already been accepted this year are include on the next page.

It is through Kim's painstaking work with the help of faithful volunteers that these important pieces of our history are preserved and remain with the North Wood County Historical Society.

Artifacts Collected



2026.01 - Kliner - Wooden toy house, Nik's Dairy Maids bowling uniform (on right), & Roddis Warehouse archival
2026.02 – Draeger – postcard & Marshfield Business promotional ephemera
2026.03 – Buchek – 7 photos; Tony & Nancy Buchek wedding images
2026.04 – Dick – Box lid, wooden; addressed to Albert Weinbrenner
2026.05 – Langfeldt – 8 Dairy fest mugs; 1992-2014
2026.06 – Berg – Marshfield history archival
2026.07 - Hennes - 1967 Marshfield Fire Anniversary poster
2026.08 - Shaut - Postcard of 1st Presbyterian Church with 1951 postdate
2026.09- Langlade Co. Historical Society - Postcard of Hefko Pool dated 1937
2026.10 – Gripentrog - 38 Bar/Saloon tokens
2026.11 – Schnitzler; Reproduction 1913 Roddis Lumber & Veneer Co. Catalog
2026.12 – Nowak- Scrapbook, photo album, archival of Elizabeth Cramer (of Hewitt)
2026.13 – Kobs-Boe- St. Joseph postcards, pamphlets, Booklet
2026.14 – Stashek- Booklet, 'A Promise Fulfilled' Rudolph Grotto Gardens
2026.15 – Kolstad- 2 pieces of wood lengths dated 1889 – one stamped "Upham Mfg. Co." from 1404 Arlington St.
2026.16 – Kohl - 32 Vol. Cyclopedia set 1892-1894
E2026.17 – Gross – Display/Educational items: collar box, dipping ink pens, ink well
2026.18 – Martin – Photo Album re: Wagner, Bauman, Durst families
2026.19 – Kolbeck – 54 photos, mostly 1960s re: Marshfield Clinic & St. Joseph Hospital, Marshfield electric facility, 1962 Columbus Homecoming parade, 200 & 300 blocks of East Central Ave
2026.20 - Berg - Pamphlet: 'The Lake Shore & Eastern Rail Road (by Berg); Archive: Article on Sherry/Wood County Railroad (by Berg)

NWCHS Upcoming 4th Quarter Events

Upcoming Events

The following events are planned for the North Wood County Historical Society:

- Thursday, October 29: Main Street Marshfield Downtown Trick or Treat
- Monday, November 30: Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck Dinner, and White Elephant Gift Exchange
- Saturday, December 5 and Sunday December 6: Christmas Open House and Tours

Downtown Trick Or Treat

On Thursday, October 29, Main Street Marshfield will be holding their annual Downtown Trick or Treat event. Since the Upham House Museum is located near the heart of the city, the North Wood County Historical Society will be participating as well. We will hand out candy to any youngsters who come to the house between 4:30 PM and 6:00 PM, the designated time for the event. The event is a very popular event for families, and we are hoping we can entice participants to stop at the house as they are out and about.



Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck

Members of the North Wood County Historical Society are invited to meet and the Upham House Museum on Monday, November 30 at 6:00 PM for the annual dinner, membership meeting, and "white elephant" gift exchange. Members are asked to bring a dish to pass, as we enjoy a traditional potluck dinner together, followed by the annual membership meeting.

Members are reminded to renew their membership for the new year. Only active members are able to vote for any action presented at the meeting. Meeting actions will include voting for Board of Director members as well as voting for Secretary and Treasurer.

North Wood County Historical Society's Christmas Open House Celebrating the History of Caroling in Marshfield

The North Wood County Historical Society (NWCHS) invites the community to celebrate the holiday season during its annual Christmas Open House, Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This year's special Christmas exhibit, "Voices in the Snow: The History of Caroling in Marshfield," explores the traditions, music, and community spirit that have made Christmas caroling a treasured part of the holiday season.

Throughout the historic home, each room will be decorated around a select Christmas carol, using its history and story as inspiration for the room's holiday decorations. Visitors will have an opportunity to discover the origins and traditions behind familiar carols while experiencing them in a festive historical setting.

Displays will complement these room themes with antique caroling songbooks, handwritten sheet music, Victorian Christmas cards, church programs, traditional carolers' clothing, lanterns, photographs, and community choir memorabilia.

Evocative displays, including a snowy village diorama and a candlelight-inspired exhibit featuring Christmas music, will recreate the warmth and atmosphere of caroling during a Wisconsin winter.

NWCHS welcomes visitors of all ages to step back in time, explore a familiar holiday tradition, and discover how generations of voices have helped bring music, fellowship, and Christmas cheer to the Marshfield community.

Christmas Open House – December 5–6 | 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are in the season of the year when much work is completed in the yard to prepare for the winter. This includes leaf raking, once the trees are empty. If you are willing and able to assist with this chore, please call Kim at the house, so we can add you to a list of people to contact when the time is right.

Additionally, we can always use a few more people to assist at the house during the Christmas Open House. If you are available on December 5 or 6 and are interested in assisting, please contact Kim at the house.

Thank you for reading!

SANFORD HEALTH
Marshfield Clinic

Thank you to the Sanford Health – Marshfield Clinic Print Shop for graciously printing our quarterly newsletter as a donation to the North Wood County Historical Society

North Wood County Historical Society

Membership and Donation Form for the year 20__

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Membership includes a quarterly newsletter and monthly event updates. Please indicate if you would prefer

email ____ or

paper ____ copies

- ☐ INDIVIDUAL $35
- ☐ STUDENT $10 (HIGHSCHOOL/COLLEGE)
- ☐ FAMILY $50
- ☐ BUSINESS $100
- ☐ GENERAL GIFT $_____
- ☐ HOUSE RESTORATION $_____
- ☐ MEMORIAL IN MEMORY OF _____

*ALL MEMORIALS WILL COUNT AS GENERAL GIFTS UNLESS OTHERWISE DESIGNATED

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212 W. THIRD STREET
MARSHFIELD, WI 54449

MISSION STATEMENT:
THE NORTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS DEDICATED TO COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND SHARING AREA HISTORY FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

GOALS:

- COLLECT AREA HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS
- PRESERVE HISTORY THROUGH ARCHIVES & STORIES
- CONNECT PEOPLE TO AREA HISTORY THROUGH RESEARCH & EDUCATION
- CELEBRATE HISTORY AND COMMUNITY THROUGH COLLABORATION, TOURS, & EVENTS
- ENGAGE VOLUNTEERS AND INCREASE SUPPORT OF THE SOCIETY

