



NORTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN

NEWS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings friends of NWCHS!

Here we are with our summer Newsletter already and we have much to be grateful for. First of all I would like to welcome our additions to the Board of Directors: Nancy Sternweis has returned for another term as director, and she has been a great member and volunteer through the years and Rick Kellar, who has been taking care of our front garden (Martha's Garden) for the last couple of years. We have all been very pleased with his dedication and hard work to give our house "curb appeal". Connie Michalsky has joined as a director as well. She will be an asset for our organization with her financial background and her affiliation with the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Connie is also a liaison with the Adler Film Project which has been taking place here at the house. We welcome them all and look forward to being a cohesive team to put forth our mission!



President Brad Allen

As I have stated in the spring newsletter, we have also been trying to increase our membership. Since that time, we have added several business, individual, and family memberships. This is a very important step in the sustainability of our organization. It gives not only financial support but also helps create a bigger family of volunteers and garners more community interest. We are very thankful for the new and renewed support. I am very certain with the momentum we have we will see a very productive and successful future. But it takes all of us to be advocates and promoters of our mission and we want everyone to know that we want to hear from you for ideas for events, displays, any local history subjects that we may not be aware of etc.

I hope you all had an opportunity to attend our Pie and Ice Cream Social, it was another great success! We had close to record numbers in sales and broke the record for number of people that came through the house! We were also represented in the Dairyfest Parade by me, dressed as Minuteman and Ken Bargender who was dressed as a Civil War soldier; and we had Ken's UTV decked out with our banners and of course American Flags! We also had the Wisconsin Wheelmen here and in the parade with their antique big-wheel bikes, one of which I had the opportunity to ride from the fairgrounds to the house, only to discover the brakes didn't work so well!

There are a lot of good items in the following pages, and we hope you enjoy. Thank you all again for your support and we'll see you during Hub City Days here at the Upham House!

Regards,

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
Nancy Sternweis
Rick Kellar
Connie Michalski
OPEN
OPEN

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:

715.387.3322
nwchs@uphammansion.com
www.uphammansion.com

NWCHS 2nd Quarter Events

Upham House Property Work

This spring, we had several trees removed from the property. Thanks to Brad Allen's work with get quotes from various contractors and then coordinating this work, we were able to have the trees removed at an affordable rate. Some of the trees removed had been creating issues with the Rose Garden. These pine trees which were on the south edge of property provided very little to the yard, but were a hindrance to the rose

bushes. Another tree was removed as it was getting quite old and was drawing concern that it would cause damage if it fell during a storm.

Some other volunteers who need to be thanked are the Garden Group. Every year they give sacrificially of their time and resources to ensure that the grounds of the house look incredible for visitors. Their efforts continue throughout the year as they

also work to maintain the grounds for all who come to visit. The North Wood County Historical Society would like to thank them for their tireless efforts.



Traveling Trunk Outreach Event

One of the many outreach events the North Wood County Historical Society provides in the *Traveling Trunk*. This is a collection of items from days gone by. The *Traveling Trunk* is used to connect people to the past by providing a hands-on opportunity to see the past through items that can be viewed and held. In many cases, participants are able to revisit days held within their memories.

On Friday, May 8 the *Traveling Trunk* traveled to the South Apple Avenue Wells Nature View facility. This trunk featured old kitchen gadgets, fishing gear, farming and gardening items, and a record player with vinyl records. Each of these items brought back memories and stories of earlier years for those who attended. According to the facility administrator, the event had a great turnout with nearly every resident attending.

If anyone is interested in having a NWCHS representative provide a *Traveling Trunk* presentation, please contact Kim at 715-387-3322 or email nwchs@uphammansion.com

Wine and Beer Walk Community Event



On Saturday, May 9, the Upham House Museum participated for the first time in United Way's 10th Annual Downtown Beer & Wine Walk. Kristin Hughes and John Armbruster offered sample libations in the front yard and informed participants that the house was open for visits.

A couple of NWCHS personnel were on hand to answer questions and tell stories about the house, Mr. Upham, and the community in general as over 120 people took advantage of the opportunity. Many of those walking through the house admitted they had never been through the house before. We are happy that we were able to showcase our greatest asset while helping to inform people of a little of the history of our great city.

Historic Preservation Month - 3rd Grade House Tours

For years during Historic Preservation Month observed in May, third graders from Marshfield's public and private schools have come to the Upham House Museum to learn about history, and more specifically about Marshfield history. These visits leave an impact on those who participate which we learn about as older individuals come back to visit and comment about their tours as third graders.

This year we again had 356 people involved in the tours, which occurred over eight different days. During these tours, the students had the opportunity to review the local history they had learned during the school year while getting a glimpse of Governor Upham's family home.

During the tours students also engage in hands-on activities throughout the house which included making butter in the kitchen, setting a formal table setting in the dining room, and practicing their cursive writing with old-fashioned dipping pens and ink in the upstairs gallery.

As part of the 250 anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, students learned more about the history of the document including information about its original signing, the reason it came to be, and its relation to July 4th, now known as America's Independence Day.

During the tours, Ken Bargender presented a \$2 bill which depicts Thomas Jefferson, primary author of the Declaration on the obverse, and John Trumbull's painting "Declaration of Independence" on the reverse.

Afterwards, each student had the opportunity to 'sign' the Declaration against a backdrop replica of Trumbull's painting.



Historic Preservation Month Cemetery Tours

On May 21, more than 200 third-grade students and chaperones from the Marshfield School District participated in "A Walk Among Our Ancestors," an engaging and educational event where local reenactors bring Marshfield's history to life.

This year marked the 23rd Annual Marshfield Cemetery Tour for school children, a cherished community tradition that helps students connect with the people and stories that shaped their hometown.

Students had the opportunity to "meet" the following historical figures, as portrayed by dedicated local actors, each sharing powerful stories from Marshfield's past. We wish to give a special thanks to those actors who were willing to give of their time to present the powerful stories of the following people:

- Mrs. Fred (Anna) Beell, portrayed by Sherri Bauer, was the wife of world renown wrestler, Fred Beell, Marshfield's only police officer killed in the line of duty.



- Clara Erion Thomas, portrayed by Roxanne Tomkowiak, witnessed the Great Marshfield Fire of 1887 and paused on the June 27 anniversary to sharing her memories of that fateful day with her granddaughter, Geraldine Smith, who preserved Clara's story as a written essay.



- Gabriel Adolph "Dolph" Lupient, portrayed by Ken Bargender, along with Louis Rivers and his family, came to what is now Marshfield on April 1, 1872 and fell the first tree to help build Marshfield's first building, a log hotel.



- William Upham – Portrayed by Dave LaFontaine, was a prominent businessman, mayor during the Great Marshfield Fire, and the only Marshfield resident to serve as Governor of Wisconsin.

(Picture not Available)

- Anna Lathrop, portrayed by Tami Jackan, was a witness to the Great Marshfield Fire of 1887 and was the first woman elected to the Marshfield City Council.



- Mary "Mayme" Connor, portrayed by Kris Coleman, was an early Marshfield civic leader, suffragette, and wife of Wisconsin lumberman and Lt. Governor W. D. Connor.



- Sgt. Willard D. Purdy, portrayed by Greg Jackan, was Marshfield's most well-known World War I hero, having sacrificed his own life to save those of his comrades.



- Mary Upham, portrayed by Theresa Bannach, was a civic leader, mentor to local youth, and a leader in relief efforts following the Great Marshfield Fire.



Again, we are so thankful to have these dedicated people step into roles and help our youth understand the importance of these historic figures from Marshfield's past. A special thank you is also extended to Dan Rogers and the staff at Marshfield Hillside Cemetery for their hospitality and for their efforts in preparing and maintaining the cemetery grounds.

This interactive experience, which continues to inspire young learners while honoring the legacy of Marshfield's past, is made possible through the efforts of members and volunteers of the City of Marshfield Historic Preservation Commission, the Marshfield Historic Preservation Association, and the North Wood County Historical Society.

Dairyfest Pie and Ice Cream Social

On Saturday, May 30, the North Wood County Historical Society held the 47th Annual Pie and Ice Cream Social. This event proved most successful with over 600 people attending the event!



As with years past, the event included donated slices of pie and scoops of ice cream for purchase along with raffle baskets of donated items and a silent auction. Attendees were also entertained with music provided by Will Elmhurst and Jim Rhoades.

This year's event included the Wisconsin Wheelmen's display and demonstrations of early 20th Century high-wheel bicycles.



Since the Wisconsin Wheelmen were able to join us this year, and since our country is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we also elected to enter our organization into the parade. Those attending the parade or watching it on the city's cable access channel were able to see our costumed society members, Brad Allen and Ken Bargender along with the Wisconsin Wheelmen.

In addition to the events outside on the lawn of the Upham House Museum, we had our Declaration of Independence display in the Upham sun room. Those in attendance were able to 'signing' the document. The Declaration of Independence display remains up in the sun room for anyone wishing to view it or sign it.

Meeting of Two Descendants of Historic Marshfield Figures

During this year's Dairyfest Pie and Ice Cream Social, two descendants of past Marshfield leaders were at the Upham House Museum. This was a first time meeting of these two individuals.

Monie Upham, granddaughter of Gov. William Upham and his second wife Grace, was here for this year's Pie & Ice Cream Social, greeting people in her grandparent's library, as she has over the past few years.



Having her at the house has been a treat for many who engage in conversation with her as they visit the property.

Tim Smith, great-grandson of Charles E. Blodgett, and his wife Sandy have been coming to the Upham House Museum for the Pie and Ice Cream Social for many years, but this year was the first time Monie Upham and Tim Smith met each other.

Tim Smith's great-grandfather, Charles E. Blodgett (1860-1929), moved to Marshfield in 1886 and became one of the city's pioneer business leaders. Blodgett was also instrumental in Marshfield's growth.

In 1898 Blodgett took over the Tremont Hotel and renamed it to the Hotel Blodgett (at the time 212-214 N Central Ave; Current 222 S. Central) which became known as one of the finest hotels in the county. In 1926 Blodgett built the Charles Hotel (at the time 109 W. 2nd St [current Charles Apartments]), a more modern hotel. Like the Hotel Blodgett, the Hotel Charles became a premier establishment and hosted patrons from all over the United States including President John F. Kennedy during his 1960 campaign; country singer, Patsy Cline, and purportedly John Dillinger while he was hiding from the FBI.

Charles Blodgett had many other enterprises as well, including:

- From 1897-1904, C.E Blodgett Stock Farm (located at the current Weber Farm Store property) became one of the biggest dairy farms stocked with 'Short-horns' as Blodgett strove to build up a thriving dairy industry.
- From 1905-1910, The Blodgett & Booth Lumber Company dealt with hemlock and hardwood.
- From 1911-1934, Blodgett oversaw the C.E. Blodgett Butter, & Egg Co. (located at West 3rd Street & South Spruce Avenue). The company had cheese receiving plants in Marshfield, Ashland, Athens, Greenwood, Merriman, Osseo, Rice Lake, Stanley, Stratford, Prentice, Wisconsin Rapids, and Alma Center.
- In 1922, Blodgett became the president of the First National Bank in Marshfield.
- In 1926, Blodgett purchased and updated the Oneida Hotel in Rhinelander.

Historic Details from:

(Charles Blodgett: https://marshfieldlibrary.org/marshfield-150th-anniversary/documents/Charles_Blodgett.pdf)

(Blodgett Hotel: https://www.marshfieldgenealogy.com/Blodgett_Hotel.pdf)

“Quiet on the Set” - Adler Movie films at Upham House Museum

The Adler non-profit film is being produced through a collaboration between Green Bay-based MLC Productions and Atwood Studio, Marshfield. This is the first collaboration between the two entities. The project is backed by Visit Marshfield and the Marshfield Area Community Foundation, through fiscal partnership with North Wood County Historical Society. The film, based on Kris Leonhardt-Kob's book "Showstopper", highlights the life and legacy of early Marshfield theater owner "J.P." Adler. Filming began on June 12 at various locations around the city and will continue through the summer.

On Friday, June 19 and Saturday, June 20, one of the Upham House Museum bedrooms became one of the movie sets. Those who were visiting the house for tours on Saturday were able to hear the director's orders as the filming occurred.

Items related to the film, including t-shirts, caps, posters and books, are available for purchase with proceeds supporting the project. These items are available only at Serendipity in downtown Marshfield. The film is expected to be released in the fall of 2027.

NWCHS Upcoming 3rd Quarter Events

Upcoming Events

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

- Date to be determined: Annual Membership Picnic at the Upham House Museum
- Saturday, July 25: Marshfield's Hub City Days
- Wednesday, August 26 – Sunday, August 30: Central Wisconsin State Fair - History Display
- Saturday, October 3 and Sunday October 4: "History Rising from the Grave" Cemetery Tours

Marshfield's Annual Hub City Days

We are again gearing up for another big event at the Upham House Museum. Marshfield's annual Hub City Days at scheduled to begin on Thursday, July 23 and run through Saturday, July 25. Since most of the major events occur on Saturday, we too will be holding our events on Saturday.

This year will look a little different, as we will not have the fully array of "horse powered" items on display. It has become increasingly difficult to coordinate getting those old carriages to Marshfield. We will still be displaying a couple of items that are owned by the NWCHS, but the other items will not be joining us.

That is not to say we will not have plenty of other engaging activities. Please come and join us for the ever popular blacksmithing demonstrations. We will also have historic information boards on display. Another things we want to provide is lunch plates and root beer floats.

Please come and check out the Upham House Museum as part of your Hub City Days experience.



at the *Hub City Days*
UPHAM HOUSE



- Blacksmithing demonstrations by John Berg & Evan Rausch
- Historic picture boards
- Lunch Plate & Root Beer Floats
- In the house "Sign" the Declaration of Independence exhibit

SATURDAY | JULY 25 | 10AM-3PM

NWCHS in the NEWS

Recently, the North Wood County Historical Society has received some positive new coverage.

On May 31, WSAW Channel 7 in Wausau aired a story about the annual Pie and Ice Cream Social, including a few nice interview pieces:

<https://www.wsaw.com/2026/05/31/marshfield-dairyfest-draws-crowds-historic-upham-mansion/>

On June 25, WJFW Channel 12 in Rhinelander aired a story about the Upham House Museum, including some nice interview pieces with Don Schnitzler:

https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/historical-landmark-in-marshfield-offers-glimpse-into-past/article_073a6ec8-2aa6-499e-af87-e421d96eb9a7.html



NORTH WOOD COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

212 W 3rd St Marshfield

715-387-3322

NWCHS Prepares Local History Display for the Central Wisconsin State Fair

The North Wood County Historical Society, in partnership with the City of Marshfield Historic Preservation Commission and the Marshfield Historic Preservation Association, is once again coordinating local history display boards for the community. Through this collaborative effort, nearly 50 display boards highlighting a wide range of Marshfield history topics have been created to share and celebrate our area's rich heritage.

This year's new displays will feature Central Wisconsin Ghost Towns, Northern Wood County Railroad Depots, and Northern Wood County Rural Schools.

Want a sneak peek? The new displays, along with many others, will be available for viewing on Saturday, July 25 during Hub City Days in the front yard of the Upham House, 212 W Third Street. Stop by for an easy and enjoyable opportunity to explore local history. The displays will also be featured during the Central Wisconsin State Fair in the John Lang Building.

Come discover the stories, places, and people that helped shape our community.

Save the Date: History Rising from the Grave

The North Wood County Historical Society invites the public to mark their calendars for "History Rising from the Grave", a unique local history experience to be held October 3 and 4, 2026, at Marshfield Hillside Cemetery.

Created to preserve and promote local history, this special event will bring the past to life by connecting visitors with the people whose lives, struggles, achievements, and legacies helped build Marshfield and the surrounding region.

While final details are still being developed, the NWCHS is providing this early notice so community members can reserve the dates for what promises to be an engaging and memorable historical experience.

The walking tour will feature at least eight first-person portrayals of early Marshfield business and community leaders. Through these stories, visitors will learn about the contributions of downtown Central Avenue merchants and entrepreneurs, as well as individuals who played significant roles in local industry, entertainment, medicine, and civic life.

Participants will experience history where it happened, hearing the stories of the men and women whose vision and dedication shaped the growth and character of Marshfield. The tour is designed to educate, entertain, and foster a deeper appreciation for the community's rich heritage.

The route is expected to cover approximately two to three city blocks, with most stops located along existing cemetery roadways. The complete tour is anticipated to last about two hours.

Additional information regarding tour times, ticket prices, and registration will be announced in the coming months.

Tickets will go on sale September 1, 2026.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to experience local history where it rests—History Rising from the Grave.

For updates and additional information, follow the North Wood County Historical Society's announcements throughout the summer and fall.

Volunteer Opportunity

"History Rising from the Grave" Cemetery Tours

October 3 & 4, 2026

The North Wood County Historical Society is seeking volunteers for its upcoming **"History Rising from the Grave" Cemetery Tours**, to be held on **October 3 and 4, 2026**.

We are looking for **eight volunteers (men and women)** to portray former Marshfield residents who are now resting in Hillside Municipal Cemetery, Catholic Cemetery, and Lutheran Cemetery. Re-enactors will share first-person stories about these individuals and recount memorable events from Marshfield's rich history.

In addition, we need **ten volunteers to serve as tour guides**, helping visitors navigate the cemeteries and ensuring an enjoyable and informative experience.

This is a unique opportunity to bring local history to life, connect with the community, and help preserve the stories of those who helped shape the Marshfield community.

To volunteer or for additional information, please contact:

Don Schnitzler ☎ 715-383-9775

North Wood County Historical Society ☎ 715-387-3322

Join us in making history rise from the grave and become part of this engaging community event!

Thank you for reading!

SANFORD HEALTH
Marshfield Clinic

Thank you to the Marshfield Clinic Health System 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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PO BOX 142 (MAILING ADDRESS)
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

