

# North Wood County Historical Society

# Mansion Newsletter

Marshfield, Wisconsin

March 2021

## From the President

Greetings and a happy spring to you all!

First and foremost, I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their confidence by electing me again as President of NWCHS. As a member of the Marshfield community, I am happy to be part of this organization and to be able to help where I can in taking care of our greatest artifact, the Gov. Upham House.

We all know that the last year has been a struggle for all businesses, organizations, schools and each individual household. But it is also good to see some hope on the horizon with the vaccines and everyone pitching in to help curb the effects of the virus. With that, we have been very fortunate that through some very generous donations from some individuals and our continued support from our members, we have been able to stay afloat financially despite not having any of our fundraising events.

That said, we are looking at some required maintenance and repairs on the house. The roof that covers the porch will be needing replacement this year. Also, we will be replacing some of the porch decking as well as fixing a structural column and joists underneath the porch. We have had a generous donation to be used toward the porch project but we will still be looking for ways to cover the costs above and beyond that. So, we are hopeful that our Pie and Ice Cream Social during Dairyfest will bring a good crowd to the grounds and we will be back on track to be the go-to place for a snack that day!

Over the years Tom Ptak has been an instrumental part of our organization and we are proud to call him and Laura our friends. Tom has taken care of our grounds for many, many years and taken great strides in keep nature at bay by weeding and keeping invasive species out of all the gardens that he tends. He is also the curator of the Heritage Rose Garden that he is so proud of, as we all are. But this year we need to help Tom out. We need to transition to having him give his advice on things and not having to labor so hard. We have called on our Board of Directors to help where they can and I am now asking our membership and community to pitch in as well. If you are interested, please call the house and let Kim know your participation level in helping out with the gardening.

As mentioned in the past, Kim and her merry band of volunteers has been able to utilize our downtime to catalog, document and organize a huge amount of materials and donations that have been in the house. We are grateful for her efforts and hard work in doing all of that. But now we are hoping to open up for tours (as comfort levels grow) and our normal day-to-day-operations.

We have weddings planned on the grounds, look forward to DairyFest, and Hub City Days to have our horse drawn wagon display again. Also, just to be a place the community can enjoy again where the past melds with our current events. Anyone interested in some of the 150-year anniversary activities please call the house or check out - "Celebrating 150 years of Marshfield" on Facebook for more information.

Thank you all for the patience, hard work, membership and interest in NWCHS and your continued support. If anyone has questions or would like to talk to me, please feel free to call the house. I wish you all a safe, healthy and wonderful spring and summer and hope to see you at the house!

*Brad*



Brad Allen



Upham House

## NWCHS Board of Directors

**President** - Brad Allen  
**Vice President** - Jerin Turner  
**Secretary** - Kaylin Speth  
**Treasurer** - Andrea Jackan  
**Past President** - Don Schnitzler

**Directors**  
Laura Ptak  
Erin Howard  
Nancy Sternweis  
JoAnn Gougeon  
Kris Coleman

**Coordinator**- Kim Krueger  
**Consulting Rosarians**  
Tom Ptak & Tom Stram

### Tour Hours

Wednesday - 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.  
Saturday - 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.  
Or by appointment

### Office Hours

Monday - 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Wednesday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Thursday - 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Phone - 715.387.3322  
Email - [nwchs@uphammansion.com](mailto:nwchs@uphammansion.com)  
[www.UphamMansion.com](http://www.UphamMansion.com)

## Work begins on Marshfield's 2022 Sesquicentennial celebration

By Kris Leonhardt - Hub City Times

After the Wisconsin Central Railroad was selected to construct a railroad from Portage to Lake Superior, they entered the Northwoods of Wisconsin with lands rich in hardwoods and pine. They called upon Louis Rivers, a French Canadian pioneer who had settled in Necedah, to set up a hotel at the location of a specific supply depot.

Drawn by the promise of free land and guaranteed business traffic, Louis and his brother Frank, constructed a log building on what is now known as the northeast corner of North Chestnut Avenue and West Depot Street in the city of Marshfield. The building became home to a hotel, store, and tavern to service the railroad workers, pioneers, and travelers.

The first train arrived in Marshfield in July of 1872 and along with it came settlers. From that day, Marshfield grew into a hub of activity - a hub that will span 150 years as calendars turn to 2022.

The North Wood County Historical Society (NWCHS,) Marshfield Historic Preservation Association, MACCI, Visit Marshfield, and other individuals and organizations are collaborating on ways to celebrate Marshfield's sesquicentennial in 2022, and are inviting others to help in the planning. Individuals are needed for reenactments, research, activities, student collaborations and more.

If you are interested in brainstorming, planning, or volunteering for the 150th anniversary event, contact NWCHS at **715-387-3322** or email [nwchs@uphammansion.com](mailto:nwchs@uphammansion.com), or find "Celebrating 150 Years of Marshfield!" on Facebook. Those interested are invited to join planning meetings via Zoom.

## TB Scott Mansion Destruction in Merrill a Stark Warning

By Breanna Butler - OnFocus

The TB Scott Mansion has stood on "Holy Cross Hill" in Merrill for more than a century, but will soon be a memory (though a recent effort to digitally preserve the house is in progress). Currently in the process of being demolished, the mansion is being torn down as part of a property sale involving Ascension Health Care. The hospital and all surrounding property is being sold, and the mansion is included in that sale.

Built in the 1880s, the mansion was the former home of the Scott's, a prominent lumber family that helped settle the community. It has been empty for 20 years.

When learning of the demolition, Merrill residents were upset. The city did not have the funds to move the building and the historical preservation committee had not taken steps to make the house a landmark. Being privately owned, the land owner could do whatever they wanted with the house. Before demolition began, a team digitally recorded the outside of the mansion to be viewed in Virtual Reality style. Since the town was unable to prevent the entire building from being demolished, they were able to save the tower which will be restored and placed at the River Bend Trail as a gazebo with a story board.

### Marshfield and historic preservation

Marshfield residents involved in historic preservation were saddened to hear of the events in Merrill, and are using the TB Scott Mansion story as an example of why public involvement and interest in local history is critical.

### Was it myth or bad luck?

T.B. Scott built the mansion beginning in 1884. Construction was near completion in 1886 when, on October 7, 1886, T.B. Scott died after suffering for a year with Bright's Disease. His death began a series of unfortunate incidents for people associated with the mansion. Was it myth or just bad luck?

- T.B. Scott - Built mansion. Died before he occupied it.
- A.E. Scott, widow of T.B. - Died one year after him. Never lived in mansion.
- Walter Scott (son)- Fatally stabbed in Chicago in 1902.
- Edward Kuehle - Owned mansion in 1899. Suffered financial losses and became deranged.
- John Barasanti - Foreclosed on Kuehle. On his way to Merrill to claim the mansion when he was stabbed to death at the Union Station in Chicago.
- Charles W. Gibson - Had office in mansion. Went uptown one day and disappeared.
- Popcorn Dan - Had popcorn stand in Merrill. Lived in mansion, was possibly also the caretaker. Took the maiden voyage on the Titanic and his body was not recovered.



**TB Scott Mansion**

## Preserving local history - (continued from page 2)

“What people can do to prevent this from happening is related directly to understanding the value of the historic building or site,” said Kim Krueger, Coordinator of the North Wood County Historical Society (NWCHS) (Upham Mansion/House). “I think one of the best ways for a site to be preserved is for the community to understand and be interested in its history and significance.”

There are a number of considerations/criteria for a building/site to meet in order to be on the historic register, including historical significance or significance for architectural value, for example however a listing is not necessarily a guarantee of safety. (*Learn more: [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NR\\_Brochure\\_Poster\\_web508pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NR_Brochure_Poster_web508pdf)*).

“A building or site that has the designation has reasons for being deemed worthy of perseverance. The more the community understands its own history – where it came from, the people and industries/business that helped develop the community’s identity – that helped it BE, the more it can appreciate a specific site or building and its significance,” explained Krueger.

She added that even though a building may be registered on the State and/or National Register, that does not guarantee the building cannot be torn down.

“There have been numerous buildings on the National Register that been demolished, many because they were not or could not be maintained or sustained,” said Krueger. “Could this happen to the Gov. Upham House? I would hope not. I would hope that if, for some reason, the North Wood County Historical Society were not able to maintain/sustain the Upham House, the building would go to a private owner who understood and truly valued the history connected with not only the house, but the community as well.”

### First and foremost, simply get involved

Kris Coleman, an active member of Marshfield’s Historic Preservation Committee, the local Historic Preservation Association, and a NWCHS Board Member, works with other members to keep history alive in Central Wisconsin.

“What I encourage on all of these is the appreciation of historic structures, and education about the upkeep and maintenance of these buildings,” she said, adding that there are many things that individuals can do to protect historic buildings from demolition.

First and foremost, simply get involved. There are many organizations to join, donate to, socialize with, and simply enjoy at any level of membership,” she said.

“Secondly, spread the word about the importance of these structures and the ability to apply for historic tax credits for both personal homes and businesses, which helps make this much more affordable,” she added. “Lastly, I encourage anyone to visit a local museum, historic home or park and truly appreciate what your community and area already have to offer.”

### Coleman House

For those looking to become more hands-on in historic preservation, there is another option. “If you are a truly brave soul, you can even buy a fixer upper of your own and actually save a piece of history for yourself,” said Coleman. “It takes time, a lot of work, study, money of course, and sometimes knowing when you have to admit defeat and break down and hire a professional, but the outcome is remarkable!”

Coleman and her husband love to restore historic homes and restore them to their former glory. “That is what my husband and I love to do and it fills our life with purpose -as well as dust – if you live in the mess like we do,” she said. “If we hadn’t bought this house, it would have probably ended up just like the one in Merrill, as it was in terrible shape with snow in the kitchen and mold in the basement.”

Coleman described removing truckloads of rubbish, working hard in the yard, demolishing and rebuilding the uninsurable garage, and adding paint, wire, bleach, wood, glass, roofing, etc. to transform her home.

“It finally is looking like a house to be proud of,” she said. “It must be almost time to move and start all over again! If more people showed interest in these beautifully built pieces of history, there would be no reason to demolish them.”



**Coleman House**

## Local author's novel based on Marshfield during the Great Depression

By Kaylin Speth

*Darling, All My Love* is a recent historical novel by local author Lori Oestrich. The novel was inspired by the Lori's own family history — namely the unlikely love story of her grandparents in 1930s Marshfield. Her grandfather Donald owned Marshfield Lumber and Supply and came from a wealthy Presbyterian family. Grandmother Florus was from a poor Catholic family. Ultimately the two overcame their differences, including family disapproval and a separation, to marry in 1935. The rest is history.

The fictional version of their love story is set in “Hub City,” based on Marshfield during the Great Depression. Readers will recognize real-life locations like St John’s Catholic Church, First Presbyterian Church, Hotel Charles, and Relda Theater.

Lori completed plenty of research to get a sense of what life was like back then, especially poring over 360 letters her grandfather wrote her grandmother during their separation.

“The letters gave me a sense of how much he loved her and the difficulties they endured,” she said. “I learned his interests, everyday life, and historical details.

Lori also made use of the Marshfield library for research into the period. “The Sanborn maps were interesting because they detailed the streets and business locations. These were created for fire insurance companies to determine the degree of fire hazard,” she said. “There is a section of books written about Marshfield businesses and families as well, which have fascinating facts. To my surprise, the swimming pool had been built in the 1930s and I read a story about this through my research.

A drought occurred, and the grand opening was delayed several weeks due to the pea plant needing water.”

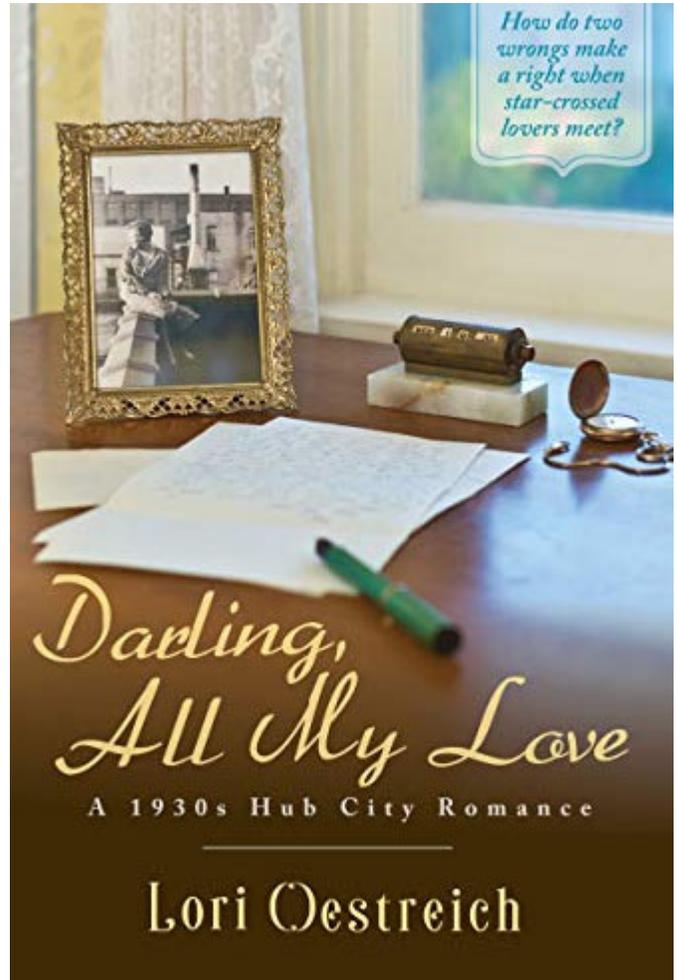
She also discovered her grandmother’s junior year yearbook picture at the library. Lily was wearing overalls, a rare sight for a woman of the period. “I’d heard the story before about how she was the first woman in town to wear pants, but to see the picture was wonderful.”

Readers who secure a copy of *Darling, All My Love* might find something familiar about the photo on the cover. “I visited the Upham House many times and love the style of the home, along with its rich history of Marshfield. When thinking about my book cover, I wanted to portray authentic historic details and the Upham Mansion fit my vision,” Lori said.

Using the house’s breakfast nook as a backdrop, she staged a few objects relevant to the story.

“The book cover has a photograph of my grandmother in a vintage filigree gold frame. She is sitting on a rooftop overlooking Marshfield’s main street in May 1931. There is a letter written by my grandfather in 1933 and a 1920s Miracle fountain pen laying on the edge. The rotary desk calendar and the 1912 hunting Waltham pocket watch, are objects that can be found in the story *Darling, All My Love*.”

The novel is available in eBook at multiple retail stores. A paperback copy can be ordered through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Walmart. **Universal eBook link:** <https://books2read.com/u/m0wypl>.



## Did you know Mary Upham held “the degree of MD”? *By Kaylin Speth*

When Mary Upham died in 1912, the news filled up almost a whole page in the local Marshfield newspaper. The wife of former and now widowed Governor William Upham, Mary had been an active and widely regarded member of the community.

One curious fact mentioned of her life was her medical training. The History of Wood County, Wisconsin (1923) states that Mary held “the degree of M.D.” from an unnamed “college of medicine.”

It seems she put her skills to good use. After the Uphams moved to the new settlement of Angelica in 1872, Mary found there was no physician within a convenient distance and put together a number of home remedies in order to tend to anyone who became ill. A Racine paper reporting on the death of Mary in 1912 stated that “she took care of the poor people in the woods when ill, free of charge, and thus endeared herself to practically the whole northern county.”

But exactly which college had taught a 19th-century woman about home remedies? The Biographical Cyclopaedia of American Women, Volume 1 sheds more light on Mary’s medical background.

Mary was educated in Racine, Wisconsin, and after graduating from high school, studied medicine with local doctor Charles Spencer Duncombe at his practice. Upon completion she received a certificate in “materia medica” but married soon after in 1867, never making a career of medicine but nevertheless putting her skills to use in an unofficial capacity, to the benefit of many grateful patients.



Mary Upham

*A tribute to Mary Cornelia Upham by Lloyd Kenyon Jones\*\**

### Appreciation of the Woman Who Understood

Accept this as a tribute to **The Woman Who Understood**-whose day is done-whose sun has set in a halo of benediction in the late afternoon of her day of life. And acknowledge (all who knew her) that beyond the chill grey of the pall of her passing, the good she accomplished lives on-increases-multiplies.



Mrs. W. H. Upham-Aunt Mary Upham-arose supreme and superior above the mere plane of morality; for morality itself is too often a moribund thing, a point of least resistance. Hers was different from ordinary goodness, or ordinary charity, or ordinary love. Others have had compassion, others have loved, others have been considerate. But she-well, she understood, and very, very few ever understand.

She understood the frailties of the human kind and had compassion for those who erred. She understood to that divine degree where she let censure go unuttered, and guided the faltering, weary and mistaken feet back from the thorny paths of wrong to the broader highway of right.

This noblewoman of the Northland had that rarest of all faculties of making her precepts abiding. They settled deep in the minds, hearts, and souls of growing boys and girls, and became stronger and more purposeful when those same boys and girls became men and women. Were we to canvass the years and the days of the past and interview all those who came in contact with her we could not find one who was not better off for having known her. In all who knew her she touched a responsive chord that caught the vibrant sincerity of her message.

And she had courage. She had the moral force to condemn wrong and champion right. It was a courage that brought forth no militant resentment from those most concerned. Rather, it

shamed them for it is resident in all breasts to realize and recognize the right, and offer no combat against it when it is presented in its wholesome simplicity.

And today, scattered over the face of the earth, are the grownup boys and girls who learned and appreciated and felt the truth in her Band of Hope hall, when the network of trees hedged in the little town in the great North woods.

What an unselfish life was hers. She had the means to travel and enjoy; she had every facility for comfort and surcease from labor. But to her, in the breadth and truth of her mind, her boys and girls were dearer than the fame, the honor, the social prestige that were hers for the asking.

And remember, these boys and girls were not geniuses, but ordinary children, part of the vast maze of census figures; and out of that raw material she fashioned goodness and a high regard for the right. She found their points of view. She considered their circumstances. She smoothed away their cares and taught them as only a gentlewoman can, how to rise from the troughs of the stormy sea of life up onto the crests of the waves of achievement.

And while her day's work is completed, we are glad she lived. We thank her for the sermon that she lived, the truths she made us feel, thank her for the sermon that she did in passing, but mostly for the undying impress that she left; and finally, we thank her for the privilege of having known and felt the unending blessing of The Woman Who Understood.

*\*\*The accompanying tribute to the memory of Mary C. Upham, first wife of the late Ex-Governor William H. Upham and a resident of Marshfield from 1878 until her death in November, 1912, was written by Lloyd Kenyon Jones of Chicago, who in his youth lived here and belonged to Mrs. Upham's "Band of Hope." The lines were written shortly after Mrs. Upham's death and first appeared in the Marshfield Herald on Fri. April 7, 1933.*

## Spoken History Series

Those interested in learning more about the area's rich history are invited to attend the monthly Spoken History presentations virtually via a Zoom platform hosted by the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library. As was past practice, these monthly presentations will be offered the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. Dates of upcoming presentations and speakers are listed here through July. The presentations are FREE and open to the general public. Preregistration is necessary and required to join the live presentation. As the Zoom links are created and finalized, the titles, descriptions, and registration links will be shared with members by email, future issues of the Mansion News, and Society's website and Facebook Page.

### Please plan to sign in to these virtual presentations:

**April 5 -** City of Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee  
 Program: History Lost; Marshfield's Automotive Businesses  
 Presenter: Vickie Schnitzler, Chairperson, Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee

**May 3 -** Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee  
 Program: Mapling at Almosta Ranch  
 Presenter: Conrad Christensen, Marshfield Maple Syrup Producer

**June 7 -** North Wood County Historical Society  
 Program: The Many Buildings and Homes Designed or Built by Gus Krasin and Family  
 Presenter: Carol Krasin, granddaughter-in-law of Gus Krasin

**July 12 -** Marshfield Area Genealogy Group  
 Program: The Who's Who of 1880, Marshfield's First U.S. Census  
 Presenter: Don Schnitzler

### Watch on *YouTube* the following recorded past "Spoken History" Presentations:

Youtube address: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyMsPsMSfTIKJEjUJ4KE6Kw> or search for "North Wood County Historical Society Youtube Channel"

*Complete History of Marshfield Schools.*  
 presented by Mike Meyers

*The Adler Bakery Marshfield, Wisconsin.*  
 presented by Jim Adler

*Wood County Parks: Their Creation and Projects.*  
 presented by Chad Schooley

*Marshfield Historic Driving Tours*  
 presented by Vickie Schnitzler

*It Happened on Main Street*  
 presented by Don Schnitzler and Mike Meyers

*1905 Marshfield Illustrated.*  
 presented by Don Schnitzler

*Marshfield's First Family.*  
 presented by Don Schnitzler

*Voyage of the Comrade.* presented by Kim Krueger

*Wicked Wood County Wisconsin.*  
 presented by Rhonda Whetstone

*Skunk Hill.*  
 presented by Robert A Birmingham

*Beyond the Dress.*  
 presented by Kim Krueger and Vickie Schnitzler

*Fill 'er Up. The Glory Days of Wisconsin Gas Stations.*  
 presented by Jim Draege

**Also tune in to watch the following video presentations on Youtube ...**

**"Behind the Scenes at the Governor William H. Upham House"**

**Episode 1 -**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLN\\_\\_NQffDU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLN__NQffDU)

**Episode 2 -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9SWVC3UPtw>

**Episode 3 -**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExCePwKGMzU>

**Hidden Textiles at the North Wood County Historical Society**

**Episode 1**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xAY4rwjY88>

**Episode 2**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=letigmHCS10>



*Thanks to the Marshfield Clinic Print Shop, we are now able to send all our newsletters in color. They have graciously agreed to print our quarterly newsletter as a donation to the Historical Society.*

## Now accepting memberships for Year 2021



### Membership and Donation Form

212 West Third Street, PO Box 142  
Marshfield, Wisconsin 54449

Phone: (715) 387-3322 E-mail: [nwchs@uphamansion.com](mailto:nwchs@uphamansion.com) Web Site: [www.uphamansion.com](http://www.uphamansion.com)

*Preserving North Wood County history since 1952*

**Please make checks payable to NWCHS. Send to: NWCHS P.O. Box 142, Marshfield, WI 54449**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Acknowledgement of donations will be emailed for those who provide an email address. End of year receipts for all donations will be mailed out in January of the subsequent year.

**I/We wish to support the NWCHS –Governor W.H. Upham House for the year 20\_\_**

- Individual \$35    
  Student \$10 (High School & College)    
  General Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family \$50    
  Business \$100    
  House Restoration \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial—In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*All memorials will count as General gifts unless otherwise designated:*

### North Wood County Historical Society Needs Your Help

This is our **Wish List** and areas where members and nonmembers can **Volunteer** to help the Society

- **Funds for purchasing archival boxes for garments.** We have numerous garments that should not be hung and need garment boxes for safe storage. Please contact Kim at [nwchs@uphamansion.com](mailto:nwchs@uphamansion.com) or 715-387-3322 for more information.
- **Donate postage stamps** to help cover mailings
- **Join the Society** by sending in your application with your yearly dues
- **Bake pies** for Dairyfest (hopefully this year)
- **Guide at Upham House-** occasional Saturday afternoons (We will train you!)
- **Garden and yard care** - seasonal work
- **Help with special events** - Dairyfest, Hub City Days - Carriage Exhibit, Christmas Open House
- **Identify and classify photographs** - meet one Saturday afternoon a month
- **Artifact care and accessioning** - Wednesday or Saturday afternoons
- **School partner** - work with projects with education liaison and students at Upham Mansion
- **Research exhibits** - develop exhibit material and historical data for the Exhibit Committee
- **Help design exhibits** - layout and display of artifacts with the Exhibit Committee
- **Sponsor an event** - ideal for businesses, groups of members, families



North Wood County Historical Society  
PO Box 142 (Mailing Address)  
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Marshfield, WI 54449