

VOYAGEUR

Summer / Fall 2023

Northeast Wisconsin's Historical Review

Volume 40 | Number 1

BACK IN THE USSR

THE UW-GREEN BAY PHOENIX
IN THE SOVIET UNION

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STUDENT RESEARCH ON YOUTH AND CHILDHOOD HISTORY
THE ORIGINS OF DEATH'S DOOR





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Summer / Fall 2023

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UWGB point guard Tony Bennett
playing in an exhibition game in
the USSR.

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A Northeast Wisconsin whose history is accurately researched, documented, and made available to its residents.

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I am currently reading Josephine Tey's 1951 novel, *The Daughter of Time*. Ostensibly a detective story, the novel follows a bed-ridden Scotland Yard detective recuperating from a broken leg as he investigates the story of Richard III, king of England from 1483 to 1485. We are all at least somewhat familiar with Richard III, most likely from William Shakespeare's tragedy: cruel and Machiavellian; a deformed hunchback; the murderer of his two young nephews, a dastardly crime perpetrated to secure the English throne for himself; and a man "determined to prove a villain/And hate the idle pleasure of these days." But, the Scotland Yard detective begins to wonder in *The Daughter of Time*, is that portrayal historically accurate or pure legend? I will not ruin the rest of plot for those of you who have not read *The Daughter of Time*, but Tey's novel is not so much a detective story as it is a rumination on history and legend, discussing primary sources, archival research, historiography, and memory, issues that historians grapple with every day in our professional lives. History, of course, is built upon primary sources. These sources are the foundation of real historical work. When such sources disappear or are lost to time, we move into the realm of legend, which are stories that are historical in nature but lacking verifiable primary sources. I have long been fascinated with legend, my own obsession since college being the story of the drowned city of Ys on the coast of Brittany in France. In this issue of *Voyageur*, Brennan Christianson, a UW-Green Bay alumni and collections coordinator at the Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay, explores the

liminal space between history and legend in his fascinating article, "The Origins of Death's Door: A Provocative Conversation." I welcome all our readers to continue the provocative conversation and join us for our next Author Talk Series event on Thursday, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc. Brennan's talk is free and a cash bar will also be available. Our sincere thanks to Caroline Diemer at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum for making this collaboration possible. Until then, I hope that all of you spend at least some of your summer sharing your favorite legends with friends and loved ones around a campfire and, of course, enjoying this issue of *Voyageur*.



Eric

Eric J. Morgan

Editor-in-Chief, *Voyageur: Northeast Wisconsin's Historical Review*
Associate Professor of Democracy and Justice Studies and History, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

After a long and blustery winter, summer arrives! The days stretch before us, full of opportunities for adventure, even if that adventure involves sitting against a tree with a cool drink, engrossed in a great magazine. The stories in this issue are sure to inspire and engage.

In the following pages, you will discover the incredible work of Father Daems, "the Founder of the Belgian Settlement in Wisconsin." The article may inspire a visit to the Belgian Heritage Center in the Namur Historic District. The Center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a National Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Brennan Christianson's feature, "The Origins of Death's Door: A Provocative Conversation," may also encourage you to discover what amazing historical sites, markers and stories Door

County has to offer. Death's Door—a name cloaked in mystery—is also responsible for over 275 shipwrecks. Who could possibly resist a visit?

We started thinking about summer on May 4 with an author talk by Martha M. Frey on her article, "Summers on the Island: The Photo Albums of Lucy Rumsey Holt" (Summer/Fall 2021). The article chronicles the summer vacations of the Holt family in the Wisconsin Northwoods between 1898 and 1936 through engaging photography.

In this issue, we highlight places of local and national importance that encourage you, our readers, to explore, celebrate and share our stories. And because May is National Historic Preservation Month, it is a wonderful time to remind you that we are all stewards of local history and should be saving and sharing it with the community.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Because of your investment in *Voyageur*, we can continue making fascinating stories, podcasts, and author talks available to our readers.

Christine Dunbar

Christine Dunbar

Executive Director, Brown County Historical Society
Manager, *Voyageur: Northeast Wisconsin's Historical Review*



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Into the Wilderness Overnight Adventure

Experience twenty-four hours of activity-filled and adult-exclusive historical fun with Wade House in the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Beginning on **Saturday, June 24th at 9 a.m. and ending on Sunday, June 25th at 9 a.m.**, the entire day will be filled with an exploration of what life would have been like for frontiersmen and frontierswomen, forging your own camping gear in a blacksmith shop, learning to build and cook over a campfire, as well as overnight camping in the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Participants must be eighteen years or older and bring their own tent and sleeping gear. The cost is \$175 per person and Wisconsin Historical Society members will receive a ten percent discount. Purchase your tickets at: wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Event/EV8891.



Manawa Mid-Western Rodeo

This summer will be the sixty-fifth celebration of the Mid-Western Rodeo held in Manawa, Wisconsin. The rodeo will open at **6 p.m. on June 29th and June 30th. June 30th** is free to all military members and veterans. On **July 1st**, events start at **7:30 a.m.** with a fun run, and the rodeo gates open at **1:30 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m.** The rodeo includes tricking, riding, and rodeo clowns. There will also be two different drill teams that will perform on different days in addition to regular rodeo events. Tickets can be preordered at: manawarodeo.org/buy-tickets.



Marinette Logging and Heritage Festival

Join in the celebration of the eleventh annual Logging and Heritage Festival in Marinette, Wisconsin. The festival will be held on **July 8th and 9th**. The festival celebrates the rich history of Marinette's deep roots in the lumber industry and its heritage that has defined generations within the community to this day. This is a non-profit, volunteer-based event with all proceeds going back into the festival event to ensure many more years of celebration of Marinette's rich history. Entry is free but donations are recommended. For more information, visit: marinette.wi.us/310/Event-Schedule.

We Will Always Be Here: Wisconsin's LGBTQ+ Historymakers

Wisconsin's LGBTQ+ Historymakers is a traveling museum exhibit that will be on display in Green Bay at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The exhibit is open from **September 4th through October 1st**. The collection covers eight individuals of varying identities who helped make a change in the world. Using graphic novel-inspired language and simple storytelling, the event is geared towards the general public and secondary schools. The exhibit showcases artwork by Nipinet Landsem, an Indigqueer Anishinaabe and Michif artist based in Madison. For more information, visit: wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Event/EV8657.

In Memoriam: Dr. Carl Edward Krog

It is with great sadness that we inform our readers of the death of Dr. Carl Krog, a longtime editorial committee member of and frequent contributor to *Voyageur*, who passed away in February at the age of eighty-six. Carl graduated from the University of Chicago and taught high school in Milwaukee and Madison before entering graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he earned a PhD in history in 1971. He joined the faculty at then-UW Center-Marquette Campus in 1966, where he taught until his retirement in 1995. In retirement, Carl remained an active scholar, taking charge of the Marinette County Historical Society's publication, *Historian*. Carl was a passionate and dedicated historian, especially regarding Northeast Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and his adopted hometown of Marinette. Carl is survived by his wife of over sixty years, Marianne, two daughters, a son, and their families. We dedicate this issue of *Voyageur* to Carl.



A HISTORY of PARTNERSHIP

Whether it's the National Railroad Museum, Hazelwood Historic Home, the Packers Hall of Fame or a host of other organizations, UW-Green Bay History students are helping bring the past to life.



For more information on partnering with the UW-Green Bay history program, contact Heidi Sherman, shermanh@uwgb.edu or call 920-465-5146.

In the photo, UW-Green Bay interns and their internship supervisors, help prepare a new exhibit for the National Railroad Museum.

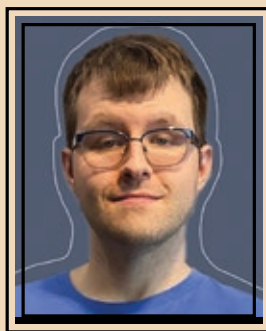
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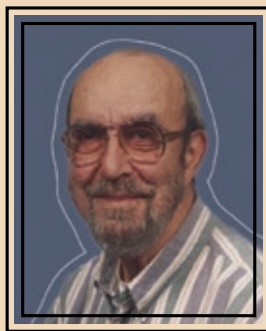
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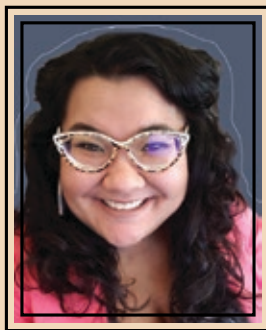
Debra Anderson is the director of the Archives and Area Research Center at UW-Green Bay. In addition to managing and preserving the collections housed at the facility, she assists individuals of all ages seeking information on a myriad of research topics. As a self-proclaimed “archival evangelist,” Deb is always seeking means to connect individuals, especially students, with historical materials in new and creative ways. Unique strategies have included creating original theatrical productions, holding photo ID nights at a local bar, history quiz shows, producing genealogy workshops, and incorporating archival materials into diverse courses such as graphic arts and queering multicultural narratives, among others.



Brennan Christianson is the collections coordinator of the Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay and the site director of the Death’s Door Maritime Museum in Gills Rock, Wisconsin. He obtained his bachelor’s degree in history with minors and humanities and German from UW-Green Bay in 2017. In 2020, he earned his master of arts in public history with a certificate in museum studies from UW-Milwaukee.



Cletus Delvaux is a native of Green Bay, Wisconsin. His interest in local history led him to join the Brown County Historical Society, leading to research and write articles for its newsletter, *The Historical Bulletin*, with a special interest in the Belgian immigrations to Northeast Wisconsin from 1853 to 1870. He also serves on the editorial committee of *Voyageur*.



Lisa Rose Lamson received her PhD from Marquette University in 2021 and is currently an assistant teaching professor in history and humanities at UW-Green Bay where she teaches a variety of courses on African American history and historic methodology. Her teaching interests include: African American history, the history of childhood, gender history, education history, the history of segregation and civil rights, textile and fashion history, and popular culture. She is an avid knitter, comic book and science fiction fan, and romance reader.



Aaron Mitchell was born and raised in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he grew up an avid fan of the state’s sports teams. Attending his first UW-Green Bay Phoenix game in 1988 with his parents and neighbors, Aaron’s passion for the team, its history, and its future still burns strong. Today, he is a practicing attorney and lives in southeast Wisconsin with his wife, Amy, and their three children.



Left to right: Cora Terletzky, Brittany Burkart, Logan Wissman, Osvaldo Lopez, Jayden Dotterer, Kianna Bulin, Allison Wanke, and Leslie Mendoza

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BACK IN THE USSR THE UW-GREEN BAY PHOENIX IN THE SOVIET UNION

by Aaron A. Mitchell

The following is an excerpt from *Phoenix Rising: A Playbook for Building a Mid-Major College Basketball Program* by Aaron A. Mitchell, published in 2021.

Even with the right players buying into the right system, college basketball programs can fail to achieve success without striking a level of cohesiveness and chemistry. Beyond simply accepting their roles, teams achieve more when their players feel a sense of responsibility toward, and even care for, each other.

One way to build that chemistry is through shared adversity. This serves to ground expectations, create commonality, shape objectives, define roles, and cement bonds capable of surviving apart from the particular challenges overcome.

It's not unusual to find teams that have risen to great heights—college basketball or otherwise—first experienced and overcome challenges or setbacks. The best of those grew stronger as a result of the bonds created and learned to embracing their strengths. More importantly, they compensate for each other's weaknesses.

ONE CRAZY IDEA

Fate brought UW-Green Bay Phoenix coach Dick Bennett and Soviet basketball coach Boris Kazebin together in August of 1989.

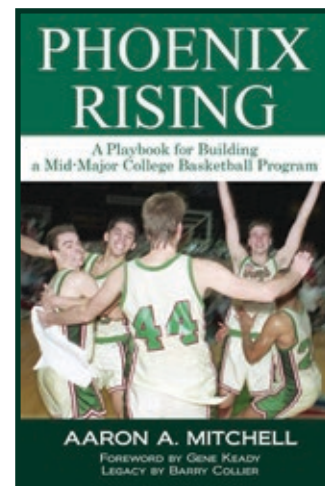
Kazebin had traveled to the US, interested in learning a defensive style of basketball he could take back and teach to his teams in the USSR. At a clinic in Milwaukee, he had found his guru in Dick Bennett.

"I saw his was my perspective on basketball," Kazebin said a year after meeting Bennett. "I was coach in this division, my team went from eleventh to first place on defense."

As the two coaches hit it off, the kernel of a unique idea took root in both men's minds.

"He spoke to me about organizing a trip to the Soviet Union the next summer (1990), and we talked about it at length," Bennett recalls. "I said I'm very interested because we have the opportunity to make a foreign trip, and we would have to line up some sponsorship and raise some money and so on. But it is definitely something I would like to do, because we have a fairly experienced team and it would do them a lot of good."

The NCAA allowed each team to take one trip overseas every four years. By spring of 1990, the USSR trip had become an idea that Bennett couldn't let pass. With Kaze-



UW-Green Bay players receive gifts from their hosts during the Phoenix's trip to the Soviet Union in 1990.

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives

bin's guiding hand, the Phoenix's tour was planned for June 9 to 27, 1990, and included three, three-game tournaments, the first in Kar'kov, the second in L'vov, and the final in Kiev. In exchange for coordinating the team's itinerary, Bennett agreed to host Kazebin later that year for a month in Green Bay, where he could shadow Bennett and learn from him on the job.

For all of the reasons Bennett found the USSR irresistible, his players found the idea... crazy.

"I remember him saying that we originally were going to go to Aruba to play in a tournament. And we were all like, 'Yes!'" says Scott LeMoine. "And then he came in and he's like, 'You know, we have this once-in-a-lifetime—the Soviet Union popped up.' And we're like, 'What?! Wait a minute! Beach, sun, or the Soviet Union?'"

"Who in the hell takes a team to Russia for eighteen days at the end of the Cold War? I mean who does that?" adds Ben Johnson with a laugh. "You can go anywhere, you can go to the Bahamas, you can go to Italy, you can go to Australia. But Russia? Russia. With no food and no water—no drinkable water—you know they had the whole Chernobyl thing?"

If anything, his team's response only served as motivation for Bennett.

"I was told we were the first college team ever to make a trip inside the Soviet Union," notes Bennett. "Three weeks, which was probably a week too long, because they were really a third-world country at that time. But that's one of the all-time great experiences I've ever had."

Fulfilling his end of the bargain, Kazebin had taken the bull by the horns and managed nearly all of the logistics for the Phoenix.

"He was really the guy who promoted it from his end and said that he would get everything scheduled," Bennett says. He would take care of all transportation, housing, and meals in the various places we would go. All we had to do was to line up our transportation to Russia and then raise enough money."

Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Northeastern Wisconsin made a \$20,000 donation to assist with the airfare costs, and Kazebin took care of the rest.

Once the details were set, Bennett set his own team's prep schedule. NCAA rules allowed teams utilizing their international trip to organize ten additional practice days beforehand, giving Bennett an additional month of coaching that summer.

"He used that strategically, to be around his team more and get all of his systems in and all of that," Johnson explains. "So basically we ended up spending the whole dang summer together. So there's no break, there's no fun."

NCAA rules also allowed graduated players from the 1989-90 team to travel. While Karinsy turned down the chance to go in favor of beginning his family real estate career, Oberbrunner and Ripley jumped at the chance.

"Coach being a competitor, Coach said, 'Listen, we're going to win. We're coming over here to prove that we are a good basketball team,'" remembers Dean Rondorf. "And so Dan played a lot and Roger played a bunch."

Aside from Karisny, Chris Yates was the only other player on the NIT team not to make the trip. Yates, whose uncle had been killed in late May 1990, was left behind for undisclosed reasons.

BACK IN THE USSR

The team flew into Moscow on June 7, 1990, and met Kazebin.

"He had an airplane—Russian plane—lined up and we boarded the Aero-flat," states Bennett.

The team quickly learned that flying in the USSR was not what they were accustomed to.

"We hopped on a military plane and you know, there's a table in the back, a couple of us are playing cards, goofing around, and all of the sudden the plane just starts to take a nosedive," remembers LeMoine. "We're like, 'What the heck?' All of the sudden it levels out and we find out that the pilots are letting people go up and take turns practicing flying the plane. And they're just having fun."

"Coach Swan was there, and all of the sudden the plane's doing some funny things," adds Rondorf. "We're like, 'What is going on?' And someone said, 'Well, Marie's flying the plane.' Coach Swan's face just got like dead serious, and he's like, 'We've got to get her out of there now!' And it was just so funny."

"Yeah, that lasted all of about a minute before Coach put an end to that," says Logan Vander Velden.

The Moscow flight was just one of many unique experiences associated with the team's air travel.

"The airports were like a runway with like a boxcar next to it," explains LeMoine. "I remember praying that we would land. It was some of the scariest flights I've ever been on in my life."

"Everybody used to applaud whenever we landed, just because we landed safe," adds Vander Velden.

"I'll never forget they unloaded our luggage...they pulled maybe twenty feet away from the airplane and just started chucking stuff over the side," remembers LeMoine. "You had to figure out who had your bag and which way he was chucking."

On the ground, it was apparent that the Soviet Union circa 1990 was drastically different from the United States.

"It was a fascinating time to be in you know the Ukraine," notes Tony Bennett. "It was a world unlike anything we had seen."

It began with the basics.

"We had to carry all of our own stuff, you know, toilet paper, soap, everything you had. They had no refrigeration, so everything was warm. We ate a lot of cabbage and black bread," recalls Dick Bennett.

"I just remember getting gas was like a huge deal," says John Martinez. "There's huge lines down the block just to get gas. Having to deal with things like that on a daily basis just was eye opening."

"Bread lines and gas lines, and the food they prepared for us," Jeremy Ludvigson says of his memories. "The food they served us was awful, and it was the top of the line." Johnson also recalls the players' experiments with the local cuisine: "We ate bread with this marmalade jam on it, and then we ate eggs and this meat that we swear was...it was not meat. We thought it was probably cat—that was the running joke, it was cat."

Unlike some of his teammates, Vander Plas lucked out by finding someone who could competently cook something basic, but entirely edible.

"This little old lady that was cooking for us—she couldn't speak much English, but she knew how to say 'mashed potatoes.' She would say, 'Mashed potatoes, yeah? Mashed potatoes, yeah?' And we would say, 'YES!' because we were eating cabbage and some (long pause) tough 'steak,' we'll call it."

Even finding decent water was a challenge.

"We're drinking these eight-ounce bottles of—they called it 'minerale, minerale.' It's mineral water that tasted like dirt and sediment and rock, but it was the very best that they had to offer us," notes Johnson.

"There were a few things you weren't sure about—so we're drinking either carbonated water or Pepsi during timeouts just for hydration," says Tony Bennett. "You ever try to drink carbonated water or a Coke while you're trying to hydrate and play? So yeah, it was interesting."

And yet, the resources available were the top of the line in the USSR.

"Most nights, they would bring us Pepsi, which was a big deal because Pepsi had just started to be produced in the Soviet Union," explains Vander Plas.

In spite of the hardships, that level of generosity showed the quality of the Soviet people.

"My notion of the Soviet people was out of whack," remarks Dick Bennett. "They want the same things we want. They take great pride in their families and the kind of work they do."

"They cheered for their home team, but we never really felt like, 'Man, they're really against us.' They cheered great plays that we

did," recalls Rondorf. "The people we encountered generally were happy that we were there."

Tour guide Boris Kazebin also ensured the UWGB traveling party was treated to the sights and culture of the Soviet Union.

"We saw the changing of the guard at the Lenin tomb the night before we flew out of Moscow; we went to a Russian rock concert; we toured all of the war gardens, and learned so much about Russian history," recalls Dick Bennett. "Boris had everything lined up. We had so many tours—we were touring even the days of games."

"I take pride when I see the Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral and think, 'You know, I stood right there, and how beautiful it was,'" says Rondorf. "I don't get that experience unless I go to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay."

For some, like Vander Plas, one of the most impactful events was seeing the Nutcracker ballet.

"None of us had ever been to the ballet before, you know," Vander Plas notes. "That was the first ballet I'd ever been to, and I had to go all the way to the Ukraine to get to one. But it was definitely a bonding experience with my teammates."

YOU CAN'T WIN THEM ALL

When it came time to actually play the games, UWGB found itself in dilapidated facilities against inconsistent talent. The venues reflected the hardship within the communities housing them.

"Small, tiny little gyms, so obviously, just the locals came to show up," remembers LeMoine.

"Very downtrodden. Warped floors. You know, just real old buildings...it was literally like playing in a barn," notes Dick Bennett. "We played in gyms that any grade school in (Green Bay) would put to shame."

The tournaments were loosely structured to provide an increasing level of difficulty in each game.

"Normally, the first game would be against a club team... and they were okay, but not particularly good," states Dick Bennett. "The second and third games, we would play their pro-type teams. They were all men, I mean they were all older than us."

"Some of the teams were bad, like high school kids. Some of the teams were really good. You didn't really know what you were going to get," recalls LeMoine.

The games had a decidedly European flair. The Soviet teams had big players who preferred to be shooters rather than bang inside. This style played to the Phoenix's strengths, as its in-your-face defensive style frustrated softer Soviet teams.

"They're great one-on-one players. They're all skilled. All five players can shoot the basketball. But they don't understand the team concept yet," remarked Johnson during the trip.

And if the Phoenix had been concerned about their opponent? Well, Kazebin, thought he could fix that...literally.

"He was always worried about whether we were pleased with everything, and he offered—if we needed to win a game, he said, 'I can arrange so you win,'" says Dick Bennett, laughing. "I said, 'This is a trip, an educational experience, and we just want to get



University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives

John Martinez accepts a crystal vase from the coach of Kiev Budivelnik following UW-Green Bay's final game during its 1990 trip to the Soviet Union.



University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives; Wikimedia Commons

Above: John Martinez (sitting, in white) poses with some of his hosts during UW-Green Bay's trip to the Soviet Union in 1990.

Below: Orthographic projection map of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.



some playing experience, but we don't have to win these games, we just want to grow as a team.' ”

Rejecting Kazebin's offer, the tightening Phoenix team fairly won its first two tournaments, starting the trip 6-0. And after each tournament, the hosts would present gifts to the Phoenix players and coaches. These "awards" for winning the tournament were often Soviet trinkets and treasures, like fancy china, table settings, Russian hats, dishes, and history or art books.

UWGB's last tournament was in Kiev, and again, the Phoenix won its first two games. Its final opponent was Kiev Budivelnik, a team that had won the Soviet Union Premier Basketball League in 1988-89. That team was a mix of Soviet legends, and "these young colts that were going to be their next Olympic team," as Bennett describes them.

While the matchup seemed like a great test for the Phoenix, factors outside of the Bennett's control—those that Kazebin's earlier proposition suggested—came into play.

"I'll never forget it, the last game, we're 8-0, and Boris said to me—he always called me 'Deeck.' He said, 'Deeck, you no win this game.' That's what he said. "I said, 'What do you mean we won't win the game?' I said, 'We're playing well, why can't we win?' He said, 'I cannot explain, but you no win.' ”

Kazebin's meaning became clear as the game went along.

"The refs...there was no way!" remembers Johnson. "We lost on a last-second deal, but it was a home job the whole time."

"We were winning at halftime, and I'll never forget, three Russian diplomats just storming out of the stands going straight

to the locker room. And you just heard screaming and yelling," explains LeMoine. "And then the second half, the refs just swallowed the whistles. They just basically looked at us like, 'Sorry dude, you're not winning this one.' And they just murdered us. They beat us, but it was like, there should've been an investigation. It was bad. They were not going to lose that last game." Dick Bennett put the circumstances aside and was nothing but gracious in defeat.

"That might have been the finest-looking team I've ever coached against. They had two seven-footers who were built very much like Roger Ripley, only seven feet. They had a 6-10 small forward who was very quick and a great shooter. Their guards were 6-5 and 6-4."

The respect Bennett showed was reciprocated as well.

"When they presented the crystal vases to Kiev for the championship, they walked right over and presented it to each of our players. They gave our players the championship awards in recognition of how well we played and how well we had done on the trip."

Like they had after many games, the Soviet athletes came back to the Phoenix's hotel and formed friendships with the players.

"The last night after it was all said and done, we hung out with a couple of them," remembers LeMoine. "I didn't really realize that for those guys on the Russian basketball team, they were actually in the military, and their posting was the basketball team. It was a very eye-opening trip."

"One or two of them could speak really good English and they would interpret and we'd just, you know, get to know the guys we'd just played against," says Vander Plas. "The big thing was the bonding experience that we had."

While the players hung out, the coaches and administration were treated to large, jubilant dinners after each tournament.

"I hate to say it, but we drank more cognac and vodka than we probably should have," remembers Dick Bennett, "They'd have about twenty-five to thirty toasts per dinner. They toast everything...It was just an incredible experience."

"There are some great stories of the coaching staff celebrating or having to go to these functions where they have to salute, and vodka and cognac flows freely," adds Tony Bennett. "We have some funny memories of seeing our coaches in ways we hadn't before."

FORTUNATE SONS

Two days after the game, the Phoenix players were on a plane headed for home, humbled by their experience and with a newfound appreciation for what they had waiting for them.

"I'll never forget when we landed, Ben (Johnson) coming off the bus and getting on his knees and kissing the ground," says Tony Bennett.

"All I can say is we are so fortunate to be Americans and to be able to live in this country," Johnson noted upon the return. Decades later, he elaborated. "To see people that live with far less than we do, that's the first take that I got from that trip. "Like, 'Woah, let's never complain about what we have.' We have hot water and we've got more food than we know what to do with, and let's not waste food anymore, and just little things like that."

Tony's comments mirrored his friend's.

"Some of the people stuck there don't have half the things we do. The people are great, but we're just fortunate."

"Things that we take for granted here is like the biggest thing in the world over there, at least at that time," Martinez says. "I've never forgotten that.

It definitely makes you appreciate everything that you have here and what we have going on here." It wasn't the first time Dick Bennett had delivered that message of humility—one of his core principles—to his team.

"I think it was my sophomore year, Coach Bennett, on Thanksgiving Day, took us to a homeless shelter and we helped feed the homeless," remembers LeMoine. "He was very big on making sure that you understood what you had and you appreciated it, and you didn't take advantage of it and you helped other people. Those kinds of lessons have always stuck with me."

Whether a part of Dick Bennett's genius or a fortunate side effect, the culture shock and hardship had served its purpose in bringing the team together.

"I think it brought us closer together *as a team*," states Martinez. "Experiencing something like that overseas together, our team camaraderie was definitely a lot better after that trip."

Vander Plas echoes that sentiment. "There's something to be said about brothers being together, and it just meant we had to spend another month together getting ready."

"It bonded us together," says Tony Bennett. "You're spending so much time beyond. Extra basketball practices and the games are good of course, but there's a cultural side of it, and just a relational side of it that's pretty unique. That was significant."



University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives

Coach Dick Bennett, hired by UW-Green Bay in 1985.

“The hotels were pretty average at best. The food was average at best. But yet, we experienced it together as a team. And that was the part that was so much fun,” states Rondorf. “We joked and we laughed. Lot of bus rides, lot of flights.”

Was it all a stroke of genius or just good fortune? To Johnson, it was unequivocal shrewdness:

“[Coach Bennett] drew a line in the sand and he said, ‘It’s Dick Bennett against the world. And I’m going to see...will these guys band together?’ So he was purposely meaner, tougher, harder on us than any time I can really remember during my time at Green Bay. Again, one of his greatest strengths is there’s a method to his madness. ‘You guys are going to band together and it’s going to be me against you and I don’t care if any of you like me or not, but you’re going to learn to love each other. You’re going to love each other and you’re going to get through this together.’ And by gosh, that’s exactly what we did.

“Looking back on it now, I’m so glad that we went there. Talk about a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but it just, it was crazy,” summarizes LeMoine.

“Amazing experience. But who in the hell takes a team to Russia at the end of the Cold War?” reiterates Johnson. “There’s one constant in all of that madness, and it’s (Coach Bennett). And again, therein lies his brilliance. Because he knew.”

TIME TO HEAL

The extra month of basketball helped fast-track the team’s development.

“It was almost like another season, even though it was only a few weeks,” notes Martinez. “It catapulted us as a team to where we needed to be.”

Guys like rising sophomore Dean Rondorf saw huge personal progression. “It was big for me in my development. I got more playing time than I ever had. So for me, it was a great experience.”

Bennett was excited about the progress, stating at the time: “I think we found a few new players. A couple young kids...There was a cohesiveness that developed among our top players.”

While nearly everyone went forward, two players stood out to the coach: redshirt freshman Jeremy Ludvigson and rising sophomore John Martinez.

Bennett boldly proclaimed that he felt Ludvigson had made the greatest strides on the trip, and Ludvigson saw it the same way.

“It was kind of my come-out party,” he says. “I started playing really well over there. That was really cool, because it’s like, ‘Okay, we’re going over there to play. I’m a redshirt freshman, I’m going to play the next year.’”

As for Martinez, Bennett had high hopes even before the team left that his sophomore guard was closing the gap with Tony, stating, “his only weakness was challenging the ball defensively, and he’s gotten much better at that. He’s much closer to Tony now than at any point in time.”

Three weeks of tournament action in the Soviet Union helped validate that proclamation.

“I thought John Martinez really came of age on that trip, because there was a game or two on that trip that Tony could not play. We held him out and John really took a leadership role, and, I think we won two one-point games in the process,” recalls Dick Bennett.

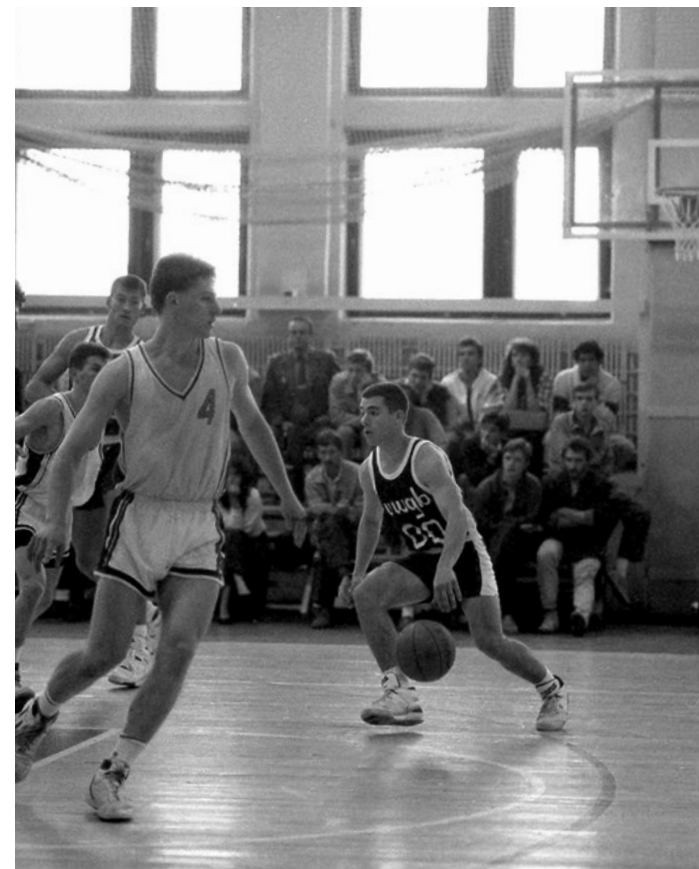
Most importantly, when paired with Tony, Dick saw the magic: “I thought that was a special combination. It was excellent chemistry.”

As a post-script, Dick Bennett made good on his promise to Boris Kazebin. That October, Kazebin came to the US and lived with Dick and his wife, Anne, shadowing the coach and absorbing all he could about Bennett’s defensive style.

Kazebin also worked hard with Bennett in trying to recruit two of the Soviet players UWGB had played against to come to Green Bay. The Phoenix were very serious about both players and explored multiple avenues to get them admitted to the school and eligible to play. In the end, a number of obstacles, including disputes over their amateur status, precluded them from joining UWGB.

And it wouldn’t have been a Boris Kazebin encounter without the humorous flaunting of the rules.

“One day, he came home with a car, a used car. And I said, ‘Boris, you don’t even have a driver’s license. How in heaven’s name did you get a car?’” remembers Bennett. “And he looks at me and he says, ‘Me Russian boy. No worries.’ He was a guy—he was a wheeler-dealer. That’s what he was. And I don’t know how he got the car, but he had a car.”



University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Archives
Point guard Tony Bennett looks to penetrate during one of UW-Green Bay’s exhibition games in a small Soviet Union gym.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH AARON A. MITCHELL

by Cora Terletzky

From 1990 to 1996, the UW-Green Bay Phoenix men's basketball team dominated the Mid-Continent and Midwestern City conferences, making four NCAA tournament appearances in six years, including a thrilling 61-57 first round upset victory over the University of California, Berkeley in the 1996 tournament. Cora Terletzky, a UW-Green Bay history and humanities major and *Voyageur* editorial student, spoke with Aaron A. Mitchell—author of *Phoenix Rising: A Playbook for Building a Mid-Major Basketball Program*—about his book. An excerpt from *Phoenix Rising*—on the Green Bay Phoenix's 1990 trip to the Soviet Union—precedes this interview.

What is your background with both Green Bay and the UW-Green Bay men's basketball team?

Aaron A. Mitchell: I was born in Green Bay and lived on the east side growing up, and my dad had always been a big Phoenix fan. He grew up in northern Michigan and traveled a lot as he was part of a military family. But then they ultimately settled down, spending a lot of time in Green Bay. He and my neighbors got season tickets to the Phoenix starting in 1988, which was coincidentally just a few years after Dick Bennet started coaching. I went to my first game when I was five years old. It was one of those things where it just opened my eyes to sports and competition. I fell in love with every aspect of the game and I became a bit of a Phoenix junkie. And so we went to games from 1988 through 1996, until I was in high school, playing basketball myself. I just felt really fortunate that I was there during some of the glory years and got to see some of the best the Phoenix had to offer. I actually ended up going to college at UW-Madison. And you know, when I was a Phoenix fan, there was always a rivalry with the Badgers. So, I carried that forward when I went to UW-Madison, and whenever the Phoenix would play Badgers, I was always there in my green shirts and standing out in the crowd. So that was always a good time.

What inspired you to write this book?

Aaron: I had a lot of great memories of going to games with my dad and with my neighbors, particularly Don and Tim. My dad passed away in 2003, and in the late 2000s I decided I was going to try to see if I could find some old game tapes and relive some of the memories. I came across a couple before finding Deb Anderson at the UW-Green Bay Archives. Deb ended up helping me by making some copies of some tapes that they had in their collection, and then I just consumed them like crazy; I was watching the games, loving the chance to relive these memories from my childhood that I had with my dad and neighbors. Ultimately, I ended up partnering with Deb Anderson to help convert all their VHS tapes from these games into DVDs and digital formats. So that was a great partnership between Deb and me, to help them take this collection of tapes that no one's ever going to watch again and put them in a format that will at least last a little bit longer. Now they are there for people who are interested in it, to consume

and enjoy them. As I started watching them, I wanted to know the whole story. So, I started doing research on the team, going through newspaper and magazine articles, and I ended up compiling a massive set of notes. I had probably hundreds of pages of notes, I did that for four or five years. That's when I realized that I probably know more about this program than most people and certainly those that weren't involved with the program. So, I reached out to players and team staff to see if I could talk to them. I thought I could do something like a documentary or a book.

I ended up being able to talk to Jeff Norgaard, Gary Grzesk, Tony Bennet, Mike Heideman, and Dick Bennet. When I met with some of these people, we ended up talking for over two hours. They were all really supportive of my project. And from there, it just spiraled. I ended up talking to probably twenty-five or so players and people affiliated with the program. And at that point, I was kind of committed. I started writing, and that's where it went. It probably took four or five years to write, but from start to finish it was about a decade's worth of work.

What was your favorite chapter to research and write?

Aaron: That's a good question. I think there are two parts of the book that I was most interested in interviewing people about, and one of them was the team's trip to the Soviet Union. In 1990, the Phoenix took a three-week trip there. They had nine games and played in three tournaments. One of the tournaments was in Ukraine, but I think they flew into Moscow, and I didn't know much about it. It was one of those things that you can't really research because there weren't a lot of newspaper articles about the trip. There are not a lot of stories about it. But it was very impactful to all the players that were there, and the stories that they shared were fantastic. You're hearing about a world that is so different from where we are today. You're hearing about what the players went through and how they adapted. It's very likely that the Phoenix were one of, if not the very first team from the United States to go over to the Soviet Union at the end of Cold War and to be a part of that culture. And it was just fantastic, a complete separation from the heavy, hardcore basketball that's in the rest of the book. So, I really liked that chapter.

I think some of the photos in there that Deb helped provide are also fantastic. There's a great photo of a couple of UW-Green Bay players standing there next to this super tall Soviet Union player and it's just great, so I really liked that. The little guy in the jacket is Tony [Bennet]. Dick Bennett talked about it; they had huge players. I mean, they just had a massive height and size advantage, but they're playing in these small, rickety gyms. I think Tony said that in some of the gyms they didn't have good clean water to drink during breaks. So, he's pounding a Coke or a Pepsi in between the huddles. If you haven't read the book and there's one part that might be interesting, it's that chapter.

The other one I didn't originally know the story of was when Coach Bennett ended up ultimately taking the job at UW-Madison. It happened in 1995, after the NCAA tournament. And what

I thought was so interesting, is that faith is a really important part of coach Bennett's life and his family's life. As a UW-Green Bay fan, it was devastating to see him leave for the Badgers. But I think for him and for the state of Wisconsin, it was the right thing to have happened. What's interesting is how many things had to line up just perfectly for him to take this job. And it's just a great story.

And it was interesting because, to this day, I look at it as if he had stayed, the next five years of my basketball life would have been very different. I'm dialed in, I'm watching the Phoenix playing in tournaments, I'm in as a fan, I'm enjoying that. But for me and for so many people in Green Bay, it was devastating for Coach Bennett to leave. Ultimately, it was good for the state of Wisconsin, and certainly for the Badgers basketball program. Things just lined up perfectly to make it possible for him to go to take that job. And ultimately, I think that move turned around the entire state of Wisconsin from a basketball perspective, certainly the Wisconsin Badgers basketball program. Before Dick Bennett was there, that program was mediocre and that is probably being generous. If you look back on the forty years before Dick Bennett was there and since Dick Bennett was there, he took them to a Final Four in 2000. Bo Ryan came in right afterwards and took over for fifteen years. That's twenty years of prosperity. They're still having success now. He changed the entire landscape of Badgers basketball.

The UW-Green Bay Phoenix, I'm assuming, are still your favorite college basketball team. Do you have a favorite professional basketball team?

Aaron: Sure! The Milwaukee Bucks would be my favorite professional basketball team. My favorite professional sports team is the Packers, having grown up in Green Bay. Especially during that era, it was Packers football and Phoenix basketball. Those were the two sports that I've followed the most closely. My mom actually worked for the Packers for a long time, so I didn't really have a choice, but it was never coerced. I was a diehard fan at the same age. I started going to Phoenix games in 1988, and I went to my first Packer game in 1989, and I was there for the Magic Man era, which was, you know, before Brett Favre. So the core of sports fandom, for me, was that era and both teams were kind of on the rise then. And they staggered a bit, with the Phoenix on the rise from 1988 into 1992, and then kept it going for the Packers. 1989 was a good year, but then it was also good from 1992 through 1996. It was a great time to be a sports fan in Wisconsin.

What is your favorite place in Wisconsin?

Aaron: I love Minocqua and Vilas County, which is a little north. We spend a lot of time up there, since my mom is from Minocqua. Originally her whole family was up there and so we go up there a lot in the summer. It's a great place to visit, I love the outdoors, the lakes, and the fishing. I just love it up there.

What is one book that you like to read over and over again?

Aaron: That's a good question! There are a bunch, but I'll give a couple answers. First of all, I'm reading the *Harry Potter* series to my children. We are all enjoying it. So that's what I'm enjoying the most right now because I get to do that with them. And I get to see how much they enjoy the story and reading. I've always been

partial to *The Lord of the Rings*. My dad read that to me when I was a kid the same way I'm reading my children *Harry Potter*, so it has a special place in my heart. As far as other books that are just fun to reread, I'm a big fan of *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer. I think it's just a great, true world adventure. It's tragic, but it's an excellent kind of real-life story. There are a lot of others, but those are some of my favorites.

If you had the option, in ten or so years down the road, to revisit this topic and write the history of the UW-Green Bay Phoenix from where you ended the book and document their history since then, would you do so?

Aaron: I don't think so. If the team is successful, maybe, but I have a couple other topics I'm interested in. I'm not, you know, an author, right? I mean, I guess I am, I wrote this book, but that's not my day job. But I've got another project starting, and maybe in a decade I'll have that one done, too. It's also Wisconsin sports related. But I don't know, if the opportunity were there, maybe, but it would be hard to have the drive. Part of the reason that this was so important for me to write this book is because of how impactful those years were on me growing up as a youth in Green Bay. I was so positively impacted by my dad, good friends like our neighbors, and by the community coming together to embrace the team. Being able to be competitive and seeing positive results and success from that had a lasting impact on me. Looking at the Phoenix today, it probably wouldn't reflect on me in quite the same way. I hope they're really successful. I want them to be great. And I'd love to write about them if they are. But this book was a labor of love.



Mitchell Family Collection

Coach Dick Bennett with Pete Mitchell, the author's father.

FATHER DAEMS

Bay Settlement's Extraordinary Missionary

by Cletus Delvaux

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-91181; Find A Grave; NavSource Naval History

Above: An oil painting of Green Bay from 1856 by Samuel Marsden Brookes and Thomas H. Stevenson.

Above Right: Father Edward Francis Daems.

Below: USS *Quinnebaug* in the waters of Barcelona, Spain on May 20, 1888.

Author's Note: Portions of this article appeared in the September 2003 issue of *The Historical Bulletin*, the newsletter of the Brown County Historical Society, under the title "Father Daems: Apostle to the Belgians." However, some additional sources of information helped me to not only expand the article but also helped to clarify a possible misconception I left my readers with concerning the role religion played in the background of the first Belgian immigrants to Northeast Wisconsin in 1853.

Father Edward Francis Daems was born in 1826 in Schaffen (near Diest) in what would become Belgium in 1830. On September 21, 1850, he was ordained a priest of the Order of Canons Regular of the Holy Cross (O.C.S.) According to Encyclopedia.com, the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross, commonly known as the Crosier Fathers and Brothers, was founded, according to their tradition, by Theodore of Celles about 1210.

The order had almost disappeared in the early 1800s. But after 1840, when a number of restrictive laws had been repealed, a surprisingly large number of diocesan clergy and seminarians joined the order. Under the leadership of Master General Henricus van den Wijmelenberg, Crosier houses were established in Holland and Belgium. Wijmelenberg, looking also to the mission field, sent priests to England, the West Indies, and, in 1850, to Wisconsin at the invitation of Bishop John Henni of Milwaukee. In all, nine Crosier priests and brothers accompanied various groups of Dutch and Belgian immigrants that settled around Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Father Daems was perhaps the most important of the Crosiers to come to the Green Bay area. Almost immediately after ordination, he obtained permission to depart for the United States to work in the diocese of Milwaukee, which then included the Green Bay area. The story is told that as Father Daems boated down Green Bay toward the mouth of the Fox River in the summer of 1851, he prophesied to Brother Peter, who accompanied him, "This is the place where we shall live." He was referring to the east shore which would be known as the Bay Settlement. One wonders whether he could see the small log mission chapel up on the wooded escarpment, which had been erected there by Father Bonduel in 1834.

Father Daems and Brother Peter left the Bay Settlement after a short period to sail up the Fox River to Little Chute "to assist the venerable Father Van den Broek, who was nearing the end of his remarkable missionary career." After his death in November 1851, Father Daems returned to the Bay Settlement in May 1852. The following month, he set about replacing the old log mission with a frame building, constructed in the form of a cross. It cost him \$605. This Holy Cross Church would serve the people of Bay Settlement until 1931, when it was razed to make way for the present church building. "At this time, much of the settlement was inhabited by Indians, French Canadians, and emigrants from Holland." But in the late summer of 1853, Father Daems would see his little parish explode with an influx of new immigrants from Belgium.

In May, 1853, a group of Belgian emigrants had sailed out of Antwerp on a ship named the *Quinnebaug* in the company of almost one hundred emigrants from Holland. These Holland emi-

grants had plans to head for a place called Wisconsin, where some of their countrymen had already settled. It is not clear whether the Belgian emigrants had originally planned to go to Wisconsin or whether they decided on shipboard to tag along with their northern neighbors.

Mary Ann Defnet, joined by researchers in Belgium, published *From Grez-Doiceau to Wisconsin* in 1986. Her research shows that the Belgian immigrants were from the area around the villages of Grez and Doiceau in the southern Brabant province of Belgium (also called Wallonia). Eighty-one Belgians, consisting of thirteen families and thirteen single persons, had sold all their possessions to begin a new life in the United States. Defnet lists the names of all the eighty-one immigrants. Seventy-four of these emigrants spoke Walloon, a dialect of French, while seven spoke Flemish, a dialect of Dutch.

The *Quinnebaug* passengers arrived in New York City on July 7, 1853. Both the Dutch and Belgian groups proceeded west mainly by water routes to Milwaukee, where they continued on foot to the Sheboygan area. The Belgian contingent was not happy here as they found that all the good land had been spoken for and their language differences continued to lead to communication problems.

At this point, the Belgians met a person who told them that French was a more common language in Green Bay—just sixty miles north. So, the Belgians decided to head for Green Bay. Finding Green Bay more to their liking, the men, leaving their wives and children in Green Bay, proceeded south along the Fox River to file land claims between Wrightstown and Kaukauna.



When the men returned, they learned that one of Philippe Hannon's children had died. The funeral was conducted at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church (the "French church") by its pastor, Father John Perrodin.

At that time, Father Daems was visiting Father Perrodin. Overhearing some of the funeral party, Father Daems was startled to hear them speaking in the Walloon language of southern Belgium. Father Daems had studied in Namur and was conversant in Walloon—the native tongue of the homesick Belgians. (One source said that he preached each Sunday in Dutch, German, English, French, and even in some American Indian languages.) The grieving group was equally surprised and pleased to at last be able to communicate with someone in their native Walloon.





Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-29708; Find A Grave

Above: Holy Cross Catholic Church, originally a pine church building built in 1834, had six different structures constructed across its complex. The pictured church replaced the original pine church in 1931.

Opposite: The headstone of Father Daems, displaying his birth on August 28, 1826 and death on February 12, 1879.

studying the history of the Belgian Evangelical Society," discovered (and published in 1953) that the first departures for America were certainly due to reasons just as ideological as they were economic." After certain members of the Catholic Church used sermons and pamphlets to condemn them, these evangelicals were advised to emigrate to America. When Father Daems heard the Belgian immigrants' stories, he set about trying to convince them to move to lands some ten to twelve miles east of his Holy Cross Church at Bay Settlement. So, why would these Protestant immigrants, who had already made down payments on lands along the Fox River south of Green Bay, agree to rescind those claims and follow the advice of a Catholic priest to refile their land claims in his parish north of Green Bay?

Most likely, the primary reason was the ease of communication: they both spoke and understood the Walloon language. In addition, there is some evidence that Father Daems was aware of lands north and east of Bay Settlement that could be had for as little as fifty cents an acre. Also, the immigrants would soon learn that Father Daems' education involved a smattering of medical knowledge. Since no doctors could be reached in the area, Daems could be relied on to saddle his horse at all hours of the day or night to do what he could to nurse the sick—especially those afflicted by cholera epidemics,

for example. In February 1879, after his death, *The State Gazette*, a non-Catholic paper, praised the consistent generosity that Father Daems had shown to non-Catholics as well as to members of his faith. In short, Father Daems was an energetic, persuasive young man who was a compassionate, well-meaning human being—less passionate about proselytizing the immigrants than helping them get started in the better life they were seeking.

Only a few of the immigrants could write a letter back to their families in Belgium. Perhaps Father Daems helped with that too. He himself would return to Belgium on Crozier business in 1855. During that return he was probably instrumental in convincing more of his countrymen to emigrate to his beloved Bay Settlement area. It is estimated that more than 15,000 Belgians emigrated to Brown, Kewaunee, and Door counties during the next ten years. A huge majority of these were now Roman Catholics. To minister to these Catholics, Father Daems founded congregations at Marchand [now Duval] and Thiry Daems. Other congregations—for example, at New Franken, Humboldt, Rosiere, Preble, Dykesville, Luxemburg, and others—bear the stamp of his missionary activities.

In 1855, Master General van den Wijmelenberg called Father Daems back to the Netherlands. The Crosiers followed a certain method in their mission work in Wisconsin. Above all, they wanted to establish a monastery community from which to send their missionaries to all parts of the area they wished to cover. But the plans to establish a monastery in Wisconsin had already failed

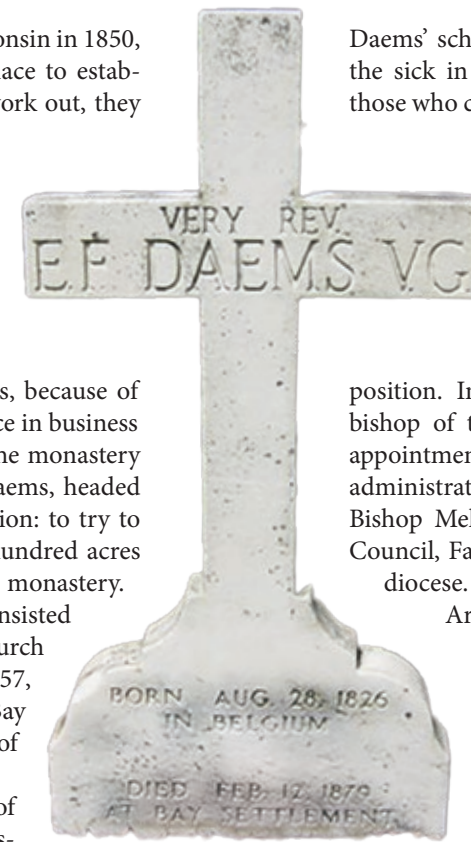
twice. When the Crosiers arrived in Wisconsin in 1850, they had chosen Little Chute as their place to establish the monastery. When that did not work out, they decided to move to Manitowoc Rapids on Lake Michigan. The monastery never came to fruition there either.

In 1855, after Father Daems had left Wisconsin, Bishop Henni of the Milwaukee Diocese immediately wrote to the Master General expressing his sadness about Father Daems' departure from his diocese. He suggested that Father Daems, because of his fluency in languages and his experience in business matters, could be successful as head of the monastery project. So, Father Daems, now Prior Daems, headed back to Bay Settlement with a new mission: to try to found a monastery there. He bought a hundred acres of land and quickly built a temporary monastery. The new community of confreres consisted of eight members. In the order's Church calendar of North America of the year 1857, the founding of this monastery in Bay Settlement is described as "Community of the Holy Cross."

But like the others, this third attempt of the Crosiers to found a monastery in Wisconsin was doomed to failure. It is not clear why it failed, but Father Sanger in his *Father Eduard Daems, O.S.C.*, speculates that the Panic of 1857 and the runup to the Civil War may have been factors in its demise. At any rate, after this third attempt, the plans for a monastery were given up. The Crosier members went onto other missions or returned to the Netherlands. Only one Crosier stayed behind in Bay Settlement—Father Eduard Daems.

Undaunted by the failure to establish a Crosier monastery in Bay Settlement, Father Daems returned to his parish activities, one of which would be highly successful. He had long recognized "that a common education and language would help unite the people who had recently emigrated from different countries." To make this goal a reality, he had built a one-room parish school in Bay Settlement in 1865. Searching for teachers for the school, he remembered that two young women from his parish had joined the Racine Dominican Sisters. Father Daems invited the two women, Sister Christine Rousseau and Sister Pauline La Plante, to return to Bay Settlement and assist him in his ministry. They returned to Bay Settlement in February 1868 and were soon joined by Sister Pius Doyle and Sister Mary Van Lanen. This led Father Daems to form the idea of establishing a religious community of women whose special work would be teaching and whose rules, dress, and manner of life would be simple.

Bishop Melcher, the first bishop of the Green Bay diocese, which had split off from the Milwaukee diocese in 1868, advised Father Daems to use the rule of St. Francis for his budding community of nuns. On November 7, 1874, the four sisters mentioned above were received as the first four members of the community, which on March 14, 1881, would officially become the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross. These sisters not only taught in Father



Daems' school and elsewhere in his parish but also visited the sick in their homes and helped prepare medicine for those who came to Father Daems for medical assistance. The community still exists today. Its work in the communities of Northeast Wisconsin must be considered one of the crowning achievements of Father Daems' ministry.

When the Green Bay Diocese was carved out of the Milwaukee Diocese in 1868, Father Daems might well have become its first bishop, if he had desired the position. Instead, the Rt. Rev. Melcher became the first bishop of the Green Bay Diocese. Bishop Melcher's first appointment was to name Father Daems vicar general or administrative deputy of the new diocese. When, in 1869, Bishop Melcher went to Rome to attend the Ecumenical Council, Father Daems was appointed administrator of the diocese. And again in 1873, when Bishop Melcher died, Archbishop Fenwick reappointed him administrator—a position he held until July 1875, when the Rt. Rev. F. X. Krautbauer became the second bishop of the Green Bay Diocese. Bishop Krautbauer appointed Father Daems his vicar general—a position he held until the time of his death in 1879.

On September 21, 1875, Father Daems celebrated his silver jubilee as a Crosier priest. That August, he had turned forty-nine years old. But

the rigors of pioneer life that arose while laboring among his early mission around Bay Settlement had taken their toll. For a number of years, his sufferings from rheumatism were intense. Finally, he caught a cold which turned into pneumonia. On February 12, 1879, Father Daems died. He was fifty-two years old.

His funeral was attended by nearly 4,000 people and the testimonials written in the newspaper give one an appreciation for a generously compassionate human being. One, the *Standard of Wisconsin*, said that Father Daems' death brought a sadness to Protestants and Catholics alike. For over twenty-five years, he had been a consoler of the poor, a doctor to thousands of the sick, and a zealous pastor of his flock. The latter include not only Holy Cross in Bay Settlement but also thirteen other mostly Belgian parishes that had sprung from his "mother-church."

The epitaph on his tombstone in Holy Cross Cemetery provides an insight into the basic simplicity, compassion, and faith of the priest who came from Belgium to serve the immigrants who came to the Bay Settlement area and beyond:

Stop, remember the trials of a faithful priest

Which for love of his flock he bore for thirty years

If you wish to bring consolation, moderate your sorrow;

For he asks not for tears; good works and prayers alone will help.

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Find A Grave

The epitaph on Father Daems' tombstone at Holy Cross Cemetery in Bay Settlement, Wisconsin.

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From the Classroom

Student Research on Childhood and Youth History

“Intensely Idealistic and Rebellious”

“We Sang Hatikvah and the Meeting Was Adjourned”

“Live to Learn and Learn to Live”



Introduction

by Lisa Rose Lamson and Debra Anderson

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay seminar in history was envisioned as a cumulation course for senior history majors and is designed to have students undertake an independent research project and produce a piece of scholarship using the results of their work. When I was approached to teach the seminar in the fall of 2021, I knew that I wanted to center the course around the act of “doing” history—analyzing and interpreting primary sources from an archive. Archival research is fundamental to historic inquiry, but often students consider it secondary to scholarly monographs and digital sources and as a result de-emphasize their own development as producers of scholarship. The course would flip students’ presumptions, emphasizing archival work to encourage scholars to develop their own interpretations of the past. As I developed the course, which is taught each semester on a rotating basis by different history faculty at UW-Green Bay, I knew that I wanted to focus on not only Wisconsin history, but also childhood. I reached out to Deb Anderson, the director of the UW-Green Bay Archives and the Area Research Center (ARC), to identify collections that would help frame the students’ research. Deb identified several collections, to both my delight and surprise, that highlighted Wisconsin childhood, and her process is discussed below.

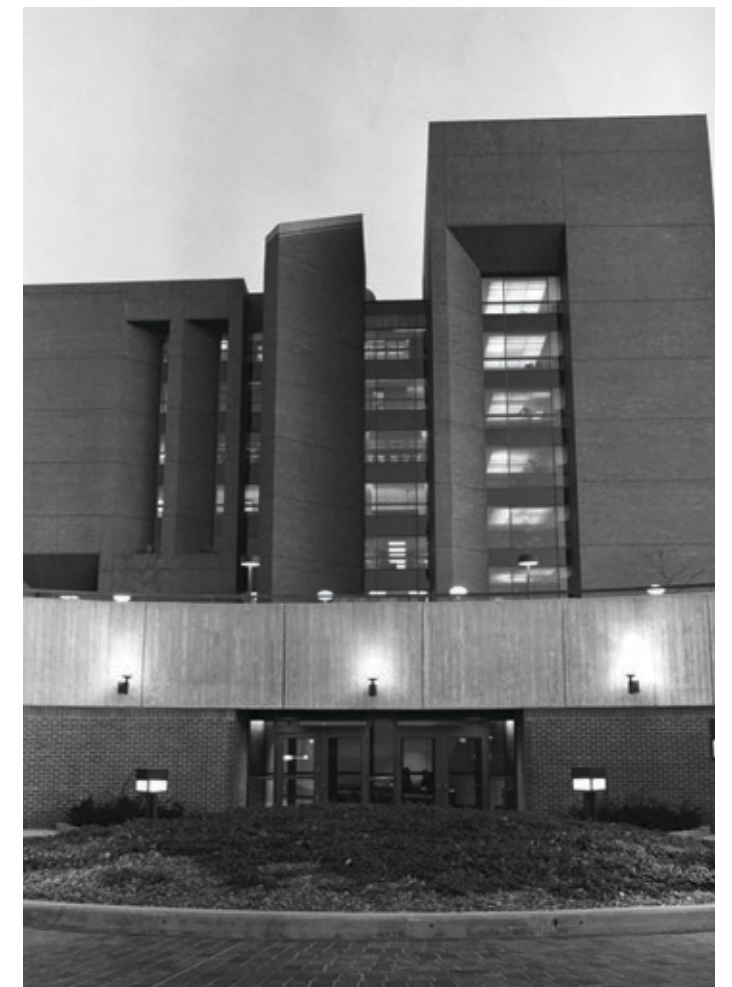
Methodologically, studying the history of childhood and youth presents students with unique questions about sourcing and interpretation. How do you tell a narrative of the past and make order of the documents when the object of your inquiry—children—rarely left behind written records? This simple question is the bane of most childhood and youth scholars, and I was excited to pose the question to the class. Throughout the semester, which often met in the archive, students grappled with sourcing, and doing so challenged them to think critically and creatively about the connection between evidence, inference, and interpretation. In addition to these sourcing concerns, the seminar students struggled against a constant urge to employ “presentism,” or the evaluation of the past using current standards or mores, as they were once children and often could deeply relate to the research. Lastly, students had to evaluate the significance of a child’s daily activities—playing or attending school among countless other examples—or how adults discussed children and made choices for them.

During that semester’s seminar, students developed, researched, and wrote documents that mirrored the work often done by professional historians. After initial exploration of the identified

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-121130; WHS-120864

Opposite Top: A group of children at Emerson School in 1925 decides whose team will bat first in a game of softball.

Opposite Middle: Sixth graders from Temple El Beth celebrate Hanukkah by giving a nurse gifts for sick children at the University Hospital.



collections, students settled into researching, using the archival sources not only for content and description of what happened in the past for Wisconsin children and youth, but also to use those primary sources to analyze the past. While the primary sources were pre-selected in the initial collections that Deb identified before the course began, students were tasked with identifying a set of primary sources that would answer their research question, organize their materials, and ultimately “make it useful.” Several times, students expressed doubt about their ability to produce a piece of scholarship. As you will see in their essays, however, their doubts were not justified.

Much of my role as the instructor was to facilitate, guide, and cheerlead as the students grappled with identifying, organizing, and interpreting multiple documents. Several times, students were

UW-Green Bay Archives; Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-118583

Above: David A. Cofrin Library on the night of October 29, 1975.

Opposite Bottom: Students at Middleton High School participate in the *Wisconsin State Journal*’s new feature, “Youth Speaks Up,” in 1965.

concerned that they would not “have enough” or that they had “too much” material to formulate an argumentative, evidenced piece of scholarship, or were uncertain of the entire process of researching. Students struggled with finding patterns throughout their sources, and the child’s voice, while sometimes there, was not always a clear one. Through proposals, outlines, drafts, and, ultimately, the final paper, students developed and refined their ideas about the past. What emerged was beyond any expectation I may have had.

The pieces that follow are a highlight of the initial course that Deb and I envisioned—students highlighting local histories centered around childhood. The three articles I selected as representative samples from the course run the gamut of sourcing: child-produced sources with adult supervision (*St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folk*); child-produced sources with little-to-no adult supervision (the New Method Hebrew School in Milwaukee); and sources about children with no presence of the children’s voice whatsoever (the Wisconsin Department of Instructional Services). While each seminar student saw themselves in the materials—as students and as children—each was able to clearly articulate how the specific time and place mattered to understanding both how childhood developed and how the children they researched saw themselves as engaging with the world around them. Using *St. Nicolas’ Magazine* from the turn of the nineteenth century, Sabrina Sodermark identifies the ways isolated children abroad in Asia sought community through their participation in children’s letters published in magazines while Sydney Grady uses records from after-school programs at the New Method Hebrew School to demonstrate the ways children envisioned their place in an increasingly global and political world in the 1930s and 40s. Finally, in the Department of Instructional Services records from the 1960s JouLee Yang sees curriculum articulating a struggle between critical thinking and the societal expectation of obedient young people. The essays are not, of course, perfect; they would all benefit from further revisions and research, most especially a stronger engagement with the larger literature on childhood and youth history. However, as evidenced by these three excellent pieces, it is clear that these history students at UW-Green Bay not only developed their historic thinking, but also highlighted the ways in which Wisconsin children saw themselves in their world.

Traditionally, undergraduate students interacting with archival materials often occurred only within the context of a state or local history course. In some instances, use of archival materials might be incorporated into an introductory history methodology course or a history research seminar. The archival focus for those uses almost always tended to focus on a biographical emphasis (e.g., the lives of founding fathers, political leaders, etc.) or a specific historical event (e.g., the Civil War, a labor strike, etc.) More often than not, classes using an archive might visit once or twice during the course of a research project.

The UW-Green Bay Archives and Area Research Center connects primary sources and undergraduate students utilizing a dif-

ferent approach. Working collaboratively with faculty members across a variety of academic disciplines, the Archives provides opportunities for students to engage with primary sources in a more immersive way. Students are asked to delve into original materials and identify research questions using critical thinking and analysis skills. Also unique is the frequency of students visiting the Archives over the course of a research project. Rather than a one-time presentation format, the UW-Green Bay Archives hosts lab sessions for classes, meaning class sessions for a particular course are held multiple weeks in the actual Archives.

An example of this primary source literacy methodology is the work done by students in the capstone senior history seminar (History 480) taught by Dr. Lisa Lamson in the fall of 2021. The umbrella theme of the class, History of Childhood, represented an archival challenge in terms of collections. While the UW-Green Bay Archives seeks to have all voices represented in its collections, the voices of children are rather silent. To provide students with enough research materials, we turned to the unique inter-lending network operated jointly by the UW System Archives Network and the Wisconsin Historical Society. By borrowing materials from the Network partners, we were able to provide students in the course a range of archival collections for their research projects. Collections included turn of the twentieth century diaries in which a couple recorded the physical and mental growth of their children to 4-H scrapbooks; from the files of a teacher at Japanese Internment camps to newsletters of Civilian Conservation Corps camps in northern Wisconsin. All of the collections gathered provided a glimpse into the lives of children thereby providing a foundation for their research projects.

Using primary sources provides students with a greater understanding of historical events, cultural and societal experiences, individuals, and specific time periods. For example, the letters of a soldier to his children provide a unique voice in the Second World War narrative. Or Girl Scout records provide a greater understanding of how youth were presented societal expectations with an organizational framework.

While primary sources are invaluable for student research projects, their use presents some unique challenges. The first hurdle often is introducing students to the foreign language of cursive writing! After the first panic, most students adapt and can read the handwritten documents better than they first thought. Secondly, original materials were not created for future researchers in mind. They were created for personal reasons, as a means of communication or to meet organizational goals. For a student researcher, this means they will be confronted with what seems to be minutia at first glance. For example, diary entries about the weather, household chores, homework assignments, leisure activities, and relationships are not especially the fodder for earthshattering research findings. Students often become bogged down in the details and feel compelled to read every word of every document in the archival collections. The student is challenged to practice skimming and to find patterns in the minutia, and to find ways to answer the underlying question of “so what?” or “what can



UW-Green Bay Archives
Students reviewing documents pertaining to women’s history at the UW-Green Bay Archives.

be learned about the past from these writings?” When students do this successfully, they experience high-impact learning that no textbook can provide.

A third challenge for students is that many approach using primary source research the same way they might approach using published sources. There seems to be an instinctual assumption that there must be one or two documents providing a summary of the “truth,” or a frustrated search for a table of contents or an index within the collection. It takes a little bit of exploring for student researchers to realize that the very nature of primary sources means they will be “doing history” and making their own hypotheses and uncovering the “truth” themselves. It is an experience that can definitely be overwhelming at first, but almost always becomes exhilarating and gratifying by the end of the research process.

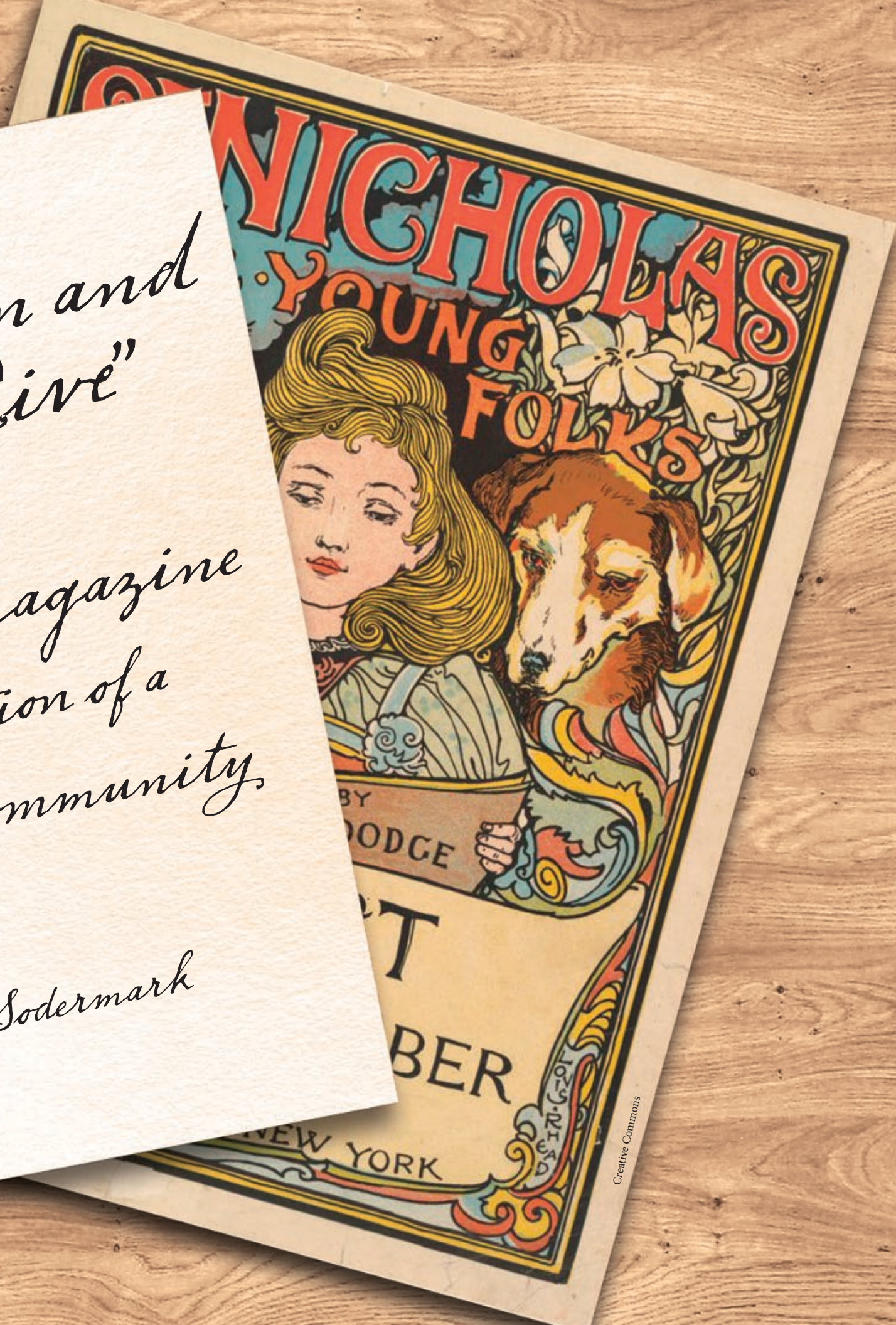
All of the challenges pale in comparison to the benefits. Within the broad course topic, childhood history in this case, students choose a primary source that resonated with them. This freedom of choice regarding resources and the knowledge that they are creating unique scholarly research generally means student researchers become invested in historical inquiry in profound and personal ways.

The three projects shared here represent the work of undergraduate student researchers who immersed themselves in the archival collections of a children’s magazine, a Hebrew School, and Wisconsin social studies curriculum guides. On one level the result is contributions to the study of the history of childhood. On a deeper level, and perhaps more importantly, the result represents a rich and unique experience in the study of history.

The UW-Green Bay Archives and Area Research Center welcomes collaborations with educators seeking experiences with primary sources for their students. No matter what the academic subject area, archival collections can provide opportunities to enrich learning and research.

Examples of past classroom and UW-Green Bay projects are available at: archives.uwgb.org.

*“Live to Learn and
Learn to Live”
St. Nicholas Magazine
and the Creation of a
Global Youth Community
by Sabrina Sodermark*



Chi King

A canal in the city of Otaru within the Hokkaido region in Japan.

“I think the [St. Nicholas] League is the most interesting part of the magazine,” wrote Paul, a young American boy living in Hokkaido, Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. “There are no foreign children (meaning foreign to Sapporo) here to play with, so I have plenty of time for reading.”¹ For Paul, living across the world in Japan was a solitary adventure, a life in which one of the few connections he had to the United States came in the form of reading children’s periodicals. But this connection went two ways, not limited to just reading the magazine once it reached Japan. Paul went one step further by interacting with the publication, writing to the magazine and entering into a conversation and community with children across the globe.

Paul’s story was not unique. At the end of the nineteenth century, the world was more interconnected than it had been in previous centuries, which meant that children, who came to Asia with their parents, could still have access to the United States and American children. One such connection was through the variety of American children’s magazines published during this era. One of these publications was *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*. *St. Nicholas*, published in New York City, provided an outlet for children to both read and write to. Two sections of the magazine where children’s letters were published were the “Letter-box” and the “St. Nicholas League,” both of which invited children across the world to engage in conversation with the magazine, but more importantly with one another. By focusing on the letters written out of Asia to *St. Nicholas*, one can see how the magazine created a community for these otherwise isolated children, giving them an outlet to become vocal actors in their community. Thus, this community experience was not passive, given how children engaged with the magazine in order to create a place within the larger global youth community. It also taught the community something they would not have known previously without this kind of interaction.

AMERICAN CHILDREN IN ASIA

The majority of children writing to *St. Nicholas* were not Asians themselves, but were either American or British, brought to these Asian countries by parents due to war, imperialism, missionary work, or myriad other reasons. (Only one letter from the selected archival volumes was from India, by a boy who claimed he was

born in India and was a Hindu.) As stated, Britain, as well as the United States, engaged in imperialistic pursuits, and had vested interests in Asia, regarding their own economies and trade. These foreign outlets were not guaranteed. Wars and conflicts broke out across the region, such as the First Sino-Japanese War, which took place from 1894 to 1895. Americans, in support of Japan, came to the country, and with them came their children.³ Other children came to these countries because of their parents' missionary work, and some came following their parents' newly acquired land for plantations.⁴ Regardless as to why these children were in Asia, what they had in common with one another, which was

different than children living in the United States, was their isolated nature. There was little to no one else around, save their own siblings—if they had any—which allowed *St. Nicholas* to become an important way for children to connect with their peers half a globe away.

The main way children connected with the magazine, besides reading it, was by writing letters to *St. Nicholas*. Letters received by children living in Asia made up a small portion of the letters written and published to *St. Nicholas*.

The majority of letters written and received by the magazine were those written by American children in the United States. A smaller subsection was then allotted to the rest of the world, allowing voices from Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. The countries predominately featured from Asia were China, India, and Japan.

MARY MAPES DODGE AND A COMMUNITY AMONG ALL

This allowance of children to connect with one another, even oceans apart, was not an accidental surprise. The magazine, first published in November 1873, saw marked changes, allowing it to become more of a communal experience for children in the United States as well as around the world. Two developments that directly impacted this growth were the creation of the “Letterbox” and “St. Nicholas League” sections. These sections both fell in line with an important goal the magazine’s editor, Mary Mapes Dodge, strove to promote, which was community among all.⁵ She ensured this belief by allowing the magazine to adapt and change as it matured—one such development including children being able to write and be published in the magazine. This change first came about as published letters, but eventually extended to publishing stories written by children themselves. Because of this, children were allowed to read and experience thoughts and opinions from children who lived different lives than them and they created conversations in the shared space the magazine provided.

As stated, this shared space was not a part of the magazine’s original conception, and in part was curated by the children themselves and what their own wants and needs were. In its original form, Dodge’s goal for the magazine was more simplistic. Her aim was to be different from other children periodicals at the time by disappearing into her role as editor.⁶ She wanted to be a mediator among children, but not a strong voice dictating what could and could not be said. She feared that by pushing an agenda on what kids wrote, as well as creating internal competition, would break the harmony the magazine had worked hard to harbor.⁷ These fears were not unfounded, either. Dodge wished to create a magazine with total democratization, meaning any child, no matter their age and background, would have access to the magazine. By creating a section that celebrated one child’s voice over another was in direct contrast with this idea. How successful Dodge was in her goals has been questioned. Other children’s



A Woman of the Century, Leading American Women in all Walks of Life,
Charles Wells Moulton, Mary Mapes Dodge

Mary Mapes Dodge in 1896.



Louis John Rhead; Metropolitan Museum of Art

Cover image of *St. Nicholas* from 1894.

literary scholars, such as Michelle Philips, cite Dodge’s altruism not aligning with the reality of the magazine’s target demographic, which were upper- and middle-class families, meaning there were already children being left out of the scope of the community.⁸ While this might be the case, it does not weaken the reality of the community fostered by the magazine. The children who had access to the magazine out of their own volition wrote to the magazine, and Dodge, to her credit, did not limit those voices to those children only living in America at the time.

In fact, Dodge, can be seen as going one step further in making sure the most children’s voices were being heard by publishing as many

UW-Green Bay Archives

An illustration introducing the Letterbox section of the September 1898 issue of *St. Nicholas*.

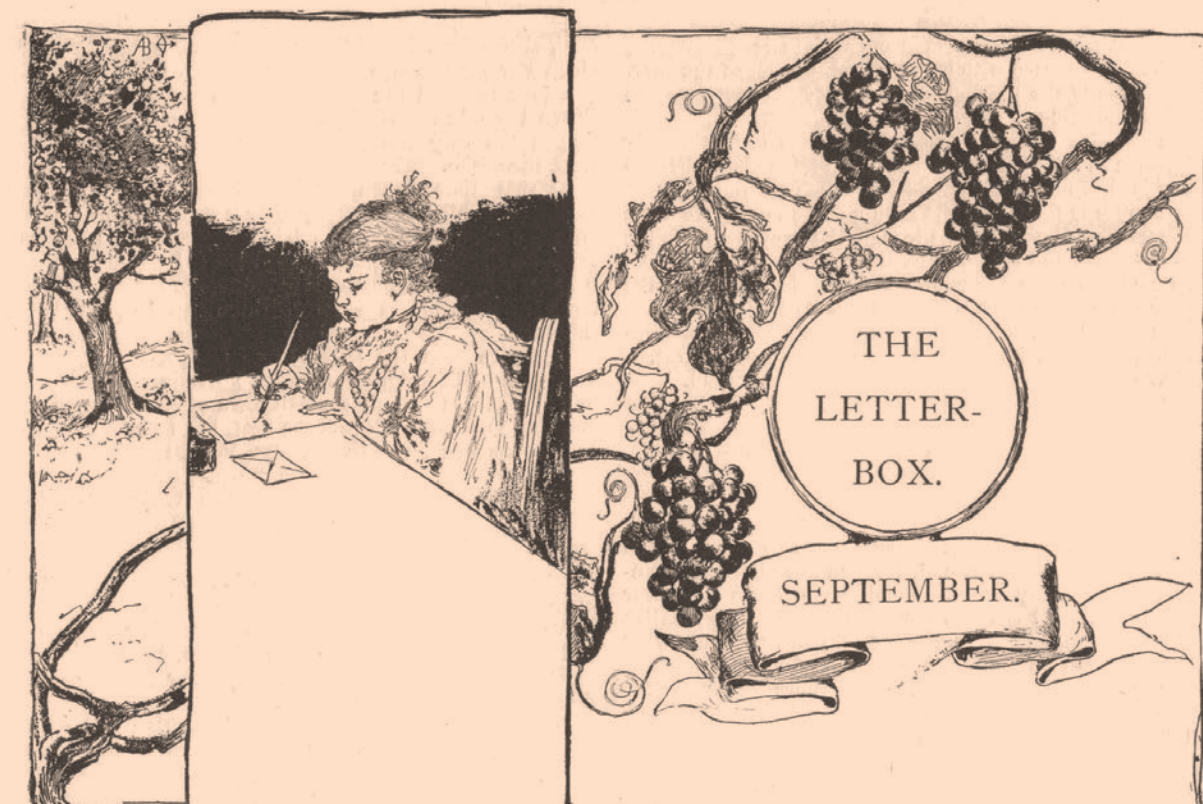
of their voices as possible—many coming from outside of the United States. This can easily be seen with how the “Letterboxes” were ordered and set up. For instance, in volume twenty-five of the June 1898 issue, which ran three pages, it began with letters being written out in full (four of these actually came from Asia or a Pacific island). Next, other letters were summarized in a list, and then at the very end, many other children were thanked for writing to the magazine with regrets that they could not be published in full or part.⁹ Dodge’s choice of highlighting certain children’s voices was thus democratic, in terms of regions, at least trying to get as many voices published in each issue as she could.

The magazine was also holistic regarding age. In 1894, a boy from Seoul, Korea proudly introduced his letter by stating he was only eight.¹⁰ Many other children also mention their age, predominately around the age of adolescence, but they were not necessarily favored over other age groups. The largest reason for this was the fact that *St. Nicholas* provided varying types of stories, which appealed to a broader age range of children, rather than one certain age group.

This was then made readily apparent, in the letters that the magazine received, making the choice to highlight the voices of children of all age more important. As with region, it did not matter how old a child was they could still be a part of their community.

THE “LETTERBOX” AND “ST. NICHOLAS LEAGUE”

The “Letterbox” and “St. Nicholas League” sections provide direct examples of actual children writings that were published in the magazine, including several examples of kids writing from Asia. Both were forwarded by an editor, who reminded the children what was to be expected of each section. The editor, however, did not provide an explanation about what was to come, or how to understand the following letters or stories. Because of this, the letters can be read with no preconceived notion about how they might fit together, or how a child was supposed to interpret





"A HEADING FOR OCTOBER." BY MARGARET M. WATTS, AGE 17. (GOLD BADGE. SILVER BADGE WON APRIL, 1920)

Margaret M. Watts

A 1920 illustration from *St. Nicholas* displaying two children lighting a jack-o'-lantern.

the letter. In turn this created a unique space, one where children talked to one another, through an editorial middle, yes, but left largely ignored. The result was a varied array of letters and responses, depending on where the letter was designated to, since the "Letterbox" section and "St. Nicholas League," were created with two different goals in mind.

LETTERBOX

Had a child living in Asia wanted to write to the magazine, prior the creation of "Letterbox," their voice would not have been as exemplified as it was in the later issues. The "Letterbox" came from a merger with *Our Young Folks*, another children's periodical. The editor of this magazine pushed for a similar section to be included by Dodge in *St. Nicholas* as a way for them to communicate to children. However, the inception of the "Letterbox" within *St. Nicholas* was different than its predecessor. Because of the nature of *Our Young Folks*, its "Letterbox" was a place for the editor to respond to children's letters, similar to something already in *St. Nicholas*, "Jack-and-the-Pulpit." In this version no children voices, or very little of their voices, were published, only hints to their character, based on what the response by the editor was. This was different within *St. Nicholas*' conception of the "Letterbox." *St. Nicholas* decided to publish the original letters to the magazine.¹¹ Because of this, *St. Nicholas* did not take part in the preaching nature found in older periodicals, but instead showcased a wide variety of viewpoints (once again emphasizing Dodge's goal of being democratic in nature). For children in Asia, then, this meant that they were not limited to what they could and could not write about, given the unique areas in which they lived.

For many children, the "Letterbox" was a place where they could state what stories they enjoyed in previous issues. For others it was a place for them to recount their own stories and poetry. Several more used the area to discuss the world around

them. This variety made for an eclectic assortment of letters of varying length from around the globe, giving insights to the broad the readership of the magazine. The children writing from Asia were no exception to this. Their topics were broad, reflecting the community at large, which showed that even though they were far from the United States, they were still a part of the community created by the magazine. They related their letters to one another. A child in the United States could write about going to school, and in response a child in Japan could discuss their own school days, thus creating an understanding of their similarities rather than their differences.¹²

ST. NICHOLAS LEAGUE

Like the "Letterbox" the "St. Nicholas League" was a place for children living in Asia to help feel like they were part of the community. The League first appeared in the 1899 November issue. It called upon children bound together by aims and accomplishments through competition.¹³ Through healthy competition it elicited children to write and, therefore, contribute to the broader community. Any child could be a part of the League and it was encouraged that children create their own chapters and groups within their communities under the structure found in the League. Because of this, as Anna Redcay noted in her article on the League, it created a "perception of belonging to a larger body of peers."¹⁴ Through encouraging children to write stories, it facilitated a way for children to join together and write to each other as well as to the magazine.

For children living in Asia, this sense of community can be found in the separate letter portion found within the League's section. Alice Mendelson, wrote from Japan that even across the ocean she was "very much interested in the League...I take great pleasure in reading the letters of other members."¹⁵ Interestingly, Alice singled out the letter portion of the League and not the

stories written by other children. This may be because while the stories were written by children, they had to follow a strict set of guidelines, based on prompts provided by the League's editor. The letters, on the other hand, functioned much like those found in the "Letterbox," where children could write about anything, often time pertaining to the League, but not always. Children here, then, were more curious to read what their peers had to say when the mediation between adult and child was least apparent.

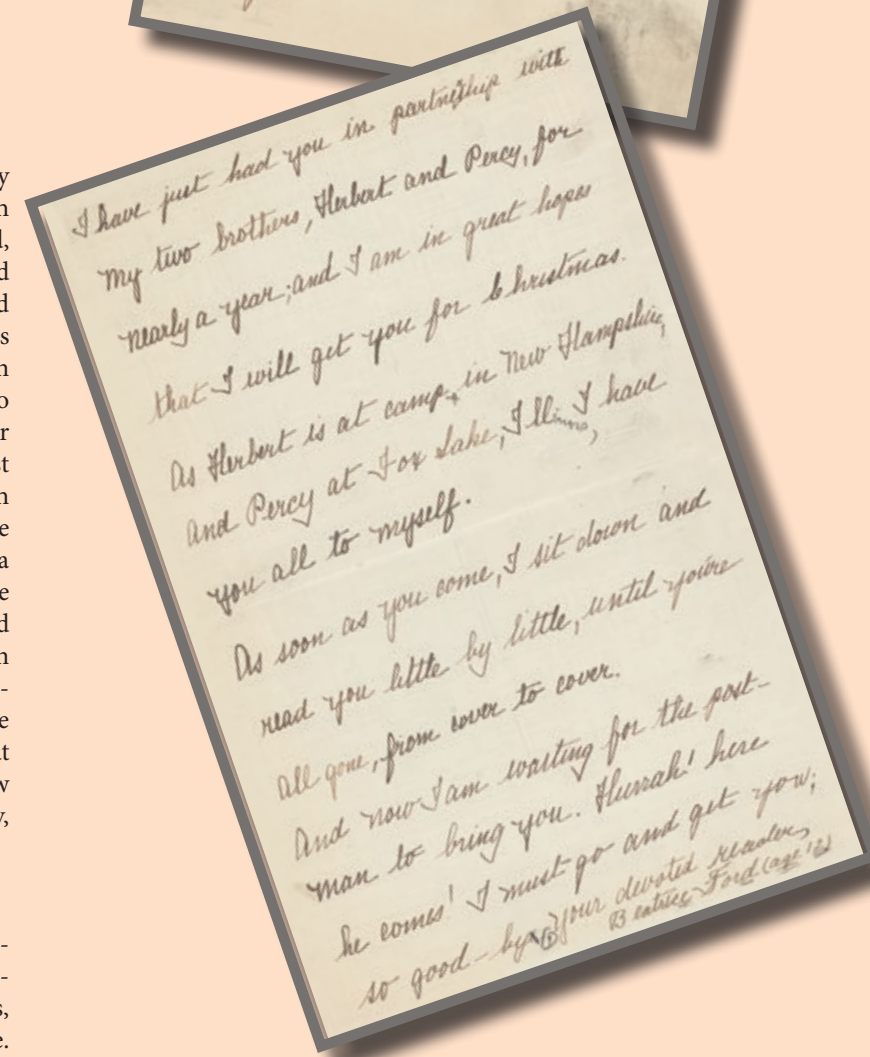
The letter portion of the League also provided children living in Asian countries a way to contribute to the League without having to write stories themselves. At another point in her letter, Alice regretted the fact that they "seldom get *St. Nicholas* before the 20th of the month, of course it is quite impossible for us to join in the competitions."¹⁶ Here Alice recognized a limitation of the magazine. Instead of becoming disheartened, she chose to participate in the League in a different way. Redcay argued that the only way a kid could be completely a part of the League was through these competitions.¹⁷ However, while the League was contingent on these competitions, children like Alice used what opportunities they had to make sure they were equally involved, bridging their isolated state with one that had them joined with other children.

APPEALING TO THE GROUP: CHILDREN ASSERT THEIR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

Children living in Asia appealed to the larger group in a variety of ways. While there was often similar formatting between each letter (opened with a greeting, discussed the stories they liked, followed by speaking to something important to them, and closed with a thank-you to the magazine), what each letter discussed in terms of what was important to them varied greatly. Francis Haworth wrote about a trip to see a volcano.¹⁸ The Smith children discussed their interaction with local tour guides on their trip to see a shrine.¹⁹ Robert D. thought that it was important for other kids to learn about how Japanese people make tea.²⁰ Amongst these letters and more, what existed was a varied way in which children chose to write to one another. Two letters highlight these differences: a "Letterbox" letter written by John C. Mack and a League letter written by Pauline M. Both asserted their right to be a part of the community. Beyond this, they actively contributed to the magazine by teaching other children. One recounted an exciting naval battle, the other made criticisms about the magazine and corrected American authors. Both noted how they were similar to American children; thus, they should be a part of that community. What is important about these letters, then, is how these children were able to contribute to the youth community, and why they decided to write to a world far away.

JOHN C. MACK

John C. Mack lived in Japan when he wrote to *St. Nicholas* magazine at the height of the First Sino-Japanese War. Unlike most children living in Asia, John was with twenty other American boys, meaning he was not as isolated as other foreign children were. However, while this was true, John still made a vocal effort to expand the community he was a part of and wrote to *St. Nicholas*. His letter was twofold. First, he established himself in Japan, and then he discussed the Sino-Japanese War. John's establishment of



New York Public Library

A letter written by Katherine E. Smith to *St. Nicholas* expressing her love for the magazine.



Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-37883

The cover of the 1883 Christmas issue of *St. Nicholas* by noted artist George Inness, Jr.

himself was important as it related his readers (other children) to his life in Japan. He wrote, “all of us go to the Tsukiji school, which has four teachers...I study Latin, Greek, English Literature, Geometry, Physiography, Arithmetic, Algebra, English History, Universal History, and Ancient History.”²¹ By explaining his educational life, John had made it clear that he was no different than children living in America, learning similar curriculum. Children, then, may have an easier time relating to him, being able to picture the setting of where he lived. John was an American boy and John went to school like any other American boy, therefore his experiences were a useful contribution to the community.

John continued by taking the opportunity to report to the community and to teach the community about an important battle, which took place between the Japanese and Chinese. He wrote: “The Japanese fleet, consisting of eleven cruisers, and commanded by Admiral Ito, was cruising around the mouth of the river when the Chinese fleet, commanded by Admiral Ting, and consisting of eleven cruisers and two battle-ships, came up, and a battle ensued. Four of the Chinese ships were sunk...The Japanese won through superior skill and bravery.”²²

Here John was emulating adult reporters by discussing what was happening in the war, which coincided with adult magazines and newspapers, which also reported vividly on the war, usually siding

with Japan.²³ But while it might be expected that adults read about the happenings of a war, in a children’s magazine where a child could write about anything, his choice was unique. This decision by John, while mirroring adults, was for other children, appealing to them by giving them information they might not otherwise be exposed to. Children did want to know about the war, too, and would have been just as fascinated by this other world.²⁴ By writing about the war, John added himself to the war narrative, and as a result, he gave the community a way to make the war feel more real. John was, therefore, an active participant in generating content for the community.

PAULINE M.

Pauline M. used her opportunity to connect with the magazine, through a letter to the League in three distinct ways: she challenged the magazine; asserted her right to be a part of the community; and then corrected American authors for inaccuracies in their work. She opened her letter immediately with the challenge to the magazine for not reaching her sooner, “I wish you could publish some prize competitions especially for children in foreign countries like Japan.”²⁵ As discussed with Alice Mendelson, Pauline argued that the magazine and League could do more to engage with a greater number of children. While a critique, her message also showed how important it was for these isolated children to be able to interact with the magazine in all the same ways children in America were able to interact with it. Like Alice, Pauline did as much as she could, living in Japan. She wrote to the letter section, and as such she got published and awarded for sharing her ideas.

Pauline’s next step in talking with her community was, like John, to showcase that she also was an American child, and therefore had a right to be a part of the magazine. Unlike John, however, Pauline’s claim to be similar went one step further. She wrote, “I expect to go to American in two years, because I have to go to school there.”²⁶ Here it was apparent that Pauline had a vested interest in making sure she was a participant in the community. She would be going back to the United States, and she wanted to make clear that she was part of this community before her travels.

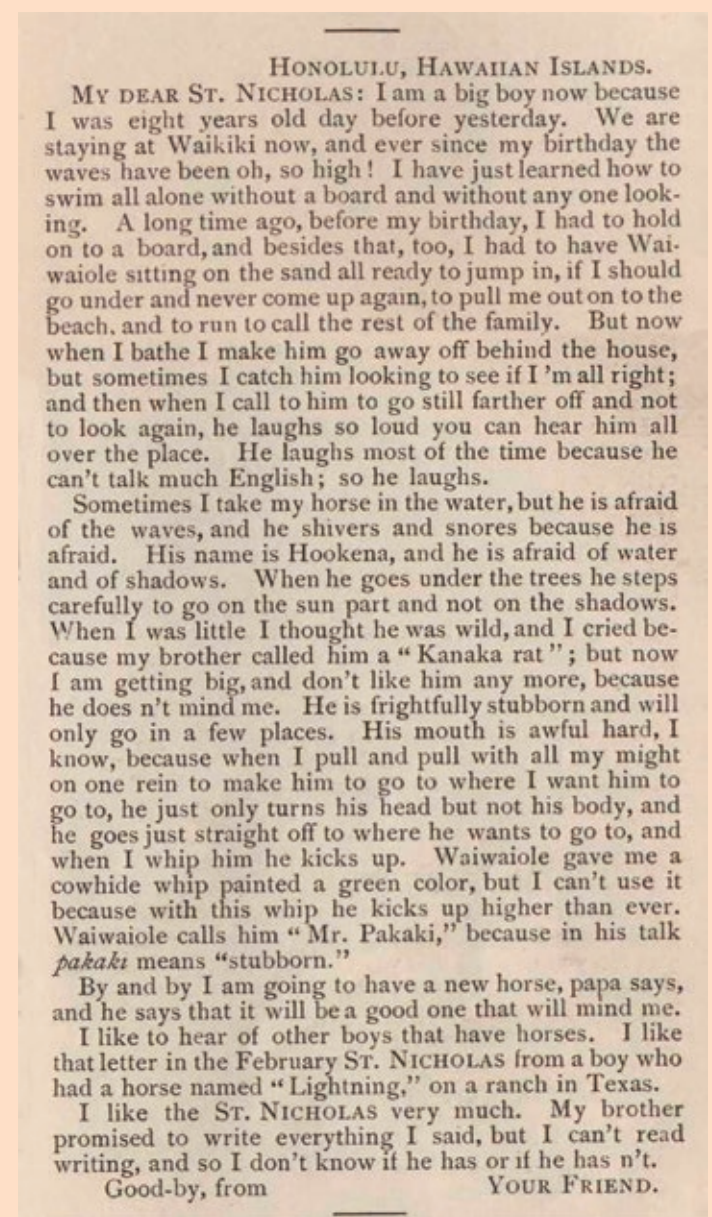
Lastly, Pauline’s letter concluded with another critique, not of the magazine itself, but of American authors writing about Japan in general. She wrote: “In some books it is said that Japanese children do not cry, but I think that the authors must have been here only a day, because if they had been here a day and a night [her emphasis] I think they would have thought differently.”²⁷

Pauline challenged what was being taught and read to other children. It is unsurprising that there would be errors regarding what was known about Asia and Asian culture at this time. Most adults were given incorrect information through newspapers.²⁸ More importantly, children were also more likely to remember a statement like this one, as they often learned more from what another child taught them than anything written in a long story or essay.²⁹ Pauline, then, offered a lesson to other children, teaching them something that they would not have known if they had looked anywhere else. Thus, she secured her place as an active member of the community, even while she was miles away from anyone else a part of the League.

Children engaged with *St. Nicholas* in a variety of ways. For many children who were only reading each issue as it came out, but for isolated children in Asia, it gave them an important opportunity to be a part of the magazine through two sections highlighting children’s writings, the “Letterbox” and “St. Nicholas League.” Because of this, these otherwise secluded children were unafraid of sharing their ideas with the community, knowing it would reach a wide array of children. These children took advantage of the opportunity to write to the magazine, and as such can be seen as both important contributors and members of the *St. Nicholas* community as a whole.

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27. Pauline M., “Letterbox: Tokio, Japan,” *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*, 469.
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UW-Green Bay Archives

A letter sent to *St. Nicholas* from a child living in Honolulu, Hawaii for the Letterbox section of the magazine.



We Sang Hatikvah and The Meeting Was Adjourned

The Politics of Mid-Twentieth Century Jewish Children in Milwaukee

by Sidney Grady



Two Jewish boys in 1950s Milwaukee have just recently entered Jewish manhood. At thirteen years old, they have both recently completed their Hebrew education, celebrated their Bar Mitzvahs, and become fully fledged Jews. The culmination of their Hebrew education is to complete a project detailing what they have learned about what it means to be Jewish—the boys answer questions about the Bible, about Jewish holidays and traditions, about the history of their people. Finally, they compare their lives to those of Jews living in Europe and draw a map; not of the United States or the homes of their ancestors (Germany, Poland, or Russia, most likely), but of Israel, a freshly forged nation just beginning to make its impact on the Jewish world, just like the boys.¹ It is a country no one in their families has likely ever stepped foot in, and yet, it has become an essential part of Jewish identity within its first decade of existence. Coming of age at the tail-end of a hectic half-century, it is clear that what it means to be Jewish has changed.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Wisconsin saw a massive influx of European immigrants, a majority coming from Germany. Milwaukee quickly became the bustling hub of the state, an opportunity-rich city of immigrants that grew to a population of approximately 20,000 by 1850.

Among the 20,000 Milwaukee residents (a vast majority being German immigrants from a variety of Christian denominations), approximately 350 were German Jews.² In the decades to come, Jewish people would remain a small but significant minority in the city, participating both economically and politically to the growth of the community. A group with a significant history of persecution on their home continent, Jewish immigrants brought a desire for self-reliance stateside with them; many preferred to support their families through independent entrepreneurship and emphasizing education to an extent that was highly uncommon for European immigrants. In the years leading up to the Second World War, the role of education in shaping a child's Jewish identity gained particular importance. Facing a global rise of antisemitism in the early- to mid-twentieth century, the Jewish community in Milwaukee used religious education and student organizations to instill a strong political identity both patriotic and Zionist in nature on the next generation of Jews, which led these children in the 1920s through the 1950s to reflect a growing political literacy and interest in their own activities.

New Method Hebrew School and Jewish Milwaukee

In contrast with Catholic immigrants, who were largely distrustful of public education and the potential for their children to encounter Protestant values, Jewish communities emphasized an education that worked in sync with secular public education.³ The result was a format of schooling known as Talmud Torah, where students would attend public school during regular school hours and receive their Jewish education later in the afternoon.

Popularized in the mid-nineteenth century, the purpose of such schooling was to provide children with the basic knowledge of Jewish history, religious practices and tradition, as well as the Hebrew language, usually until their Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the age of thirteen. This, in conjunction with secular public education, would allow Jewish children to maintain a Jewish identity, while also avoiding complete separation from the larger Protestant-American culture. This strategy was not motivated simply by a desire for assimilation (as many leaders in Jewish education were adamant about discouraging assimilation), but for a sense of American pride in an increasingly secular public education environment which allowed Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to learn together.⁴ Using education as a way to encourage children to engage fully in American culture outside of their Jewish circles is an early feature of Jewish-American communities, and the Talmud Torah format of Hebrew schooling was conceived of specifically with this in mind.

New Method Hebrew School was one Milwaukee school that followed this format. Opened in 1914 by Harry Garfinkel, a Jewish-Russian immigrant who had landed in the United States just two years prior, the school provided afterschool education for local Jewish children until Garfinkel's death in 1964, after which it shut down. Garfinkel's vision for the school was an education in which children would not be scolded by "old rabbis" for asking questions—seemingly, he pictured an environment that encouraged children's curiosity as a part of learning.⁵ The school also promoted social engagement through student groups: Young Children of Israel and Junior Jewish Forum, which were aimed at younger children who had not yet celebrated Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and Hatikvah Circle, which was composed of teenaged children. While organized through the school, these groups were led and run by students with seemingly minimal intervention or guidance by adults; therefore, the activities of these groups seem to have been born, at least in part, from genuine interest on the part of the students. Looking through the lens of these students, their interests and priorities and the ways in which they engaged with their young peers, a snapshot of Jewish childhood in America through these tumultuous decades comes into view.

The early- to mid-twentieth century was a rather dynamic time for the United States as a whole, as well as across most of the broader world. Two world wars and an economic collapse in this period meant significant and lasting changes to American life. For the Jewish population, the changing times were layered. In Europe, antisemitism—the ancient and particularly incessant prejudice against Jews—was experiencing a massive rise. Leading up to the Second World War, European Jews became the scapegoat for an economically and politically struggling continent. The sentiment eventually spread to the United States, and regions with sizable Jewish populations felt it most. Milwaukee's experience of this shift was perhaps unique: the descendants of

Beth Hillel Temple

Opposite: Stained glass windows found within the Beth Hillel Temple in Milwaukee represent the three themes found within the section of the service known as the *Shema Yisrael*.



Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-72005

A Jewish community gathering for Seder, the ritual feast marking the beginning of Passover.

German immigrants made up most of the community, and they were likely simply less suspicious of European immigrant groups as a whole. In addition, anti-German sentiment had also been on the rise in the United States in recent years, which perhaps made this population more sensitive to waves of paranoid intolerance. Antisemitism was uncommon in Milwaukee prior to the 1920s, which likely made it even more striking when it began to appear.

Local clubs and resorts explicitly discriminated against Jewish guests, and Jewish students at Marquette University were excluded from the university's fraternities until they began their own.⁶ But Milwaukee's overall tolerant nature apparently kept the tensions low and the incidents isolated. Hatred of Jews existed, but it was on the fringe of Milwaukee culture. What resulted was a city where the Jewish population was aware of rising antisemitic sentiments in the world but was not overwhelmingly burdened by them. They were at a distance from the conflict that could allow them to carefully decide how they engaged with it. As the children of New Method Hebrew School gathered for their evening meetings, they perhaps felt compelled to discuss the politics of the changing world around them but were relatively sheltered from

the stressful and eventually incredibly tragic circumstances of many of the world's Jews.

The Political Affairs of Children

The weekly meetings of all three organizations followed a similar structure: there would be administrative discussion, followed by a debate on a variety of topics and some sort of entertainment (typically a musical or comedy performance by one of the children), and all were meticulously recorded. In both the administrative events of the meetings, and in the debates, the children show a significant level of political literacy: a sufficient preparation to participate in government as citizens. This is revealed through an understanding of political topics, as well as the organization and functioning of government, as demonstrated by a command of terminology, processes, and concepts that are atypical for children.

In the autumn of 1932, the Hatikvah Circle alternated between debates on topics such as whether basketball is better than baseball (which resulted in a tie) and whether or not immigration should be restricted (in which the affirmative won).⁷ This pattern is fairly consistent throughout the decade. The debates are recorded with a variety of detail, with some including the final votes of each student present and others simply noting the topic, but this variance seems to relate to which student is taking the minutes rather than the subject. There is no pattern regarding how different subjects are handled; "mature" and explicitly political topics are not given a more serious treatment, and "fun" topics do not receive more enthusiasm. Rather, there appears to be equal significance given across the board; there is nothing to suggest that more sophisticated topics received less genuine interest. This is true of the younger children's groups as well: in the meeting logs of 1937, the Young Children of Israel recorded debates on the ethics of mercy killing laws, as well as the increase in drunk driving after "repeal" (likely referring to Prohibition, which had ended approximately four years earlier).⁸ These are interspersed with debate topics such as sports and play.

This behavior plays out in the interactions between these two groups as well. In the spring of 1933, the Hatikvah Circle began to plan a debate with the Young Children of Israel—a big event, it seems, as the planning went on over the course of several meetings. The topic of the debate fluctuated between whether jigsaw puzzles should be abolished, whether chain stores should be abolished, and whether the United States should "acknowledge Russia" (Russia was, of course, the Soviet Union at this time, which would be formally recognized by the United States government just a few months later).⁹ The club ultimately decided to debate chain stores. The Soviet Union question is also an example of one major difference between the older students of the Hatikvah Circle and the young children of the other two organizations; the topics became timelier and more frequently based on current events, while the younger students focused on more general questions. This could signify that the general interest in political and ethical questions cultivated in the young children manifested as a desire and ability to keep up with important national and world business as they got older.

With terms like "abolish" ubiquitous throughout each group's minutes, even the most mundane entries take on a judicial tone. There is a sense that the children took these meetings seriously regardless of what activities or discussions were taking place; everything was very official. The strict structure of each of the three groups comes through in how it is described; almost every single entry could be neatly summed up with the same phrases: "Meeting was called. Old business opened. Old business closed. New business opened. New business closed. Dues collected. Meeting adjourned." It reads as a business meeting rather than a social club for children—and perhaps to the students, it is both. It is important to note that the minutes retain this quality across several decades, with new students entering the rotation over the years, so it is not the case of one particularly bureaucratic group of students or a minute taker with a specific style of writing.

The Hatikvah Circle, in particular, often made use of governmental language. For example, during their meeting on

November 30, 1932, the minute taker recorded that "a suggestion was made to impeach the treasurer Martin Bernstein," before they moved on and began their debate on abolishing the electoral college. In the next entry, they succeeded in impeaching Bernstein, citing a "lack of duties." New members were voted in (or out) and sworn in. Members elected to higher positions were sometimes required to give an inaugural address. There is at least one reference to a member being "blackballed" (which is rejection via secret ballot).¹⁰

In 1933, a motion was made that members be "addressed properly" with the titles Mr. and Miss—the motion was carried, and each entry afterwards addresses members as such.¹¹ This sort of language can be seen with the Young Children of Israel as well. It becomes particularly notable when the minute taker has clearly suggested that the meeting had become unruly. In one meeting, an amendment was proposed that members should only be asked "in a kind and polite way to pay the dues," and a motion was made that "any member who annoys the club be put on probation." There was also a suggestion that the club appoint a sergeant-at-arms to keep things civil and orderly.¹² This is a rare entry that displays apparent childlike behavior, but this only makes the language used to describe it all the more telling.

Despite the heavy subject matters these students were often engaging with, the organizations were, ultimately, an opportunity for socialization with other Jewish children. There is no reason to believe these clubs were created specifically for the students to engage with or practice political behaviors, particularly given that they do also engage in more expected childlike behaviors. This suggests that the children chose to emulate adult political behavior, not as a means of play, but as a means of giving shape, meaning, and importance to their activities. Combined with their willingness to engage with mature and complex topics, often related to politics, this demonstrates that the children were actively pursuing the ideal Jewish American adulthood that educators sought to cultivate.

Ideology in the Classroom

Considering the hot topic of debate that was Jewish education in the early twentieth century, it is not unexpected that these students would have been exposed to political thought and behavior at their young ages. The idea that political identities were pushed to Jewish children through schooling is established. However, this fact would never be more apparent than it was in the 1940s, stretching into the 1950s. Another side effect of the rapid rise of antisemitism in the early twentieth century was a sharp increase in support of Zionism, a nineteenth century nationalist ideology that supported the creation of a Jewish state (Israel) in the Holy Land (roughly the area of Palestine at the time). As Jewish educators began to infuse this ideology into schools, it entirely altered the form, function, and purpose of Jewish schooling for a time. It was an ambitious but tangible end goal to shape education as a path towards. Scholars such as Jonathan D. Sarna describe the movement as a "takeover" of American Jewish education—it was a complete revamping.¹³ The center of this movement was the emphasis on the learning of the Hebrew language as a "living language" rather than solely the written language of the Bible. This

approach had benefits simply for being an effective way of acquiring the language that was needed to read the Bible, as most students did anyway, but was also a way of instilling a cultural and, significantly, a national identity in children. Zionism offered the potential of a homeland for an ethnic group that had historically not identified as much with their ancestral European countries as much as their Christian counterparts had. Hebrew could become the language of the Jewish people and not just the Jewish holy book; it was an attractive notion that stuck.

This movement was taking place over roughly the same period that the New Method Hebrew School existed, but Zionism is not a heavy presence in the activities and discussions of the children throughout most of the records—they are far more interested in explicitly American issues. However, shades of this ideology can be seen. The names of the two most active student organizations, the Hatikvah Circle and the Young Children of Israel call explicitly back to Zionism, “Hatikvah” being the name of a Zionist poem that would later become the national anthem of Israel. One proposed motto for the Hatikvah Circle in 1932 was “Blue and White,” which were envisioned as the colors of the future flag of Israel long before the nation existed.¹⁴ But the presence is subtle, almost decorative—a perhaps obligatory shoutout to a popular ideology at the time that the children were, ultimately, not that interested in actually discussing.

In materials created after the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948, however, the presence of Zionist tones sharply increased. Some educational materials from the New Method Hebrew School in the 1950s showed deliberate insertion of Zionist messaging into the religious education of the children: for example, film strip scripts teaching the origins and meanings of Jewish holidays such as Sukkot and Rosh Hashanah were imparted with brief interjections about modern day Israel.¹⁵ A stark change is seen in entries to the Young Children of Israel meeting minutes from this period—while the students had previously ended even their most politically charged meetings with entirely secular and apolitical entertainment from members of the club, the meetings began to end with some variant of “We sang Hatikvah and the meeting was adjourned.” On certain occasions, “America the Beautiful”



A Bar Mitzvah ceremony being performed within a Reform Judaism synagogue.

Creative Commons

would also be performed, creating an interesting mixture of performative Zionism and patriotism.¹⁶ Despite being remarkably unobtrusive, previous unusual behaviors in these groups seemed to be self-directed by the children, and there is no reason to believe there had been a change in that regard; it does not seem likely that the children were instructed to celebrate Israel or America in this way by educators or other adults. Rather, it could be that as the students continued to emulate adult political behavior as they had before, they inevitably saw fit to emulate the exuberant postwar spirit exhibited by adults.

This exuberant postwar spirit was a complicated subject for Jewish Americans in general. This was, of course, following a deeply painful time for the global Jewish community, but it was a cultural norm to engage with and participate in the broader American culture, and so they largely carried on in the spirit of victory along with everyone else. Rona Sheramy argues that when educators did eventually begin to address the persecution and genocide of world Jews in this era, it was through the lens of highlighting Jewish strength and resilience, rather than oppression and tragedy.¹⁷ If the New Method Hebrew School students were even learning about this aspect of the war at all, it would have likely been through this filter. There was little desire in the early postwar years to discuss the events of the Holocaust.

The political agendas of Jewish educators in the twentieth century is well-documented and established; what is far less established is how this impacted the children. The Jewish American community’s historical emphasis on education has had tangible consequences on their academic success, even today: fifty-five percent of Jewish adults in Wisconsin hold college degrees compared to twenty-seven percent of the general Wisconsin population.¹⁸ But the deliberate process of educating a child to be socially and politically engaged impacts the child’s behavior before they even reach adulthood, as is seen in the activities of the New Method Hebrew School students. These children took enthusiastically to political topics and behaviors, structuring their social activities in such a way that emulated the adult processes of government. While this did not prevent the children from participating in more typical childhood behavior, it seems it may have prepared them to engage more thoughtfully with the changing world around them. What it meant to be Jewish in America shifted after the Second World War; balancing their American and Jewish identities, this community began to focus on victory in the face of hardship. Jewish children growing up in this era would look ahead to a future marked by the hope and resilience of their people.

Notes

1. Curriculum: student projects, box 1, folder 5, New Method Hebrew School Records, Archives Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries (hereafter cited as New Method Hebrew School Records).
2. John Gurda, *One People, Many Paths: A History of Jewish Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Jewish Museum Milwaukee, 2009), 3.
3. Jonathan D. Sarna, “American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Jewish Education* 64, no. 12 (July 1998): 11.
4. Sarna, “American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective,” 12.
5. News clipping: Harry Garfinkel’s death, 1964, box 1, folder 8, New Method Hebrew School Records.
6. Gurda, *One People, Many Paths*, 102.
7. Hatikvah Circle minutes, 1932, box 1, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
8. Young Children of Israel minutes, 1937, box 2, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
9. Hatikvah Circle minutes, 1933, box 1, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
10. Hatikvah Circle minutes, 1932, box 1, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
11. Hatikvah Circle minutes, 1933, box 1, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
12. Young Children of Israel minutes, 1923-1929, box 2, folder 4, New Method Hebrew School Records.
13. Sarna, “American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective,” 14.
14. Hatikvah Circle minutes, 1932, box 1, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
15. Curriculum, film strip scripts—Jewish holidays, box 1, folder 4, New Method Hebrew School Records.
16. Young Children of Israel minutes, box 2, folder 7, New Method Hebrew School Records.
17. Rona Sheramy, “Resistance and War: The Holocaust in American Jewish Education,” *American Jewish History* 91, no. 2 (June 2003): 288.
18. “American Jewish Population Project,” Brandeis University, <https://ajpp.brandeis.edu/map>.

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-23481

A group of Jewish youth studying under a rabbi for their Bar Mitzvah.



INTENSELY

IDEALISTIC

& REALISTIC

Wisconsin Schools and the Ideal Teenage Citizen in the 1960s and 1970s

by Jou Lee Yang

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-133306

Right: Lake Mills High School's arched front entrance and bell tower.

West Bend Current

Opposite: A photograph from a West Bend High School time capsule from the 1970s, which was discovered within the walls of the school.

The 1960s and 1970s were a trying time in the United States at the height of the Vietnam War and with tensions on the home front amidst the Cold War. During this time of immense change and upheaval, societal expectations placed on children developed as well; one of the core influences on children that brought about this change was education. Although education at all levels saw some change, one of the largest developments came from high schools where teenagers from fourteen to eighteen years old were cultivated into what society saw as proper citizens, ready to join civilization and become active members of their communities and the larger world. However, the ideal of what society wanted from teenagers contrasted greatly with what high schools actually taught teenagers to be. High schoolers in social studies and science classes during the late 1960s and early 1970s were expected to be capable of critical analysis utilizing the scientific method and be willing to empathize and understand other people and ideas. However, these expectations countered the general belief in the 1960s that teenagers should be obedient to their parents, allowing them to facilitate their lives and fit into the idea of a coddled child who should be capable of exhibiting adult behavior.

The scientific method was a methodology utilized to push students to move away from partisan arguments and focus instead on conclusions that primarily relied on research. The process of the method was that high schoolers would first be required to question a topic and formulate their own hypothesis based off what students were already aware of. The initial process allowed students to later be aware of their own prejudices and perceptions that either benefited or limited their final conclusion. After formulating an answer to their question without guidance, students were made to research more about the topic and the arguments around it. It was in this manner that students were introduced to the idea of evaluating sources and arguments rather than relying on a two-sided, simplistic approach of good and bad. Based off this research, students would come to a conclusion that would no longer be as partial as their initial hypothesis that relied on previous knowledge and prejudice on the topic. Instead, students would be making more objective judgements relying on research and evaluating their information.

Despite the name scientific method, this approach was not solely used in science but also in social studies classes to move students away from the two-sided argument. Lake Mills High School's curriculum for social studies utilized the scientific method in its sociology course, cultivating a larger sense of needing objective judgement with the complex and often controversial topics addressed in this subject.¹ The use of the scientific method allowed for students to evaluate issues, delving into the complex structures and arguments of topics rather than focusing on partisan arguments. Another aspect of the scientific method in social studies classes used newspapers and other media, as



seen in Mukwonago Union High School, to give high schoolers awareness of the issues the United States faced in the era which would offer perspective to the students on who and what shaped the country.² The scientific method of problem-solving enabled students to develop the behavior of utilizing research to generate conclusions rather than prejudice instilled in them by the adults and media in their lives. It allowed students to become critical thinkers who relied on evaluation and analysis of other sources to develop their opinions. The opinions would not only be less partisan but would also lead students to come to an independent decision based off their research. One of the objectives in Lancaster Senior High School in their political science course was for students to be able to make independent decisions that would likely be asked of them as adults on subjects relating to social, economic, and political issues.³ High schools in the late-1960s and early-1970s instilled critical thinking skills in students to make objective judgements on issues which moved away from a two-sided argument and applied the skills students developed rather than relied solely on theory.

Alongside cultivating the scientific method to create more objective judgements in high schoolers, Wisconsin schools developed a sense of empathy and open-mindedness in students with both the pursuit of knowledge and social issues. This empathy stemmed from making less subjective conclusions in Mukwonago Union High School that believed in fostering understanding and tolerance in students, being aware of the need for international cooperation, and having faith in the dignity of people in their philosophy for the Social Studies Department.⁴ The school incited



Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS-14712

West Bend High School, built in 1925, was in use for over eighty-five years before its demolition in 2011.

students to empathize and believe in the better of people. It greatly encouraged students to be aware of political, economic, and social issues and be able to critically analyze said issues through their understanding.⁵ This approach helped with the analytical skills of students by having students be made aware of topics from a multitude of perspectives, increasing their ability to study a problem through many lenses and arguments rather than solely two viewpoints. West Bend High School also enforced empathy and understanding in their students through most of their courses. In the race and prejudice unit of social psychology, students were tasked to discuss why racist stereotypes developed and how these stereotypes influenced other people, both the majority and minority populations.⁶ It challenged students to evaluate both themselves and the prejudices they held and the factors influencing prejudices existing in the United States; this evaluation enabled students to have a deeper understanding with other races and have a new lens to look at political and social issues. High schools in Wisconsin cultivated empathy and nonpartisan attitudes in students to better prepare students to move away from a two-sided argument and look at issues through a multitude of lenses rather than simply one.

An aspect which rose from the focus on cultivating empathy in students was developing a progressive mindset in students regarding social issues. In Lake Mills High School's ninth grade area studies course, the school wanted students to understand that there existed free expression only when it respected the rights of others and that students needed to have faith in social progress.⁷ This approach likely led students to develop the idea that social change was inevitable because there was faith that social change was possible. It was not only Lake Mills High School that instilled in students the idea that change was inevitable, but also Mukwonago Union High School. An objective in the Social Studies Department at the school was to understand how change was both necessary and impossible to avoid if society was to be both structured and orderly.⁸ In a sense, students were made to believe that to be proper citizens in society, they needed to recognize change was a natural order to maintain society. The social change that schools promoted varied, and although the primary source of said change came from racial issues, West Bend High School

also encouraged students to consider changes originating from gender issues. In their course for social psychology, one of the objectives in the unit about identity and dependence asked students to identify the values of youth before they reached puberty and how those values were influenced by the family structure around them; with this identification, students would identify how families affected both positive and negative outlooks about a student's idea of the male and female identity.⁹ It was through this questioning that students became aware of how their prejudices based on gender developed and how family influenced these judgements and how the deficits and benefits were being seen in identifying as a male or female. It would likely be this kind of sentiment which would help pave the way for society to learn and understand about genders outside of the binary male and female designations. The development of empathy was not only present in the school's social psychology course but also in their regular ninth grade social studies class. One of the behavioral goals in the curriculum was to make students aware that there are different ways that racial and cultural groups resolve their differences and that empathy needs to exist in racial, cultural, and social conflicts in other times and places.¹⁰ West Bend High School demonstrated guiding students from ninth to twelfth grade to develop empathy for all kinds of demographics and to make students aware of their own prejudices that shape how they evaluate issues. There were several schools in Wisconsin that, while developing a sense of empathy in students, also influenced an era of social change through the objectives placed on high schoolers.

Wisconsin schools were not the sole motivators for students to become more independent in being able to critically analyze and make decisions for themselves. Education historian Campbell F. Scriber studied how exchange programs for high school students were utilized during the Cold War. The exchange programs, Scriber argued, also pushed high schoolers to move away from polarized arguments and consider a multitude of perspectives when viewing the world and its problems. High schoolers found in their exchange programs that their worldview was being

challenged to become "multilateral, anti-colonial, and socially conscious" and enforced these considerations to be placed on the organization allowing them to do their exchange.¹¹ In short, students gained insight to not only challenge other countries' beliefs but also American beliefs in a way that they believed would better help change society in a rapidly developing world, partially as a result of exploring anti-Americanism. Scriber utilized a student's experience in their argument that noted for as much as anti-American sentiment held incorrect information, there were sound criticisms against the United States also brought up.¹² The exchange programs unveiled for students the limitations on the current United States government that needed attention because students were placed in a different country that held little to no patriotic regard for the United States and thus a different perspective on how the United States operated. Furthermore, Scriber described that students were forced away from viewing communists as villains and capitalists as the heroes of this grand play; instead, exchange students were made to evaluate and quantify the virtues and defects of both systems.¹³ Scriber argued that high school students placed in the student exchange programs were forced to consider different perspectives in the course of their study as well as to better evaluate and analyze problems through the new perspectives they were given.

However, whereas high schools wanted free-thinking and inquisitive minds, the social conditions of the 1950s incited parents to take a more controlling approach to childhood in the 1960s that sought to take away teenager's responsibilities and obediently fit into certain age-regulated structures. Historian Steven Mintz argues that more attention was being placed on the rise of juvenile delinquency and the number of teen arrests in the 1950s, thus with a panic over juvenile delinquency, parents began to surveil and control their children.¹³ Rather than stressing achievement, parents began to emphasize conformity and materialistic wealth in a post-Second World War prosperity which offered fewer opportunities for students to "explore, experiment, and express their deepest instincts" because it was seen as unnecessary.¹⁴ Furthermore, the marks of adulthood (e.g., marriage, a career, and an independent home) were being pushed further back because of said prosperity whereas students were wanting to achieve said marks because it would allow them to be ready for adulthood.¹⁵ This reflected the idea of a coddled child where teenagers were no longer being given responsibilities or opportunities to take up responsibilities that would allow them to reach the mark of adulthood. No longer were teenagers freely allowed to explore the world outside of their school and home but instead forced to remain within the structures in order to be kept safe from the dangerous, real world. The 1950s rise of teenage arrests incited parents to push the image of a child, a being of innocence and lacking authority, onto high schoolers and even college students to control the development of teenagers.

Mintz argues that, because of the rise of teenage arrests during the 1950s, a defining belief in society was that a rebellious child was a danger both to himself and to the community, doomed to be a poor citizen for society.¹⁶ Teenage rebellion was not seen as a cry for autonomy and control but rather as a sign of teenagers being dangerous and needing moral correction.¹⁷ Historian Joshua Garrison argues that by adults utilizing media and cre-

ating scare films, high schoolers would be put into neat categories of obedient and disobedient which directly contrasted the way students were being taught to move away from a partisan view on issues. Garrison remarked that teenagers were given the impression of the world being one of good and evil, where there were some adults who would care and protect teenagers, such as policemen and teachers, and adults who would manipulate and take advantage of youth.¹⁸ Teenagers were then forced to either conform to the established age-regulated infrastructure and grow into a proper citizen or to dismiss it all as a waste of time and become one of the perverted adults the youth were told were evil; any teen who decided to fight against the regulation set by adults would be regarded as being mentally and emotionally weak, incapable of handling adulthood and thus, unable to become a proper adult.¹⁹ Teenage rebellion was seen as a danger and a sign of the youth being unable to become a functioning member of society in the 1960s.

The image of high schoolers in the 1960s seen through later research and Wisconsin school curriculums contrasted the expectations placed on the youth, which played into them being seen as unfit members of society. Mintz argues that teenagers were seen "as intensely idealistic and rebellious [in the 1960s]; in later years they were caricatured as uniquely self-absorbed, materialistic, and



Madison Living History Project Digital Repository

Students Ken Quinn and Mary Alderson posing for photos before Edgewood High School's 1971 prom.

narcissistic.”²⁰ However, the use of the term “caricature” implied an exaggeration, in which case society exaggerated the traits of the youth to extent of being the three characteristics Mintz listed. The idea of teenagers being materialistic was not wrong, per se, but rather was indicated through Mintz’s argument as a characteristic that made teenagers unable to properly become good citizens. However, Mineral Point High School sought for students to become more aware citizens who were good consumers and an objective member of an American society that was becoming increasingly complex.²¹ Being materialistic was, to the high school, a part of being a prudent consumer which contrasted the idea of materialistic in a negative sense when the economic benefit of being materialistic was needed and encouraged. Furthermore, a part of the caricature of teenagers being “self-absorbed” and “narcissistic” lay in Mintz’s argument that, led by idealistic notions such as racial issues to the point of allowing violence to lead their cause rather than peaceful means, radical teenagers were expecting any authority figure other than their parents to respond to their concerns.²² It contradicted Garrison’s argument on how scare films presented teenagers adults outside of their parents who would willingly side with them and care for their concerns, that there existed adults wanting to exploit them that were not proper citizens and then good citizens who would do their all to help teenagers in need.²³

In addition to being that told adults would care for their issues, West Bend High School created an entire course called “The Person” which dealt with understanding what it meant to be a person in the twentieth century that conflicted with the societal expectation on teenagers in the 1960s. The course explored that idea that defining exactly who a person was would lead to people moving cautiously around the subject, abandoning their responsibilities in a search to define themselves and their values, withdrawing from traditional values, and/or having little to no direction at all because of being tossed under a large amount of change.²⁴ The course influenced students to see that a part of identifying themselves lay in creating a sense of autonomy. However, parents likely saw this search for independence as rebellious, and as a result attempted to maintain the structures put in place around teenagers and deem said teenagers as unfit for society.

Furthermore, at West Bend High School in its social psychology course, students were encouraged to develop in being able to “critically discuss changing institutional values and roles.” in response to students understanding more about generational gaps influencing problems in society.²⁵ Unlike the societal call for teenagers to not question authority and allow themselves to fit into age-regulated structures, West Bend High School challenged students to evaluate the restrictions put on them by infrastructures. The call for students to analyze the reasoning behind age-regulated restrictions and society viewing criticism on the current structure incited what Mintz argues was the caricature of teenagers in the 1960s.

High schools developed in the post-Second World War world to have larger facilities that could hold larger populations of students. In return, students were exposed to more demographics of people whether that be racially, economically, or socially. Schools in Wisconsin then developed in the 1960s and 1970s curriculums that expected high schoolers to have critical thinking skills and capa-

bilities to empathize and move away from bipartisan arguments. High schoolers were being made aware of a growing, complex society that would only continue to develop. However, despite high schools challenging students to be aware of the outside world and challenge it, society in the 1960s wanted teenagers who were obedient and followed the regulations in the emplaced infrastructure. Any form of rebellion was seen as weakness in teenagers and gave teenagers a label of being dangerous and unable to properly integrate into society as respectable citizens. The era of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States played a unique role in being part of a quickly developing society in a post-Second World War era that became more socially, politically, and economically aware of itself and its role in the international world.

Great tension existed in the expectations placed on students in high schools compared to what society wanted from teenagers in the 1960s and 1970s, a contrast of wanting critical thinkers who were capable of empathy and of an image of a protected child, unable to properly survive the adult world and thus needing to be coddled and kept away from responsibilities because of their youth.

Notes

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2. “North Central Re-Evaluation Social Studies Mukwonago Union High School,” p. 5, 1969-1970, Curriculum guides, 1979/195, box 1, Wisconsin Department for Instructional Services.
3. “Curriculum Guide Social Studies Lancaster High School 1970-1971,” Curriculum guides, 1979/195, box 1, Wisconsin Department for Instructional Services.
4. “North Central Re-Evaluation Social Studies Mukwonago Union High School,” page 1, 1969-1970, Curriculum guides, 1979/195, box 1, Wisconsin Department for Instructional Services.
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If Tombstones Could Talk...

Grave Concerns

Fort Howard:
June 6, 7 & 8 at 6:00
Allouez:
August 2, & 3 at 6:00.
Woodlawn:
September 11, 12 & 13 at 5:30

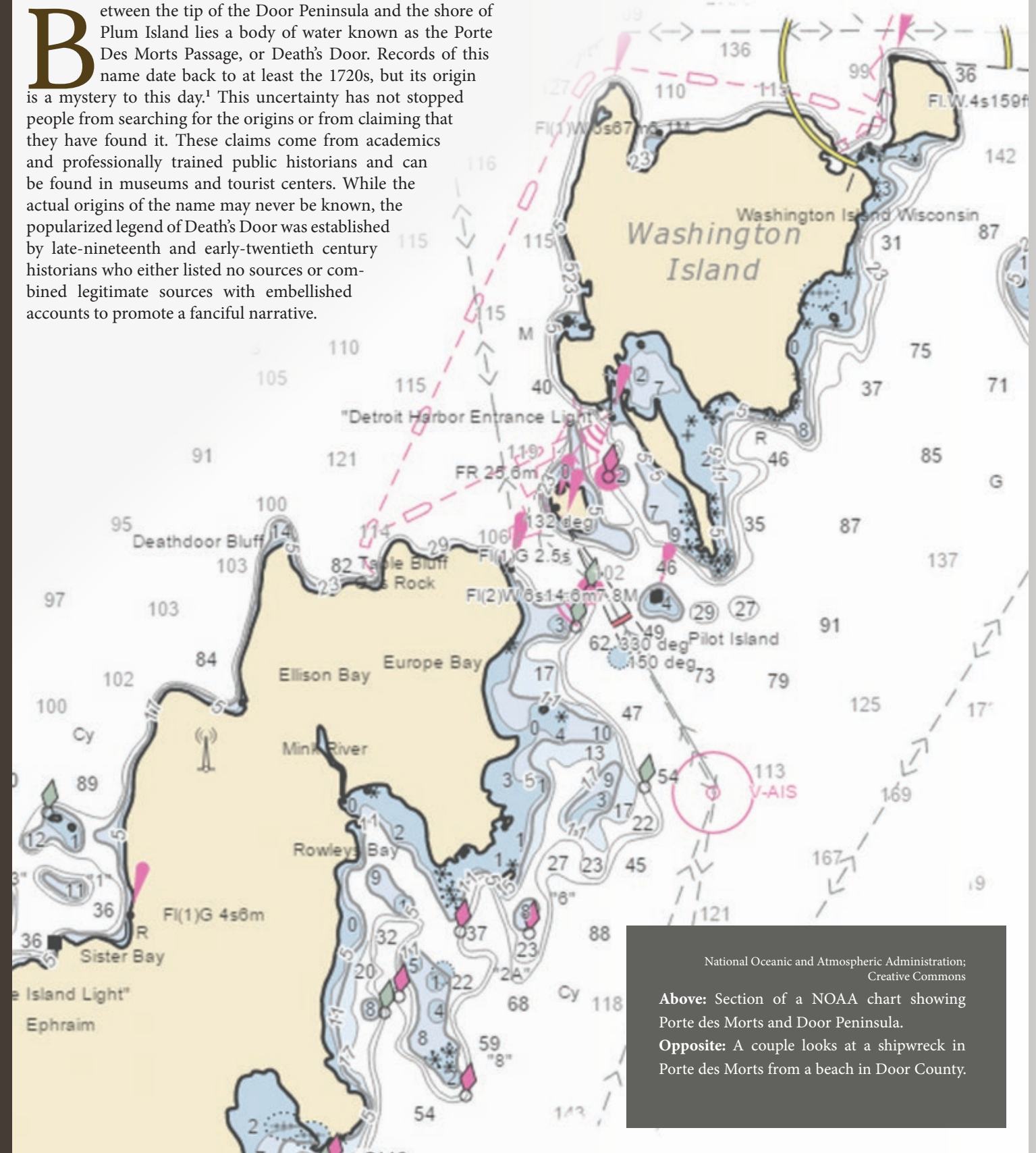
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\$15/Person,
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BROWN COUNTY
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Between the tip of the Door Peninsula and the shore of Plum Island lies a body of water known as the Porte Des Morts Passage, or Death's Door. Records of this name date back to at least the 1720s, but its origin is a mystery to this day.¹ This uncertainty has not stopped people from searching for the origins or from claiming that they have found it. These claims come from academics and professionally trained public historians and can be found in museums and tourist centers. While the actual origins of the name may never be known, the popularized legend of Death's Door was established by late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century historians who either listed no sources or combined legitimate sources with embellished accounts to promote a fanciful narrative.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Creative Commons
 Above: Section of a NOAA chart showing Porte des Morts and Door Peninsula.
 Opposite: A couple looks at a shipwreck in Porte des Morts from a beach in Door County.

THE ORIGINS OF DEATH'S DOOR

A PROVOCATIVE CONVERSATION
 by Brennan Christianson

Death's Door passage connects Lake Michigan to Green Bay. Today it is crossed daily by the Washington Island Ferry, as people travel to and from Washington Island. Before the construction of the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal in 1881, Death's Door was the most trafficked shipping route in the state of Wisconsin, bringing goods from Green Bay to Milwaukee and Chicago. In the time of the fur trade, American Indians and French alike traveled through Death's Door to transport trade goods to Green Bay and furs to New France. Prior to this time, it is unclear what happened. Much of this period is covered by a fog that many historians have tried to lift. The period of time during which the naming of Death's Door could have taken place is vague and stretches for nearly a century. Primary sources claim the event took place during either the mid- to late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century. This was a time of great upheaval, mass migration, near constant warfare, and a complete shake up of social and political life. Prior to this time there were two major tribes who lived around Green Bay: the Ho-Chunk and the Menomonee.

According to historian Patrick Jung, prior to European contact, the Ho-Chunk (sometimes referred to as the Winnebago or the Puans by those outside the tribe) lived on Green Bay's eastern shores, while the Menomonee were situated along the western shores, thus giving both tribes dominance over Green Bay and the Fox River valley. These two tribes were in an alliance, although both sides recognized that the Ho-Chunk held the dominant position.² One of the first Frenchman to enter Green Bay was Jean Nicolet, a translator who was an experienced diplomat, lay missionary, and trader.³ His purpose in the area was to secure a peace between the Hurons, who were allies of the French, and the Ho-Chunk. Nicolet arrived in either 1633 or 1634 and was met by several thousand American Indians from several different tribal nations. After negotiating a truce between the Ho-Chunk and the Hurons, Nicolet left the area and headed back to Canada.⁴

The French would not be back in the area for nearly twenty years. When they returned, the Ho-Chunk had been nearly destroyed. Once a powerful tribe of over 20,000 members and 4,000 to 5,000 warriors, they had been reduced to only 600 in the span of two decades. The Menomonee did not seem to fare much better, with one account claiming they had fewer than 200 members.⁵

The extreme decline of the Ho-Chunk and Menomonee population were not the only changes. A large influx of American Indians from the current state of Michigan had flooded into the area, fleeing west from the oncoming invasion of the powerful Haudenosaunee (sometimes referred to as the Iroquois Federation by those outside the tribe). Over ten different tribes fled to the Green Bay area including the Potawatomi, Sauks, and Meskwakis. This influx created a brand-new dynamic with three different language families—Algonquin, Siouan, and Iroquoian—over a dozen tribes, and a population density of 15,000 to 20,000 people all within three days of travel to Green Bay.⁶

This new influx of different peoples created two main changes: conflict over limited space and resources and a new social order based on defensive villages. As many tribes were depopulated from disease and war, and a common enemy—the Haudenosaunee—appeared, many native groups came together to form multi-ethnic villages. This system became the new dominant political structure in seventeenth century Wisconsin. Accord-

ing to historian Richard White in his book, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region 1650-1850*, "This was a village world. The units called tribes, nations, and confederacies were only loose leagues of villages. The nature of authority within a Potawatomi village and that within a Miami village might, at least initially, differ significantly, but in neither case did authority extend beyond the village."⁷

These villages were not homogenous, but each was made up of several different tribes. As tribes became closer geographically, many members intermarried and created new familial ties and increased the diversity of the villages. With so many tribesmen changing villages, the borders of each village became extremely hard to determine. Not only borders, but the loyalties of each one of these warriors became much more complex as family, economic, and political ties made individuals change loyalties depending on which one was most pressing.⁸ This system of intermarried, heterogenous, village governments became the standard environment in Wisconsin for the next several decades.

To make things more complicated, the French were also involved. The French were interested in obtaining beaver pelts and were willing to trade goods for them. They also wanted to keep these tribes allied against the Haudenosaunee who were threatening France's control of the fur trade. During the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries the many tribes of Northeast Wisconsin would travel east to Montreal to trade with the French for goods, particularly metal tools and firearms. This trek was still difficult to accomplish, due to the combination of the long journey and the Haudenosaunee controlling the Ottawa River which led to Montreal. Therefore, most trade parties that left for Montreal did so during times of peace, such as the 1660s to 1670s, as well as after the Iroquois wars ended in 1701.⁹

Now that context has been established, what sources exist to bring validity to the name of Death's Door? In *Death's Door: In Pursuit of a Legend*, author Conan Bryant Eaton claims that the earliest recorded account of the name "Death's Door" comes from a journal entry of the French Jesuit missionary, Emmanuel Crespel, in the year 1728.¹⁰ Crespel was sent along with a French military expedition in 1728 traveling to the Fox Valley region. On August 14 he mentions passing through Death's Door. He mentions it rather offhandedly by stating, "as we were doubling Cap la Mort (Death's Door) [sic], which is about five leagues across, we encountered a gust of wind, which drove ashore several canoes that were unable to double a point in order to obtain shelter; they were broken by the shock; and were obliged to distribute among the other canoes the men who, by the greatest good fortune in the world, had all escaped from the danger."¹¹

The next account about the passage was written nearly a century later. This account was in a journal written in 1817 by Willard Keyes about his voyage from Vermont to Wisconsin, which was published by the Wisconsin Historical Society in 1920. He writes, "August 11th, pass "Point De Mort" (Point of Death) so called from the many Indian Canoes wrecked there in attempting to pass the point which is perpendicular—rocks rising out of the water."¹² During the same year, Samuel A. Storrow, a judge advocate stationed in Wisconsin between 1816 and 1820, wrote a letter to Major General Jacob Brown where he describes Death's Door. His mention of the passage is only a sentence long: "Leaving this

beautiful island (Washington Island), we reached, on the 16th, the southerly cape of Green Bay, Port Des Morts, so called from the destruction at this place of a number of the Potowotomies [sic]."¹³

These three accounts seem to be reliable yet lack description about the name Death's Door. While Crespel's account is about a paragraph long, Keyes' and Storrow's accounts only last a single line. Each mention of Death's Door is taken as a given, which implies that neither Crespel, Keyes, nor Storrow were responsible for the naming. Due to the private nature of these accounts, none of these sources had reason to be embellished, thus making their accounts more or less trustworthy.

The next account comes from Samuel Stambaugh, an American Indian agent stationed in Green Bay between 1831 and 1832. He wrote a "Report on the Quality and Condition of Wisconsin Territory, 1831," which was sent to the Secretary of War. It discussed the condition of the land around of Green Bay to assess if it was of suitable quality for the Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee, who were being relocated from New York to Wisconsin. Stambaugh included a more detailed account of what happened at Death's Door than any of the previous sources. He wrote of a trade party sent out by a native tribe of the area. The trade party was sent to an unnamed French trading post when they decided to take a small break at the top of the Door Peninsula. While seated on a stone table that projected out above the water, a storm suddenly came in huge force and destroyed their boats. The men who were left alive soon perished while trying to swim to safety. This area was then known as Death's Door from then on.¹⁴ Stambaugh's account adds a lot more detail to the origin of the name, yet he does not give any sources to validate his account.

In 1839, Michigan geologist Douglas Houghton passed through the passage on his way to the Upper Peninsula. He stated, "Passage Des Morts, or Death's Door, is reputed to take its name from a war party of Indians, in canoes, having been driven against the bold and lofty cliffs, in a severe storm. All except three or four are said to have perished."¹⁵ This passage marked the first time any account relating to Death's Door involved an expressly stated military conflict. This account does not address which tribes were involved, the time period it took place in, nor if the battle took place at Death's Door or if the tribes were just passing through. Due to all of these concerns, verifying the validity of this account is quite difficult. Since Houghton was himself just passing through the area, and his main concern was with the Keweenaw Peninsula, it would be unlikely that he was an expert on the topic.

James Jesse Strang, a member of the Michigan House of Representatives from 1853 to 1856 and known as the "king of Beaver Island," talked about Death's Door in 1854. He claimed that Death's Door was named due to an army of the native leader, Pontiac, being wiped out in a

storm while passing through it. This event is quite unlikely, as Pontiac's rebellion took place in 1763, and we have accounts of the name going back to at least 1728. In a later republishing, the editor even stated that Strang must have been mistaken, instead thinking that he probably associated Pontiac with a group of Potawatomi who were killed in Death's Door by a group of Ho-Chunk.¹⁶

The accounts of Death's Door become more frequent in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. This frequency may be due to an increased amount of settlement in Northeast Wisconsin by administrators, soldiers, and settlers during this time period. An increase in population possibly brought an increased interest in the history of the area. The authors, however, still had not given a date or time period for when the naming took place, and many of these sources added a lot of detail that cannot easily be confirmed. This did not, however, stop a few people from trying to do just



Door County Maritime Museum
Map of Door Peninsula
and Washington Island.

that. During the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century, three historians expanded on the accounts of the Death's Door Story: Charles I. Martin, George R. Fox, and Hjalmar Holand. Despite having academic training, two of the historians cite no sources to support their information, while the third connects unrelated sources to create a fictitious narrative. Their accounts of the story are some of the most widely known in Wisconsin, and are often repeated in tours, publications, and in museums.

Historian Charles I. Martin was the first to publish an account of the Death's Door legend in his book, *History of Door County, Wisconsin*, released in 1881. He claims that the Potawatomi lived on the Potawatomi Islands (the group of islands north of the Door Peninsula) around the late-seventeenth century. They would head south onto the Door Peninsula to hunt game for the tribe. He claimed the Ojibwe (who he refers to as the Chippewa) invaded the islands while they were gone, taking away much of their plentiful hunting grounds. The Potawatomi responded by sending every able-bodied warrior back to the islands during a night raid. It ended in a catastrophic storm that killed every warrior they had. They believed an evil spirit was responsible for the storm and named the passage Death's Door. All the bodies of the warriors were buried on Detroit Island, and their graves were reportedly still there until the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷

Martin cites no sources in his account about the legend of Death's Door, instead claiming that it "has its origin in an Indian tradition, which is probably founded in fact."¹⁸ It is unknown where Martin heard this legend. The story he tells is

rather inaccurate due to the combat between the Potawatomi and the Ojibwe. These two tribes, along with the Ottawa, were in an alliance known as the Council of the Three Fires, which was intact during this time period; therefore, conflict with each other would have been unlikely.¹⁹

The next historian to publish a story about the Death's Door legend was George R. Fox, in *Wisconsin Archeologist* in January of 1915. Fox lists several grave sites of American Indians found on Detroit Island. Fox claims that these graves belonged to the victims told of in the Death's Door Legend. Since there was no written account of the legend in any previous publication of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Fox decided to write his version of the legend in full. It involved the Nocquets (an American Indian group related to the Menomonee) and the Potawatomi. Unlike Martin's account, the Potawatomi were the invaders, not the defenders. The Nocquets lived on the Potawatomi Island

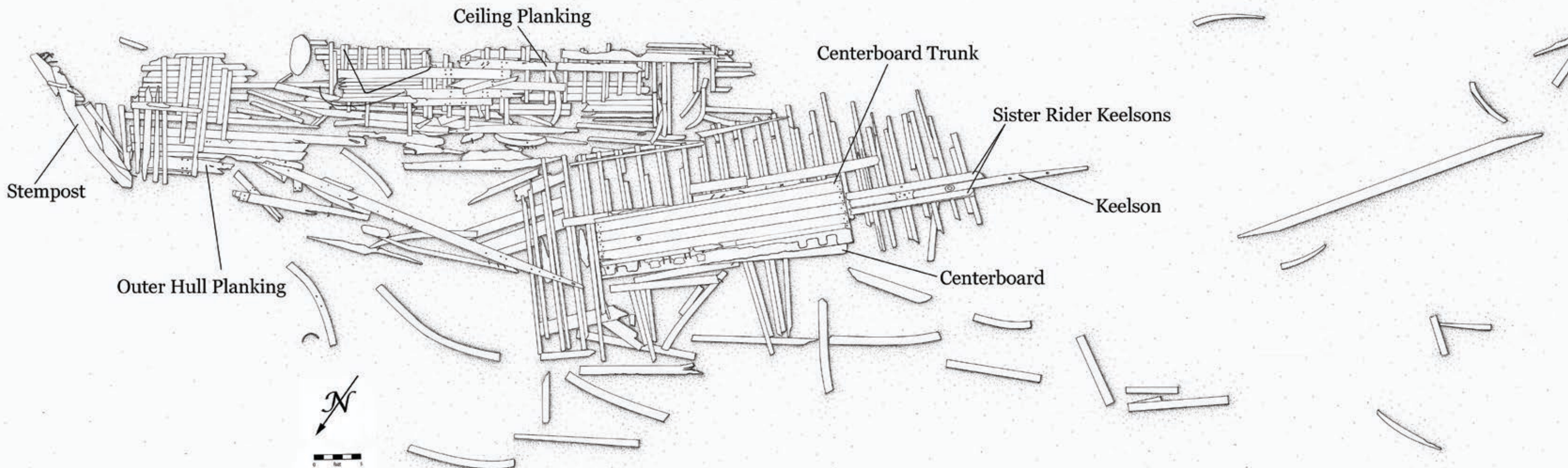
Kevin Cullen; Wisconsin Maritime Museum

Below: The debris field of *Grape Shot* following its sinking in 1867 off Plum Island.

Opposite: Divers document the wreck of *Grape Shot* in 2015.



2015/08/27 12:50:14





chain, where they had a large amount of game, fish, and birds to hunt. The Potawatomi invaded Washington Island when the Nocquets were gone, and the Nocquets wanted to take it back. Thus, they invaded Washington Island, but in their haste, they failed to give an offering to the manido (spirit of the water), and their war party was wiped out in a storm. Fox does not cite any sources for his legend. Instead, his only mention of a source is the statement, “so the story goes.”²⁰

There are some similarities between Fox’s and Martin’s version of the story. Both authors state that graves found on Detroit Island are related to the Death’s Door legend. They claim that the Potawatomi were involved, though Martin saw them as the defenders, while Fox saw them as the aggressors. They both also claim that the islands were left empty; this let an invading force easily take over. Finally, both include a surprise attack that is wiped out in a storm. It is possible that Fox was inspired by Martin’s story and merely changed some of the finer details for his version.

The most famous account of the Death’s Door legend comes from historian Hjalmar Holand, who discussed it in his book, *History of Door County, Wisconsin: The County Beautiful*, in 1917. His account is the longest and most in-depth of the three narratives and is far more embellished (and, therefore, more suspect). He starts with the Ho-Chunk (though he refers to them as the Winnebago) whom he claims come from Mexico, invading the Door peninsula which was inhabited by the Potawatomi. Holand describes the Potawatomi as “the most affable and generous of Wisconsin tribes.”²¹ The Ho-Chunk were described in a pretty terrifying light. They are described as “the only tribe in Wisconsin that used horses, and they were the fiercest of warriors. They were very perfidious, superstitious and insolent, and not only took the scalps of their enemies but devoured their bodies at their feasts.” According to Holand, the Potawatomi were willing to share the land with the Ho-Chunk, but the Ho-Chunk instead chose to chase the Potawatomi off onto Washington Island. The Ho-Chunk were not satisfied and would not rest until they wiped out the Potawatomi.

The Potawatomi decided to counterattack during a night raid, but spies sent out to light signal fires for a safe landing were captured. Two were burned at the stake, while a third revealed the plan, and the Ho-Chunk decided to act on this information. As a large storm was brewing, preventing the Potawatomi from retreating, the Ho-Chunk lit a fire in the wrong spot and the Potawatomi were dashed against the rocky shore of the Door Peninsula. The Ho-Chunk sent their own war party to Washington Island to finish off the Potawatomi, but they did not fare any better, and their canoes were destroyed in the storm. The Ho-Chunk took this as a sign to never cross the passage that was then known as the “Door of Death.”²²

Unlike Fox or Martin, Holand actually cited sources for his account of the legend. Some of his sources are legitimate, but his use of them is rather erroneous. In his account of the legend, he cites four different sources: Jonathan Carver’s *Travels through the Indian Parts of North America 1766-1768*; the account of Samuel A. Storrow; the account of Samuel Stambaugh; and an account from one Captain Brink of the government engineers. The account that Ho-Chunk were invaders of the indigenous Potawatomi can be easily disregarded. When Jean Nicolet arrived in the early 1630s, the Ho-Chunk were the dominant power in the Green Bay area. The Potawatomi themselves did not even arrive in Door County until the 1650s and 1660s. By that time, the Ho-Chunk had been reduced to a small fraction of their former might, only a few hundred in number. By the time the two tribes interacted with each other, both tribes were in desperate states and could not inflict great damage on each other.

The account Holand gives offers much greater detail than those of either Fox or Martin. In his footnotes, Holand lists his sources: Storrow, Stambaugh, and Captain Brink, who was a government engineer who surveyed Door County in 1834. Stambaugh talked about a trading party that got destroyed while resting in Death’s Door, and Storrow mentions that many Potawatomi died while crossing the passage, but Brink offered a quite different account. His is similar to that of Holand, except for a few minor changes. The most telling difference in his account, however, is that he does

Bain News Service; Destination Door County

Right: Hjalmar Rued Holand (1872-1963), author of *History of Door County, Wisconsin: The County Beautiful*.

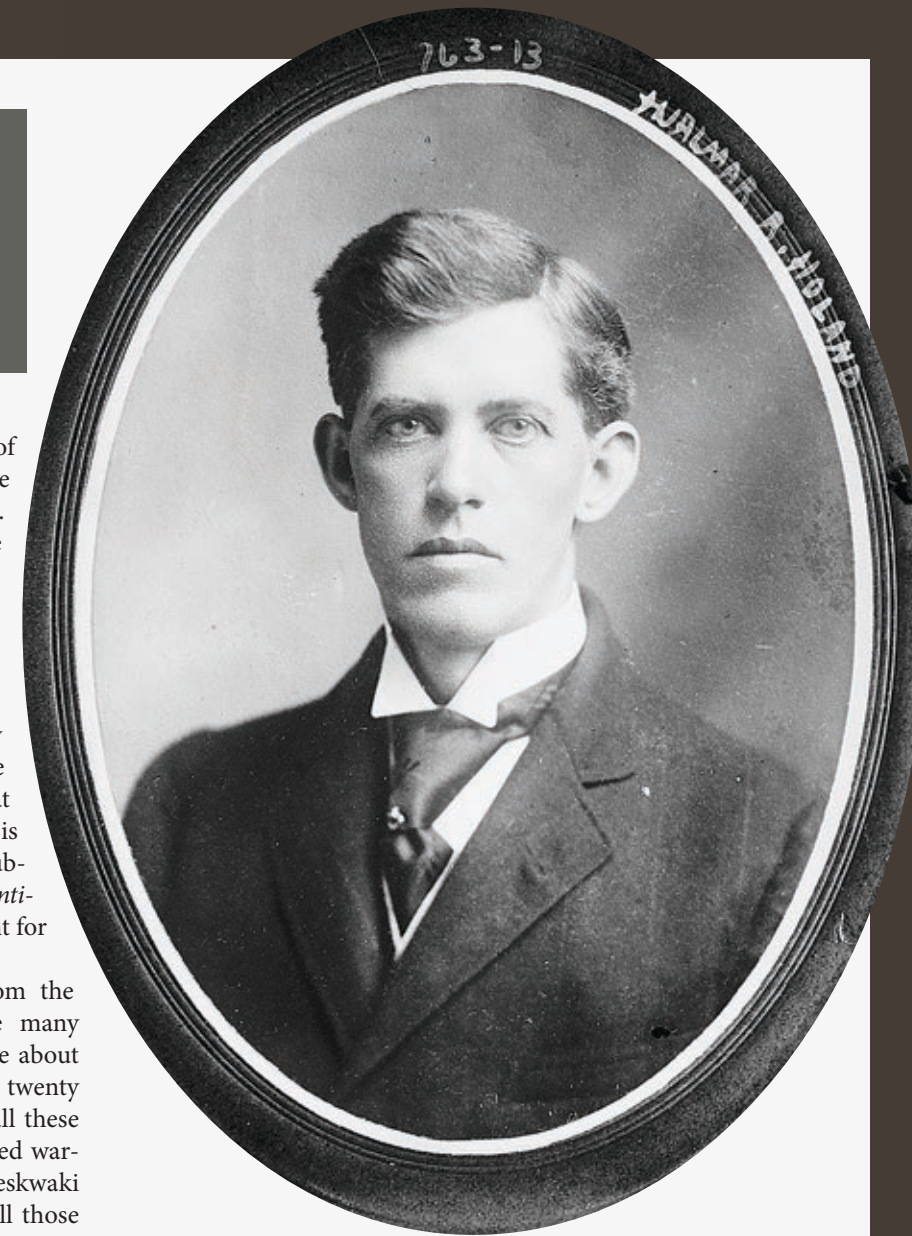
Opposite: Looking out over Port des Morts from the Door Peninsula.

not mention which tribes were involved, only that a tribe of 300 American Indians were wiped out in a failed surprise attack.²³ However, the reliability of Brink is questionable. As Patrick Jung, a professor of history at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, states, “One quote by Brink indicates he not only did not know any Indian languages, but that he also had a superficial and ethnocentric view of their culture; not uncommon traits for the early Anglo-American who first came to the western Great Lakes.”²⁴ This argument is supported by a separate account written by Brink where he claims that, when attending a wedding, he had no idea what the American Indians were saying, what their dances meant, or generally what was happening.²⁵ It is also unclear where Brink’s source comes from. He was publishing articles in newspapers, such as the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, by 1899, so it is possible that he served as an informant for Holand around this time.

It is possible that Holand also took information from the account of Nicolas Perrot, a Frenchman who wrote many accounts about seventeenth century Wisconsin. He wrote about the Ho-Chunk and how they lost their power during the twenty years of French absence in the area. He wrote, “despite all these misfortunes, they (Ho-Chunk) sent a party of five hundred warriors against the Outagamis (another name for the Meskwaki or Fox), who dwelt on the other shore of the lake; but all those men perished while making that journey, by a tempest which arose.”²⁶ It would make sense that Holand used this source, as it mentions a large Ho-Chunk fleet sent against an enemy who were wiped out in a large storm.

The sources that Holand used all talk about Death’s Door, but the details of the sources themselves vary wildly. Two sources do not mention a tribe, while one mentions the Potawatomi but does not say why they were passing through the area. If Holand did use Perrot, which included the Ho-Chunk and their fleet being wiped out in a storm, it would not be accurate due to not mentioning where this event took place, and that it was against the Meskwakis, not the Potawatomi. According to Patrick Jung, “Clearly, what Holand did was synthesize the information he had from Storrow, Stambaugh, and Perrot and changed some of the facts so they fit into the framework provided by Brink’s account.”²⁷

Regardless of which account has more credibility, all three have a major flaw. All of them discuss each tribe as if it was a homogeneous nation, rather than the heterogeneous village structure that was found in seventeenth century Wisconsin. Thus, instead of Holand’s account with a tribe of all Ho-Chunk and a tribe of all Potawatomi, there would have been a conflict of several villages, each with multiple clans and tribes allied against one



another. The plain truth is that the time period in which this event would have taken place would not have been as straightforward as one tribe versus another tribe.

And so: what actually happened? The short answer is that we do not really know. The history of Wisconsin in the seventeenth century cannot be stated definitively. Since there is no surviving account of why neither the American Indians nor the French named the passage as Death’s Door, it is safe to say that knowing exactly what happened is going to be extremely difficult—and most likely impossible—to grasp. The more in-depth answer is that there are some likely scenarios that can be discussed. One possibility is that the event took place prior to European involvement; thus, the naming of Death’s Door would have happened prior to the mission of Jean Nicolet in the early 1630s. In that case, only oral tradition could provide an account.

A different possibility is that the Ho-Chunk were wiped out along Death’s Door sometime in the early- to mid-seventeenth century, most likely between Nicolet’s mission to the Ho-Chunk and Perrot’s travels to Wisconsin about twenty-to-thirty years later. A great shift in the local political structure took place then

with a massive decline of the Ho-Chunk. Perrot writes that the tribe was reduced in size from 6,000 to 1,500. Furthermore, the tribe lost additional hundreds during a storm. If the Ho-Chunk were involved with the naming of Death's Door, it would probably have been during a military expedition at this time.

Another possibility is that a group of Potawatomi dominated villages were wiped out in a storm along Death's Door sometime in the mid-sixteenth to early-seventeenth century. This event would have most likely been a trade mission heading towards Michigan, or even Montreal, as a means to obtain weapons. The tribes of Wisconsin were not willing to move in large caravans of traders all the way to Montreal except during times of peace, which would allow safer travel.

There are two possible stretches of time where this event would most likely have taken place. The first time would be between the 1660s and the 1670s, when there was a break in the fighting between the many tribes of Wisconsin and the Haudenosaunee. This respite would have provided a window for the Potawatomi to travel between Door County and Montreal. The second time would have been between 1701, when the Iroquois or Beaver Wars concluded, and 1728, when Emmanuel Crespel reported the name. After the conflict ended, Detroit became a prominent trade destination for about a decade. In 1712, Michilimackinac (Mackinaw Island) became the dominant trade destination for American Indians in Wisconsin.²⁸

If a trade caravan of predominantly Potawatomi had embarked to Montreal, it likely would have taken place between the 1660s and 1670s. If the caravan was heading to Detroit, it likely would have done so between 1701 and 1711. Finally, if the caravan was heading to Michilimackinac, it likely would have done so between 1712 and 1728. These dates place them before the first written account of Emmanuel Crespel in 1728, places the Potawatomi in the Door County area during the correct time period, and gives them motivation to travel east to trade fur for weapons. Many of the primary sources claim that the Potawatomi were involved, and even though they are unreliable at best, all three of the historians' legends involve the Potawatomi. Although this cannot be known definitively, this is the most likely scenario for the origins of Death's Door.

In his book, *Death's Door: In Pursuit of a Legend*, Conan Bryant Eaton states. "Beyond question the Death's Door legend refuses to die. Indeed, within recent times it has done better than stay alive. Nurtured by modern minstrels who bathe it in vivid color, it has gained the vigor to change and to grow."²⁹ We as a society must learn to accept that there are some things we will never know, despite claims to the contrary, and that is fine. Sometimes, it is just as good and important to dispel incorrect claims as it is to prove correct ones.

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THE ORIGINS OF DEATH'S DOOR

AN AUTHOR TALK
BY BRENNAN CHRISTIANSON

Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:30 PM.
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NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM OF BROWN COUNTY
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN, FEBRUARY–NOVEMBER 2022

The curator of the Neville Public Museum's recent exhibit, *HerStory*, took on a monumental task. *HerStory* explores the history of women in the United States—highlighting the experiences of Wisconsin women, in particular—from 1900 to the present. Imagine, for a moment, a similar effort to tell the history of American men over the last 122 years (*HisStory?*) and you will begin to get some sense of the challenge of creating a coherent historical narrative that accounts for both change over time as well as variations across the categories of race, class, ethnicity, and religion.

HerStory provides that sense of coherence by dividing over a century's worth of women's history into a color-coded chronology. Visitors are invited to explore different eras of women's experience through text, images, material artifacts, and recorded interviews. The exhibit is focused thematically on women's employment, military service, community work, and political activity. Timelines mark the beginning of each era, charting the changing legal landscape as federal laws and Supreme Court cases broadened women's rights and protections against unequal treatment. With one or two exceptions, the vast majority of Wisconsin women featured in the exhibit are "groundbreakers" in one sense or another. We learn about figures such as Delores Mueller, a Green Bay native who joined the women's branch of the Marine Corps in 1941 to serve her country in World War II; Mildred Holman Smith, a well-

known community leader whose work helped Green Bay win the "All American City" award in 1965; Eva Busse Brown, who became Wisconsin's first woman barber in 1972; and Ada Deer, a Menominee activist and tribal leader who was the first indigenous woman appointed assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1993. Overall, the exhibit's narrative highlights women's local and national progress in achieving greater economic and political equality, although text panels are careful to note that work yet remains in areas such as equal employment, the wage gap, and student loan debt.

HerStory provides critical representation of women's lives and accomplishments, and shines a much-needed spotlight on the diverse experiences of Wisconsin women. Too often, women's history is relegated to a sidebar or footnote in museum exhibits and high school classes. *HerStory* provides an important corrective to the assumption that women have only recently engaged in paid labor or political activism. The final era of the exhibit (1980s-2020s), in particular, showcases the full range and diversity of Wisconsin women's achievements in the last few decades. Visitors who take in the full exhibit cannot help but be struck by the tremendous educational, professional, and political attainments of American women since 1900, many of whom vigorously fought the laws and social norms of their day to achieve their goals.

Given the importance of an exhibit such as this, then, it is all the more frustrating that *HerStory* contains a number of missteps and errors. Some are simply factual mistakes. For example, one of the first panels that visitors see when they walk into the exhibit proclaims: "The first large scale gathering in support of suffrage...took place in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention." The panel is intended to provide national context for the seventy-year fight for women's suffrage in Wisconsin, but it is incorrect. In fact, of the eleven resolutions on women's rights that were offered at the convention, only the resolution on women's right to vote was not passed unanimously—indeed, it almost did not pass at all. American women were not known as "suffragettes," as the panel goes on to describe Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Suffragettes were British; American women who fought for the vote were "suffragists." And nowhere does the exhibit explain that the antebellum women's right movement was intertwined with the abolitionist movement. Indeed, it was a split within the movement over whether to support the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave only Black men the right to vote, that led to the creation of initially competing suffrage organizations. These mistakes may seem small, but, taken as a whole, they simplify and decontextualize the history of the suffrage movement.

Other errors and omissions mar the basic history presented in *HerStory*. Inexplicably, local namesake Dr. Rosa Minoka-Hill is not identified as the second Native American woman in the nation to earn an M.D. A text panel on the Civil Rights Movement ignores decades of scholarship and repeats the well-worn myth that "other than Rosa Parks, the majority of well-known leaders were men." To the contrary, Ella Baker, Septima Clark, Fannie Lou Hamer, Dorothy Height, and other women were widely acknowledged as the movement's founders and leaders in their day. Laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 failed to protect the vast majority of women workers (and black and brown men) because they excluded domestic service and agricultural labor from wage protections. And women could indeed be fired from a job for being married (or prevented from being

hired in the first place) until the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These and other inaccuracies are troubling, given the admirable mission of *HerStory* to give women's history the prominence it deserves.

Finally, as it moves into the more recent decades of women's history, the exhibit appears to repeat the infuriating claim that the wage gap is the result of women's choices. Women, so the argument goes, choose lower paying jobs because they eschew competition and desire the flexibility that comes with part-time or lower-waged work in order to "meet responsibilities at home." In fact, over a century of women's history shows just the opposite. Women have fought, organized, and lobbied for equal pay for their work. And they have sought higher paying jobs when they could secure them. The exhibit provides a case in point when it notes that a majority of women industrial workers sought to retain their high-paying jobs (that lacked a flexible schedule) after World War II. Numerous recent studies have confirmed that the wage gap begins early—long before women with children are attempting to balance home and work. There is no doubt that the "motherhood penalty" is a significant causal factor in the wage gap. But a recent AAUW study demonstrated that among college graduates with the same majors, grades, and resumes, women earn seven percent less than their male counterparts just one year after graduation.

Visitors can learn much that is inspiring and educational from *HerStory*. And the exhibit's goal of centering American and Wisconsin women's history is admirable. But given that the scholarly field of U.S. women's history has flourished for more than half a century, it is also a goal that is worth getting right.

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Neville Public Museum

Examples of the displays of the exhibit at the Neville Public Museum.



THE WISCONSIN CAPITOL STORIES OF A MONUMENT AND ITS PEOPLE

BY MICHAEL EDMONDS

MADISON: WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS, 2017. 192 PAGES, \$25, HARDCOVER.



Dominant on the Madison skyline from all directions, the Wisconsin State Capitol ranks as second-most-beautiful in the United States on the *AttractionsofAmerica.com* website. To mark its hundredth anniversary, PBS Wisconsin presented the documentary *Our House: The Wisconsin Capitol*. Michael Edmonds' book, *The Wisconsin Capitol: Stories of a Monument and Its People*, is the companion to that documentary work.

Broader in scope than the documentary, Edmonds' book includes the state's first Capitol in Belmont, where the territorial convention met in 1836, and the 1837 to 1844 and 1857 buildings in Madison. His account of the 1904 fire which ravaged the 1857 building is engrossing, and, like the book in general, is well-illustrated with photographs.

Edmonds' focus is on the building begun in 1906 and finished 1917, which became the third, and current, Capitol built in Madison. Designed in the shape of a cruciform by George B. Post and sheathed in Vermont granite, it has elegant marble interior finishes and is decorated with classically-inspired, museum-quality murals and sculpture. Daniel Chester French, the nation's foremost public sculptor, created the fifteen-foot tall *Wisconsin* statue, which is mounted on the Capitol's dome.

More so than the PBS documentary, Edmonds' book features accounts of people associated with the Capitol's history. For example, readers learn the story of Sam Pierce, whose parents had been born into slavery. Beginning in 1922 as a receptionist in the governor's office, Pierce was the gatekeeper for the chief executive. Edmonds quotes a deflected visitor who wrote, "I found myself going out of the entrance." He realized, with admiration, that Pierce "wasn't trying to get me into the governor's office, he was just quietly oozing me out of the place" (p. 114).

The current Capitol was initially home to essentially all of state government. As in most capitols, occupants realized that the location, size, and decoration of their offices reflected their power and status. Lew Porter, the Madison architect who was construction superintendent of the building project, felt overwhelmed by the entreatments of legislators and bureaucrats. Edmonds explains how Porter finally outmaneuvered the recalcitrant state bank examiner by moving his office in the middle of the night, when the courts were not open to block his plans. More significantly, Edmonds discusses another

agency with space in the new Capitol, the Legislative Reference Bureau, and its importance in establishing for the nation the principle that "government should be staffed by pragmatic idealists using scientific knowledge to serve the interests of common people" (p. 59).

The Capitol did not remain unchanged. As the state's population grew and government responsibilities increased, the building became overcrowded. For a while, staff improvised by using legislative committee rooms and chambers as office space when the Legislature was not in session. Then, beginning with the moves in 1931 of the Highway Commission and Industrial Commission to a new office building on West Wilson Street, state government began to disperse around Madison. Although Edmonds does not make the point, a consequence was the erosion of communal bonds that came from working in the same building and, as a result its floorplan, often having face-to-face contact with other legislators and staff in its halls. As officials no longer knew one another personally, political culture became more divisive and confrontational.

As Edmonds discusses, another adaptation to overcrowding was gradually to subdivide space and make other utilitarian alterations to the Capitol. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the building was marred by cheap carpeting over mahogany floors, drop ceilings masking original light fixtures, flimsy wall partitions, and overpainted murals. Recognizing the problem, between 1987 and 2001 architects, engineers, preservationists, and others completely restored Wisconsin's Capitol. In 2001 the National Park Service designated it as a National Historic Landmark.

The Wisconsin Capitol is in the tradition of Whiggish history. Edmonds' tone throughout is positive and enthusiastic. He represents the Capitol as the "people's house" for an inclusive population (with admitted shortcomings). He writes that his book "pays homage to Wisconsin's grand monument to freedom and democracy" (p. x).

Not everyone agrees. After *The Wisconsin Capitol* was written, there was an outpouring of Black Lives Matter protests in Madison in the summer of 2020. On June 23, hundreds of protesters smashed windows and lights at the Capitol and pulled down statues of *Forward*, a woman representing devotion and progress, and abolitionist Colonel Hans Christian Heg, a Civil War casualty. "We're moving backwards," said the protesters' spokeswoman. The statue "doesn't need to be here until we're ready to move forward.... The Capitol is where we solve problems, and nobody's coming here to solve problems." The symbolic meaning of Wisconsin's Capitol remains conflicted.

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Library of Congress

The current Wisconsin State Capitol, designed by architect George B. Post, in 1910.

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