

Directory: Wisconsin's Wartime Oral Histories



This directory describes oral history collections documenting the experiences of Wisconsin veterans and civilians during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War. This list was compiled by Recollection Wisconsin in 2016-2017 as part of a yearlong planning project supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). This is not a comprehensive list, but offers a sample of the range of wartime oral history resources held in libraries, archives, historical societies, and museums across Wisconsin. For more information about the project, visit <http://recollectionwisconsin.org/wioralhistory>.

Note: The majority of the content described here is not currently available online, and in-person access to these collections varies. Researchers are encouraged to call ahead before planning a visit.

Amery Public Library

225 Scholl Court, Amery, WI 54001 | 715-268-9340 | library@amerylibrary.org

Amery High School Oral History Collection

A DVD, copied from the original VHS tape, includes three interviews: Michael S. Murphy (Army, WWII), Gordon L. Larson (Air Force after WWII, stationed at Johnson Atoll), and Gary B. Ganje (Army, Vietnam). Interviewers were Amery High School students and the recordings were made by Amery Telcom, Inc., the local cable company, in the 1990s.

Arvid E. Miller Memorial Library Museum, Bowler

N8510 MoHeConNuck Road, Bowler, WI 54416

Hear Our Stories

Video interviews with 41 Stockbridge-Munsee tribal elders, recorded in 2008, including nine interviews with veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. A list of all narrators is available [online](#).

Cadott Community Library

331 N. Main Street, Cadott, WI 54727 | 715-289-4950 | cadottpl@cadottlibrary.org

Local History Tapes

Cadott Community Library in Chippewa County holds 30 audiocassettes recorded by the Cadott Historical Society between 1990 and 1998. Four wartime recordings from the larger collection include oral histories from four veterans of World War II: two in the Navy, one doing farm work during the war, and one atomic bomb assembler.

Carter Memorial Library, Omro

405 East Huron Street, Omro, WI 54963 | 920-685-7016

Omro Remembers: A Patriotic Past

Eleven DVDs of a local community access TV show from American Legion Post 234, recorded 2006-2007. Each episode includes an oral history interview with a local veteran, conducted by the program host, Ken Bressers. Narrators are primarily veterans of World War II (Army, Navy and one chaplain) and one veteran of the Korean War.

Chippewa Valley Museum, Eau Claire

1204 E Half Moon Drive, Eau Claire, WI 54703 | 715-834-7871 | info@cvmuseum.com

General Oral History Collection

Audio interviews with notable Eau Claire residents, consisting of 32 open reels recorded 1976-1979 (plus one dated 1955) and 41 audiocassettes (out of a larger collection of 80) recorded 1986-1989. Topics include World War I ("The Great War Tapes"), World War II and Vietnam. In addition, one audiocassette recorded in 2003 features an interview with Charlotte Grinsel of Eau Claire about her time as a Navy WAVE in WWII.

Hmong Oral History Collection

Audio interviews with Hmong residents of the Eau Claire area discussing refugee camps, migration, and settlement in Wisconsin. Interviews were conducted in groups, with Hmong speakers, English speakers, and a translator, between 1992 and 1997.

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park, Neillsville

W7031 Ridge Road, Neillsville, WI 54456 | 715-743-4224 | highgrnd@tds.net

Reunion and Education Gatherings

Recordings created during gatherings of veterans hosted by The Highground in Clark County between 2012 and 2015. These events honored service men and women from World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the Persian Gulf War. Recordings are informal one-on-one conversations rather than formal oral history interviews.

Jewish Museum, Milwaukee

1360 N. Prospect Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202 | 414-390-5730 | info@jewishmuseummilwaukee.org

Oral History Collection

Video interviews conducted by the Jewish Museum Milwaukee between 2001-2014 with Holocaust survivors from numerous Eastern European countries. Narrators speak mostly about the Holocaust itself, but some touch on life in origin countries before the Holocaust and life in Milwaukee after the Holocaust.

Kinnamon School Visitor Center and Museum, Hayward

N8493 County Road E, Hayward, WI | 715-558-7839

Recording of a group conversation with four Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe elders, all veterans of World War II, recorded in 2016.

La Crosse Public Library Archives

800 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601 | 608-789-7136 | archives@lacrosselibrary.org

The Road She Traveled

A project by 7th grade students at Longfellow Middle School in La Crosse in conjunction with the La Crosse League of Women Voters. Between 2006 and 2014, students interviewed women who have positively impacted the La Crosse community. Narrators describing military service or homefront experiences include Vernetta Fish (Marines Women's Reserve, WWII), Margaret Fish (teacher in Onalaska during WWII), Hope Kumm (Civil Air Patrol pilot during WWII), Alice Holstein (Air Force, Vietnam), Nancy Henckel (Navy nurse during Operation Desert Storm), and Beth Vacek (Iraq). Some interviews are available [online](#) via the project website.

Veterans History Project

Video interviews conducted by students at LaCrossroads High School of La Crosse between 2001-2005. Catalog records and many full recordings are available [online](#), via the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.

Langlade County Historical Society, Antigo

404 Superior Street, Antigo, WI 54409 | 715-627-4464 | lchs@dwave.net

Audio interview with Roland "Bud" McBain, recorded in 2012. McBain grew up in Seymour, Wisconsin and retired in the Rhinelander area. The interview covers his work in radio communications with the 72nd Publicity Service Battalion in England during World War II.

Lawrence University, Appleton

113 S. Lawe Street, Appleton, WI 54911 | 920-832-6753 | archives@lawrence.edu

English 498 Collection

Four audio interviews with veterans of World War II, conducted by Lawrence University students in 2012. Narrators are Dean Einspahr, Henry Meyer, Donald Stoyvenberg, and Donald Zolkowski.

University Archives Oral Histories

Lawrence University Archives initiated an oral history program in 2006 to record stories from faculty, staff, and alumni of Lawrence and Milwaukee-Downer College. Several narrators discuss military service and life on campus during WWII. All audio recordings are transcribed and fully available [online](#).

Lester Public Library, Two Rivers

1001 Adams Street, Two Rivers, WI 54241 | 920-793-8888 | lesref@lesterlibrary.org

Two Rivers Oral Histories

Video recordings of conversations with local veterans of World War II and the Korean War, part of a "Story Circles" project conducted with community members at the library in 2010.

Marathon County Historical Society, Wausau

410 McIndoe Street, Wausau WI 54403 | 715-842-5750

D.C. Everest Hmong Oral History Project

Two sets of audiocassettes recorded in 1998 and 2001 by students of D.C. Everest Area Schools in Weston, Wisconsin. Interview transcripts were published by D.C. Everest in books including *The Hmong and Their Stories* (2001) and *Hmong in the Modern World* (2005). See <http://www.dceoralhistoryproject.org/> for more information about the D.E. Everest Oral History Project, including transcript extracts and related publications.

D.C. Everest World War II Oral History Project

Audiocassettes recorded 1999-2001 by students of D.C. Everest Area Schools in Weston, Wisconsin, featuring interviews with local veterans of World War II. Interview transcripts were published by D.C. Everest in books including *World War II: Stories from our Veterans* (2001) and *World War II: More Stories from our Veterans* (2004).

MCHS Oral History Program

Thirteen interviews on audiocassette conducted by the Marathon County Historical Society for a museum exhibition in 1990-1991. Interviews feature WWII-era experiences of local residents, including Army and Navy veterans as well as women's homefront experiences working for the Red Cross and Marathon Battery Company.

Marquette University, Milwaukee, Special Collections and University Archives

1355 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233 | 414-288-7256

Generation After Oral History Project

Audio recordings of interviews with Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Milwaukee between 1946 and 1955 from across Europe, primarily Poland and other East-Central European countries. Some recordings have transcripts available online as a part of the digital collection "[I'll Tell You a Story: Memories of Pre-Holocaust Europe.](#)"

Neville Public Museum of Brown County, Green Bay

210 Museum Place, Green Bay, WI 54303 | 920-448-4460

Vietnam Oral History

Video interviews with five Green Bay-area Vietnam War veterans, conducted by the Neville Public Museum in 2010. The collection also includes photographs and personal items from the veterans interviewed.

Oshkosh Public Museum

1331 Algoma Boulevard, Oshkosh, WI 54901 | 920-236-5799 | museum@ci.oshkosh.wi.us

World War II Oral Histories

105 interviews with WWII veterans in the Oshkosh area, recorded on audiocassette primarily 2001-2005, with some interviews dating to 1993-1994. Interview summaries and transcripts are available [online](#), along with WWII-era artifacts and photographs from the museum's collections.

Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center, Superior

305 Harbor View Parkway, Superior, WI 54880 | 715-392-7151

World War II Oral History Collection

More than 150 interviews with veterans of World War II, including individuals from Duluth and northeast Minnesota as well as Superior and northwest Wisconsin. Includes both audio and video in various formats, recorded between 2000 and 2016. Topics covered include service in both European and Pacific theaters, POWs held in Germany, Japan and Russia, and homefront experiences. Video interviews were conducted by a professional historian; other interviewers were local volunteer veterans.

Born Digital Oral History Collections

The Bong Veterans Historical Center (BVH) began collecting post-World War II oral histories after 2011. Born digital audio interviews include 16 files related to veterans of the Korean War, 21 from the Vietnam War, 15 from the Cold War era, and 8 from the Persian Gulf War. Catalog records for many BVH recordings are available [online](#) via the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.

Richland County History Room, Richland Center

325 N. Central Avenue, Richland Center, WI 53581 | richlandhistory@gmail.com

Military Living History Fair

Audio interviews recorded in 2013 at a living history fair sponsored by the local VFW post. Includes interviews with veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

Sauk County Historical Society, Baraboo

900 2nd Avenue, Baraboo, WI 53913 | 608-356-1001 | history@saukcountyhistory.org

Three oral history interviews with veterans of World War II, recorded in various formats between 2005-2008. Narrators are George Rambo, Clete Ring, and Garvin Kowalke, a B-29 pilot. A transcript of the Kowalke interview is available [online](#) from the Sauk County Historical Society.

Taylor County Historical Society Museum, Medford

845A E. Broadway Avenue, Medford, WI 54451 | 715-748-3808 | tchistoricalociety@gmail.com

Heroes of Taylor County

Five DVDs of video interviews with Taylor County veterans, conducted by a Boy Scout for Eagle Scout project in 2012.

- Volume 1: World War I and World War II (Air Force, Navy, Army National Guard, Army, Marines)
- Volume 2: World War II (Navy, Army)
- Volume 3: Korean War (Army National Guard, Army, Air Force, Marine)
- Volume 4: Vietnam (Army, Navy, Marines)
- Volume 5: Gulf War & Afghanistan (Navy, Coast Guard, Army, National Guard)

Video Oral Histories

Fourteen interviews recorded on VHS by the Taylor County Historical Society in 2002. WWII veterans interviewed include Lester Carlson, Harold Gowey, Delmar Fischer (Marines), Arthur Steinman (Pacific Theater – occupation of Japan), William Sthrolm (Pacific), Leo Boelk (Pacific), Vernon Frey (Navy) and William P. Scharrschmidt (B-24 Bombardier). Other narrators include Allen Lietze (Korea), Dave Thomas (Vietnam), Gary Schaefer (Vietnam), and Frank Ellner (Gulf War).

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Special Collections and Archives, McIntyre Library

103 Garfield Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54701 | 715-836-2739 | library.archives@uwec.edu

Centennial Oral History Collection

Oral history interviews conducted by students and staff in 2012-2013, prior to the University's centennial. The interviews cover a wide range of topics related to the history of the school, including experiences of military service and antiwar activism on the part of several alumni.

Eau Claire Vietnam Veterans Oral History Project

Fifteen audiocassettes featuring interviews with Vietnam veterans, recorded by a UW-Eau Claire student for a thesis project in 1998.

Stacy Jalowitz: My Experience in the Gulf War

Interview on two audiocassettes with UW-Eau Claire student Stacy Jalowitz, who served with the Army National Guard in the Persian Gulf War in 1991. More information can be found in the [finding aid](#) for this collection.

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Archives and Area Research Center

2420 Nicolet Drive, Green Bay, WI 54311 | 920-465-2539 | archives@uwgb.edu

UWGB Women's World War II Oral History Project

Audio interviews with eight local women who served in the military during WWII, recorded by a student in 2003. Each interview covers a brief personal background, the decision to serve and the reaction of family to that decision, treatment while in the service, types of jobs the women were assigned and the reaction to their work from men in the Army and their home communities. The women enlisted with the WACs, the WAVES, and in two cases, the Marines and Air Corps.

Veterans Oral History Project

Two UW-Green Bay students, both veterans themselves, interviewed veterans with connections to UWGB for a course project in 2015. There are interviews with Marines during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, and World War II; an Army communications security repair specialist in 1968; a Navy pilot and an Air Force nurse during the Korean War; and an Air Force veteran stationed in Turkey during the Iran Hostage Crisis.

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Murphy Library Special Collections

1631 Pine Street, La Crosse, WI 54601 | 608-785-8511 | specoll@uwlax.edu

UW-La Crosse Oral History Program

Special Collections at Murphy Library is the repository for the UW-La Crosse History Department's Oral History Program, which includes oral history recordings from the 1960s to the present. Military-related audio content encompasses WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam, as well as experiences of Hmong refugees and antiwar activists in the Vietnam era. Many recordings are available [online](#) and the majority of interviews are fully transcribed.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Archives and Area Research Center

900 Reserve Street, Room 520, Stevens Point, WI 54481 | 715-346-2586 | archives@uwsp.edu

Portage County Historical Society Oral Histories

Oral history interviews on audiocassette and VHS conducted by the Portage County Historical Society, primarily in the 1980s and 1990s. Conflicts covered include WWI, WWII, and the Korean War, including veterans who served in the Army, Air Force and the Navy. Materials are owned by the Portage County Historical Society and under the custodianship of UW-Stevens Point. Some WWII-era interviews are available [online](#) via the PCHS website.

UWSP History 302 Oral Histories

Interviews on DVD with veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, recorded by students in 2011 as part of a course project. Interviewees include John Peters, John Regnier, and Phil Kallas.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Archives Department

2311 East Hartford Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53211 | 414-229-5402 | askarch@uwm.edu

Oral History Interviews of The Forgotten Champs: The 1944 Milwaukee Chicks Oral History Project

Oral history interviews with five former members of the Milwaukee Chicks, a professional baseball team that played in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) in 1944. The interviews were conducted as part of a 1995 oral history course at UW-Milwaukee. Interview transcripts and audio recordings are available [online](#).

Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc

75 Maritime Drive, Manitowoc, WI 54220 | 866-724-2356 | museum@wisconsinmaritime.org

WMM Oral History Collections

A range of audio and video oral history recordings related to Manitowoc's shipbuilding industry during World War II. Includes interviews with Art Zuehlke of the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company and local residents who built or served on one of the Manitowoc-made submarines. The collection also features interviews with crew members of some of the 28 submarines built by the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company and with crew members of the USS *Cobia* (the *Cobia*, preserved by the Museum, was not built in Manitowoc but is the same class of submarine).