

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW



The [Recollection Wisconsin](#) consortium brings together digital cultural heritage resources from Wisconsin libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies and shares them with the world. In 2019, the program was supported by Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as well as grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Recollection Wisconsin is also supported by donations of time and expertise from the consortium's Governing Partners: Marquette University, Milwaukee Public Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

IN 2019, RECOLLECTION WISCONSIN:

- added almost 90,000 new records and welcomed 9 new content partners
- launched the nation's first customized DPLA Local site
- developed a strategic plan to build digital readiness in local historical societies and historic preservation groups
- convened the second and final [Curating Community Digital Collections \(CCDC\)](#) cohort to extend and enhance digital stewardship work
- coordinated the reformatting of 977 at-risk audio and video recordings of interviews from Wisconsin veterans and civilians
- became one of three national anchor sites for the *Community Archiving Workshop Regional Training of Trainers* program
- provided digitization kit training workshops to staff from 12 Wisconsin public library systems
- spotlighted digital cultural heritage from across the state, from main streets to industry to indigenous and immigrant populations, increasing Facebook reach by 16%

NEW PARTNERS AND COLLECTIONS

In 2019, we added almost 90,000 new records to our central search from both new and continuing [Content Partners](#). A few highlights include:

- The **Wisconsin Historical Society's** [Somos Latinas \(We Women\) History Project](#). This oral history project was launched in 2012 by Dr. Andrea-Teresa (Tess) Arenas, faculty member in the Chican@ and Latin@ Studies Program at UW-Madison.
- [The Sphere](#), from the **UW-Milwaukee Libraries**. Billed as "the nation's first and only grocery fanzine," *The Sphere* was published by Mike Koppa and distributed at Koppa's Farwell Foods in the 1990s.
- [Video interviews](#) with leaders of Wisconsin's cranberry-growing industry, created by the **Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association**.

- New collections from the **Beloit College Archives**, including the illustrated diaries of alumnus [Laura Aldrich Neese](#) and photographs of 1940s-50s campus events by [Ray Metzker and Bob Miller](#).
- [Genealogies of German families](#) in Calumet and Fond du Lac Counties, from the **Chilton Public Library**.
- Photographs, yearbooks, scrapbooks, oral histories, and other local history materials from **members of South Central Library System**, representing the communities of [Columbus](#), [Cross Plains](#), [McFarland](#), [Lodi](#), [Poynette](#), [Rock Springs](#), and [Sun Prairie](#).

We also welcomed the following new partners who will have content available through recollectionwisconsin.org in early 2020: Matheson Memorial Library (Elkhorn), Milton Public Library, Milwaukee Municipal Research Library, Portage County Public Library (Stevens Point), Pauline Haass Public Library (Sussex), and Waunakee Public Library.



NEW COLLECTION SEARCH LAUNCHED

Recollection Wisconsin joined the Digital Public Library of American (DPLA) in 2016. Our partnership with DPLA means that more than half a million digital cultural heritage resources from collections across Wisconsin can be discovered alongside 37 million resources from thousands of contributors nationwide at dp.la.

In April 2019, Recollection Wisconsin became the first DPLA partner in the country to launch a [customized “DPLA Local” site](#). Through this new and improved centralized search interface, users can discover materials held in the collections of Wisconsin libraries, archives, historical societies, and museums, including state and local history resources as well as content from across the country and around the world. The new search interface was built for us as a benefit of Recollection Wisconsin’s DPLA membership. It utilizes the same code DPLA developed for its own dp.la portal, which means users can benefit from handy features like auto-generated citations and the option to save custom lists.

PLANNING A DIGITAL READINESS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

From July to December 2019, Recollection Wisconsin partnered with [WiLS](#) and the [Wisconsin Historical Society](#) on a community-driven strategic planning process to build “digital readiness” in local historical societies and historic preservation groups. We collaborated with local history practitioners across Wisconsin to better understand their needs related to digital collections creation, management, and preservation. Individuals representing over 100 local history organizations participated in our web survey, five focused community conversations, and three strategic planning sessions. This work was supported by an Archives Collaboratives Planning Grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the grantmaking arm of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).



A core group of participants helped develop a [strategic plan](#) which informed an implementation grant proposal submitted to the NHPRC. If funded, work to build and launch our proposed Statewide Digital Readiness Community of Practice will begin in July 2020.

CURATING COMMUNITY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

We convened our second and final [Curating Community Digital Collections \(CCDC\)](#) cohort in 2019. This IMLS-funded program paired information studies graduate students with small or under-resourced cultural heritage organizations around Wisconsin to extend and enhance digital stewardship work. In summer 2019, ten teams, each comprised of a site supervisor, professional mentor, and a graduate student from either [UW-Madison Information School \(iSchool\)](#) or [UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies \(SOIS\)](#), worked together to research and create policies, best practices, and workflows to manage and preserve a variety of digitized and born-digital content.

Our teams prepared for their summer projects by participating in a three-day immersion workshop designed to introduce foundational digital preservation knowledge, skills, and tools. [AVP](#) Senior Consultant Amy Rudersdorf provided workshop instruction and support for curriculum development.

Our teams tackled a range of digital content including born-digital community donations, digitized images and oral histories, university records, and complex digital objects created for virtual museum exhibits. Students completed content inventories, digital preservation policies, procedures for renaming files and checking digital file integrity, training manuals, and other key documentation. The resulting [resources](#) are available to the public on our website.

In 2020, we'll share the documentation of how we designed and delivered CCDC as a model for other organizations to reuse and repurpose. We'll also make available an online version of our digital preservation immersion workshop curriculum, which introduces the basic skills and concepts needed to understand, protect, monitor, and sustain digital content over time.



LISTENING TO WAR: DIGITIZING WISCONSIN'S WARTIME ORAL HISTORIES

[Listening to War: Digitizing Wisconsin's Wartime Oral Histories](#) supports the digitization and preservation of oral history interviews from 24 Wisconsin libraries, archives, museums, and veterans' organizations. These irreplaceable recordings capture personal accounts of Wisconsin veterans and civilians during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War. This project is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

In 2019, our digitization vendor, George Blood L.P. of Pennsylvania, reformatted 977 audio and video recordings in a range of at-risk formats including audio reels, audio cassettes, VHS cassettes, MiniDV, and Hi8. In fall 2019, all materials were returned to us, along with digitized files. The original recordings were stored at Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning (RL&LL) while they were prepared to be shipped back to project partners via the South Central Library System Delivery Service and UPS. The digital master files and associated metadata have been transferred to the [Wisconsin Veterans Museum](#) for long-term storage. The web-access copies are currently being edited and described, and will be available online in mid-2020.



COMMUNITY ARCHIVING WORKSHOP



In 2019, thanks to an IMLS grant awarded to the [Association of Moving Image Archivists](#) (AMIA), Recollection Wisconsin became one of three national anchor sites for the *Community Archiving Workshop Regional Training of Trainers* program. The [Community Archiving Workshop](#) (CAW) model is an approach to collections care training that pairs local experts with a team of staff, volunteers, and community members to process at-risk audiovisual collections.

In July 2019, staff from Recollection Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, Milwaukee Public Museum, History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, UW-Eau Claire Archives, and the Hoocąk Waazijja Hacı Ho-Chunk Language Division, gathered in Madison to participate in a workshop led by audiovisual archivists Amy Sloper of Harvard Film Archive and Jeff Martin, a Chicago-based moving image archivist and time-based art conservator. The training covered the essentials of care and preservation of film, video, and audio collections and included a hands-on Community Archiving Workshop event at the UW-Madison Archives where local volunteers processed 47 films and 139 audio reels.

In Spring 2020, regional partners will host Community Archiving Workshops in Appleton, Eau Claire, and Milwaukee to jump-start the preservation of Wisconsin audiovisual collections.

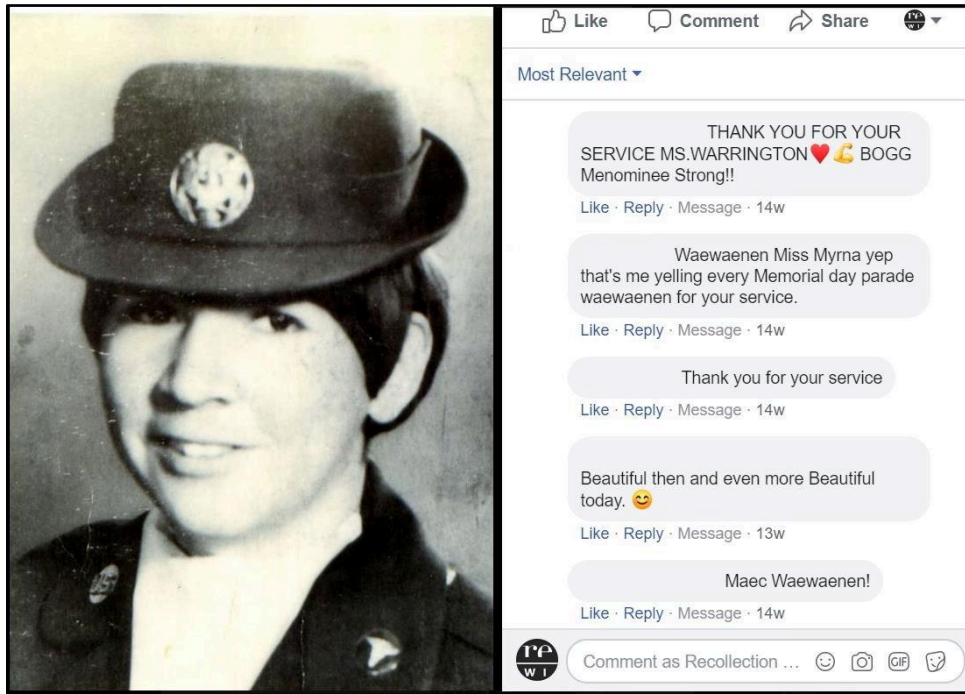
DIGITIZATION KITS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In July 2019, staff from 12 public library systems around the state participated in training workshops presented by South Central Library System and Recollection Wisconsin. The workshops introduced system staff to the mobile digitization kits available to their member libraries for scanning photos and documents. The Department of Public Instruction supported equipment purchases as part of the WISELearn budget in FY19. SCLS and Recollection Wisconsin worked together to compile [documentation](#) for the kits.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

In 2019, we aimed to spotlight digital cultural heritage from all over Wisconsin. Our goal was to find images and oral histories, maps and newspaper articles, scrapbook snippets and official reports that reflected the collections and the stories of our state, from the smallest towns to the biggest cities, from the northernmost points of the state to the Illinois border, and from small local history organizations to large museums and libraries. Some of our favorite examples include:

- Using the hashtag #MainStreetMonday to highlight communities all over the state
- Exploring Wisconsin industries of the past and present, including ice harvesting, canning, tobacco farming, and the automotive industry
- Highlighting important events from the past and in the present. Our most shared Facebook post celebrated Wisconsin's first state-recognized Indigenous Peoples' Day



We created [new online exhibits](#), bringing together primary resources from many different Content Partners to tell rich stories of three unique topics – ice harvesting, the canning industry, and Irish immigration. And 2019 was a year of social media success; our Facebook page saw a 16% increase in followers. More importantly, we saw increased engagement on Facebook from many followers who were inspired to share their own stories and memories on our page, enriching the historical record and forging personal connections to the past.



LOOKING FORWARD

In September 2019, the Recollection Wisconsin Governing Board and Steering Committee held a planning meeting to identify strategic goals and future directions as the consortium continues to grow. Projects on our plate in 2020 include:

- Convening an **Education Advisory Committee** to help connect K-12 teachers and students with Content Partners' resources.
- Undertaking a **gap analysis** to understand current collection coverage and identify collection development opportunities. This is the first step in an overarching objective to systematically develop the shared collection to foster diversity and inclusion, so that more Wisconsin residents can see their stories represented.
- Continuing to explore **strategies for long-term storage** and management of Content Partners' digital resources, in order to support all stages of the digital content lifecycle.
- Launching **online public access to the hundreds of oral history interviews** digitized through the NEH-funded Listening to War project.
- Sharing an openly-available version of the **immersion workshop curriculum** created for the Curating Community Digital Collections program.
- Continuing to engage with the **DPLA Hubs Network** nationwide through participation in the DPLA Network Council, Advisory Council, working groups and member meetings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Subscribe to Recollection Wisconsin's monthly [newsletter](#).
- Check out our [blog](#).
- Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Join the conversation around digital stewardship on the Wisconsin Digital Stewardship [Google Group](#).
- Use our [contact form](#) to get in touch or contact us individually:



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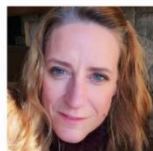
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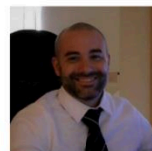
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