

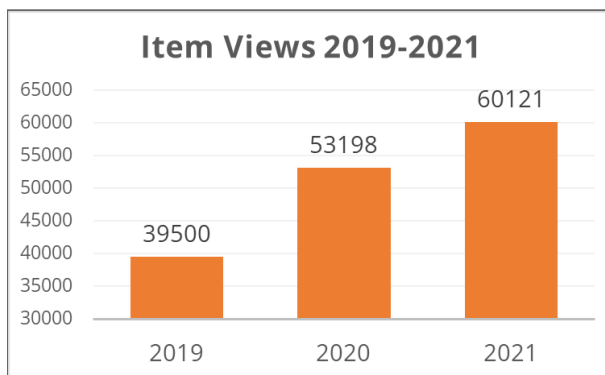
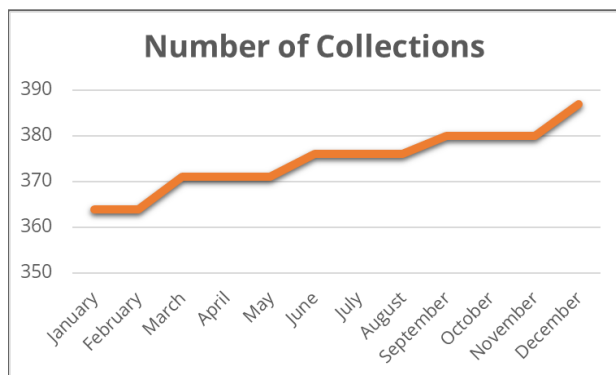


2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Recollection Wisconsin Consortium is guided by the principle that access to information has the power to enrich the lives of all the people of Wisconsin. Since 2005, Recollection Wisconsin has partnered with Wisconsin libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies to bring together [hundreds of thousands](#) of historical resources. available online at <https://recollectionwisconsin.org/> and, through our role as a Service Hub for the Digital Public Library of America, in DPLA's nationwide collection at <https://dp.la/>.

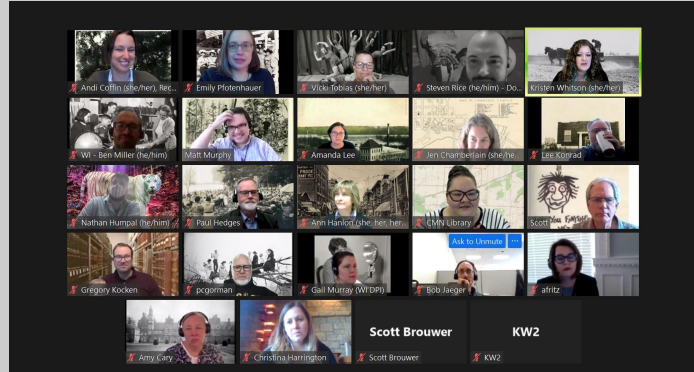
2021 was a year in which Wisconsin's cultural heritage organizations continued to grapple with fewer resources, fewer staff hours, and less certainty about what the next day would look like. Pandemic variants, staffing shortages, and budget reductions will continue to disrupt service for the foreseeable future. In fact, for the second biennial state budget cycle in a row, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's request for a dedicated funding line for Recollection Wisconsin was denied despite the tenacious efforts of the Wisconsin library community and positive response from individual legislators on both sides of the aisle. We are in conversation with DPI, the Wisconsin Library Association's Library Development and Legislation Committee (LD&L), the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND), and other stakeholders about the next steps to stabilize the consortium's funding in the coming years.

The work of Recollection Wisconsin and our 240 consortium partners continues despite those obstacles. As our collection and community grew steadily this year, so did the use of the collection by teachers, students, researchers, local historians, and the curious general public. We brought aboard 14 new content partners, 23 new collections, and added nearly 70,000 resources in total to Recollection Wisconsin and DPLA. We saw a 13% increase in user views of the collection items over 2020 and a 52% increase over 2019.



Welcome from Scott Brouwer, Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee Chair

Greetings from La Crosse Public Library Archives! I am one of thirteen Steering Committee members representing Recollection Wisconsin Content Partner institutions large and small from all over the state. By regularly rotating members, the committee always attempts to foster geographic and institutional diversity so all voices are heard.



I'm honored to be serving as Chair of the Steering Committee at a time when great things are in process and even greater things are just beginning. As presented in the [2020 Year in Review](#), the scale of the projects and initiatives that were launched and established in that tumultuous year is amazing. To highlight just a few that blossomed in 2021:

- The gap analysis project, in which the Recollection Wisconsin Governing Board and Steering Committee jointly set a priority to systematically develop the shared collection to foster diversity and inclusion, was instrumental in the creation of online exhibits.
- The Digital Readiness Community of Practice presented four virtual Digital Readiness Fairs in the summer, held a statewide Digital Readiness Workshop, and began developing and sharing Digital Readiness resources.
- The Recollection Wisconsin Education Advisory Committee worked on developing materials for teachers to incorporate primary source materials from Content Partners into their Wisconsin history curriculum that will be ready for the start of the 2022 school year.

Learn more about all of these below and thank you for following the evolution of Recollection Wisconsin!

-- Scott Brouwer, Archivist, La Crosse Public Library and
Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee Chair

Telling the Stories of Everyday Wisconsin Life

Recollection Wisconsin aims to be a place where all Wisconsin residents can see their stories represented, from cities to rural areas, Indigenous and Black communities, recent and not-so-recent immigrant populations, gay and straight people, folks from all walks of life doing all sorts of ordinary and extraordinary things.

To make good on that goal, we first have to understand what's missing from our collections and why. In 2019, we performed a gap analysis on our collection by examining the types and locations of the organizations contributing content to Recollection Wisconsin, what kinds of resources educators were looking for when they came to the collection and what holes - in eras or formats or topics - existed in the collection or in the metadata. A [full report](#) of that gap analysis was published at the end of 2020. In 2021, we identified a two-pronged approach to address those gaps: 1) expanding our network of Content Partners to include underrepresented communities and areas of the state and 2) highlighting the resources that already exist within our Content Partners' holdings but aren't readily discoverable.



[Louis St. Germaine with musky](#), 1948,
UW Digital Collections

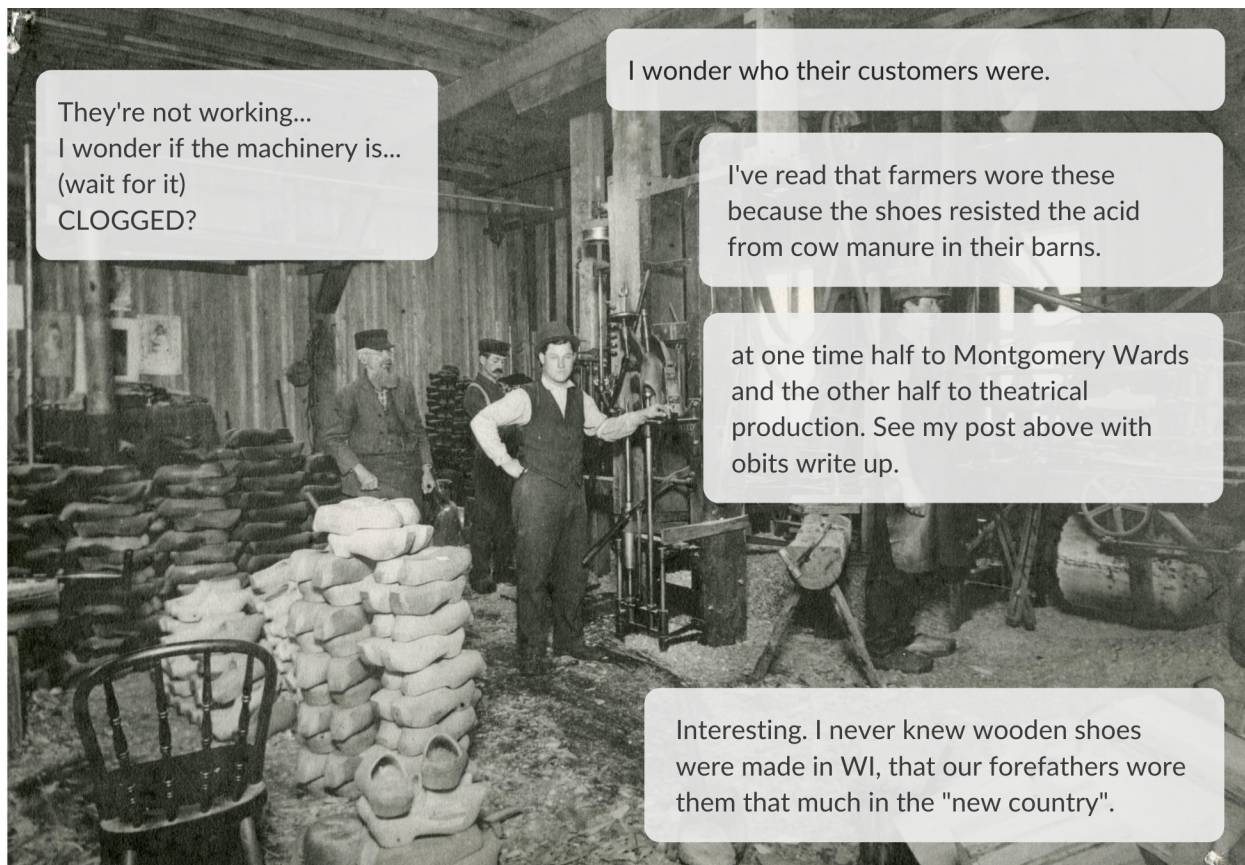
One of the ways we achieve the latter goal is by creating [exhibits](#), online stories that pair research with primary sources from our Content Partners' collections. In 2021, we focused those exhibits on some favorite everyday pastimes of Wisconsinites: fishing, eating, and baseball.

Curated by Joe Hermolin, President of the Langlade County Historical Society, [Wisconsin Fish Stories](#) was our first video exhibit, focusing on sport fishing in the 20th century. Mr. Hermolin also provided curation for our exhibit examining [Where We Get Our Food](#), from wild rice harvests of Indigenous communities to World War II era rations at the butcher shop to the burgeoning farmers markets across the state.

Another shortage World War II gave us was one of male baseball players. As made famous in the film *A League of Their Own*, Wisconsin was critical in continuing to deliver baseball to thousands of fans

through the war with the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. In [Batter Up, Play Ball!](#), written in collaboration with UW-Madison iSchool graduate student Thalia Coombs, we take a closer look at the AAGPBL's creation and the contributions of its groundbreaking players.

With more than 650,000 resources in the collection, finding just the right image to connect people to their community's history can be a challenge. We are working to shine spotlights on cities, towns, and villages across the state through our #MainStreetMonday Facebook series. On Mondays, we publish a set of images to Facebook from a Wisconsin town or city - [Elcho](#), [New Lisbon](#), [Cuba City](#), [La Farge](#), and [Holmen](#) just to name a few - and it often inspires current and past residents to share memories or ask questions. The #MainStreetMonday about [Kiel](#), for instance, reached 12 times more people than currently live in the town of Kiel!



They're not working...
I wonder if the machinery is...
(wait for it)
CLOGGED?

I wonder who their customers were.

I've read that farmers wore these
because the shoes resisted the acid
from cow manure in their barns.

at one time half to Montgomery Wards
and the other half to theatrical
production. See my post above with
obits write up.

Interesting. I never knew wooden shoes
were made in WI, that our forefathers wore
them that much in the "new country".

[Four workmen stand inside of Baivier Wooden Shoe Factory](#), Kiel Public Library. The men are surrounded by tools and machinery used in the wooden shoe manufacturing process as well as stacks of wooden shoes in various states of completion. 1925. See the [full conversation](#) on Facebook about this photo.

Cultivating Community

The Recollection Wisconsin program is made possible by and provides benefits to hundreds of organizations across the state that participate at many levels:

- 240 [Content Partners](#) contribute their historical resources to the collection
- 6 organizations anchor our [Governing Board](#) and provide valuable in-kind contributions: Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, University of

Wisconsin-Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Milwaukee Public Library, and Marquette University

- 13 members of our [Steering Committee](#) guide the collection growth and maintenance
- 7 members of our [Education Advisory Committee](#) inform our outreach efforts to connect K12 educators with Content Partners' materials
- 11 members of our Digital Readiness Community of Practice [Launch Committee](#) provide guidance on digital local history projects around the state and building peer-to-peer support networks

And we are always helping this community grow. In 2021, we helped bring local historical collections into Recollection Wisconsin from the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum, Lester Public Library in Two Rivers, Eager Free Public Library in Evansville, Verona Public Library, and Lester Public Library of Arpin. Every month, we held office hours with potential new Content Partners to hear about their collections and strategize with them to move forward. We shared our work with the library and archives community across the state and beyond, in presentations for the Southwest Wisconsin Association of Libraries annual meeting, Wisconsin Library Association conference, Wisconsin Historical Society Local History and Historic Preservation conference, Midwest Archives Conference, and the National Digital Stewardship Alliance conference.

Digital Readiness Community of Practice

Another way we are building the Recollection Wisconsin community is through the [Digital Readiness Community of Practice](#), which is funded by the National Historical Records and Publications Commission and supports digital readiness - the knowledge, tools, resources, and infrastructure to provide online public access to archives and historical records - in small and under-resourced local historical societies and historic preservation organizations across Wisconsin.

The community of practice came together for four virtual Digital Readiness Fairs held June - August 2021. Each Fair was hosted by a local partner: Appleton Public Library, Crandon Area Historical Society, Pioneer Village/Barron County Historical Society, and Kenosha County Historical Society. The Fairs reached 269 individual registrants from 121 different organizations, with presentations on topics as varied as audio-visual preservation, equipment sharing, rights statements, and getting started on a digital project. Presenters included staff and volunteers from local and county historical societies as well as faculty and archivists from the University of Wisconsin system and private colleges, not to mention a teenage volunteer from a county genealogical group. Presentations and resources are available on our [Digital Readiness Fairs website](#).

"The Digital Readiness Fair was an excellent way to get started in our digitization efforts. It provided the type of actionable information that most conferences lack. The information was presented in a way that was accessible and, as important, motivating."

We also presented a statewide Digital Readiness Workshop during the Wisconsin Historical Society's Local History and Historic Preservation Conference in October 2021, attracting 50 participants for a 90 minute digital project planning session.

In addition to the Fairs and Workshop, we've also developed and shared several community-driven Digital Readiness resources to help local history organizations plan for and bring their collections online: a series of short and digestible [case studies](#), a [Digital Readiness glossary](#), and [Toolkit blog posts](#) that provide simple answers to common questions we receive. We're currently working through an expanded and improved Digital Readiness Toolkit, which will be available in Spring 2022.

Building a Community of Practice for Digital Readiness in Wisconsin was supported by Archives Collaboratives Planning and Implementation Grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the granting arm of the National Archives.



Making Connections

Recollection Wisconsin and our community of Content Partners have been key in assisting others with historical research and building collaborations at the state, regional, and national levels. In 2021:

- We partnered with the Wisconsin Latinx History Collective (WLHC) to help harness community knowledge from organizations so the WLHC can tap into local Latinx networks and train volunteers to document the experiences of Latinx communities in our state.
- We assisted a pair of researchers from Stanford University and the Library of Congress looking for evidence of women photographers during the Daguerreian era (1840-1860), who were most concentrated in the midwest.
- We continued our partnership with the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) on the Community Archiving Workshop, along with partners at the Milwaukee Public Museum, History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, and UW-Eau Claire Archives, to develop and distribute documentation and tools for inventorying and assessing film and audiovisual collections.

Rescuing At-Risk Pieces of Wisconsin History

In May 2021, we were thrilled to publicly launch [Listening to War](#), a digital collection of nearly 500 oral history interviews with Wisconsin veterans and civilians, dating from the Spanish-American War of 1898 up to the 21st-century Afghanistan War. These recordings came from [20 libraries, archives, historical societies, and veterans organizations](#) across the state. Most were recorded on

audiocassette, reel-to-reel tape, VHS, and other at-risk analog formats. Recollection Wisconsin partnered with the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to digitize, preserve, and provide access to these unique stories. The project was highlighted on [Wisconsin Public Radio's Central Time](#) and in the Summer 2021 issue of *Wisconsin People & Ideas*.

The Listening to War project was made possible by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities from 2016-2020.



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Engaging Students with Wisconsin History

In 2021, with guidance from our Education Advisory Committee, we began to develop resources for teachers in grades 3-5 to incorporate local primary sources from Recollection Wisconsin Content Partners into their Wisconsin history curriculum. In 2022, we'll share draft resources with teachers for their review and input, and then make the finished resources available in time for the start of the 2022 school year. This work is made possible with contributions from three Wisconsin-based funders: the Green Bay Packers Foundation, the Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, and the Alberta S. Kimball-Mary L. Anhaltzer Foundation. In November, Recollection Wisconsin project managers were honored to attend a luncheon at Lambeau Field along with dozens of other community-based arts and education programs that received funding from the Packers Foundation this year.

Stay Connected to Recollection Wisconsin

- Subscribe to the Recollection Wisconsin [newsletter](#).
- Check out our [blog](#).
- Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Join the conversation with other digital practitioners on the Wisconsin Digital Stewardship [Google Group](#).
- Use our [contact form](#) or email us at info@recollectionwisconsin.org to get in touch or contact us individually:



Andrea Coffin
Communication
and Consortia
Manager
acoffin@wils.org



**Melissa
McLimans**
Library Strategist
and Consultant
melissa@wils.org



**Emily
Pfothenhauer**
Digital Strategist
and Grants
Manager
emily@wils.org



Vicki Tobias
Digital Project
Manager



Kristen Whitson
Digital Projects
Specialist
kristen@wils.org

Acknowledgments

In 2021, Recollection Wisconsin was supported by Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 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.