



2022 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/>.

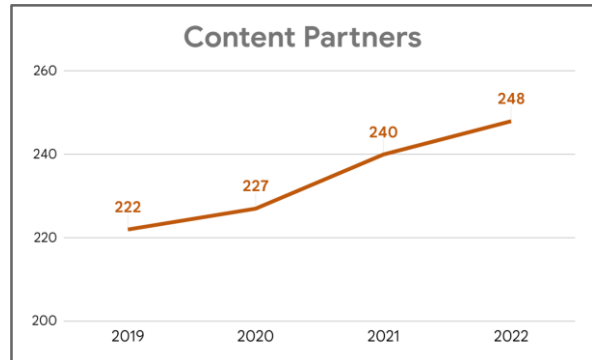
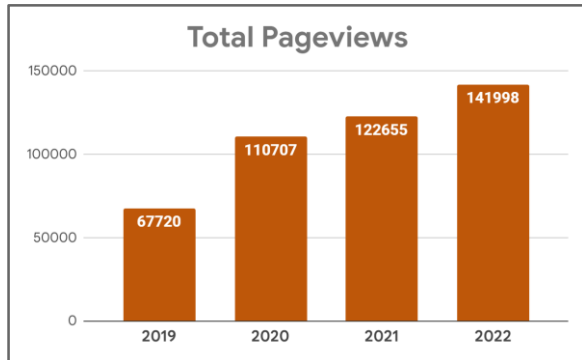
In 2022, Recollection Wisconsin prioritized planning for long-term financial sustainability. Through a survey and facilitated conversations, our content partners and stakeholders told us clearly that Recollection Wisconsin is highly valued by their own institutions and by the state's overall cultural heritage community. Without Recollection Wisconsin's guidance and infrastructure, digitizing and sharing unique collections would be out of reach for many small and under-resourced libraries and historical societies. Without Recollection Wisconsin's centralized point of discovery, those unique collections would remain hidden from teachers, students, genealogists, and the general public.

Since 2016, the majority of funding for Recollection Wisconsin has come from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction through a combination of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds and state funding via WISELearn. However, these funds are not guaranteed and can vary from year to year. In the second half of 2022 and into 2023, a reduced contribution from DPI resulted in cuts to core project management activities, including reducing the frequency of metadata harvests and trimming our newsletter and other communications.

In order to provide a more reliable funding stream for Recollection Wisconsin and to enable future growth, DPI has included the program as part of its funding request for the [2023-2025 biennial state budget](#). Recollection Wisconsin is actively working to support that request by meeting with legislators and key partners and gathering impact stories, and this work will continue into 2023. At the same time, Recollection Wisconsin project managers are working with the Governing Board and Steering Committee to explore alternative funding sources in order to ensure that Recollection Wisconsin - and the value it provides to nearly 250 libraries, archives, historical societies, and museums of all sizes in the state - continues well into the future.

Nonetheless, 2022 was a productive and joyful year. Our collection and community grew steadily. We brought eight new content partners and 18 new collections aboard, and we added more than 22,000 resources to Recollection Wisconsin and DPLA. We also saw a 16% increase in user views

of collection items over 2021, continuing a trend of significant usage increases since 2019. We were grateful to be face-to-face with our community at in-person conferences and meetings, including a memorable meeting of the Governing Board and Steering Committee, hosted by the Wisconsin Historical Society at the State Archive Preservation Facility in Madison, on the day when a 3,000-year-old dugout canoe had just been pulled from Lake Mendota.



Welcome from Bethany Huse, Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee Chair

Posoh (hello)! I am Bethany Huse with the S. Verna Fowler Academic Library/Menominee Public Library in Keshena, Wisconsin, which serves as the academic library for the College of Menominee Nation and the public library for the Menominee Tribe and County. I have had the pleasure of serving on the Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee for over five years. This community has been such a support over the years and a great place to ask questions, connect with people in similar fields, and help to promote Recollection Wisconsin.

This past year has been a rewarding experience filled with new projects and expanding past ones. With the input of multiple educators and guidance from the Steering Committee and the Education Advisory Committee, we were able to revamp the Recollection Wisconsin website for educators. This priceless online resource allows educators to use Recollection Wisconsin as a teaching tool for classes. With more focused input, we can help teachers across Wisconsin and beyond include collections from the many content partners around the state.

As the academic and public library for my community, the education resources provided by Recollection Wisconsin are priceless and help to develop material for introducing students to primary and secondary resources, teaching tour groups about the work that is being done locally and statewide, as well as allowing us the opportunity to show these resources to future educators that attend the College of Menominee Nation.

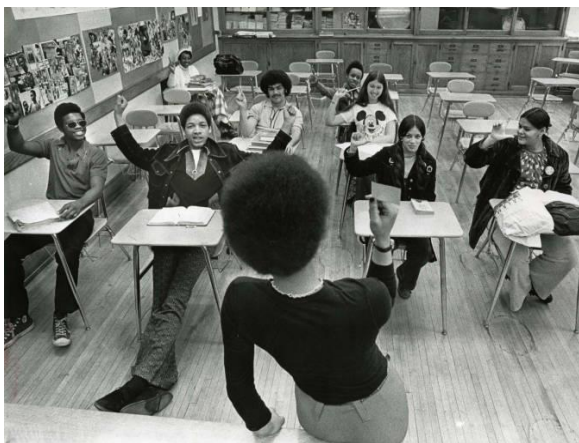
In addition, Recollection Wisconsin has worked on the Digital Readiness Toolkit over the past year. It is so helpful to know that others who are working on digital collections, or even starting out, are all in the same boat - we are all trying to learn a new skill that is in its infancy. The Digital Readiness Toolkit walks users through the steps of setting up a digital collection as well as showing the standards of digital collections and what the expectations are. All of us who are breaching into the world of digital collections experience a level of uncertainty about what to do. This Toolkit offers a needed space for support and guidance.

Being part of the Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee itself has been a valuable experience for me, as I joined shortly after starting my job and had little experience. Not only have I learned from these meetings, but I've been introduced to others in the field, which has helped to facilitate further learning, new opportunities, and sharing resources with institutions I didn't know beforehand. Recollection Wisconsin gives a voice to the many libraries, museums, and historical societies around our state. It provides the ability for any Wisconsin citizen or out-of-state online visitor to learn even more about our great state. As the library that serves the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin community, it is also with great pride that we can offer our Indigenous voice and story as well.

On Wisconsin and waewaenen (thank you)!

-- Bethany Huse, Librarian and Interim Library Director, S.Verna Fowler Academic Library/Menominee Public Library and Recollection Wisconsin Steering Committee Chair

Bringing Local History to Students: Recollection Wisconsin for Educators



*[Lincoln High School classroom](#), 1974.
Milwaukee Public Library.*

This year, we made further gains towards helping educators see the value of and use resources from Recollection Wisconsin in their classrooms.

In late 2021 and early 2022, we surveyed educators in grades 3-5 on how they find and use primary sources in their classrooms and what primary resources they wish they had better access to. The information gathered in this survey, combined with input provided by the [Recollection Wisconsin Education Advisory Committee](#) on how to effectively connect with and engage educators, helped us improve our resources for teachers on our website and on our social media outlets.

In September, Recollection Wisconsin launched a [refreshed website for educators](#) teaching state and local history in K12 classrooms with the aim of making the many primary sources available in Recollection Wisconsin more easily and quickly accessible.

In addition to a general redesign, we added new themes requested by teachers, such as [Famous Wisconsinites](#) and [Early Statehood](#). And, drawing on our popular #MainStreetMonday Facebook campaign, we created the [Travel Back in Time series](#), highlighting historical photos of communities all across the state, small and large, from Ashland to Wilmot. In this series, teachers and students can explore the diverse and endlessly interesting history of Wisconsin towns, including Kiel, once known as the [Wooden Shoes Capital of Wisconsin](#), and [Pleasant Ridge](#), a community near present-day Beetown founded by the formerly enslaved Shepard family that became home to many other freed and escaped enslaved people.

“Recollection Wisconsin is like a research fast lane for historic images. It gets you there so much faster. Plus, through its collections and curation, you can find many entertaining side trips to places you never expected to go.”

- Andy Soth, public television producer

In October, we launched a National Archives Month Image of the Day campaign on social media. We selected an image for each weekday, drawing from a diverse set of our content partners in all parts of the state, from large and small institutions. The images we selected were intended to spark inquiry from students and tie into the themes and historical topics that teachers told us they struggle to find primary sources to support. Images in the campaign ranged from immigration and settlement, Indigenous history, women in Wisconsin, industry and agriculture, to just plain fun. You can see the entire campaign [on our website](#).

This work was made possible by guidance from Recollection Wisconsin’s Education Advisory Committee, including experts from DPI, PBS Wisconsin, Wisconsin Historical Society, and Madison and Milwaukee public schools. Funding for this project was provided by the Green Bay Packers Foundation, the Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, and the Alberta S. Kimball-Mary L. Anhaltzer Foundation.

Making Digital Projects Accessible to All: The Digital Readiness Toolkit

In June 2022, we launched a revised and expanded [Digital Readiness Toolkit](#). This guide to creating and tending a digital collection was developed specifically to meet the needs of small cultural heritage organizations and is freely available for anyone to use. The Toolkit comprises practical tools, guidelines, templates, and further reading for seven key activities of cultural heritage digitization projects: Plan and Prioritize, Obtain Permissions, Digitize, Describe, Share, Store and Maintain, and Evaluate. Each of the Toolkit’s seven focus areas is organized into three

levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. This tiered structure is a way to break down a large and complex process into achievable steps.

“Overall, the Toolkit is excellent and really helps guide through all the complex parts - making you really think about "Why" you are even doing the project and keeping it in focus.”

- Theresa Hebert, Museum Coordinator, Highground Veterans Memorial Park

The Toolkit follows the structure of the [Digital Readiness Levels](#), a framework designed to help small, rural, or under-resourced public history organizations plan and implement digital projects in order to increase access to their unique collections.

Every stage of the Toolkit's development, from planning to design to review to testing, was driven by community input, and we are grateful to everyone who contributed.

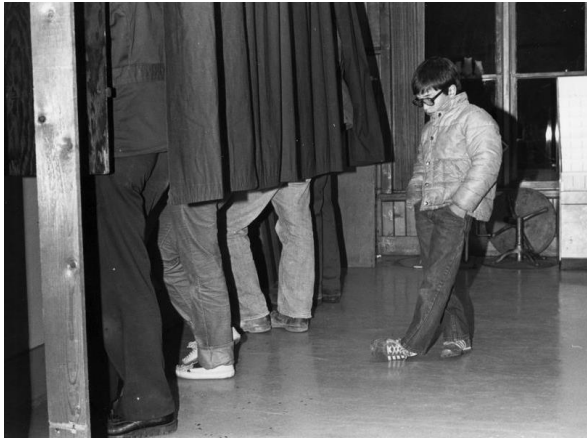
With many thanks to our national partners, we're already working on the next version of the Toolkit! We're working with the Community Archiving Workshop and the Association of Moving Image Archivists to incorporate much-needed guidance for audiovisual collections and testing a self-assessment tool with national partners. Look for this updated version of the Toolkit later in 2023.

This work was supported in part by grants to WiLS, in partnership with Recollection Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society, from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

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.

One way we achieve this is by creating and sharing [exhibits](#), online stories that pair research with primary sources from our Content Partners' collections.



[Young boy in polling place](#), ca. 1975–ca. 1990.
UW–Madison Archives.

The first Wisconsin election is believed to have taken place in Green Bay in 1825, when only white male citizens over the age of 21 were allowed to vote. After Wisconsin was made a territory in 1836, one of the legislature’s first acts was to set out rules for elections. The online exhibit [Elections in Wisconsin](#) showcases early election petitions, photos of citizen participation, and even a recipe for Election Cake.

Created by guest curator Autumn Wolter, intern at the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior, Wisconsin, the [Major Richard Bong](#)

[\(1920-1945\)](#) online exhibit shines a light on the life and Army Air Corps service of Richard (Dick) Ira Bong, America’s Ace of Aces. Through historical photos, the exhibit tells the story of Bong's life, including his family, childhood, military service, decorations, and more.

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. Since 2017, we’ve been working to spotlight Wisconsin cities, towns, and villages across the state through our #MainStreetMonday Facebook series. These sets of historical images from or about a Wisconsin town or city which often inspire current and past residents to share their memories, engage with others commenters, or ask questions. In 2022, we highlighted images from [Mineral Point](#), [Crandon](#), [Wilmot](#), [Alma](#), [Prairie du Chien](#), [Eastman](#), [Madison](#), [Saukville](#), [Cazenovia](#), and [Portage](#).

The images from Madison’s past prompted one user to share, “These were wonderful pics. Thanks for sharing. I wish I had taken more pics when I was young. I had to have visited State Street 1000 times in the 70s. It was our hub. I bought shoes, home decor, got my hair cut downtown, shot pool...Life was good & filled with adventure then.” The flashback to Cazenovia’s Main Street and a [1910 image of a building](#) caught the eye of one Recollection Wisconsin community member; he had purchased [that same building in 2021!](#)



[View of Mineral Point](#), 1864.
Mineral Point Public Library Archives.



[Mansion Street during ice storm, Mauston, 1922.](#)
Mauston Public Library / Juneau County Historical Society.

We also engaged a lot of Wisconsinites when we commemorated the [100-year anniversary of a devastating ice storm](#) that impacted large parts of Wisconsin with images from Kiel, Holmen, Wilton, New Lisbon, and Mauston, which happened to be the same day in 2022 when Wisconsin was experiencing yet another ice storm!

“Since making part of our oral history collection available via Recollection Wisconsin, I have been able to send multiple family members to the site to hear their relatives' stories. It's made it so much easier for them to access the recordings and saved us so much staff time....A couple from Tennessee came in to visit and the woman thought that her dad had interviewed with us prior to his death, but she wasn't sure. I was able to look him up and find that he was one of the histories available on Recollection Wisconsin. She was moved to tears that her dad's story was available online and she was so excited that she could send the link out to all her family members.”

- Brianna Fiandt, Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center (Superior)

Keeping the Past Alive for the Future: Preserving Audiovisual Collections

Arising from Recollection Wisconsin's [work](#) with the Community Archiving Workshop in 2019-2021, Recollection Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, is pleased to offer [audiovisual lending kits](#) for use in cultural heritage organizations. The options include a Film Inspection Kit for examining 8mm or 16mm film and a Wolverine Film Scanner for reformatting 8mm and Super8 film.

The Community Archiving Workshop project also tapped into the vast expertise of consultant Bronwen Masemann to develop three case studies showing how Wisconsin archives and museums took concrete steps to enhance the preservation of their audiovisual collections:

- [Preserving At-Risk Audiocassettes: A Case Study of the History Museum at the Castle in Appleton, Wisconsin](#)
- [Preserving At-Risk Acetate Reel to Reel Audio Recordings: A Case Study of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Special Collections and Archives](#)
- [Preserving At-Risk 16mm Acetate Films: A Case Study of the Milwaukee Public Museum](#)

"The 8mm and 16mm film inspection kit was incredibly useful to the Center's blossoming moving image film collection. Having access to winding arms and splicing equipment allowed me not only to transfer our newly acquired films from rusting metal film reels to new archival cores and cans, but also to add fresh leaders and tails, and to repair any fragile or damaged areas. It was wonderful to have a chance to get hands-on experience and familiarity with both the equipment and the films themselves."

- Gil Taylor, Center for Railroad Photography and Art

This work was supported in part by grants to the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Digital Equity Project: Advancing Justice in American Libraries



DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF AMERICA

In July 2022, the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) [announced](#) the Digital Equity Project, supported by the Mellon Foundation. Recollection Wisconsin, along with UW-Milwaukee Libraries, is excited to be an initial partner in this new effort to advance racial justice in American libraries. Other partners in the Digital Equity Project Community of Practice include the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Seattle Public Library. Each of these organizations will pursue a project dedicated to digital capacity building.

The Recollection Wisconsin/University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries project is a partnership with the Milwaukee Women's Art Library (MWAL), a collection of papers from local women and nonbinary artists, originally privately stewarded and recently donated to UWM Libraries.

The project [kicked off](#) in November 2022 when [Celeste Contreras](#) was hired to serve as Community Ambassador to both build the collection and represent the community of women and nonbinary artists. She'll spend the next year seeking to understand the perspectives and concerns of artists, helping UWM assess their own gift and donation practices and policy infrastructures, documenting artistic practice and the networks that make up the MWAL community, and assisting UWM in serving the MWAL community overall. She'll also share the importance of preserving community history - in whatever shape that might take - and provide tools, resources, and training for community members to preserve their own history.

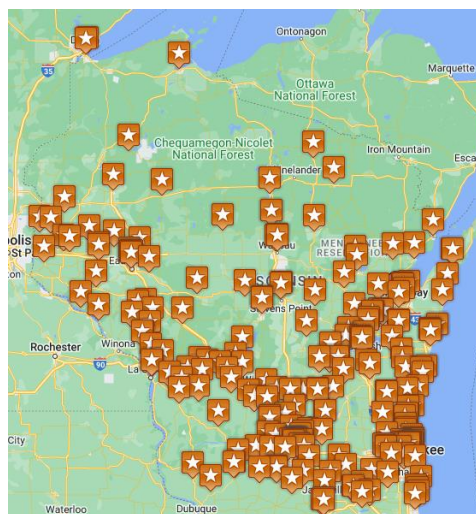
This partnership bridges the gap between institutional support and grassroots community-led collection-building and builds trust between small community organizations and large, established institutions like UWM. Recollection Wisconsin will provide guidance on personal digital archiving,

community digitization efforts, and make digital projects knowledge accessible to a wide range of practitioners in the Milwaukee artists' community.

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:

- 248 [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 collection growth and maintenance
- 7 members of our [Education Advisory Committee](#) inform our outreach efforts to connect K12 educators with Content Partners' materials



Recollection Wisconsin Content Partners

And we are always helping this community grow. In 2022, we helped bring local historical collections into Recollection Wisconsin from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (Green Bay), South Milwaukee Public Library, and Carthage College (Kenosha). We also partnered with Winnefox Library System to bring in collections from many of their member libraries: Brandon Public Library, Caestecker Public Library (Green Lake), Oshkosh Public Library, Patterson Memorial Library (Wild Rose), and Spillman Public Library (North Fond Du Lac).

We shared our work with the cultural heritage community across the state in presentations for the Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's library media specialist community, the Wisconsin Historical Society Local History and Historic Preservation conference, the Wisconsin Council for Local History Capitol Chapter, and the Midwest Archives Conference. and in conference exhibits at the Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies (WCSS), School Leaders Advancing Technology in Education (SLATE), and the Wisconsin Educational Media and Technology Association (WEMTA).

Recollection Wisconsin has also been key in assisting others with digital collections advancement and building collaborations at regional and national levels. In 2022, we reached beyond Wisconsin to share our expertise with other DPLA Hubs. We presented an interactive workshop for the Sunshine State Digital Network (Florida), on respectful community engagement, along with

Recollection Wisconsin Board chair Ann Hanlon (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) and Erin F.H. Hughes, Mukurtu Hub Manager with WiLS. At the annual meeting of Digital Commonwealth (Massachusetts), we participated in a panel discussion on approaches to community engagement for academic archives. For the Digital Library of Georgia, we shared guidance on copyright and privacy issues for high school yearbooks. Nationally, we highlighted the Digital Readiness Toolkit with DPLA's hub network in a brown-bag session with Kelli Hix of AMIA. Recollection Wisconsin continues to build a reputation as a source for digital projects expertise!

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 [Digital Readiness Community of Practice](#) mailing list.
- Use our [contact form](#), email us at info@recollectionwisconsin.org to get in touch, or contact us individually. We'd love to hear from you!



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