



PRINCETON WI HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Spring 2024 NEWSLETTER

Join us for another year of preserving and promoting local history!

In this issue:

Christmas in Princeton
Annual Holiday Meeting & Election
Phase II Museum Renovation Progress
History Textbook Grant
Washing Machines Return Home
Digging History: Metal Detecting with Jim Winter
Sneak Peek: Bentley Pharmacy Artifacts
Last Chance to Fill the Time Capsule
Upcoming Events and Meetings

Princeton Historical Society and Folklore Museum
630-632 W. Water Street • PO Box 71 • Princeton, Wisconsin 54968
920-295-9008 • princetonhistsociety@gmail.com
princetonwihistoricalsociety.org

Christmas in Princeton



Thank you to everyone who supported us during Christmas in Princeton! Always held on the weekend after Thanksgiving, this beloved Princeton tradition is a hugely busy time for us.

This was Dave Dugenski's last year playing Santa for the kids, thank you Dave! If anyone wants to be Santa next year, let us know.

Mrs. Claus's Kitchen was again a success. The net profit from our holiday concessions was \$1,059.53. Thank you to the Princeton school for use of their kitchen and equipment, thank you to the Chamber for organizing the craft fair at which we serve, thank you to all of our volunteer bakers, and thank you to food servers Mike and Chris Goulet, Vickie Wielgosh, Laura Skalitzky, Mr. Cheeks, and the National Honor Society student volunteers:

Sarabeth Hawkins, Hailey Treder, Sophie Buslaff, Abby Cattanach, Lane Schoebel, and Kiley Wekwerth.



Annual Holiday Meeting & Election

Thank you to all who attended our Jan. 13th holiday meeting at Mekan River Outfitters! Illness and weather pushed the date back, but didn't stop us. Along with fellowship and speeches of gratitude, we held our officer elections and heard some wonderful news:

- Mike Lehner pledged all of his Green Lake boat tour tips for 2024 to us!

Mashuda Construction will match this up to \$10,000, Tank Tech will match this up to \$500, and the Princeton Chamber will match this up to \$500!

- Marjory Mlodzik pledged a \$10,000 donation to us!

We are so incredibly grateful for their support— and for yours!



2024 PHS Officers

All 2023 Board Members were re-elected. Mike Goulet will remain President, Jim Frasier will remain Vice President and Museum Director, Chris Frasier will remain Treasurer, and Vickie Wielgosh will remain Director of the Museum Expansion. Chris Goulet was added to the Board as Director of Fundraising and Grants. Laura Skalitzky chose to step down as Secretary and remain a board member at large (though she will still do PHS newsletters). Ron Hatfield generously agreed to be elected Secretary in her place.



Left: The meal served by Mekan's was a delicious, creamy, deconstructed chicken pot pie with wild rice, and mini ice cream sundaes for dessert.

Below: PHS President Mike Goulet gave a photo presentation of our 2023 events and thanks volunteers.



LAST CHANCE to Contribute to the Time Capsule!

For several months in 2023, in honor of Princeton's 175th birthday, we asked people to bring in contributions to a time capsule. On January 22nd, PHS President Mike Goulet visited Princeton 5th graders to talk about the project.

Mike asked kids to create their own message to send into the future. Each student got a double-sided worksheet to fill out, with prompts like, "I feel happy about..." and "In 25 years, I will be." These worksheets were added to our time capsule.

By helping students understand the connection between the present and future, kids also learn to appreciate history—because today's present is tomorrow's past. We hope that many of these students will be around when we open the time capsule for Wisconsin and Princeton's 200th birthday in 2048.

Would you like to add something to the time capsule? We will have one more event to help you create and submit contributions.

Join us at the Princeton Public Library on Saturday March 9th, from 10am-Noon for the "Last Chance to Fill the Time Capsule!" All ages are welcome, and refreshments will be served.

We will have the same worksheets that the 5th graders have available for you, but we also encourage you to bring your own letters, photos, small objects, or even digital content (on a USB drive or SD card or even on your phone).

AT THIS MOMENT IN TIME...
Describe yourself and your thoughts right now, in Spring 2024.
Our time capsule is being created by the Princeton Historical Society, with PHSR help. The time capsule will be opened in 2048, for Princeton's 200th birthday.

My Name is: _____ I look like this: _____

My Favorite Things About Princeton Are: _____

My Favorite Things to Do Are: _____

Two Goals I Have Are: _____

AT THIS MOMENT IN TIME...
Describe yourself and your thoughts right now, in Spring 2024.
We hope to attach your pictures, letters, and more to this sheet!

I feel happy about: _____

I feel worried about: _____

Food: _____
Drink: _____
Sport: _____
Song: _____
Music: _____
TV Show: _____
Book: _____



The time capsule itself is a large metal shipping box which once belonged to Lee Mevis, who attended college at UW Madison in the 1960s. His parents would fill the container with "care package" items and ship it to Lee, who would mail it back to be refilled.

PHASE II MUSEUM PROGRESS

When we held the grand opening of our Folklore Museum in the summer of 2021, we knew that the larger, back half of the museum would be completed “some day.” Nobody (except perhaps the ever-persistent Vickie Wielgosh) thought it might be as soon as 2024.

Yet here we are— thanks to the amazing volunteers helping us! In recent months, the skeletal walls have been framed in, wiring completed, heating installed, insulation stuffed under floors inch by inch, drywall installed pound by aching pound, mud applied, and paint sprayed on. It’s really happening! We still need to pay for HVAC and electrical work, but so much progress has been made.

Many thanks to Owen Purvis for all of his incredibly hard work on this project, as well as the following volunteers:

Dan Ladwig, painter; Mike Janssen, drywall expert; Mudding crew and general labor Chris Frasier, Jim Frasier, Mike Goulet, Norb Wiancki, Susan Gorr, Vickie Wielgosh; and wonderful painters including many of the above, plus Jeff Murphy, Carla Konen, Mary and Mark Lind, and Mary Fritsch-Hatfield.

Below: Several thousand pounds of drywall sheets were carried in by hand by herculean volunteers.

From left to right: Jim Frasier, Owen Purvis, Richard “Poncho” Treder and daughter Madeline, Mike Goulet, Kevin Soda, and Max Soda.



Above: PHS hired Berlin handyman Randy Koscher to stuff insulation and install drywall.

Below: PHS President Mike Goulet rises above the chaos as Vickie Wielgosh directs traffic.



PHASE II MUSEUM PROGRESS CONTINUED...

Will we actually open Phase II of the museum this summer? Maybe. The toughest part of the construction is almost done, and we will soon be able to start with the “pretty” parts, but even those take time.

Each exhibit has unique needs. First, facades, shelving, extra-large artifacts, and display cases go in. Then the vignettes need to be “dressed” with period-appropriate materials and artifacts. Photos have to be printed and framed, and each photo and artifact needs appropriate labels and signage.

Finally, we can add technology to the exhibits— touch screens, screens with ongoing photo presentations, phones with audio recordings narrating scenes, etc.

Ten exhibits will go into this space: Schools, Churches, Community Service, Agriculture, Industry, Government, Arts & Entertainment, Disasters & Emergency Services, Communications, and Native American History & Nature. Our “Service to County” exhibit in the space connecting Phase I and Phase II will finally be completed. There will also be a donor appreciation wall. We are currently considering naming exhibits after sponsors. For example, “The Smith Family Agricultural Exhibit.” Please contact us if this is of interest to you! We are also looking for the following objects and artifacts:

WANTED:

- A stained glass window and at least 11 feet of communion rail
—from a local church would be best.
- Sturdy shelving.
- Local Native American artifacts—stone tools or arrowheads, etc.
- Vintage and antique communications equipment, preferably from the Princeton area. Examples: switch board, early crank type wall phones, a telegraph, early cell phones, etc.
- Vintage fishing equipment, and anything to do with sturgeon



Above: Norb Wianecki mudds drywall.
Middle: The painting crew hams it up.
Bottom: Owen Purvis with our new ceiling (some assembly required).





WI History at School:

Grants For New Wisconsin History Textbooks

One of the most important things we can do as a Historical Society is to help ensure that kids learn about and appreciate local history. That's why PHS board member Chris Goulet wrote a grant asking for help to purchase of brand new Wisconsin history textbooks for Princeton 4th grade students. These kids have been using beat-up books that are decades old. Two entities responded to Chris's request: the Oshkosh Community Foundation and the Webster Foundation. Together they have donated \$1,500 to help us buy twenty-five student copies and two teacher copies of "*Wisconsin: Our State, Our Story*," written by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Full color and visually stunning, these books cover a period from our state's earliest Native American history all the way up through the impact of 9/11. Good job, Chris! Jim Frasier was also a driving force behind the textbook project.

Spin (Re)Cycle: Washing Machines Return Home

Over the years, our little museum has accumulated an over-abundance of antique washing machines. The beautiful but bulky beasts were taking up quite a bit of space, while none of them have any close ties to Princeton history.

Thus, in November 2023, PHS Vice President Jim Frasier wrote to Speed Queen (a.k.a Alliance Laundry) in Ripon, to see if they had any desire to take ownership of four washing machines. They were delighted to accept, and gave us a generous \$500 donation in return. Who could have guessed that airing our dirty laundry would have such benefits?

The Anchor Brand "Big 3" Barlow and Seelig washing machine in the bottom photo here dates from around 1915. It has a locking lid and electric "vacuum" power which pushed a primitive bowl-shaped agitator up and down. The copper drums in these machines were later replaced by galvanized ones. Barlow and Seelig went on to found Speed Queen in 1928.

The washing machine in the top photo being loaded onto the truck for delivery to Ripon dates from about 1950.

Many thanks to Richard May for helping us store and haul these!



Richard May (left) and Jim Frasier (right)



Digging History

Discovering & Preserving Artifacts with Jim Winter

We are working with the Princeton Public Library to bring you a great program about saving history through metal detecting. Professional metal detectorist Jim Winter, better known to many as the Driftless Digger, has a passion for local history, and researches his finds extensively. He takes pride in saving history that would otherwise rust away or be lost forever.



Mr. Winter will be metal detecting properties in the Princeton area April 25th and 26th, then presenting his finds on Saturday, April 27th at 11am at the Princeton Library.

Members of the Princeton Historical Society will talk about the context in which they were found, and the history of the land he detected.

Thank you to Naomi and Ernie Pulvermacher for helping to sponsor Mr. Winter's stay at their Air BnB, Huckleberry Hideout, where Mr. Winter will also be doing some detecting. This farm property is also the location of the former St. Marie Catholic church and other early sites.

If you are interested in having your property metal detected, Mr. Winter may be available to do that. There is no charge. Please contact us or Mr. Winter directly at 608-712-3406 or jimwinter34@gmail.com. He has a simple form for people to sign that keeps everybody free from liability. You can decide beforehand who will keep anything found. Please RSVP soon— in addition to working on the Pulvermacher farm, he is already booked to detect at two properties in Berlin as well as at Jerry Disterhaft's residence.

Mr. Winter is based out of Platteville, WI, and has been featured on Channel 15 WMTV, in the Wisconsin State Journal, in the LaCrosse Tribune, and in many other publications.



Bentley's: Pharmacy & Family Legacy

Many longtime Princeton residents have been going to Bentley Pharmacy their entire lives. Now the business is closing up. While another pharmacy will take over, the Bentley name and legacy will be preserved in our museum. So will many artifacts, generously donated by Pat Bentley, who has invited us to take what we wish from his basement treasure trove.

We hope that Pat will be able to speak at one of our upcoming meetings, at which time we will also present some of the artifacts we found here. Stay tuned for more on this story!

Upcoming Events

Museum Open Saturdays
11am-3pm
May—October

PHS Member Meetings

All membership meetings are held at the PHS Folklore Museum at **6pm on the third Monday of each month, May-Oct.**

We will continue our tradition of having a local guest speaker at each meeting who will talk about their lives and memories in Princeton. These are recorded for posterity.

6pm Meeting Dates

May 20th, June 17th, July 15th,
Aug. 19th, Sept. 16th, Oct. 21st

Something's Fishy at the Museum!

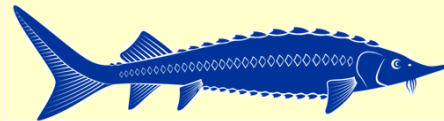
Sturgeon Celebration

Sat. April 13th, 11-1

Join us in celebrating one of Princeton's newest traditions, which in turn celebrates one of Wisconsin's oldest— the annual sturgeon spawn.

Begun at the Princeton Library, the Sturgeon Celebration is a day of wildlife exhibits, guest speakers, and crafts. We're participating by opening our museum a month early to give tours, sell Princeton and sturgeon themed souvenirs, and maybe even have some games for families.

Come on down and check out our gift shop, participate in a minnow race, and get a sneak peek at our museum expansion project!



DON'T FORGET Sat. March 9th, 10am-Noon at the Library : Last Chance to Fill the **Time Capsule**
FORGET Sat. April 27th, 11am at the Library: **Digging History** with Jim Winter

Come to our spring fundraiser event!

Meat Raffle

Sat. May 25th, 1pm

at the Western House Bar & Grill



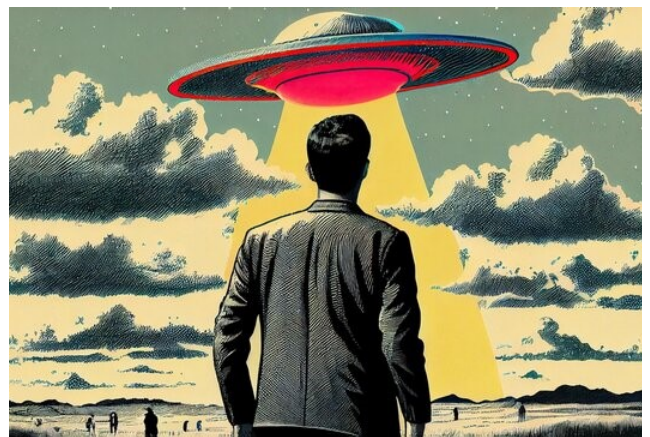
Join us at the Western House (1002 W Main St, Princeton) for a great time!

This is your chance to get some great cuts of meat (and other prizes) for a very low price.

Want to donate a raffle basket or prize?

Please contact us!

Our fall meat raffle will be Sept. 28th at Beer Belly's.



Stay Tuned for an Out-of-This World
Summer Dinner Lecture

Visit Our New Website!
princetonwihistoricalsociety.org

**DON'T FORGET
TO PAY YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
DUES**



If you didn't get a Christmas card from us with membership information, please let us know and we'll add you to our mailing list!

Don't Forget to "Like" Us on Facebook!



Volunteers Wanted
WE NEED YOU!

Please call 920-295-9008 for more information on volunteering to staff our museums, help with raffles and food booth fundraisers, construction, and more!

Contact Us!

Have a question about local history, genealogy, or our organization?

Interested in donating?
Want a topic featured in the next newsletter?
Please let us know!

princetonhistsociety@gmail.com

630 West Water Street

PO Box 71

Princeton, Wisconsin 54968

or call 920-295-9008

VISIT OUR GIFT SHOP



If we're closed, call 920-295-9008 and we'll let you in!

8X10"
prints of historic
Princeton
photos are only
\$5.00