

# FOCUS ON STORYTELLING

After a day in a new Wisconsin history museum, visitors will see the people and places around them through entirely new eyes. It will be a place where all Wisconsinites will find themselves part of the story and be able to participate in a dialogue about “What Makes Wisconsin, Wisconsin?” The museum will immerse guests in the lives of citizens past and present and excite them with authentic objects and modern technology. Unlike traditional museums focused on a journey through time, Wisconsin’s museum will set itself apart with a thematic experience. This flexible approach will allow the museum to evolve as the state evolves, forge strong bonds with local communities and assure that it always remains relevant. This unforgettable museum experience will be centered on the following five themes:

## Our history is shaped by our unique mix of people.

**W**isconsin has long been home to one of the largest and most diverse American Indian populations east of the Mississippi, with 12 vibrant nations located within the state’s borders. In addition, Yankee and African American migrants, European immigrants, and people arriving from Asia and Latin America have made major contributions to our history, our institutions, and our cultural life.

To emphasize this point, ALL people will see themselves reflected in the new museum, and their stories and perspectives — from the state’s formative days through today — will be included across all storylines. American Indians, for example, will be featured throughout the museum, and the vital role women have played in Wisconsin will comprise half of the stories told.



*Clockwise from top left: WHI IDs 71433, 7813, 130057, 109827*



“This museum can play an active role in educating Wisconsin residents on the long history of Mexican/Latino settlement in the state and work to demystify the claim that this migration is new, foreign, or to be feared.”

**Sergio Gonzalez**, Author of “Mexicans In Wisconsin”



Schooners docked on Milwaukee River. WHI ID 2082

## Our natural resources are key to our past and future, and water is at the heart of our story.

**W**isconsin's location between major waterways and its varied landscapes and climate have determined our livelihoods and affected how we think about the environment. Getaways "Up North" to enjoy time away by the lake are a longtime and beloved tradition in our state. It is no surprise that Wisconsin has been home to some of the greatest national thinkers about the ways humans interact with the land, such as Aldo Leopold, John Muir and Gaylord Nelson.

Finding the right way to manage our natural resources will be critical to the next chapter of our story. By telling the stories of how our many waterways and our environment are important to all aspects of life in Wisconsin, the new museum will play a key role in helping our residents and leaders make informed decisions and find a path toward a sustainable and prosperous future.



Rhineland hotel and resort owners. WHI ID 37927

## We build community by playing together.

**O**ur social culture of food and drink and music and entertainment originated with Central European immigrants but grew to create a common bond among Wisconsinites regardless of ethnicity. From dances to church picnics to Friday night fish fries (or boils) to scores of ethnic festivals, we love to gather and celebrate our heritage.

Our enjoyment of sports and games began with early Native residents, and in recent decades we have elevated our support for our sports teams to an art form (we Cheeseheads love to tailgate!). Likewise, our love of the outdoors is reflected in a deep culture of hunting, fishing, camping, and of course, anything related to winter sports and recreation.

Visitors to the new museum will be able to enjoy these stories in exciting ways. A demonstration kitchen will allow heritage recipes to be prepared on site, while visitors may also enjoy a peek inside an authentic Northwoods cabin.





1929: Republican Party's 75th anniversary in Ripon. WHI ID 24257



1897: "Fighting Bob" La Follette in Cumberland. WHI ID 3562

## We are a laboratory of democracy.

**T**hroughout our history, Wisconsin citizens have vigorously debated rights and responsibilities and formed groups to find innovative solutions to social problems. Wisconsinites helped found the Republican Party, created the Progressive movement, and played a pioneering role in shaping the Social Security Act, workers' compensation, welfare reform, school voucher programs and collective bargaining with public unions, making them central figures in national political debates up to the present day.

Conveniently located across the street from the State Capitol, the new museum will offer a valuable opportunity to build a powerful civics center for the state. Guests will be able to "time travel" to key moments in Wisconsin history by listening to audio, watching video or reading newspaper accounts from the time. Surveys have shown that Americans consider museums their most trustworthy source of information, rating them higher than newspapers, government, or college professors. The Society's museum will honor that trust by objectively telling stories that will explain how we got to where we are today, and arming visitors with important information that will inform healthy debate as our state moves into the future.



1912: Oshkosh Equal Suffrage League 4th of July float. WHI ID 5157



1966: Workers march from Wautoma to Madison. WHI ID 93386





*Clockwise from top left: WHI IDs 33402, 85574, 2406, 6638*

## We are America's Dairyland and a center for industrial innovation.

**W**isconsin's wealth of natural resources and the ingenuity of its people have shaped its diversified and distinctive economic base. Although the state's primary identity is rightfully known as America's Dairyland, its character is also forged by agricultural diversity, mining and forest industries, maritime commerce, manufacturing, tourism, and emerging technologies. In the new museum, the Society will have the space to be able to display large objects from its internationally known collection — such as its 1969 Oscar Mayer Wienermobile, 1941 Harley-Davidson motorcycle or 1948 Nash Ambassador automobile, or other artifacts that the Society will now be able to collect. These unique gems will allow visitors to immerse themselves in these important stories in fun and memorable ways, and allow them to understand and appreciate the impressive extent of Wisconsin's history of innovation.

**To learn more about the new museum campaign or to join us, please contact us:**

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