



The Past Through Tomorrow: Empowering Digital History at the Library

Kristen Whitson - *WiLS/Recollection Wisconsin*

Steven Rice - *Door County Historical Museum*

Beth Renstrom - *Sturgeon Bay Historical Society*



Agenda



- Who we are
- Foundations and Recollection Wisconsin
- Digital Readiness Community of Practice
- Door County Historical Museum
- Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation
- Q & A

Who we are



- **Kristen Whitson**
Digital Projects Specialist, WiLS/Recollection Wisconsin
- **Steven Rice**
Museum and Archives Manager, Door County Historical Museum
and Door County Archives
- **Beth Renstrom**
Executive Director, Granary Project, Sturgeon Bay Historical Society

What is Recollection Wisconsin?



recollection



W I S C O N S I N

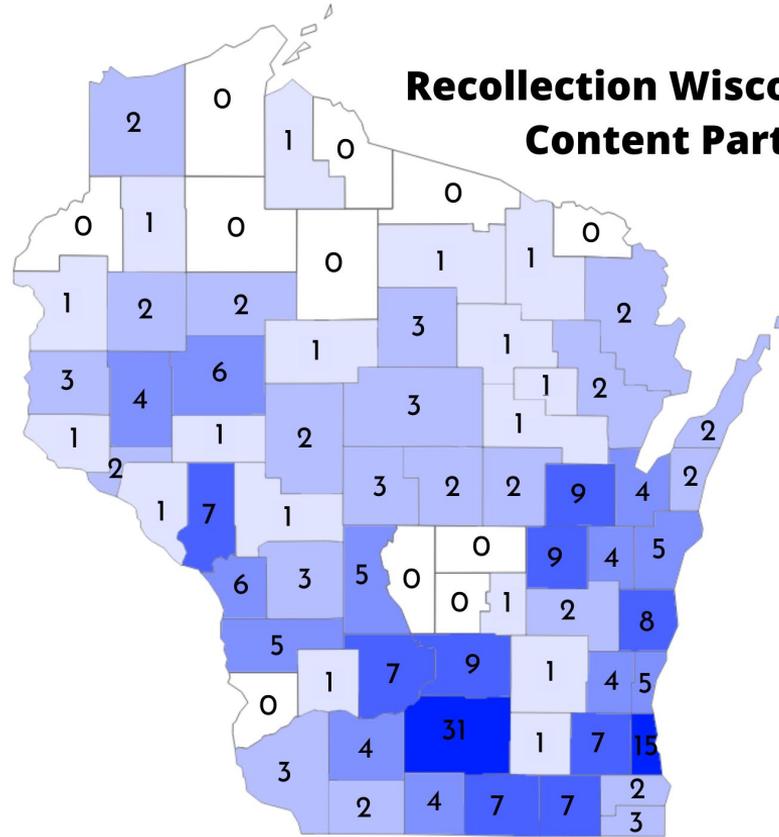
<http://recollectionwisconsin.org>

A collaborative program





Recollection Wisconsin Content Partners



Digital Readiness and the Community of Practice



<https://recollectionwisconsin.org/cop>

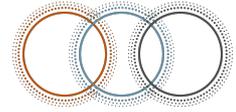
NHPRC-funded project (thank you, NHPRC!)

- Planning Grant - July-December 2019
- Implementation Grant - October 2020-September 2021

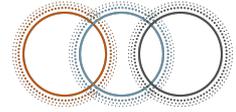
Partners: WiLS, Wisconsin Historical Society, Recollection Wisconsin, & Launch Committee



Digital Readiness and the Community of Practice

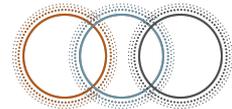


Digital Readiness Resources



- [Digital Readiness Levels](#)
- [Digital Readiness Fairs](#)
- [Digital Projects Toolkit](#) + Implementation Guide
- [Glossary](#)
- [Case Studies](#)

Digital Readiness Levels



Focus Area	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Plan and Prioritize	Set goals for your digital work that fit your organization's mission and policies. Revise existing policies to include digital work, or adopt a separate digital mission statement.	Identify content you want to share in digital format based on your organization's goals, mission and policies. Identify potential partners, resources, tools and platforms to meet your goals.	Make a plan for your digital project with timelines, roles, activities, goals and required resources. Share with partners participating in your project.
Obtain Permissions	Create and use permission forms and donor agreements, or modify existing ones, that include specific language for the use of born-digital or digitized collections.	Assess collection for copyright status. Identify collections items with other access restrictions or concerns, including items with privacy, ethical or cultural considerations.	Assign rights statements or Creative Commons licenses for collection items to be publicly shared online. Develop and share your organizational takedown policy and, if applicable, a statement on harmful content.
Digitize	Identify standards and procedures to be used to digitize physical materials or process born-digital content.	Undertake digitization or born-digital processing work either in-house or with an appropriate vendor or partner using identified standards.	Use or advocate for a quality control checklist to review digitized or born-digital content to confirm it meets identified standards.
Describe	Create and maintain a collection-level inventory of digital content. Identify metadata standards to be used for digital collections.	Using identified standards, create descriptive metadata for collection items to be shared online. Adopt a consistent file-naming convention.	Create expanded item-level metadata, using controlled vocabularies and a data dictionary.
Share	Gather and evaluate digital content. Organize and move content and associated descriptive information to a centralized location using a consistent folder and file organization scheme.	Review access goals and options for providing access to content. Choose a system or platform that meets your goals.	Make item-level metadata and content available for discovery and repurposing. Follow accessibility standards for online content including alt text, transcripts and other accessibility best practices.
Store and Maintain	Store two copies of each unmodified archival file and related metadata. Check storage media annually and refresh as needed.	Store three copies of each archival file and related metadata. One copy should be stored off-site. Check and refresh storage media on a regular schedule.	Plan for future storage needs as your collection grows. Use software tools to check file integrity.
Evaluate	Identify primary users and ways to engage them in your digital collections.	Collect usage data. Consider using analytics tools, social media, or research inquiries to gather use stories.	Share your story with other practitioners to build community around digital work. Use data to inform future collection development work, outreach and programming.

Check As You Go



As you move towards a new level in any of the focus areas, consider the following questions:

Is it documented?

- Are new directions and decisions represented in existing policies, such as a collection development policy or a rights and reproductions policy? Do policies need to be revised or do new policies need to be created?
- Are new procedures or processes written down, such as steps for using a scanner or standards for how to describe content? Is there enough information provided that someone new to the organization would be able to carry out these processes on their own?
- Are partnerships or arrangements with other parties, such as a digitization vendor or a content contributor, documented in some way, like a contract, Memorandum of Understanding, or letter of commitment?

Is it sustainable?

- Is there a plan for how this work will continue to be supported by staff and/or volunteers from year to year?
- What work needs to be done to maintain relationships with partners or collaborators?
- Is funding committed for any recurring costs, such as a cloud storage service?
- Are best practices and widely-adopted standards being used, so that digital work is “future proof”--that is, it's compatible with commonly-used platforms and systems?
- Is there an exit strategy for any tools or partnerships? For instance, can content be removed from a platform if necessary?

Is it appropriate, relevant and/or accessible?

- Are new digital initiatives in line with the organization's mission and values? Do digital initiatives reflect community needs and respect community priorities?
- If information is available publicly, is it violating any privacy, copyright or ethical considerations?
- Can all potential users access the content? What can be done to improve accessibility for people with disabilities?

Is it working?

- Are we doing what we set out to do? What were our goals and have we achieved them, partially or fully?
- What have we learned and what will we do differently next time?
- What lessons learned would be helpful to other organizations?
- Have we communicated our project decisions and progress to stakeholders and partners, including any funders?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Digital Readiness Levels was made possible by a grant to Recollection Wisconsin from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). Many thanks to the Digital Readiness Community of Practice Launch Committee and other experts who reviewed and provided feedback on drafts. The structure of the Levels is adapted from the [National Digital Stewardship Alliance Levels of Digital Preservation](#).

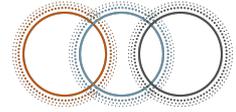




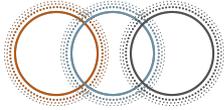
Slides, resources, and
recordings from the
**DIGITAL
READINESS
FAIRS**

<https://recollectionwisconsin.org/cop/digital-readiness-fairs>

Digital Readiness Resources



- Digital Projects Toolkit + Implementation Guide
- [Glossary](#)
- [Case Studies](#)



Concluding thoughts

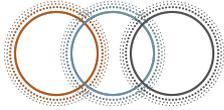
- [WiLS Ideas to Action Fund](#) as a resource
- Planning a project and having a community of practice provides support when wonderfully unexpected things come up
- **Don't let perfect be the enemy of good**

Door County Speaks: Bridging the Gap



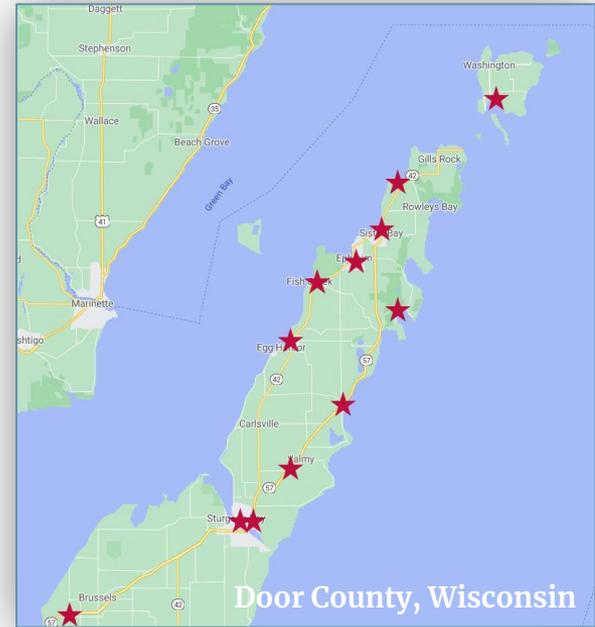
DOOR COUNTY **SPEAKS**



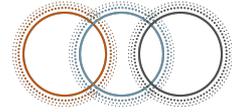


An Engaging Opportunity...

- A motivated, diverse historical community
- Limited community resources for oral history
- The Door County Library: a shared community resource on the move
- Solution: The *Door County Speaks* Oral History Kit



Building the Kit

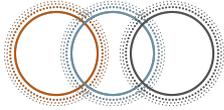


- Funding Sources: NFLS and WiLS
- The Swiss Army Kit: Attracting a wide audience
- Technology: Striking a balance
- Resources: Targeting different learners
- Building for the future
- Building for other institutions



**NICOLET FEDERATED
LIBRARY SYSTEM**

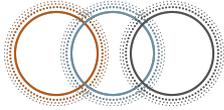




The Oral History Kit

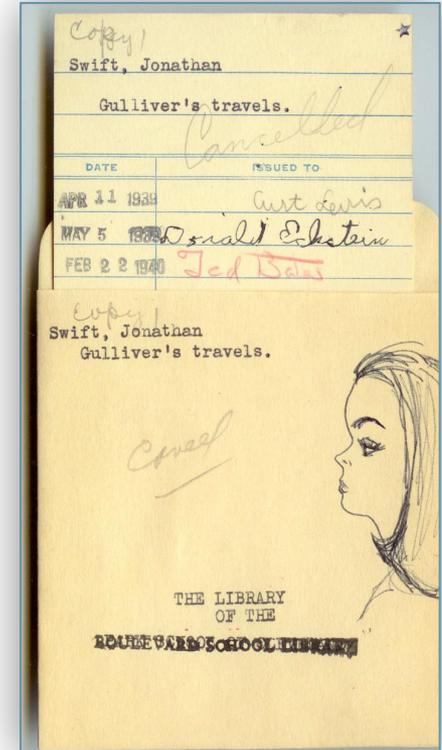
- Zoom H2n Audio Recorder w/Accessories
- Door County Speaks Oral History Binder
 - Quick Start Guides
 - Project Planning Guide
 - Equipment Guide
 - Copyright, Ethics and Donation Overview
 - Sample Donation and Release Forms
 - Further Reading
- Safe Transport

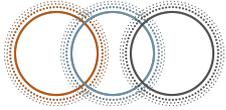




Checking Out the Kit

- Loan period: Two Weeks
- Renewals: Two Possible
- Cannot be ordered through Interlibrary Loan
- Cannot have holds placed online
- Held at library circulation desks
- Subject to special fines and replacement costs





Presenting the Kit

- Building confidence with library staff
- Tying in with existing programming: *Door County Reads*
- Releasing to the public
- Responding to COVID-19 and beyond





Lessons and Opportunities

- A flexible and scalable resource
- Enriching other projects
- Fostering lasting partnerships





Our Mission

The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation, Inc. was founded in 2016. We are a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preserving Sturgeon Bay's living history, which defines our community character and cultural evolution, for future generations through advocacy, preservation and education. We do this by saving, restoring, repurposing and sharing the story of Sturgeon Bay's authentic historic structures.

Preserving Sturgeon Bay, Preserving Door County

Wisconsin State Historic Registry 2017

National Historic Registry 2018

National Trust for Historic Preservation 2021



Beth Renstrom
Executive Director, Granary Project
Sturgeon Bay Historical Society



**Current project:
Rehabilitating and repurposing the
Door County Granary to serve as a
fully interpreted grain elevator, an
agricultural heritage museum, and a
cultural center for the community**



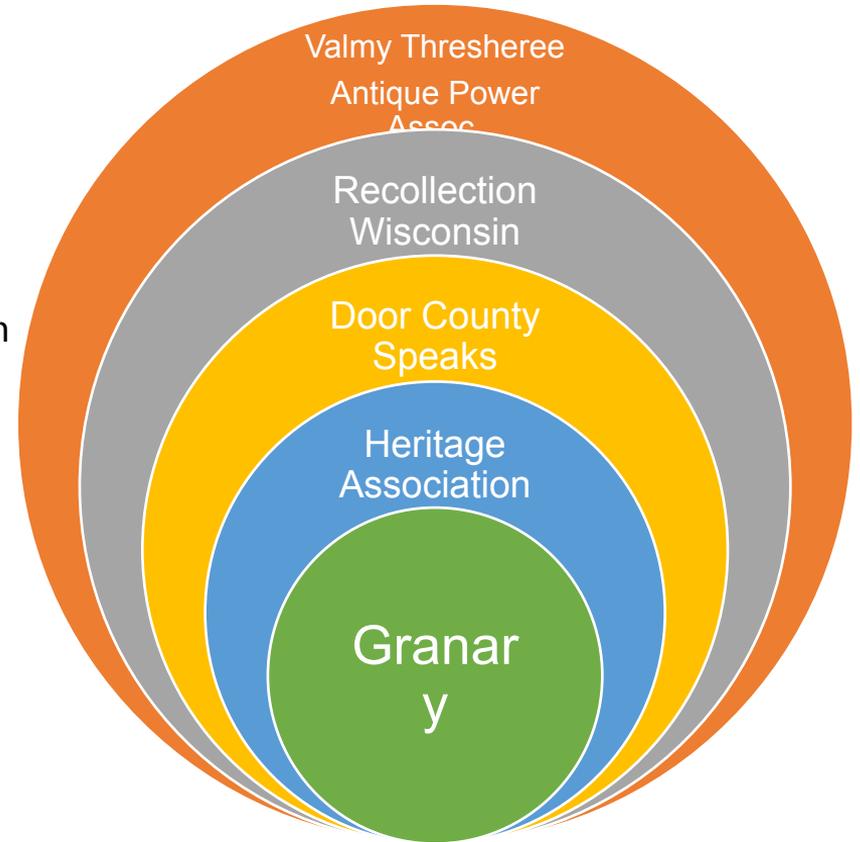
Granary Project

Led us to:

- Door County Heritage Community
- the Door County Speaks Project
- Recollection Wisconsin
- Northeast Antique Power Association

... and led us to an opportunity to capture history at

The Valmy Threshere



Valmy Threshere Process/Planning

- Obstacle: Limited time before the event
- Prep Work:
 - Dedicated one person to learning the Door County Speaks recording equipment
 - Created list of questions to facilitate conversation
 - Created oral history interview and permission for use form
 - Practice Session before the event (resulting in a great historical recording for the archives)
- Publicity:
 - Social media
 - Some traditional local news channels
- The Event:
 - Backup recording kit
 - Signage at the Door County Granary booth asking for stories
 - Quiet space to record



Results

- 🙄 No recordings at the event
- 😞 Lots of questions and interest, but people weren't ready to record in the spur of the moment
- 😊 Gathered contact information to follow up over the winter (non growing/harvesting season) to tell their stories
- 😍 Videos of several of the historic agriculture demonstrations
- 😎 Created a level of digital awareness and readiness in our organization and the community



Audio and Video Results



George Evenson, Door County
Historian
Audio captured by Dave
Kellems, SBHSF Volunteer



The 2021 Valmy Threshere, Northeast
Antique Power Association. Video captured by
Beth Renstrom, SBHSF Executive Director for
the Granary Project



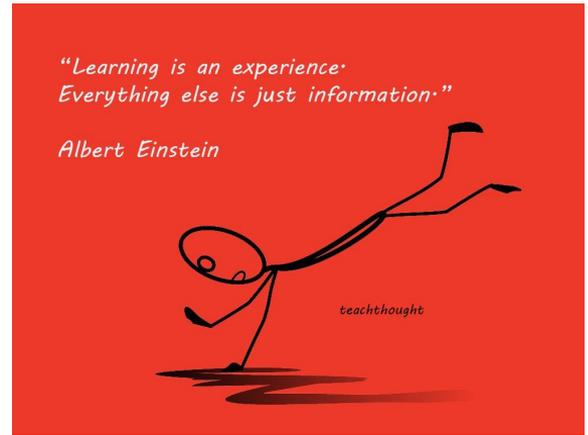
The big question: How do we keep, disburse, and provide access to these recordings?

Recollection Wisconsin!



Lessons learned

- More prep time would have been great
- Train multiple people on the recording equipment
- Set aside time for review and publication
- Take advantage of opportunities ‘Let’s record some video!’
- Unexpected results can lead to other opportunities
- If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.



Wrapping Up



- It won't be perfect, start anyway
- Community of practice and planning leave room for the unexpected
- Look for resources in places you might not expect - funding, partnerships - Recollection Wisconsin!

Contact Us



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Questions?