

1995 - 2025

Portage Historical Society

The Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Road • Portage WI 53901

Spring 2025 Newsletter

NEW MILITARY EXHIBIT

People have asked for it so we have done it! Sarah Pulliam, a Portage High School social studies teacher, and a group of students have created this new, permanent



MILITARY EXHIBIT from scratch with QR codes to direct the visitor to more information. The exhibit includes military artifacts from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War and the War on Terror. Our focus this season is the Vietnam War - 50th anniversary of the last US personnel evacuated in April 1975.

Thank you to the families who donated items in our exhibit: Mary Baxter Poole, Zamzow Estate, Ed Manthey, LaVerne Griffin, and Ted Rebholz.

The Vietnam War (November 1, 1955 – April 30, 1975) was an armed conflict in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia fought between North Vietnam (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and South Vietnam (Republic of Vietnam) and their allies. North Vietnam was supported by the Soviet Union and China, while South Vietnam was supported by the United States and other anti-communist nations. The conflict was the second of the Indochina wars and a proxy war of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and US. Direct US military involvement escalated from 1965 until its withdrawal in 1973. The fighting spilled into the Laotian and Cambodian Civil Wars, which ended with all three countries becoming communist in 1975.

Impact on the U.S. military

More than 3 million Americans served - 1.5 million saw combat. At the height of American involvement in 1968, 543,000 American military personnel were stationed in Vietnam, but only 80,000 were combat troops. 58,220 American soldiers were killed and

150,000 wounded with at least 21,000 permanently disabled. The average age of troops killed was 23. Approximately 830,000 veterans, 15%, suffered post-traumatic stress disorder. Drug use, racial tensions, and fragging—attempts to kill officers—created problems for the military and impacted its capability. 125,000 Americans left for Canada to avoid the draft, and approximately 50,000 servicemen deserted. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter granted an unconditional pardon to Vietnam draft evaders with Proclamation 4483.

Effects of U.S. chemical defoliation

Another controversial aspect of the US effort was use of chemical defoliants between 1961-71. 20 million gallons of toxic herbicides called “Agent Orange” were sprayed on 6 million acres of forests and crops. They were used to defoliate parts of the countryside to prevent the Vietcong from hiding weaponry and encampments, and deprive them of food. Defoliation was used to clear sensitive areas, including base perimeters and ambush sites along roads and canals. The chemicals in Agent Orange pose health hazards, such as immune system disorders, developmental abnormalities, and issues with the reproductive system. Agent Orange and similar substances have caused many health issues for Vietnamese people and the US crews that handled them. The US Veterans Administration has listed prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, multiple myeloma, type 2 diabetes, B-cell lymphomas, soft-tissue sarcoma, chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, peripheral neuropathy as, “presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service.” Spina bifida is the sole birth defect in children of veterans recognized as caused by exposure to Agent Orange.



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In popular culture

The war has featured extensively in television, film, video games, music and literature. The first major film on the war was John Wayne's pro-war *The Green Berets* (1968). Further films were released, the most noteworthy examples being Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978), Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Other films include *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), *Casualties of War* (1989), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *The Thin Red Line* (1998).

The war influenced a generation of musicians and songwriters, pro/anti-war and pro/anti-communist.



The Vietnam War Song Project has identified 5,000+ songs referencing the conflict. Country Joe and the Fish recorded The "Fish" Cheer/I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag in 1965, and it became one of the most influential protest anthems.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Co-Hosted by the Portage Historical Society

HEARTH & HOME

2025 SPEAKER SERIES

Historic Indian Agency House
1490 Agency House Road, Portage

Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm | Free Admission



JUNE 10
Dr. James Marten

Professor Emeritus
Marquette University
Inventing Childhood: Coming of Age in the New Republic



JULY 8
Vicki Twinde-Javner

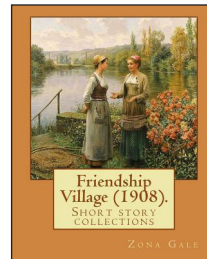
Sr. Research Archaeologist
Mississippi Valley Arch. Center
Daily Life at Frontier Forts: Archaeology Yields Evidence



AUGUST 12
Tamara Funk

Curator, WI Historical Society
Haste to the Wedding: Philosophies & Customs of Euro-American Courtship & Weddings in the 18th - 20th Century United States

Celebrating Friendship Village August 16, 2025



10:00 am
Presentation by Jeff Grothman
Museum at the Portage

12:00 noon
Society Hill
Walking Tour
Guide - Judy Eulberg
Starting at Museum
at the Portage



2:00 - 4:00 pm
Pie & Ice Cream Social
Women's Civic League

DOWNTOWN PORTAGE
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Canal Days
SERENADE IN THE CITY
where music, art & love fill the air

Saturday, June 7th 2025
11am - 2pm

- Melodies & Muses**
Enjoy live musicians as you picnic under the open sky
- Creative Crescendo**
Express yourself through painting and hands-on crafts at various locations downtown
- Whimsical Wonders**
Face painting, instrument making and fun for all ages!
- Ballad Bazaar**
Shop local stores & vendors to find unique treasures
- Symphony Sound Garden**
Try your hand at different instruments and make some music!
- Take the stage**
Showcase your talent or enjoy original works at Portage Center for the Arts' open mic

www.portagewi.com

OPEN HOUSE

June 7, 2025 (Saturday)

1:00 - 4:00 pm

Stop by during Canal Days - check out our new Military Exhibit and meet some of the students who created it!!!

Membership Appreciation Night

September 18, 2025

5:00 - Social Hour 6:00 - Presentation

“Wisconsin POW Camps”

Presented by Bob Block
Oregon Historical Society member

Most people are unaware that Wisconsin had Prisoner of War camps during WWII and are surprised to learn that there were 38 of them having a total of 20,000 POWs.



ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

What a great turnout for our Annual Meeting held on April 22, 2025, at the Knights of Columbus Hall. It was the biggest crowd since Covid!

The following members were re-elected to the board of directors: Dave Eulberg, Fred Galley, Sean Malone and Vicki Vogts. Election of officers will be held at the May board meeting.

Richard Carlton Haney gave a presentation based on his book, “When is Daddy Coming Home? An American Family During World War II”. Many attendees purchased signed copies.

Sarah Pulliam, social studies teacher at Portage High School, had Professor Haney as a history instructor at UW Whitewater in the early 2000s. What a small world!



SUNROOM RESTORATION PROJECT

Did you know that our building is almost 115 years old?! With age, comes repairs. In 2021, the city had the asphalt shingles replaced and in 2022, the rubber membrane on the flat room areas was replaced. Unfortunately, the roofer tore off the overhang (without city or society approval) which included the original copper gutter on the sunroom. Without the overhang and gutter, rain water is now running directly over the windows and columns on the sun room which has caused significant damage.



We are searching for grants to help in the repair costs but donations would help in getting the restoration project started now. Please consider donating to the Portage Historical Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Your donation would be tax-deductible.

Priority #1

New Framed 12" Overhang with 10" Copper Gutter System.....	\$40,000
Reproduce Crown Molding & Soffit.....	\$25,000
Repair Rubber Roofing for Iron Railing.....	\$10,000
Repair & Powdercoat Original Iron Railing.....	\$ 8,000
TOTAL	\$83,000

Priority #2

Repair/Replace Leaded Glass Full Metal (16 Windows).....	\$15,000
Restore/Replace Wood Columns/Bases & Wood Panels.....	\$20,000
All Sunroom Exterior & Window Casement Painting.....	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$55,000

Priority #3

Replace Spalled Exterior Bricks on Southwest Tower.....	\$ TBD
Replace Plaster in Southwest Tower.....	\$ TBD
Replace Plaster on West Interior Walls.....	\$ TBD
Replace Plaster in Miscellaneous Interior Walls/Ceilings.....	\$ TBD

CURATOR CORNER

By: Sara Oostdik

Part of collections work is ensuring that items are housed in archival quality materials to help preserve them for years to come. “Archival” materials are more than just acid-free, they are free from chemicals and dyes, and are specialized based on what is being preserved. Since it is important to buy certain materials, the Museum at the Portage purchases our archival supplies through reputable companies like Gaylord Archival.

While the museum has a budget for some archival supplies each year, there are certain items that are on our “wishlist” (below). If you would like to help us purchase some of the items below, please reach out to me at museumattheportage@gmail.com. As our collection continues to grow, we appreciate any help you can provide!



Cotton Muslin Garment Bags (unbleached and unsized):

- Why is it needed? To help safeguard our textiles that are too large for boxes: including 5 beautiful fur coats and numerous military uniforms.
- Need 2 or 3 large (\$94 each) and at least 8 medium (\$48 each)

Cotton Muslin-Covered Padded Hangers:

- Why is it needed? To help prevent wear and strain on the shoulders of textiles that are hung.
- Need several (price range from \$21-24 depending on size)
- A good alternative are satin-covered padded hangers, please let us know if you would like to donate any to the Museum, white preferred!

3 mil Archival Polyester Roll, 40” x 50 ft

- Why is it needed? To encapsulate larger posters and certificates that are fragile and are at risk of deteriorating. Also, good for creating a safe “envelope” when putting larger items on exhibit.
- Need 1 roll (\$161.75)

Polyester double-sided tape, 1/4” x 36 yds

- Why is it needed? To create enclosure, used with archival polyester.
- Need 1 roll (\$17.85)

TOUR GROUP VISITORS



On May 14, a group of 50 people from “Historic Adventure & Travel Tours” from Rochester, Minnesota, visited the Museum at the Portage while in the Wisconsin Dells area.

It was a three-day mystery tour where the travelers do not know where they are going! They only know the general area they are visiting and that they are touring a historical site - what fun! The group gave the museum a generous donation after their visit - so appreciated.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

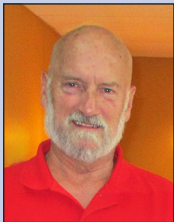
The Museum at the Portage is maintained by the Portage Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It was founded in 1995 and is dedicated to preserving the history of Portage and surrounding areas. Your support of the Portage Historical Society will ensure that future generations will continue to learn about Portage's historic past. Join today! Memberships run January - December.

Membership Levels

<i>Level</i>	<i>Donation</i>	<i>Store Discount</i>	<i>Genealogy Research</i>
Pierre Pauquette	\$25-\$49	15% off	
Ansel Clark	\$50-\$99	20% off	
Zona Gale	\$100-\$249	25% off	1 hr free
Julia Rusch	\$250-\$499	30% off	2 hrs free
Frederick J. Turner	\$500+	35% off	3 hrs free

Welcome to our new members in 2025: Joyce Bisbee, Pieper Schultz, Carole Vogts, Gerald & Carol Ziehmke and The Mercantile (Tracy Fuqua)

IN LOVING MEMORY



Timothy "Ted" Chesney
4/11/1945 - 5/1/2025



Gary Larkin
5/18/1936 - 3/3/2025



Marjorie Margelowsky
9/12/1928 - 4/15/2025

Have you thought about a memorial gift or donation to the Museum?

We have received memorial gifts of both money and artifacts in the past, which have been greatly appreciated. When drafting your Will or settling a loved ones estate, perhaps a gift to the Museum might be an appropriate memorial consideration for you. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so any donations are tax-deductible.

BRICK MEMORIAL PATIO



Outside the front entrance of the Museum at the Portage is a **Brick Memorial Patio**. Engraved pavers will serve as a lasting tribute to those - past and present - who established Portage as a cultural center in 1854 and those who continue to serve the City of Portage.

Pavers are available in two sizes:

- 4" x 8" for \$125
- 8" x 8" for \$150

Your support of the museum will ensure our history will live on for generations to come. When ordering online, you can pay with PayPal, a debit or credit card. Want to pay with a check? We do have paper forms available at the museum or you can email us at museumattheportage@gmail.com so we can mail you a form. We appreciate your support!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Vicki Vogts, president
Suzi Hemler, vice president
Deb Rohrbeck, secretary
Veronica Kamrath, treasurer

Peggy Amend
Melody Brooks-Taylor
Peggy Brown
Dave Eulberg
Fred Galley
Nancy Kreier
Peggy Malone
Sean Malone
Sandy Nachreiner
Kathy Rowley
Florence Schieber

Curator:
Sara Oostdik

Docents:
Judy Eulberg
Sarah Mautz
Linda Wendt

Be sure to "LIKE" us on Facebook & Instagram
and enjoy the changing posts about Portage's
history. You can add comments about your own
experiences or information about each post.

Find us on
Facebook &
Instagram
#portagemuseum



Portage Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 727
Portage, WI 53901
Museum at the Portage
804 MacFarlane Road
Portage, WI
(608) 742-6682 (call only during open hours)
Website: www.portagemuseum.org
Email: museumattheportage@gmail.com
Hours of Operation
Memorial Day to Labor Day
Tuesday - Saturday, 1-4:00 pm