

Museum Notes

for the week of May 10 – 16, 2026

by Kristen Parrott, curator

Summer will be here soon, and with it lots of summertime activities. Our first event of the summer will be held on Friday, May 29, from 5 to 8PM, when the Vernon County Historical Society will be the featured non-profit at Sittin Pretty Farm's Pizza Night. The farm is located at S5990 Chamberlain Ridge Ln., six miles out of Viroqua on County NN. You can learn more about how to order pizza from their website, <https://www.sittinprettyfarm.org/>. Profits from the evening will benefit the historical society.

Many events this summer will honor the U.S. 250th. July 4, 2026, will mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the creation of the United States of America. This anniversary is called a semi-quin-centennial, meaning "half of 500 years". The Vernon County Historical Society has been preparing for this moment for a long time, and will continue commemorating the anniversary throughout the summer.

Special 250th events this summer include a community conversation about the PBS documentary series *The American Revolution*, the annual July 4 Strawberry Shortcake Social at the Sherry-Butt House, a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, and a public program on "The Idea of America and the Constitutional Debates".

The community conversation will be held on Tuesday, June 2, from 6:30 to 8:30PM at the Vernon County Museum and History Center. This free two-hour program, designed by PBS Wisconsin, will begin with a short clip from Ken Burns' documentary, *The American Revolution*. We will then break into guided, small-group discussions to talk about the concepts and ideas that have shaped America since its inception. Advance registration is appreciated but not required. Email us at museum@vernoncountyhistory.org or call us at 608-637-7396 to sign up.

The annual Marcia Andrew memorial Strawberry Shortcake Social will be held at the historic Sherry-Butt House, 795 N. Main St., Viroqua, on Saturday, July 4, from 1 to 5PM. Visitors will enjoy homemade strawberry shortcake, vanilla frozen custard, and lemonade, plus tours of the house and music on the lawn. Musical guests this year include Kickapoo Joy Juice.

Then on Wednesday, July 8, at 5PM, we will host a public reading of the Declaration of Independence outside at the history center. This event will commemorate the first public reading of the Declaration on July 8, 1776, in Philadelphia. Contact us if you'd like to be one of the readers.

Our focus on the U.S. 250th will continue on Tuesday, July 21, when UW Madison Prof. Daniel Kapust will speak on "The Idea of America and the Constitutional Debates" at the history center at 6PM. The program will ask, What is America? This question is one of the central issues in the debates over the ratification of the Constitution. Federalists and Anti-Federalists argued not just about whether to adopt the new Constitution, but what America was and what it might be.

Lots more will be happening this summer, but these are a few events to put on your calendar now!