

Museum Notes

for the week of August 2 – 8, 2026

by Kristen Parrott, curator

Researching ancestors who served in the military will be the topic of the next genealogy class. On Thursday, August 13, at 10AM, guest speaker Russell Horton will present a program called, “Finding Those Who Serve: Military Genealogy” at the Vernon County Museum and History Center. Russell is the archives collection manager at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. His focus is on records and photographs related to Wisconsin’s veterans.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum was begun by Civil War veterans in 1901, and is celebrating its 125th birthday this year. It is under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. The museum’s excellent website is currently offline, but you can still access their online collections database here: <https://wisvetsmuseum.catalogaccess.com/>

Maybe you are looking for an ancestor who served in the Civil War, or someone who was in the army during World War I, or a person who might have served in the navy many years ago. Come learn how to research those who were in the military, and discover new resources for your family history work.

Everyone is welcome to attend the genealogy classes. Vernon County Historical Society members attend for free, and non-members are asked to pay \$5 per class session. Classes are held in the first-floor, wheelchair-accessible conference room.

You can further explore military topics by touring the “Fur, Feathers, and Fidelity: Military Mascots” traveling exhibit at the museum between now and August 27. The exhibit is provided courtesy of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, and is funded in part by Wisconsin Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Military mascots help rally troop morale, provide a sense of respite, and serve as symbols of pride and unity. This engaging exhibit explores the history of these remarkable companions, featuring mascots dating back to the Civil War and highlighting the deep connection between humans and animals in times of service and sacrifice.

Other military exhibits can be found around the museum, including one about the ship the *U.S.S. Wisconsin* and several local men who served on it, and one focused on the decorated WWII fighter pilot Joshua Sanford of Hillsboro. Also on display is an exhibit about the Black Hawk War, which ended here in Vernon County in early August of 1832.

Come tour all the museum exhibits during our regular public hours, which in August are Monday through Friday, 11AM to 4PM, and Saturday, 10AM to 2PM.