

Wisconsin Historical Society: Laura Boyd to be featured in the “Women of Madeline Island Exhibit”

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 19, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Kara O’Keeffe
608-261-9596
kara.okeeffe@wisconsinhistory.org

La Pointe, Wis. – In 2018, the Madeline Island Museum will be highlighting and adding the stories of six new women to the “Women of Madeline Island Exhibit.” These new additions will include the life of Laura Boyd, a long-time Higginsville, MO resident, whose life sheds light on a behind the scenes narrative of summers on Madeleine Island.

“We are thrilled to be able to share a part of Madeline Island history that is not told in the typical narrative,” said Keldi Merton, site director of the Madeline Island Museum. “Laura Boyd’s story was brought to us by her great-niece, Linda Smith, who came to the museum looking for information about the family Laura Boyd worked for. She had no idea she was bringing us such an important story to the island.”

Laura Smith Boyd (1900-1963) was the daughter of emancipated slaves. Her life represents the struggle to move beyond slavery. Laura was serious about education and excelled in learning, after completing four years of high school, she continued to read and write her entire life. Laura supported herself by working for wealthy families in Kansas City, Missouri who often traveled outside of the state. One of the many places that she accompanied her employers to was Madeline Island. She wrote home about her time on the island, including her domestic work and also her leisure activities. Laura spent her life working towards being an agent for social

change in her community. She was a mentor and a role model as she worked towards the betterment of women of color and her community.

“As I read Laura’s letters, I sense the great loneliness and pain of her separation and being so far away from her family in Higginsville,” said Linda Smith, Laura Boyd’s great-niece. “Now I fully understand the encouragement that she gave to me and my sister. I am grateful for having a blessed aunt and mentor.”

Madeline Island has long been home to remarkable women whose accomplishments live on in local lore, but who tend not to be included in standard histories. Many women went beyond handling the basic needs of daily life on the island and served their community as well. In the exhibit, guests will get to know some of the many notable women of Madeline Island, including Laura Boyd.

The Madeline Island Museum is open daily from May 27 – October 14. All Wisconsin Historical Society members receive free admission to the museum. Ticket price for regular admission to the museum for adults (18-64) cost \$8; Seniors (over 65) \$7; Children 17 & under: Free. Additional information regarding operating hours and special events can be found at madelineislandmuseum.org.

About Madeline Island Museum

Founded in 1958, the Madeline Island Museum tells the story of Madeline Island and surrounding region. Owned and operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society since 1969, the Madeline Island Museum is located in La Pointe, Wisconsin. Open 7 days a week, 10:00 am -5:00 pm, the Museum is located half a block from the ferry dock. Visit madelineislandmuseum.org for a complete list of 2018 Programs & Events, or call 715-747-2415 for more information.

About Wisconsin Historical Society