

Wisconsin Historical Society: History magazine follows passenger pigeon plight, settler colonialism, Villa Louis' 150th, & more

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MADISON, Wisconsin — One hundred fifty years ago Wisconsin's affluent Dousman family built its now-famous estate, Villa Louis, in Prairie du Chien, and in 1952, it opened as the Society's first state historic site. This month, in the newly-released edition of the [Wisconsin Magazine of History](#), Villa Louis curator and author Mary Eloise Antoine recounts the estate's history, treasures, and changing interpretations.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

A Funeral Reveals [Settler Colonialism](#) in Paul Rykken's article about Jacob Spaulding, the first Euro-American to settle permanently in Black River Falls, Wis. Spaulding developed lasting relationships with members of the Ho-Chunk Nation — forty Ho-Chunk men led his funeral procession. Although he was part of the first wave of Euro-Americans to settle this part of Wisconsin and thus helped bring large-scale changes to Native people of the region, Spaulding's story complicates the 'settler colonialism' narrative. He spent his final years trying to stop the U.S. government's efforts to remove the Ho-Chunk from their homeland. His actions provide a window into the complex dynamics of settlers and Indigenous people that occurred in frontier communities, and is a challenging counternarrative to the conventional view of the period.

[Passenger Pigeons](#) Disappear from Wisconsin, going from "millions to none" author John H. Nondorf reports in his image essay. Once among the most populous birds in North America, the passenger pigeon was long considered a nuisance to farmers

and disappeared in the late nineteenth century. Its demise was commemorated in a plaque erected by Aldo Leopold at Wyalusing State Park in 1947. Ironically, the bird whose flocks blotted out the sun has no known photographs in the wild. Only a few specimens that exist today. Nondorf explores the birds' Wisconsin connections, including photographs in the Wisconsin Historical Society collection from the last private flock owned by Chicagoan Charles Whitman.

A Newspaper Kid Recalls her [Ink-Filled Childhood](#) in a short memoir by Catherine Capellaro, who details her days as the daughter of two self-proclaimed “ink-stained wretches” who produced small-town papers in New Glarus and Monticello.

BOOK EXCERPT: The *Wisconsin Magazine of History* also includes an excerpt from the Wisconsin Historical Society Press book, [Hope Is the Thing: Wisconsinites on Perseverance in a Pandemic](#), a collection of essays and poems on hope during COVID-19, edited by award-winning Wisconsin author B. J. Hollars.

The Wisconsin Historical Society Press has been sharing Wisconsin history and culture for the Wisconsin Historical Society since 1855 in service to the mission of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Published since 1917 by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press, the award-winning Wisconsin Magazine of History is a benefit of membership in the Wisconsin Historical Society Foundation. It is available in print and digital editions.