



Heritage and History:

Enriching the Door Peninsula Experience

Village and cemetery walks. Chapel tours. Family history presentations. School reunions. Historic barn events. The creation of a traveling ‘Historymobile’ – these are just some of recent initiatives by local historic entities.

While each historic group stands alone, they benefit from collaboration, and the Heritage Alliance of Door County (HADC) has been working to expand that collaboration. HADC is an organization trying to further public awareness of Door County history by sharing information, expertise, and solutions to organizational challenges.

Historic tourism has become an integral part of the Door County economy and encompasses more activities each year: sunset cruises on an old Chicago fireboat in Sturgeon Bay,

dozens of themed trolley tours with stops at historically significant sites, a class reunion on the 100th anniversary of a grade school – bringing visitors from around the world, tours of renowned dwellings by costumed docents,

guided tours of historic village buildings, water-borne group tours on water taxis – featuring extremely knowledgeable historic guides, speakers who organize historic programming for public presentations. History permeates Door County’s much-lauded status as a renowned tourism destination. – continued





HADC has been collaborating on a wide variety of marketing activities: producing a collective brochure (available at visitor centers and historic sites), maintaining a Facebook presence, helping Wisconsin Public Television produce a DVD as part of the ‘Hometown Stories’ series about Door County’s unique history. HADC has also coordinated speakers from Wisconsin Historic



Society to help launch ‘The Wisconsin History Tour’ and the University of Wisconsin to make available their project “Wisconsin 101- Our History in Objects. HADC

reaches out to local and statewide groups to help further the success of Door County heritage tourism. From south of Brussels to north of Rock Island, every community in Door County has



multiple historic entities preserving and sharing their stories. Be it related to maritime, agriculture, religion, ethnicity, art, logging, farming, lighthouses, the cherry industry or tourism, on any given day history-related events are occurring across Door County.

Why so much cooperative historic activity in such a relatively small, rural location?

Historic enthusiast and HADC member Kristen Peil of Baileys Harbor summed it up best. “Heritage matters. Each community has its own historic story, but by working together we can share expertise, objects, and stories to a wider public.”



Pick up a copy of the new Heritage Alliance brochure at a local visitor center and start exploring Door County’s multi-layered history yourself. Whether a first-time visitor or not, it will enrich your Door Peninsula experience.