

Content Partner Case Study: Railroad & Logging Photos Langlade County Historical Society, Antigo



About LCHS

The mission of the **Langlade County Historical Society (LCHS)** is to preserve, advance, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Langlade County. This is done by the maintenance of a museum, local historical artifacts and archives, and historic sites on the museum campus. In addition, the LCHS prepares programs and publications dealing with local history. The LCHS is affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society.

About the railroad and logging photo collections

The logging industry was the major factor that led to settlement of Langlade County and the growth of the city of Antigo was made possible with the expansion of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. In the early part of the 20th century, a postcard photographer based in Antigo, A.J. Kingsbury, captured many railroad and logging scenes. His **postcards and glass plate negatives** form the basis of this collection but there are many other postcards, family and professional photographs in the collection, which totals about **450 images**.



Digitizing the collection

We used an **Epson Perfection V500 flatbed scanner** at our museum to scan negatives and photographs. The scanner was chosen on the advice of Wisconsin Historical Society staff as being appropriate for glass plate negatives. Scans were done at **400 to 600 dpi**, depending on the size of the original, and saved as **TIFF files**. Scanning was done by a high school student volunteer and a museum volunteer and took about 25 to 30 hours to complete. Scans are stored on an external hard drive and a DVD.

Describing and sharing the collection

We used an **Excel spreadsheet template** to catalog each photograph. Museum volunteer Joe Hermolin created the descriptive information (metadata). It took about 50 hours in total, including time spent searching for information for the descriptions. We then transferred the digital files and the Excel spreadsheet to Recollection Wisconsin using **Dropbox**. Their staff uploaded the digital files and the catalog records to an online collection hosted by the **Milwaukee Public Library**. The photos and postcards can now be found online at <http://content.mpl.org/langlade> and through the Recollection Wisconsin website (<https://recollectionwisconsin.org>), the Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la>), Google and other search engines.

Use and benefits

The digital collection has been used by several local museums and one school in publications, displays, and classroom instruction. One private author is using some photos in a book about the logging industry.

The primary benefit of this project is the goodwill generated in the community. The project was referenced in the local newspaper and gaining their support has been important in enhanced coverage of events and fundraising by the museum. The student volunteer became interested enough that he continued to volunteer at the museum doing carpentry work. A surprise benefit came from serious model railroaders who used the photographs as references in building model depots, logging camps, etc. for the museum. They have donated generously to the museum in time and money.