

On Ouisconsin: An Illustrated Historical Catalogue
Artist's Statement

History is the product of imperfect memory. Real history reflects an honest attempt to minimize errors of fact and analysis. Fake history is deliberately deceptive, the equally disreputable cousin of fake news.

One way to challenge the assertion that “only (I/we) know the truth of what happened” is to deliberately distort historical fact. Skewering history forces us to question claims about the real world. Inventing historical facts or stretching them to absurd degrees reveals how easily history can be corrupted.

On Ouisconsin: An Illustrated Historical Catalogue contains highlights of an alternate history of our beloved state. My hope for this fond but irreverent “re-imagining” is to stimulate a search for more accurate depictions of historical truth.

In general, humans seem to have a need to explore the world by poking around. The design of *On Ouisconsin* appeals to what might be called the “snooping gene”, a holdover from our gatherer origins. Even the most haphazard gift wrapping prolongs the delicious anticipation of “the thought that counts”. A chest of drawers offers the viewer one gift after another.

Feel free to sample the catalogue’s drawers in any order you wish. The last, beige card in each drawer “explains” that drawer’s artifact. Please do not remove the drawers entirely or touch the artifacts, some of which are as fragile as the catalogue’s rendering of truth.

Pay particular attention to **Drawers 5** and **13**, which have stops that restrict movement past a certain point. In addition, **Drawer 13** contains the only artifact with an audio play button. Be sure to return the earbuds to their container for the benefit of the next listener.

--Philip M. Heckman, 2017

NOTE: If you have questions about something in the first 14 drawers, consult the “**Trivi-Addendum**” in **Drawer 15**. This index contains additional information and corrections of the catalogue’s most dubious content.