

# SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter ~ September 2021

Volume 31, Issue 3

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Minnesota sign made by Ray Meffert, Arlington, 1994



Milk can #49 from "Shorty" Lawrence Tesch farm to Star Creamery

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Henderson from wagon wheels to Prince

### SCHS AT THE FAIR

Souvenir from each Sibley County Town



First day fair greeters and newest SCHS Board members, Shirley Black and Diane Fredin

**Board of Directors:**

President  
 Jeff DuCharme  
Vice President  
 Vicki Stock  
Secretary  
 Shirley Black  
Treasurer  
 Tom Frauendlenst  
Directors  
 Joy Cohrs, Holly Harjes, Diane Fredin, Eldrene Ebert, Mike Reinhardt

**THANK YOU!**  
 Eldrene Ebert and committee for developing the 2021 Sibley County Fair Museum's exhibit. It was perfect for the little school house.



## FLOUR SACKS 30's, 40's, 50's



### The 1930's Flour Sack

by Colleen B. Hubert

#### IN THAT LONG AGO TIME WHEN THINGS WERE SAVED,

When roads were graveled and barrels were staved,  
When worn-out clothing was used as rags,  
And there were no plastic wrap or bags,  
And the well and the pump were way out back,  
A versatile item, was the flour or feed sack.

Pillsbury's Best, Mother's and Gold Medal, too  
Stamped their names proudly in purple and blue.

#### THE STRING SEWN ON TOP WAS PULLED AND KEPT:

The flour emptied and spills were swept.  
The bag was folded and stored in a sack  
That durable, practical flour sack.

The sack could be filled with feathers and down,  
For a pillow, or t'would make a nice sleeping gown.  
It could carry a book and be a school bag,  
Or become a mail sack slung over a nag.  
It made a very convenient pack,  
That adaptable, cotton flour sack.

Bleached and sewn, it was dutifully worn  
As bibs, diapers, or kerchief adorned.  
It was made into skirts, blouses and slips,  
And Mom braided rugs from one hundred strips.  
She made ruffled curtains for the house or shack,  
From that humble but treasured flour sack!

As a strainer for milk or apple juice,

To wave men in. It was a very good use,  
As a sling for a sprained wrist or a break,  
To help Mother roll up a jelly cake,  
As a window shade or to stuff a crack,  
We used a sturdy, common flour sack!

As dish towels, embroidered or not,  
They covered up dough, helped pass pans so hot,  
Tied up dishes for neighbors in need,  
And for men out in the field to seed.  
They dried dishes from pan, not rack  
That absorbent, handy flour sack!

We polished and cleaned stove and table,  
Scoured and scrubbed from cellar to gable,  
We dusted the bureau and oak bed post,  
Made costumes for October (a scary ghost)  
And a parachute for a cat named Jack.  
From that lowly, useful old flour sack!

So now my friends, when they ask you  
As curious youngsters often do,  
"Before plastic wrap, Elmer's Glue  
And paper towels, what did you do?"  
Tell them loudly and with pride don't lack,  
"Grandmother had that wonderful flour sack!"  
(Feed sacks too! Remember!)

Ah Yes! I remember it all well. I bet you all do too.



Framed flour bags found in Green Isle

## CROWN PRINCE

Display Committee

Visitors in the museum Kitchen will see items of bread-making equipment. The main ingredient in bread is flour. And now on display is the Crown Prince flour bag.



Sibley County cities that once had flour mills are Henderson which had the first, the Ellendale Flowering Mill is where production of flour began in 1859, and the 1887 Gibbon Roller Mill after a railroad depot was sited there in 1882. Henderson and Gibbon community history books have detailed information on these mills including changes in owners, managers, fires and financial problems.

Henderson's banker, Tom Welch, had five daughters but only one son, Ernest L. In 1888 the Henderson Roller Mill was operated under the business name of E.L. Welch and Co. This new ownership caused a change in the brand name of the flour. Museum Kitchen items on display include one of the paper bags in which the flour was sold with the business name and red royal crown pictured over the word "PRINCE" in bold, red letters.

A golden opportunity came when a SCHS member was able to retell this Welch family story to a great

granddaughter of Tom and granddaughter of Ernest L. Such happenings add "life" to our County's Collections from local residents. During her visit at the museum, this granddaughter was delighted to hear that her grandfather Ernest L. was the "Prince".

There are stories about how some items in the Historical Society's care arrived at the museum. One of the most unusual is the history of our Crown Prince flour bag. Years ago, Historical Society officers and volunteers decided to rearrange displays in the upstairs room known as "The Guest Bedroom". A Victorian style, love seat - known as a fainting couch - was to be featured in this room but it had broken springs and an inappropriate cover.

Volunteers Verona Braasch and Arlene Busse removed layers of old coverings and found that a surprising variety of old things had been stuffed around and over the broken springs to protect anyone sitting on this love seat. The protective stuff included the Crown Prince flour bag, the front of another bag, a St. Paul magazine from the 1890's, an almost complete Merry Widow style corset, and the waistband and pockets of many pairs of men's pants.

New upholstery fabric was found, a close match to the original. Sharon Haggemiller found a team able to retie the springs and do the re-upholstery. The wood frame was in good condition and remained as found.



When you visit the Sibley County Museum in Henderson, look for the flour bag in the Kitchen then admire the fainting couch in the upstairs Victorian style, Guest Bedroom.

## BALD EAGLES IN OUR MIDST

Holly Harjes, Editor

With a wing span of seven feet, the bald eagles soaring in Sibley County have truly added a "spectacle of the day" when spotted. This national bird quickly is identified by its striking white head and tail.

Eagles attain their adult plumage and can begin breeding at age four or five. They mate for life and return to the same nest area each year. Nests sometimes reach 10 feet in diameter and weigh over 4,000 pounds. Generally they lay 1 to 3 eggs; incubation lasts about 35 days. Eaglets remain in the nest about 10 to 12 weeks.

Eagles are especially sensitive to disturbance during incubation. This is an important reason for bird watchers to respect nest locations.

One eagle visited our plowed field for several days. The National bird had grabbed some roadkill, dragged it into the field and made return trips to complete his feast.



## WHO IS NANCY GREEN?

Research Committee



The world knew her as "Aunt Jemima", but her given name was Nancy Green and she was a true American success story. Born a slave in 1834 Montgomery County, KY, she became a wealthy superstar in the advertising world as its first living trademark.

While in Kentucky, Green was employed by Charles Walker. Then an attorney and later a distinguished Circuit Judge. She moved with the family to Chicago just after the Great Fire in 1872.

Walker heard that a friend was looking for a model for the Aunt Jemima character, and he suggested Green who, by that time, had served the family for many years.

She was instantly recognized with the characteristics the guy was looking for...charisma, humor, and a fantastic cook.

Green was 56 years old when she was selected as spokesperson for the new ready-mixed, self-rising pancake flour and made her public debut in 1893 at the World's Fair in Chicago. She demonstrated the pancake mix while serving up thousands of pancakes...and became an immediate star. She was a wonderful storyteller, her personality was warm and appealing, and her showmanship was exceptional. Her exhibition booth drew so many people that special security personnel were assigned to keep the crowds moving.

Nancy Green was signed to a lifetime contract, traveled on promotional tours all over the country, and was extremely well paid. Her financial freedom and stature as a national spokesperson enabled her to become a philanthropist, a leading advocate against poverty and a fighter for equal rights.

She maintained her job until her death in 1923, at the age 89.



## **MARRIAGE IN MINNESOTA**

Research Committee

A law went into effect in August of 1978 permitting Clerks of Court to perform weddings. The new provision replaced this former function of Justices of the Peace; the justice court system had been abolished. Judges of any court of record continued offering civil ceremonies. Gaylord dentist, Arlan Sneltjes, was Gaylord's last Justice of the Peace. His last wedding was conducted at the Gaylord Congregational Church. The young couple were traveling together to the groom's home to meet his parents and wished to arrive already married.

Clergy of many denominations performed most Minnesota weddings in those years. Marriage licenses were issued at the Clerk's Office where advice was given for quick use of the license when requested. The marriage would then have been recognized by the church and State.

In April of 1978, Sibley County Clerk of Court, Robert Busse, on behalf of the Clerks' Association sent all fellow clerks a copy of the new law and a suggested plan for a marriage ceremony. The museum has his file with a copy of the law, a little black book with the marriage ceremony he used, and documents from 60 or more weddings he conducted between 1979 and 1987. He retired from office in 1987. The weddings took place in many back yards, parks, and one in a hospital labor room.

Deputy Cheryl Dummer was appointed as Court Administrator upon Busse's 1987 retirement. The title of that office since the mid 1980's has been Court Administrator.

## **ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF SIBLEY COUNTY**

Research Committee

County census records from 1870 list the country of origin for immigrant residents. Most census years do not have this information. Available microfilms for Sibley County, beginning with 1857, were purchased for the museum many years ago. These films are an asset for museum genealogy researchers helping those who ask, "Where did my ancestors

come from?" The Sibley County Historical Society pays for a subscription to Ancestry.com for the use of volunteer researchers. This web site, available since 1996, is very helpful as family origins are explored.

The place of origin of most Sibley immigrants was one of the many German states. They were listed on census records as separate countries until the 1871 unification of Germany. Scandinavian countries together produced the second largest wave of new residents. East and West Canada, France, Poland, Russia, Ireland, Scotland, England, Switzerland, and various U.S. states are all listed as Henderson residents' places of origin. Henderson was the "Melting Pot" community in 1870. The first non-native American residents for whom there are records arrived in the area in 1852.

## **OH, NO, NOT MORE CHICKEN STUFF**

Research Committee

"Chicken Feed" was another name for candy corn most often found in the United States. That was actually the original name of the candy with production starting in the 1880's.

Wunderle Candy Company was the first to produce the candy in 1888. Following the 19th century, the Goelitz Confectionery Company (now called Jelly Belly) manufactured the product. Along with other agriculture-inspired treats at the time in the late 19th century, America's confectioners sought to market candy corn to a largely rural society.

Originally the candy corn was made by hand. Manufacturers first combined sugar, corn syrup, carnauba wax, and water and cooked them to form a slurry. Fondant was added for texture and marshmallows were added to provide a soft bite. The final mixture was then heated and poured into shaped molds. Three passes, one for each colored section, were required during the pouring process. The recipe remains basically the same today. The production method called "corn starch modeling," likewise remains the same, though tasks initially performed by hand were soon taken over by machines made for that purpose.

Candy Corn "chicken feed" is from another newsletter MinnValley Mutual Ins Co, Blue Earth, Sept. 2020.

## BEAT TO CLEAN

According to WIKIIPEDIA, carpet beaters (or carpet-beater) may also be a rug beater (or rugbeater). Other names are carpet whip, rug whip, clothes-beater, dust beater, carpet duster, wicker slapper, rug duster, or pillow fluffer.



The metal carpet beater on display in our Summer Kitchen

Beaters were typically made of wood, rattan, cane, wicker, spring steel or coiled wire. Antique rug beaters have become very collectible. The beaters make for interesting wall hangings!

To use a beater, objects were hung over a clothes-line, railing or special carpet hanger then “beaten”. Some folks preferred to beat in winter on the snow. Carpets were laid face

down. This method had some advantages—for instance, insects would freeze to death even if they were not expelled through beating. But being face down left a dirty and unpleasant-looking patch of dust on the snow. Some communities forbade beating on the snow for aesthetic reasons. Another way is to spread snow over the carpet. In this way the dust caught but the snow does not go up in the air.



A wicker slapper from Wikipedia

By Tenbergen at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=61019827>

“Beater cleaning” was in common use until the ‘50’s when carpet sweeper and then the vacuum cleaners became affordable.

## COUNTY FAIR HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S “WHAT’S IT?”



The 2021 Sibley Cuntly Fair is now history. Over 600 visitors from seven states visited the Society’s building and had the opportunity to guess the use for the “what’s it tool”.

The correct answer was a **“tobacco plug cutter”**. Three of these tools may be seen in the basement of the museum.

Correct answers came from Shelly Haefs, Le Sueur, Gary Lauwagie, Chaska, David Tesch, Henderson, Jim Vinkemeier, Arlington. Each winner will receive a free, one-year Historical Society membership.

Several of the humorous, incorrect guesses included: notary stamper, cutters for ration stamps, or noodles, fish, or animal toenails, chicken beheader, chicken decapitator, bullet maker, and from Melvin in Gaylord—Arrow (the brand name).

From the 1880s– to the 1940s, tobacco cutters, available from many sources, would have been found bolted to counter tops everywhere tobacco products were sold. Photos of uncut plugs or large strips of chewing tobacco, show something looking like big pancakes. A cutter as the one seen at the fair, would cut the material into small pieces to sell. To chew easily, the tobacco needed to be kept moist, so small amounts were purchased at a time. Soon those little round cans of “snus” or “snuff” would replace chewing tobacco for some users. No knowledge of the harmful effects of all forms tobacco was understood in this era.

### Wouldn’t it have been a thrill to be present to have heard.....

Mark Twain say “The man who does NOT read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read.”

Will Rogers (as the US Roving Ambassador) say  
 “We are just here for a short spell and then pass on, so get a few laughs and do the best you can.”

Red Skeleton say at the close of his performance “I am so sorry folks, did not say any four letter words tonight.” Then a roaring applause from the audience!

## 1936 SIBLEY COUNTY PLAT BOOK

Eldrene Ebert

The Sibley County Recorder's Office has a collection of county plat books. When Sibley County observed the sesquicentennial in 2003 a committee was formed to produce two books. One of them was "A Collection of Sibley County Maps Past to Present" printed to commemorate the event. The intent was to provide an easy reference as to where land owners settled, how long they stayed or even when they first appeared on record.

Permission to reproduce was granted by all the publishers, except for the 1936 issue. A statement in the book is "Prepared and Published by R. L. Nelson, Assistant Highway Engineer, and George Seemann, Deputy Register of Deeds". No other name is given. The book showed land owners according to records as of February 1, 1936. In Minnesota Counties in 1976, the title "Register of Deeds" was replaced with the original title of "Recorder", as was used in Sibley County from 1854 to 1857.

I worked in the Recorder's Office more than twenty years. So, I can imagine how the 1936 book came about. Al Lehman, County Engineer, and Florenz Seemann, Register of Deeds, must have gotten together realizing it had been ten years since a plat book had been published. That one was outdated. From their staff, they appointed the assistant engineer and the deputy registrar to oversee the task of making their own plat book.

I assume George had the drawings and the engineer's office had map making tools including a Leroy Lettering kit. All townships were hand drawn. Producing the book may have been an ongoing project to work on after the daily filings and other tasks were completed in each office.

Plat Books are used in the courthouse as a quick reference to locate property. Some customers came in without a legal description but knew where their name was in the plat book. Plat books steered us to the correct tract index. When documents came in for filing, the metes and bounds descriptions were drawn out to help locate quarter section and tract. The difficult ones were saved in order to save time redrawing them in the future.

I do not know if their 1936 book was published in house or if they sent it out. I do not know how many of these books were made. A copy in the Recorder's Office was stamped "Property of the Sibley County Clerk of Court's Office" which indicates that other county offices had them. Needless to say this 1936 book was helpful for another 10 plus years until the 1952 Atlas of Sibley County, published by Charles O. Nelson, was purchased.

Back in the 1980's, when Gladys Abraham was Recorder, large drawing books were started. Sheets 20"x 24" were labeled and placed in books for all sections of the county's 17 townships. Ron Kirsch was her deputy and took charge of these books by adding new information every day when new deeds were recorded. In spare time all drawings were transferred to the book by the rest of the staff. This was an ongoing procedure with subsequently elected Recorders as well.

Kathy Dietz, current County Recorder, says that these books are still in use and maintained, even if their content is entered in the computer system. The reason being that the program they are using does not let them add document numbers, names and other helpful information.

### Watch for information on the Christmas Holiday Open House



### AMAZING MEMORIES TO RELIVE AND ENJOY.

Sunday, January 2, 2022  
Sunday, January 9, 2022  
1:00—5:00 p.m.





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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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~~Michael Reinhardt~~  
~~P.O. Box 246~~  
~~Henderson, MN 56044-0246~~

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★ **Veterans Day:** ★  
 Thank You for Your Service!

**A Prayer for Our Veterans**

Oh, God, Our Heavenly Father,  
 You have blessed us with brave men and women  
 Who are willing to defend our freedom.  
 May Your protection and grace  
 surround them each day.  
 Let Your healing hand be upon those  
 who suffer wounds and injuries.  
 May those who have made the  
 ultimate sacrifice rest forever in your Holy Presence.  
 Comfort the families who mourn  
 and are left to remember  
 the precious lives of their loved ones.  
 Help us to honor and support them.  
 Let us ever be mindful of each sacrifice made  
 on behalf of the American people by our  
 sons, daughters, husbands, wives, mothers,  
 fathers, and friends.  
 Amen.

**SCHS Paid Membership  
 June—September 2021**

Dan & Nancy Hislop	<u>County Fair Winners</u>
Rich & Sandra Weckwerth	Gary Lauwagie
Allen Cty Public Library	Shelly Haefs
Tiffany Reinitz	David Tesch
Mark Albers	Jim Vinkemeier
Sam Fudenberg	
Barbara Mathwig	
Delano Quast	
Carmen Johnson	

Thank you for your support for the Sibley County Historical Society. Your membership is very important to us. It helps us maintain the museum building and grounds, and helps support the activities of the Society. The benefits of a current member include free access to genealogy research, free admission to the museum, and four issues of the newsletter each year.