

# SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter - September 2023

Volume 33

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700 Main Street – P. O. Box 407 – Henderson, Minnesota 56044

Phone: (507) 248-3434

[www.sibleycountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.sibleycountyhistoricalsociety.com) - [schs1@frontiernet.net](mailto:schs1@frontiernet.net)

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### Words from the President –

Well, I think we had another successful display at the August 2023 Sibley County fair and we had quite a lot of visitors. For those of you who didn't see it, the theme this year was "Communications". We had displays of things from mail to telegraph and radios, and telephone and cameras through the years. I think the visitors found it all interesting.

Items were brought from the museum along with other items borrowed to us. It was interesting to see the kids' reactions to a rotary dial phone and to learn how it worked.

Thank you all who brought items and also to those who took a shift or two sitting in the building. We are grateful to have so many willing volunteers. I am sure some are already thinking of a theme for next year.

As Fall is almost here, we will be planning a day to cleanup around the outside of the museum. Anyone interested can contact one of us for more information.

*Joy Cohrs, SCHS Board President*



## Remembering Pete Pinske *by Marie Main*

Applause was heard from the dining room of the Sibley County museum, as volunteers came from the attic, summer kitchen, and everywhere they were working. We had quite a group of volunteers in those days. The dining room had been lacking a very important part of its woodwork ever since it was opened. Before becoming our Sibley County Museum, it was rented as apartments. Perhaps some child had used the finials, which were an important part of the fireplace and sideboard as toys. The room was far from perfect and that must certainly have been a source of annoyance to anyone who had a sense of order. Pete must've been one of those people, as a few weeks before he had quietly taken a sample of each.

When Arlene and Pete drove up, we all knew the dining room would no longer be lacking, and we congregated to applaud the finished project. The many missing finials had been reproduced by the artisan Pete Pinske, and installed with the help of his able assistant, Arlene, his wife.

One of the most celebratory events in many years originating at the Sibley County Historical Society was held at the David Kahle Farm, where Pete, in and around a beautiful Pinske barn, gave an inspiring talk about generations of his family of builders—the Pinske family. Demonstrations were also given by his expert workmen on building practices. A grand staircase had been built on the outside, leading to the loft, so everyone could comfortably view the upper story, the loft. There was to be a supper, and those of us from the museum worried about the amount of food needed—in moments unrecognized pickups, cars and trucks came driving up. When the occupants came from those vehicles, they were bearing roasters filled with chicken and hot dish, coolers full of salads, along with statements: “Pinskes built our barn”, or “we worked with Pete on our beautiful church”. We added table after table just for the food and served at least 140, all they could eat. Everything about that evening was perfect including the weather, a beautiful June evening.

That barn now celebrates the Christmas nativity almost every year, inspiring thousands of worshipers. Years ago, when the slate roof of the museum needed replacing and money was scarce as usual, Pete was the champion, testifying before the county, commissioners, and telling how in Europe, where he had just visited, he learned how important it was to preserve old buildings; it was just taken for granted that should be emulated in the United States. The museum got its slate roof with Pete and his workers doing the almost impossible job of installation.

Then there is the summer kitchen floor. When the crew was building the new addition, which Pete planned and advised, under the strict supervision of the Minnesota Historical Society, items in the summer kitchen had to be moved, all linoleum was lifted, and what could be seen with bare earth in places. That wooden floor had to be replaced. He remembered the history of the West Union church, where he and his crew had replaced the floor. It had been built in approximately the same era as the Poehler house, now our museum. He had salvaged those boards and carefully stored them. They were installed, and now they are our “new” old flooring. The summer kitchen floor is as authentic as it can be. Thanks again to Pete Pinske.

The many barns, churches, and the Sibley County Historical Society museum building, which is intent on preserving the history of our county, and the people working and worshipping in them, stand in appreciation and remembrance of you, **Pete Pinske**.

*Marie Main*

## Learning to Read *by Holly Harjes*

What is new is really old. The May 8, 2023 issue of the Mankato Free Press had a long article on the Minnesota Legislature's concern for children's low reading scores. Legislators are considering appropriating \$35 million to #1. select **NEW** reading programs with **Phonics** based instruction and #2. to help pay for that curricula and provide professional development for teachers in the new (old!) methods.

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About 87 years ago I sat in the lower grade seats in a consolidated, two-room, country school in North Dakota. Phonics was used with students reading out loud every day! "Your seat work today," our teacher said while handing out pages from a Sears and Roebuck catalogue, "will be to find and circle all the vowels."

I became a good reader. My best childhood Christmas was the year I had seven (7) story books under the tree. My best adult Christmas was 1974, the year Sibley County joined the Minnesota Valley Regional Library System.  
*By Arlene Busse.*

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The newspaper article referred to was titled: State Lawmakers look to transform how Minnesota kids are taught to read. In the 80's reaching curricula education moved away from phonics—adopting a whole-language approach.

Phonics is learning to read and write by identifying, hearing and using different sounds that distinguish one word from another. Phonic skills also helps students know which letters to use when writing.

If a comprehensive education bill was passed, school districts will need to comply in 2024. This type of instruction is known as "science of reading", returning to the emphasis on phonics—now words are made up of a series of sounds!

## The Versatile Barber *by the Research Committee*

News - Aug 03, 2019

### STORY - UPPERCUT DELUXE

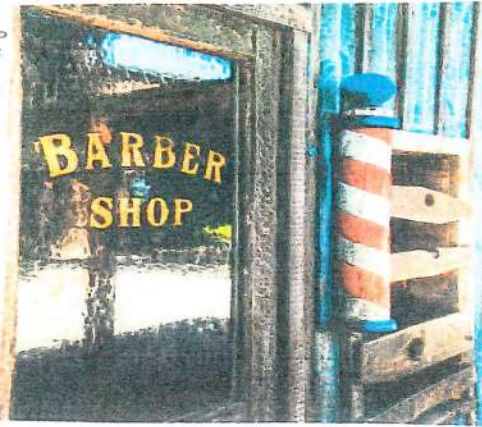
The barber pole journey back to its original symbol of bloodletting.

hair and trim services, providing a place to see a sore tooth or often the only option for treatment. Medical care was fairly primitive back then, and even simple procedures were risky.

The bloody bandages associated with bloodletting inspired the red and white stripes, while the barber pole itself symbolizes an instrument people gripped onto during the procedure to encourage blood flow.

Barbers would place the barber pole outside their barbershop to let customers know they were open for business.

Men's hairstyling has come a long way since the Middle Ages, but the barber pole still perseveres as an iconic representation of the trade.



Hundreds of years ago, barbers didn't just cut hair and trim beards, they also worked as dentists and surgeons, providing their services to poorer people who couldn't afford to see a physician. If you were unlucky enough to get a sore tooth or some kind of illness in those days, a barber was often the only option for treatment. Medical care was fairly primitive back then, and even simple procedures were risky.

The red and white bold stripes of the barber pole originated from a practice known as bloodletting. One of the nastier aspects of barber history, this practice involved drawing blood from the patient, in an attempt to cure them of disease or infection. Thanks to the progression of modern medicine, we now know that draining blood from a sick person probably wasn't the best idea. However, this method was used to treat everything from common colds to deadly diseases back in the Middle Ages.

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# What's-it items

(unidentified)

at the 2023 Sibley County Fair

“Spring Lancet” in wooden box—c1870s.



A spring lancet in a box (ca 1870); part of the HSI S collection of bloodletting instruments

Used for bloodletting, a procedure thought to be therapeutic. Bloodletting is thousands of years old...controversial...height of popularity, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century...rejected as quackery.”



The other what's it at the fair was a “Sugar Nipper” ca early 1800s. Before granulated sugar or sugar lumps were available in the 1850s, sugar came in hard cones. A sharp tool was needed to nip off pieces.

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No winners this year! Sorry. The 60<sup>th</sup> guesser was pretty close (Sarah).

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Daily drawings were held for a “Country Schools of Sibley County” books. The winners were: Pat Kroells, Green Isle, on Wednesday; Betty Oelfke, Arlington, on Thursday; Dale Neubarth, Arlington, on Friday; Betty Ewert, Arlington, on Saturday; Travis Rosenay on Sunday.

598 visitors signed in this year at the SCHS house. Thank you for visiting us!

## Meet the Minnesotan who figured out that the USA needed more cowbells

*By Lindsay Marshall in MNopedia*

Between 1865 and 1885 William Bleedorn's foundry in Carver County produced thousands of bells per year that were used by farmers across the country.

Bleadorn was born in Prussia (now Germany) in 1835. In 1853, he arrived in the United States and settled in Wisconsin, where he lived for ten years. He married Minnie Schroeder in 1857. The couple would go on to have seven children.

In 1863, Bleadorn registered for the draft. At that time, he was living in Watertown—then a small hamlet near the northern border of Carver County. Bleadorn did not begin his military service until 1865 ... with Co. D of the First Battalion Minnesota Infantry.

Bleadorn opened the Watertown Bell Factory in 1864 in downtown Watertown. The community grew rapidly during the 1870s and was incorporated as a village in 1877.

Bleadorn founded a unique and in-demand trade: manufacturing cow bells. He established a production process in which he cut and shaped each of his bells individually from sheet metal he had shipped to himself.

Each of Bleadorn's bells was made to produce a slightly different sound. Farmers who did not fence in their fields could locate their free-roaming cattle quickly by listening for the unique tones of their bells.

When Bleadorn began his foundry, it was one of only three in the country and the only cow bell manufacturer in Minnesota.



# LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

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**We may have it!**

**Thanks** to Charles and Donna Meyer,  
their designated donations have allowed us to replace  
some of the paper copies of newspapers with microfilm.

We purchased over 150 reels of the Arlington Enterprise, Gaylord Hub and ordered the Winthrop News and Green Isle records. We already had the Gibbon Gazette and Henderson Newspapers. By doing this we have all the county newspapers on microfilm up to 1950 making research so much easier.

Other items available in the Research Center include the following:

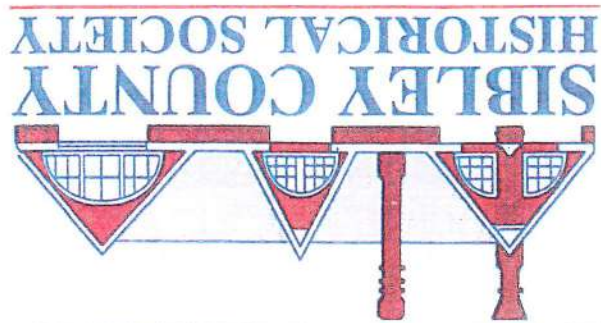
<b>Family Histories</b> Donated Books	<b>Surname Files</b> Obituaries, stories, etc.	
<b>Churches/Cemeteries</b> Records, plats & location		
<b>Plat Books</b> Original Entries 1874 Atlas, etal.	<b>City/Township Histories</b> Information on each	<b>Organizations</b> Major Sibley Co.
	<b>Subjects</b> ie, Railroads Weather, medical	<b>Sibley County</b> Organizations, County Departments
<b>School Histories</b> Rural Schools Town & parochial	<b>Access to Ancestry.com</b> Census Records Where people lived	<b>Newspapers</b> Not on Microfilm
<b>Military</b> Civil, Indian, etal. Wars Rosters & Reports		

We are usually open most Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., but please call 507-248-3434 first to be sure we are there. You may e-mail us at [schs@frontiernet.net](mailto:schs@frontiernet.net) to make an appointment. Fees may apply.

By Eldrene Ebert, Chairman of Research Committee.

Reminder: If you have a 2022 date above your mailing label, this indicates we have not received your 2023 membership dues. Please remit this year's dues as soon as possible. 2024 dues are due on or before Feb. 1, 2024.

700 Main Street  
 P O Box 407  
 Henderson, MN 56044  
 Phone 507 248 3434  
 E-mail: schs1@frontiernet.net



**Board of Directors:**

- President – Joy Cohrs
- Vice President – Diane Fredin
- Secretary – Shirley Black
- Treasurer – Tom Frauendienst

**Board Members at Large:**

- Holly Harjes
- Mike Reinhardt
- Verne Schlueter
- Becky Briggs
- Delano Quast

Museum Curator – Sharon Hagenmiller

Send articles, announcements, photos, and comments to the SCHS Newsletter Editor (Diane Fredin, P. O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044 or e-mail them to schs1@frontiernet.net

Check your membership date on the mailing label. Memberships now run from February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024. Mail your check and information to: SCHS Treasurer, P. O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044

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**SCHS Membership Form**

Circle: New or Renewal

- Individual: \$20.00
- Family: \$25.00
- Business: \$50.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Sibley County Historical Society Treasurer, P. O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044