

SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter - September 2022

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

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Words from the President –

Greetings! I think our display at the Sibley County Fair was great. We had a lot of visitors and many good comments. Kudos to Ruth Ann Buck for coming up with the Music theme. Our featured city, Gaylord, had an amazing display. Thanks to all the towns for bringing displays also.

We had a presentation by Ann Tracy on August 11, at the museum, which was well attended; we had a room full.

Porch painting is in progress and should look very nice when done.

Our September board meeting will be held at the Winthrop Museum followed by a program presented by the 'Hat Lady' Diane Fredin.

Joy Cohrs, SCHS Board President

The 2022 Sibley County Fair closed with a sprinkle of rain: lovely days with one hot day. Sibley County Historical Society presented 'Bits of Music History' incorporating displays from each of the seven towns in Sibley County. Thanks to all of you for sharing your time and collectibles.

Gaylord was the featured city. They followed Arlington and Henderson in former fair years; the four (4) remaining cities will follow in years to come.

The 'What's It?' items stimulated comical responses, like the following:



- I. Cookbook holder, clip board holder, mole trap, sewing equipment, napkin holder, holder for milk jug
- II. A popped balloon, fishing weight, plumb bob, fishing lure, parachute toy, shotgun barrel cleaner

Melanie Schmidt was the real winner with her answers: a harmonica holder and a spit rag. Her prize was a SCHS **2023** membership. Welcome, Melanie.

"Country School" books were awarded at each day's drawings. Those recipients were Ken Dose, Kathy Stumpf, Lucy Dvorak, Nick Dupay and Ken Schiroo. This 522 page volume was compiled by SCHS volunteer staff. These five (5) individuals visited the SCHS building (old town hall) at the fair along with over 670 other fairgoers and volunteer guides. The guests hailed from eleven states (CA, CO, FL, IL, KS, MN, MO, ND, SD, TX, WI) plus London and the U.K.

“This Old House”

By Joy Cohrs

August F. Poehler came to America in 1855 at the age of 17 with his father. He joined his brothers in Henderson in the family general store business as a fur trader. He met his future wife Emilie Connick as they disembarked the steamship “Otter” in 1864. They were married on New Year’s Eve that year. They were blessed with six children.



The A. F. Poehler residence soon after occupancy in 1883. The proud owner stands on the boardwalk in front while son August poses with his velocipede. The date stone (with swan on top) and its companion marked the present day porch. The short stack, a lifting post, still stands on the lawn. Installation of central heating was a first in rural Minnesota at that time. August 1883.

The house was built in 1884 at a cost of \$39,000. The architect was George Pass from Mankato, design is Modified Eastlake Gothic. Bricks were made at the Henderson Brickyard and brickwork was done by Ernest Boren of LeSueur. The roof is Pennsylvania slate shingles.

The original porch was replaced in the 1930’s. There are 7 chimneys on the house and the house was one of the first to have central heat which was a combination of hot air and steam. The old coal chute can be seen in the basement.

The window shutters, which were found in the attic, were original to the house.

Ceilings in the house are 11 feet 6 inches. The house also had a bathroom which was a very new idea in the 1880’s. A large tank in the attic was filled by pumping water from the outside well. The tank is still in the attic.

August L. Poehler, son of August F., grew up in the house. He saw the need to preserve history and thus the Historical Society was formed in 1940. He served as the first President of the Society with 24 charter members. Dues were 50 cents a year or \$10 for life memberships.

Artifacts were stored in the former courthouse basement, then moved to the former fire barn and back to the courthouse. Realizing it was not a good idea to keep moving the artifacts, they began looking for a permanent space. In 1948 the house became available to purchase. The Society purchased it for \$7,500.00.

After cleaning, painting and setting up displays, the museum was ready to open on Memorial Day, 1949. It has been tradition to open every year on Memorial Day.

The house was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1982. The society survives with a yearly appropriation from Sibley County, donations, and paid memberships.

All the office workers, research people, guides, etc. are volunteers. We are always looking for more volunteers so anyone interested should contact the museum or a board member.

“First Floor”

By Holly Harjes

NOW ... we enter the parlor from the dining room. It is where guests in the 1890's must have waited until dinner would be served. The grand chandelier hangs from the eleven foot ceiling. The woodwork is art in itself. The pocket doors to the music room are a real shocker to me. They are 9 feet tall; the walls are 17" thick.

(I thought pocket doors were just designed in 1950 when my family had a new home with pocket doors.)

The bay window is charming for an assortment of arrangements. Of course, the original, wood shutters cover the windows.

From here, I go into the music room. This is where the gentlemen moved after dinner for discussions, a pipe or a cigar. I may also enter and exit through a small entry to the front porch. Another small door leads to the greenroom—storage for hunting gear. The room is lined with interesting instruments to reveal the abundance of musical talents in the county's history. Of course, the fun item is a \$3.50 Sears hand crank organ. That's the ONE instrument visitors can “play.”

There's a unique display of an 1890 camera from Winthrop's Ostrom Studio which took the wedding photo. Completing the story is the attire (and bridal bouquet) of John Luehring and Emma Panning's April 1, 1911 wedding in Moltke Township.

Walking through the Victorian Mansion, visitors are amazed at the beautiful floors of black walnut and maple.

Lumber for August Poehler's residence was resourced from this area called The Big Woods.

I wish I had a hoop skirt outfit to swish around in as I visited these elegant rooms. And, of course, I would like to wear a huge hat with feathers and ribbons.



Gems of the Second Floor and Attic

by Becky Lund Briggs, with Charles Isenberg and Arlene Busse

The Isenberg Family Rug Loom - The first gem is part of my family!

John & Johanna Isenberg and their five sons emigrated from Sweden to Cornish Township, Sibley County, MN. Anders (Andrew) was the first to come, arriving in 1880. August and Carl Gustaf (Charles) followed in 1881. Solomon and Manne were the last sons to come to America, arriving in 1882 along with the parents.

John Isenberg was a carpenter and woodworker. Family lore says he made the loom for his daughters-in-law to use. It is a two harness Swedish-type loom. It was shared among the families and traveled from home to home. As the loom made its rounds, each family would complain the other families weren't taking good enough care of it.

Gilbert Isenberg's son Charles remembers seeing the loom in the attic of Carl Isenberg's farm house when his aunt and uncle Emil & Violet (Isenberg) Lindquist lived there. It was in poor condition, and sat unused for years. When Emil & Violet left the farm, the house was torn down and the loom donated to the Sibley County Historical Society.

Arlene Busse says the loom was stored in a garage on museum property for many years. When the garage was torn down to move in the log cabin, the loom was put in the museum basement. It sat there disassembled until Dr. Dysterheft of Gaylord, who was familiar with looms, re-assembled it. It now sits in the second floor Textile Room. The white rug displayed on the loom was woven by an Isenberg family member, and donated by my grandmother, Manne's daughter, Alice (Isenberg) Johnson.

Children were not supposed to climb on the loom, but family members say it was an irresistible temptation – Doris (Isenberg) Briese remembered what fun it was. For that reason, there is a doll displayed on the top of the loom.



The Skylight - The second gem is not as noticeable.

In the second floor hallway near the stairway is a painted-over skylight. If you dig under some insulation in the attic, you can find the remaining glass. In the roof of the attic was another skylight. This system brought daylight to the attic so the Poehler children could play up there, and also illuminated the hallway. Clever!





The Water Tank –

Pretty much hidden is the third gem, the water tank in the attic.

The Poehler boys or a hired man would pump water from the well outside up to the attic. From there, gravity would let water flow to the second floor bathroom and the sink in the library.

Look Out Basement—Here We Come! And Lower Level

By Lyle Verne Schlueter, Board Member



When you visit and tour the Sibley County Historical Museum, you will find many things in the basement—interesting displays of pioneer tools and machines used in the new settlement of Henderson and Sibley County, Minnesota.

On display are several sausage stuffers. As a young boy of five or so, I recall butchering day which was done in the colder months of the year. Aunts and uncles would arrive early in the day. The men would butcher the hogs or beef and then the men and women would gather around a large sturdy table and the further processing of the animals would begin including the cutting, sausage making and canning. Prepared sausage ingredients would be put with the meat and the mixture would be kneaded and put through the sausage press into casings.



The casings for the sausage would be natural—utilizing the intestines of the animals.

I remember my Grandmother Martha Fisher cleaning the intestines for use and me asking her about the procedure; she explained it all in great detail!

At the end of the day, no one left hungry. The ladies were terrific cooks! No matter how long and demanding the day was for them, the food was always wonderful!

A drum A baton A photo A boy - Continued from July Newsletter

By Holly Harjes

Author of this story, George Foltz Jr. was Win Working of Blakely Township.

Story of a Drummer Boy, who was in the Civil War, was an article headline in the February 13, 1925 Henderson Independent. No photograph of the boy in uniform exists.

Mr. Foltz was born in Peru, Illinois, and his mother died during his early childhood. His father moved to Mankato...worked as a mason in Mankato until Lincoln's call for volunteers, when he enlisted in the Second Minnesota Regiment...left George at the home of friends before he went to mobilization camp...the boy was lonely without his father...in the middle of June, 1862, two weeks after his father's departure, George slipped away...set forth on foot... . [Family history reports this was his second escape attempt, successful, because he silenced the family dog with the bribe of a slab of bacon from the farm's smoke house.]

When he reached the camp (Fort Snelling), his father indignantly ordered him home, but the determined youngster appealed to the captain...who permitted him to stay. The regiment was ordered South...the battles of Mill Springs and Bowling Green are deeply etched in the veteran's recollection.

The regiment was encamped at Winchester, Tenn., in June, 1862, beside the Seventeenth Ohio Infantry. Young Foltz persuaded his father and the captain to permit him to enlist in that regiment as a drummer boy. The Ohio regiment was attached to the army of General Sherman and from that time on, Mr. Foltz was in the thick of the fighting in many of the battles...Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Murfreesboro, Kenesaw Mountain, Stoney River and Atlanta.

It was the custom then for the drum corps to proceed the troops when going into action, falling back when firing began. This was enough to try the nerves of an old campaigner, but Mr. Foltz does not recall a single instance of a drummer showing the "white feather". "We were too busy to be scared," he said. "Our work was by no means ended when we were ordered to fall back. We laid aside our drums and went to the assistance of the wounded, carrying water and bandages, often bandaging wounds."

"This work", he explained, "was sometimes more dangerous than that of the common soldier, for often they could hide behind a building or a tree and while we were obliged to scurry from place to place, most of the time exposed to the enemy's fire."

Yet, Mr. Foltz was not wounded, although many of his mates were killed. He recalls that three were shot down beside him in the Georgia campaign.

Mr. Foltz was a veteran when Sherman began his march to the sea...[he] considered Sherman an ideal officer and cherishes a memory of the grim, old general wearing a slouch hat and a private's blouse, walking among his men like a common soldier.

After his discharge Mr. Foltz accompanied his commanding officer, Captain J. D. Inskip, to the latter's home at East Liberty, Ohio, where he remained two years and attended school. He returned to Mankato in 1867, where his father was again working as a mason... . He worked with his father until he was 19 years old, when he married Miss Theresa Oberle and came to Henderson. [Family history says the couple eloped to Henderson to avoid parental wrath.]

For a number of years, Mr. Foltz was the leader of a drum corps of boys in Henderson and there are few men born in Henderson in the last fifty years, who as boys, did not hear from his own lips the story of the veteran drummer's life in the army. He still tells the story to eager youngsters, and of course, he is a conspicuous figure on Memorial Day.

October 2021Devonna Murrin
June McCarthyLong Beach, CA
Modesto, CA**November 2021**

Sam Schult

Winthrop

December 2021Arlen Messerli
David & Marie Main
Charles Woehler
Carrie Johnson
Marian Anderson
Ruben & Eldrene
Duane & Vicki Stock
Bill & Charlotte BesekeWinthrop
Gaylord
Arlington
Poolesville, MD
Gaylord
Gaylord
Arlington
Arlington**January 2022**Charlotte Doudell
Arden & Carol Sjogren
Bill & Donna Grunwald
Thomas & Cheryl Kurkoski
Lavonne Sandersfeld
Verne & Donna Schlueter
Carol Reiter
Steve & Becky Briggs
Mary Ellen Weller
Thomas DunnHenniker
Marjorie Renneke
Vern & Renee Ruschmeyer
Edward Kruse
Marie Renneke
Jeff DuCharme
Harriet Throdahl
Tom & Diane Frauendienst
Judith Monkkonen
Elizabeth Kuphal
Ron & Kay Klement
Susan Peters
Sam Fuderberg
Marjorie Johnson
Dale & Joan Ewald
Diane Rostberg
Phil & Connie Delzer
Marian Pfarr-Saxton
Greg & Carolyn Johnson
Lois Braun
Karol Erickson
Leslie & Diane Pettis
Brad & Jessica Nachreiner
Elaine Nelson
Lorraine Steeber
Suzanne Osten
Diane Neubarth
Brian Williams
Harold & Bonita Pettis
Leon & Bev Stadtherr
Dale & Patricia EricsonSan Jose, CA
Bismarck, ND
Apple Valley
N. St. Paul
Williamsburg, IA
Arlington
Henderson
Eagan
Madison, WI
NH
LeSueur
Dassel
Burnsville
Mpls
Henderson
Gaylord
Henderson
Culver City, CA
Gaylord
Gibbon
Palm Bay, FL
Roseville
St. Peter
Hutchinson
Henderson
Mpls
Gaylord
Winthrop
LeCenter
Olympia, WA
Winthrop
Comfrey
Albert Lea
Palatine, IL
Scandia
Hutchinson
LeSueur
Gibbon
Winthrop
Gibbon**February 2022**Joseph Strobel
Brian & Diane Fredin
Ruth A. Wolter
Gordon & Maureen Krumrey
James A. Mayer (4 yrs)
Michael Reinhardt
Ruth Ann Buck
Dwight & Patricia Grabitske
Eric Hanson
Carol Jackson
Lowell Nagel
Joe Luskey
Bernice Hanson
Charles & Karen Erickson Jr.
Diane Laabs
Linda Cancio
Lois Bode
Lynn & Wendy Evenson
Eileen L. Amorim
Eugene & Jeanette Bening
Roger & Holly Harjes
Richard & Diane Isakson
Leo Berger
Birdine BattcherGaylord
Winthrop
Gaylord
Glencoe
Winthrop
Henderson
Arlington
Arlington
Chesapeake, VA
Eden Prairie
Arlington
Green Isle
Arden Hills
Mpls
Gaylord
Sacramento, CA
Gibbon
Green Isle
Gaylord
Hutchinson
Green Isle
Gibbon
Henderson
Arlington**March 2022**Jeff & Joan Zumhofe
Howard & Fran Armstrong
Steve & Joanne KleistWinthrop
Gaylord
Richfield**April 2022**Tiffany Reinitz & Mark Albers
David & Marie MainHenderson
Gaylord**May 2022**Neal & Bobbie Harder
Don & Betty StrobelLe Sueur
Le Sueur**June 2022**

Allen County Public Library

Fort Wayne, IN

July 2022Edward & Arlene Pinske
Hometown Bank
Shirley BlackGaylord
Henderson
Gibbon**August 2022**Joe & Alice Strobel
Catherine CreechGaylord
Henderson

Thank you to these members for having paid their Sibley County Historical Society dues in a timely manner. The yearly period now runs from February 1 through January 31 of each year.

Your dedication to the Society is sincerely appreciated. If you do not see your name, you may pay your 2022 dues at any time to the SCHS Treasurer, Tom Frauendienst.



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

Check your membership date on the mailing label. Memberships now run from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2023. Mail your check and information to: SCHS Treasurer, P. O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044

Thank you for your support of the Sibley County Historical Society.

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

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