

SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter - December 2023

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Words from the President –

We are close to the end of another year at the museum. Many visitors were received throughout the summer and some special visitors also. One Sunday, descendants of the Didra family, who lived in the log cabin by our museum, came to visit. Another week we had a visit from Donna Meyer from Texas, along with her sister who had never been to our museum.

Last Spring we put up a couple new signs. A new museum sign for the front yard to replace the old one (I think it looks great and is more eye-catching!). We also got a handicap entrance sign by the back door courtesy of the Sibley County Highway Department. The front porch was repaired and painted.

We had a fall cleanup day in October with a nice turnout of volunteers. We trimmed shrubs, raked, etc. We recently had to have a couple trees removed that were dying. We will look at replacing them next Spring.

Again, I would like to thank all our volunteers who we could not operate without—from our Sunday guides to the Tuesday and Thursday gals as well as others who help out with miscellaneous projects. Your help is so much appreciated.

We are now planning for our SCHS Annual Meeting in April 2024 along with a special opening on Memorial Day to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Sibley County Historical Museum.

This is our last newsletter for the year. Happy Holidays to all!

Joy Cohrs, SCHS Board President



WASN'T IT FUN TO SEE SOME OLD BELLS AT THE 2023 COUNTY FAIR?

Sleigh Bells – do much more than just ring in holiday cheer:

1. Sleigh bells or jingle bells are a type of bell that produces a distinctive jingle sound belonging to the percussion family.
2. The bells are made from sheet metal bent into a spherical shape with a small ball bearing or a short metal rod placed inside to create the jingle sound.
3. Small bells were known in ancient times. In Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt they were commonly suspended from the trappings of horses, mules, and camels.
4. **Centuries ago, sleigh bells were fastened to horses to signal the approach of someone important or to warn pedestrians of an approaching vehicle.** Sleighs were unable to stop quickly enough so they needed a warning sound.
5. William Barton opened the first U. S. sleigh bell company in East Hampton, Connecticut in 1810. East Hampton eventually became known as “**Belltown**”.
6. Sleigh bells, or jingles, are rarely used to produce specific pitches. The affluent ornamentally wore bells as a symbol of wealth and status.
7. In old Pagan beliefs, jingle bells are used to ward off bad luck, diseases, and evil spirits. Today, some motorcyclists strap on small bells to ward off road demons.
8. Sleigh bells were one of the first instruments played in space. In 1965, Gemini 6 astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra, smuggled bells and a harmonica onto their spacecraft and played Jingle Bells for mission control as a light-hearted holiday joke.
9. The song “Jingle Bells”, also known as “One Horse Open Sleigh”, is one of the most popular recorded songs on Earth. It was written in 1857 by James L. Pierpont and was originally meant for Thanksgiving.



The Tradition of Christmas Lights in Minnesota

Every state in the US has something they are known for. Colorado has The Rocky Mountains, Georgia boasts delicious peaches, and when you think of Oklahoma you think of tornadoes. When most people think of Minnesota, they probably think of the long harsh winters we experience.

Because of the brutal winters we face, Christmas and all of the festivities it entails helps ease the pain of the cold. Everyone has their favorite traditions this time of year, like drinking hot chocolate, going sledding, or picking out the perfect Christmas tree. One beloved tradition most Minnesotans cherish every season is decorating with lights. In this blog we will walk you through the world of Minnesota Christmas lights and discover how communities come together to transform the state into a winter wonderland.

In the land of 10,000 lakes, it is no surprise that Minnesotans have turned Christmas lighting into an art form. This tradition, deeply rooted in the state's culture, serves not only as a way to celebrate the holiday season but also as a means of spreading cheer, fostering community togetherness, and brightening up the long, dark winter nights that Minnesota is known for.

The tradition of illuminating Minnesota with Christmas lights has deep historical roots that date back to the late 19th century. Understanding the origins of this beloved tradition provides insight into how it has evolved over the years, from simple candle-lit trees to the extravagant displays seen across the state today.

Before the invention of electric lights, candles were the primary source of illumination for Christmas trees and decorations. Families would carefully secure candles to their trees and wreaths, creating a warm and inviting ambiance. However, the use of open flames posed significant fire hazards, as you can imagine. It required constant vigilance to prevent accidents, and the candles often burned out quickly.



The situation began to change with the invention of the first Christmas tree lights. In 1882, Thomas Edison's friend, Edward H. Johnson put the very first string of electric Christmas tree lights together. These early electric bulbs, while not as safe as modern LED lights, were a significant improvement over candles.

As electricity became more accessible and affordable, Minnesotans began to incorporate electric lights into their holiday traditions. During the 1920s and 1930s, businesses in Minnesota started using holiday lighting as a way to attract customers. This trend further popularized the use of Christmas lights, and it soon became customary for businesses to decorate their storefronts and windows with colorful lights and festive decorations during the holiday season.

Learning to Read by Holly Harjes

What's the origin of the phrase 'A picture is worth a thousand words?'

This famous phrase ties right in with our last September issue's article on Phonics. Just recall the number of times we would introduce a new book to a child and ask "what's happening? Who do you see? Where are they?" Discussing a picture lets a child enhance their vocabulary and imagination. Their desire to read increases as they desire to read those words at the bottom of the page!

All this came about because someone coined the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words." A sincere observation: A picture tells a story just as well, if not better, than a lot of written words.

In advertising with the title "One look is worth a thousand words", in *Printer's Ink*, December 1921, Barnard claimed the phrase's source to be oriental by adding "so said a famous Japanese philosopher, and he was right." Another form of the phrase was written in March 1927, this time suggesting a Chinese origin. In fact, Barnard didn't introduce the phrase—his only contribution was the incorrect suggestion that the country of origin was Japan or China. This has led to another popular belief about the phrase; that is, that it was coined by Confucius. It might fit the Chinese-sounding 'Confucius he say' style, but the Chinese derivation was pure invention.

A similar idea was seen very widely in the USA from the early 20th century in advertisements for Doan's Backache Kidney pills, which included a picture of a man holding his back and the text reading 'Every picture tells a story'.

Neither of the above led directly to 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. Who it was that married 'worth ten thousand words' with 'picture' isn't known, but we do know that the phrase is American in origin. It began to be used quite frequently in the US press from around the 1920s onward. The earliest example can be found from the text of an instructional talk given by the newspaper editor Arthur Brisbane to the Syracuse Advertising Men's Club in March 1911.

"Use a picture. It's worth a thousand words."

In both USA and Britain, the phrase was popularized in the early 1900s by the advertisements for Doan's Backache Kidney Pills, in which the slogan *Every Picture tells a Story* appeared alongside the picture of a man or woman clutching the small of his or her back.



Duane G. Thiele: Thiele Studio (1960-1962)

Gaylord

By Steve Briggs

In 1960 Duane G. Thiele opened a branch of his Glencoe studio in the IOOF building. It was managed by Jack Schuster and sold to him in September 1962. Many years go by, the photo records (hundreds of envelopes containing proofs, order forms, and related items) are donated to the Sibley County Historical Society. More years pass. An inventory is now being prepared of the photo collection.

The collection consists of two boxes of envelopes. The first box has been inventoried. It contains weddings, high school graduations, confirmations, businesspersons, and family individuals/groups.



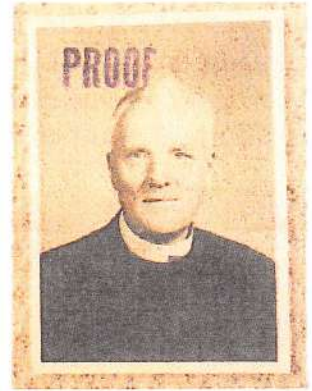
.....Box 1 of 20



Nancy Kvasnicka



Jerry Scharpe



Rev. Marquardt



George Pinski



The Abrahams

Our Research Committee has the inventory list of box 1 and would be happy to share.

You can contact them for an appointment if you'd like to visit and peruse the list.

Box 2 is being worked on.

Sample of Confirmations:

Doerre, Linda % Clarence
Piotter, Barbara, % Reinhard Podratz
Abraham, Bill % Arnold
Schulz, Allan % Elmer
Radke, Ronald % George
Sorbe, Tom % Dean
Grewe, Virgil % Mrs. Erna
Schrupp, Raymond % Ray
Podratz, Lance % Gerhard

Sample of Business persons:

Peterson, Don
Severin, Clarence
Anderson, George
Salzwedel, J. J.
Hrabek, Gladys
Jones, Ralph
Knoche, Dr. Harvey A.
Renner, Cy
Kuelbs, Jim

Sample of High School graduates:

Pautsch, Wilbert % Walter
Overson, Eldon % Eldo
Meyer, Paul % Alfred
Battcher, LeRoy % Elmer
Estesen, Larry % James
Franke, Clifford % Edwin

Winthrop Community Historical Society

223 Carver Street North, Winthrop, Minnesota

*"Christmas in the Country"
Museum Open House*

*12:00 noon to 4 p.m.
December 9, 2023*

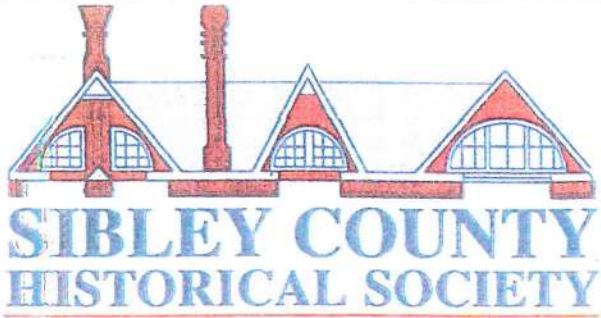
We would like to share with you the many artifacts, etc.
that have been collected since
our last Open House.

Refreshments & cookies will be served.

Our Open House celebration is our commitment
to the preservation of Winthrop's history.

Merry Christmas!





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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.



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

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

Editor: Diane Fredin

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