

SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter ~ March 2021

Volume 31, Issue 1

700 Main Street • P.O. Box 407 • Henderson, Minnesota 56044
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From the President:

A Message from Jeff Ducharme,
Sibley County Historical Society President

We are approaching a historic time for the Sibley County Historical Society as our Annual Meeting, Sunday, April 25 at 2:00 p.m. will be offered to members to attend via online ZOOM. So, no black tie or fantastic food catered along with a no host bar or gourmet desserts. It's free, so please email us your email address so we can send you the ZOOM link to attend.

Inside this issue:

Page 2
Sailor's Unique Uniform
Teddy Bears
Page 3
Glass Fire Grenades
Did You Ask Enough Questions
Page 4
Pandemics & Epidemics
Zipper, an Onomatopoeia
Page 5
Sibley County Farmers
Page 6-7
Henderson Early Days
Page 8
Paid Membership

There are three board member positions to fill. Vicki Stock, Vice President, and Mike Reinhardt board member at large terms were April 15 2018 - 2021. They have both agreed to renew another term. Wendy Evenson, board member at large was appointed a two-year term in April 2019 and will not be renewing her term. If any of our members would consider a SCHS Board position, please let us know.

For now, we are optimistic that we will be able to open the Museum for our traditional Memorial Day season kickoff. However, during this historic COVID-19-time, limited guests and masks and social distancing are all to be determined and maybe by timed reservation too. So, please stay well and thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Cheers,
Jeff DuCharme

Board of Directors:

President
Jeff DuCharme
Vice President
Vicki Stock
Secretary
Shirley Black
Treasurer
Tom Frauendenst
Directors
Joy Cohrs, Holly Harjes, Wendy Evenson, Eldrene Ebert, Mike Reinhardt

From the SCHS Board:

A huge Thank You for supporting the new system to have all Memberships paid in February. There has been a great response.

We do plan a Memorial Day 2021 opening. Summer, Sunday Tours is our dreamDEPENDING.

HELP NEEDED:

Task Positions Available: tour guides, grounds keeping, display creation, housekeeping, financial donations.

This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave!

This March letter happened because we received great writings from Museum fans. We hope that we have created questions, brainstorming, thoughtful tidbits, historical memories. Feel free to contribute writings and volunteer time. Our years of success, since 1948, is a result of All donated objects, All volunteer labor (never a paid position) and generous followings from folk like you !

Sailor's Unique Uniform

By Arlene Busse

Research indicates the "Cracker Jack" image for sailors was gone in 2016. No more bell bottoms. The jumper and trousers have zippers for ease in dressing. The 13 buttons remain, evidently for tradition's sake. The 13 buttons were placed to boarder the front, wide side flap on the pants. No mention was made of the tiny pocket situation. The white hat stays the same and is called "the Dixie Cup" also referred as the "Cover".



During World War II, a non-commissioned sailor's dress blues pants closed with 13 buttons. There was one tiny pocket which could hold about one silver dollar. This coin was in common use in Idaho where the Farragut Naval Training Station was located. My sailor husband solved the tiny pocket problem with a cloth money belt. He used this for years while on vacation trips.

The Navy provided classes at Farragut resulting in rating my husband as an Electrician's Mate. He spent most of his years in service in the South Pacific in his ship's engine room. He claimed the intense heat in the engine room caused hair loss. When on deck or on leave, head and the hair loss caused sweat enough to soak the white Dixie Cup resulting in sunburn.

Teddy Bears

By Collections Committee

The year 1903 is important to the history of children's toys. The teddy bear as a popular children's playmate had its beginning because of a newspaper story about President Theodore Roosevelt's hunting trip to Mississippi in 1902.

The Theodore Roosevelt Association has a web site which provides this version of the story...

"After three days of hunting, other members



of the party had spotted bears, but not Roosevelt.

Now what? The President's bear hunt would be a failure! The next day the hunt guides tracked down and old black bear that the dogs had trailed quite a distance and attacked. The guides tied the bear to a willow tree

and called for the President. Here was a bear for him to shoot!

But Roosevelt took one look at the old bear and refused to shoot it. He felt doing so would be unsportsmanlike. However, since it was injured and suffering, Roosevelt ordered that the bear be put down to end it's pain. Word of this hit newspapers across the country, and political cartoonist Clifford Berryman picked up on the story drawing a cartoon..."

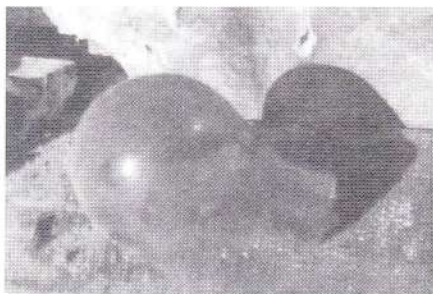
The original cartoon ran in the Washington Post...similar cartoons appeared, but the bear was smaller. This bear cub...connected bears with President Roosevelt.

The Teddy Bear tie-in came when a Brooklyn, NY candy shop owner, Morris Michton, saw...[the] cartoon and had an idea. He put in his shop window two stuffed toy bears his wife had made. Michtom asked permission from President Roosevelt to call these toy bears 'Teddy Bears'. The rapid popularity of these bears led Michtom to mass-produce them, eventually forming the Ideal Novelty and Toy Company.

In 1978 the Ideal Toy Corporation produced a replica of their 1903 bear for its 75th birthday edition of the original Teddy Bear. This bear in its original box will be a summer resident at the Sibley County Museum.

Glass Fire Grenades

By Ruth Ann Buck, Research Committee



Few visitors seeing the museum's example of this have any idea of what the object is. The SCHS's fire grenade is located in the former window, shelving between the

original summer kitchen and the 2010 addition. "HS Nutting Extinguishing Grenade, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1888" is on the label of our amber colored glass orb. No donor record has been found. Our research states that the liquid inside this model was salt water.

The following information is from the April 11, 2019, ANTIQUE TRADER....*when a small fire broke out in the interior of a home, a glass orb, known as a fire grenade, was taken from a wall-mounted bracket or kept handy next to the fireplace and thrown at the base of the flames...The concept was simple; the glass orb shattered on contact and contents, as it spewed onto the flames, vaporized into fire extinguishing gas. Only a very small fire could be stopped with one of these devices.*

Similar products were made between 1860's and the early 1900's, some filled with carbon tetrachloride. According to some historians, the fire grenade had its roots reaching back to Roman Empire times. In 1954 the "hand grenade fire extinguisher was no longer acceptable to the Underwriters Laboratory. After 1905 modern brass and copper fire extinguishers were developed.

Vintage fire grenades have become attractions for collectors. Prices range from \$25 to \$2,000. Fire grenade is an appropriate name because it was meant to be tossed just as a military grenade is lobbed.

When my family moved into our home in Arlington Township in 1978, we found two round, red glass objects in the basement. They were identified

as fire extinguishers by Fred Nuessmeier, who had lived in the house.

Did You Ask Enough Questions?

By Arlene Busse

Have you asked family elders about your family history, this is so important, and to write down the answers? Are there unidentified photographs of relatives that the elders may be able to name?

The begats list, of generations with statistics of birth and death etc., is important to record correctly. Just as important as the statistics are the anecdotal stories about these individuals. Did an immigrant ancestor experience a storm at sea? Did the person come alone or with family? Did one of your relatives change jobs, move to a different location, have an accident, get arrested? Yes, even less savory information is part of a well-documented family history. Perhaps someone in the family line-up served in the military. In some countries, men had to do a compulsory stint in the military before immigration was allowed. An example of not asking one veteran enough about his World War II service follows.

Robert Busse of Henderson enlisted in the US Navy in 1943 right after high school graduation. In early August of 1945 he was on a US Navy Destroyer escort near Tinian Island in the North Pacific. A few years before his death he mentioned this event. He said, 'There were so many of our smaller ships circling this big battleship that we were more in danger of hitting one another than we were from a hit from a Jap torpedo.' Later the men were told that an atomic bomb was on the battleship waiting to be off-loaded at Tinian Island.

I didn't ask enough questions! I should have found out which bomb, 'Little Boy' (August 6) or 'Fat Man' (August 9) was on that battle ship. Bob said, "But I do not even remember the name of the ship."



Pandemics and Epidemics

By Arlene Busse

My first job as a public health nurse began in 1954 at Devils Lake, North Dakota. Much of what I did during the school immunization clinics in my county and helping nurses, in the other two counties in our joint health department, with their clinics. Medical doctors gave the DPT shots for protection from diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus. At the same time Mantoux tests were given to see if a student or teacher were positive for tuberculosis. The sites were to be examined after two days. A positive test required a home visit, seeking the source of exposure and giving instructions to see the family doctor for evaluation. In this era, the drug Streptomycin was used for people with tuberculosis. Several "residents" in the county jail needed the drug which had to be injected so jail visits were on my work schedule.

Also, in this era, disposable syringes had not been invented. The barrel, plunger, and needle to be separated and washed. Each needle was tested for barbs, using a cotton ball. Next came packaging and autoclaving. The two parts of each glass syringe were numbered the same and had to be kept together.

The other school health problem, of epidemic status that year was scalp ringworm. I had a battery powered Woods Lamp, which in a dark space, aimed at a student's head might show florescence. This would indicate infection and need for a home call. In my rural schools, dark spaces might be small book rooms with no windows, but more often coal bins had to be used.

A polio epidemic occurred in Minnesota in the 1940s. Sister Kenny, from Australia, came to Minneapolis in 1940. Her treatment relied on hot compresses, of wool fabric, to relieve muscle spasms and pain. She also taught the use of mild exercise for paralyzed muscles. The Sister Kenny Institute for polio patients opened in Minneapolis in 1942.

As a student nurse at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis in the 1950s, I attended a World Health Organization event at which Dr. Jonas Salk was a speaker. I had the privilege of being introduced to him. I still like to tell people that I once shook hands with

Dr. Salk!

Dr. Salk's polio vaccine became available in 1955. I became the McLeod County nurse that year. I do not remember the date when a public clinic was held for distribution of the vaccine. The delivery was unusual. The liquid dose for each person was dropped on a sugar cube which was then consumed.

Outbreaks of other contagious diseases have occurred in the US as the "Asian Flu," or H2N2 in 1957. The "Hong Kong Flu" in 1968 and in 1981 AIDS appeared. Deaths decreased about 2007 when medications became available. Swine Flu arrived in 2009. The common flue kills many each year when individuals do not get the annual "Flu-Shot".

The year 2020 will long be remembered for the world wide spread from China of COVID19. The illness and death from this new pandemic has been compared to the Spanish Flu which began in 1918 and faded away in 1920. No vaccine was available then. The rapidity of development of several vaccines for COVID19 is being called a MEDICAL MIRACLE.

Zipper, an Onomatopoeia

Webster says onomatopoeia means, "The naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the



sound associated with it." The word "zipper dates to 1923 when the B.F. Goodyear Company decided to use a certain type of patented fastener on their new style of rubber boots. It was thought the sound made when using the fastener could be expressed by their new word, zipper. By 1930 a manufacturer of children's clothing was using zippers instead of buttons, advertising that small children could now be more independent.

There are many companies making zippers of many lengths, colors, and materials using plastics and metals. An article found on line, dated 2017, reported that YKK is marked on as many new zippers as one billion a year. The initials stand for Yoshida Kogyo Kabushekekaisha, the founder in 1934, of a Japanese zipper manufacturing company.

Sibley County Farmers Taught Me About Collaboration

By Ken Meter the president of Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis

His food systems work has strengthened community foods initiatives in 144 regions in 41 states. His new book, Building Community Food Webs, will be published by Island Press in April, 2021. Meter also wrote an original history play, "The Plum Tree," for students then in the old Gaylord Elementary School. His works was performed when Meter served as the artist-in-residence teaching writing.

I was given a warm welcome by a group of Sibley County farm families in 1978, and they changed my whole view of rural life. The insights they gave me helped to propel me into a professional career that has spanned rural areas internationally.

I was hired as a reporter and photographer by the *Le Sueur News Herald* in the late 1970. When I covered the SAVE annual meeting, I encountered Bill Harjes of Green Isle. Bill was determined to prove that organic farming could thrive, long before it was popular. He was consistently rated among the top milk and corn producers of a strong dairy county.

After I left the paper. I devoted the late summer to learning more about farming by helping Bill with chores. I began commuting 30 minutes to get to Bill's barn by 5:30 am. As we worked, several SAVE members stopped and told intriguing stories. During the winter months, I asked if I could record some of the stories I had heard. Gordy and Sherry Bates invited us to join several farmers for beers at their house.

Art Berger, Kenny Narr, Jim Kreger, Roger Harjes, and Denny Tuchtenhagen settled in one night at 9 pm, after a long workday. Their stories conveyed a rich sense of how prosperous farming once had been. Jim Kreger told a story about launching a farm in a manner that would be most unimaginable today: he raised eggs for one year and had earned enough money to make a down payment on a farm. But the men also gave me a dire warning: the whole farm economy was heading for a crisis, because their neighbors were taking on debts they could not repay. They were right. In a few years, farm foreclosures would start; this swelled into a national crisis by the mid-1980's. I wrote their stories in a small booklet, *Green Isle: Feeding the World and Farming for the Banker*. It was the first published account to predict the farm credit crisis.

I also learned that Sibley County hosted a precious farm community. The families collaborated on so many levels. Most had started to farm in the early 1950's when the farm economy was prosperous. They had shared the struggles of getting established. They vividly understood that they needed each other. They sustained an accomplished 4-H chapter; the daughters and sons routinely won blue ribbons at the State Fair. But the goal was not to win ribbons; it was to instill pragmatic skills and strong values.

The farmers I interviewed represented every conceivable farmers' organization (National Farmers Organization, Farmers Union, and Farm Bureau), and diverse religions (Catholic, Lutheran, and Baptist). They raised diverse crops and livestock, and drove different brands of tractors. But these allegiances were placed second to the imperative of working together to create a strong community, and to raise a cohort of children who would thrive.

Today, as I reflect on the way our society has polarized in the 43 years since I was welcomed by these Sibley County farmers, I am so grateful I had this experience at an early stage of my career.

The booklet *Green Isle: Feeding the World and Farming for the Banker* is available for free. Download at <http://www.crcworks.org/gi.pdf>

Henderson Early Days World War I to 1934

Story By Alfred Kelm given to the SCHS June 1996

Editor has presented this story in original writing form and content was condensed to capture a sincere and honest impression of the times. Please enjoy! Nothing like the true flavor of a story when read from the author's cursive, original draft.

Page 1.

The special nights in Henderson when they had a free movie show outside in the community park the show screen was west of the community bldg. in front of the jail maybe 150 feet. a man name Leo had a old ford pickup truck and he put the movie projector machine in his truck box to shine it on the screen. Some of the show characters were Bud Abbott and Lou Costello and Charlie Chaplin mostly comedy shows. The people came a far away as New Prague, Belle plaine, LeSueur, Arlington and Gaylord. the town streets were full of people. The women and children watched the free show and the men were in the 5 bars which was called Pool places where you could play pool and in some you could get a shot of moonshine for 40 cents and (page 2.) Grocery store paid 7 and 9 cents a dozen for eggs. 1930 I sold 2 sacks of no 1 winter wheat for 29 cents a bu at the Henderson feed mill in 1932 corn was 14 cents a bu at elevator and a bottle of Schmidts beer without alcohol for 25 cents but if you wanted a inch of alcohol in your glass before you poured the beer in was also 40 cents the bars were full doing a booming business. We had 4 grocery and shoe stores which also sold goods to make dresses or shirts or anything they all bought eggs from the farmers which they took out in trade for groceries. I remember that eggs were 7 and 8 cents a dozen. Saturday night was Henderson band concert night in the early days Henderson Band was considered by other towns as a prize band and they would ask them to play for their towns. Also they had two poultry buying stations and 2 cream buying places 2 harness shops 2 feed mills selling no 1 wheat 29 cents. There was no employment in Henderson there were so many single men living in old bldgs, if you could get 10 to 25 days work a year at a dollar a day by farmers making hay threshing and shredding corn you were lucky and sometimes you couldn't collect wages and you were stuck.

Page 3.

My favorite spot to sit in Henderson was the front stone steps ahead of the Sibley County bank bldg.. Their were so many mosquitos in Henderson on a hot soggy summer night everyone nearly lost their minds Elmer (pat) Brahs who was latter was Mayor of Henderson sat on the first step smoking a cigarrett and Henry Boethcher sat on the 2nd step smoking his pipe and I sat on the 3rd up step. There was also a breeze their and the smoke would was chase away the mosquito's and I could back against the door fram edge and itch my back where the mosquitos bit me. Brahs and Boethcher and I never went in no joints because I didn't have no money to spend Brahs and Boethcher would cut cord wood our in the ravine north of the train depot and 2 cords a day and dry it and sell it the next winter for \$4.00 a cord and earnt their money the hard way.

Henderson Early days 1924 to 1932

Page 4-5

Every few years their was a medicine show troupe coming to town and staying a full week entertaining every night with Hypnitists and fortune tellers looking in a 8inch clear diameter glass ball telling your fortune. The event usually took place in Brahs hall some of the contestants on stage after a lot of coaxing to get them were Ted Malz of Blakely Minn, Freddy Schulz who was mrs Ray Meierbachtols father, George Oldenburg, Mike McCormick, Ray (fat) Oldenburg who had a little son he called skipper and myself The Hypnatist name was Howard E. Harriss he lined us all up sitting on chairs facing audience accross the stage he told us to pay attention only to him and listen carefully to him only and look directly in his eyes

and say relax your breathing and slowly close your eyes, and when he counted to 3 and snapped his fingers and told us to try to open our eyes and we couldn't we couldn't move and
Pages 6AA , 6BB,7,8,9, More amazing hypnotic action in Henderson

Page 10.

Towards the end of week if you went to him after show he tell you who stole your money or property from you or missing persons who disappeared or sold voodooism or put a curse of Bad luck on people that didn't pay their bills to you

Page 12

This Hypnitist could tell you How many dollars bills you had in your Billfold on first sight and then 20 minutes latter he ask the same man how much money he had in his billfold and he would look and find out the money disappeard and Hypnitist had his money in his billfold and he would give it back to him again and he never was close to the Hypnitist how could he pick pocket him and never was close to him

Page 13-14

There were many differt troupes of medicine shows one year they Hypnitised a man riding a bicycle in the grocery store window the bicycle was jacked up he rode and paddled the bycycle from 1PM to 7P.M. to get people to come to the show. the store didn't like the idea of them using a local person so they would use one from their troupe in case they would pass out. They would also have a troupe of young cow girls dressed in bright green western clothes what anybody could dance with after the show if you paid them 10 cents per dance they wore western cow girl green hats and uniforms. They had so many single men coming to town and they could dance with the troupe which became very poplar.

In the drought hears 1925 to 1932 most farmers and neighbors made their own beer the receipe was 10 gallons of clean water put in a redwing big crock jar 3 lbs of cane sugar 3 lbs can of barley malt from your butcher or grocery store costing 90 cents to \$1.85 depending on the brand 1 east cake what you used to bake bread and on peeled and sliced raw potatoe to make the alcohol and mixed it together to ferment the third day you put it in bottles and they called it Home Brew Beer.

Page 15

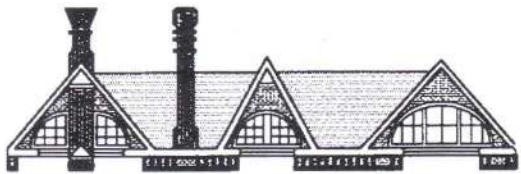
Some of the farmers in drought years when it didn't rain all summer were so dry they had the beer drank out of the big jar before they had it bottled.

My mother made root beer it cost twice a much as home brew to make to make 5 gal. of rootbeer it cost 2 ½ dollars to buy a bottle of rootbeer extract and 2 lbs of sugar the 3rd day it would be bottled or put in quart fruit jars and stored it in the cellar in harvest time it was 100 degrees every day I was so dry I nearly drank 5 gals of root beer myself over the week end beause of the heat

Alfred Albert Kelm –Jan.27, 1915 died April 23, 1994 and buried in Brown Cemetery, Henderson

Borrowed from MinnValley Mutual Insurance Co Dec. 2020 Vol. 121

You are from MN if.....
Kicking ice chunks off your car makes you feel good.
Temperatures mean nothing until you hear the windchill.
Any temperature over 30 degrees makes you happy.
You consider it a sport to gather your food by drilling through 18 inches of ice and sitting there all day hoping that the food will swim by.
Driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow.



SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Michael Reinhardt
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Henderson, MN 56044-0246



SCHS Paid Membership December 2020—March 2021

Richard & Gail Estenson	Ron & Kay Klement	Harry Kreger	Don & Betty Strobel
Marjorie Johnson	Lawrence Crawford	Marlys Gaucher	Marian Anderson
Margaret Hoffman	Janice Isakson	Marlene Moskop	Jacquelyn Schmidt
Kathleen Ringo	Roger & Lorraine Just	Lynelle Brant	Diane Neubarth
Rich & Roseann Nagel	Lila Sillerud	Mary Weller	Eugene & Jeanette Bening
Harold & Bonita Pettis	Otto Templin	Vernon & Renee Ruschmeyer	Eric Hanson
Beverly Woods	HomeTown Bank	Michael Reinhardt	Carol Jackson
Charlotte Doudell	Charles & Karen Erickson	Robert Fahey	Elizabeth Vandam
Steve & Becky Briggs	Leon & Bev Stadtherr	Ruben & Eldrene Ebert	Catherine Creech
Ruth Ann Buck	Carrie Johnson	Susan Peters	Eunice Beneke-Rucks
Larry & Sharon Sickmann	Lorraine Steeber	Harlan Mehlhop	Jeff DuCharme
Leslie & Diane Pettis	Roseann Schauer	Susan Morrisette	Thomas & Cherryl Kurkoski
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Arlen Messerli	Elizabeth Kuphal	Lynn & Wendy Evenson	
Bill & Charlotte Beseke	Marian Pfarr-Saxton	Wm Mickelson	
Lowell Nagel	Tom & Diane Frauendienst	Lois Bode	

Send articles, announcements, photos, and comments to the SCHS Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044 or email: schs1@frontiernet.net

Check your membership date on the mailing label. *All memberships will be valid until February 1, 2022.*

Mail to:

SCHS Treasurer
P.O. Box 407
Henderson, MN 56044

SCSH Membership Form

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renew | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$25.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$50.00 |

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