

Quarterly Newsletter of the



MURRAY COUNTY —HISTORICAL SOCIETY—

Slayton, Murray County, Minnesota

Spring 2021

The Hadley Bank

By: Janet Timmerman as previously published in the Murray County News

In the spring of 1915, bankers Christopher Dinehart, Frank Weck, and land developer, Burt Weld gathered a group of potential stockholders together in Hadley with the intention of starting a new banking business there. There was a lot of interest in the community for a bank and by August the State Bank of Hadley was incorporated with one hundred sixty shares sold at one hundred dollars each. The bank went into business. The majority of the shareholders were from Hadley, but the majority of the stocks were held by Dinehart, Weld, and Weck of Slayton. The stockholders read like a who's who of Hadley residents. Names like Johnson, Olson, Fresk, Voss, Mihin, and Ost, as well as Lowe, Christianson, Larson, and Swan were included in the list.



State Bank of Hadley Building.
December 2020. MCHS collection.

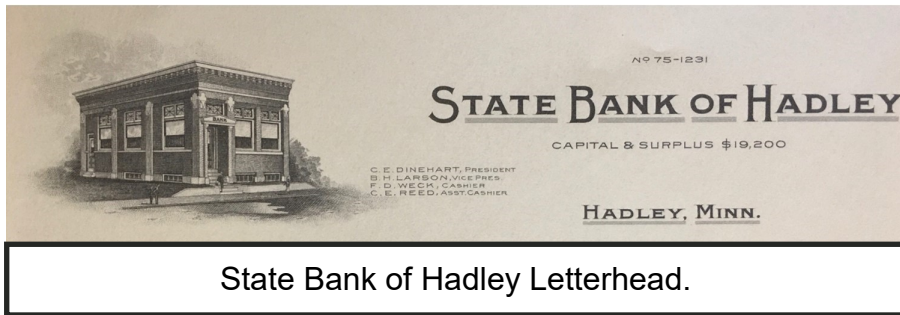
In the certificate of incorporation, the capital stock topped out at \$16,000. That would be over \$416,000 in today's value. The indebtedness was limited to \$180,000,

By the next spring the bank had a total of \$27,000 in deposits and by that fall \$82,000. By 1923 that was up to \$203,000. The Bank was flourishing and providing money for local business and personal loans. As noteworthy as that is, one of the things the bank is most remembered for is the robbery that occurred there in the winter of 1923. It was the first bank robbery in Murray County.

In mid-afternoon on December 20, 1923 two men entered the bank while Emil Oberg was working as the assistant cashier. One pulled a gun on him and ordered him to "throw up his hands and show then where the money is." Oberg obliged, stepping aside, and letting them clean out the cash drawer. They then asked where the vault was and took what they recognized as anything valuable from the safe. Oberg later thought they were amateurs because they took coins but left behind thousands of dollars of liberty bonds. Neither of the robbers wore masks but ordered Oberg to look at the floor and not at them. They locked Oberg in the vault and made their getaway in a green Overland with the top part of its windshield painted black.

Oberg, gathering his wits about him, finally pushed the emergency button that was installed in the vault. It sent a signal to the T.H Knutson store next door that there was a problem. Knutson called the sheriff,

which at the time may have been Mrs. James Lowe, and they went to let Oberg out of the vault. For ten years George Woodgate had slowly been expanding his telephone system to include hundreds and then



thousands of customers. Within twenty minutes George Woodgate's new telephone system proved its worth by allowing every town in 150 miles of the robbery to be notified. Descriptions of the car and the men were disseminated.

Two weeks later, the brother of Dick Pearson of Slayton overheard a conversation in a Mankato bar that led him to believe the two men talking had been the robbers. Mankato police put them under surveillance and Oberg traveled to Mankato to identify them. He recognized them right away.

Henry Marso and Jack Kooser were arrested and held in jail till spring. In a hung jury trial, they were released. They were retried a second time in 1925. In the second trial, a witness claimed he could identify them in a different city at the same time as the robbery. The Murray County jury found them not guilty in 20 minutes because they had a credible alibi. No more is known about the rest of Marso's life, but Kooser went on to live up to the original charges. He was arrested for robbery of a jewelry store in Blue Earth in 1927. Within that time, he had become involved with gangsters from the Twin Cities where his wife and sister-in-law were murdered in a gangland killing. Kooser was finally sentenced in 1930 to prison in Leavenworth for bootlegging. After his release he went back to his gangster ways. In 1935 Kooser was found murdered near Stillwater, his body dumped in a ditch. So ended the infamous Hadley bank robbery case.

The start of the Great Depression in 1929 sent many banks spiraling and in 1930 Northwestern Bancorporation, a mutual protection association, purchased the Hadley State Bank along with the State Bank of Slayton, and the First National Bank of Iona. The bank was closed in 1932, a victim of the depression.

It is hard to ascertain what the building was used for in those early days after closing but from the 1950's and 60's into the early 1990's the bank building served as a private residence. One family that lived there in the 1960's remembers the children's bedroom being in the vault. In the early 1990's a sociology teacher from Southwest Minnesota State University purchased the bank hoping to recondition it and use it as a residence but that plan fell through.

It was an iconic building on Hadley's Main Street for over one hundred six years and stood as a symbol of the economic hopes of a small town.



State Bank of Hadley.
December 2020.
MCHS collection.

MCC Students Utilizing the Dinehart Holt House

MCC's College Spanish class has enjoyed using the Dinehart Holt House to film their movie. Each year, the College Spanish class can choose to write, film, and edit a movie as their project for the semester. With Covid, this looks a little different than in the past, but students are allowed to work in small groups while following masking and social distancing protocols.

The students have written a movie that spans the 1800s through present day. Students write all the lines in Spanish and memorize their parts. They are responsible for planning and filming each scene as well as editing the movie on Adobe Premiere Pro.

The class has really enjoyed getting to use the Dinehart Holt House as the location and focus of the film. They get to learn about and experience local history while creating a really interesting project in Spanish. They are grateful for the opportunity to use this space and appreciate the hard work that has gone into the upkeep of this unique historical experience.



- Joanna Vogel; MCC Spanish and English Learner Departments

2021 Front Porch Music Series



Come and enjoy three live concerts preformed on the Dinehart Holt House front porch! The concerts are free and open to everyone—a donation jar will be passed around, donations are always appreciated!



Thursday, July 22: Kordal Kombat (Barber Shop)

Thursday, July 29: Skally Line (Folk)

Thursday, August 5: StarFire (Classic Rock)

Each concert will begin at 7pm. Bring your own blanket or lawn chair.

Free refreshments will be available before the performances. In the event of rain, the July 22 concert would be relocated to the MCC auditorium and the last two concerts would be relocated to the 4-H Building on the fairgrounds.

The 2021 Front Porch Music Series was made possible through grant funding provided by the Southwest Minnesota Art Council.



Collections Committee: New Donations

The MCHS Collections Committee met on May 4 and 5 to review 113 items donated by 21 individuals. When the committee members look at each item they must consider the following questions: 1) Does this item help MCHS meet its mission? 2) Is this item important to or tell a part of Murray County's history? 3) Is MCHS financially able to care for and store this item appropriately? 4) Is there a duplicate item in the collection already? 5) Is the condition of the item suitable for approval?

With those questions in mind, take a look at a few of the items that were up for review! Would you have voted to accept them into the collection?



Set of four capes and hats worn by members of the Avoca American Legion Auxiliary. Donated by Mancy Lee Pierson.



Set of three scrapbooks containing photos and information about the Murray County based musical group "The Love Notes." This group was organized in 1982. Donated by Jackie Linder.



Complete set of Immaculate Heart of Mary School annuals from 1950 to 1956. Donated by Romane Dold.



The Echo written by Reverend Martin McDonnell, founder of Iona. Found by donor Adam Leinen in the wall of his house when he was remodeling.



1930s era saddle owned by Charles R. Smith, former president of the Lake Wilson Saddle Club. Each letter of the initials of the club, "LWSC," are on a metal plate attached to the saddle. Donated by Janet Timmerman.



A Word from the Director - Janet Timmerman

"In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."

Mark Twain

If this spring gives us anything, it is hope that we can again become the social animals that we truly are. I look forward to gathering again. To talk and smile and laugh unhindered. That is my wish for each one of you. And though spring has been somewhat shifty in its appearance this year, we are planning a summer of new programming, new exhibits, and new projects.

The Front Porch Music Series will be back. All of last year's scheduled performers have agreed to come back and provide some fun and varied music for us. Kordal Kombat, that crazy a cappella group on steroids, will kick off the season on July 22nd. A great acoustic group from near Duluth, the Skally Line, will venture south on July 29th. Our final concert will be a fan favorite, Starfire, with fifties rock and roll. (Feel free to get up and dance!) We thank our funding partner the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council, who extended our grant for the 2021 season. Help with the expenses comes from the MN Arts and Heritage Legacy fund. Since the Dinehart House will be undergoing some reconstruction and repainting this summer, we'll do our best to accommodate both music and renovations. Watch for updates as the summer progresses.

We are also planning a walking tour this summer. The first will be a tour of some of the historic homes mainly along Linden and Maple Avenues here in Slayton. If it's popular we may do it more than once.

On a personal note, I am going to be reducing my Museum hours and increasing my research and writing hours this summer in preparation for leaving the position of Director in the fall. You will not see me as much in the museum, but rest assured that Rose is more than capable of helping you in any way possible. We also have Bryanne Bose returning as the summer assistant. Though we do not know when, we look forward to Karen Finne's return once the pandemic is back in the bottle. And volunteers are joyfully welcomed!

Lunchbox Lectures

Did you miss one of the Lunchbox Lectures from the 2020-2021 series? No problem! To access the lectures, go to www.murraycountyhistoricalsociety.org and look for the 'Recent Posts' section. All of the lectures will remain on our website for you to view at anytime!

November 12: 2020 Cemetery Tour PowerPoint

December 10: Draining the Great Oasis; Narrated PowerPoint by Janet Timmerman

January 14: Murray County in the 1920s PowerPoint

February 11: Railroads of Murray County; Jakob Etrheim

March 11: Baseball Interview with Bill Bolin; Pulled from the MCHS Archive

April 8: Frank Thayer—An Architect's Story; by Rose Moudry



Happenings at the Murray County Museum

By: Rose Moudry Site Coordinator/Collections Manager



Word has gotten out that we are open again without the need for an appointment and we have seen a jump in visitors over the last few months. It's great to hear the "ting" of the bell every time someone walks in the door. There has been a great mix of researchers, exhibit viewers, and volunteers.



Ian Timmerman.

Speaking of volunteers, I want to thank a few people for the time they have spent volunteering over the past few months. Three women have been coming in on a regular basis to sort biography clippings: thank you to Kathy DeBoer, Ruth Hoyme, and Rita Lear for your help with this tedious project! Ian Timmerman spent a couple days here at the museum tearing down old pegboard and building two new walls in the booth that will house the Indigenous People / Early Settlers exhibit. Thank you

Ian! Jon Schmit spent a morning helping to hang wallpaper that resembles a log cabin wall in the new exhibit booth. Thank you Jon! Finally, thank you to John Risacher for donating old planter disks which were then taken by Dennis Miller who welded them to create stanchions that will be used in the Sierk Building and out at End-o-Line in the Engine House. Thank you John and Dennis! We truly appreciate the time volunteers spend here. As staff members, we try very hard to take on as many projects as possible, but we would never be able to accomplish as much as we do without the help of volunteers. Thank you!



Jon Schmit.

We are very excited to have Bryanne Bose of Lake Wilson join our team again for the next few months as our Summer Employee. Bryanne will be working on several collections projects and helping with summer programming.

Overall I have been spending my time finishing up the South Wing exhibit, which is officially open for viewing; working on the Indigenous People / Early Settlers exhibit by researching, storing items, painting, building; working on accessioning new items approved by the Collections Committee and also items that are "Found in Collection;" and helping with research requests. As always, things have been very busy here at the museum, just the way I like it!

Stay Tuned for Information on this Summer's Raffle



After a one year break, the summer raffle will once again take place this coming season!

Tickets will be sold for \$5.00 each and the winners will be drawn on the last day of the Murray County Fair, August 21. In July we will announce the list of prizes and tickets will go on sale. Tickets will be available to purchase from MCHS Board Members and at the museum. Please considering purchasing a ticket to help support our efforts of preserving Murray County history. Stay tuned for more information!



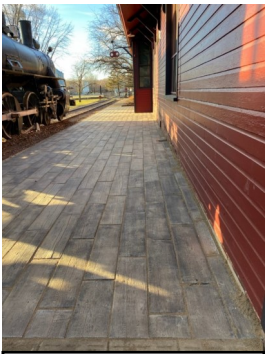
Updates from End-O-Line Railroad Park and Museum

By Jakob Etrheim, Site Coordinator

Spring is in the air and summer is just around the corner! It also means we're getting closer to opening End O Line RR Park for the season! We're excited to hopefully have a "normal" summer at the park.

In past years, the month of May is full of field trips from schools all around SW MN. This year, there are only four field trips scheduled. Because of this, we have decided to open the park early for the season. Starting May 5 through May 26, End O Line Park will be open Wednesday-Saturday from 10a-4:30p. During this time, tours of the park will be self-guided for a free-will donation. The gift shop and restrooms will be open with cleaning measures in place. Masks will still be required while inside the buildings. Starting May 26 through Labor Day, we'll expand our hours to Wednesday-Sunday 10a-5p. At that point, guided tours will be offered for an admission fee with self-guided still available.

Last fall, VIP Landscaping in Slayton replaced the old platform board walk on the south side of the Currie Depot with brick pavers. This Spring, James Jens Construction will be building steps and ramps to the building's two entrances. They had to be removed in order to install the new pavers. The Depot will not be open to tour until the steps/ramps are completely installed until approximately late May.



New pavers.

Grant work is still underway for the historic Manual Railroad Turntable. Last Fall, we were awarded a \$23,700 Legacy Grant through the Minnesota Historical Society to hire a historical architect to develop construction documents and scope of work forms for future construction work. The goal is to have these documents completed by later this summer. The next step will be to apply for a grant to fund construction work in 2022. Some of the construction work that we'll apply for will include installing an active drain system in the pit, replace and repair disintegrated stones along the pit wall, rebuild the bridge guardrails to meet current building code, and repair the concrete abutments. This entire process may seem slow. Because the turntable is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, we're required to follow the Department of the Interior's standards for working with historic structures. We should have a wonderfully preserved turntable in the next 2-3 years!

Please Save The Dates for some of the scheduled events at the park this summer:

Saturday, June 12: Open House. Free Admission for the day. Author Presentation: The Beautiful Snow: The Ingalls Family, the Railroads, and the Hard Winter of 1880-81 by Cindy Wilson.

Sunday, July 4: Independence Day. Free Admission for the day.

Friday, September 3: Author Presentation: Never Let Go: Survival of the Lake Shetek Women by Pamela Nowak.

Visit our Facebook page or Website for further details. We hope to see you at the park this summer!

Many Thanks for Your Donations and Memorials!

Life Member Donations:

Margaret Kluis

Tom and Loretta Pryor

Maxine Silvernale

General Fund Donation:

Diane Anderson

Janice Del Calzo

Brent and Dianne Johnson

Paula Rail

Julie Schrader

Dinehart Bear Fund:

Donald Buldhaupt

Brian and Kate Harmsen

Joyce Risacher

Memorial Donations:

Patricia and Romane Dold in memory of Gary and Fran O'Brien

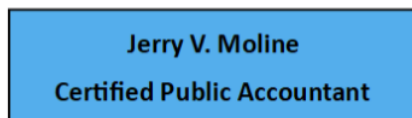
Jon and Ruth Hoyme in memory of Sally Vos

Vos Family in memory of Sally and Frank Vos

If we missed your name as a donor, please contact Janet to make sure we have your donation on our list. We are deeply grateful for every donation and memorial. The Murray County Historical Society, is a non-profit, 501(c)(3). Donors may deduct their contributions as directed in the US Income Tax Code.

The society's tax number can be given upon request.

We Thank Our 2021 MCHS Business Members!



If you or someone you know would like more information about becoming a business member, contact the museum by phone or email.

Museum Bingo!

When: Friday, July 2; 11:00am - 5:00pm

Where: Murray County Museum (2480 29th Street; Slayton)

Who: Anyone! Bring your family or bring yourself!

Mark your calendar for July 2nd to participate in Museum Bingo! A great program to get your young family members excited about the museum! Each participant will receive a bingo card with photos of artifacts around the museum. Explore the exhibits to find all of the artifacts! If you get a blackout on your card you win a bomb pop!

2021 Membership Renewal

Membership support allows us to develop new exhibits, host in person and socially distanced programs, and care for all the artifacts and archives in the Murray County Historical Society collection.

We truly appreciate all renewing and new members. It is that time of year again where we like to encourage all current members to consider renewing their membership for the upcoming year. Are you a lifetime member or have you already renewed for 2021? Consider purchasing a membership for a family member or friend. Memberships make great gifts! Thank you again for all the support you show us here at the Murray County Historical Society!



2021 Murray County Historical Society Membership



Murray County Historical Society
2848 29th Street
PO Box 61
Slayton, MN 56172
(507) 836-6533

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Check One

☐ Annual Membership \$15.00

☐ Family Membership \$25.00

Life Member—Donation \$_____

Method of Payment

☐ Cash ☐ Check

☐ Membership Card received

Member Signature

Obituary Index Available Online

Thanks to the hard work of Karen Finne, our resident obituary expert, we have a collection of over 24,000 digitized Murray County obituaries! From Anna Aaker to Anna Zylstra, our collection covers a good portion of past Murray County residents. An index of all the obituaries in the collection can be found on our website under the research tab.

If you find the name of a person whose obituary you would like a copy of, contact us here at the Murray County Museum. We can send you a digital copy, a hard copy in the mail, or you can stop by the museum to pick up a copy!



Do you have a collection of Murray County funeral leaflets or clipped newspaper obituaries at home? Consider sharing them with us to be added to the collection!

Many thanks to Karen for all of her hard work! This collection would not have been possible without her!

MCHS Board Members:

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Dennis Anderson
Romane Dold
Judy Horn
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Lori Gunnink

Staff:

Janet Timmerman
Jakob Etrheim
Karen Finne
Rose Moudry

Visit the Museum

Tues-Fri: 10am-5pm
(507) 836-6533

www.murraycountyhistoricalsociety.org



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— HISTORICAL SOCIETY —

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