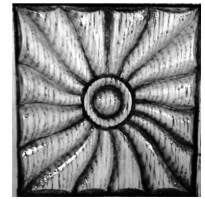


MURRAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Murray County
Historical Society

Winter 2016

From the Director's Desk.....

"The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present." *David Thelen, professor emeritus of history, Indiana University*

The New Year gives us a chance to catch our breath, assess the past year, finish up our old projects and get started on new ones. 2015 was an outstanding year for people interested in Murray County's history. New exhibits, new stories, new artifacts in the collection. Some say that historians are always looking back, but that's not entirely true. We spend a lot of time looking ahead and figuring out what stories to introduce to the present. For example, do you know what happened in the county 125 years ago this year? Do you know what happened 50 years ago this year? Do you know what happened 35 years ago? Well, one answer to them all has to do with the structure called the county courthouse. Born from a county seat controversy between Currie and Slayton, it was built in 1891. It was rejected as a proper structure to house the county offices in 1966, and finally torn down and replaced in 1981 at the ripe old age of 90. This year the museum will celebrate the life of the structure and the people whose work it housed all those years. The staff is working on a new traveling exhibit, a retrospective article, and a targeted exhibit here at the Museum.

Do you remember the 1970's? Yeah, they're fuzzy for me too, but...the 70's are a very important decade for exploration into the past. A new 1970's exhibit will open this spring or early summer.

Highlights of the new 70's exhibit this year will be:

Righteous Fashion! Do you remember polyester leisure suits?

Farm Out, Man! Green Revolution

Can You Dig it? Technology takes hold on the farm

Rock On! Heads, jocks, and nerds in high school

Rad Idea: Ecology

Bummer: Vietnam Vets come home to confusion

It will be copasetic, man.



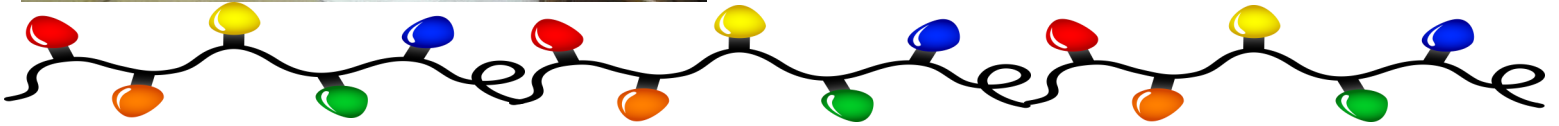
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- Upcoming exhibits
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- Winter and Spring Events
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- Mystery Photos



Parade of Trees Winner Trinity Lutheran Church

With lovely hand made angels and sparkling white lights reminding us what the season is all about, this year's winner of the Parade of Trees was Trinity Lutheran Church. The tree was tucked into the protestant church alcove and must have spoke to someone, as one vote was worth a twenty dollar bill, giving them the edge in votes with a little over \$28.45. Thank you to every organization and individual who decorated at tree. This fundraiser gathered over \$105.00 for the Museum. These funds go to develop low cost programming, build new exhibits and help care for the artifacts in the collection.



Vintage Toy Display

This was the first year for a Vintage Toy display to accompany the Parade of Trees. Local folk brought in their treasured vintage toys, along with the stories of how they acquired them, for a museum-wide display. The display evoked nostalgia for many. During the Open House there were frequent comments heard like, "I used to have one of those!" or, "I wonder if that one of mine is still in the attic?" Everyone went back to their childhood during the display and recalled fond memories of toys long gone. This little display will be back next year by popular demand and hopefully be larger and with a wider variety of toys. Start checking your attic!



New in the Collection...



1966 Architectural Drawing by Setter, Leach, and Lindstrom, Inc.

Waning Years of the 1891 Murray County Courthouse Brought to Light

When the courthouse was torn down in 1981 amid a wave of protests and opinions on both sides of the issue, most people remember it as a short and hard fought battle. The push for a new courthouse, however, was a long and very arduous task. The first calls for a new courthouse began as early as 1959. A new collection of items donated, and ultimately accessioned into the Museum collection, sheds some light on the long process.

In a phone call last fall, Janet Anderson Voges of Minnwest Bank asked if the museum was interested in a group of documents found in the basement of the Lake Wilson Bank building. Among the many items there was a tabletop display board with the above picture and a set of documents meant to inform the public on a new courthouse building; a building that relied upon the passage of an upcoming bonding bill vote.

The display included floor plans and names of the Citizens Committee for an Adequate Murray County Courthouse. The co-charimen of the committee included Richard Kahnk of Lake Wilson, Dr. Dean Nywall of Slayton, and Victor Roth of Fulda. This was when Ernie Oldewurtle, Landolph Markwardt, Leon Sierk, Walt Silvernale, and Clem Smith were the county commissioners.

Our interest was piqued, and the staff pulled out a scrapbook created on the courthouse. Newspaper articles informed the picture with all the 1966 rationale for tearing down the old structure to make way for the new. There was no discussion the papers about historic preservation at the time, however, the bonding bill failed. These new documents will be featured along with many other photos and stories in the upcoming traveling courthouse exhibit coming this spring.



Dinehart Lunchbox Lecture Series Continues

For more information contact Janet Timmerman at 836-6533

jtimmerman@co.murray.mn.us

Join us for this outstanding series of lectures for 2015-2016. They will be held on the first Thursday of the month, lectures begin at 12 noon at the Murray County 4-H building on the county fairgrounds. The cost is \$3.00. Murray County Historical Society members are free. Coffee and tea are provided.

February 4, 2016

1860's Glass Plate Photography featuring Dave Rambow, Pipestone

In this digital world, it is hard to imagine the work and talent it took to get a photograph from a glass plate. Photographer and Living History re-enactor, David Rambow will demonstrate how a glass plate camera works and the art of taking photos with one.

March 3, 2016

Southwestern Minnesota Women in WWI featuring Anita Talsma-Gaul

There were many women that picked up the slack when the men went off to war. From the Woodstock Women's Home Guard to Red cross nurses, women had a huge part in America's success in WWI. Dr. Talsma-Gaul presents in her animated style that is always educational and entertaining.

April 7, 2016

The Calamity at Lake Shetek— Curt Dahlin, Maple Grove, MN

The human loss during the 1862 US Dakota War was immense on both sides. Mr. Dahlin has done in-depth research into the killings at Lake Shetek and Slaughter Slough. He will present on his publication of the same name. Books will be for sale after the talk.

Preserving Your Family Heirlooms: A Cooperative Program with Slayton Community Education

Starting in February the museum staff will be teaching a Community Education course on the various techniques people can use to preserve their family heirlooms. This program will run five Tuesday evenings in February and March and cover the following topics.

Preservation 101: Why and how we keep our family heritage alive

Get the Picture?: How to care for photographs, documents, and paper items

Preserving Your Family Stories: How to do an Oral History Project

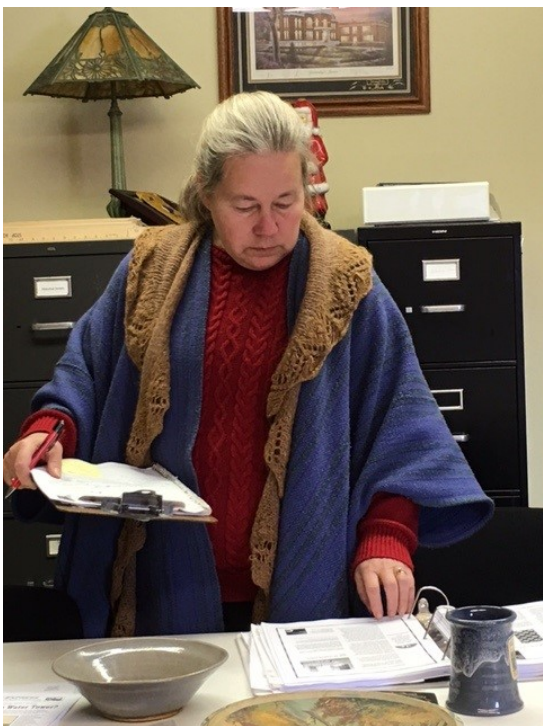
Patchwork: How to Care for Textiles and Quilts

Putting it All together: Making a Memory Box

This program is hosted by MCC Community Education and will cost \$50.00 for the whole series to cover the cost of supplies and hand-outs. For more information and to sign up contact Amy Woldt at MCC Community Education at (507) 836-8360.

Murray County Museum receives Textile Inventory Grant

In December the museum received notice that their application for a Legacy grant had been accepted. The funds from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will be used to hire a part-time temporary position to catalog and re-house the clothing in the museum textile collection. That sounds like a simple task, but it involves several steps for each item of clothing. Each piece has to be researched to see if it is an accessioned item in the collection. It must be assessed for condition, photographed, and added to our database. Then each item is either carefully re-housed in acid free textile boxes or hung on archival quality padded hangers. There is an estimated 995 article of clothing that need treatment. We have hired Torri McKinney from Walnut Grove. Torri has experience working with textiles and is familiar with the workings of historical museums. She has a BSA in Art /Fibers from Southwest Minnesota State University and has owned her own fibers shop for many years. She brings a wealth of knowledge with her and we are excited to have her on our team this spring.



Torri making notes on preservation techniques of clothing in the collection.



niques.

Some of the 995 arti-

CHANGES AT THE MUSEUM

The front entry of the museum is getting a make-over this winter. The old surfaces have been removed, additional insulation added, and new sheetrock hung. The crew also installed new oak woodwork around the window and doors. Dan Conway's crew did a great job of working with less than perfect conditions and Ian Timmerman volunteered to do the staining and painting. Our hope is to make a welcoming entrance for our visitors. Stop by a see how it looks.



News from Josh Jordan's Corner of the World...

When I am out and about in Murray County, lots of people ask me what I am up to when End O Line is closed for the winter. Some of the things that I have been working on this winter are getting a cabinet made for a new train layout for the End O Line Visitor's Center; designing and researching a new exhibit on the history of the Currie area; and putting together a trivia night that will be held at 6:30 pm at the Dinehart-Holt House in Slayton on February 18th. Do you think you know about US History, Local History, geography, books, music, and movies? Assemble a team of 3-6 people and test your knowledge. The Museum has assembled a team of crack shot trivia buffs to challenge you! Pre-Registration is required. Each team pays \$20.00 and the winning team takes half the pot. Give me a call at the museum (507) 836-6533 to fill in your spot.



Keeping the Collections Part II: Deaccessioning

In the last few issues we have discussed our collections policy, how we bring new items into the collection and how we try to preserve them the best way we can once they are donated. But what about items that do not belong in the collections or items that have deteriorated to the point they can no longer be preserved? Our collections policy addresses that.

Museums have a process for thinning out the collection, its called deaccessioning and it is as big a process as brining an item into the collection. The first thing a museum will do is try to determine whether an item should remain in the collection by asking a few questions.

- Was this item ever officially accessioned and is there paper work or a clear title to the item?
- Is this item out of the scope of our collection policy?
- Is this item a duplication of items in the collection?
- Has this item deteriorated beyond our ability to preserve it?
- Does this item pose a physical threat /danger to the rest of the collection or the museum staff who work here?

If the answer is yes to any of the last three questions then the item may be eligible for deaccession. Once it is determined that the item should be taken out of the collection one of three things can be done with it. First and foremost, every effort is made to return the item to the donor or donor's family.

1. It can be transferred to an education collection where it can be handled and be used for educational purposes.
2. It can be transferred to a like institution such as another museum or appropriate organization, or library
3. Lastly the item may be disposed of if it is deemed a hazard to the staff and collection.
4. In rare cases when the item has been unconditionally donated and sale of the item specifically allowed by the donor, it may be sold and funds put in a restricted fund for collections care and acquisition.

HELP WANTED

If you are interested in helping with any of these volunteer tasks
please contact **Janet at 507-836-6533**

1. ***Do you like to file and organize things?*** The Museum is looking for two to three people to volunteer a few hours per week filing topical newspaper articles into filing cabinets. Can work alone or in pairs, etc.
2. ***Are you outgoing and enjoy greeting people?*** The Museum is looking for volunteer docents who would greet people and answer questions at the museum two afternoons per week this summer. You may also help perform Dinehart Holt House Tours as needed.
3. ***Farming and farm machinery your interest?*** The Museum needs some farmers or farmer wannabees to help organize and repair farm machinery in the Sierk Building.
4. ***Love to flower garden?*** Never enough flowers in the world for you? The Dinehart Holt House gardens need someone to give them some tender loving care. Roses, perennials and bushes. The gardens can also be expanded on and added to.



Spring is a great time to rent the Dinehart Holt House!

This spring during the wedding season consider renting the elegantly decorated Dinehart Holt House for groom's suppers, bridal and baby showers or even a small venue wedding! It is a beautiful place to have your prom or senior pictures taken as well. Prices are affordable.

Perhaps your organization is looking for a special spot to hold a meeting or luncheon. To encourage more use by non-profit organizations, the house is now open for rental on a donation basis for non-profits, church groups and club.

Call us at 507-836-6533 or museum@co.murray.mn.us

Please fill out and return to: MCHS PO Box 61, Slayton, MN 56172

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email: _____

_____ I would be interested in serving on the **MCHS Board of Directors**
(Attend monthly meetings, help plan special events, staff special events, serve as committee chairs, volunteer at the museum buildings when needed)

_____ I would be interested in serving on one of the following committees, as part of the Murray County Historical Society (check all that apply). Most committees meet quarterly.

- _____ Collections Committee
- _____ Membership Committee
- _____ Building Committee
- _____ Program (Special Event) Committee
- _____ Fundraising Committee
- _____ Nomination Committee



_____ I cannot serve on a board or committee, but am willing to volunteer at events or at the museum.

Hours:

T-F 10-5 and S 10-2PM

Contact us:

507-836-6533

museum@co.murray.mn.us

murraycountyhistoricalsociety.org

Find us on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/murraycountyhistoricalsociety) too!

MCHS Board Members:

Brian Harmsen

Linda Wing

Brad Bergerson

Christy Riley

Dorothy Bloemendaal

Gary Kass

Rachel Dreeson

Margaret Kluis

Dennis Miller

County Commissioner

representative: James Jens

Murray County Historical Society
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Slayton, MN
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