MURRAY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter **Winter 2025-2026**

Thank you for tuning in the winter 2025-2026 edition of the Murray County Historical Society Newsletter. A special thanks to everyone who made it to our 2026 Annual Meeting at Key Largo back in October. We had Janet Timmerman speak on all the stories she couldn't put in her latest book *Halcyon Days: Leisure on Lake Shetek.* At the meeting Colleen Gengler re-upped for another three years on the board. We thank her for her service and are looking forward to three more years working with her.



The Friends of the Slayton Public Library Tree, who's tree is decorated with the book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt."

This past December we had several events. On a snowy Saturday we were pleased to welcome visitors to the annul holiday open house where we had 18 beautifully decorated trees. Thank you to everyone who came out to the event and a special congratulations to the Friends of the Slayton Public Library for being the people's favorite tree. Following the open house, we partnered with the library to host a series of "Scan for Keeps" events, during which the public could bring in photos, documents, pictures, etc. and get their items digitized using a large archival scanner borrowed from the Minnesota Digital Library. We enjoyed seeing everyone's old photos and documents that were brought in and hopefully will offer the event again in the future.

As you may have heard, in December the Murray County Historical Society was awarded a grant in the amount of $14,040 to develop a collection storage plan. This plan is the first step in upgrading our collections storage area. It is not all good news however. We had also applied for $186,000 in grant funds to repair windows at the Dinehart Holt House, which was not awarded to us. In the large grant round there was $11 million in requested funds, with only $4.7 million available to be awarded. Despite not being awarded the funds to repair the windows, we are still grateful that Minnesota has a program in place for awarding millions of dollars a year for historical preservation. As a state, we are blessed to have such strong support for local history, and we hope that continues.

Looking forward, 2026 is a notable year in American History. While Murray County did not exist until well after 1776, we will be still be planning several events this summer to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

In this Newsletter:

- Director Update
- Electrifying Murray County Research Article
- Trivia Night
- Puzzle Contest
- Lunchbox Lecture Schedule
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- Membership Renewal

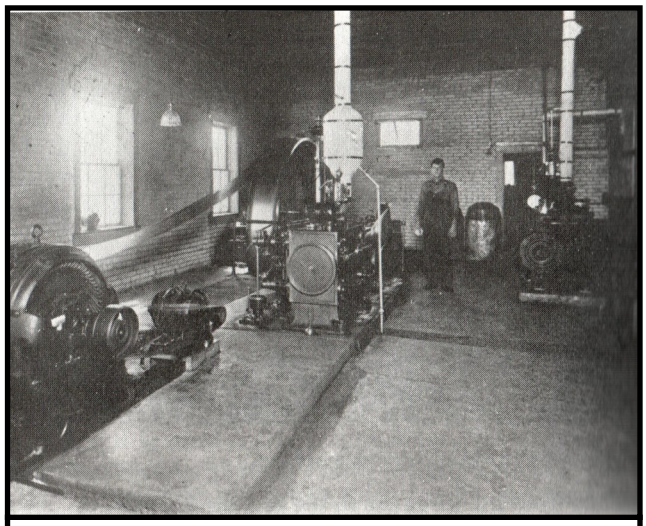
Electrifying Murry County Article

By Nick Demuth

This January the Murray County Historical Society will be hosting a travelling exhibit from the Minnesota Historical Society called “Electrifying Minnesota.” As part of hosting that exhibit we will be adding several of our own artifacts from the history of electrifying Murray County to that exhibit. We are sharing some of that information in this research article.

Electrifying Fulda:

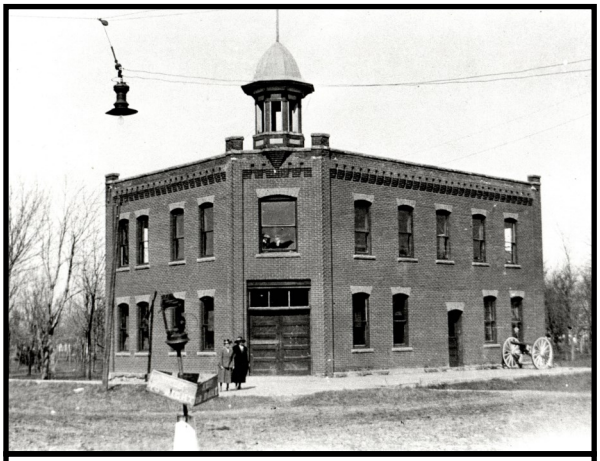
Large population centers were the first to be electricized, specifically in Minnesota, but also generally in United States. In Minnesota, Minneapolis first lit up the night with electric power in 1883. The following years saw rapid adoption of electricity not just in Minneapolis, but throughout other metro areas. As with many things, electricity was slower to reach rural areas, but many people saw the implementation of electricity in the home and work spaces as inevitable.



Pictured here is John Buschena, an employee, at the Fulda Light and Power Company in 1913. Buschena would go on to own and operate a successful electric company of his own.

In Murray County, Fulda was the first town to provide electricity. Beginning in 1893, someone living in Fulda would be able to light their homes using electricity provided by a local electric plant.

Initially, there were no meters. There was a flat rate of $1 per month for the first light installed at a residence, and $0.75 per month for the second light installed. Churches and halls were given special half rates. Because houses hadn't been built with any internal wiring, the light was on a long chord that moved around the house with the person. J.A. Maxwell was appointed to collect the bills for the lights, a job for which he would be paid 1% of all the fees collected.



In this photograph of the old Fulda City Hall/Fire hall from 1918, notice the electric street light in the top left of the photo.

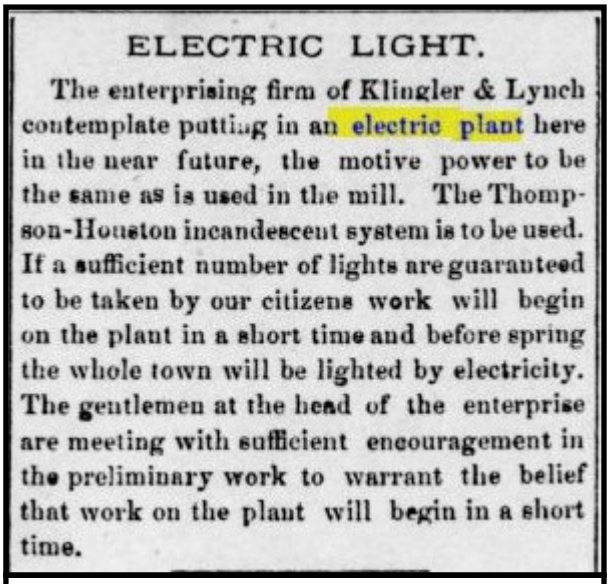
However, the service was poor and spotty, leading to a lawsuit between AD Brown and the City of Fulda. Brown alleged that the city failed to pay him in full for building an electric plant. The city conversely claimed that he had given them an inferior plan and it would cost another $500 to $600 to complete the plant. The Judge Brown dismissed the case.

In January 1901 after a succession of issues with the plant and spotty service, the City of Fulda decided to lease the plant to an Edward Guthier of Mapleton Minnesota. He swapped out engines, switchboards, and installed new lights. Service was acceptable until September of 1901, when some of the machinery blew and had to be repaired. In 1906 the City of Fulda sold the plant to a group of local investors, creating the Fulda Light and Power Company. After the sale, the Fulda Light and Power Company enlarged to provide service to Avoca, Heron Lake, Kinbrae, Dunde, Lime Creek, and Okabena.

In 1925 the company was sold to Peoples Light and Power Company (owned by Wilbur Foshay of Foshay Tower Fame). Foshay in turned around and almost immediately sold the plant to Interstate Power Company, who were eventually purchased by Alliant Energy. In 2015 12 electric distribution cooperatives, including Nobles Coop, purchased Alliant energy’s service territory, bringing control of local electric service back home.

Electrifying Slayton:

As early as 1896 there were talks of lighting Slayton with electric power. However, it was not until 1915 that Slayton would have its first electric plant. However, that does not mean that Slayton was without light. In 1903 three businessmen, Burt Weld, J. W. Case, and Adolph Peick built a gas plant to provide gas lights to the streets of Slayton. At the inaugural lighting, the Slayton Brass Band even furnished music. Each night, someone would need to go to each lamp and light them individually. The gas lights were enough to placate the demand for electricity for a time, but by 1914, there was once again public outcry in support of bringing electricity to Slayton.



ELECTRIC LIGHT.

The enterprising firm of Klingler & Lynch contemplate putting in an electric plant here in the near future, the motive power to be the same as is used in the mill. The Thompson-Houston incandescent system is to be used. If a sufficient number of lights are guaranteed to be taken by our citizens work will begin on the plant in a short time and before spring the whole town will be lighted by electricity. The gentlemen at the head of the enterprise are meeting with sufficient encouragement in the preliminary work to warrant the belief that work on the plant will begin in a short time.

An article from the December 17, 1891 edition of the Slayton Gazette speculating that Slayton will soon have an electric plant.

In a public vote, the people of Slayton voted 142 to 8 to contract with Victor Klinger to build and operate and electric plant to provide power to Slayton. Evidentially, there were rumors and misinformation about what electric power was and what it could be used for, enough so that Klinger published an article in the Murray County Herald clearing up rumors and misinformation.

However, there were slight hiccups in delivering “the juice.” When Klinger called upon the contractors to furnish bids, the numbers came back several thousands of dollars more than the original estimates. The difference was stark enough that Klinger decided that he would not be able to provide a power plant for Slayton after all. This of course lead to great disappointment and to the Herald publishing the headline “Antiquated Lights to Reign.” The city quickly formed a light committee to explore getting electric light again. They engaged the services of F. H. Eddy, a mechanic and electrician who owned the electric plant in Farmington. In a headline reading “Let There Be More Light” from November 1914, the Herald announced that Mr. Eddy had agreed to open a plant in Slayton and furnish power. Under the Slayton Power Company he had a plant up and running by early 1915.



Photo of victor Klinger, the man people associate an electrified Slayton with.

All was well with the company for several years. By 1923, the demand for electricity had outpaced the Slayton Power Company’s ability to produce power. In early 1923 Mr. Eddy made an agreement with Northern State Power to build more lines to bring in to Slayton. Shortly thereafter, North State Power bought out Mr. Eddy’s interests and became the singular power supplier to the City of Slayton. Northern States Power would continue to provide Slayton with power until a 1998 merger with several other power companies to form Excel Energy, who provides power to the city to this day.

Readers are encouraged to visit the Murray County Museum from January through April to see the “Electrifying Minnesota” exhibit and learn not just about Murray County, but how Minnesota as a whole was electrified. On display will be electrical artifacts from Murray County history as well as information on the REA and more information about how other towns were electrified.

Trivia Ad

The Murray County Historical Society Challenges you to get your think on Saturday, March 14th, 2025 at 7pm at the Avoca Community Hall, 129 2d St SW., Avoca, MN 56114.



Teams may consist of 2 - 6 members. There will be a $25 entrance fee. Teams must sign up and pay their entrance fee no later than Thursday, March 6th. Have a fun team name ready when you sign up! Call 507-836-6533 or email Nicholas.demuth@murraycountymn.gov to get registered!

Lunchbox Lecture

All are invited to attend the 2025-2026 Lunchbox Lecture Series. All talks are presented at noon in the Murray County 4-H building on the county fairgrounds in Slayton. You are invited to bring your own lunch while you enjoy the presentations. The cost is $3.00 or free for Historical Society members.



January 8, 2025: Nicholas Demuth, History of the Murray County Poor Farm

February 12, 2025: Jake Halverson, Chandler Air Force Base

March 12, 2025: Jay Grammond, Topic TBD

Get Your Puzzle On!

What: The Murray County Historical Society is hosting its Second Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition! Get your team of up to 4 people together and compete to complete a 500pc jigsaw puzzle in under 2 hours. First and second teams to complete the puzzle will get a prize! If no one completes the puzzle in the time limit, the team with the most completed puzzle will win.



When: Saturday January 17th at 10am.

Where: The Dinehart Holt House

Entry: $40 per team. Included with the entry fee is the puzzle and bars and coffee at the event.

Update From The Fulda Heritage Society



The Fulda Depot foundation work was completed this summer. Members of the Minnesota Historical Society administering the State of Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund grant made a site visit in August to review and approve the work. The remaining site grading, paver replacement, and ADA-compliant ramp construction will be completed in Spring 2026.



The Fulda Heritage Society has added a Little Free Library to the Depot and Museum site. The library was built by Doyle Abrahamson, Fulda, who put in countless hours making it a replica of the Fulda Historic Depot. You can find the library under the awning of the Museum which is just south of the depot. (W. Davis St). (Doyle Abrahamson and Ted Winter are pictured.)



The Heritage Society is planning a small series of custom mugs to celebrate the city of Fulda's 150th anniversary in 2031. The first in the series features the Depot. These 10 oz mugs are available at The Store, Fulda Hardware, and at the Fulda Museum.

Updates from End-O-Line Railroad Park and Museum

By: Jake Halverson, Site Supervisor

Greetings from End-O-Line and Happy New Year! I am currently writing this article on the very last day of 2025 -and I think that is a very fitting task at the moment, as it will encompass everything that has happened in what was a very big year for End-O-Line. So, enjoy as I roll out the hit-parade.

I will start off with some figures and statistics. Starting Memorial Day weekend and ending on 17 October, End-O-Line had 3,017 visitors. This is a 14% increase over the same period from 2024 (2,642). Our busiest day of the season was 14 June, when we held our Annual Open House, with 114 people. And, although we had a well-attended opening weekend to the season in May, our slowest day of the season, before our soft close after Labor Day, was the Wednesday after Memorial Day (the 28th), where we only had two people show up. Over the course of the Summer, between the two bookend holiday weekends, we gave 32 guided tours -with a total of 147 people on said tours. The largest group to receive a guided tour during the regular season was 13, while the smallest was a party of one. The most common group size was four. And, lastly, the most common time to take a guided tour was at 1:30 in the afternoon (37 people took a guided tour at this time). The least common time to take a tour, which only happened once and it had three people on it, was at 3:30 -the last time in the day that guided tours are offered.



A view of the mill being moved to its new home.

End-O-Line saw some changes this year, as well. Some of these changes were quite a bit more noticeable than others. As was reported on in previous newsletters, End-O-Line became the official and permanent home of the C.St.M.&O velocipede -which had been a temporary lone to our collection since the mid-1980s. Also, End-O-Line is now the proud home to a fleet of electric bikes which will be available to rent, come the start of the next season, Memorial Day weekend, 2026. I should also mention that End-O-Line was the recipient of a couple of grants, as well as a large donation (the latter on behalf of the Lindmark Family). The Small state grant, as well as the federal grant from the National Parks Service, are welcome and valued opportunities for the restoration, preservation, and beautification of End-O-Line, and I wish to personally thank our director, Nicholas Demuth, for all his hard work in securing these grants. Thank you, Nick!


An empty view of where the buildings used to rest.

And, lastly, the very big news! If you have driven by End-O-Line anytime in the last few weeks, you will have noticed that it looks very different from how it has presented these last couple of decades. Specifically, we have officially (and finally!) moved the General Store and Grist Mill to their new locations. The General Store now sits just north of the school, on the site of the old playground, which was torn down. The Grist Mill is now located just to the south of the Court House. This

End O Line Continued

means that all five non-railroad-related buildings, which the museum offers as exhibit spaces, are now in a row. This will allow for a smooth delivery of guided tours, and a much more accessible experience, in general, for the visiting public. I would like to take a moment right now to thank a few groups of people who made this yearslong endeavor possible. First, many thanks to Joe Schreier and his crew for taking the time out of their busy lineup of projects to build the foundations for the buildings in their new locations. It was Joe's vision to have all the buildings in a row -which meant that the land that the Grist Mill would be situated on would have to be raised up quite a bit higher to be out of the flood zone. Second, I wish to thank the team at Goldschmidt House Movers, based out of St. James. They did fantastic work moving the buildings and did a great job taking advantage of the warm weather we had at the beginning of December to get everything in place. Lastly, thanks to the crew from Xcel Energy -you kept us all from being inconveniently electrocuted.



A view of the General Store in its new home.

Well, that is all the news from End-O-Line this year. We hope to have another excellent season in the coming year. Now that the buildings are moved, we will be spending much of the upcoming summer returning items to their proper places in each building (most of the exhibits were put into storage to protect them from flooding). And we will be spending some time and money on making the buildings presentable for the 2027 season. On a final note, I would like to announce that the Annual Open House for the 2026 season will be held on 13 June. As of right now, the topic of discussion to be presented is yet to be determined.

Until spring arrives, enjoy these quiet, cold months. They offer us a little bit of time to take things more slowly and enjoy the lives we live. Have a wonderful New Year!

Volunteers Wanted

Do you have some free time and are you looking for something fulfilling to do? We are looking for volunteers to help with various tasks around the museum! Call or stop by the museum if you are interested in helping out with any of the projects listed below. Even a few hours a month would go a long way!

- Sorting and filing newspaper and obituary clippings.
- Adding clippings to the topical binders.
- Leading or assisting with field trips or adult tours.
- Cleaning at the museum.
- Identifying photos from the Wheel Herald Collection.



find us on facebook

The Murray County Historical Society updates its Facebook page on a regular basis with upcoming events, behind the scenes work, and interesting artifacts! Be sure to hit "Like" to get post notifications!

Members With *italicized* Names Still Need to Renew for 2026 as of **1/6/2026**

Sheri Achterhoff

Merlyn Anderson

Joan Baack

Hilary and Marilyn Barry

Carmen Barry

Dianne Barstad

Chris and Rigel Baumberger

Linda Beerman

Kathy Behrends

Brad and Diane Bergerson

Audrey Berlin

Justin and Tara Berreau

Kathy Bill

JoAnn and Leroy Biren

Dorothy Bloemendaal

Mary Borgstahl

Jasmine Bray

Dennis and Jan Brech

Deb and Jeff Brockberg

Richard Brown

Donna Bruns

Bill and Jan Bryan

John and Caryl Busman

Brian Byers

Doris Carda

Almie Carlson

Leonard and Lisa Carlson

Barbara Carlson

Miron and Cheryl Carney

Rosemary Carraway

Gaylene and Jim Chapman

Jim Christensen

Anne Ciochetto

Lonnie Clark

Richard Culshaw

Beth and Kris Cuperus

Wanda Daniels

Jenna Davis

Lynne Day

Richard DeBeau

Larry and Kathy DeBoer

Rosella DeGrote

Janice & Americo Del Calzo

Pat and Lynette Demuth

Cindy Dogan

Romane and Patti Dold

Brandon and Rachel Dreesen

Kimberly and Rodney Eisfeld

Donald Erickson

Curtis and Lois Erickson

Jakob Etrheim

Neal Everson

Kelly Felber

Annette Fiedler

Grant Fischer

Bruce Fried

Karen Frisk

Elaine Gaul

Anita Talsma Gaul

Duane and Shari Gehl

Colleen and Don Gengler

Martha Giefer

Jane Giese

Myron Gnadt

Jim and Carla Goedtke

Sandy Grams

Diane Green

Rudy and Lori Gunnink

Trace and Tammy Hafner

Barb Haken

Jeanette Halbur

Geana Hamilton

Dave Hansen

Brian & Kate Harmsen

Gary Harmsen

Doug & Grace Hart

Dodi Haugen

Lois Henkel

Todd Hieronimus

Philip and Janet Hintermeister

Gwen Clauson Hogan

Becky Hollaren

Merry Hollis

Richard Holmberg

Judy Horn

Steve Horn

Jon and Ruth Hoyme

Wesley Hromatko

Rebecca Hudson

Al and Arlys Husfeldt

Jennifer Hagen Immerman

Marvin Isder

James and Doreen Jens

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Brent and Dianne Johnson

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Laurel Johnson

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Jim Kluis

Glenn and Margaret Kluis

Robert and Ruth Koehler

Joycelyn Koenig

Kim Konkol

Jim and Roxanne Kremer

Lisa Kremer

Thomas Kremer

Martin and Mary Krogman

Arnold Krusemark

Janice Kunselman

Denise Kurkowski

Steve and Nancy Laible

Larry and Kathy Laleman

Char Larson

Marjorie Larson

Sharyl & Eldon Larson

Skip and Evey Larson

Elizabeth Leach

Rita Lear

Steven Lee

Kathleen Lemire

Robin Leonard

Rosemary LeTendre

DianeGaryLewis

Jackie Linder

Mike Lowe

Larry Lucht

Marlin Lundholm

Henry and Marlene Magnus

Clint Magnus

Nona Magnussen

Molly Malone

Mike and Sheryl March

Corrine Marz

Brian and Paula Matson

Mary Mattson

Jill and Gerald McCord

Cindy Meier

Jackie Meier

Mary Mesner

Cleo and Patricia Metty

Wendy and Richard Meyer

Kathy and Jim Michaelson

Dennis and Kathy Miller

Murl Cole and Colleen Miller

Nancy and Greg Moberg

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Mary Ellen Moline

Patricia & Harold Nelson

Jeaneen Nelson

Elvera Nelson

Kevin Nelson

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Christy Riley

John Risacher

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Hub and Marilyn Sandmann

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Paula Schaeffer

Sharon Schmidt

Joe and Marcia Schreier

JoAnn Schultz

Mark Schwanebeck

Karen Setterberg

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Janet Timmerman

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Colleen Tollefson

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Dale and Christyn Vos

Kyle and Shanee Vos

Ryan Vos

Linda Vosberg

Joan Vasgaard

Caren Voss

Leo and Judy Voss

Rosanne Wancenried

Vin and Cheryl Weber

Jon Wendorff

Kevin Ohme and Jodi White

Betty Wilcoxon

Sharon Willen

Ted and Marjorie Winter

Joyce Wynia

Steven and Rhonda Wynia

Julie York

Mary and Robert Zishka

2026 Membership Renewal

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed your memberships! All **2025** Murray County Historical Society memberships expired as of **January 1, 2026**. Any membership renewals received before **October 1st of 2026** will go towards a **2026** membership. Please fill out the form below and return with payment. Renewals can be returned either in-person to the Historical Museum in Slayton or mailed to: PO Box 61, Slayton, MN 56172

Membership support allows us to develop new exhibits, host programs, and care for all the artifacts and archives in the Murray County Historical Society collection. We truly appreciate all renewing and new members. Memberships make great gifts for others too!

Reminder: Lifetime memberships are no longer offered. Existing lifetime members are grandfathered-in and may contribute a donation in lieu of annual membership dues. .

MURRAY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Murray County Historical Society Membership

Name
_____
Address
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_____
Phone
_____
Email
_____

☐ Membership Card received

Check One
☐ Annual Membership $15.00
☐ Family Membership $25.00

Life Member—Donation $_____

Method of Payment
☐ Cash ☐ Check

_____
Member Signature

Murray County Historical Society

Business Membership Form

Name of Business: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Primary Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Owner: _____ Number of Employees: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Circe one and send in payment with membership form: Large Business: $100 Small Business: $50

Valentines Day Coloring Contest

VALENTINE COLORING CONTEST

SPONSORED BY:

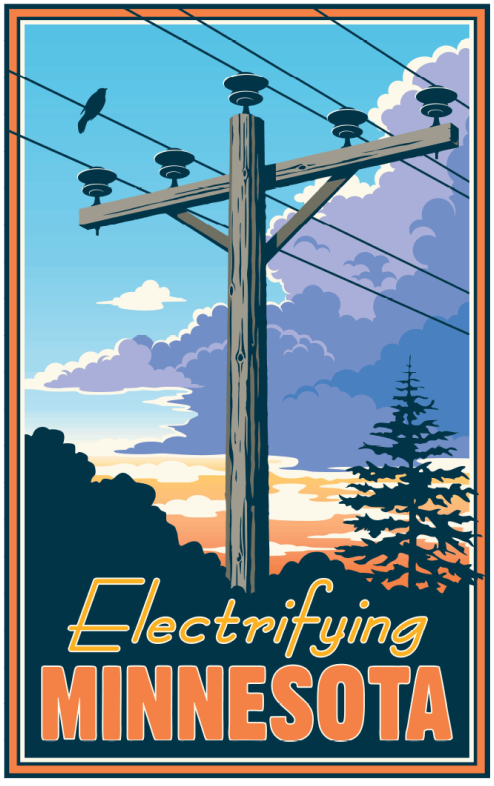
MURRAY COUNTY MUSEUM

1. PLACE NAME and CONTACT NUMBER on the BACK of picture
2. WINNERS WILL RECEIVE A VALENTINE'S DAY BASKET
3. PLEASE RETURN: DUE by FEBRUARY 10TH
4. PICTURES will be VOTED ON : FEBRUARY 12, 2025
5. GROUPS: PRESCHOOL, 1-2nd GRADE, 3-4th GRADE, 5-6th GRADE
6. ONE WINNER will be chosen from each CLASS.

PLEASE PICK UP YOUR PICTURE TO COLOR AT THE MUSEUM DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS:

TUESDAY-FRIDAY: 10 AM -5 PM

Electrifying Minnesota Travelling Exhibit



The Murray County Historical Society is hosting Electrifying Minnesota, a Minnesota Historical Society travelling exhibit from January – April 2025.

Discover how electricity has transformed the lives of Minnesotans since 1882, learn what makes the generation of electricity possible, and imagine how we will generate electricity in the 21st century.

Imagine what it was like, for the first time, to have electricity available at the flick of a switch. Discover what makes the miracle of generating electricity possible. Learn what people thought about electricity in the late-19th and early-20th centuries and how we will generate it in years to come. Period silent films, photography and an interactive electromagnetic generator all reveal the power of electricity and how it shapes our lives as Minnesotans.

This exhibit was created by The Baaken Museum in partnership with the Minnesota History Center. It is on temporary loan from the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul and will be traveling to venues throughout Minnesota.

We have also augmented the exhibit to disseminate he history of electrifying Murray County, including the History of the REA and the Fulda Power Company.

Donations and Memorials

Thank you to all those who have sent financial contributions to the Murray County Historical Society since our last newsletter. Donations along with your membership help our society continue to preserve our collections, develop exhibits, and host special programs and events.

General Fund Donations:

Eugene and Noreen Smestad
Vin and Cheryl Weber
Thomas Kremer
Janet Rothanburg
Pat and Lynette Demuth
Brent and Dianne Johnson
Lois Stofferan
Jon Wendorff
Jeffery Strand and Kim Jeppesen
Toner Family
Leroy and Joann Biren
Rosemary LeTendre
Lane Riordan
Linda Wing

Memorials:

Jakob Etrheim in Memory of Gary McCarter



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. Donations may be dropped off at the museum or mailed to: **PO Box 61, Slayton, MN 56172**. We are deeply grateful for every donation and memorial!

We Thank Our Business Members!

Rooster's ON-OFF SALE LIQUOR
Shetek Dental Care
LEFT BANK ROASTERIE & CAFE "Coffee Lovers Dream Come True"
Creative Three Realty Everything We Touch Turns to Sold!
the Hut Gift Shoppe
Jimmy's Pub
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Jerry V. Moline Certified Public Accountant
MURRAY COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER
Slayton YOU ARE HERE
Trails Edge General Store
Rowdy's Radiator and Repair
Chandler Co-Op
STATE BANK OF CHANDLER
Almich's Market where fresh is
Joe Shreier Construction
HADLEY Steel, Inc.
Hoffmann Construction
Investors Choice Financial Services Inc.
CLEAR EYECARE + EYEWEAR

Please consider a business membership. The sign up form is in the previous pages.

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James Jens, *Director*
Colleen Gengler, *Director*
Loy Woelber, *County Commissioner Ex-Officio*

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nicholas.demuth@murraycountymn.gov

Ann Muecke, *Collections Supervisor*
Murray County Museum/Dinehart-Holt House
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ann.muecke@murraycountymn.gov

Jake Halverson, *End-O-Line Supervisor*
End-O-Line Railroad Park and Museum
(507)-763-3708
Jacob.Halverson@murraycountymn.gov

Notice: You are invited Murray County Museum from mid-January through April to see our latest exhibit. More Inside!

Museum Hours

Tuesday-Friday: 10am - 5pm
Saturday: 10am - 2pm

MURRAY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 61
2480 29TH STREET
SLAYTON MINNESOTA 56172