

Museum Messenger

March/April 2009

- March 27
Office Closed
- May 2
Spring Bonnet Tea
- May 16
United Way Day of
Caring
- May 25
Office Closed

Inside this issue:

- President's Thoughts **2**
- Membership News & Donations **2-3**
- From the Desk of the Director **3**
- MCHS Event Photos **4**
- The English Corner with Edna **5**
- Front Porch Reminiscence with Sue **7**
- 2009 Membership Information **8**



Coming down the home stretch: Civil War Flag Update!

The Mower County Historical Society has been working on preserving the Civil War Flag. Here is an update on it.



This project has been ongoing since 2007. Currently the flag is being preserved by experts in West Virginia. With the help of grants from the Minnesota Historical Society and Hormel Foundation, over half of the costs have been covered. Most of the second half of the funds required have come from

individual donations and fundraising. We are on the "final leg" of this campaign. The flag is scheduled to be back in early to mid-summer. However, we are still short of our return shipping costs. The

Community Day fundraiser was used as a way to garner money for this effort. With that in mind, we are still short \$460 of the return shipping costs.

Donations for this project can be sent to the historical society and are tax deductible. Every little bit will help us to finish the project.

Keep an eye on upcoming newsletters as we will keep everyone informed on the completion progress and the flag's return!

MCHS Loses Former Board Member and Loyal Supporter

As our last newsletter was going to print, MCHS heard some grim news. Ella Marie Lausen, former board member and loyal supporter of our organization, passed away on January 6, 2009. She was 86 years old. It felt only right that we should give Ella Marie the honor of being recognized by our organization for her outstanding contributions to not only our organization but also in the community.

Ella Marie was one of the original incorporators of MCHS. She was on the first Board of Directors for the organization. As time went on, Ella Marie would serve on the Board of Directors on and off from 1947-2001. For most of those years, she served as the secretary of the Board. One of her former colleagues described her as "a long time county historian and lover of history." Her roots in history may have lied in that she lived on a century farm. In the mid-1980s, when the historical society was not doing as well, Ella Marie worked to spark interest in the organization again and rebuild the membership. Ella Marie's accomplishments did not only contain themselves to the east end of the fairgrounds, but were just

as important on the west side as well. Ella Marie worked tirelessly for the betterment of the Mower County Fair at this same time. When



it came to organizing the Fair, she did it all! Even as the Fair Board was preparing for their 125th County Fair this summer, they consulted with her on what had been done previously. The National Barrow Show was one of Ella Marie's main interests. She was involved with all of the National Barrow Shows since their origination in Austin in 1946. In 2007, she was given a Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Swine Records for her tireless efforts. Former colleagues mentioned that "it was hard to distinguish the Fair Board and MCHS as separate entities because Ella Marie was so involved with both!"

Before joining MCHS or the Fair

Board, Ella Marie was a rural school teacher beginning in 1940 before moving on to teach at the Austin school district. The school house on the MCHS site was one that Ella Marie taught in! Outside of the two organizations and teaching, she was a very accomplished woman. She served on the Mower County Chapter of the American Red Cross board. In October 1963, Ella Marie was honored as the Austin Business & Professional Women's Club as Woman of the Year. The article from the *Austin Daily Herald* article from October 7, 1963, lists many more organizations for which she was involved in that helped garner her award. In 1986, Ella Marie was honored by the Fair Board and 4-H for her years of service of promoting agriculture and farm families in Mower County. That same year she was inducted into the Mower County Livestock Hall of Fame. In 1995, the Fair Board graced Ella Marie with another distinguished accolade. Ella Marie was named the 1995 Outstanding Fair Person. She was also a historian for her church.

We can all look back on Ella Marie's life and remember how tirelessly she worked for MCHS and other organizations. As board and staff, we will not forget her efforts for our organization. We will miss her but never forget her.

President's Thoughts—



Barbara K. Lewis
President

In last month's column, I told you I was leaving after two years as president of the board of directors. Well folks, I am back. It will be another exciting year of challenges and conquests for MCHS. I continue to look forward to meeting new members and visitors to our site for our special events and tours.

In this column I am sad to say that our office will be bidding farewell to Edna Hill. Edna has chosen to retire from the office after 15 years of dedicated

service to the Historical Society. She has helped so many who have passed through our doors. I have been so fortunate to observe her magic with the school children when they visit in the spring. Watching this special lady share Mower County's history with children of all ages is so magical. She brings history to life for all of them. They come to the center excited and ready to soak up the knowledge that is to be offered. In the first few minutes of her time with the children there is a

transformation from jumping around, wiggling, and talking to standing still and listening to Edna.

The Board of Directors accepted her resignation with regret at our Feb. 18th meeting. Edna did say that she will be able to help us with tours and our special events. We wish her the best in her retirement. I know that when we call the office, we will miss that wonderful English voice saying, "Hello, Mower County Historical Society."

Edna's knowledge and friendship, has been one of my special treasures that I have acquired in my time with the Mower County Historical Society.



Thanks for the memories, Edna! You will be missed!

2009 MCHS Board of Directors

Executive Board

Barbara Lewis	President
Stan Aldrich	Vice President
Cathy Roser	Secretary
Diana Stone	Treasurer

Directors

Don Chapek	DeWayne Habermann
Bill Lewis	Kathy Paine
Dave Spinler	Jeff Austin
Garry Ellingson	Miguel Garate
Josie Cummings	Don Konken
Paul Sween	

MCHS Staff

Dustin Heckman, Executive Director
Edna Hill, Museum Assistant
Sue Doocy, Museum Assistant

Memorials

Ella Marie Lausen from Gene & Polly Jelinek, Monica Lonergan, Barb Lewis, Marvin & Mavis Klouse, Richard & Mickie Hall, & Edna Hill
Clarence Mental from Georgia Jech

Deceased Members

Ella Marie Lausen Daisy Grundy
Robert Shaw

Donations

Adelia Ellig Don & Leah Konken
Clair Allen Keith & Pegg Berhow
Mower County Cynthia Scott
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary of Austin
Dorothy Schulz

From the desk of the Director—

The other day I was doing some cleaning around the buildings when I heard a wondrous sound. It was a bird chirping! Spring is on its way! That means the tour season will soon be revving up for MCHS. This will be my first trip through the tour season here and I'm excited for it to begin. It is always fun to have a family come into the office and ask to be given a tour. What is even more fun is asking them where they have come from. Speaking of which, when was the last time you visited MCHS? All members receive free tours for anyone listed on the membership. Family memberships include anyone who lives in your household. To all of our business members and sponsorship holders, your membership benefits include a free tour for groups of 25 or less. Why not plan an employee outing as a thank you for all the hard work they have put in! I welcome you to give me a call and schedule that outing as soon

as you can.

As everyone knows the economy is still not doing well. Here at MCHS, the staff and Board of Directors are working to find ways to cut costs. Check out the green insert in the newsletter for our wish list. These are things that we need around the office that can be donated to cut down our office supply expense. All donations are tax deductible. You will also find a yellow insert with a questionnaire on it. We are using this questionnaire to get member feedback on how we can improve ourselves and the types of programs our members would like to see. The questionnaires are due back April 1st so please take some time and answer the questions and send it back to us. The more input the better! I encourage members to also give me a call or stop by my office during regular hours and talk about the museum with me.

Now I know some of you are thinking, "My budget is too tight! I can't afford to go buy these supplies to help you out but I really want to help. What can I do?" One way is to become a volunteer! We are always looking for extra hands to help out with research, give summer tours, help during special events and fair week, or perform some maintenance tasks. Even if you can only commit to a few hours a month or every other week, we don't mind! We appreciate the help! Stop by and fill out our volunteer form so that we can put you on our list of contacts.

It is with much sadness that I must tell you of Edna's retirement. At the end of February, Edna retired from MCHS after almost 15 years of dedicated service. I hate to see her go. She is always upbeat in the office and can provide little quips at the drop of a hat. Edna knows so much about the



Dustin B. Heckman
Executive Director

organization. I hope that Sue and I can absorb some of her knowledge in order to keep this information flowing onto future generations. I would like to thank her for tireless efforts at MCHS and I hope if any of you see her out and about, you will do the same. Edna, you will be missed!

New & Renewed Members

Randy & Shirley Sammons
American Family Insurance—Jeff Austin
Agency
Ronald Stowell
Twin Towers Craft Room
Mavis Madson
Barb Lewis
John & Linda Seeley
Sheila Bachelder
Shirley Watt
Ronald & Margaret Seath
Ken & Opal Heydt
Mary Frances Guiney
Judith Wanzek
Carol Ashton-Olson
Robert & Elaine Bicking
Albert Layman
Helen Hocker
Bill Schliching
Phyllis Helgeson
Dick & Charlene Kelly
Karen Kendall
Garry & Sharon Ellingson
Jim & Mary Ann Butler
Sarah Broadbent

Charlene Loiseau
Richard & Sue Quam
Ben & Stephanie Roser
Clair Allen
Dave & Karen Spinler
Spinler Construction
Kathleen Sherman
Richard & Bernice Alger
Ken & Gloria Trom
Robert Stephenson
Larry & Cindy Bellrichard
Tim & Bonnie Rietz
I.J. Holton
Marian Vaughan
Frances Morse
David & Milda Weness
Stacy Bennett
Sue Brooks
Bill & Sharon Lewis
Northern Country Coop
Tim Hyland
Rev. Mary-Frances Jones
Holiday Cars
Harold Lechner
Dan Brewster

Ankeny's Mini Mart #5
Home Federal Savings Bank
Wells Federal Bank
Dolan's Landscape & Spas
Witt Fabrication
Frances Larson
Phil Egtvedt
Tradexpos—Jack & Elizabeth Thill
Lloyd & Ramona Swenson
John Morrison
Charlotte Winslow
Wagner Construction
Farmers State Bank of Elkton
Baudler, Baudler, Maus, & Blahnik, LLP
Reeve Chiropractic Clinic
Mower Vehicle Registration Inc.
Dorothy Schulz
Hill, Larson, Walth & Benda, P.A.
David Madison
Hormel Foods Corporation
Mower Co. Farmers Mutual Ins. Co.
Mower County Corn & Soybean
Producers

Photos from our Volunteer Appreciation Gathering— January 9, 2009



Volunteers talk amongst themselves while enjoying some refreshments.



Board member Don Chapek (left) talks with one of our volunteers.



Board member Miguel Garate explains the tradition of cake in the Hispanic culture at events as volunteers enjoyed a 3 milk cake that he brought to share.

Executive Director Dustin Heckman and volunteer Jenny Hill pass out pieces of cake. It was enjoyed by all! Great idea, Miguel!



Some of our volunteers enjoying some social time with one another.



The English Corner with Edna—

Hello dear friends,

This will be my last mail call – as the saying goes, “All good things come to an end.” So my time has come to put down my pen and retire. I don’t do this lightly as I’ve loved my job here at MCHS.

I’ve had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful people. I’ve enjoyed so much from the children I’ve taken round the museum. They were a delight and fun to be with. I’ll miss you and them.

I regard the board members and staff as my extended family, a big thank you for that. Another thank you goes to all the volunteers that rallied when I called. I’ll miss your goodies, well, maybe my waist line will shrink a little, that won’t be so bad, eh!

I will still be around to give a hand on Teas and Teddy days. So, February is over. I guess it’s time for spring, it must be somewhere nearby.

Valentine’s Day has just passed, so I’ll leave you with the Kissing Story from a 1927 newspaper.

Practice of Kissing

The idea of the kiss being an instinctive gesture is negative by its being unknown over half the world, where the prevailing salute is that by smelling or sniffing [often called rubbing noses]. The kiss appears constantly in Semetic and Aryan antiquity.

In Greece, in the classic period it became customary to kiss hand, breast or knee of a “superior”.

In Rome, the kisses of inferiors became a burden some civility. The early Christians made it the sign of fellowship. It passed into more ceremonial form in the kiss of peace given to the newly baptized and in the celebration of Eucharist.

While the kiss has been adopted as a religious rite, its original social use has continued. Among men however, it has become less effusive. Court ceremonial keeps up the kiss on the cheek, between sovereigns and the kissing of the hand by subjects, and the Pope like a Roman Emperor receives the kiss on the foot.

Encyclopedia Britannica 1927

Big hugs to you all, and Thank you!



Edna Hill
Museum Assistant

Memorial or Gift Donation

I’m happy to enclose a gift to be used by MCHS to carry forward the objectives of the society, namely to discover, collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge about the history of Mower County and to relate it to the history of the State of Minnesota.

I’ve enclosed a \$ _____ memorial in abiding memory of _____ .

My name _____

Family Address _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

City/State/Zip _____

_____ Check here if you do not wish to have your name printed in the Museum Messenger with this gift.

Mail Donation to: Mower County Historical Society, 1303 6th Avenue SW, Austin, MN 55912

Shopping at MCHS

Austin 150th Anniversary Pictorial

1004 Locomotive DVD

City of Austin & Mower County Afghans

Variety of Books

2008—2009 Keep the Doors Open Sponsors

Platinum Level Sponsors

Clayton Township
Millie Moeller
Wagner Construction Company

Gold Level Sponsors

Nevada Township
Hormel Foods
Tradexpos
Stacy Bennett, Efremov, Russia
Udolpho Township
Austin Township
Lansing Township
Barbara K. Lewis

Silver Level Sponsors

Windom Township
Racine Township
David Spinler Construction Inc.
Red Rock Township
Dexter Township
Bill & Sharon Lewis
Akkerman, Inc.
Witt Fabrication
Adams Township
Super Fresh Produce/Garden Center
Johnson Floral
Lou's Forever Framing
Home Federal Savings Bank
Viking Glass and Lock
Pleasant Valley Township
HyVee of Austin
Harold & Kathy Paine

Bronze Sponsors

Twin Towers Craft Room
Fox Electric Company
Austin Newspapers Inc.
Farmers State Bank of Elkton
Mower Co. Vehicle Registration
Anderson Memorials
Baudler, Baudler, Maus & Blahnik
Ulven's Ace Hardware
Kenny's Oak Grill
Sergeant Township
Lloyd & Ramona Swenson
C.O. Brown Agency
First Farmers & Merchants, Brownsdale
Hoversten, Johnson, Beckmann & Hovey
Medgaarden's Southwest Sales
Nystrom Signs
Mower County Farm Bureau
Mower County Framers Mutual Insurance
Daryl and Rae Ann Peterson
American Family Insurance—Jeff Austin
Smyth Companies Inc.
Harvey & Alice Sathre



Need bird or squirrel corn?

We have some left for \$3 a bag.

Want some colored corn?

**We have some of that too! 50 cents
per ear or \$1 for 3 ears!**

This is part of the Beanie Baby collection that was donated by Colleen Weimer in December. Colleen has stated that MCHS may use this collection for whatever purposes they deem fit! Thank you for the great donation!

Front Porch Reminiscence with Sue—

When I was a kid, Mom would have packed a picnic lunch, Dad would climb into the driver's seat, and we'd all go for a Sunday drive around the country, heading towards the Mississippi River and Bluff Country.

But being as I just completed a major part of the Minnesota Digital Library Project, I thought I'd show you some highlights of Mower County. It has several interesting landmarks, and they are not that far away.

Have you ever heard of Mousenik? Austin Rocket Society of Austin Pacelli and Brownsdale High School students launched homemade rockets, and in 1957, received national recognition on ABC-TV when one particular launch was filmed at the "Red Rock proving grounds" with Mower County Sheriff Reninartz and 30 cars of people. A 4-foot, 10-inch rocket with a mouse on board climbed into the sky to

1,642 feet at 221 mph. The mouse did not survive the landing in which case lead to the humane society's intervention and an appearance in Mower County Courts for reprimand. The mouse was buried on the Aaby farm.

The Booth Post #130 GAR Hall, which is one of two halls left in the state of Minnesota, is located in Grand Meadow. Organized in 1885, with 16 of the "old boys" and named the hall after a boy who gave his life for his country. The hall was built in 1891 and served the Grand Army of the Republic and the Women's Relief Corp for many years until 1960.

The next site saw the First United States Dragoons commanded by Lt. Col. Stephen Kearny camping in the Austin area in 1834, before it was even platted on the map. Now it is Horace Austin State Park, located on the south side of Mill Pond in Austin.

A grand archway to the park once stood at the entrance and was the home of five African monkeys. The state park, named after Minnesota's sixth governor, was established in 1914 with 50 acres along side Coon Lake before the river channel was changed. Mill Pond, like all other lakes in Mower County, is man-made.

In Johnsburg, which is planning their 150th Celebration this year, there was a robbery at Freund's General Store and the three assailants killed John Freund in 1934. It was a Saturday night, according to the 1978 article in our files, and Mr. Freund was sweeping up and preparing to close the store when he was attacked. The bandits stole \$20 and two cartons of cigarettes.

At one time, Mower County had 86 miles of railroad that connected many towns and villages to one another allowing easier traveling and shipping.



Sue Doocy
Museum Assistant

The mail was even transported by rail. Its amazing to see how many depots there were in the area and to know that there are stories where a whole town, like Le Roy, moved lock, stock and barrel, including buildings as much as a mile to be closer to the railroad station.

I look forward to taking another drive around the county and discovering something new.

Edna—come back to visit real soon!

2008—2009 Ag Building Sponsors

Hodgeman Drainage Claremont	Absolut Energy	Northern Country Coop	Mower County Dairy Association
Albert Lea Seed House	Don Chapek Shady Lane Farms	Dave's JD's	Freeborn Mower Cooperative Services
Mower/Fillmore County Soybean Growers	Klouse Concrete Construction	M&H Tent Rentals	Pioneer Sales Representatives
Hanson Tire Service Inc. of LeRoy	POET	Tucker Tiling	Patterson Seed LTD
Prinsco	ThermoKing	SoyMor	Witt Fabrication
Kruger Implement	Gehling Auction Inc.	Broskoff Structures Inc.	Freeborn County Co-op Oil

Where the Present Meets the Past.

**MOWER COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

1303 6th Avenue SW
Austin, MN 55912

Phone: 507-437-6082

Fax: 507-437-6082

E-mail: mchs@smig.net

www2.smig.net/mchistory/index



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Austin, Minnesota
Permit No. 150

Upcoming Events

May 2 Spring Bonnet Tea 1 PM

May 16 United Way Day of Caring

**Watch for updates in the local papers!
Want to help out with these events?
Give us a call and we will let you
know what you can do to help!**

Upcoming Events:

May 2

Spring Bonnet Tea

May 16

United Way Day of Caring

**Check out your address label.
If it is highlighted, then your membership is due!**

Membership Levels Available

Individual \$15 Family \$25 Business \$50

Sponsor Levels Available (includes a membership)

Ag Building Sponsor \$250
Keep the Doors Open Bronze \$100-\$249.99
Keep the Doors Open Silver \$250-\$499.99
Keep the Doors Open Gold \$500-\$749.99
Keep the Doors Open Diamond \$750-\$999.99
Keep the Doors Open Platinum \$1,000 & UP

Contact Dustin to discuss sponsorship incentives & opportunities!