

## The tale of three viruses

# We Have Done this Before

by Eileen Holz  
NCHS volunteer

When you get to reading about the historical epidemics and pandemics in Minnesota and Nicollet County it really becomes very repetitious, except for the virus causing the epidemic. Death tolls are high, panic is rampant, and warnings and precautions are very similar.

## 1918 Spanish Influenza



Note the ad at the left published during the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic.

Sound familiar?

Spanish Influenza swept the world from August 1918 to March 1919. In the end, the Spanish flu killed anywhere between 1,378 and 5,000 people in North Dakota and 7,000 to 10,000 in Minnesota. Exact numbers are very difficult to determine as Spanish flu often progressed into pneumonia so causes of death on death certificates was often foggy. MNopedia states an estimated fifty million deaths worldwide; 675,000 of these were in the United States; over 10,000 were in Minnesota.

Spanish Flu, also known as grip or gripe, is also a misnomer as we will learn with Infantile Paralysis in the next section. World leaders during WWI were reticent to report large

numbers of flu deaths on top of the atrocious battlefield deaths so under-reported. Since Spain was not involved in WWI that country reported truthfully their flu deaths, so other world leaders started naming the disease the Spanish Flu. Little is known about where the virus started but possible origins are the battle fronts in Europe from 1914–1918 or the Shanxi Province in China morphing from a respiratory disease in 1917 or possibly Camp Funston in Kansas where 48 soldiers died of a flu-like disease shortly before the major outbreak.

Similar to the toilet paper shortage in the COVID-19 pandemic a rumor was spread in Fargo that lemons and onions cured the Spanish flu spread. "The story ran in *The Fargo Forum* and the next day there was a rush on lemons and onions and you could hardly buy them." *The Forum* also reported in 1918 that four men arrested for public drunkenness said they drank as much as they could to get immunity from the flu. For the record, drinking alcohol had the opposite effect.

Spanish flu was an incredibly fast-moving virus with symptoms appearing in the morning and a death by evening. Descriptions of the deaths sound like plots of monster movies; suffice it to say that it was exceedingly quick, agonizingly painful, and at the time was often compared to a much earlier epidemic, the Black Death.

The U.S. had a built-in virus delivery system as it was deploying troops world-wide to fight in WWI. Since no vaccine was available, doctors used a method that had worked for measles and diphtheria; extracting blood plasma from a flu survivor or even animals, as with diphtheria,

Three Epidemics continued on page 6

## CONTENTS

Tale of Three Epidemics	1, 6–9
Director's Column	2
Sites Info	2
2nd Quarter 2020	
Member recap	2
Ridgley & Harken Update	3
President's Ponderings	4
2nd Quarter Donations	
2020 Monetary	4
2020 Memorials	4
2020 Remembrances	4
From the Archives	5
Archive/Collections	
Donation	5
History Still Happening	10
Reopening Survey	11
Membership Form	12

## Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS for 2nd quarter 2020, as of June 27th.

### Renewed Champion Business:

Crown Underground, LLC

### Renewed Advocate Business:

Brighton Township  
St. Peter State Hospital Museum

### Renewed Patron Members:

Beverly Gustafson

### Renewed Family Members:

John E. & Julianne Allerson  
Dwight & Geni DeBoer  
Malcolm & Phyllis Maxwell  
Carolyn & John Meyer  
Dale & Kay Mowbray  
Harold Rodning  
Ken & Patsy Rossow  
Jon & Karen Smithers  
Rick Wright

### Renewed Individual Members:

Haley Ashwood  
Eric Annexstad  
Michael Frederick

### Renewed Senior Members:

Peg Bindner  
Charles Johnson  
Ron Roselli  
Mary Ann Scharf  
Bernard Thieman  
Bonnie Tostenson-Sellner  
Diane Wild  
Nancy Zins

### New Crossing Circle:

Larry & Judy Biederman  
Gretchen Koehler

### New Patron:

Audrey Gatchell

## NCHS Board...

### Executive Board Officers

**Kate Martens**, President, St. Peter  
**Tami Skinner**, Vice President, St. Peter  
**Loren Sundboom**, Treasurer, St. Peter  
**Matthias Leyrer**, Secretary, North Mankato

### Directors

**Tim Bartelt**, St. Peter  
**Tom Brown**, St. George  
**Marie Dranttel**, St. Peter  
**Ray Jacobson**, St. Peter  
**Joe Metzen**, St. Peter  
**Donna Nelson**, St. Peter  
**Bob Sandeen**, St. Peter

## NCHS Staff...

### Executive Director: Jessica Becker

director@nchsmn.org

### Research Coordinator: Ruth Einstein

researchcoordinator@nchsmn.org

### Office Manager: Elaine Deschaine

elaine@nchsmn.org

### TSHC Museum Assistants:

**Amanda Johnson, Erica Smith**

### Cox House Museum Assistant:

**Sarah Busse**

### TSHC Janitor: Robert Weber

### NCHS Webmaster: Scott Lassiter

## NCHS Sites information...

### Treaty Site History Center

1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082  
Phone: 507-934-2160; Fax: 507-934-0172

### Closed temporarily due to

### community coronavirus concerns

General info via e-mail: info@nchsmn.org  
or research@nchsmn.org

### E. St. Julien Cox House

500 N. Washington Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082  
Phone: 507-934-2160

### Closed for 2020 house tours due to

### community coronavirus concerns

For tour and rental info: cox@nchsmn.org  
Watch for program info.

**Tune In!**  
**Hear Executive Director**  
**Jessica Becker on**  
**Community Affairs every**  
**fourth Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. on**  
**KNUJ Radio! Turn your**  
**dials 860 AM or listen**  
**online at knuj.net.**

## Director's Column



Jessica Becker

Hello everyone,

Where do I start? It's hard to remember back to a time when COVID-19 wasn't affecting us daily. We even timed our March newsletter to reach you before we had to close our doors. We haven't been able to open them since. We truly miss seeing you, talking to you, and sharing history in person with you.

Still, in troubled times, history organizations provide a sense of connection, context, and stability. As we continue to grapple with what is happening in the world right now, the Historical Society's work matters more than ever. It matters that we continue to create public discussion. It matters that we offer stories from our past. And it matters that we continue fulfilling our mission and serving our communities just as we have done for more than 90 years.

When the Governor issued the Stay at Home Executive Order more than two months ago, the Society needed to adjust to continue offering our content and services. There was still history to share, an organization to run, plans to make, and genealogists who need help with research. Our doors may be closed, but our work continues.

Despite being closed since March, staff and volunteers are cautiously planning outdoor fall events, shuffling the exhibit schedule, and creating new partnerships to bring history to you. In the meantime, we continue sharing a lot of great Nicollet County history on our social media pages, so please "like" and "follow" us to stay connected to your history. We are also updating our website to provide access to more resources and new ways to connect with us.

*Director's Column continued on page 3*

Now you can  
purchase or renew  
memberships  
online!

Visit

[nchsmn.org/membership](http://nchsmn.org/membership)  
for details.



*Director's Column continued from page 2*

Most of you are aware that recently the dial turned again on the Minnesota Stay Safe plan, allowing museums to reopen. We miss seeing your smiling faces come through our doors at the E. St. Julien Cox House and the Treaty Site History Center, but we need to wait a little longer to welcome you back. We want to make sure we are prepared and that it's safe for you and our team. You can be a part of our planning. We have devised a short survey, see page 11 for a print version, you are invited to take to fill in some blanks about reopening the History Center. We must follow many new rules in the Stay Safe Plan, but we want to know what else we can do to make you feel safe and comfortable to visit us again. Please visit our website at [nchsmn.org](http://nchsmn.org) to take the survey or see page 11 of this newsletter.

At this time, the E. St. Julien Cox House is closed indefinitely for house tours for the 2020 season. We take pride in the immersive experiences we offer during tours, which we cannot continue to provide with the current cleaning and distancing guidelines. The Society will focus on exterior renovations and planning for the remainder of the season and look forward to welcoming you back for the 150th anniversary of the Cox House in 2021.

We want to give a heartfelt thank you to our members, volunteers, and communities for your continued support, patience, and understanding. We hope to see you again soon.

Please stay safe and well.



Jessica Becker  
Executive Director

## Fort Ridgely and Harkin Store Update

We all know the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are far-reaching. The Minnesota Historical Society has made the difficult decision to extend the closure of Fort Ridgely and Harkin Store past the June 30 date they announced in April. This news saddens everyone at NCHS, but we understand the decision was made with consideration for the current reopening rules and the cost of operating the sites.

Since Fort Ridgely and Harkin Store aren't opening this summer, NCHS had to lay off our excellent staff at those sites. These people are the heart and soul of these historical sites and have made the visitors' experiences rich for many years. The Nicollet County Historical Society salutes Ruth, Robin, Justin, Glenn, Donna, Amber, Anna, Char, and Opal. We will incorporate the history they have presented from these sites as we go forward.





Kate Martens, president  
NCHS Board of Directors

## President's Ponderings

Kate Martens, President,  
NCHS Board of Directors

If anyone had shown me the headlines in the newspapers from the first week in June, 2020 last year in June 2019, I probably would have accused him/her of—I'm not sure what! But that is what living in historical times is. It seems certain that future historians will be studying these days as we study those of generations before us. That's why the Nicollet County Historical Society exists. Even in these difficult times, NCHS serves to share our collective history, in spite of the sites being closed in response to Covid-19. The staff has been creative and persistent in providing you access to the rich resources of the area. There is some exciting planning going on with how to improve the collections, exhibits and programming. We are also hoping that as you come up with ideas for improvement, you will share them with us.

The situation today offers challenges as well as opportunities. One challenge is the revenue we would have generated had we been open. We hope that not only will you share your ideas, you may also think of us. You will be receiving a membership renewal reminder, and we always welcome donations! The opportunities are in being more responsive to your ideas and input, being creative with our resources and information, as well as maximizing our commitment to share the diverse history of Nicollet County.

It is an honor to be working with this Society during such significant times, and seeing the dedication to history shown by so many staff, volunteers and members. Thank you!

Just a reminder, the NCHS Board of Directors continue to meet regularly. Scheduled meetings are:

August 24	6:30–7:30 p.m. (possibly still virtual meeting)
October 26	6:30–7:30 p.m. (manner / location TBD)
December 21	6:30–7:30 p.m. (manner / location TBD)

If you are interested in being included in any of these, please e-mail the Executive Director for a link to virtual meetings.

## Monetary Donations

received by NCHS for the  
for 2nd quarter 2020, as of  
June 27th.

### Monetary

Anonymous via GiveMN  
Willis & Rachel Anthony  
Daniel & Mary Groebner  
Loren Sundboom

## Memorials

received by NCHS for the for  
2nd quarter 2020,  
as of June 27th.

### In Memory of

**Emma Louise Rodning**  
Given by  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson

### In Memory of

**Louise Rodning**  
Given by  
Harold Rodning



E. St. Julien Cox House



Traverse des Sioux Townsite



Treaty Site History Center

*preserve our past  
solidify our future*

Membership dues and all other donations go directly to enhancing the reach and impact of NCHS collections, programs, and exhibits at our sites—and to expand those services to new audiences.

■ membership yearly support	
business	
Advocate	\$ 200
Benefactor	\$ 500
Champion	\$1000
senior	\$ 30
individual	\$ 40
family	\$ 50
sustaining	\$ 75
patron	\$ 100
supporter	\$ 200
benefactor	\$ 500
life	\$1000

contact Jessica at 934-2160 for more information  
1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082  
director@nchsmn.org

Keep updated on Society happenings here:

- [www.nchsmn.org](http://www.nchsmn.org)
- Facebook | NCHSMN
- Twitter | nchshistory
- Instagram | nchsmn
- or call 507-934-2160



## Remembrances

We remember with  
honor the following  
members who we lost  
since our last newsletter.

- Helen Baumgartner
- Louise Rodning

## WANTED

### Writers | History Buffs | Storytellers

We invite members to volunteer to write articles for *The Crossing*. Share your knowledge of Nicollet County and Minnesota history by contributing an article for the newsletter. Does your family have a story to share? Do you have a favorite Nicollet County anecdote to relate? Do you have an old picture with a story to tell? Share your talents. If you are interested in donating for an upcoming edition please contact **Jessica at 507-934-2160 or director@nchsmn.org**



## From the Archives...

by Ruth Einstein  
Research Coordinator



# The Case of Two Gravestones

It has been a relatively quiet few months for the NCHS Archives, though in May, I did receive a request to help solve a mystery. I love a good history mystery.

Archives volunteer Nita Aasen, who creates profiles for all Nicollet County burials on findagrave.com, received a message through that platform concerning entries for seemingly identical gravestones for 1st Lt. John Noble Carlton, one at Resurrection Cemetery in St. Peter and one in Wyoming. Which was the actual burial site? Had a family member placed another gravestone in a cemetery in a small town in Wyoming, as the Find a Grave contributor who created that profile contended?

Carlton, a test pilot based at Mitchel Field near Dayton, Ohio, was killed in a crash on April 10, 1941. Paul Martin, who contacted us with this question, has created a website dedicated to the history of Mitchel Field ([mitchelfield.weebly.com](http://mitchelfield.weebly.com)) and is in the process of documenting every one of the thousands of airplane crashes and accidents that occurred there.

As Martin notes on his site, quoting historians Anthony J. Mireles and Marlyn R. Pierce, "Throughout the war, (1940 through 1945), the U.S. Army Air Corps/Army Air Forces suffered over 54,000 accidents, including 6,351 fatal accidents in the continental United States, resulting in the loss of 7,114 airplanes and the death of 15,530 personnel. This was an

average of ten deaths and nearly 40 accidents, fatal and non-fatal, a day. The Army Air Forces reached its peak for both training and accidents in 1943. That year the Army Air Forces suffered 2,268 fatal accidents that resulted in over 5,600 fatalities and over 2,500 aircraft damaged or destroyed. The situation was better in 1944 with a 14 percent drop in accidents compared with 1943. However, there were still nearly 2,000 fatal accidents and the death of 5,000 pilots and crew."

John Noble Carlton was among those courageous pilots whose mission it was to test planes and equipment to be used in the war against the fascist Axis powers. He was killed when his plane exploded at 400 feet, and though he was able to eject, he was too low to the ground to allow his parachute to fully open.

Two Gravestones  
continued on page 9

## St. Peter Youth Is Killed Testing New Army Ship

Plane Apparently Exploded At Height of 400 Feet— Tried to Use Parachute

John Carlton, 28, son of Dr. and Mrs. E. C. Carlton of St. Peter and a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, was killed yesterday afternoon in an airplane crash at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio.

Dr. and Mrs. Carlton were informed by telephone of the fatal crash and left immediately for Dayton.

### On Test Flight

In a call to the Minneapolis office of the Associated Press, the Herald was told that Lieutenant Carlton was on a test flight in a Curtis P-40 pursuit ship near Wright Field.

Eye-witnesses reported that his plane apparently exploded at a height of 400 feet and literally flew to pieces. His parachute was partly opened when he was found, indicating that he tried to jump, but he was prevented because of the low altitude at which he was flying.

At the time of the accident, John and other army pilots were testing some of the speedy fighting planes recently purchased by the army.

His duties in regular flight duty were that of pilot on a Boeing B-17, the "flying fortress" bomber, in addition to which he had training as a navigator, bomber and gunner. He received his training at Randolph and Kelly fields, and after leaving Kelly in October, 1937, was stationed for a time at Hamilton Field in San Francisco.

Later he was attached to a bomb group which was transferred to Salt Lake City, where he had been until recently.

### Obituary

John Noble Carlton was born May 28, 1913 in St. Peter, the son of Dr. and Mrs. E. C. Carlton. He attended the local schools and graduated from the St. Peter high school in 1930 and from Gustavus Adolphus college in 1934. He was a member of Battery B, Minnesota National Guard during his school career and after college graduation was employed by the Minnesota Highway department and also as auditor at the State Capital.

Lieut. Carlton decided to enter the U. S. Army Air Corps and trained at Randolph Field, San Antonio, Texas where he was graduated in October, 1938. He was then stationed at Hamilton Field near San Francisco and remained there until Sept. 1940 when he was transferred to Salt Lake City. After a few weeks there he was called to Dayton, Ohio, where he was stationed at Wright Field. He was there at the time of his death.

Lieut. Carlton was married April 18, 1940 to Miss Mary Helen Rogers, daughter of Major and Mrs. F. B. Rogers of San Francisco. They recently returned from a trip to Georgia and California and were residing at Dayton.

Surviving him are his parents, Dr. and Mrs. E. C. Carlton of this city, one brother, George Carlton of Washington, D. C., and two sisters, Doris Carlton Allen of Washington, D. C., and Phyllis Carlton Humphreys of New York City.

### Funeral Here

Funeral services will be conducted here the fore part of next week.

## Artifact & Archival Donations

First Quarter 2020 Donations:

John and Marit Kvamme, with members of the task force: Organizational records of the Central School Task Force, 1986–1987.

## Dies In Air Crash



LIEUT. JOHN N. CARLTON

John N. Carlton, son of Dr. and Mrs. E. C. Carlton of St. Peter and a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps who was killed yesterday afternoon in a crash at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio.

NCHS asks for your help in preserving the historical record of one of the most significant periods of our lifetimes. We collect materials that illuminate and document the lives and activities of the residents, businesses, organizations, and faith communities of Nicollet County. How communities respond to periods of crisis speaks to the heart of who we are. If you would like to donate your records, photos, and items to the Nicollet County Historical Society, please contact us at [collections@nchsmn.org](mailto:collections@nchsmn.org).



**Beds with patients in an emergency hospital in Camp Funston, Kansas, in the midst of the influenza epidemic. The flu struck while America was at war, and was transported across the Atlantic on troop ships.**

Photo credit: National Museum of Health and Medicine.

**"I had a little bird, its name was Enza. I opened the window, and In-Flu-Enza!"**

– Children innocently sang this rhyme while playing and skipping rope during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

[www.mnopedia.org](http://www.mnopedia.org)

and injecting the plasma as a safeguard into 1918 recruits; it was termed "convalescent plasma" and was very similar to the treatment being used for COVID-19 in 2019 and 2020.

1918 recruits, including the following from Nicollet County, were inoculated for the Spanish flu, many with the exact opposite effect as was desired. Ralph Boys and Elmer Osland, upon their arrival at Camp Forest, Georgia, both reported good health.

Ralph James Boys' mother received his letter from Camp Forest on Monday, written the previous Thursday, telling her not to worry that he as "feeling fine", later that same day the Nicollet County mother received a telegram announcing his death on Sunday, 3 November 1918.

Nicollet County soldier Elmer Osland, who died of the flu 4 November 1918, was also at Camp Forest with Ralph and their deaths were reported in the same newspaper article.

Adam and Anna (Manz) Jutz of Brighton township lost their 29-year-old son, John B. Jutz,

on 30 November 1918 while stationed at Camp McPherson, Georgia. John died of an often times deadly form of pneumonia which accompanied the Spanish flu.

The Nicollet County area also lost: Clayton Parsons, age 26, while in the Army, Company A, 38th Battalion, serving at Camp Presidio, California, 22 Oct. 1918, leaving his wife of just over a year Olga and a 3-month-old child; and John H. Evans, is also listed in the NCHS St. Peter Herald obituary files as having died in Nov. 1918 of the flu at Camp Cody, New Mexico, though with the present COVID-19 closure of the NCHS archives, little was found on John.

And the deadly flu was not contained to forces serving or training on U.S. soil but was easily transmitted aboard troop ships to those serving abroad also. The Andrew Tiedemann family of Nicollet and Sibley Counties lost son Victor E. Tiedemann. Victor had sailed from Brooklyn, New York on 16 August 1918 so had been in France less than two months when he died, 23 October 1918 of the Spanish flu while a private in Company I, 352nd Infantry, 99th Division of the A.E.F. (American Expeditionary Forces). There is a stone in Victor's honor in the Bernadotte Lutheran Church Cemetery, but it is not clear if his remains were returned home or if this is a cenotaph in his memory. And the Spanish Flu epidemic continued to extend into 1919 with nearby Kasota soldier, Albert Klaseus' death being reported in Hoboken, New Jersey in May of 1919, memorialized in Calvary Cemetery, St. Peter.

And, of course, the Spanish flu not only struck military personnel but non-military as well. Ludwig Fluegge of Bernadotte township died at age 18 in December 1918, only recently preceded in death in November 1918 by his brother-in-law Fred Poehler, also of Nicollet County. Fred left his wife Lydia with a year-and-a-half year old daughter and an infant son to mourn his death.

Similarly to COVID-19, Spanish seeming also targeted a specific race, COVID-19 chose to disproportionately effect African Americans while the flu took aim at the Minnesota Native American population. Quoting from MNopedia: "In May 1919, the Office of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, reported that the Native American population in Minnesota was 5,792. From October 1, 1918, to March 31, 1919, there were 1,633 influenza cases in this hard-hit group. Eighty-five deaths resulted, with a fatality rate of five in 100. (The data were likely incomplete, and it is unknown whether the deaths of Native Americans were included in the state total.)"

Public discord against health officials, almost duplicated with each of the following diseases countered closures with wouldn't it be better to leave schools open where children can be



monitored rather than having them “running in the streets” but closures continued and very similar types of our now oft-spoken phrase of “social distancing” occurred in motion picture theaters, factories, and retail; though there are reports that saloons remained open throughout.

The ending of the Spanish flu came in the summer of 1919, both because many who had it died or developed immunity. Further research into this particular virus led to the discovery that “a group of three genes weakened bronchial tubes and lungs and cleared the way for bacterial pneumonia.” Though there have been many flu-like epidemics since the 1918–1919 pandemic, none have reached the monumental death rates of the 1918 version, until those unknown in 2020:

1918/19:	675,000	in United States
1957/58:	70,000	in United States
1968/69:	34,000	in United States
2009/10:	12,000	in United States during H1N1

#### Spanish Flu Sources:

<https://www.mnopedia.org/event/influenza-epidemic-minnesota-1918>  
<https://www.history.com/news/blood-plasma-covid-19-measles-spanish-flu>  
<https://www.influenzaarchive.org/cities/city-minneapolis.html#>  
<https://www.minnpost.com/health/2020/03/a-look-back-at-the-1918-flu-pandemic-and-its-impact-on-minnesota/>  
<https://www.fox9.com/news/twin-cities-pandemic-lessons-from-the-spanish-flu-of-1918>  
<https://www.minnpost.com/mnopedia/2019/01/the-1918-influenza-pandemic-killed-thousands-of-minnesotans/>  
<https://www.influenzaarchive.org/cities/city-minneapolis.html#>  
<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic>

## The Polio Epidemics in Nicollet County

This polio study is written as an intermediate result of years of research on Nicollet County polio victims and survivors. Information comes from many sources including newspaper reports of the epidemics, obituaries, and if I was lucky enough, interviews with the actual survivors themselves or family members, in addition to personal survivor history. I would like to personally thank NCHS volunteer Nita Aasen for her much appreciated assistance in keeping my project in mind while she did her incredible Nicollet County obituary search over the past many years. Also thank you goes to those survivors who allowed me to interview them or those who have written their own personal polio experience.

**This is polio project is ongoing and this researcher would welcome any additional information on polio victims and survivors who contracted polio while living in Nicollet County.**  
**My e-mail is: hazelart@hickorytech.net**

There is an incredible similarity between the polio epidemics of the past and the present COVID-19. As with the Spanish Flu and recently COVID-19, the polio virus played no favorites in who it attacked. Babies, Gustavus professors, the butter maker in Norseland, the elderly, the United States president all fell victim to the dread disease.

The disease was known variously as Polio, Poliomyelitis, and also by Infantile Paralysis, a misnomer because of the vast age range of its victims. Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus which invades the nervous system and can cause irreversible paralysis in a matter of hours, in its most virulent state. It is often thought of as a muscular disease but, in fact, it affects the nerves which direct the muscles to move or not move. As with COVID-19 estimates were from 95 to 99 percent were asymptomatic, an unseen transmitter. Polio came in two forms: non-paralytic or abortive polio, with symptoms of fever, sore throat, headache, vomiting, fatigue, and meningitis; and paralytic polio which had two degrees, spinal cord polio and brainstem or bulbar polio, with symptoms being: loss of reflexes; severe spasms and muscle pain; loose and floppy limbs, sometimes on just one side of the body, sudden paralysis, temporary or permanent, deformed limbs, especially the hips, ankles, and feet.

Five to ten percent of the paralytic polio victims were of the Bulbar Polio variety, which attacked the white matter in the brain stem, and often led to difficulty or incapability in breathing and hence the necessity of an iron lung or similar breathing assistance.

Only about one percent of cases resulted in paralytic polio causing permanent paralysis, and often the need for the use of calipers/braces, crutches or more commonly Kenny sticks, wheelchairs or walkers; while in a mild case a very temporary muscle weakness and almost complete recovery; or any residual affect in between.



**Child-size iron lungs helped young ones with polio breathe, and on the right a typical hospital ward crib.**  
 Photo courtesy of Hennepin Medical History Center

Quotes from 25 April 2020  
Star/Trib article by Curt Brown  
titled *Sister Elizabeth Kenny:*  
*A 'raging tiger, merciful angel'*  
*who challenged the doctors*  
*on polio.*

***"There is some woman  
here from Australia,"  
Dr. John Pohl told Henry's  
parents. "I don't know if  
she has anything, but he  
won't walk again and it's  
worth a try."***

***"your splints and casts  
are illogical; throw  
them out."***



**Above : Sister Kenny, on right, demonstrating stretching exercises.**

**Below: The original Sister Kenny Institute,  
1800 Chicago Avenue, Minneapolis**

Photo credits: MNHS photo collection



***"She looked like an M-4  
tank," said actress  
Rosalind Russell, who  
played Kenny in the  
movie and became  
her friend. "But her  
eyes were the loneliest  
and loveliest I have  
ever looked into."***

### **Three Epidemics continued from page 7**

But those complete recovery patients are not out-of-the-woods as it was not until about 1982 that post-polio syndrome (PPS) was formally declared as a latent effect of polio. It can be from 15 to 40 years after "recovery" from an initial attack that recurring symptoms appear in estimates which range from 25% to 40% to lately 80% of new symptoms.

"The most common symptoms [of PPS] include slowly progressive muscle weakness, fatigue (both general and muscular), and a decrease in muscle size (muscular atrophy). Pain from joint deterioration and increasing skeletal deformities such as scoliosis are common. Some individuals experience only minor symptoms, while others develop more visible muscle weakness and atrophy. PPS is rarely life-threatening but the symptoms can interfere significantly with the individual's capacity to function independently. While polio is contagious, PPS is not transmissible. Only a polio survivor can develop PPS."

This author has a close friend who contracted a mild case of polio in the 1950s, lived a full life, with hiking and horseback riding, and now in her mid-seventies is confined to a wheelchair with a myriad of health problems attributed to PPS.

Sister Elizabeth Kenny, was an Australian nurse whose renegade practices of exercising, stretching, and hot packing brought great criticism when she arrived in Minneapolis those being almost the exact opposite from previous practices of immobilization and casting which rather than healing caused muscle atrophy and increased paralysis. Eventually the Kenny technique, 1) hot packs to loosen tightened muscles, 2) muscle and tendon manipulation, and 3) neuro-muscular retraining, became the norm, though even today victims have called the Kenny treatments "torture" with the application of scalding hotpacks and agonizing stretching exercises. In December 1942 the Elizabeth Kenny clinic opened at 1800 Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis with 100 patient beds. The building is still visible from I-94 though the institute has since merged with Abbott-Northwestern Hospital system, moved to their campus at 800 E. 28th Street and is now a physical therapist facility called Abbott Northwestern Hospital Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. And similarly to COVID-19 preparations Minnesota hospital beds rapidly filled and 1946 found Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey pleading with the federal government for the use of Fort Snelling barracks buildings as temporary shelters for polio victims.

While this researcher has always heard that there were three Nicollet County Polio epidemics, evidence to date shows there were years and years of very mild to epidemic-sized outbreaks and a very early onset in the county.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>
<b>Contracted</b>	<b>Found</b>	<b>Contracted</b>	<b>Found</b>
1877	1	1943	1
1905	1	1944	1
1909	9	1946	1
1910	2	1948	22
1911	1	1949	5
1914	2	1950s	1
1915	1	1951	2 *
1916	1	1952	19
1918	1	1955	1
1920s	1	1956	1
1925	6	unknown	7
1932	2		
1934	1		
1940s	2		
		<b>total over</b>	
		<b>79 years</b>	<b>92</b>

\* NOTE: St. Peter Herald reported that there were 44 polio cases from 1944 to 1951 this researcher has yet to find the 12 remaining documented cases, but still searching.



Ages ranged from Laura Fitzke, aged 14 months in 1911 to my dear friend, Nellie (Haney) Wendelschafer at 65 years old in 1952 the same year I contracted polio and both at Sister Kenny. And while many victims returned home to resume their lives, one in this county living to the ripe old age of 96, at least 16 Nicollet County residents are documented to have died within the year they contracted and the vast majority of those were within a day to a week of the report of infection.

Treatment centers in Minnesota were many, as beds filled rapidly during epidemic years, in Minneapolis: Kenny Institute, University of Minnesota Hospital, General Hospital, Sheltering Arms, which started as an Episcopal orphanage but became an after-care hospital for young polio victims; Bethesda Hospital and Gillette Hospital, St. Paul; St. Mary's Hospital, Rochester; not to mention many dedicated mothers and families who cared for their family members who never left Nicollet County.

Grace Lindquist, a 1932 polio victim, stayed at home in St. Peter. Rather her mother Minnie was sent to Minneapolis to learn the exercises required to nurse Grace back to mobility. Neither her mother nor her father relished doing the exercises but they continued. Grace remembers having her affected foot and leg tied to the end of her bed at nighttime to help prevent the shrinking of the muscles. At this time her parents would also have had 5 or 6 other children at home.

Grace was, in fact, lucky to be able to stay at home with her family and have that personal support. My first stay at Sister Kenny in 1952 at age 3-1/2 was for seven months. My parents could visit one day every other weekend for about 2 hours. I have heard of much longer stays than that. In a recently discovered case with living family members' input, a California mother visiting her parents here in Nicollet County with her two children contracted polio while here and was sent to Sister Kenny, while her 6-month-old daughter remained with her maternal grandparents, her 18-month-old son stayed with his paternal grandparents.

Hospital stays not only met the medical needs of the polio victim but included extensive physical therapy also—from re-learning to breath, re-learning to walk and maneuver stairs with heavy full-length braces, learning how to fall “correctly” after a bit of a shove from a therapist, and managing a wheelchair, and on and on.

**End of Part One.** Please be sure to follow the tale of three viruses in the Fall edition of *the Crossing* where we will finish the polio epidemic story, and tie the three Nicollet County virus tales together.

.....  
*Two Gravestones continued from page 5*

A banner headline, article with photo, and obituary in the April 11, 1941, edition of the *St. Peter Herald* memorialized Carlton, who grew up in St. Peter and was a graduate of Gustavus. The obituary, which indicated that Carlton was to be buried in St. Peter, was key in solving our mystery. Other clues included the family's membership records from First Lutheran Church in St. Peter, which confirmed that the burial would have been at Resurrection; an image of the application for a military headstone to be sent to St. Peter completed by John's father, Dr. Ernest Carlton, a professor at Gustavus; and census records confirming that the family lived in St. Peter from the 1920s through the 1940s and that no members of John's immediate family could be found living in Wyoming.

Just to tie a bow on it, I contacted a member of the Board of Directors of the cemetery in Wyoming, who not only went through their files and did not find a record of Lt. Carlton's burial, but even went out to walk the cemetery just in case there had been an oversight in their documentation.

Case closed, and now we are left to remember the sacrifice of Lt. Carlton and the grief of his family and community.



**Lt. John Noble Carlton's gravemarker in Resurrection Cemetery, rural St. Peter.**

# History is Still Happening During the Pandemic

When we closed our doors to the public in March, the Society didn't stop our mission to preserve, protect, and share our history. Our exhibits are only one way we fulfill that mission; it's just the one most often thought about.

The way we share history moved online. We focused on social media, email, and our website.

## Are you moving?

If you are moving, please remember to call or send in your new contact information so you will continue to receive *The Crossing* and other Society correspondence in a timely manner. Contact Elaine at 507-934-2160 or [elaine@nchsmn.org](mailto:elaine@nchsmn.org) with changes.

Third class bulk rate mail is not forwarded and if a newsletter is returned to us, the Society must pay the return postage.

## GO PAPERLESS?

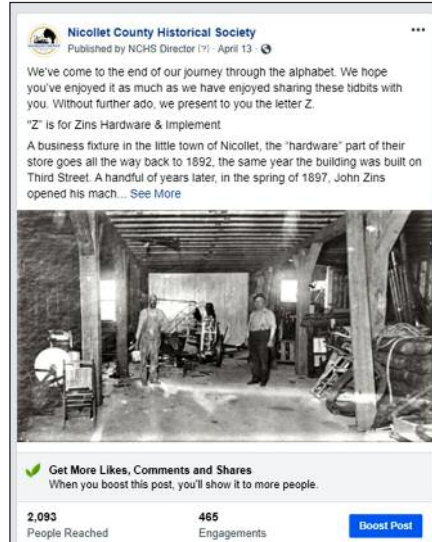
Would you rather receive your *Crossing* newsletter electronically?

Simply contact Elaine at 507-934-2160 or [membership@nchsmn.org](mailto:membership@nchsmn.org) and we will make that change in our mailing database.

Also during this time self-sheltering, NCHS may have to rely more on internet communication due to our printer/mailer being closed. If you know of folks who are members of the Society who do not have access to the internet, we would ask that you print this newsletter pdf and share our news with them so they are up-to-date with NCHS doings.



Between when we closed our doors on March 16 until this newsletter went to print, we reached 275,949 people through our social media pages. (That's 62,954 more than the same timeframe in 2019).



We participated in the #MNMuseumAlphabet challenge...



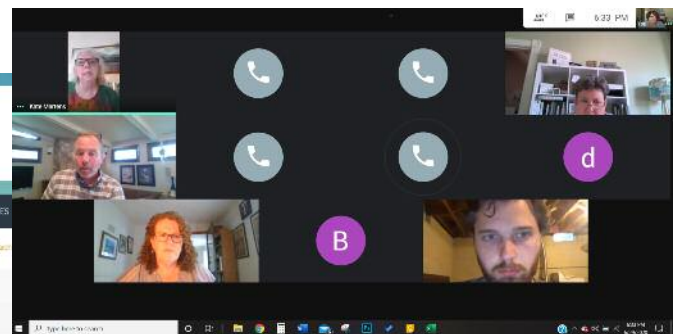
...and shared blog stories.



We upgraded our website, adding new stories, resources, and ways to connect with history.



... and research continued.



The board and committees met...

And we aren't done yet! Keep checking on your favorite connection, try the new website, and stay tuned!



## History Center Reopening Survey

### \* Required response

The safety and comfort of our visitors, staff, and volunteers is the top priority of the Nicollet County Historical Society as we plan our reopening. We would like to know more about your concerns and plans as the Stay Safe MN reopening plan progresses so that we can create the best experience possible.

If you have not previously responded to this survey on Facebook or through our e-updates email, please do so with this form. Your input is invaluable to the timing of our reopening. Thank you!

#### \* REQUIRED

What is your age? \*

- ☐ 18–24      ☐ 35–44      ☐ 55–64  
☐ 25–34      ☐ 45–54      ☐ 65+

Agree or disagree? I see myself visiting the Treaty Site History Center exhibits regardless of the precautionary changes that could be made. \*

- ☐ Agree      ☐ Disagree

When was the last time you visited the Treaty Site History Center? \*

- ☐ I visit all the time!      ☐ It's been a while.  
☐ Within the last year.      ☐ I've never been.  
☐ I know it's been more than one year.

When the history center reopens, what is the likelihood that your concern regarding COVID-19 will prevent you from visiting? \*

- ☐ Very likely      ☐ Somewhat unlikely  
☐ Somewhat likely      ☐ Very unlikely

If we opened tomorrow, how likely are you to visit the Treaty Site History Center EXHIBITS in the next four weeks? \*

- ☐ Very likely      ☐ Somewhat unlikely  
☐ Somewhat likely      ☐ Very unlikely

How likely are you to visit the Treaty Site History Center EXHIBITS in the next 3 months? \*

- ☐ Very likely      ☐ Somewhat unlikely  
☐ Somewhat likely      ☐ Very unlikely

If you plan to visit the Treaty Site History Center, at what time would you likely visit?

	Very likely likely	Somewhat unlikely	Somewhat	Very unlikely
Morning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Afternoon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saturday daytime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important are these factors in making you feel safe in public spaces? \*

	Not at All Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Local/state government & public health officials say it is safe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of antibody testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of COVID-19 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other organizations reopening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to avoid lines in public spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of vaccine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing other people visit public spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Below you will find various measures that could help protect the health and safety of our guests, staff, and volunteers. We would like you to evaluate each of these measures by telling us how you would feel if it was implemented at the Treaty Site History Center. These are additional to the safeguards required in the Stay Safe MN plan. \*

	This would make me feel more comfortable	This is a basic requirement for me	This would not affect me	This would be a minor inconvenience for me	This would be a major problem for me
Require all visitors to wear face masks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require all staff/volunteers to wear face masks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement touch-free payments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer timed ticketing (tour reservation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhanced sanitation for guest access (e.g. hand sanitizer stations, sanitation wipes for all guest contact areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require guests to have their temperature taken by infrared thermometer. Those with fevers would be refused admission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One-way directional flow through exhibits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special visiting hours for seniors 65+	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there anything else you would like us to know or keep in mind as we plan our reopening?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please detach and return to NCHS at 1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082.

Note that this survey is also available to complete online at:

<https://forms.gle/4uP8kTcDfsv5n8My6>



**NICOLLET COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
1851 N. Minnesota Ave. • St. Peter, MN 56082

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Treaty Site History Center

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## Your membership dollars at work...



## - NCHS Membership Application -

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed ☐ Please debit my credit card ☐

Acct. Number \_\_\_\_\_

CVV Code \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

3 #s on rev-VISA®, MC®, Disc®, 4 #s on rev-AE®

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please save mailing costs, I will read my newsletter online.

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2020 at the following level (please check one).

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65+)	\$ 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 40
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$ 50
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$ 75
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$ 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$ 200
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$ 500
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	\$ 1,000
<b>Business Memberships</b>	

call or  
e-mail  
for info

Please make checks payable to:

**Nicollet County Historical Society**

Membership applications should be mailed to:

**Nicollet County Historical Society**  
1851 North Minnesota Avenue  
St. Peter, MN 56082

**PAPERLESS??** Now you can purchase or renew your membership **online!** Visit [nchsmn.org/membership](http://nchsmn.org/membership) for details.