NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EST. 1928

the CROSSING

a publication of the Nicollet County Historical Society

March 2022 • Volume 27 / Issue 1

Historical Society's Annual Business Meeting

Join us for the 2021 NCHS Annual Business Meeting on **Sunday, March 27 at 1:00 p.m.**

Due to the lingering presence of COVID-19, the NCHS Board decided to hold this year's meeting remotely via Zoom and to conduct business through mail-in ballots. Please note this will be a business meeting only where we'll announce the ballot results and give an update about how 2021 went for NCHS.

Please note, under NCHS Bylaws, remote voting is not permitted and as a result, attendees cannot vote via Zoom, but can otherwise fully participate. All voting will be completed via United States Postal Service mail. At the beginning of March, **ballots were mailed to all NCHS members in good standing.**

We ask that you complete the following tasks and mail your ballots back **postmarked by March 15, 2022**. We will announce the results at the meeting.

- Review the "minutes" from last year's action-by-ballot. These look a bit different because of the process that was used to conduct business last year.
- Review the 2021 financials. As always, these are preliminary and unaudited. The 2021 tax returns will be completed later this year and final adjustments will be made at that time.
- Review the biographies of the nominated slate of candidates for the Board of Directors.
- Vote and approve where indicated on your enclosed ballot.

If you're planning to attend our virtual Annual Business Meeting on March 27, **please register by March 21, 2022**. You can do so on our website at nchsmn.org/events or by calling 507-934-2160.

Please note that the 2021 Annual Report will once again be available in digital format later in March. Physical copies will be available by request.

Thank you for your support!

If you have questions about your membership status, please contact Jessica at 507-934-2160.

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2022 SLATE FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee of your Nicollet County Historical Society presents the following slate of board members for the 2022 term. Elections will take place at the virtual Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 27, 2022.

We're expanding the Board of Directors to 14 in 2022. If approved, this Board will have an even greater amount of talent onboard helping lead NCHS out of the pandemic and into new initiatives. This group is anxious to get started if given the opportunity.

Slate of New Candidates

Eric Annexstad, Saint Peter
John Chamberlain, Saint Peter
Alma Forst, West Newton Twp.
Dave Johnson, Saint Peter
Dennis Schmidt, New Sweden Twp.
Jon Smithers, Saint Peter

Directors Running for a Second Term

Kate Martens
Joe Metzen

Directors Running for Officer Positions

President - Kate Martens
Vice President - Tami Skinner
Treasurer - Ken Rossow
Secretary - Dana Melius

A very special thank you and farewell to outgoing board members Tim Bartelt, Loren Files, and Matthias Leyrer. Your guidance and leadership will be missed come April!

Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS since the last *Crossing* as of 3-7-2022.

Renewed Crossing Circle Life Members
Robert & Sally Lambert

Renewed Patron Members:
Lori Lahlum
Glenn Stryker
Roland & Edi Thorstensson

Renewed Sustaining Members:
Beverly Gustafson
Ryan Kupcho

Renewed Family Members:
John & Julianne Allerson
Claude & Sandra Brew
Gordon & Mary Long
Dr. Craig A. Nelson
Janet & Byron Nordstrom
Joe, Kay & Cordelia Metzen
Elizabeth Peters
Helen Schauer
Howard & Jane Swenson
Jerry & Peggy Wolfe
Rick Wright

Renewed Individual Members:
Ruth A. Brandel
Paul Honken

Renewed Senior Members:
Thomas Brown
Lois Currier
Alma Forst
JoAnn F. Gieseke
Marlene Groves
John Hickman
Marjorie Johnson
Maurine Johnson
Victoria Johnson
Donna Kowal
Willis Lindquist
Arnold Nimps
Karen Reyelts
Kenneth Saffert

New Patron Member:
Eric Hendrickson

New Family Members:
Gary & Mary Campbell
Jack & Kane Kolars
Lisa & Bruce Martens
William & Mary O'Brien
Anna Verslius

New Senior Members:
Ida Mary Asleson
John Berbich
Jane Klein

We make every effort to provide an accurate listing of membership renewals and donors. If we have made an error please contact us at 507-934-2160 or info@nchsmn.org and we'll make corrections.

NCHS Board…

Executive Board Officers

Kate Martens, President, St. Peter
Tami Skinner, Vice President, St. Peter
Loren Sundboom, Treasurer, St. Peter
Tim Bartelt, Secretary, St. Peter

Directors

Dana Melius, St. Peter
Ray Jacobson, St. Peter
Matthias Leyrer, North Mankato
Joe Metzen, St. Peter
Ken Rossow, St. Peter
Bob Sandeen, St. Peter

NCHS Staff…

Executive Director: Jessica Becker
director@nchsmn.org
Research Coordinator: Ruth Einstein
research@nchsmn.org
Accounting: Barb Church
barb@nchsmn.org
TSHC Museum Assistants:
Sara Busse & Erica Smith
Custodian: Robert Weber
Cox House Manager: Kate Roberts
cox@nchsmn.org

NCHS Sites information…

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N. Minnesota Ave.
Saint Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160
Hours: Thu.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
E-mail: info@nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House *
500 N. Washington Ave.
Saint Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160
E-mail: cox@nchsmn.org
* This site remains closed temporarily

Traverse des Sioux
Adjacent to the Treaty Site History Center
1851 N Minnesota Ave.
Saint Peter, MN 56082
Open dawn to dusk year-round

Now you can purchase or renew memberships**online!**
Visit **nchsmn.org/membership** for details.

KNUJ AM 860
• 860AM • knuj.net • 97.3FM •
"Your Friend in Southern Minnesota"

Tune In!

Hear Executive Director Jessica Becker on Community Affairs every fourth Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. on KNUJ Radio! Turn your dials to 860 AM, 97.3 FM, or listen online at knuj.net.

Director's Column

Jessica Becker

Lately, I've been doing a lot of reflecting about the challenges and successes NCHS had over the last two years.

Looking back, I'm proud of how we handled this pandemic. It was a steep learning curve, but we have history to learn from, and we did. We banded together to make quick, smart choices that kept the Society running and safe. Our success was in no small part due to our fantastic staff and Board of Directors. I'm so proud of them and grateful for their leadership, initiative, input, guidance, and resilience.

I am also proud of what we have and continue to accomplish. You'll read about what's new and ongoing at the History Center and Cox House, what the Board is up to, and more.

Our steps toward returning to "normal" start with you. We want to encourage visitors to return and experience our sites again. And to do that, we need your help.

I invite you to get involved with NCHS this year. Visit our exhibits and bring a friend. Volunteer some time to help install an exhibit or sit on a committee. Promote NCHS by sharing social media posts. If you can't volunteer, consider making a monetary donation toward any of our upcoming exhibits, events, projects, or maintenance.

Please become part of our team and help to help NCHS come back better and stronger. This year will be a big one. I invite you to join us for the ride!

Jessica Becker
Executive Director

President's Report

Kate Martens, President, NCHS Board of Directors

Kate Martens, President NCHS Board of Directors

The Nicollet County Historical Society continues with the mission of discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Nicollet County and the state of Minnesota. Collections work, the archives and research center have been busy, there are upgrades to technology, and the reconfiguration of our museum spaces has been accomplished. We are particularly excited about the shifting of spaces to take advantage of the somewhat limited space we are experiencing. Exciting exhibits are also planned and will be installed over the upcoming month. Our staff and volunteers have continued to be awesome and resilient, and our Board has been busy and productive.

The ballot you are receiving by mail reflects an expanded Board, with the purpose of reviewing policies, updating staff, and doing some strategic planning. The Board will be doing some long-range planning and committees are undertaking a schedule of exhibits and events which will also offer our members many opportunities.

I recently had the opportunity to enjoy our website anew. I was looking for some photos for a project and got caught up in the wide array available to browse, the cemetery and genealogy sections, and especially the information from the Pollinator Plant Sale last year. That brought some hope of spring and excitement about this year's version of the sale. My satisfaction with my membership in the Historical Society was complete.

Tribute to Mike Bidelman

We were devastated to hear about Mike Bidelman's passing back in January. Though he couldn't volunteer recently, Mike was a steady presence in the archives for years. He quietly worked on his projects but always had a smile for the front desk volunteers and thoughtful commentary on museum happenings.

Mike started volunteering at the museum years ago. He brought his students to the museum to research the St. Peter business district when he was still teaching. They tried to determine the owners of properties and business types starting from the 1850s and going up into the 20th century. Once he retired, Mike expanded the project by working his way through our microfilmed newspapers from 1855 and onward to compile a master business history of St. Peter. This work has allowed us to provide much better service to our customers. Mike's work has dramatically expanded our knowledge of St. Peter's past.

When asked about Mike, former Research Coordinator Bob Sandeen had nothing but praise for him. "On a personal note, I had great respect for Mike. I admired his dedication to his work as a teacher, the huge amount of research that he did in order to discover the history of the St. Peter business district, and the extremely efficient way in which he organized the results of his research. I regarded Mike as a good friend, and I miss him very much."

There's no doubt his passing leaves a void in our personal and professional lives.

Memorials

received by NCHS since the last *Crossing* as of 3-7-2022.

In Memory of
Beverly "Bev" Wetherill
Given by
Marlene Carlson
James & Diane Stenson

We remember...

with honor the following friends and members whom we lost since our last newsletter.

- **Bernard "Mike" Bidelman, Patron member & archives researcher**
- **Bruce Davis, Voice of the Valley**
- **Beverly Gustafson, Patron member**
- **John Hall, 2020, Family Member**
- **Dr. Craig A. Nelson, Family Member**
- **David Nelson, Family Member**

Monetary Donations

processed by NCHS since the last *Crossing* as of 3-7-2022.

Monetary
Frani & Mark Anderson
Anonymous
Shari & James Brostrom
Thomas Brown
Dwight DeBoer
Marie Dranttel
JoAnn F. Gieseke
Richard Holz
Carl & Susan Johnson
Ben Leonard
Emilie Lokensgard
John Luepke
Margaret Muchow
Carol Peterson
Herbert & Louise Poncin
Harold Rodning
Ken & Patsy Rossow
Helen Schauer
Doug & Judy Schultz
Betty Thompson
Bonnie Tostenson-Sellner

Honorarium
Warren & Terri Michels
in honor of
Loren Sundboom

SITES REPORTS:

Treaty Site History Center

Wrapping up 2021

Thank you all for helping make 2021 successful. Given the unknowns when we reopened in June, it had the potential to be a dreadful and disappointing year. But your support, friendship, and attendance made all the difference. There never was a question whether we appreciate your patronage, but you went above and beyond for us in 2021.

Volunteers installed a screen in the new multipurpose room.

The room that once was the Site Manager's office was returned to a storage closet

Changes Coming in 2022

The Society went on winter hiatus in late December through the first week of January. Winter break is always an excellent opportunity for staff to catch up on projects and complete deep cleaning. We did some work in the backroom, completed the annual gift shop inventory, did lots of dreaming and planning, and even went so far as implementing some exciting changes.

Space is always at the forefront of our minds since we store your treasures. But we also need areas to work, meet, and put up displays. So over the last two years, we've taken advantage of being closed and dug into projects rearranging spaces to fit our growing needs better. It's an ongoing process.

Over the break we made some more changes, this time spaces you'll notice. When you arrive for an in-person program or meeting, you'll now head to the north end of the building. Our smallest gallery space will soon become our new multipurpose space for programs and meetings. It's ideally located for events, aids in visitor flow, and generally helps the building work more efficiently. The Lind Gallery you're used to sitting in for programs like Film Series will revert to exhibit space. Because the room hosts displays and programs, it was difficult to offer quality exhibits because we always had to keep them movable. With this room shift, we are able to offer better exhibits, programs, and a quality meeting space. These changes will be implemented once our current exhibits close.

Facilities

We take preventative maintenance very seriously at the museum. In this case, it literally keeps a roof over our heads. This spring you'll see a lot of action on our roof while Schwickert's completes a timely, albeit costly, roof coating project. This work is necessary due to the age and wear we see from Minnesota weather. We're looking forward to the project completion because it means a more weather-tight and efficient building for many years to come.

The Future Looks Brighter

Things seem a lot more "normal" around the museum these days. Visitors are returning after this recent wave of COVID exits, we've stopped requiring masks, though we do still highly recommend them, and we're cautiously optimistic about offering inside events soon.

If you'd like to be a part of our brighter future, we can always use volunteers to help with all sorts of projects. If you have some spare time, please let us know by contacting us at 507-934-2160 or info@nchsmn.org.

COVID-19 Update: Masks Encouraged

Beginning Saturday, March 5, 2022, masks will be encouraged but not required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status. This change is because the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lowered the COVID-19 Community Level to a "Low" level from the "High" level of transmission that we have experienced for several months.

COVID-19 Update continued on page 5

SITES REPORTS: Treaty Site History Center continued…

COVID-19 Update continued from page 4

Masking will continue to be highly recommended but not required for NCHS staff, volunteers, and interns. Masks will continue to be available for our team and visitors. NCHS staff require masks in areas where adequate physical distancing is not possible, such as in confined spaces or in areas with limited air circulation. Please note the Research Center still requires masks and an appointment.

Keeping us all safe.

- Masks are encouraged but not required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status.
- Our staff reserve the right to request masking in areas where social distancing is unavailable, in confined spaces, or in areas with limited air circulation.
- We strongly encourage keeping your distance from others.
- We're still performing enhanced cleaning of high-touch surfaces and providing hand-sanitizing stations for visitors.
- If you feel sick, have flu-like symptoms, or have been in contact with someone who has recently had COVID-19, please visit us another time.

Thank you for your continued patience and support during this unusual time in history.

SITES REPORTS: Cox House Corner…

by Kate Roberts
Cox House Manager

The Cox Family

The Cox Family…for the past year, I have delved into so much research of the family that sometimes my head is boggled. There is so much mixed information on dates and marriages, where they lived and when, of the family members to confuse one of what really is fact or fiction. The bottom line is the Cox family is incredibly interesting.

Now to the future! I am fervently hoping that this summer will bring an end to this tiring episode known as COVID. Some restoration work was started on the Cox House in the fall with foundation repairs to the front porch and the start of storm window restoration. More work on these issues will be done as the weather improves. Recently we have installed a new thermostat in the house as well as an updated alarm system. Painting of the house is also on the list of things to accomplish. Also with Spring, work on the replacement of the privacy fence will begin, as will the planting of prairie grasses that were common to the area at the time the Cox house was built. Other beds of plants will also be refreshed or new.

All of that said, programming at this time will greatly depend on the status of COVID and how we can safely present programs. At this time outdoor family-friendly come and go events will be the focus of early-season planning. I hope that you will consider joining us for some fun times this summer as we make progress on the much-needed restoration updates on the house. We will keep you updated on events as the time draws closer.

Thank you all for your continued support and generosity!

The crew from Down to Earth Landscaping moves the fence posts into their new location in the backyard at the Cox House.

HISTORY CENTER EVENTS:

Films Series at Home Continues!

You can view our monthly film series documentaries from the comfort of your own home. Links to stream are provided on our website at nchsmn.org/events. These documentaries inform, challenge ideas, and create conversation. After watching each film, we encourage you to participate in an online discussion in the Documentary Film Series Discussion Facebook group.

Documentary Film Series

The Man who Tried to Feed the World: A Tale of Good Deeds and Unintended Consequences | March | **53 minutes**

In 1966, drought and an exploding population confronted India with the imminent threat of a severe famine that many scientists and intellectuals feared was a harbinger of global catastrophes to come, as the world's population outstripped its ability to produce food. India turned to Norman Borlaug, an unassuming plant breeder from Iowa whose combination of scientific knowledge and raw determination had made him a legend among a small handful of fellow specialists.

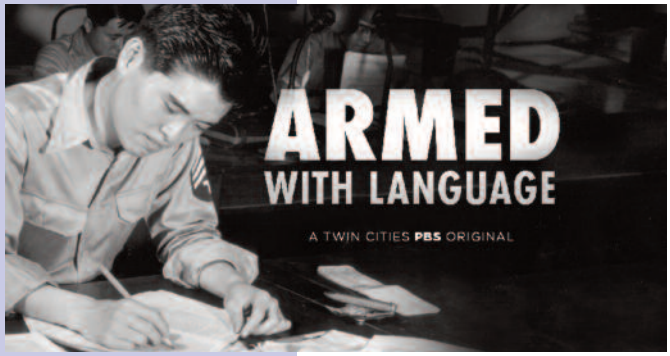
The Man Who Tried to Feed the World recounts the story of the man who would not only solve India's famine problem, but would go on to lead a "Green Revolution" of worldwide agriculture programs, saving countless lives. He was awarded the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work but spent the rest of his life watching his methods and achievements come under increasing fire.

Mr. Tornado: One Man's Pursuit to Understand the Deadliest Storms | April 7 | **52 minutes**

The Super Outbreak of 1974 was the most intense tornado outbreak on record, tearing a vicious path of destruction across thirteen states, generating 148 tornadoes from Alabama to Ontario, damaging thousands of homes, and killing more than 300 people. Meteorologist Tetsuya Theodore "Ted" Fujita spent ten months studying the outbreak's aftermath in the most extensive aerial tornado study ever conducted, and through detailed mapping and leaps of scientific imagination, made a series of meteorological breakthroughs.

His discovery of "microbursts," sudden high wind patterns that could cause airplanes to drop from the sky without warning, transformed aviation safety and saved untold numbers of lives. *Mr. Tornado* is the remarkable story of the man whose groundbreaking work in research and applied science saved thousands of lives and helped Americans prepare for and respond to dangerous weather phenomena.

Armed with Language | May 5 | **58 minutes**



Minnesota was home to a little-known military intelligence school during WWII that trained Japanese Americans to be translators. Primarily recruited from concentration camps on the West Coast, these men and women served while many of their families remained imprisoned. For their efforts it is said that they "shortened the Pacific War by two years and saved possibly a million American lives."

HISTORY CENTER EVENTS continued:

Native Plant Workshops with Genevieve Brand of Seed to Site

Getting Your Feet Wet with Rain Gardens

April 14 @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Do I need a rain garden? How do they even work? Get your feet wet in this class designed to start you on the path to a native garden that reduces water pollution and supports pollinators! Genevieve Brand from Seed to Site will share her knowledge of rain garden design, installation, and resources that can help you along the way. This is a virtual event with the potential for a field day on a later date.

Native Plant Identification & Weeding

Summer 2022, date & time TBD

Invasive Plants & Alternatives

Fall 2022, date & time TBD

Pollinator Plant Sale

Saturday, June 11 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Treaty Site History Center

Are you a gardener? Native plant enthusiast? Are you interested in attracting butterflies and other pollinators to your yard? Then mark your calendar for the online Pollinator Plant Sale on Saturday, June 11 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Treaty Site History Center.

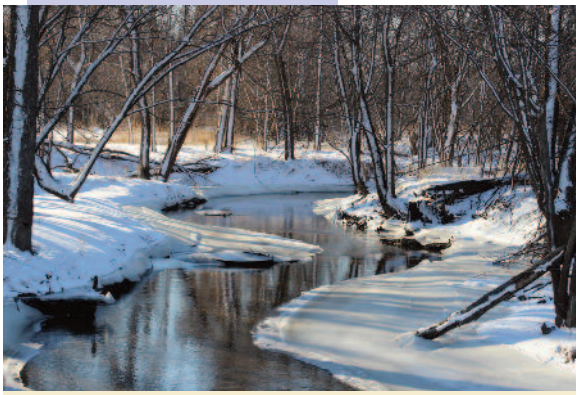
Garden enthusiasts can choose from an array of beautiful native pollinator plants perfect for different garden sizes and types, from shorelines to rock gardens. Many of these are excellent plants for attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, and other wildlife to a backyard. Seed to Site, LLC is propagating the plants.

All proceeds from the Pollinator Plant Sale will support the upkeep of the native plant gardens and landscaping of the Treaty Site History Center.

Volunteers are needed Friday and Saturday. Contact Jessica at 507-934-2160 or director@nchsmn.org for more information.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS at the HISTORY CENTER…

Seasons of Southern Minnesota | April 2–July 2, 2022



Terri Michels', "Kasota Creek"

Seasons of Southern Minnesota is a collection of photos taken by Warren and Terri Michels. As Warren says it's not so much about, is this shot Terri's or mine…it's more like they are ours!

Warren and Terri both have an eye for photography but differ in their approach. Warren often sees the bigger picture while Terri is more often the macro shooter. They even share their cell phones and cameras to try and get the perfect image to share with their viewers.

Photographers Warren and Terri can be found traveling, hiking, and biking with cameras in hand ready to catch that, at the right place, at the right time, with their cameras on, photo.

Seasons of Southern Minnesota Reception
April 2 from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Enjoy free admission and light refreshments during the reception and meet the photographers, Warren and Terri Michels

Brewers and Bottlers:
A Refreshing History of Beer and Soda Making in Nicollet County | April 16, 2022–March 25, 2023

Above: The Engesser Brewery, which was located on the west side of Front Street, between Pine and Jackson. This c1905–1907 image, made from a glass plate negative was used to produce postcards.

Below: Circa 1889, employees of the Matthew Engesser brewery in St. Peter, are shown with a brewery sign, a child, and a dog.

from the collections of the Nicollet County Historical Society via Minnesota Reflections

Beer and soda have long held an important place in American history, even here in Nicollet County. The brewmasters and soda makers of the area served the role of providing refreshment to the hard-working people who were building the landscape we have here today. From the small pioneer breweries established on the territorial prairie to large modern bottling facilities, the Nicollet County Historical Society explores our rich history of locally produced beverages.

Brewers and Bottlers showcases material from the collections of the Nicollet County Historical Society and other donors related to the history and heritage of brewing and bottling in Nicollet County.

Brewers and Bottlers Open House

Saturday, April 16, 2022 | 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Please help us open Brewers and Bottlers: A Refreshing History of Beer and Soda Making in Nicollet County at the Nicollet County Historical Society on April 16 with free admission and light refreshments.

For more information, visit our website at nchsmn.org/events.

Brewers and Bottlers

Our latest exhibit, Brewers and Bottlers: A Refreshing History of Beer and Soda Making in Nicollet County, opens on April 16 and we need your help.

No exhibit is complete without visuals. We're hoping you might loan or donate items you own from breweries and soda makers throughout the Minnesota River Valley.

NCHS is looking for

- **Photographs**
- **Signs**
- **Bottles and cases**
- **and more to display in the exhibit.**
- **Collectibles such as glassware, coasters, writing utensils, etc.**
- **Company documents such as letterhead**

Contact Jessica at 507-934-2160 or exhibits@nchsmn.org for more details.

From the Archives…

by Ruth Einstein
Research Coordinator

Volunteers and staff of the NCHS Research Center have been hustling and bustling since the beginning of the new year. Our Collections Committee members, Nita Aasen, Jessica Becker, Eileen Holz, Brian Oviatt, Marlin Peterson, Bob Sandeen, and yours truly have accepted several significant collections that will provide great benefit to our researchers.

The Archives has acquired photographs of Purity Dairy and Marigold Dairies of North Mankato, donated by Andrew Nesvik, whose father, Palmer Nesvik, was the office manager at Marigold for many years.

The photographs include a horse-drawn Purity Dairy wagon and early trucks, and an interior view of dairy machinery. Merrill Claridge, who had begun his dairy career with Schaefer Lake Dairy in 1924, partnered with Earl and Marie Smith of Sanitary Dairy to found Purity Dairy. Claridge left Purity Dairy in 1936 to establish Marigold. From the 1940s to the mid-1960s, Marigold was one of the largest employers in North Mankato and was one of the top-rated independent dairy companies in the nation.

Photographs from the Marigold years include images of dairy workers operating sparkling machinery, Merrill Claridge, groups of employees, and the crew of delivery truck drivers. If you or someone you know was employed at Marigold, assistance is needed to identify individuals pictured.

As the collections of the NCHS grow, the need for archivally appropriate storage that will help preserve materials in perpetuity grows as well. The Research Center is profoundly grateful to an anonymous donor, who has provided the funds to purchase new storage boxes. We salute Marlin Peterson, who volunteered to do the back-straining work of swapping out our archival collections from the old ratty boxes.

We invite our history loving supporters to make a contribution to the Research Center, which will further allow us to procure storage boxes for artifacts and textiles, a book scanner, photo sleeves, and thereby help us keep our precious documents and artifacts safe for generations to come.

If you or someone you know was employed at Marigold, assistance is needed to identify individuals pictured. Please contact: Ruth at the Research Library research@nchsmn.org

Artifact & Archival Donations

since December *Crossing*:

John Berbrich: Digital images, including members of the Guemmer and Berberich families, and of locations around Courtland.

David Goodell: Three uniforms worn by the donor during his military service, 1966–1995.

Patricia Kuehl: Postcard showing Cliff Mollert and his Band, St. Peter, Minn.

L. Andrew Nesvik: Photographs of the Purity and Marigold Dairies in North Mankato; 1951 flood photos.

Steven Poncin: Biographies by Steven Poncin of Christian Henry Brinkman, Cordelia Brinkman Poncin, Ralph Allan Poncin, and Mary Rosbach.

Diane Hein Schoettlin: Scrapbook of Raymond Hein; five issues of St. Peter High School *Hi-Lites* newspaper, 1935–1938; St. Peter High School Class of 1937 and reunion materials, clippings and materials relating to other classes.

Ron Thompson: Collection relating to the military service during the Second World War of Loyd Thompson, including his Seabees uniform, two reproductions of war-time photos of Thompson, reproductions of his discharge certificate and service record, flag.

Edwin Wetherill: Three early Harkin Store ledgers; documents created or collected by Fred Wetherill concerning the Harkin Store in West Ridgely from the period during which he acted as a liaison between the Massapoust family and the Minnesota Legislature in discussions regarding the sale of the store to the State; documents and two photos regarding the quilting group in which Beverly Wetherill participated.

GAR Charter

Above: Charter before.

Below: Charter after conservation treatment in the mylar sleeve, a rigid folder and sink mat .

The Nicollet County Historical Society acquired the charter for St. Peter's chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1963. The G. A. R. was an organization similar to the American Legion, but organized by Civil War veterans of the Union Army. The St. Peter chapter, Asgrim K. Skaro Post 37, received its charter in 1883.

Recently, Amanda Malkin of PaperLoves Conservation, LLC, in St. Peter greatly improved the chances that this impressive charter will be preserved for many years to come. The document was placed in an archival mylar L-sleeve, which was then secured into a rigid folder with sink mat. Amanda's work rehousing the charter is truly spectacular! Those of us who have seen what she has done have nothing but the highest praise for her efforts.

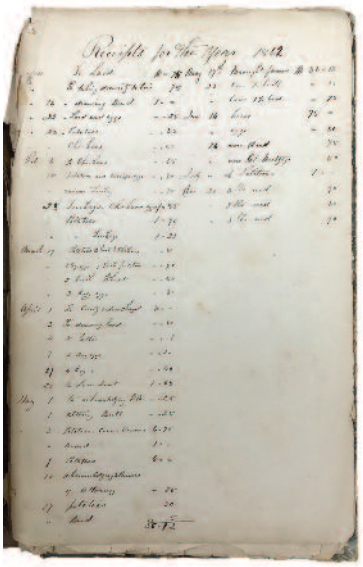
In addition to the charter, the Society has an impressive collection of items from Post 37, including its large, colorful banner; various inscribed ribbons that were worn by the veterans; photographs; and many ledgers and documents, including membership rosters.

Much can be also be learned about St. Peter's G. A. R. post from the Society's large collection of microfilmed newspapers that cover all of the years of the local post's existence. The Society's extensive collection of genealogical material provides considerable information about the lives of the post's members.

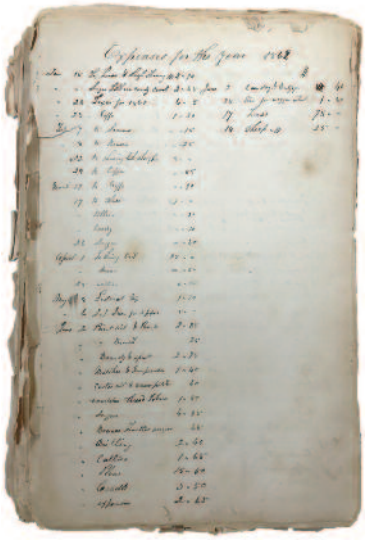
The Research Center acknowledges with gratitude the underwriting of this conservation project by an anonymous donor.

Harkin Store Ledgers

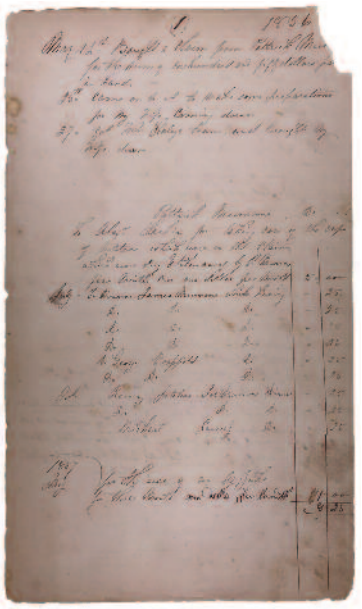
Longtime NCHS member and historian Ed Wetherill recently donated three of the earliest ledgers of the Harkin Store, once a social center of West Newton village. Ed's father, Fred Wetherill, received the ledgers from direct descendants of the store's owner, Alexander Harkin, in appreciation for his assistance in mediating the transfer of the ownership of the store to the Minnesota Historical Society. The Harkin Store, which was operated as a living history site by MNHS, is temporarily closed.



The oldest ledger dates back to May 22, 1856, well before the opening of the Harkin store that we see today, which opened circa 1870. Harkin clearly operated an earlier store or trading post, though the exact date that store was established or exactly where it was located is unknown. Entries in the earliest ledger concern land purchases, marriages performed by Harkin, and purchases and sales of a considerable variety of items.



Of special interest are the entries for the summer of 1862, when recording of both receipts and expenditures abruptly stopped due to the start of the Dakota War in August of that year. The Harkin family fled, as did many of their neighbors living in the western part of Nicollet County. Alexander Harkin resumed business at the store near the end of 1862. It is astounding to see material proof of the exodus of the Harkin family during that period in these ledgers. Archival materials, such as these ledgers, can illuminate the lives of those who have gone before us in a way that appeals to the intellect, but also evinces an emotional response. Turning the pages of these ledgers gives us insights into the daily activities of an important merchant in what was once the Village of West Newton in a way that no secondary source can.



2022 Calendar of Events: *All events are subject to public health recommendation*

Event/Program information:

TSHC: Treaty Site History Center events are free for NCHS members unless stated otherwise.

continuing to March 26	***Educational Excellence: Saint Peter School District 508*** **an exhibit celebrating the history of Saint Peter schools**	**Treaty Site History Center**
to March 26	***Fort Ridgely***	**Treaty Site History Center**
to March 26	***Welcome New Neighbor: refugee resettlement in Southwest Minnesota, 1948–1952***	**Treaty Site History Center**
March:	**Film Series at Home: *The Man Who Tried to Feed the World: a tale of good deeds and unintended consequences***, Free	**Watch from Your Home**
Mar. 15:	**NCHS Annual Meeting BALLOT POSTMARK DEADLINE**	
Mar. 21:	**NCHS Annual Meeting REGISTRATION DEADLINE** **Online at nchsmn.org/events or call 507-934-2160**	
Mar. 27:	**NCHS Annual Meeting**	**Via ZOOM**
Apr. 2:	**Opening of: Seasons of Southern Minnesota** **A collection of photos taken by Warren and Terri Michels.** Through 7-2-2022 **Reception: Arpil 2, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**	**Treaty Site History Center**
Apr. 7:	**Film Series at Home: *Mr. Tornado: One Man's Pursuit to Understand the Deadliest Storms***, Free	**Watch from Your Home**
Apr. 14:	**Native Plant Workshops with Genevieve Brand of Seed to Site** **Getting your Feet Wet with Rain Gardens**	**Via ZOOM**
Apr. 16:	**Brewers and Bottlers:** **A Refreshing History of Beer and Soda Making in Nicollet County.** Through 3/25/2023	**Treaty Site History Center**
Apr. 16:	**Brewers and Bottlers Open House.** 10 a.m. through 4 p.m.	**Treaty Site History Center**
May 5:	**Film Series at Home: *Armed with Language***, Free	**Watch from Your Home**
Summer 2022:	**Native Plat Workshops with Geneviefe Brand of Seed to Site** **Native Plant Identification & Weeding**	**date and time TBD**
June 11:	**Pollinator Plant Sale**, 9:00 a .m.–12:00 p.m.	**Treaty Site History Center**
Fall 2022:	**Native Plant Workshops with Genevieve Brand of Seed to Site** **Invasive Plants & Alternatives**	**date and time TBD**

Please watch the NCHS website, Facebook & Twitter and MNHS website for further events and details for additional programming.

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

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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 _____

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Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2022 at the following level (please check one).

☐	**Senior (65+)**	**$ 30**
☐	**Individual**	**$ 40**
☐	**Family**	**$ 50**
☐	**Sustaining**	**$ 75**
☐	**Patron**	**$ 100**
☐	**Supporter**	**$ 200**
☐	**Benefactor**	**$ 500**
☐	**Life Member**	**$ 1,000**
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Please make checks payable to:
Nicollet County Historical Society

Membership applications should be mailed to:
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1851 North Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082

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