

Waseca County Historical Society

History Notes

Volume 36 Issue 1 / March 2014



www.historical.waseca.mn.us / LOOK FORWARD TO OUR PAST



ON THE COVER: *The church with the two steeples located on the Steele-Waseca County line, represents the first Methodist missions in the county and in Blooming Grove Township. It was started by early German settlers including the Johann Saufferer family who donated the land on which it sits. Why does it have two steeples? Read the story on pages 4-5.*

INSIDE: The Spring Luncheon Line Up | New Endowment | The loss of Rod Searle | August 23 Fundraiser-All About Herter's of Waseca | Timeline Exhibit Plan Progress

History Notes is a publication of the Waseca County Historical Society ©2014
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WCHS HOURS: Tuesdays-Fridays, 9-5
 Closed Mondays



The Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

From the Co-Executive Directors . . .

The year is starting out with both sad news and exciting news. Our long-time friend, volunteer, board member and supporter, Rod Searle, died on January 5. How we miss him. His last board meeting was in October. Rod left a generous bequest to WCHS. We remember Rod as a consummate member/supporter because he loved history and helped in every way possible. (See Searle Remembrance on page 3.)

Then on the tails of our Annual Fund Drive we received another generous donation from Marvin and Ardis Sutter of Blooming Grove township. They sold the farm and with their donation asked that we be sure to maintain Blooming Grove Township history along with the family history of the Sutter, Schuette and Saufferer families. Their request included the history of the unusual church with the two steeples built on a portion of the Saufferer farm. See page 4-5. The Sutters' gift will create a named endowment fund benefiting WCHS. The gift also



Dr. Ron Schirmer

replacement project with additional donations that will be necessary for completion. We are extremely grateful to a family whose ancestors were early settlers of the county.

Relics are thousands of years old

Just this last week we were presented with the return of relics in our collection that have been until now unidentified. Dr. Ron Schirmer (MSU) and his grad students who presented two "Archaeology Nights" at our museum last year have spent time examining previously unidentified and uncatalogued Indian relics in our collection and have now returned them with specific and fantastic information. Just part of the collection is on display this spring. Most of the items are thousands of years old.

The Research Phase of the Timeline Exhibit Plan will commence on February 19 with consultants. All the information gathered to date must be verified and documented. The scriptwriting will continue after research is completed. Meanwhile Sheila Morris will be speak-



Karl Jones, at work on the 1890s cash register

ing to groups about the exhibit plan and looking for additional funding.



Spring Luncheon-Lectures are scheduled and tickets are \$12/ WCHS members, \$16/non-members. We require paid reservations, call 507-835-7700. The speakers are:

March 20, Jim Jensen, author of *Threads of Evidence*: With the attention to detail of a custom woven suit, Jim Jensen weaves the story of a crime in a small

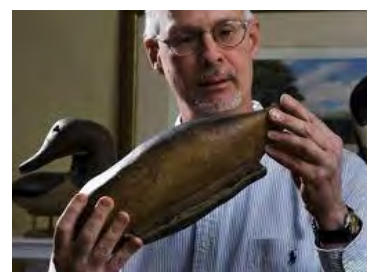
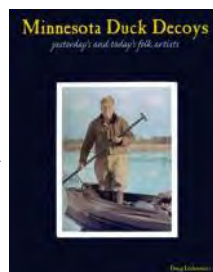
Minnesota town. *Threads of Evidence* is true, yet reads like a novel.

April 24, Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle, author of *The Ku Klux Klan in Minnesota*: Minnesota . . . was once home to fifty-one chapters of the KKK.



May 29, Doug Lodermeier, author of *Minnesota Duck Decoys*:

Attention all hunters— As a prelude to our Herter's exhibit in August, we present Doug Lodermeier, the premiere authority on the craft and collectibility of duck decoys. *The WCHS Spring Luncheon-Lectures are funded, in part, by the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council with an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund.*



... We're excited about 2014. Join us!

The Herter's exhibit and fundraiser are heating up for August 22 and 23. Please call us if you have stories about working at Herter's. The initial focus is on the store, the catalog and the employees. What was it like working at Herter's?

WCHS volunteers have been active. **Cory Boje and Scott Beckmann** stabilized our courthouse fireplace on the balcony. They got it off the floor and braced with wheels on it, so we can decide where its permanent installation will be. It was quite a feat!

Charlie's Hardware has donated and will be installing a new gas stove for the museum kitchen. **Cory Boje** came by and helped with altering the cabinets beside the new stove.

Karl Jones has been working on the **1890s cash register**. See photos. We have finally heard its "ka-ching." Karl drives all the way from Champlin, MN to donate his time and expertise.

We're grateful to **Scott Roemhildt, Jeff Huelsnitz and John Pribble** for initial preparations for the Ice Harvest. Sorry guys, we had to cancel because of the extreme cold.

Over the past few months we have been fortunate to have **Kathryn Rieck**, a Waseca High School and St. Olaf graduate, volunteering regularly. She is awaiting acceptance to grad school in Museum Studies. She has been invaluable.

Finally, the Museum Lighting Replacement Project has been completed. WCHS is grateful to the **Waseca VFW Post 1642, Waseca Area Foundation, the Roy and Jeanette Tollefson Fund of the E.F. Johnson Foundation and Alliance Pipeline Community Investment Program.**



Rod Searle, 1920-2014

by Newell Searle



Rod Searle came into the world surrounded by reminders of American history. Raised in Haddonfield, New Jersey, he lived across the river from Philadelphia and Independence Hall. His mother was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Rod's grandfather soldiered on the Wyoming frontier during construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. His father was born in Arizona Territory, in a mining camp, and the Searle family lived through Geronimo's raids in 1886.

Growing up in Haddonfield, Rod daily passed buildings like the Indian King Tavern that had been erected before the American Revolution. His awareness of history as something personal emerged in 1939-40, during a year at Rutgers Preparatory School, when Europe went to war and he wondered how soon the United States might enter it.

As my father, his first gift to me was a historical novel of the Revolutionary War called *Bedford Village*. He read it to me when I was older. We sat in the living room and he read aloud the historical novels by Kenneth Roberts, such as *Northwest Passage* and *Rabble in Arms*. A sense of history, a sense of the past, became an integral part of our father-son relationship.

He had many popular and well-written histories in our bookcase, but Rod's sense of history was physical as well as intellectual. During a Montana vacation, he stopped at the Custer Battlefield to see for himself what he'd only read about. One summer, he and I camped and canoed along 160 miles of Montana's upper Missouri River; we saw the country as Lewis and Clark saw it; we found the site of Indian camps, and explored homesteads in the remote badlands that had been abandoned during the drought of the 1920s and 1930s.

Rod always wondered about the mining camp where his father was born. During an Arizona vacation, he met someone who knew the camp's history; the man's grandfather was the doctor who had delivered Rod's father. Rod's grandparents and the doctor had been close friends and the doctor's descendants owned the old mining camp. Rod, a cousin, and I went to Arizona the next year and, in company with the doctor's descendants, we shared stories, toured the ghost town, and hiked across miles of desert to the silver mine – just across the border in Mexico.

During his legislative service, Rod strongly supported increased funding for the Minnesota Historical Society's expanding network of historic sites. Later, he initiated creation of an oral history program to capture the memories and insights of legislators. History wasn't an abstraction to him but always a part of the present. As Speaker of the House of Representatives, he recognized that he was the steward of traditions that had given Minnesota its well-deserved reputation for good government.

The Church with Two Steeples & the Saufferer Family



In gratitude to Marvin and Ardis Sutter for their generous gift we dedicate this issue of *History Notes* with this early Waseca County story of their ancestor, Johann Saufferer, immigrant, settler, farmer, father, legislator, and church builder.

A SETTLER AND FARMER

John Saufferer was born Johann Leonard Saufferer, in Wurttemberg, Germany, on January 20, 1821. He came to America in 1845 arriving in New York. He first settled in Lawrence County, Ohio, where he learned to farm; then moved on to Clay County, Illinois where he bought his own farm. At age 31 he returned to Germany to marry Henrietta Mueller and brought her back with him to America. By 1856 they had several children (four of 12 children they would have) and moved to Blooming Grove

Blooming Grove United Methodist Church in February 2014



Township in the Minnesota Territory. That farm was located in Sections 1 and 12, purchased from Pardon Hiscox, who had been granted this land for his service in the War of 1812. Eventually Johann Saufferer would add to his holdings with land in Sections 2 and 11. Waseca County would be organized in February of 1857.

Settler experiences like the Saufferers recount arriving in a covered wagon after a long, hard trip, including encounters with Indians, enduring blizzards, storms, illness, prairie fires and other hardships.

A CHRISTIAN

There were very few white settlers in 1856, and many were eager to share their faith when they heard that a young German Methodist missionary, Reverend F.R. Grotchenmeyer had arrived in Blooming Grove Twp, then known as the West Prairie. Farmer Heinrich Reinecke invited his German neighbors to his home to hear Reverend Grotchenmeyer. However, the next year when the Saufferer family got settled in June 1857, they opened their door to the missionary. Most of the meetings were held in their home until the log parsonage and log school were erected. Fourteen members were accepted into full membership in the Saufferer settlement German Methodist Mission. This later became Bethel Church. The five acres on which the church is located was given by Johann Saufferer.

In 1858 the charge included the Remund settlement, which later became the Immanuel Church. These church-



Blooming Grove United Methodist Church, c. 1970

Saufferer family motto:

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
—Joshua 24:15

es were the first of the Methodist mission in the area. The Bethel and Immanuel Churches were “yoked,” until 1951 when the congregations united and the separate church buildings were actually placed together creating the unique two-steeple church. It was named the Blooming Grove United Methodist Church. It's there on the Waseca and Steele County line at Steele Co. Rd. 64, and remains active yet today.

A PUBLIC SERVANT

Johann Saufferer was well educated, had studied Latin, and served in some governing capacity for most of his life including years on the district school board, and on the township boards. In 1872 he was elected to the state legislature. He was referred to as The Honorable John L. Saufferer, and became one of the wealthiest men in Blooming Grove Township.

Johann Saufferer died at his farm on November 23, 1906. His wife Henrietta died several years later on January 17, 1919. They are both buried in the little Bethel Cemetery next to the church they helped create.

THE FAMILY

Henrietta Saufferer gave birth to 12 children. They were George (1852), Henrietta (1853), Charles (1855), Maria Anna (1857), Caroline (1859), Matilda (1860), Henry (1862), Amelia (1864), Lydia (1866), John (1869), Benjamin (1874), and Louis (1876).

Generations have followed Johann Saufferer, including the Schuette and Sutter families. Marvin and Ardis Sutter were the last to live on the old Saufferer farm in Blooming Grove which was sold in 2013.



Johann Saufferer family c. 1879

There are so many Waseca County stories, but this Blooming Grove family story is one that spans the entire history of the County. Many descendants remain and the facts and stories will be maintained at your Waseca County Historical Society. —*Researched by Linda Taylor*

Johann and Henrietta Saufferer on their front porch, c. 1890



Thanks to these generous donors!

As of 09/20/13 to 12/20/13

These are quarterly new/renewed members, donations, acknowledgments. The WCHS Annual Report will list all members.

MEMBERSHIP

Lifetime Members

\$1,000 Donations to the WCHS Lifetime Endowment Fund providing ongoing interest support for Operations. (+ Deceased)

Allen, Mary
+Britton, Joe
Britton, Marjorie
Brown Printing
+Brown, Wayne "Bumps"
Brynildson, Gladys
Cooper, Gus
Corchran, Liz
Dahl, Robert M.
Fette, Leo J. and Shirley
First National Bank
Fischer, Larry and Marian
Fitzsimmons, Francis M.
Fostveit, Donna
Fox, Jim and Elaine
Fuller, Boyd
Gerding, Dr. James and Josephine
Gores, Marjorie L.
Haley, Sharon L.
+Hecht, Sigri
Homer, Margaret
Johnson, Ronald J.
Kastner, Bonnie
Kiesler, Kal and Barbara
Kopischke, Gerald and Barbara
Lewer, Henry & Phyllis
Markus, Richard
McCarthy, George B. and Jean M.
+Moriarty, Dorothy
Oelke, Neta
Peterson, Ariene
Pommerenke, Gloria/Lori
+Rethwill, W.H., Jr.
Roundbank
Rutledge, Jerry and Linda
Searle, Rod and Ruth
Sheeran, Betty and Bob
Smith, Keith and Wilda
Stauffer, Bruce and Mary Jane
Strand, Mel
Sutter, Marvin and Ardis
Swenson, Virginia
Tippy, Jim and Moira
+Wendland, Ken
Wendland, Helen
Webber, Wendy
Wick, Bruce and Lorraine
Winegar, Sharlene and George
Wynnemer, Don and Margaret

Renewing Members

Bagne, Myrwood and Helen (MN)
Bowe, Brian (MN)
Britton, Valerie (MN)
Giesen, Margie (WI)

Hansen, Nancy (MN)
Jacobson, Robin Forrest (WA)
Joyce, Ron (MN)
Kramer, Robyn (IA)
Nelson, Philip and Georgia (NC)
Peters, Jackie and Jurgen (MN)
Reinecke, Thiel (MN)
Roemhildt, Scott (MN)
Swenson, Dan (MN)
Tesch, Russ and Marie (MN)
Witt, Eugene and Fauniece (MN)

New Members

Deragisch, Debbie (CA)
Hamilton, Ann (SC)
Kastner, Anne (MN)
Koehler, Brent (MN)
Pettigrew, Quintin and Karen (MN)
Reck, Milo and Marilee (MN)
Sardo, Julie Zetterberg (WA)

New Sustainer \$100

Joyce, Ron (MN)
Nelson, Philip and Georgia (NC)

DONATIONS

2013 Annual Fund Drive.

After 12/20/13

Dunn, Jane
Chaffin, Robert and Lois
Wilkus, John and Marilyn
Sutter, Marvin and Ardis
Fuller, Boyd
State Bank of New Richland
The Ronald J. and Janet E. Johnson
Foundation

In memory of Kathleen Mary Conway

Welna, David
Welna, Jeanne

Exxon Mobil, matching the volunteer hours of Don Wynnemer

MEMORIALS

Memorials, Unrestricted

In memory of Harry Chin

by Caryn Wendt
by Tony and Alana Nguyen
by John and Marilyn Wilkus
by Audra and Tim Boyer

In memory of Emily Miller

by Waseca Monday Study Club

In memory of Rod Searle

by Julie A. Hinz
by Donna Fostveit
by Susan and Cory Boje
by Jane Coleman
by Jim and Barb King
by Rick and Sheila Morris
by Jurgen and Jackie Peters
by the "Merry Maidens"
by Eunice Gasner
by Beverly Draeger,
"a true gentleman and statesman"
by Marjorie Britton

by Winona State University Foundation
by Ellen Searle LeBel
by Neta Oelke
by Keith and Wilda Smith
by family and friends, \$240
by Robert and Janet Prail
by Neil and Sharon Fruechte
by Helen Forrest
by Audrey Jo Poyser
by Nancy McIntire and David LaMotte
by Peter and Donna Rae Scheffert
by Charles and Karen Humphrey
by Charles and Susan Mundale
by Wallace and Jeanne Wadd
by Stephen Wenzel
by Henry and Phyllis Lewer
by Duane and Jina Ringhofer
by Dr. Brian and Mollie Grerer
by Dr. Gyles and Carol Randall
by Corey and Brenda Elmer
by Paul and Janet Romanowski
by Jean Lundquist
by Don and Fran Zwach
by Norma Witt
by Paul and Linda Lohse
by Belva Britton-Williams
and Kim Williams

by Cary J. and Linda Ruhland-Stage
by Dr. James and Cathy Dey
by Wayne and Mary Levine
by Pat and Gail Plathe
by Robert G. Rupp
by Bruce and Mary Jane Stauffer
by Wendell and Kathryn Erickson
by Betty J. Kristo
by Janet Dixon
by Timothy and Sandy Penny
by Paul and Janet Overgaard
by Elizabeth "Betty" McIntire
by Lynne Swenson
by Christine Roberts and Richard Larson
by Jeanette L. and Richard K. Thompson
by Clarice Dinesen
by Steven and Kathleen Van Deest
by Caryn and Myron Wendt
by Jon and Vanessa Zimprich
by Eugene and Mary Scheffert
by Roger and Julianna Skluzacek
by Patrick and Pamela Hammond
by Dave and Melissa Dunn
by Steven W. Judd
by David and Kathryn Overland
by Margaret and Larry Sinn
by Audra and Tim Boyer

In memory of Alan Breck

by Donna Fostveit
by Neta Oelke

In memory of Mary J. Klug

by Donna Fostveit

In memory of Jerry Bartelt

by Donna Fostveit

In memory of Pam Miller

by Mary Allen

In memory of Pat Wright Hanson
by Kathy Rosenthal

In memory of Carol Beetsch

by Margaret Sinn
by Sherry Jones

Memorials, Restricted

In memory of Harry Chin

by Carol Wobschall, to the WCHS Endowment Fund

VOLUNTEERS

See Directors' Letter

GRANTS RECEIVED

\$9,866 for Research Phase of Timeline Exhibit Plan From Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund/Legacy Fund

Events

February 15—Boy Scouts

Troop 85 meets at museum

March 12—WCHS Board

Meeting, 6 p.m.

March 20—Spring Luncheon:

Jim Jensen, *Threads of Evidence*

April 9—WCHS Board Meeting,

6 p.m.

April 24—Spring Luncheon:

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle, *The KKK in Minnesota*

May 14—WCHS Board Meeting,

6 p.m.

May 23—Spring Luncheon:

Doug Lodermeier, *Minnesota Duck Decoys*

Questions?

Call 507-835-7700 or email:
director@historical.waseca.mn.us

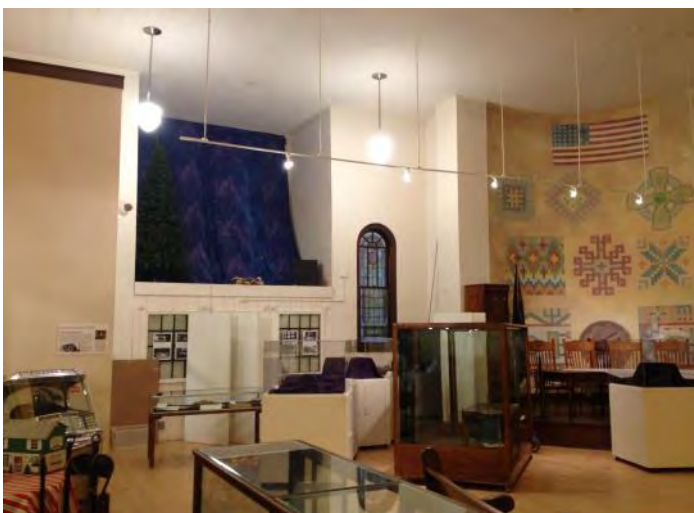
The WCHS Spring Luncheon-Lectures are funded, in part, by the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council with an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund.

Building Projects Pending

Stained Glass Windows Project: While assessing and repairing the bell tower last fall, and proceeding with painting the second story windows, the condition of the storm windows on the museum’s east side protecting the original stained glass windows was found to be in extreme disrepair. There is just enough funds in our capital fund to restore them as soon as this “darn winter” is done. They are beautiful!



And, then there is the **Roof Replacement Project.** Again, just as soon as the snow and ice are gone, we will obtain estimates to upgrade the museum roof. We are grateful to the Sutter family for a very generous donation toward this needed work, but more will be needed. We look to more donations and the **Herter Fundraiser on August 23** to fund it. We will keep you informed as there is progress. Below, shows our new lighting—track and two vintage pendants in the main floor exhibit space.



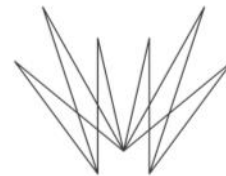
And as Speaker, he insisted observing those traditions, including a requirement that members must wear a coat and tie in the Chamber.

In later years, he attended Elderhostel to learn about a variety of topics, including a history of Broadway musicals and swing music of the 1940s. He set out to visit all the Presidential Libraries, and did so except for one. The last book he gave me, a month before he died, was *George Washington’s Secret Six*, about his New York City spies. In the course of 70 years together, we came full circle with books about the American Revolution. —END

The Board of Directors would like to announce that Rod Searle left a generous bequest to the Waseca County Historical Society Endowment Fund. There will be a discussion at the March WCHS Board meeting about how to honor Rod Searle and his lifelong interest in the historical narrative.



Rod Searle, 1920-2014
 He lived his life Intentionally. He found humor to relax people. He looked for what was right, and then he worked to get it done. He was unflappable.



Grant Recipient
 MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
 & CULTURAL GRANTS

Made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

HISTORY PARTNERS | Pledges of \$1,000 per year for three years

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Jerry and Linda Rutledge



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Membership Renewal Date

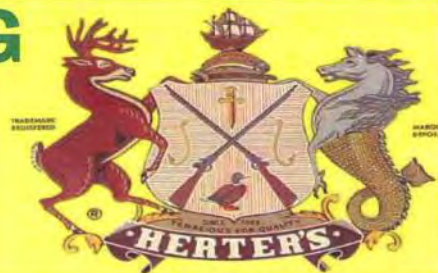


HERTER'S

AUGUST 22 & 23, 2014

At the Museum & County
Fairgrounds, Waseca, MN

HERTER'S EXHIBIT OPENING SWAP MEET/BEER-FEST & WASECA ROCK 'N ROLL REVIEW



Call 507-835-7700 for tickets

To benefit the **Waseca County Historical Society**
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