

Fall Open House is Oct. 17 at museum

Mark your calendars to visit the Dodge County Historical Society museum in Mantorville from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 17 for an open house.

See the exterior renovation of the Red House. The Ashland School, which got a new roof this year, will be open too.

As we continue to work on our textile collection, we wanted to exhibit some of the beautiful Victorian wear before it will be put away in archival-grade boxes for storage. The main floor of the museum has six complete jackets

with skirts as well as four jackets on exhibit. We have a glass case with accessories and there will be one jacket laid out and available for visitors to get a closer look at the garment construction. If you are interested in textiles or garment construction, this is a must-see.

You will also learn about the efforts we are taking to photograph and catalogue each item before it is carefully packed away. All the information will be entered or updated in the new database.

Also in the lower level, you will find a World War I exhibit featuring our gun collection and the Civil War era horse-drawn hearse.

On your way downstairs, be sure to notice that our dugout canoe is back home after a one-year exhibition at Legacy of the Lakes Museum. This is one of only seven dugout canoes in the state.

We will be serving light refreshments during the open house. Be sure to stop by.

- Jean Bartel

Volunteers train to use new archives database

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DCHS received a grant to update its archives database. The grant paid for the migration of all the accession data into the new database.

The teaching workshops were cancelled due to COVID-19. It was our good fortune to have a one-time four-hour session in July to teach us how to use this new database. The teacher was Ann Grandy from Polk County. Lois Hancock, Nan Babcock, Warren Schwenke, Barb Maplethorpe and Jean Bartel brought their laptops and were eager to learn.

You can search and view some of our collection by searching on MNCollections.org, then scroll



Pictured, clockwise from right, Warren Schwenke, Jean Bartel, Lois Hancock, Nan Babcock and Ann Grandy from Polk County.

down to the DCHS tile. You can search by subject, or by donor's name.

Once we have more time to enter data and upload more pictures of the items in our collection, this will be a very interesting site. You can also look at objects in other Minnesota historical society collections on this website.

- Jean Bartel

Board Members

Jean Bartel, President

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Tom Gall, Treasurer

Dave Aakre

Nan Babcock

David Chicos

Janet Kubat Willette

Mark Packard

Contact Information

Dodge County Historical Society

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Mantorville, MN 55955

Phone: 507.635.5508

Email: dodgecountyhistorical.society@gmail.com

Hours

Open 1-4 p.m. weekends through Oct. 30. Contact Dave Hanson at 507.374.6594 for more information.

Website

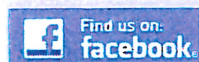
www.dodgecountyhistorical.org

Moving?

Please contact the society if your address or email has changed.

Ordering online?

When ordering through Amazon Smiles, be sure to designate the historical society for your donations.



The mission of the Dodge County Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Dodge County and its relation to the history of the state of Minnesota.

Agricultural exhibits displayed at county fair, one now in Hayfield

New exhibits were displayed at the Dodge County Fair this year. Both exhibits had to do with Dodge County agriculture. One exhibit was "The Plow that Broke the Prairie" and the second exhibit was "The Dredge that Drained the Prairie." Both exhibits were well received by fair-goers.

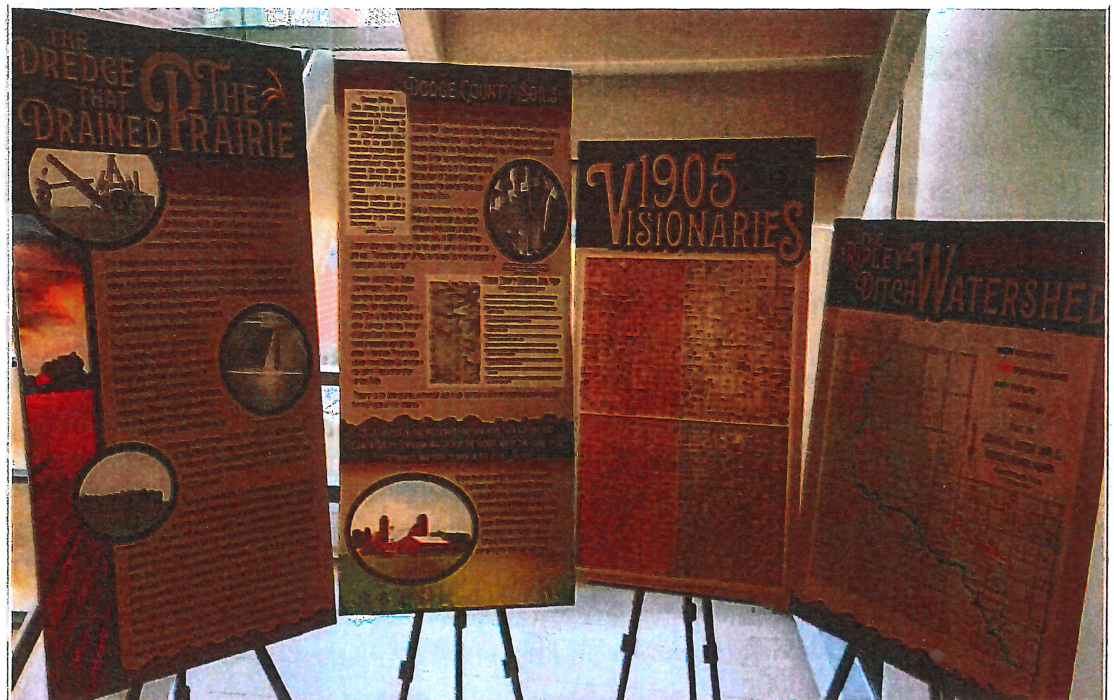
The Dodge County Historical Society (DCHS) provided a place for the public to write comments on the exhibits. DCHS wants to include all of Dodge County in its historical research and stories. This was one of the first attempts to do that.

Additionally, the society wants to rotate exhibits to other sites in the county. The Government Center in Mantorville is one place the society posts exhibits. We have another exhibit on display at the bank in Hayfield. The bank is located in a beautiful building, fashioned after an old train depot. The Dredge that Drained the Prairie exhibit is now in this bank. If you missed it at the

fair, you can go by the bank and see it. The plow in the exhibit was accessioned to DCHS's collection in the 1990s. Linda Jerviss researched the plow, which was brought to Claremont by the Vorce family in the late 1800s. It was designed to plow through the strong root system of the prairie. It is an interesting story that includes some of the history of how this area was settled.

The Dredge Exhibit is about how the Ripley Ditch in Dodge County came into being. Dodge County, particularly southern Dodge County, has some of the most productive land in the state. It wasn't always that way; sloughs and very wet soil were problems and they were the norm. The ditch was dug around 1910-1911. The ditch includes 16 miles of the main ditch as well as 16 miles of secondary branches.

- Lois Hancock



Wasioja Garden Party was a success

The desire to socialize, enjoy the outdoors and open our historic Wasioja buildings led to the Wasioja Garden Party on July 30 and Aug. 1.

With help from a capable contingent of energetic volunteers, three historic Wasioja buildings were open for visitors: the Recruiting Station, the school and the church. The buildings were staffed by volunteers who greeted and chatted with the visitors. Refreshments were offered at the Wasioja Creamery, which is owned by Historical Society Board president Jean Bartel.

There was also a small gift shop with books and other merchandise related to Dodge County history.

It was Jean's idea to host the Garden Party. Jean and her late husband, Ted, held many garden parties over the years as a way to share the extensive gardens they developed on their property. Jean is the creator of many hook rugs and quilts, which were on display throughout the garden, and they tied in with the historic



quilts from the Historical Society's collection that were displayed in the three buildings.

A printed program told the stories of the quilts, with some of the stories going back as far as the Civil War era.

The fundraising event attracted a good crowd, with 262 participants signing the guest book,

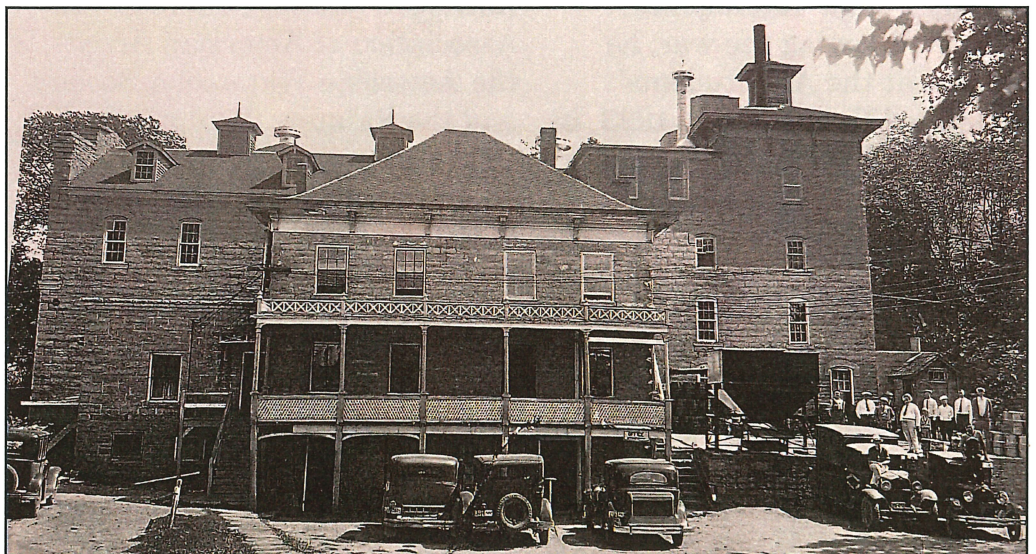
and an uncounted number who didn't. Many of the visitors voiced appreciation at being able to tour the buildings as well as the gardens. Thank you to all who attended, and many thanks for your generous donations.

- Nan Babcock

Guess what?

Two readers correctly identified the Guess What image in the last newsletter. It was Trinity Lutheran Church in Hayfield. The church was pictured on June 13, 1925, after a tornado struck the town.

It's your turn to identify the building pictured at right. Email your answers to dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com. Put Guess What in the subject line.



Realist artist got his start in Mantorville

The Arnold Blanch house and barn are listed in Mantorville's historic walking tour guidebook, but what do you know about the house's namesake?

Arnold Blanch was born June 4, 1896, in Mantorville, the son of Lewis Manning Blanch and Bertha L. Alder Blanch. His grandparents, Henry and Louisa Blanch, are buried in Mantorville's Evergreen Cemetery. There's a Blanch Street and Blanch Court in Mantorville, but it's unknown if they are named for the artist or his family.

I couldn't find anything about Blanch's childhood in Mantorville, but according to Find a Grave, he had two siblings. It's unknown how long he lived in Mantorville, as both his parents are buried in Bloomington.

An extensive online search traces Blanch's history to 1914 when he started his studies at the Minneapolis School of Art. He studied there until 1916. During World War I, he drew maps for the American Expeditionary Forces' intelligence Corps. Following the war, he studied at the Art Students' League of New York. In 1923, he settled in Woodstock, New York, and joined the Woodstock artists' colony.

His first one-man exhibition was held in New York in 1926. From that date forward, his paintings and original prints were featured in most major American expositions. Blanch was known as a social realist and abstract artist. He used lithogra-



The Arnold Blanch painting in the DCHS collection.

phy, silk screening and woodcut. He was also a teacher, lecturer, visiting critic and spokesman for the art colony in Woodstock.

During the 1930s, he was a muralist for the Federal Art Project and did work in post offices in Columbus, Wisconsin; Fredonia, New York, and Norwalk, Connecticut. His mural, "Harvest Scene," is in the Fredonia post office.

He was a member of the American Artists Congress, the Association of American Artists, the American Watercolor Society and the Painters, Sculptors, Gravers Society of America.

His paintings are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Sheldon Museum of Art in Nebraska, and the Woodstock Artists Association and

Did you know W.E. Felt of Dodge Center? Felt was a druggist and violin maker. We've had inquiries about him at the museum and are looking to learn more. Email dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you have information to share about Mr. Felt.

Museum in New York. The Dodge County Historical Society also has one of his landscape paintings.

Blanch died at age 72 after suffering a heart attack on a Trailways bus bound for New York City, according to Find a Grave.

- Janet Kubat Willette

Red house restored

The restoration of the settlers' cabin in Mantorville known as "The Little House on the Hill," has been completed. Work on the building's exterior included a new cedar roof and full paint job, as well as repairs to siding and stone foundation. In addition, the project saw the rebuilding of the chimney, two doors, four shutters, porch floor and rain gutters.

Plans are underway to refresh the interior settlers' cabin exhibit and have the building ready for tours by the summer of 2022.

The work was completed by Equity Builders of Prior Lake. Funding came from a grant from the Arts & Cultur-



al Heritage Fund created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to the state constitution which was passed in 2008.

— Linda Jerviss

Celebrate Christmas in Wasioja on Dec. 12

The historical society will be celebrating Christmas in Wasioja with the creamery, the recruiting station, the school and the church open for festivities from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 12, followed by a Christmas Candlelight Service at the church at 6 p.m.

Musicians will share songs of the season at the church. At the school, there will be an opportunity to make



a Christmas decoration that might have been made in the early days in Wasioja. The recruiting station will be open, and at the creamery there will be eight Christmas trees displayed in the building.

Light refreshments will be available.

This event is a great chance to socialize and celebrate, as well as an opportunity for end-of-year charitable giving.

— Nan Babcock



Government Center exhibit

A school days exhibit is in place at the Dodge County Government Center through October.

Volunteer appreciation picnic held

We are very thankful to the many volunteers who have assisted in the projects and events of the last year. To honor them, we invited them to a picnic at the Wasioja Creamery on Sept. 26. In addition to abundant picnic food, all floors of the Creamery were open for guests to tour.

Our volunteers help with record keeping, cleaning, rearranging, cooking, baking, and acting as hosts at our exhibit at the county fair and at our historic sites when they are open.

We are looking for more people who are interested in Dodge County history to join us as volunteers and as members of the Historical Society.

- Nan Babcock



Pictured, from left, Dave Aakre, Char Edgar, Tanya Edgar, Larry Edgar and Marlene Aakre at the volunteer appreciation picnic at the Wasioja Creamery.

DODGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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