

Warren Schwenke honored at MALHM conference

Congratulations to our volunteer Warren Schwenke. He was recognized at the MALHM conference for his years of service at the museum.

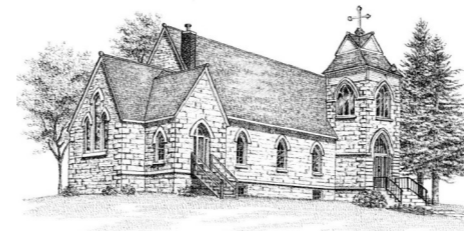
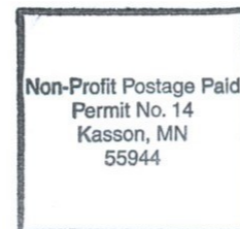
Warren does all our data entry of donations, memberships and updates the mailing list. This winter, he has given valuable input and research into a new software program that will help our society move into the 21st century to organize the data he is involved in. He also does a lot of fix-it projects for us when we need something done, from weeding in the foundation planting, painting, things that require hammers, nails, etc. He is a valuable resource when we are searching for photos or other files. He often knows where to look for something that many of us new to the museum wouldn't know existed.

Hats off to Warren! Thank you for all your time and hard work. We hope you will continue to be a part of our team of volunteers for years to come.



DCHS vice president Nan Babcock presents an award to Warren Schwenke, a long-time DCHS volunteer. Schwenke does a lot of projects at the museum, including weeding, updating the mailing list and photographing items to be accessioned.

DODGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 456
MANTORVILLE, MN 55955



DCHS

The Hilltop

News from the Dodge County Historical Society

Spring 2023

DCHS hosts annual meeting

On April 14, Dodge County Historical Society members gathered in person for our annual meeting and dinner for the first time since 2019. We met for food and conversation at the Old School Cafe in Mantorville and enjoyed a delicious dinner, followed by an inspiring presentation from Richard Krom and his daughter, Kathy Kaster. They talked about the role of the First Minnesota Company in the Civil War.

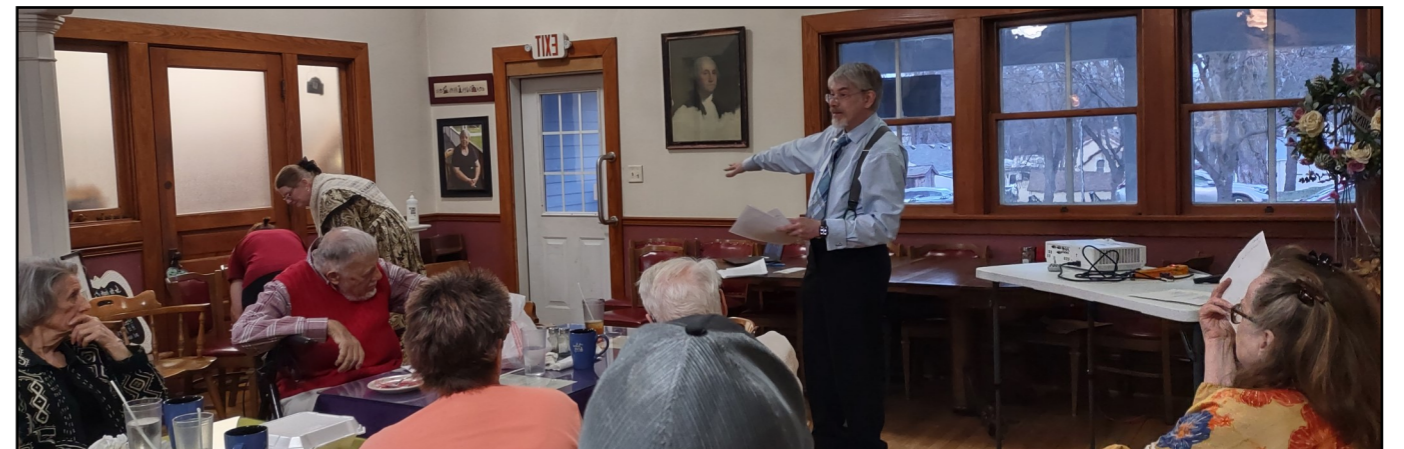
The annual meeting followed, with treasurer Tom Gall giving a financial report, secretary Lois Hancock sharing minutes of the 2022 annual meeting, and vice president Nan Babcock giving an overview of activities and accomplishments in 2022.

The results of the mail-in ballot for board of directors was announced. Two board positions were open, and Jean Bartel received 79

votes, Lois Hancock, 75, and Diane O'Brien, 19.

Following the annual meeting, the board of directors held a brief meeting to elect officers for the year. The slate of officers remains the same as 2022: president Jean Bartel, vice president Nan Babcock, secretary Lois Hancock, and treasurer Tom Gall.

Tom Gall gives the treasurer's report at the meeting.



Intern Annie Buresh to return this summer

As many of you may recall, we were able to hire an intern last summer with the support of Dodge County, and she's coming back.

Annie Buresh worked with us from late May through August. We are looking forward to working with her again as we continue to inventory our storage facilities, check items against the database, add new entries when items were never cataloged, and have her cheerful, never-faltering smile at our various fundrais-

ing events. It is our goal to work off-site on Monday and Tuesday, and at the museum the remainder of the week.

If there are cars in the parking lot, the doors are open and we will be happy to visit with you. We hope you will stop by the museum or the log cabin at the fair this summer to meet Annie and check out everything she is doing to make our museum even better!

Board Members

- Jean Bartel, President
- Nan Babcock, Vice President
- Lois Hancock, Secretary
- Tom Gall, Treasurer
- Linda Jerviss
- Lori Kryzer
- Dallas Ness

Hours

By appointment only through May. Please contact us 48 hours in advance if you want to make an appointment to come in. We will do our best to accommodate you.

Contact Information

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Moving?

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

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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.

Museum opens May 20

On May 20, we will open the museum for the season. We are doing so in conjunction with the Mantorville Spring Fling. Our hours at the museum will change as the season progresses. In May we will be open Saturday and Sunday, and in June we will add Friday to the mix and as summer comes, we will add Thursday. Please check our website for our hours if you are planning a trip to see us.

We kept the museum at a balmy 55 degrees this winter to lower our energy bills (a success!), and with warmer temperatures, we have spent the past six weeks tearing down exhibits, doing important inventory and finding treasures that were never cataloged. Consequently the cases are getting a thorough cleaning and new exhibits are being installed.

We worked this past year to showcase the dugout canoe that spans the length of wall above the staircase. It will be our big spring reveal. The dugout is a treasure in that we are lucky to have one of only seven available to view in Minnesota museums.

Other new exhibits will include kitchen items, sewing and a “gents” case. The Norwegian bed will be spruced up and a few items added to pay a small homage to the Norwegian immigrants in Dodge County. We hope

to enlarge this exhibit for next year. We will also showcase Peg Lynch, a comedienne from Kasson that made her way to the big time in radio and early television. Many of you will recall that we had a seasonal exhibit several years ago.

Plan to make a trip up The Hill and spend a little time with us. Remember, we will have official hours on the website, but unofficially Annie and another volunteer will be there most Wednesdays through the remainder of the week if you happen to be in town. We will be happy to visit with you! We may even put you to work on whatever project we are working on!

THE RICE LAKE DUGOUT CANOE

RICE LAKE LEGACY
 The Rice Lake dugout canoe was discovered on the east shore of Rice Lake in Dodge County. It is unknown who found it, but it was passed along to various Dodge Center residents, then donated to the Dodge County Historical Society in 1990.

This dugout canoe is one of only seven in museums in Minnesota. Soft maple, basswood or cottonwood would have been likely choices for the wood used. The Native Americans liked dugout canoes because they believed they were faster and more durable than birch bark canoes.

Radiocarbon dating was done in 2013 by archaeologists from Maritime Heritage Minnesota. The test results show the age of the canoe to be A.D. 1790 to 1850. This time span is within the era when the Dakota Sioux were active in the area. Dodge County was used for hunting and foraging as well as combat ground. The Mdwakanton Sioux often battled the Sauk and Fox tribes who ranged into Minnesota from their Iowa encampments.

The Eastern Dakota moved into southern Minnesota in the 1700s to join the Western Dakota that were already here. The movements were due to accelerating growth in the United States.

The Treaty of 1825 attempted to halt the intertribal wars. In 1849 a Minnesota Territory government treaty moved the Dakota to a narrow strip of land between Morton and Granite Falls. These treaties and the failure of the U.S. government to make promised payments resulted in the Sioux Uprising of 1862.

“Little Crow’s Village on the Mississippi” Seth Eastman 1846-1848
 Most of the canoes in this watercolor painting don’t have sharply upturned ends. Because of this, it is believed they are probably dugouts.
 (Used with permission of Minnesota Historical Society)

THIS DISPLAY IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DODGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Book provides insight into Berne

**The Berne Church –
 Rooted and Ground in Love**
 Researched and edited by
 Catherine Eayrs

By Mychal Wilmes

The first settlers who settled in Berne were drawn here by letters back home and word of mouth. Most brought with them their children, a horse or oxen, a milk cow or two, and minimal household belongings. They mingled with Native Americans, who had not yet been pushed out by governmental action, raised crops that sometimes failed, attended church, and prayed that God would provide. Historical accounts document fears of food shortages caused by storms and early killing frost.

The Berne Church *Rooted and Grounded in Love*

Zwingli United Church of Christ
 Celebrating 150 Years

A Historical Record of the Berne Area and Its People

Researched and Edited by
Catherine Eayrs

The book details how World War I threatened the German-speaking population as their loyalty was questioned. An unofficial loyalty

committee spied on those who spoke against the war or sided with Germany. A pastor who allegedly told a person in a private conversation that the U.S. should not be involved in the war was arrested, tried and convicted, and sentenced to one year in jail or a \$500 fine. The campaign against Germans petered out at the war’s end, but was replaced by Klu Klux Klan activity in Dodge County. Berne wasn’t torn apart – in fact it became stronger as businesses continued to grow. The book is replete with fami-

ly histories, tales of grand social events, and history as seen from perspectives of farmers, businesspeople, and housewives.

Remember DCHS when giving donations

As an all-volunteer non-profit society, we depend on your generosity. There are many ways to support us with charitable giving: The most obvious is by sending a donation to the museum. We also try to hold at fundraisers each year.

Our volunteers invest many hours in preparation for these events so everyone attending has a memorable experience. Please add these opportunities to your calendar as the dates are slated.

Recently we have had the good fortune to be added to the Thrivent Choice option for charitable giving.

If you are a Thrivent member, please consider us when assigning your Choice dollars.

Sometimes it is difficult to send a more sizable donation on a fixed income. We have members that have arranged for DCHS to be a smaller, more manageable monthly donation that is set up through their bank.

Although many of us do not think about charitable gifts when managing our legal affairs, adding DCHS as the recipient of a gift is another thoughtful way to support our society. We were the recipient of a very meaningful gift through a trust fund this past year.

Perhaps you would like to help us but would prefer to invest in something on our wish list. Please contact us and together we can find something that would be of great value to the society and would be a good fit for your charitable giving.

Krom, Kaster speak at annual meeting

Richard Krom, author of the book, "The First Minnesota: Second to None", was the speaker for the 2023 annual meeting.

Richard's great grandfather, Edward H. Bassett, served in the First Minnesota during the Civil War. His 218 letters home are included in the book, as well as a historical narrative provided by Krom.

The presentation he gave with his daughter, Kathy Kaster, provided insight into the daily lives these brave Minnesotans endured. Edward H. Bassett was from Morristown, Minn.

Richard lives in Rochester. He



Kathy Kaster, left, and her father, Richard Krom, talked about the role of the First Minnesota Company in the Civil War at the DCHS annual meeting.

was program chair of the Rochester Civil War Round Table. He is also president of VESM.org (Veterans' and Emergency Services Museum) in Rochester. VESM is housed in the Hilton Hotel, downtown. Their mission is to educate its visitors on the contributions that local Rochester men and women made for our country.

The exhibit is professionally done, having life-size soldiers and a Red Cross nurse, complete with their stories told. Richard is largely responsible for the development of this museum. He contributed many hours of research into the stories of local people, as well as making the museum family friendly and engaging.

DCHS volunteers attend museum conference

The statewide conference for Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums was held in Austin this year. Because the conference was within daily driving distance, three of our most active volunteers were able to attend.

Patti Krier spent time networking with folks. She felt that although we are small and rely so heavily on our volunteers, we can be proud of all that we are accomplishing.

Kim Boyum found the conference fun and interesting. She, too, did a lot of networking and found everyone eager to answer questions and share museum

struggles and victories.

Linda Jerviss says the conference is the best and most fun way to add to your working knowledge of the museum field, and networking among like-minded people is invaluable.

Lots of notes were taken to share with our board. Some of the topics at the seminars included fundraising, social media marketing, digital curation, new solutions to problems, effective inexpensive storage, and inexpensive exhibits. All found the seminars very informative, and we are looking forward to their input as we work together in the coming year.

Volunteers help preserve military uniforms

As we continue to work through our textiles in storage, we have finally reached the military uniforms, hats, boots, belts, ties, gas masks, duffels, even a footlocker. Every item has been tagged or a printed fabric ID sewn into them.

Research for military uniforms advised it is better to have them on padded hangers and cloaked in a dust cover rather than folding the heavy wool into boxes. Including our Col. James George exhibit, which holds Mexican and Civil War uniforms, we have almost 70 in total. They include representation from WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam. The accessories will



Kim Boyum and Jan Jech finish months of work on the military garment project.

be packed in appropriate archival grade or other suitable boxes.

The Dodge Center High School shop class, under the direction of Tony Bendickson along with student team leader Grady Klankowski, welded two double-rod clothing racks. We have filled them both to capacity. They will hang for the summer in an area where the fresh air can get to them before being tucked into a climate-controlled environment this fall.

Along with the shop class, we thank volunteers Jan Jech, Kim Boyum, Patti Krier, Lois Hancock and Jean Bartel for the hours of sewing, creating padded hangers and getting everything hung up.

Volunteers help accomplish many tasks at museum

We have accomplished several important things so far in 2023, with the help of our hard-working and dedicated volunteers:

- upgrading organizational software: Warren Schwenke and Steve Paynic
- preserving military garments: Jan Jech, Patti Krier, Bill Babcock and Kim Boyum;
- revamping and creating exhibits in the Museum: Kim Boyum, Warren Schwenke;
- producing the newsletter: Janet Kubat-Willette; and
- presenting Kasson-Mantorville First Graders History Day-Mary Ann Bucher, Barbara Loquai, Sandy Gochnauer, Mitch Miller, Nancy Thornton and Theresa Walter.

Our Board members put in a huge number of hours on these projects, and we appreciate those who help us to get these things done.

We will have many more opportunities to volunteer when the museum opens on May 20, as we plan activities at our buildings in Mantorville during Stagecoach Days in June, at the Log Cabin during the Dodge County Fair in July and at the Tractor Jam in Wasioja at the end of July.

We will be having a training class for volunteers who would like to host at the museum during our open hours. Training will include learning about the exhibits we have on display, our research resources, and how to assist people



searching for family information. Please contact us if you're interested in participating.

We always have research projects in progress, so if you are interested in getting involved, we welcome your help with any of the topics that interest you.

Events held to learn about Hayfield's history

DCHS board members and volunteers have met a couple of times at Uncle Mony's in Hayfield to find out what historical events, places or people we could delve into.

Both events had good participation. We have done some research and are looking for more information. Can you help us further our knowledge of the old tobacco barn that was 1 mile west of Oslo on the south side of Highway 30? We are also finding that information about Annie Nielson and her maternity home is scarce aside from the location, and that she delivered a lot of babies.

Another individual we are trying to find out more about is Nickel Pete. Many of you remember that he was the owner of The Wonder Store.

Perhaps you didn't know that his real name was Carl Peterson. We've learned a little about him and am hoping you can help us learn more.

Carl's parents went to eastern South Dakota to settle in about 1910 and as a youth he became interested in photography. His sister bought a Sears and Roebuck camera and 10-year-old Carl would ride his bicycle into the nearby reservation and take photographs of native life as well as the veterans of the Little Bighorn Battle. The photographs were processed and made into penny postcards.



A group of interested people gathered at Uncle Mony's Restaurant to talk about Hayfield area history.

Carl reportedly had shoeboxes of the photos on his store counter with tabs to easily find something when he was conversing with interested customers.

Carl and his twin brother, Emil, were in WWI together. Because of his photography experience, he was in the Signal Corp, taking photos of the trenches from the rear seat of an aircraft. His brother Emil was in a significant, bloody battle in a pocket of the Argonne Forest. They suffered considerable losses because they took both friendly and enemy fire.

Twenty years after the war, Carl closed his shop and drove around the Midwest interviewing the veterans of his brother's battalion because he wanted to be sure that the Midwestern boys got their proper recognition.

He subsequently wrote a small book of less than 100 pages called "The Lost Battalion." It is no longer available. Do you have a copy of this book? Were you fortunate enough to be given one of Carl's precious photos? We are interested in anything you may be able to add to this story.

Plan now to attend July 30 Tractor Jam



Plans are underway for our annual Wasioja event, now known as Tractor Jam, this year set for Sunday, July 30.

This is what you can expect:

- Tractor show
- Threshing machine
- Six-foot VonRuden chainsaw
- Quilt Show
- Garden Show

- Onion Creek Cloggers and Band
- Historic buildings open
- Event-related vendors
- Food available for purchase

This is our major fund-raising event of the year, as well as our chance to celebrate our local history and all things rural. Please plan to attend!

Phyllis Purvis wins DCHS prize drawing at expo

This was the first year the Historical Society had a booth at the Dodge County Expo since the pandemic. Kim Boyum and I talked to a number of people; we had interesting conversations about people and places in Dodge County. Our booth drew a lot of interest this year.

The booth featured a poster highlighting research that can be done at the museum, particularly family research, another poster asking for information on topics generated by the Hayfield roundtable talks, and a slide show of DCHS's events throughout the year was on display.

We had Wasioja T-shirts on display for sale, and offered as the prize in a drawing. The winner was Phyllis Purvis from Kasson. Mike Eckers' book, "Boys of Wasioja," was for sale and 10 to 15 were sold.

Being visible to the public, talking to people, and building contacts with people who are interested in history is what we did.



Phyllis Purvis with her new T-shirt.



The Dodge County Historical Society had a booth at the Dodge County Expo, held March 26 at Triton High School in Dodge Center. We had a great day talking to people who are interested in history.