



# Newsletter

## Share your talents with DCHS

We had a productive year in 2025 with exhibits and events. We started the year by hosting a booth at the Dodge County Expo in March with an exhibit of automotive service stations of the past.

Our annual meeting in April featured Helen Leqve of Kasson and her daughter Karen Tracy. Leqve shared stories from her days as a Rosie the Riveter during World War II.

On Memorial Day we held the service in the Wasioja Church due to construction going on at the Seminary. Steve Kramer was the speaker, and Dave Livingston read an article about how black soldiers served during and after the Civil War.

In May we went on the road to Fieldcrest Care Center in Hayfield to present a program on transportation, with special emphasis on the Peterson Standard



**Volunteer Nancy Thornton is joined by friends at the Creamery during the Christmas open house.**

gas station that was located in Hayfield. In July we welcomed visitors to the Log Cabin at the Dodge County Fair, and later welcomed the national Model T Car Club for coffee, doughnuts and live music at the Recruiting Station in Wasioja.

In September during Marigold Days we held a rummage sale of items not needed in our collections, and sold T-shirts with our newest design, Man's Beer, a beer produced

at the old brewery in Mantorville. The shirts feature a replication of the original label.



We closed out our Museum year in October with an open house thanking and honoring the many volunteers who keep our organization going.

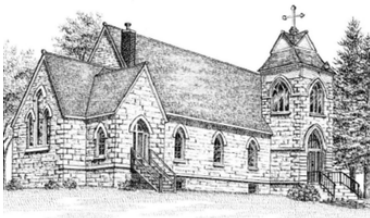
In October and November we made preparations for our Christmas events and

in December, we welcomed visitors to the Creamery for a festive open house, then welcomed visitors at the Wasioja Church for a Candlelight Christmas Service.

As we get things going in 2026, we invite you to join us.

We are preparing for Board of Directors elections, our annual meeting, a Kasson-Mantorville first grade visit, other possible school visits, the opening of our Museum, Memorial Day observation, and so on throughout the year. We publish a quarterly newsletter and respond to opportunities for sharing history.

If you are interested in learning more about Dodge County history by helping to preserve the past, give us a call at 507.635.5508. We have fun working together to promote Dodge County history.



### Board members

Jean Bartel, President  
Nan Babcock, Vice President  
Lois Hancock, Secretary  
Tom Gall, Treasurer  
Mary Sue Sandeno  
Dale Rood

### Hours

Open by appointment only through May 14. Please contact us via email 48 hours in advance if you want to make an appointment to come in. We will do our best to accommodate you.

### Contact information

Dodge County  
Historical Society  
615 North Main St.  
P.O. Box 456  
Mantorville, MN 55955  
Phone: 507.635.5508

Email:  
dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

### Website

<https://dodgecountyhistorical.mn/>

### Moving?

Please contact the historical society if your address, phone number or email has changed.

*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.*

# Member updates

## Submit a name for the newsletter, win a prize

We are in the process of re-designing our newsletter, and we're brainstorming for a new name.

We would like your imaginative ideas to add to our list of possibilities. Please email your suggestions to us at [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).

The contest winner will receive the T-shirt of their choice, either University of Wasioja or Man's Beer.

## Members: Update your contact information

If you've ditched your landline, updated your email address or moved, let us know so we can keep in touch. Email your updated information to [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

# thrivent®

## Consider monthly giving to support Dodge County Historical Society

Planned giving is a great way to contribute to DCHS on an ongoing basis.

Along with our routine operating expenses, we need funding to produce new exhibits, keep our technology up to date, and host events that promote our history.

One option for giving is making monthly donations through your local bank. Perhaps giving a larger sum once a year is difficult to do with your budget. Monthly giving offers you the chance to give a little more, that wouldn't be as noticeable if it is doled out over 12 months. Area banks we have checked with assure us that customers can set up a plan to automatically pay a set amount from a specific account to the organization they wish to support.

Thrivent Financial members have two options for charitable giving each year. They can give Thrivent Choice Dollars, or donate Thrivent Action Dollars towards a fundraiser.

For one-time giving and estate planning, people can speak to their financial advisors about setting up the arrangements for charitable giving.

The purpose of the historical society is to preserve and promote the history of Dodge County, Minnesota.

## Share your photos and stories of barns from Dodge County

Do you have a photo of an old barn and its location? We're interested in preserving the history of barns from our county. When Dodge County was settled, farmers often built their barn before turning attention to building a permanent house. The barns marked the locations of prosperous farms, and many have disappeared from the landscape.

If you have a photo of a Dodge County barn,

DCHS has this cool barn photo but no information about the barn. Do you recognize it?



whether it's gone or still in existence, please share it with us. Include the location of the barn, who owned the barn and any other information you know about the barn. You can send the photo in email, upload the information to [bit.ly/4ctYzpl](https://bit.ly/4ctYzpl) or you can bring it in so we can scan it and have it available in our digital records.

# Railroad history in Mantorville

By Dale Rood

When the Winona and St Peter Railroad built westward through Dodge County, they went around Mantorville, which at the time was the primary community in Dodge County. But this does not mean there were never any railroads into Mantorville. As a matter of fact, there were two, the Chicago and Great Western, and the Chicago and Northwestern. Today I will take a look at the Chicago and Northwestern.

The Chicago and Northwestern built a branch from Kasson north into Mantorville in about 1890, and it remained until about 1920. It ran from west of the present CHS grain elevator in Kasson, with access from the east. Much of the routing in Kasson is obliterated by subsequent housing developments on the west side of Kasson. As near as I can determine, it went to the west of the Kasson Church of Christ and crossed what is now County Route 21 to the north of that. From here north, there is still evidence of its one time presence.

One of the things I had wondered about is how the railroad was able to overcome the steep gradient into

Mantorville. I became aware of a creek flowing from the south cutting an easier slope in the direction of Mantorville. The gully that creek flowed in runs just to the west of Restoration Park which is behind Kwik Trip near Kasson-Mantorville High School. On investigation, I discovered what appears to be an old railroad bed running on the west side of that gully through the landfill, which visible from newly opened 16th Street. The track apparently ran down that slope coming out where County Route 12 meets Highway 57, crossing Highway 57 near that point. In the brush to the east of that intersection is a concrete culvert that carried the railroad over it into the east part of Mantorville. It travelled on to the north to a trestle where it crossed the Zumbro River, heading toward the old Mantorville Brewery. The remnants of that trestle still stand. The track then extended as far as the brewery and ended. We have a picture of the brewery with the track appearing in the foreground.

There was a boxcar station (with additions) on this line near the brewery, to the east of Blanch Street. I am not aware of any passenger

service to this station. What was loaded here is unclear, but it appears to be produce from nearby farms destined to markets to the east of Kasson.

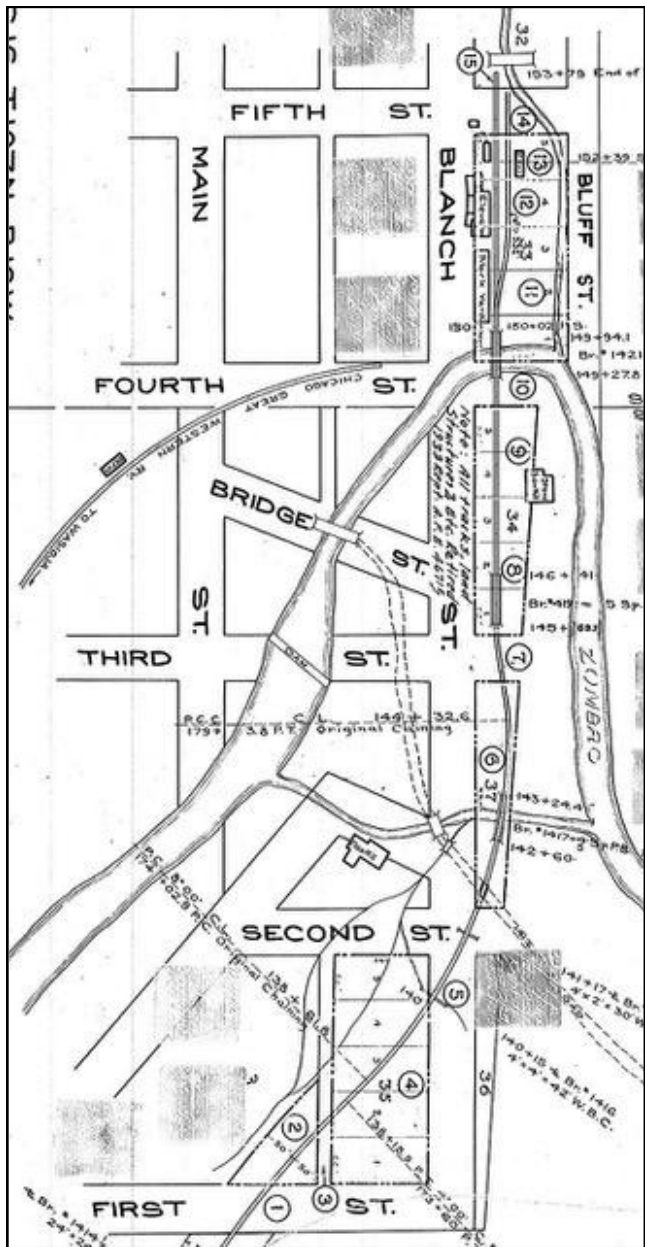
How it served the brewery is uncertain. It is doubtful that the brewery shipped much of anything out from there. Its marketing area was probably local only. Beer and similar beverages brewed at the brewery needed to be refrigerated if kept for extended periods of time, and at the time this branch was in operation refrigerator car service was not available. This is why in the Old West, the alcoholic drinks were whiskey and similar. They did not spoil upon being transported long distances. It was only later that beer could be shipped further than the local area where it was brewed.

There was no turntable or turn-around track with this branch. Locomotives servicing along this track would have had to push the cars they brought in and then back out. Similarly they would have had to back in to pick up cars they wanted to pull out.



**On left, picture of old Mantorville Brewery, noting C&NW tracks in foreground. Above, ruins of Mantorville Brewery as it appears today, area where C&NW track ran in foreground.**

# Railroads in Mantorville in photos



## Finding history

The map in the upper left is a map of Mantorville from the 1920s showing the C&NW railroad route into Mantorville. Upper right, roadbed leading down hill into Mantorville next to Restoration Park, visible from newly opened 16th Street.

At left, remnant of C&NW trestle across Zumbro River into east Mantorville. Directly above, C&NW culvert next to intersection of Highway 57 and County 12.



## Christmas in Wasioja

The Wasioja Creamery is dressed for Christmas in Wasioja. At right, John Todor presented an inspirational message at the Wasioja Church during Christmas in Wasioja.



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# Legacy grants help restore buildings

DCHS currently has two Minnesota Legacy grants in process.

Since 2008, Minnesota's Legacy grants have been available for use in a clean water fund, an outdoor heritage fund, a parks and trails fund and an arts and cultural heritage fund. Our Legacy grants come from the arts and cultural heritage fund administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Legacy grants began when voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) to the Minnesota Constitution in 2008. The Legacy grants are funded by a state sales tax of three-eighths of one percent beginning on July 1, 2009 and continuing until 2034.

These grants have enabled us to fund much needed maintenance projects on our historic buildings.

We have one large grant in process for work on the Wasioja Schoolhouse. It is all exterior work except for a repair in the second floor ceiling from a previous roof leak. All windows in the building are being removed and restored in phases during 2025-2026.

The tuckpointing to exterior masonry (only in necessary areas) along with painting trim, south entry siding, and replacement of the east door (from steel to wood to replicate the era of restoration) will be done when the weather warms. Completion will be done by summer/early fall to be in compliance with the grant office.

The second grant, considered a small grant, is for \$20,000 to pay for the construction documents created by our architect. These documents will tell us all the various elements that need to be addressed to restore the Wasioja Church along with each element will be the estimated cost to repair, replace, restore across the entire building. These documents give us direction for the third phase of the grant process: applying for a large grant to complete the work outlined in the construction documents. With fingers crossed, we hope to have work done on the exterior as our priority, as well as the interior.

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## Donate \$50 or \$100 to sponsor exhibit poster



If you would like to sponsor one of the exhibit posters currently being prepared for 2026 activities, you can donate \$50 to help pay for the production of an exhibit poster. Producing one poster currently costs around \$100. The posters are exhibited at the Museum, the Dodge County Government Center, Kasson Public Library, Prairie Meadows, the Log Cabin during the fair, and other places as opportunities arise.

If you sponsor a poster, you will be acknowledged on the poster as a sponsor and supporter of our organization.

# Board of Director candidates wanted

We have a board of directors (BOD) election coming up in March. There is an open position because of the resignation of Elaine French due to family illness. Jean Bartel will run for re-election for a third term and Lois Hancock will be leaving the board after serving three terms. If the proposed change to our bylaws is approved, we may have positions for more than seven members.

Members will need to cast

ballots for directors. Our BOD is made up of volunteers who have an interest in local history. Board members manage finances, plan events, prepare exhibits and staff the Museum along with many other volunteers.

Please consider submitting your name to join us on the BOD. Without a full board, we may not continue to operate as a society. As a member of the BOD, you should expect to attend monthly meetings, stay in

communication with other members and volunteers, and spend on average several hours per month in activities that support our organization.

We like to have BOD members who represent a variety of geographic locations. We need people with a variety of strengths and abilities, so we can work together to accomplish what is needed. Having respect and appreciation for one another is a priority for us.

We have many trusted

volunteers who we greatly value who are not on our BOD, but we hope to find individuals willing to step into this important role to keep our historical society functioning.

To apply, email us at [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or call the Museum at 507.635.5508 and leave a message. We look forward to working with a cohesive BOD on many worthwhile activities in 2026. Please join us.

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## Members asked to vote on change to DCHS bylaws

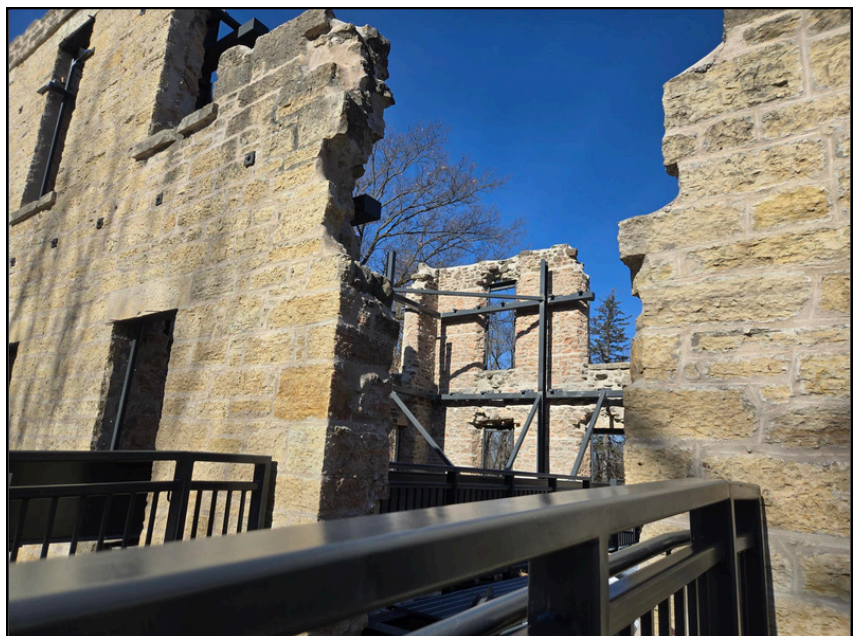
The Board of Directors is asking DCHS members to approve a change to our bylaws concerning the number of members on the board. Our current bylaws specify a seven-director board. The number was reduced from nine to seven in a 2022 bylaw change with the rationale that it is difficult to fill nine positions on the board.

The board members' evaluation is that we probably need to have a range of directors on our board. Having a range affords us a bit of leeway to stay within bylaws compliance should a board member need to resign. The remaining board members aren't left scrambling to replace that member. Conversations with members and directors of several organizations that are similar to ours also agree that having a range of directors works well for their boards. We are requesting the bylaws be changed to require a range of six to ten directors. Members will be receiving a mailing requesting a vote on this.



### Wasioja Seminary

Work is progressing on the Wasioja Seminary stabilization project. The permanent steel beam support structures are being put in place to hold up the walls, and a permanent walkway is being installed that goes through the center of the structure. Tuckpointing the limestone still needs to be done on the southwest corner. The work will be completed by summer.



# Thank you to our donors from 2025

*We are so very grateful for the support of our donors who have generously given gifts of varying amounts. Each donation is an encouragement to us as well as a boost to our budget. We give many thanks to all of you who have donated. We couldn't accomplish anything without your support.*

**More than \$1,000**

- Jean Bartel
- Justin Deno
- Susan Hansen
- Sue Naegeli
- John Olive
- Jerry Roy
- KM Telecom
- Duayne Wincell

**\$250 to \$999**

- Barb Bachman
- Walter Backman
- Roxayn Ball
- Con-Tech Manufacturing Inc.
- John Donovan
- Beth Fahning-Hanggi
- Lloyd Henslin
- Heritage Bank
- Sheila Hisdahl
- Merrie Powell
- Evelyn Schlichting
- Wasioja Township
- Daniel Welsh

**\$100 to \$249**

- Michael Adkins
- Sue Alberts
- Gerald Andrist
- John Bierbaum
- Wallace Bigelow
- Mary Ann Bucher
- Canisteo Township
- Paul Fahning
- William Gilliland
- Denise Hassenstab
- Colleen Hayne
- Daryl Houston
- Linda Jerviss
- Janet Johnson
- Paul Kiltinen
- Lynn Knutson
- Patricia Krier
- Robert Law
- Connie Luedtke
- Mark Moenning
- Dan & Tammy Neseth
- Larry Pedersen
- Ripley Township
- Robert Scherger
- Robert Senjem
- Donald Senjem
- Mary Stoddard
- Sharon Thiemann
- Valane Tyler

**\$2.50 to \$99**

- John & Carol Allen
- Phyllis Alsdurf
- Anonymous
- Noel Austin
- Nan Babcock
- Philip Behrens
- Monica Brossard
- Folmer Carlson
- Cindi Carter
- Nancy Clancy
- Mary Coomes
- Dodge County DFL
- Phillip Drexler
- Walter Dunlap
- Sue Edge
- Rex Edge
- Eleanor Engesser
- Samuel Fudenberg
- Lois Fure
- Nancy Grabau
- Doris Greene
- Lois Hancock
- Richard Hanson
- Jane Hardwick
- Mary Beth Harmon
- Harold's Club
- Suzanne Heller
- Don Hodgman
- Bernice Kubat
- Janet Kubat Willette

**\$2.50 to \$99**

- Paul Larsen
- Joanne Lerud-Heck
- Barbara Loquai
- Mary Lou McClamrock
- Karen Morris
- John Mosher
- Mark Packard
- Mary Sue Sandeno
- Warren Schwenke
- Daniel Senjem
- Norman Senjem
- Judy Severson
- Donna Shellum
- Lance Sorenson
- Roger Sowieja
- Cheryl Stowers
- Rod Streich
- Dick Swenke
- William Thompson
- Nancy Thornton
- Johathan Timm
- Ann Traxler
- Gary Trelstad
- Janet Tripp
- Ray Tyler
- Mary Vikeras
- David Wahlstrom
- Dorothy Wandrei
- Doris Weber




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## Historical society welcomes all volunteers

As we get things going in 2026, we invite you to join us. We have a need for a volunteer with website management experience, and a volunteer with Facebook management experience.

If you enjoy spending time in the garden with plants, you could help out by keeping the garden at the Museum weed-free and tidy.

We are beginning a joint project with the Dodge Center Public Library to gather oral histories from around the county and will need volunteers to help.

We will need volunteers to welcome visitors at the Museum during our open hours from May to October. If we are unable to staff the Museum with volunteers from May to October, we may have to eliminate those hours and continue with an "open by appointment only" procedure.

If any of these opportunities appeal to you, please give us a call at 507.635.5508 or send us an email at [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

# Annual Membership \$20

*Membership includes: Promotions, requests for research assistance, newsletters and limited number of mailings, which are sent via mail, email and text.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ok to text? Yes / No

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to Dodge County Historical Society and mail to Dodge County Historical Society, P.O. Box 456, Mantorville, MN 55955.**

DODGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOX 456

MANTORVILLE, MN 55955

Return Service Requested

