



Gazette

*Serving Claremont, Dodge Center, Hayfield,
Kasson, Mantorville and West Concord*

June 2026

Three elected to board at annual meeting

The annual meeting was April 24, when members gathered to take care of business, enjoy one another's company, eat cake, and enjoy an entertaining program by Mr. B's Hiawathaland Rails.

Lois Hancock finished her third term on our board, and in accordance with the bylaws must step down for at least a year. Lois has made many valuable contributions to our organization in terms of research, volunteer time, and serving as secretary. She will continue to be involved with us as time goes on.

Our new board members are: Sharon Schriever, a Wasioja resident, new to the board; Mary Ann Mittelstadt, a Kasson



Mr. B of Mr. B's Hiawatha Rails provided an informative program at the annual meeting.

resident, new to the board; and Dave Chicos, a rural Dodge Center resident who previously served on our board.

We welcome these volunteer board members and thank them for their willingness to serve our organization in this role.

We confirmed a bylaw change that was approved by mail-in vote. Our board will now consist of a range of members, permitting 6 to ten board members. Several other boards recommended a range of board members.

volunteers have created new exhibits for visitors to enjoy.

This year we are featuring two important people in our history - Teunis S. Slingerland and Teunis Slingerland, Jr.

We have many resources to help families with searches for ancestors, including cemetery records and family folders. From a Museum computer, visitors can search digitized local papers going back into the last century.

Museum open now through October

The Museum in Mantorville started regular open hours for the season on May 14. Through mid-October the hours will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday 1 to 4 p.m. It is open other times by appointment, and as a general rule, if you come up the alley and there's a car there, the Museum is open.

Assistant Manager Katie Hendrickson and

New look

We're happy to announce that our newsletter will now be called The Gazette. We have had a new logo designed for our organization. You can see it on the masthead of this newsletter.



Board members

- Jean Bartel, President
- Dale Rood, Vice President
- Nan Babcock, Secretary
- Mary Sue Sandeno, Treasurer
- Dave Chicos
- Tom Gall
- Mary Ann Mittelstadt
- Sharon Schriever

Hours

Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday 1 to 4 p.m.

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, new number?

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

Mission

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



Share your county barn stories and photos

If you have a photo of a Dodge County barn, 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 or you can bring it in so we can scan it and have it available in our digital records.

Consider monthly giving to support DCHS

Planned giving is a great way to contribute to DCHS.

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

One option for giving is making monthly donations through your local bank.

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 advisers about setting up the arrangements for charitable giving.



New project in the works: Veterans Honor Roll survey

The Dodge County Historical Society is happy to announce its newest project: Veterans Honor Roll Survey. This survey allows veterans, or those who know veterans from Dodge County to help us recognize the service within our communities. The survey asks for basic information about the veteran and for any memories associated with them.

This project will provide the historical society with information that can be used for future exhibits, social media posts, and more.

We want to hear your story! To fill out the form, you may go to our website <https://dodgecountyhistorical.mn/> and fill out the Google form there. You can also stop by the museum for a physical copy.

The survey will be available at the Log Cabin during the Dodge County Free Fair and other events.



The Dodge County Free Fair is July 15-19, 2026.

Railroad history in Mantorville

By Dale Rood

Editor's note: This is the third article in a series about railroads in the county.

As reported earlier, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad ran a branch into Mantorville from the south. Since that article I have had information from a long time Mantorville resident about a significant stretch of that roadbed that still exists. There is a berm that runs just to the east of Dodge County Highway 21, the road that goes by the dump, that is fill for the old railroad right of way. It runs north of the dump and gravel pit next to County 21. It is a significant area of fill. I understand that after the railroad was removed this raised right of way was a play area for children in the Mantorville/Kasson area.

I must also update incorrect information I included in my previous article.

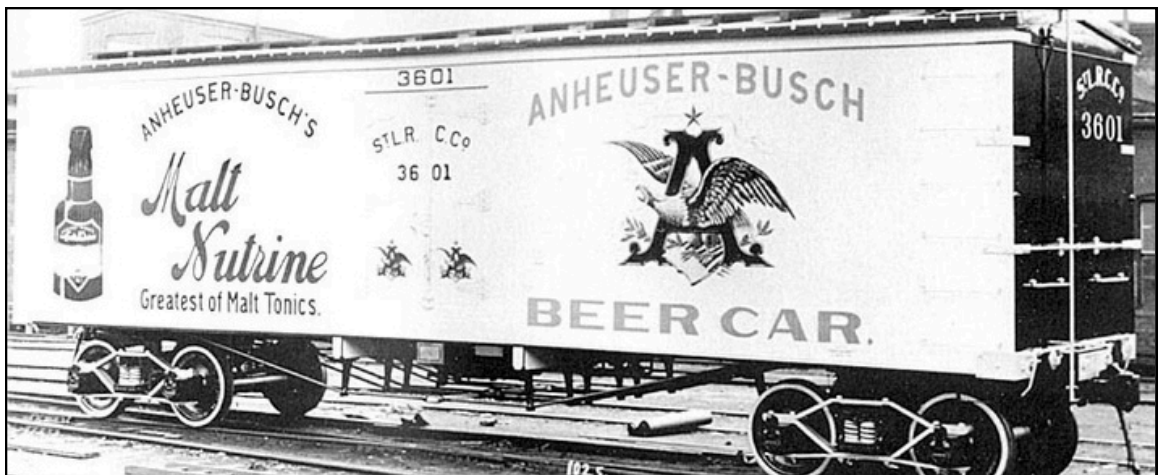
The old brewery, the ruins of which still exist in Mantorville, was a primary shipper of goods on this track. I had stated that refrigerator cars were not available in the years



The berm in this picture is an old railroad right of way next to County 21, located south of Mantorville on the dump road and north of the quarry.

the Mantorville branch was in operation. I have since found that information was incorrect. The earliest refrigerator cars, or "reefers" as they are known, date back to

transporting peaches from Georgia to markets some distance away. The large orchards that supplied these markets gave Georgia its reputation as the "peach state."



The Anheuser-Busch Beer Company was one of the first companies to use refrigerator cars to transport its beer nationwide.

1851 running in the northern New England area.

The 1880's saw a rapid development in refrigerated transportation on the railroads of the United States. In 1875 reefers were developed for

In the 1880's reefers were developed for hauling dressed meat to market. The railroads were slow to grab onto this method of transporting meat due to their heavy investment in transporting livestock at that time.

The Anheuser-Busch Beer Company was one of the first companies to use refrigerator cars to transport its beer nationwide.

Between 1880 and 1900, the number of reefers on railroads in the U.S. rose from an estimated 1,300 in 1880 to an estimated 68,500 cars in 1900. Considering the C&NW branch was in use in the late 1880's into the 1920's, refrigerated transportation, a necessity for the long distance transport of beer, would have been available for the

Mantorville Brewery. Even short distance transport by rail would have been desirable due to the muddy dirt roads and the limited loads wagons could carry. The railroad was the best form of transportation to anywhere out of town.

Recognizing our invaluable volunteers

We appreciate the time and energy our volunteers give so generously to keep our organization functioning. We recognize these volunteers who have contributed their time and talents since January 2026: Bill Babcock, John Donovan, Lois Hancock, Susan Hansen, Avin Honecker, Linda Jerviss, Patti Krier, Barbara Loquai, Mitch Miller and Jeannie Wytenbach.

We apologize if we have missed anyone. We appreciate you all.

Jerviss named Volunteer of the Year

We are pleased to honor Linda Jerviss as our Volunteer of the Year. We presented her with a certificate for "Excellence in Volunteering" from the Minnesota Alliance for Local History Museums (MALHM). Linda is one of 18 volunteers across Minnesota to be honored at the 2026 conference.

Over the past 12 years, Linda served on the DCHS board along with many other activities that benefit our organization.

Linda puts her talents to cataloguing collection items and spends hours designing exhibits, such as the one in the photo, featuring the Victorian living room, showcasing the Slingerland settee, a square Chickering piano along with other pieces from that period.

Another very important responsibility Linda takes is initiating and tracking the many state Legacy grants that DCHS uses to accomplish restoration and



DCHS Board President Jean Bartel presents Linda Jerviss with the DCHS Volunteer of the Year award.

rehabilitation projects to preserve our county's historic buildings.

Thank you, Linda!

Hendrickson is new historical society employee

The Dodge County Historical Society welcomed our new employee in May.

Katie Hendrickson will be our full time assistant manager for the coming year. She will be working at the Museum as well as going out and about making contacts and arranging programs around the county.

A Rochester resident and graduate of Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, Katie recently completed a job assignment at Camp Nelson in Nicholasville, Kentucky, south of Lexington.



Hendrickson

historical society's facilities and collections and getting acquainted with board members and volunteers. She has set some goals for what she would like to

Camp Nelson has a strong heritage in Civil War history.

Katie is getting familiarized with the

accomplish in the coming year.

"I would like to see more people from, not just Dodge County, but nearby counties, visit the museum and see what we have to offer. My biggest goal is to create educational programs for the younger generations to get them interested, engaged, and connected to history."

The Museum is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday but the general rule is if you see a car in the parking lot, you're welcome to come in.

Looking back 250 years in Dodge County

When our forefathers were signing the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in 1776, what was happening here in Dodge County?



Indigenous people were the major occupants at this time. The Dakota people controlled this area, with Winnebago, and Sac and Fox

tribes using the land as well. They all moved with the seasons, and used the area for hunting, gathering, fishing, some agriculture, and fur trading.

France had controlled the fur trade from the 1600s until 1763, when the British took over the territory. French-Canadian trappers and traders continued to operate throughout the territory along the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River and their tributaries.

The European traders, primarily French, Scottish and Irish, lived independent lives in the wilderness, and frequently married indigenous women. The women were important domestic, business and political partners, as the traders and natives co-existed and did business together. Known as illegal traders, these independent fur traders didn't

feel any particular allegiance to any European

country, and often operated without the required license from the governing body, either French or British. In our neighboring Rice County, the city of Faribault was named for Alexander Faribault, who came from a fur trading family, and whose mother was part Dakota. Alexander established a trading post on the Cannon River that later became the city of Faribault.

(Information from the Minnesota State Historical Society and the book North Country: the Making of Minnesota by Mary Lethert Wingerd)



The work on the Wasioja Seminary is nearing completion. Please watch for notice of a ribbon cutting ceremony. The Seminary is owned by Dodge County and sits on a county park. County officials are in charge of arrangements.

DCHS website receiving needed improvements

Our website is receiving some tender loving care from our board member, Tom Gall. He continues to make long needed improvements in the functions and information of the site.

Donations can now be made online. Membership forms are available.

You can sign-up to volunteer online. Links to other area historical organizations are available.

Please go online and take a look.

DCHS hosts Kasson-Mantorville students

We were happy to host visits with Kasson-Mantorville School students on May 20. Six classes of first graders visited the Museum.



Students helped Barbara Loquai with the laundry and listened to banjo music by Jeannie Wyttenbach.



Students danced around a Maypole, churned and tasted butter, learned about inventions and go into a one-room school.



Donations needed to restore church

We are seeking donations for the restoration of the Wasioja Church. The restoration will be financed by Minnesota Legacy grants. This program has recently started requiring 25 percent matching funds from the requesting organization, so we will have to make a significant contribution.

The Wasioja Church has an amazing and inspiring past that tells of our early settlers' sacrifice and dedication in building a house of worship. It is in need of major restoration and rehabilitation, which will be very costly. This old church is a significant symbol of our heritage and the faithfulness of those who came before us, and we strongly believe it is worth saving.

This is the church's story.

Beginning in 1856, a group of Wasioja residents called Regular Baptists were meeting at the school with the leadership of Elder William Carey Shepherd, who lived nine miles away in Ashland Township. Wasioja leaders offered to give him a piece of property to build a church. The following March, at a "donation party," Shepherd was given \$219, mostly in gold, and a deed to the lot that had been previously offered to be used for a church.

In August 1857, about a dozen people organized themselves into the Baptist Church. The congregation temporarily met in a store that was being built by Dr. Miller. In February 1858, plans and pledges were made in preparation for building the church, but in the spring a national financial crash occurred, and dried up sources of money.



The Wasioja Church was dedicated in 1858, the same year Minnesota became a state.

In spite of the financial hardships, the Wasioja settlers were determined to build the church, and completed using the barter system. For example, people who grew vegetables traded with those who had lumber for the building. The church was dedicated on July 31, 1858. Only \$50 in cash was contributed.

Church membership increased gradually, and members were involved with establishing churches in Concord, Claremont, Rice Lake and Pine Island. "At the time Elder Shepard settled in Ashland there was not a Baptist church in Minnesota south of Red Wing, nor a minister living south of St. Paul."*

**History of Dodge County, H.A. Smith*

Visit DCHS in the Log Cabin at the Dodge County Fair



Be sure to visit the Log Cabin during the Dodge County Fair July 15 to 19.

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We are planning and preparing new exhibits featuring railroads, our sesquicentennial (150 year) farms, and a Wall of Wishes for our country on our 250th anniversary. Our rural school binders will be there as usual. Our friends with the local Grange will be adding an exhibit to our space.

The Log Cabin is staffed by volunteers, and it's a fun opportunity to spend a few hours visiting with people who are interested in our county history. Let us know if you would like to volunteer. See you there!

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
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MANTORVILLE, MN 55955
Return Service Requested

