

COTTONWOOD

COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Cottonwood County Historical Society

Spring 2015

Plant and Bake Sale

Fund-raiser

Saturday May 23, 2015

8:30 am – 1:00 pm

The Cottonwood County Historical Society will be having a Spring Fund-raiser on Saturday, May 23 from 8:30 to 1:00 p.m. at the home of Marilyn Wahl, just two blocks south of the museum on Hwy 62. Look for the balloons!

For years gardeners have shared their excess plants with friends and neighbors. In keeping with this tradition, if you have surplus plants, bulbs or used plastic pots that you would be willing to donate, they would be much appreciated. The sale will consist of house plants, flowers, cactus, perennials, hanging planters and bulbs. Delivery of any plant donations should be made the week of the sale to Marilyn Wahl, 831-4220, at which time they will be potted for the sale on Saturday. In addition, a bake sale consisting of breads, pies, muffins, cookies and bars will also be available. Mark your calendars today! This event is sponsored by museum volunteers with proceeds dedicated to upcoming projects at the museum.

WOOD AND WOOL: A SAMPSON FAMILY ODYSSEY

Exhibit Dates: May 3 – September 5, 2015



The exhibit in the Remick Gallery entitled *Wood and Wool: A Sampson Family Odyssey* opened Sunday, May 3. The exhibit features art work by several members of the Sampson family including Tom, Jan, Barry and Toni. Tom, the featured artist, grew up spending time outdoors drawing inspiration from nature. Wood turning allows him to use wood that would

otherwise be firewood or left to decay but which produce spectacular turnings. Barry, also a wood artist, uses diamond willow as his medium. Jan and Toni enjoy making beautiful textiles which will also be showcased. This exhibit is the summer show and runs through September 5, 2015.

**If you are planning a visit to the gallery, our hours are
Monday – Fridays from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m
Saturdays from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

RIVERFEST ACTIVITIES

This year activities are centered around the Windom Square. At the museum, the Sons of Norway provide Scandinavian delicacies in the Meeting Room. In the Exhibit Hall, Interpreters in the vignettes visit with people who walk through to see the exhibits.

Winners of the “Give it your best Shot: Focus on Cottonwood County”



Left: “Rock Cabin”
Karla Ambrose

Middle: “Winter Wonder”
Laura Nerness

Right: “Barn & Window”
Paul Buhler

Our theme this year for the photo show was Cottonwood County buildings and architectural details, of which 20 photographers submitted images. Visitors to the exhibit were asked to vote for their favorite photograph for the duration of the show. The first place winner was Karla Ambrose with her photograph entitled “Rock Cabin”, a summer shot of the stone house at Pat’s Grove County Park. The second place honor went to Laura Nerness with “Winter Wonder” which featured the Cottonwood County Courthouse taken on a snowy day in December. The third most popular photograph, by public vote, was by Paul Buhler with his image “Barn & Window.” The photographers were asked to provide two images – one for the show and one to be entered into the museum’s permanent photograph collection. Thank you to the 20 photographers who participated this year and showcased the buildings of Cottonwood County. A book containing the photographs of this show will be available by Riverfest.

Cottonwood County Student Art Show Winners Announced:



The Cottonwood County Historical Society is pleased to announce the winners of the Cottonwood County Student Art Show which closed April 25, 2015. The “Best of Show” and “People’s Choice Award” this year was awarded to Sun Yue of Red Rock Central Public School with her pencil drawing entitled “Johnny Depp”. The “First Place” award went to Casey Currier from Red Rock Ridge Alternative Learning Center with his mixed medium pieces titled “Sunrise/Sunset”.

Best of Show
“Johnny Depp”
Sun Yue
Red Rock Central Public School
Pencil Drawing

First Place
“Sunrise/Sunset”
Casey Currier
Red Rock Ridge ALC
Mixed Medium

Those receiving honorable mention include McKayla Vandekief of Westbrook Walnut Grove Public School, Christianna Green of Windom Area Public School, Carly Fast and Louis Louangthilath of Mountain Lake

Public School and Allison Webber, Zach Kennedy, and Jackie Trapp of Red Rock Central High School. The exhibit featured art work of senior high students from throughout Cottonwood County. More than 40 works of art were displayed this year! Congratulations to all the winners and a big thank you to the teachers and students who participated.

A PERSONAL STORY:

FIRST... BE KIND! BY JANELLE KAYE

“Hello, this is Janelle.”

The voice on the other end said, “Janelle, my name is Duane. I used to live next door to your great-grandparents in Peterson, Iowa, and I met your mother when she was about seventeen. I think that it was around the time that she graduated from high school. I was about six, and I thought she was the kindest and most beautiful girl in the world. For the last seventy or so years, I have tried to find out what happened to her.”

I was rendered speechless, an event that seldom occurs.

The voice continued. “I finally decided to do a search for her online and found her name on ancestry.com. When looking for information about her, I found your name connected to hers, did a search, and found where you lived. I called the Historical Society there, and was put in touch with you. I hope that is OK.”

I barely could contain my excitement at this point, because I was talking with someone who could tell me about my great-grandparents. He seemed sincere and legitimate, so I ventured a question. “You knew my great-grandparents?”

“Yes, we were neighbors. I was a little boy, but I remember how kind they were too. They sometimes would take me with them when they had to run an errand. One day the three of us were in their old car driving over the bridge that led out of town, when Charlie, your great-grandfather, started talking about the abundance of the corn crops. Your great-grandmother, Rose, said, ‘Charlie, the corn certainly has big ears.’ This was accompanied by a glance toward me. Even I, at that age, knew that she meant me, and that Charlie was being warned to watch what he said.”

“Duane, that is such a fun story.” (I was starting to get my words back.) “How did you meet my mother?”

“One day, in the springtime, your mother came to visit her grandparents. She was older and so beautiful. I must have been about six at the time. I remember how kind she was to me. She sat and talked with me for quite a while. She asked me about school, and what I liked to do. I thought it was so amazing that she would talk with me as long as she did. Older kids didn’t always do that. I never forgot her, and always wondered what happened to her. I tried to find out, but didn’t find any leads until I found your book and saw the words Norma Jean Jacobson in them. I wondered if that was her. You can’t know how grateful I am to have found her.”

“Would you like to talk with her? She is sitting in the room with me. You are welcome to talk with her, although she is hard of hearing. She’s ninety-three now.”

I put my cell phone to my mother’s ears and watched her face as her eyes enlarged with amazement when she heard the words “beautiful” and “kind” and “I never forgot you.” This was particularly welcome on a day when she had just returned home with me after attending the funeral of a very dear friend. For someone to reach out to her from so many states and years away was truly amazing. She seemed to understand what he was telling her and responded kindly. (How else would she respond?) “Thank you.” She asked him a few questions, and after about five minutes gave the phone back to me.

Duane and I continued to exchange stories and questions and ended our conversation by exchanging contact information. Since that day, we have kept our corner of cyberspace occupied with pictures and stories from long ago. My mother has a renewed sparkle in her eye, because she knows she is valued and remembered.

Never, never, never underestimate the value of kindness! My new rule? First, be kind!
My second rule? Contact a local historical society if you need information about someone.

Written by local author Janelle Kaye

3/26/2015



AND THE WINNER IS...

Thank you to all who voted for a new logo and newsletter design. The newsletter design to win by a large margin was the one with the museum name written out. The logo has been narrowed down to two from which the Board of Trustees will make the final choice. Thank you for assisting in this exciting decision.

GENERAL FUND DONATIONS: Donations made between February 16 – April 30, 2015

JoAnn Russenberger in memory of William Kremmin; Dr. R.J. & Sharon Diemer; Phil & Mary Anderson; Mary Johnson in memory of Charles L. Johnson; Gerald & Betty Stevens in memory of Charles L. Johnson; Ron & Karen Stevens in memory of Charles L. Johnson; Doris Preston in memory of Charles L. Johnson; John & Ilene Sharkey in memory of Charles L. Johnson; Leland & Sigrid Johnson in memory of Charles L. Johnson; Paul & Gerry Maras in memory of Richard Sykora; Richard and Dorothy Raverty in honor of Edna Espenson's 100th Birthday; Loy Storey in memory of Doris Barker; Lucille Nelson; Tom & Karen Wickie in memory of John Galle; Wig & Wanda Turner in memory of Nancy Sweigard; Larry & Melody Goeman in memory of Lil Wesseling; Larry & Rebecca Stevens in memory of Marv Einertson; Phyllis Miller in memory of Marv Einertson; Bill & Marilyn Peterson in memory of Marv Einertson; Dr. & Lois Castledine; Loy Storey in memory of Edward Tasler

Donation for "Celebrating Cottonwood County Women Authors"

Friends of the Windom Library

Donation Designated for Lighting Project in Meeting Room

Joyce Nielsen; Leland & Marilyn Erickson in memory of John Galle and Marv Einertson

Donation Designated for North Landscaping Project

Karen Kremmin in memory of William Kremmin; Freddie Hoppert in memory of Marv Einertson

CCHS Welcomes New Lifetime Members

Dawn Bondhus Mueller; Leland Johnson

CCHS Thanks Our Annual Renewals

Joan Kaye; Joanne Kaiser; Eileen Cushing

CCHS Thanks Our Annual Patron Renewals

Peggy Eichner; Lance Ludvigson

AT THE MUSEUM:

- **Wood and Wool: A Sampson Family Odyssey**
 - **May 3 – September 5, 2015**
- **Plant/Bake Sale Fund-Raiser**
 - **May 23, 2015, Home of Marilyn Wahl: 608 Third Ave., Windom, from 8:30 am– 1:00 pm**
- **Riverfest - June 27, 2015**
- **Cottonwood County Fair – August 19 – 22, 2015**



Wisconsin Civil War Veteran Homesteads in Cottonwood County

Clark W. Seely, one of Cottonwood County's early homesteaders, was born in Pennsylvania in 1844 and moved with his family to Ripon, Wisconsin, in 1855. Seely was rejected twice because of his size and age, but in June 1863 he was accepted into the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry, Company D. Within 2 months of enlisting, Seely's unit fought in the Battle of Chicamauga. In October he contracted typhoid fever and rode on horseback 10 days before being sent North to a hospital. He rejoined his regiment the following year.

John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln April 14, and Union forces captured Confederate President Jefferson Davis May 10. Seely took a shot in the knee during the capture. He nearly died from exposure and having to ride 125 miles to Macon, Georgia, without medical attention.

He eventually arrived in Ripon, but the doctor gave him a 1 in 100 chance of survival without a leg amputation. He refused and lived an active life with the pain and handicap of his injury for over 60 years. The Seely family moved to Iowa in 1866 where Clark married Julia Lowry early in 1873.

The Homestead Act of 1862 opened up the West for settlers. Anyone over 21 years old could claim 160 acres by erecting a dwelling and improving the land for 5 years. A special compensation to Union Civil War veterans enabled them to subtract their time served in the war from the 5 years.

In October the newlyweds homesteaded in section 32 of Amo Township. They experienced hardships common to homesteaders. Winters were long, sickness was common, and water was scarce. They had few neighbors, and towns weren't nearby.

In 1878 the Seelys moved to Section 4 in Rosehill Township where they raised their 7 children. Clark was one of several early settlers at the organizational meeting of Rosehill Township in 1879. He served as town clerk over 20 years. He also served on the school board and as justice of the peace in Rosehill and the Village of Westbrook. When he retired in 1905, he moved into Westbrook, 5 years after its incorporation. He served as postmaster there for 14 years.

Seely died in 1928 in Westbrook. The Westbrook Sentinel described him as "one of the history makers having endured the serious drawbacks, hard times, grasshoppers, and other inconveniences in its [Cottonwood County] making and taking his part in all active duties as a patriotic citizen." The article also commented that he was "a patriotic citizen who grieved to see the tendency of the American people to make a sport day of Memorial Day, the seeming disregard of and lack of respect for the American flag."

Credits: Cottonwood County Historical Society; Westbrook Sentinel (May 31, 1928);

Life of a Private in the Civil War by Clark Workman Seely

Written by guest author Carolyn VanLoh of Westbrook.

CCHS

Cottonwood County Historical Society

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TOUR THROUGH COUNTY HISTORY

The 3rd grade annual visit to the Cottonwood County Historical Society, Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center took place on May 6th & 7th. Students from throughout the county visited the museum to see the Archaeologist, the Pioneer Lady, the Aristocratic Lady, the Rural School Teacher, the Fireman and the Fur Trapper. They then viewed the Cottonwood County Courthouse and Law Enforcement Center. Thank you to our volunteers for making this a great experience for over 200 3rd grade students.

