



COTTONWOOD

County Historical Society

Monday—Friday 8 am—4 pm and Saturday 10 am—4 pm

Fall 2020

Cottonwood County Historical Society 119th Annual Meeting



**Sunday,
November 8, 2020
2:00 p.m.
Virtual Only**

This year due to the pandemic, we postponed our planned speaker for the annual meeting. The business part of the meeting will be available via Zoom. Hence, enclosed is the ballot which we encourage you to mark and mail, e-mail or drop off at the museum. Those returning their ballots, will be eligible to win one of 4 door prizes consisting of gift cards. If you are a lucky winner, it will be sent to you in the mail. So please **return those ballots by November 2** and tune in to the Zoom meeting. Those of you who are receiving this by email can access the Zoom meeting thru the link below (**you need to click just below the blue hyperlink**). If you are receiving this in paper form, simply type the link below in your browser.

Topic: CCHS Annual Meeting — Time: Nov 8, 2020 02:00 PM Central Time

President Tom Wickie will open the room 5 minutes before the meeting begins.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/98562280801?pwd=NGRETkw4eVJvdIBvL2NlckJLczZUQT09>

If needed: Meeting ID: 985 6228 0801 Passcode: VnD6pv

Fall Fundraiser

Drive-Thru a Success!

The Cottonwood County Annual Fall Fundraiser once again was a big success with over 200 meals served on September 14. The drive-thru on the south side of the building worked wonderfully. It worked so well that we ran out of food by 6:15 p.m. which was a first! Thank you to all the museum supporters who came to the event and to the Board of Trustees, staff, and volunteers who worked the event. Money raised will go toward museum projects.



Projects at the Museum

*Handicapped Accessible Door Installed
New Corner Caps on North Wall*



The month of September was a busy month at the museum. The handicapped accessible doors were installed on a warm and sunny September morning by Worthington Glass; they are quiet and work beautifully. Thank you to the Schmidt Foundation for their support of the project and to those members who contributed funds toward the doors.

North of our building the fence/wall from which our banner pole and decorative bench sit year round, had been compromised over the years with the corner cap totally deteriorated. Mel Duerksen tuck-pointed much of the wall and put on a new corner cap. It is as good as new and ready for the next 20 years!

In the Remick Gallery:



“A Century of Civic Engagement: League of Women Voters Minnesota”

November 1-21, 2020

The upcoming exhibit in the Remick Gallery will celebrate the 19th Amendment's centennial year when women won the right to vote. Throughout 2020 this exhibit has been traveling throughout Minnesota to recognize the League of Women Voters mission and history over the past century. It features 12 pop-up panels to tell the history of the non-partisan network which encourages informed participation in government.

“Festival of Trees”

December 1-23, 2020

The Festival of Trees opens December 1st in the Remick Gallery. We encourage businesses, clubs and individuals to decorate a tree in the theme of their choice. Visitors vote for their favorite tree throughout the month of December. If you would like to decorate a tree or have questions, please contact the museum at 831-1134 or e-mail us at cchs@windomnet.com.

Coming in January ...

“2021 Photo Show...Give it your best shot!”

We are looking for local photographers to participate in the upcoming photo show. The theme this year is “Signs”...think Cottonwood County! Where can your camera take you?



The Details...

Pick up a registration form at the museum. We ask for two 8” x 10” images of the same photo. One will be in the photo show and one will become part of the photograph collection at the museum. Maximum of one entry per photographer may be brought to the museum until January 11, 2021. No matting, framing or mounting of the photo! The goal of the show is to promote Cottonwood County and our local photographers. The opening reception is on January 17, 2021.

New Ornament Arriving in November

The museum started an ornament series seven years ago that began with historic sites in Cottonwood County. The first ornament featured the Cottonwood County Courthouse which was built in 1904. The second ornament showcased the Westbrook Depot, which is now part of the Westbrook Heritage House Museum and has been on the National Register since 1986. Our third ornament is a site well known in the county—The Jeffers Petroglyphs. It is the largest concentration of carvings in Minnesota and was placed on the National Register in 1970. Our fourth ornament took us to Mountain Lake where we highlighted the original section of the 1904 Mountain Lake Public School which in 2020 was replaced with a new addition. Our fifth ornament was the Storden Bank, one of the oldest continuous running businesses in Storden. This sixth ornament took us to Pat's Grove County Park and the Stone house, where we noted the upgrades of a new roof and tuck pointing. This year with Cottonwood County celebrating its 150th Anniversary, our ornament highlights aspects of our county—the cottonwood tree, the Des Moines River, the railroad, the farm and the wind towers. Check these ornaments out...they make great Christmas gifts!

Coralee Krueger, First Woman Mayor in Windom, MN

By Janelle Kaye



Leona Miller Phillips

August 26, 1920, was a monumental day in the history of the US. This was the day when white women finally achieved the right to vote nationwide. Many African American and Native American women were not able to vote until the Civil Rights Movement.

Voting for the first time was a day to remember. In previous articles for the CCHS newsletter, I outlined some of the suffragists' struggles and events that occurred nationally, in Minnesota and Cottonwood County. In response to my request for information about individuals involved in the suffrage movement, Coralee Krueger sent me an article about her mother, Leona Miller Phillips.

The women who struggled to vote and passed their resolve to make a difference politically unto future generations is the story of Coralee's life. To get a sense of the changes during the last 100 years, I asked Coralee to respond to some questions for this article. She graciously complied.

JK: When did your mother first vote?

CK: *In June 1919 Illinois was one of the first states to approve the 19th Amendment that allowed women to vote. Of the 48 states, 36 needed to ratify for the amendment to pass. Tennessee made it happen on Aug. 18, 1920. It became official on Aug. 26.*

The significance of Aug. 26 is that it was Leona Miller's 21st birthday. She voted in every election until her passing in 1976. Being able to be part of this momentous occasion was something she talked about for many years.

What I have in common with Mother is I have voted in every election. When I was married in August 1960, I joined my husband, Jim, in Columbus, Ohio. That year for the first time a few states allowed new residents to vote for President/Vice-President. Ohio was one of them, and I was able to take advantage of that opportunity.

JK: Tell us about what you did before you were the mayor.

CK: *I grew up in a small town 60 miles southwest of Chicago, graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and lived in five more communities before moving to Windom in 1984.*

When our youngest son entered kindergarten in 1975, the editor of the Star-Herald in Luverne asked me to become a proofreader. Then she said, "You know what I like. Please do some editing on stories that are submitted." By the time Brent was in first grade, she added reporter to my duties. A write-up I presented to her after my 25th class reunion added a weekly column. I worked for three small-town newspapers as reporter and columnist in Luverne, Montevideo, and Windom, retiring in 2002.

JK: When did you become Windom's mayor?

CK: *From 1989 to 1996 I served as a Ward 1 council member. I did not seek re-election. Shortly before the 2000 mayoral race, there were no candidates, and a male friend urged me to run. I was mayor from 2001 to 2004 and did not file for office after that term.*

Continued.....



Coralee Krueger

JK: What helped you to have the confidence to take on the job as mayor?

CK: Reporting on the city council in Montevideo prior to our moving to Windom provided insights on the pros and cons of a good meeting. Also, I gained knowledge as president of my senior class in high school, dorm president at the U of W, and various other committees there.

JK: What was the major highlight during your tenure as mayor?

CK: A major accomplishment was the vote to install a fiber-to-the-home telecommunications system. In November 2000, before I took office, voters requested that the city research and implement a telecom system.

In January, the council appointed a telecom committee that worked diligently for more than three years to pave the way. Also at that first meeting, four men expressed their opposition to the project and presented a petition of 700 names. Their appearances continued, letters of criticism were carried in the Citizen, and petitions grew to 825.

The telecom committee set a Technology Fair for Feb. 21, which explained the many facets of the plan. One indicated that net revenue bonds would not affect taxpayers. In March 2004, the committee gave the go-ahead. In May the council did the same. Construction was completed in early 2005. Only a handful of property owners rejected the service.

Politics are filled with positives and negatives. Over my four years, I received many compliments from committee members on my willingness to listen to their concerns. I also took stands as a council member that offended two friends who have not forgiven me.

Leadership positions over the decades prepared me for the ups and downs, but the downs are still not easy.

JK: What advice do you have for future aspiring women mayors or women in elected office in the Windom area?

CK: For the most part, I think the stigma against women in politics, especially in rural areas, is disappearing. Here they are also known for their other community roles.

JK: It sounds like you think it is much easier these days to run for office. That's good news and encouraging to women who may want to participate in government. Thank you, Coralee for responding to my questions and for your service as the first woman mayor of Windom. Your story graphically depicts how women have moved from a time of not being able to vote to one of having a significant place in government and politics.

As Election Day draws near, remember to vote, everyone! And get involved in our democracy! It matters!

General Fund Donations:

Donations made between July 24, 2020 - October 22, 2020

Doug & Priscilla Jacobson in memory of James Redding; Jan Wassenaar; Donna Gravley; Betty Grenig; Paul & Gerry Maras in memory of Phyllis Miller; Maria Schneider; Lowell & Nancy Tjentland in memory of Leon Stalls; Tom & Karen Wickie in memory of Ken Fast, Marilyn Flatgard; & Phyllis Miller; Sarah Tadé in memory of Marilyn Flatgard; Sarah Tadé in honor of Tom Wickie; Melvin & Romelle Wojahn; Jon & Linda Johnson; David & Beatrice Muller; Rob & Tami McMenimen; Joan Menken; Silliman Trust; TORO Company distributed by Windom Women of Today thru Windom United Services.

Thanks to the Storden American Legion for funds to support a new interpretive marker and bench at Red Rock County Park and a bench at Pat's Grove County Park.

Also thank-you to the following for non-monetary donations received:
Duane & Barb Pingeon, AA batteries; Kathy Schoneman, plastic silverware packets for fall fundraiser; Janel Eichstadt, kitchen towels.

CCHS Membership

CCHS Welcomes New Member:

Daniel Woolsey

CCHS Thanks Members Upgraded to Lifetime:

Diane Potter; Holt's Cleaning Service

CCHS Thanks Our Annual Renewals:

Dean & Kathy Kretsch; Roxanne Potter; Judy Kielty; Dorothy Fundahn; Laura Williams; Zola Wood; Herman & Lylas Eigenberg; Melanie Dunlap; Lou Masters; Don & Jean Hoppe; Sharon Evers; Ralph Sweigard; Judi Ray; Doris Curry

CCHS Thanks Our Annual Patron Renewals:

LaVern & Carol Christianson; Paul Buhler; Linda Mix; Jim Guddal; Rosemary Isackson; Richard & Dorothy Raverty; Mary Lou Walinga

CCHS Thanks Our Annual Sponsor Renewals:

Lynne Kessler; Leon Hoyer; Maria Schneider; Sonya Buller; Kate Schneider



Just a note —

Currently at this time, the museum is open on Saturdays by appointment only! You can call ahead at 507-831-1134 or reach Director Linda at 507-822-4756.

Visitors should also call ahead and schedule times for the research library so that we can provide for social distancing and staff on hand to help you with your research.

Cottonwood County Historical Society

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TIME SENSITIVE DATA—PLEASE READ!



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2020 Exhibits In the Remick Gallery:

**A Century of Civic Engagement:
League of Women Voters
of Minnesota**

Nov. 1 – Nov. 21, 2020

CCHS Virtual Annual Meeting

**November 8, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.
(see front page for Zoom link)**

“Festival of Trees”

December 1-23

