

**Updated Statement of Program Service Accomplishments  
Morrison County Historical Society  
January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020**

The Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and sharing Morrison County history. It owns and operates The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum in Little Falls, MN.

The year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected how MCHS met its mission. In order to curb the spread of the disease, people needed to wear masks and stay physically distant from one another. Governor Tim Walz also ordered various businesses and organizations to close to the public a couple of times during the year. Organizations had to adopt pandemic protocols after the first round of closings (March – June, 2020) in order to limit the number of people in their buildings.

MCHS closed the Weyerhaeuser Museum to the public on March 15 and remained closed until June 30. During this closure period, museum staff had to figure out how to work from home while sending one person at a time to regularly check on the museum. We had to learn how to use remote meeting tools (mostly Zoom) and create online events, cancelling or adjusting already-planned programs. We increased the content on our website, including tracking major developments related to the pandemic. We also began collecting local news items and artifacts related to the pandemic for MCHS's collections.

During this time, police officers in Minneapolis killed George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, setting off Black Lives Matter protests around the world. National Guard troops from Camp Ripley in Morrison County were called to the Twin Cities metro to keep the peace.

Through the summer and fall, the Weyerhaeuser Museum was open by appointment only as part of our pandemic procedures to limit the number of people in the building. The Governor closed museums and similar public places again after Thanksgiving and through the winter holidays based on a spike in cases, allowing for reopening in mid-January 2021. The Weyerhaeuser Museum stayed closed until the first week in February 2021, reopening that week by appointment only.

With this context, following are MCHS's program service accomplishments for 2020.

On January 4, 2020, before the pandemic, MCHS, with its partners, the Charles A. Lindbergh House & Museum and Charles A. Lindbergh State Park, hosted the annual Candlelight Hike, which brought around 1,000 visitors to the three sites. For 2021, the partners revamped the annual Candlelight Hike, turning it from a one-evening event into the Candle-less Hike and Scavenger Hunt, a ten-day, daytime event, in order to encourage people to be outdoors and keeping a distance during the pandemic. There were approximately 150 attendees who turned in Scavenger Hunt forms.

Prior to the pandemic shut-down, MCHS held the second of its annual event series, "Exploring History & Culture in Central Minnesota." The series brings together four central Minnesota historical societies, Morrison, Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns, to collaborate on programming related to specific cultures within the region and state. The 2020 series featured programming by The Museum of Russian Art to the four history organizations in February.

Completed the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund (Legacy) grant project to install mobile shelving in the Weyerhaeuser Museum's Archives.

Raised funds toward the replacement of the Weyerhaeuser Museum's 45-year-old HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system, part of our Capacity Improvement Projects to maintain and improve the Weyerhaeuser Museum building and the museum's grounds. We also replaced two exterior doors leading to the courtyard, having them specially made and installed by Kampmann Sash & Door in Brainerd, MN.

2020

Morrison County Historical Society

Created the exhibit “BEAD,” featuring a variety of beaded items from MCHS collections, including three Ojibwe bandolier bags. The physical exhibit was finished just as the museum closed in March, so staff immediately set about turning it into an online exhibit and made it available on MCHS’s website (morrisoncountyhistory.org).

MCHS continued its partnership with Rethos: Places Reimagined (formerly Preservation Alliance of Minnesota) to serve as their Central Minnesota Education Coordinator, arranging various classes to teach historic preservation skills within the counties of Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, and Benton. Classes and events included Repairing & Restoring Old Windows, Egress Education: A Door & Window Repair Workshop, Slaveholders & Real Estate in Minnesota, Why Old Is Green: Sustainability in Older Homes, Lead, Asbestos & Radon, Oh My!, Riverside Park Demonstration & Tour, and Think Before You Knock.

Published 4 newsletters, featuring articles such as “Ethel Gourd Hall’s Bandolier Bag,” “Clara Fuller & Women’s Suffrage,” “St. Mary’s Russian Orthodox Church,” “Signs of COVID-19,” “Coughs & Sneezes Spread Diseases: The Spanish Flu in Morrison County,” “C-19 Symbols: Making the Victims of COVID-19 Visible,” “Beaded Bags,” “Jim Crow in Morrison County: Rose Winch’s Experience,” “Upsala, Minnesota – Swedback’s Settlement,” and “Keep Me & Never Go Broke,” “Building Mattresses, Building Connections,” “The Search for Rachael Carew – Part 1,” “The Winter Wonderland of Little Falls, the Little Switzerland of America,” “No Tears for Mrs. Claus,” and “Partnership Event in Riverside Park.”

Developed our Writing Intern program and hosted our first writing intern from St. John’s University.

Hosted online events, including Exploring Ojibwe Genealogy, The Archaeology of Bear Ceremonialism, and A Fireplace Zoom Chat with St. Nicholas. Also held a plant sale, voter registration event, and November New Member Month.

MCHS developed and implemented pandemic procedures in order to safely operate the Weyerhaeuser Museum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MCHS staff assisted off-site researchers in answering their research questions.

Maintained an active online presence via our blog/website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Grew the MCHS collections through donations from members and friends.

Mary Warner, MCHS executive director, continued serving on the board of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the State Review Board for the National Register of Historic Places. She completed her time on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s (MPCA) Sustainable Building Group.

Ann Marie Johnson, MCHS preservationist, completed her time on a subcommittee of the MPCA’s Sustainable Building Group.

Camille Warzecha, MCHS board president, is serving on the Little Falls Heritage Preservation Commission.

Number of members in 2020: 353  
Number of collections donors: 26  
Number of researchers: 85  
Number of visitors: 1,077  
Number of website visitors: 72,130