

# THE MORRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Board Orientation Guide



THE  
CHARLES A.  
WEYERHAEUSER  
MEMORIAL MUSEUM

## Mission

The Morrison County Historical Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Morrison County's history.

## Vision

Using Morrison County's history to inspire curiosity, connection & change.

## Slogan

Today is history.  
Live it, save it, share it.

## Mascot



Sir Chompsalot, the beaver. Trapped by Jeff Opelia, taxidermy by Randy Hamson, 2009.

*The challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present.*  
~David Thelen

# Welcome to the Board of the Morrison County Historical Society

Congratulations! You have been selected by the Morrison County Historical Society's members to serve on the Board of Directors. Thank you for your dedication to Morrison County's history and your service to the organization.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Morrison County Historical Society depends upon its 9-member Board of Directors to provide direction to the organization through sound governance, which includes setting policy, providing fiduciary guidance and stability, and ensuring MCHS stays on-mission. MCHS board members also serve as ambassadors of the organiza-

tion in the community.

This Board Orientation Guide will give you foundational information about MCHS, but if you have further questions, please ask. If you are new to serving on a nonprofit board, there are several nonprofit governance guides on file at The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum that staff can make available to you. There are also numerous training opportunities available through state organizations such as the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and Propel Nonprofits.

Welcome aboard!



The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, the home of the Morrison County Historical Society.

# A Brief History of MCHS

*This article was written in 1996 by Jan Warner, who served as executive director of the organization from the late 1960s to 2015.*

An old, grey, cloth-bound composition book with yellowed pages holds the minutes of the first meeting of the Morrison County Historical Society. On July 28, 1936, a small group of citizens met at the Morrison County courthouse for an organizational meeting. The minutes state, "The object of this society is to record history of the events in Morrison County from the day of Lieutenant Pike's exploration in 1805 to the present date. Biographies of persons who will furnish information and consent, history of the World War and those who have taken part, Record Hand Craft and Folk Craft, and establish a museum for the various articles that have been used in the homes, farms, lumbering woods, mines, etc., for the education, information, benefit, and enjoyment of the people of Morrison county and future generations."

The first year of this ambitious new organization was to be led by: Val Kasperek, President; Mrs. Harry Stillwell, Vice President; Mrs. A. E. Amundsen, Secretary; and Mrs. Warren Gibson, Treasurer. Members of the Board of Trustees were Frank Logan, Royalton; and Mrs. Julius Jetka, Mrs. J. K. Martin, Mrs. Warren Gibson and Mrs. R. L. Co-

chrane, all of Little Falls. With no money in the treasury, this group immediately incurred \$5.50 in expenses – \$1.00 for stamps, \$1.00 for a letter file, a cash book and a secretary book at \$.25 each, and membership in the Minnesota Historical Society for \$3.00. Mrs. Stillwell moved that "the Society constitute a membership committee and as soon as enough money is collected to pay the bills, that the Sec'y draw an order on the Treas. for same." It was seconded and carried. At the same meeting, six people paid their membership fees of \$.50 leaving the organization with a \$2.50 deficit. It was noted that President Kasperek had not paid his dues to the Secretary. The official Certificate of Incorporation for the Morrison County Historical Society was filed September 15, 1936.

At a meeting on May 5, 1937, the Society (with the assistance and under the guidance of the W.P.A.) launched a project to collect biographies of as many Morrison County residents as possible, particularly those of immigrant pioneers. The project not only provided jobs and income to local residents, it also gave impetus to the historical society and provided a wealth of family history that is being used by the growing numbers of genealogists today.

The Society quickly assumed responsibility for many preservation projects. They placed a marker on the grave of Hon. Nathan Richardson, who was credited with the organization of Morrison County, marked the grave of Hole-In-The Day I on the bluffs north of Little Falls, and made attempts to save the site of old Fort Ripley. Collections of artifacts soon began to arrive and the Society needed a home. The Morrison County Board of Commissioners offered a room in the basement of the courthouse. That

small room, with asbestos covered pipes overhead, and the dimly lit hallway adjacent to it, was the home of the Morrison County Historical Society for almost forty years until the construction of The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum.

The first donations to the museum were made in the summer of 1938, John Wetzel being the first donor. During the first year many of the donated items were photographs. Other items were logging tools and equipment, a bear trap, a cradle, and a cavalry sabre. The Vasaly family donated an organ which had been made into a desk. The organ had been used for entertainment at Fort Ripley.

Much of the activity of the Society was curtailed during the 1940s due to WWII, however, collecting of artifacts continued. Val Kasperek continued to work diligently for the benefit of the Society. In 1952 the Morrison County Historical Society increased its efforts to acquire members. Alex Huddleston was appointed curator of the museum at a salary of seventy dollars per month.

At the Society's annual meeting in 1957 it was reported that there was poor attendance. The Society seems to have struggled until 1962 when the Minnesota Historical Society called a reorganization meeting. It was the beginning of an invigorated Morrison County Historical Society. The Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were updated and plans began to take shape for a new museum. In 1975 the Society moved into its new building, The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, donated to the Society in honor of the late Charles A. Weyerhaeuser by members of his family.

The early efforts of the dedicated historians who organized the Morrison County Historical Society laid the groundwork for the past sixty years of collecting, preserving and interpreting Morrison County's History. And, although this writer did not find a record of Mr. Kasperek ever paying his dues, in 1940 the Board of Trustees voted to give him a life membership for all of the work he had done for the Society, a well deserved tribute for the gentleman who was the first President of the Morrison County Historical Society.

~ Jan Warner



**MCHS Founders. From left, standing: Val Kasperek, Mrs. R. L. Cochrane, Mrs. Julius Jetka, Mrs. Warren Gibson, Mr. Warren Gibson, Mr. Harry Stillwell. Seated: Mrs. Harry Stillwell, Mrs. J. K. Martin.**

# Articles of Incorporation

## AMENDED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION of the MORRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this corporation is the Morrison County Historical Society (hereinafter called Society).

### ARTICLE II – REGISTERED OFFICE ADDRESS

The registered office of the Society is 2151 Lindbergh Drive South, Little Falls, Minnesota.

### ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The general purpose of the Society is educational, social and civic in discovery, preservation and dissemination of historical knowledge, especially about, but not restricted to, historic knowledge of Morrison County and Minnesota. It is the duty of the Society to operate in a manner that is for the public good of Morrison County, Minnesota.

### ARTICLE IV - POWERS

The Society has all of the authority necessary or proper to accomplish its general purpose including, though not limited to, the powers specified in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 317A.161, and the power to acquire or construct and to own and maintain a history center.

### ARTICLE V – EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS

No part of the net earnings of the Society shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the Society shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article III hereof.

No substantial part of the activities of the Society shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Society shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Society shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding provision of any future tax code or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding provision of any future tax code.

### ARTICLE VI – CAPITAL STOCK

The Society does not, and may not, have capital stock.

### ARTICLE VII - MEMBERSHIP

The conditions, rights and responsibilities of membership are defined in and may be altered from time to time by the Society's Bylaws. Unless the Bylaws provide otherwise, members may vote by mail or electronically at any regular or special meeting of the members.

### ARTICLE VIII – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The management of the Society is in a Board of Directors composed of the number of persons stated in the Bylaws. The officers of the Society are its President, its Vice President, its Secretary, and its Treasurer, and such other officers as may be created in the Bylaws. The officers are elected by the Board of Directors. The qualifications and terms are defined by the Bylaws, consistent with these Articles.

### ARTICLE IX – ANNUAL MEETING

There is an annual meeting of the members for the election of directors and for the transaction of other business at the time and place stated in the Bylaws.

### ARTICLE X – AFFILIATION WITH MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is authorized to affiliate with the Minnesota Historical Society.

### ARTICLE XI – DURATION/ DISSOLUTION

The Society has perpetual existence until dissolution.

In the event of dissolution, any remaining assets shall be distributed for the purposes of the Society or to

such organizations organized and operated exclusively for such purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding provision of any future federal tax code.

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These Amended Articles of Incorporation of the Morrison County Historical Society supersede and replace any and all previous versions of the Society's Articles of Incorporation. They were adopted at a special meeting of Morrison County Historical Society members on May 4, 2021.

Original Morrison County Historical Society Articles of Incorporation adopted September 15, 1936.

Amended: 2/1964, 8/30/1971, 3/27/1973, 2/21/1974, 9/15/1996, 8/29/1998.



The Big Pine, on the grounds of the Weyerhaeuser Museum. This pine has become part of the organization's image, both for the history it represents and for the nature experienced at the museum.

# Bylaws

## AMENDED BYLAWS OF MORRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Article I NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. Name. The name of the corporation is Morrison County Historical Society. It is referred to herein as the Society.

Section 2. Registered Office. The registered office of the Society is The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 2151 Lindbergh Drive South, Little Falls, Minnesota.

Section 3. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Society begins on the first day of January each year.

Section 4. Purpose. The general purpose of the Society is educational, social and civic in discovery, preservation and dissemination of historical knowledge, especially about, but not restricted to, historic knowledge of Morrison County and Minnesota. It is the duty of the Society to operate in a manner that is for the public good of Morrison County, Minnesota.

### Article II MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in the Society is open to individuals, families, businesses, and corporations.

Section 2. Membership is issued on application and receipt of the annual fee as determined by the Board of Directors. Membership may be obtained at any time during the calendar year and becomes renewable on the same date in the following year.

Section 3. Every member in good standing has one vote on any question submitted to the membership, provided that person has been a member at least six months.

Section 4. Membership is not transferable.

Section 5. It is the duty of the president to keep a current roster of members by name and address.

### Article III MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Section 1. Place of Meetings. Meetings of the members shall be at the registered

office of the Society or at such other place designated by the Board of Directors, which may include remote meetings, of which designation notice shall be given in writing, by mail or electronically, to all members not less than one week prior to the meeting.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the members shall be held during the month of September, or as close to September as possible (no earlier than August or later than October). Notice of the meeting shall be given in writing, by mail or electronically, at least ten days before the meeting.

Section 3. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the members may be called by the president and shall be called upon request of two of the directors or the written request of not less than twenty-five members whose signatures are subscribed to the request. (Refer to Minn. Stat. 317A.011, Subd. 19 (a,b) for definition of "signature.")

Section 4. Notice and Voting. Notice and voting by members shall be governed by MINN. STAT. 317A.401-467. Members may vote by mail or electronically.

Section 5. Quorum. Ten members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

### Article IV THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Number, Qualifications and Election. The business and affairs of the Society shall be managed by a board of nine directors who must be members of the Society. A majority of board members must reside in Morrison County, MN. The number of directors may be increased or decreased from time to time by amendment of the Bylaws, but no decrease shall have the effect of shortening the term of any incumbent director. The members shall elect directors to hold office until the next succeeding annual election. All directors shall hold office for a three-year term for which they have been elected and until their successors shall be elected and qualified. Each director may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms, after which time they shall leave the board for a minimum of one year. They are eligible to be re-elected to the board following the one-year hiatus.

Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities. The duties of the Board of Directors shall include, but not be limited to, forming policy for the Executive Director of the Society and the care of the museum. They shall also oversee the Executive Director, approve service and maintenance contracts, except in the case of emergency situations, in which case the Executive Director shall have authority to take appropriate action. The Board will also manage the funds of the Society.

Section 3. Place of Meetings. Meetings of the Board of Directors, regular or special, may be held anywhere the Board of Directors may designate, including remotely.

Section 4. Election of Officers. The Board of Directors shall meet each year within 30 days following the annual meeting of the members for the purpose of organization, election of officers, and consideration of any other business that properly may be brought before the meeting.

Section 5. Other Meetings. Other meetings of the Board of Directors may be held upon reasonable notice to each director upon the call of the president or secretary of the corporation. Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors may be waived in writing, signed (as defined by Minn. Stat. 317A.011, Subd. 19 (a,b)) by any person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time of such meeting, and shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice. Attendance of a director at such meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice thereof, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because such meeting is not lawfully convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice, or waiver of notice, of such meeting. Provided: The Board of Directors by resolution may provide for periodic regular meetings of the board, and as to such meetings no notice shall be required.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of the number of directors fixed by the Bylaws shall constitute a quorum for

the transaction of business. The act of the majority of the directors present at a meeting, at which a quorum is present, shall be the act of the Board of Directors.

Section 7. Vacancies and Absences. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining directors though less than a quorum of the Board of Directors. A director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of the predecessor in office and until a successor is elected and qualified.

If a Board member anticipates being absent from a regular monthly Board meeting, the individual will contact the President, or notify Society staff, prior to the Board meeting. If a Board member has three absences without giving notice within a 12-month administrative year the Board may declare a vacancy, subject to replacement as provided in the Bylaws.

Section 8. Except as otherwise provided in this Article, Minn. Stat. 317A, or corresponding provision of any future Minnesota law, shall govern the Board of Directors.

#### Article V OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Society shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer which may not be combined. These officers serve without compensation. Other offices with specified duties may be created by these Bylaws from time to time as the Board of Directors may recommend the incumbents of which may be compensated.

Section 2. Vacancies. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in any office by death, resignation, increase in the offices of the Society, or otherwise, it shall be filled by the Board of Directors and the officer so elected shall hold office until a successor is chosen and qualified.

Section 3. The President. The president shall preside at all the meetings of members and directors, discharge the duties which devolve upon a presiding officer, and perform such other duties as the Bylaws or the Board of directors may prescribe.

Section 4. The Vice-President. The vice-president shall perform the duties of the president during the absence or disability of the president and shall

perform such duties as the Bylaws or the Board of Directors may prescribe.

Section 5. The Secretary. The secretary shall attend all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors and keep or cause to be kept a true and complete record of the proceedings of those meetings.

Section 6. The Treasurer. The treasurer, together with Society staff, shall keep a correct record of accounts showing the financial condition of the Society at all times, except items of historical collection which may from time to time come into the possession of the Society. It shall also be the responsibility of the treasurer to deposit or cause to be deposited funds of the Society into the financial institution designated by the Board of Directors and keep such financial accounts in the name of the Society. The treasurer shall furnish at meetings of the Board of Directors, or whenever requested by anyone entitled thereto, a statement of the financial condition of the Society, and may be required to furnish bond in such amount as determined by the Board of Directors. The treasurer shall also perform such duties as the Bylaws or the Board of Directors may prescribe.

Section 7. Committees. The president shall appoint such standing committees as are deemed necessary for efficient operation of the Society. At least 60 days before the annual meeting a nominating committee of members shall be appointed by the president.

Section 8. Delegation of Authority. In the absence of any officer of the Society or for any other reason deemed sufficient, the Board of Directors may delegate the power of duties of such officer to any other officer or to any employee of the Society, for that time being, provided a majority of entire board concurs therein.

#### Article VI Written Instruments

Negotiable instruments issued by the Society, its orders for payment of money, and all other written instruments to which the Society shall be a party will be signed by the Treasurer, President, or Vice President, or those officers to whom the authority is from time to time given by resolution of the Board of Directors, except as may be otherwise specifically provided in the articles or in the Bylaws.

#### Article VII Amendments

The members of this Society may, by two-thirds majority vote of a quorum present at any meeting, or at a special meeting having that purpose mentioned in the notice thereof as one of the meeting's objects, alter, amend or repeal these Bylaws. Notice must be given in writing, by mail or electronically, at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

#### Article VIII Robert's Rules of Order

Unless otherwise provided for in the Articles or these Bylaws, business will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

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These Amended Bylaws of the Morrison County Historical Society supersede and replace any and all previous versions of the Society's Bylaws. They were adopted at a special meeting of Morrison County Historical Society members on May 4, 2021.

Original Morrison County Historical Society Bylaws adopted September 15, 1936.

Amended: 3/31/1979, 9/24/1995, 8/29/1998, 10/8/2006, 9/19/2016.



**Black-eyed Susan, one of the flowers from the Weyerhaeuser Museum's prairie areas, photo by Glenys Warner-Holman.**

## How to Be an Ambassador for MCHS

Advertising methods shift with each technological advance, yet word-of-mouth consistently remains the best way to share information about a person's favorite products and services. The same holds true for the Morrison County Historical Society. While we produce newsletters, books, and an active website, plus post on social media and write press releases, our best advertising comes from someone who has personal experience with MCHS sharing that knowledge with others. As a board member of MCHS, you are in a position to share what you know about the organization with others. Being a public ambassador for MCHS is one of the most important roles you can fulfill while serving on the board (and beyond!).

Social media has highlighted our personal networks of family, friends and acquaintances. The average network contains around 150 people. It is this network that serves as the foundation for sharing word-of-mouth messages. If each of the 9 MCHS board members has 150 people in their personal networks, there are 1,350 potential avenues for spreading the message of the organization.

### Nine Ways to Be an Ambassador for MCHS

1. Attend MCHS events.
2. Give memorials & gifts to MCHS in honor of the people in your life, or provide general donations to MCHS.
3. Volunteer at the Weyerhaeuser Museum (in addition to attending board meetings).
4. Follow MCHS on social media.
5. Share MCHS posts on social media with your networks.
6. Sign up for the MCHS e-newsletter.
7. Talk about MCHS and the work you do for the organization with your family, friends, and acquaintances.
8. Encourage those interested in Morrison County's history to become a member, make a donation, volunteer, or serve on a committee or the board.
9. Serve on a committee.

## Conflict of Interest Policy

According to the Minnesota Attorney General's Office, "Under Minnesota law, a conflict of interest arises when a nonprofit corporation enters into a contract or transaction with a director, a director's family member, or an organization in which the director has a material financial interest. Under certain circumstances, these types of transactions can be acceptable. If the transaction is challenged, the interested director will have the burden of establishing that the contract or transaction was fair and reasonable, that there was full disclosure of the conflict to the board of directors or members, and that the contract or transaction was approved by non-interested members or other directors in good faith." (<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Consumer/Publications/FiduciaryDuties.asp>)

The Morrison County Historical Society adopted a formal Conflict of Interest policy in 2008 that explains the process by which board and staff members disclose and deal with potential conflicts of interest. Board members should review this policy on an annual basis.

The full policy is as follows:

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY Morrison County Historical Society

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to prevent the personal interest of staff members and board members from interfering with the official performance of their duties and/or result in personal, financial, professional, or political gain on the part of such persons at the expense of the Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS)

#### Definitions

Conflict of interest means a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between individual interests and official MCHS responsibilities of MCHS staff members and Board of directors. In simpler terms, a conflict of interest occurs whenever the personal or professional interests of an individual are in conflict or have the appearance of a conflict with the best interest of the Morrison County Historical Society.

MCHS – Morrison County Histor-

ical Society

#### POLICY AND PRACTICES

1. Full disclosure shall be made by Staff members and Board of Director Members to the Board of Directors of all conflicts of interest, including but not limited to the following:

a. An individual or an individual's organization(s) stands to benefit from a transaction with the MCHS. This would exclude reimbursement that is part of her/his regular job responsibilities or as reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred.

b. A staff member in a supervisory capacity is related to another staff member whom she/he supervises

c. A MCHS staff member or Board of Director is related to another board member or staff member by blood, marriage or domestic partnership.

2. Following the disclosure of a possible conflict of interest or any condition listed above, the Board of Directors shall determine whether a conflict of interest exists and, if so the Board will initiate actions deemed necessary to address the conflict and the best interests of MCHS. Votes shall be by a majority vote without counting the vote of any interested director, even if the disinterested directors are less than a quorum.

3. An interested Board member, officer, or staff member shall not participate in any discussion related to the conflict issue or debate of the Board of Directors however; they may be present to provide clarifying information in such a discussion or debate unless objected to by any present board member.

4. All decisions shall be based on the best interests of the Morrison County Historical Society and be reflected in the official minutes of the Board meeting. The fact that a situation listed in Section 1 above exists does not necessarily mean that a conflict of interest exists. The Board of Directors must determine if the situation is significant enough to be a concern for the MCHS.

5. This policy and disclosure form must be reviewed annually by all specified parties. Any changes not previously noted shall be documented.

6. This policy is not intended to discourage any of the situations listed in Section 1 above if they are in the best interests of the MCHS.

## Duties of Officers of the Board

The 2014 edition of “Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence” by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits provides a clear set of guidelines for the proper governance of nonprofit organizations, including details about board characteristics and qualifications, composition, responsibilities, and operations. At its most basic level, a nonprofit board such as the one that operates the Morrison County Historical Society, is responsible for the governance, including the fiduciary and legal operations, of the organization.

Within the larger board structure, the officers of the board play a key role in guiding the organization. MCHS has a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary, each of whom performs distinct duties.

### President

The president is responsible for calling and presiding over board meetings, setting the agenda (in consultation with the executive director), notifying board members of meetings, creating committees, and making sure all reports (minutes, financials, staff, etc.) are compiled for meetings. The president also presides over the annual meeting. In addition, the president, along with the treasurer and one other board member, are named on bank and other financial accounts as representatives of MCHS. This gives them the ability to transfer funds, make withdrawals, and sign checks.

### Vice President

Should the president be unavailable, the vice president becomes responsible for fulfilling the duties of the president.

### Treasurer

The treasurer tracks and reports on the financial condition of MCHS at board meetings. The museum’s accounting program, QuickBooks, can provide the treasurer with a wide variety of reports, including profit & loss statements and balance sheets. The treasurer, along with the president and one other board member, are named on bank and other financial accounts as representatives of MCHS. This gives them the ability to transfer funds, make withdrawals, and

sign checks. The treasurer is responsible for overseeing the financial data produced by staff in order to ensure the financial health of MCHS. This includes instituting and maintaining proper controls over financial activities.

### Secretary

The secretary records the minutes of board meetings and the annual meeting and provides them in typed format for the rest of the board. The minutes are considered the official history of MCHS.

### Additional Check Signer

In addition to the president and treasurer, MCHS sometimes finds it necessary to have a third board member available to serve as a check signer for the organization. This board member does not need to be an officer. Like the president and treasurer, the check signer is named on MCHS bank accounts as a representative of MCHS and can transfer funds, make withdrawals, and sign checks.

### Separation of Duties

According to “Principles and Practices,” “No one should serve in more than one officer position in the same organization at the same time.” Further, “if staff membership on the board is deemed necessary, it should be limited to the executive director. The executive director should not serve as the chair, vice-chair, secretary or treasurer.”

This separation of duties between officers and between officers and staff is critical to the healthy functioning of MCHS. It is through the separation of duties that the organization is afforded the oversight needed to stay in compliance with the law and to avoid fiduciary pitfalls.



Bricks, museum fireplace.

## The Role of the Executive Director

While the role of the MCHS board of directors is governance of the organization, including ensuring that MCHS operates in accordance with the law and its mission and providing oversight of management and finances, the executive director is in charge of managing the operations of MCHS. This includes carrying out programs related to MCHS’s mission, managing human resources (staff and volunteers), and serving as a liaison to the board in order to keep board members informed of daily activities.

The executive director also serves as the public face of the organization, representing MCHS at community events and meetings and serving as a liaison between MCHS and external stakeholders (members, donors, government, businesses and other nonprofits). Further, the executive director assists the board in researching and developing policy.

The board and executive director share responsibility in crafting a strategic plan, fundraising, budgeting and financial management, and evaluating the organization to make sure it stays on-mission.

The board is responsible for hiring the executive director and evaluating his/her performance. The board also has the ability to terminate the executive director.

The well-being of MCHS depends upon a good balance between the functions of the board and those of the executive director.

### Income Sources

The Morrison County Historical Society has a variety of income sources, including income from an annual allotment from Morrison County, membership dues, donations, endowments, grants, research services, and gift shop sales.

*If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday. ~Pearl Buck*

# The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum

The Morrison County Historical Society was organized in 1936, with Valentine Kasperek, one of its founders, serving as the president and curator until his death in June 1951. The MCHS museum, located in the basement of the Historic Courthouse, was closed for a year until a meeting was held in August 1952 to revitalize the Society.

Alexander Huddleston became the new curator and served as the Society's secretary. He actively worked to increase the collections and MCHS quickly outgrew its basement space. Huddleston arranged for MCHS's taxidermy collection to be moved to the Pine Grove Park shelter and shifted exhibits to the basement hallway in order to gain more space. He was never to see a solution to the lack of collections space. Huddleston died in August 1958 following a heart attack.

MCHS went into another slump, remaining inactive until the Minnesota Historical Society stepped in to re-energize it in 1962. Arch Grahn, field director for the state historical society, was in charge of the effort to rebuild interest and membership in the organization. (Grahn had also been involved with the 1952 revitalization of MCHS.) Art and Jan Warner were in attendance at the December 1962 meeting and became members. They immersed themselves

in the organization, with Art first becoming president on March 4, 1965. Jan "proposed keeping a Scrap Book of photographs and articles of current events in Morrison County" and was authorized by the board to do so. Thus began the curatorial work that would eventually lead to her becoming executive director of the organization.

Space remained an issue, with the Society deciding it needed to build a new museum. During the planning phase (late 1960s-early 1970s) of building a new museum, MCHS appointed a Design Committee. It was comprised of Stella LeBlanc (chair), Arvid Christopherson, Felix Ginter, Reinhart Holland, Gladys Coenen, Jan Warner, and Art Warner (MCHS President – ex-officio).

The Design Committee put together an extensive document describing what they wanted to achieve with a new museum in terms of the space needs of the building and conveying county history.

The intro to the document includes the following:

"The Morrison County Historical Society's building should reflect the important historic events of this county. It should not be a building copied from a particular period but rather a composite of past events put together with a feeling

of today. It must also be planned to serve today's functions and those of the future. This appears to be a difficult task but in studying Morrison County's past and its present one finds strong relationships. Therefore, it should not be difficult to achieve a building "for all time" by using those materials and designs of today which also reflect past

events. Effective use should also be made of "salvaged" materials from Morrison County's history."

The document discusses the importance of the Mississippi River to the museum site, local materials suggested for use (logs, rough-sawn lumber, stone, yellow brick, black granite, iron), and the function of the building.

In the summary regarding the museum's function, the following points were made:

"THE FUNCTION: The function of this building is to preserve and interpret the past, remembering also that today is tomorrow's past.

"1. The site which has been chosen, if used wisely, will in itself help to accomplish this.

"2. Past events can be reflected in the design of the structure.

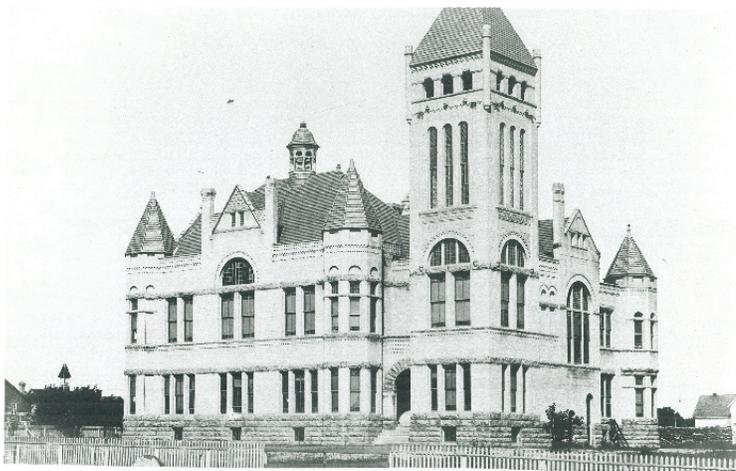
"3. The interior, with its displays and its research materials, will carry out the interpretation in more detail."

Architects who worked on the project were given this document as a starting point in designing the museum.

Foster Dunwiddie, the museum's eventual architect, took the suggestions to heart, visiting historic sites throughout Morrison County with Jan Warner, who served as the local point-person during construction of the museum. Dunwiddie's design for the museum was an updated Greek Revival style, representing a style popular among early county settlers. He was inspired by the original buildings at Old Fort Ripley, especially the enlisted men's barracks and officers' quarters.

The Society's new museum was constructed between 1974 and 1975, with the dedication occurring on August 24, 1975. It was named The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum as a memorial to the general manager of the Pine Tree Lumber Company, whose children had provided the funding to build the museum.

~ Mary Warner



The Historic Morrison County Courthouse was built between 1890-91. In April 1938, a basement room was provided to the Morrison County Historical Society, which served as the organization's first permanent home. Photo dated c. 1900. Note that the clock had not yet been installed in the tower. #1990.29.29

The "The" is part of the official name of The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum and is normally capitalized.

# Growing History

*Art Warner, who served as president of MCHS for 47 out of the 50+ years he was involved with the organization, wrote this article in honor of the 25th anniversary of The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum.*

**W**OW! Where have the years gone? It seems like such a very short time ago that we were sitting down with Foster Dunwiddie to begin the process of designing a new museum for Morrison County. We remember well Foster's advice to determine the "program" for the Society before making any major design decisions. He explained that it is much more efficient to have in mind what you plan to do, and then design a building around those plans, rather than to try to fit what you plan to do into an existing structure.

We appointed a Building Committee which met with Jan Warner and Foster several times, and which provided valuable input and ideas. Then Jan and Foster drove all over the county looking at old buildings to see what styles had been popular in this area. Foster also looked at many old photographs of Morrison County buildings, including Fort Gaines (which is now included within Camp Ripley), to see what buildings looked like in the past. Foster's keen eye picked up on the various design elements in all of these buildings, and out of all that effort and study came the museum which we know today.

At the same time that the building was being planned, Jan and Foster were working with John Low, a young designer working with Miller-Dunwiddie, on the scope and design of the displays which would help to tell the story of Morrison County. John had just the right touch in bringing together the story to be told and the type of exhibits needed to convey that story. The many compliments we have heard regarding displays indicate that he did a superb job. John also selected the furnishings which we are still using today.

Prior to moving into the new building, the museum had been housed in one very small room in the basement of what is now known as the Historic Courthouse. Most of the artifacts and documents were crammed together in a haphazard fashion in that room which served as office, display, and storage space, while other artifacts were placed out in the hallway, or in a small damp vault located on the other side of the basement. There was no space available for work or research areas, and no security for any part of the collection. There was also absolutely no temperature or humidity control for any of the artifacts, photographs or documents.

What a joy it was moving into a building which had an office area, and separate spaces for display and storage, a library, a room for meetings, and a

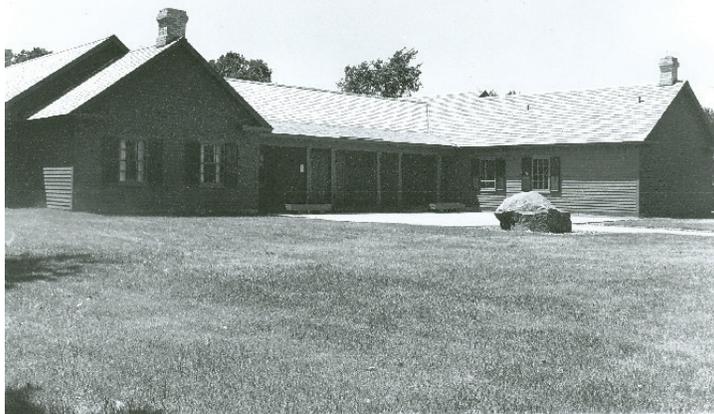
workroom. It also had temperature and humidity controls, and an alarm system to help protect items which cannot be replaced. The temperature and humidity are monitored at five points throughout the Museum, and the alarm system keeps track of entrance to the building, movement within the building, smoke, high temperature (which could indicate a fire), and low temperature (which could indicate that the heating system is not working).

which we provide to the community, and to the many people who study history and do research on a variety of subjects. With the tremendous increase in interest in family history, the Museum placed us in a position where we could be of very real service to genealogists. Of course, this also meant that there was a need for more than the one Staff person we had at that time. We now must have a highly skilled, trained, and educated Staff to meet the needs of patrons. Fortunately, we have an excellent Staff of one full-time person, and four part-time people, to operate the Museum (which is open year around), and to assist those who come in, write, call, or send an e-mail message, to do research.

Additions to the Museum in 1981 allowed us to receive, store and care for more artifacts, photographs, and documents which have proved invaluable in doing research and in telling the story of Morrison County. The installation of a computer system in 1993, under the expert guidance of Dorothy Bachan, literally catapulted us into the electronic world and all that can be accomplished with a few strokes on a computer keyboard. We are now on the edge of entering the rather unbelievable world of the Internet, with all that can be accomplished through that mystical world-wide connection of computers.

It's somewhat awesome to think that in twenty-five years we have gone from paper and pencil, an old rickety typewriter, and one telephone in a small crowded basement room, to a multi-room building with digitized and computerized record keeping, and the ability to contact almost any part of the information world in a matter of a few seconds. The Museum, with all of the electronic advances which have been incorporated into the building, has greatly expanded the ways in which we can be of service to the many people who have an interest in history and genealogy.

~ Art Warner



**The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum after its completion in 1975.**

workroom. It also had temperature and humidity controls, and an alarm system to help protect items which cannot be replaced. The temperature and humidity are monitored at five points throughout the Museum, and the alarm system keeps track of entrance to the building, movement within the building, smoke, high temperature (which could indicate a fire), and low temperature (which could indicate that the heating system is not working).

It didn't take very long to realize how this new space would allow us to improve and expand on the service

## The Museum's Namesake

The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum is named for lumberman Charles A. Weyerhaeuser, who, along with his business partner Richard "Drew" Musser, ran the Pine Tree Lumber Company in Little Falls, MN, from 1890 to 1920. Construction of the museum came through the generous donation of Charles' children.

Back in the 1970s, when Charles Weyerhaeuser's family got involved in the Morrison County Historical Society during the planning phase for a new museum, the family offered to make a donation toward construction of the building. Eventually, the family decided to donate all of the funds needed to construct the museum. They asked to remain anonymous, a request that was honored for as long as possible, until someone mentioned the source of the donation in a community meeting. With the cat out of the bag, the Society went public with the source of funding for the museum, which was also a good time to reveal the name of the new facility.

From the *Little Falls Daily Transcript*, March 18, 1974:

*The Morrison County Historical Society today revealed that its new building, now under construction, is being donated to the Society as a memorial to a prominent long-time resident of Little Falls, the late Charles A. Weyerhaeuser, by members of his family.*

*Upon completion, according to Society president Art Warner, the building will be known as the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum. Mr. Weyerhaeuser (1864-1930) is chiefly known for his work as general manager of the Pine Tree Lumber Company from its inception in 1891 until 1920.*

*Warner noted that "we are extremely fortunate to be the recipients of this gift, which will be of great benefit to all of the people in Morrison County and the surrounding area."*

While the building bears Charles' name, the collections and exhibits reflect Morrison County as a whole.

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*The MCHS board meets every 4-6 weeks. All members and the public are welcome to attend. Call the museum at 320-632-4007 for the meeting schedule.*



**Charles A. Weyerhaeuser (1866-1930), son of Frederick Weyerhaeuser, who started the Weyerhaeuser Company, a world-wide lumber corporation. Pine Tree Lumber Company, based in Little Falls with Charles as the general manager, was the Weyerhaeuser Company's first foray into Minnesota.**

.....

**The first MCHS website launched in 2002, built by Mary Warner and Eric Swanson using HTML. The website was shifted entirely to the WordPress platform in 2009. Articles and blog posts are regularly added. For more info on the museum and Morrison County's history, visit [morrisoncountyhistory.org](http://morrisoncountyhistory.org).**

.....

## Where the Rooms All Have Names

**D**id you know that the rooms in The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum all have names?

Yes, most of the names are generic, like Archive, Work Room, Collections Room I & II, Kitchen, Front Desk, and Director's Office, but several rooms have special names.

There's the J. C. Patience Room, Z. N. Barnes Room, Gordon Rosenmeier Room, and the R. D. Musser Library. Why these names? All of these men were associated with Pine Tree Lumber Company, so the room names convey history.

Staff have more casual names for these rooms. The Z. N. Barnes Room houses the business and industry exhibits, including artifacts from the logging industry, so we call this the "logging exhibit" or "business exhibit" room.

The J. C. Patience Room houses the way-of-life exhibits. The first label visible upon entering the room has the title "Cultural Baggage," so that's what we call the room.

The Gordon Rosenmeier Room is used primarily for research, so we call this "the research room."

And the R. D. Musser library is simply called "the library."

## Museum Materials Reflect History

The materials used in the construction of The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum were well considered and reflect aspects of area history and local resources.

When you visit the museum, you'll notice wood everywhere, from wood car siding and columns around the courtyard windows to wood ceiling beams and floors in the exhibit and research rooms to a fully paneled library. This is to honor the museum's namesake, Charles A. Weyerhaeuser.

The slate floors in the hallway speak to the slate found at the Little Falls Dam. The hall floor was originally supposed to be vinyl-asbestos tile but the material was upgraded during the building process.

The yellow brick used in the building's chimneys and two fireplaces was manufactured at the local brickyards west of town. They were salvaged from St. Adalbert's Church. Pat Burns, local bricklayer, laid the brick. Architect Foster Dunwiddie required him to make a sample of the brickwork prior to starting because he wanted to make sure the mortar was properly scribed. He wanted "beaded" joints that were found in old brickwork, not concave joints. In order to provide beaded joints, Pat had to make a special tool for the job.

## The Museum Landscape

The landscape upon which the Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum sits was designed with as much care as the museum. The intent was to make the grounds part of the interpretation of Morrison County's history. To that end, there are several artifacts on the grounds, including milling equipment, a piece of the Jefferson Highway, and a granite boulder from one of the county's quarries. The courtyard fountain is a memorial to Jane Moyer. The gazebo overlooks the confluence of Pike Creek and the Mississippi River, allowing visitors to imagine how this site was used as a lookout for Native people. The prairie areas speak to the numerous prairies in Morrison County, and the Big Pine reminds visitors of the pine forests and the logging industry. Nature is very much a part of the interpretation of county history and is a huge draw for visitors to the museum.



The gazebo.

## The Gazebo

On the south side of The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, visible as you walk through the front doors, is a courtyard with a picturesque gazebo overlooking the Mississippi River.

The gazebo was built and installed between 1983 and 1984. It was designed by Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc., the same firm responsible for designing the building, with Foster Dunwiddie leading the project.

W. Gohman Construction Co. of St. Joseph, MN, was awarded the contract to build the gazebo, which cost just over \$30,000 to build. (A gazebo worth \$30,000? The museum's insurance company at the time did not think a gazebo was worth more than \$10,000, but looking at the hand-cut "fish scale" shingles on the roof and specialty woodwork, it was worth every bit of its \$30,000.)

In a memo dated November 11, 1983, from Foster Dunwiddie concerning a meeting regarding the gazebo, Foster noted, "Bruce Gohman indicated that they plan to install the footing for the Gazebo this fall before freeze-up. They will be fabricating the Gazebo in their shop over winter and will bring it to the site in sections for erection by crane while the ground is still frozen. We discussed bringing the crane in along the north side of the Museum. Taking care not to disturb the prairie restoration in this area of the site. We also discussed removing all excavated material from the site."

## The Prairie

On September 22, 1977, The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum received a set of guidelines from Prairie Restorations, Inc. for prairie landscaping at the museum. As it turns out, Prairie Restorations, which is headquartered in Princeton, MN, was founded that year and the museum was an early customer.

Ron Bowen, one of the founders of Prairie Restorations, used to walk along roadway ditches to collect the prairie seeds he needed to grow the business (literally and figuratively). From this humble beginning, the company has grown from 3 employees to 45 and from 1 operational location to 6 (as of 2015). The company still restores prairies, but also works to restore other ecosystems, like wetlands and woodlands.

Before sustainability became a household word, the Weyerhaeuser Museum was practicing it by having Prairie Restorations install natural prairie areas on the grounds, one on the north side of the museum grounds, adjacent to the forest of the Lindbergh Site, and one along the east side near the building.

The original cost to install the prairie was \$7,556, with replantings and maintenance occurring over the years. Museum staff enjoy watching the prairie areas evolve over the seasons, hoping to see butterfly weed and other flowers bloom..

## The Fountain

The fountain in the museum's courtyard was installed in 1977 in memory of Jane Moyer, a Little Falls resident. Friends of Jane, including Alphild Michaels, Keith & Viola Tanner, Lucy & Edward Tanner, Bob & Sarah Maud Sivertsen, and Laura Jane Musser, made contributions for the fountain.

The fountain was manufactured by Robinson Iron of Alexander City, Alabama. The Weyerhaeuser Museum's fountain is the popular "Roman Fluted" style that Robinson Iron offers. It has a 5-foot "Frog & Turtle" basin. The cost of the fountain, including shipping, was \$1,618.36. Miller-Dunwiddie Architects, Inc., the architecture firm that designed the museum, was involved with the fountain installation and the landscaping around it.

During shipping, the fountain "cracked in half" and was "refused by [the] other truck line". (On Hand Notice, Terminal Transport Co., Inc., 10/18/1977, Weyerhaeuser Museum documents 1973-1988) It was returned to the company "for adjustments." (MCHS Board Minutes, September 22, 1977) The weight of the 2 crates with the fountain and basin came to 940 pounds.

According to Jan Warner, former MCHS executive director, the 2 crates sat outside for a while before the fountain was installed because a bird built a nest on one of the crates and no one wanted to disturb the eggs before they hatched.

The fountain was repaired (re-welded and repainted, with new wiring and pump) by Ricky Masog of DMS Machine and Chuck Hauer of Hauer Brothers Electric in Little Falls in 2015.



# The MCHS Collections

The collections of the Morrison County Historical Society are the basis of all the organization does, from assisting with research to creating exhibits to writing history-related articles to historic preservation projects, and more. The collections include a wide variety of material, such as newspapers, photographs, oral histories, books, 3-dimensional artifacts, and ephemera, with everything related in some way to Morrison County's history. There are thousands of items in the collections, all donated by those with a connection to the county who want to see their heritage preserved. The goal of MCHS is to preserve items in perpetuity. The Weyerhaeuser Museum serves as an important part of that preservation effort, with temperature, humidity, and light controls, along with a security system in the building.

The following article was written by Ann Marie Johnson, MCHS curator of collections, discussing the evolution of caring for museum collections. It was written in 2011 and appeared in the MCHS newsletter, Vol. 24, No. 1.

## The Evolution of a Collection

After nearly seventy-five years of existence, the collections of the Morrison County Historical Society have evolved from a small group of "antiques" and "pioneer histories" to a museum filled with artifacts and archival materials relating to the history of Morrison County, Minnesota. The purpose of the Society at the time of its formal organization included collecting "material of every kind", a purpose that continues to be fulfilled (County Historical Society Completes Its Organization; *Little Falls Daily Transcript*; 1 September 1936). As the collections grow, new dimensions are added to the rich depths of Morrison County history "...for the education, information, benefit, and enjoyment of the people of Morrison county and future generations." (Minutes from organizational meeting; 28 July 1936).

The first formal gifts to the collections of the Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) were made in the summer of 1938, barely two years after the organization was officially established. The initial items were photographs and maps, archival materials that continue to serve as key assets. Among the earliest artifacts were an assortment of three-dimensional objects, including logging hooks, oxen shoes, a bear trap and even an organ that was converted into a desk. Donated to MCHS by the family of Charles Edward Vasaly (1869-1935), a newspaper editor and seven-term mayor of Little Falls, the organ had originally been used at Fort Ripley for entertainment. After fairly modest beginnings, the collections soon began to grow at an increasingly rapid rate. In 1951, MCHS president Valentine Kasperek reported an inventory of 1,110 antiques, 311 historical write-ups, several hundred photographs and "pictures of interest", and 1,131 Works Progress Administration biographies. Today, the size of the collections numbers well over fifty thousand.

As donations poured in, space quickly became a critical issue. In a letter dated February 27, 1940, to Fred Johnson, president of the Brown County Historical Society, Kasperek expressed his increasing concern over lack of space. At the time, MCHS was housed in the basement of the Morrison County courthouse in a room that was approximately the size of the museum's current Research Room, which measures about fifteen by thirty feet. This room served as the home of MCHS for almost four decades courtesy of the Morrison County Board of Commissioners. Sixteen years later, curator Alex Huddleston exclaimed in an article published in the *Little Falls Daily Transcript*, "(t)here just isn't enough space!" (Collection Grows

as Space Declines; 29 December 1956). When MCHS moved into The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum in 1975, it must have been a dream come true for the collections. Today, over thirty-five years later, it is hard not to repeat Huddleston's lament, "(t)here just isn't enough space!" As with many other cultural institutions that have collections in



A bison bone from the MCHS collections, donated in 1938.  
#1938.41.1

their care, space at MCHS seems to have always been and most likely always will be a key concern.

Substantial changes have also occurred in the accessioning process for the collections, the method of cataloging used by museum professionals to document a collection. The original collections records at MCHS were notes handwritten in a series of small hardcover ledgers. The information for each item consisted of what would now be considered less than bare minimum – the name of the donor (sometimes only the last name and first initial) and a one to two word description of the item donated, such as "scenes" or "clump". By the end of the first ledger, which was used until the fall of 1946, the information had become somewhat more descriptive, typically consisting of a phrase or short sentence, such as "Photo of Pine Tree Lumber Co". Today, museum management software allows for a sophisticated level of specific information to be recorded for each item. Most items in the collections at MCHS now have several pages of associated documentation plus detailed digital photographs. The numbering system has also changed significantly. From a

single ascending number (i.e. "1", "2", "3"), the system now consists of a set of three numbers (i.e. #2011.1.1). This set creates a unique object identification for each item and identifies the year it was received, the chronological order in which it was received within that year, and the number that item is within the donation. For example, #2011.1.1 represents the first item in the first donation that was added to the collections in the year 2011.

According to the newspaper article announcing a call for the formation of a historical society in Morrison County, the purpose of the organization would be to "gather historical information about the county, mark historical spots and secure specimens." (WPA to Organize Historical Society In Morrison County; *Little Falls Daily Transcript*; 25 July 1936). After nearly three quarters of a century, the Morrison County Historical Society continues to fulfill this original purpose with "...the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Morrison county and the state of Minnesota...." (County Historical Society Completes Its Organization; *Little Falls Daily Transcript*; 1 September 1936). As a nonprofit organization devoted to preserving artifacts and historical information regarding Morrison County and to educating the public about the history of the county, MCHS continually seeks to use the collections in new and increasingly accessible ways. Visitors to The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum are welcome to enjoy the richness and depth that is the ever-evolving collections of the Morrison County Historical Society. ~ Ann Marie Johnson

### The Museum as Artifact

The largest artifact in MCHS's collection is actually the Weyerhaeuser Museum. The museum building, while providing a protective envelope for the collections inside, takes as much care (if not more) than the other artifacts. The museum opened in 1975. It is the goal of MCHS to have the Weyerhaeuser Museum placed in the National Register of Historic Places. It will be eligible for this designation when it reaches 50 years of age, however the building must be maintained sensitively in order to preserve the integrity necessary for eligibility.

## 10 Words to Describe MCHS The Organization's Ethos

The Morrison County Historical Society has a good reputation. It is known state-wide as being a progressive, professional organization that takes the lead in adopting best practices in the museum field. Visitors to The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum recognize this reputation through the care we take in producing exhibits and in providing research resources. Members and the public see it through the history we write for publications and the website. The high quality of MCHS's services is a point of pride for staff and board members. However, we don't rest on our laurels, expecting quality to come without hard work and a solid foundation of values that have been inculcated over the course of MCHS's history.

Following are 10 words that describe the Morrison County Historical Society's ethos, the values by which the organization operates.

~ Mary Warner

*The list of values first appeared in the Morrison County Historical Society's newsletter, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2014, but has been updated for this publication.*



Ledgers and document boxes in the archives of the Weyerhaeuser Museum.

**1. Helpful** – We provide good customer service, helping people find answers to their research questions. If we can't find an answer at our museum, we try to connect researchers to other research resources. We are also helpful to other organizations in terms of sharing museum practices and research.

**2. Careful** – We take great care when it comes to our collections, the museum environment, finances, and research.

**3. Ethical** – We operate the museum with high integrity, following best practices in nonprofit management and the museum field. We are transparent about our operations.

**4. Forward-thinking** – We continually watch trends, try new things, engage in contemporary collecting, and adopt new technology where appropriate.

**5. Open** – MCHS is open in a number of ways. The museum is open all year. We're open to new ideas. Most importantly, we are open to the history of *all* of this land's people, from the time before this land became Morrison County up to today. We don't just focus on the rich and famous. We're also open to *all* of Morrison County's history, not just the feel-good, pleasant stuff.

**6. Encouraging** – Not only do we collect and preserve Morrison County's history, we encourage others to do the same. We also encourage researchers who hit brick walls in their research, working to help them get over, around or through the wall.

**7. Curious** – We question everything. Our curiosity leads to uncovering more county history.

**8. Creative** – Because we operate on a limited budget, we find creative ways to accomplish goals and present local history to the public.

**9. Engaged** – We stay engaged with local community issues and the larger museum community throughout the region and state. We work to improve the entire museum field by sharing our expertise.

**10. Generous** – Admission to the Weyerhaeuser Museum is free. We share Morrison County history freely on our website and our staff is always willing to share advice on preservation issues and nonprofit operations.

# Challenges & Opportunities

There are challenges associated with running any type of organization. It is no different in the nonprofit museum field, which has several challenges that regularly crop up (lack of money and lack of space being at the top of the list). The Morrison County Historical Society is not immune to these field-wide issues and additionally has a few challenges that are unique to the organization. Embedded within each challenge is an opportunity.

**Challenge:** The Weyerhaeuser Museum doesn't have enough space for its current and future collections.

**Opportunity:** A lack of space makes staff very good at arranging collections in the space we do have. It also causes the organization to be thoughtful in bringing in new collections.

**Challenge:** There is not enough money available to do everything we'd like to do as an organization.

**Opportunity:** Having a tight budget makes the organization operate efficiently and figure out creative solutions for accomplishing things at low cost. Being short on cash is also an opportunity to find new ways to raise the money we need.

**Challenge:** MCHS does not have enough staff.

**Opportunity:** The staff we do have is multi-dimensional, taking on a variety of roles and tasks within the organization. Staff finds efficient ways to do what needs to be done, in many cases creating content that is used in a variety of ways. Being short-staffed provides opportunities for volunteers to be involved with daily museum operations.

**Challenge:** There is too much history for MCHS to save.

**Opportunity:** This means that MCHS's mission is perpetual. MCHS will remain relevant because the history of this land stretches back to long before the county was formed and will continue so long as people make this land their

home. MCHS also has a role in assisting others with preserving their history.

**Challenge:** Maintaining the Weyerhaeuser Museum so that its integrity remains intact.

**Opportunity:** People love the Weyerhaeuser Museum, a building designed to be an artifact that helps tell the history of Morrison County. As MCHS works to maintain the site, we can use it to show others how to preserve



Card catalog index of the Little Falls Daily Transcript newspaper, MCHS collections.

structures in a sensitive way. If we can maintain the building's integrity, it will be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places when it turns 50. National Register designation will provide another draw for visitors.

**Challenge:** There are people who think history is boring.

**Opportunity:** This gives MCHS a chance to provide people with history that makes a connection. Once people see how they fit into the larger scheme of county history, they no longer think history is boring.

**Challenge:** MCHS is often seen as a Little Falls, MN, organization.

**Opportunity:** While MCHS is located within the city limits of Little Falls, it covers all of Morrison County's history from the time before Morrison County was formed as a government entity. Because Little Falls is the county

seat and has the largest population in the county, MCHS does have a preponderance of city history in its collections. Care must be taken to constantly examine and share history from all reaches, times, and peoples of the county and for MCHS to host events around the county.

**Challenge:** There are many organizations in Little Falls with similar names: The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site, Charles A. Lindbergh State Park, and Linden Hill (the Weyerhaeuser and Musser homes).

**Opportunity:** Having so many great sites with similar names allows staff and board members to talk about the larger community and stay connected to these other organizations.

**Challenge:** Because there are many intriguing attractions in the area, MCHS is sometimes left out of marketing related to the entire community.

**Opportunity:** This allows MCHS to take responsibility for marketing itself, rather than relying on other organizations to do it for us. In this manner, we have better control of our brand and message.

**Challenge:** History and preservation issues can lead to heated emotions.

**Opportunity:** Because history is the sum of our past, including positive and negative events, it very well can lead to heated emotions. Museums are trusted institutions in the public sphere. Most don't hide history that makes people uncomfortable; they instead find a way to engage visitors in processing history, putting it into a larger perspective. While this might make MCHS temporarily unpopular, the overall effect of fairly covering both negative and positive history preserves the overall trust the public has in the organization. If people are experiencing heated emotions due to history, it means they are engaged and care. (None of that 'history is boring' attitude here!)

~ Mary Warner

## Budget Process

Each year, typically in the spring/summer, the Morrison County Historical Society's Finance Committee develops a budget for the following year. The budget is then sent to the Board of Directors for approval. The budget needs to be approved before MCHS presents it to Morrison County in order to seek further funding through the county allotment. MCHS is invited to attend a county budget meeting, which usually takes place in July or August of each year.



Specialty hardware appears on the doors at the Weyerhaeuser Museum, including these small metal doorknobs.

## Other Historical Societies in Morrison County

- ~ Motley Area Historical Society
- ~ Royalton Historical Society
- ~ Upsala Area Historical Society

For a full list of local attractions, organizations and other resources the Morrison County Historical Society calls upon for research, see the Online Resources page of MCHS's website.

## Museum Services - What We Do for the Public

As a local history organization, the Morrison County Historical Society has no shortage of services it can offer to the public, all of them based in some way on the organization's mission of preserving and sharing Morrison County's diverse history. Here are some of the services the organization provides:

- Exhibits, permanent, temporary & online
- Self-guided tours for general visitors
- Guided tours for school & other groups
- Research assistance for those who visit the museum
- Research services for those who cannot visit the museum
- Photo reproductions
- Preserve donated artifacts & documents
- Assist individuals with questions on how to preserve their personal collections
- Assist municipalities and other organizations with research for historic preservation and other topics

- Research and write county history articles for newsletter, website, and other publications
- Produce forms, procedures and projects for collecting local history
- Host classes, events and book talks
- Monitor local preservation issues and provide info as needed
- Assist authors with research for books and articles
- Advise other organizations on non-profit issues
- Produce community-related walking tours
- Create sessions for museum- or history-related conferences
- Answer general questions about county history
- Connect people to other history-related resources across the state
- Provide directions to other attractions and sites in the county

(Note: This list is not exhaustive!)

## A Few Words About Collaborations

Collaborations between organizations have become the darlings of the nonprofit and granting communities. The benefits of collaborations (efficiency, cost sharing, networking, etc.) are often touted and, when they work, they benefit all organizations involved. However, there are downsides to collaborations, including increased complexity, being led off-mission, and an imbalance in how costs, responsibility and credit are accrued among the organizations involved.

Before entering into a collaboration, the Morrison County Historical Society needs to consider the following:

Does the collaboration fit with or further MCHS's mission of preserving and sharing Morrison County history?

Who will be doing the bulk of the work for the collaboration? Is it truly a joint effort or will MCHS be required to provide considerable resources? Will

there be more work than current MCHS staff can handle?

How is the funding to be managed? Who will serve as the fiscal agent? Is MCHS expected to contribute financial resources to the collaboration? If so, how much? Does MCHS have the budget to cover expected costs?

Who gets credit for the collaboration? Ideally, all organizations involved in the collaboration should be credited in publicity as contributors. MCHS needs to be known for its work in cooperative efforts.

Will private benefit accrue to an individual or organization via the collaborative? Because the IRS has rules about nonprofits not providing private benefits, MCHS should not be involved in collaborations unless private benefit issues are addressed. (See MCHS's conflict of interest policy.)

# Contact

The Morrison County Historical Society owns and operates  
The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum in Little Falls, Minnesota.

**Mailing Address:**

Morrison County Historical Society - PO Box 239, Little Falls, MN 56345

**Physical Address:**

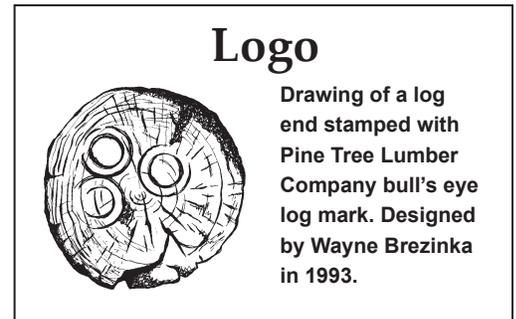
The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum - 2151 S. Lindbergh Drive, Little Falls, MN

**Web Address:** [www.morrisoncountyhistory.org](http://www.morrisoncountyhistory.org)

**Email Addresses:** [mocohistory@gmail.com](mailto:mocohistory@gmail.com) or  
[staff@morrisoncountyhistory.org](mailto:staff@morrisoncountyhistory.org)

**Phone:** 320-632-4007

MCHS staff maintains a current list of contact information for all board members.



*History is never antiquated, because humanity is always fundamentally the same. ~Walter Rauschenbusch*