

## **Morrison County Historical Society 2021 Highlights - Annual Meeting Report, September 8, 2021**

**Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic continues. After being closed through December 2020 and January 2021, the Weyerhaeuser Museum reopened by appointment only in February 2021.

In the spring of the year, several vaccines were made available and there was a great push to get people vaccinated as quickly as possible. The goal was to reach 70% vaccination of the population, at which point it was felt that COVID-19 would be subdued. MCHS staff received vaccines as soon as they were able. The Weyerhaeuser Museum reopened to the public on June 3, 2021, with public hours set at Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., with Wednesdays by appointment. Those who were vaccinated could visit the museum without a mask, while the unvaccinated were required to wear a mask. After a couple of months, the delta variant of the disease started spreading wildly and the CDC went back to recommending masks indoors for those who were both vaccinated and unvaccinated in places that had not achieved a vaccination rate of at least 70%. Because Morrison County's vaccination rate is only at 49%, the Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) reinstated the mask requirement in August for all who visit the museum.

MCHS received a second Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$23,397 in 2021. Both the first PPP loan (\$23,600) and second were entirely forgiven. In addition, MCHS received a CARES Act grant of \$5,000 from the City of Little Falls.

All events and programs hosted by MCHS are designed with the pandemic in mind, with some programs occurring outside, some online through Zoom, some as hybrid in-person and online events, and some as in-person, masked events. The popular Candlelight Hike done in partnership with Lindbergh State Park and the Lindbergh House & Museum was turned into a daytime scavenger hunt hike for 2021.

**Capital Campaign & Capital Projects:** The bonding bill toward the Weyerhaeuser Museum's may capital improvement projects was resubmitted by local legislators again in 2021 and Mary Warner, MCHS executive director, testified about the bill to legislators via remote meeting. Because this was not a bonding year, the bill did not pass, though it will likely be reintroduced next year.

The big capital improvement project MCHS has been working on in 2020/2021 is replacing the aging HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system with a smaller, more efficient system. MCHS has received a Region 5 CARES Act zero-percent interest, 15-year loan of \$110,000 toward the new system, a USDA Rural Development grant of \$21,000 for the HVAC system, and a \$10,000 grant from Morrison County Community Development to remove the 8,000-gallon underground fuel oil tank that was part of the old system. The HVAC system is scheduled to be replaced in October 2021. The museum will be closed to the public during this project.

Kampmann Sash & Door of Brainerd manufactured and replaced three of the museum's exterior doors that had deteriorated with age. We have one more exterior door to replace.

Painting of the Weyerhaeuser Museum's exterior continues. Chris Ann and David Johnson, siblings of Ann Marie Johnson, MCHS preservationist, have spent several days over the summer painting sections of the museum.

**Updated Articles & Bylaws:** In order to be eligible for the USDA Rural Development grant, MCHS was required to update its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaw. It did so at a special meeting of members on May 4, 2021.

**Strategic Plan Update:** The ad hoc Strategic Plan Committee of MCHS has been meeting throughout 2021 to update the strategic plan the organization adopted in 2017. The organization has made headway on a number of the goals in the 2017 plan, particularly in building & grounds and programming, and felt it was time to revisit the plan, refocus and reprioritize its goals.

**February Event Series:** The 2021 February event series, Exploring History & Culture in Central Minnesota, featured programming from the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum & Gallery, cohosted online by MCHS, the Stearns History Museum, Sherburne History Center, and Benton County Historical Society, with sponsorships from Sourcewell and Rethos: Places Reimagined.

**Brick by Brick Series:** In order to explore the idea that history is part of a community's infrastructure, MCHS pulled together a variety of partners for a three-part online series called "Brick by Brick: Building Community Development Through History." Presenters included people from the City of Little Falls, Morrison County Community Development, Taft Law, Rethos: Places Reimagined, the MN State Historic Preservation Office, Spring Hill Capital, Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape, St. Cloud State University, MN Pollution Control Agency, and MCHS, with online hosting and moderation provided by Sourcewell. Videos of the series can be found on MCHS's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV3GC1akugIoQbp6Oab3tow>.

**LF Summer Musical & Kintop Exhibit:** In a unique partnership, the Little Falls Summer Musical theater group and MCHS got together to present a story from Morrison County's history: the 1905 unsolved murder of Annie Kintop from Darling. Taryn Verley wrote a fictionalized account of the murder called "Darling," that Little Falls Summer Musical performed, adding period-appropriate music found in MCHS's collections. MCHS also created a traveling exhibit that explored the murder from a historical perspective. The exhibit was part of MCHS's exhibit at the Morrison County Fair in Little Falls, as well as being put on display at the Charles Martin Auditorium during the August performances of "Darling." It was brought back to the Weyerhaeuser Museum, where it will remain on display until the end of 2021.

**Rethos Contract:** MCHS renewed its contract to serve as the Central Minnesota Education Coordinator for Rethos: Place Reimagined in 2021. The contract involves MCHS arranging 5-6 preservation-related training classes in Central Minnesota.

**Musser Fund Grant:** MCHS received a Laura Jane Musser Fund general operating grant in 2021 in order to hire a part-time, temporary collections assistant/registrar to assist with the many collections-in-waiting the museum has. Collections-in-waiting are those that have been offered to MCHS but have not been officially accessioned and entered into the museum collection. Collections items are often received in far greater volume than current staff have time to process. These items become collections-in-waiting.

**Morrison County Historical Society**  
**2021 Web Stats: January 1 – August 20, 2021**

Unique visitors to website: 38,706

Pages viewed: 581,979

Top 3 downloaded PDFs:

1. World War II Abbreviations
2. Morrison County Murders Index
3. Little Falls on the Big River

Top 10 web pages viewed:

1. Home page
2. How to Build a Museum Exhibit in an Hour
3. 1972 Flood Exhibit
4. Morrison County Influentials
5. Questions from the Murder Box
6. Contact [MCHS]
7. Paul Larson's Boats
8. Hennepin Paper Company – Construction Paper
9. Online Resources
10. Hole in the Day's Bluff

Twitter followers: 841

Joined Twitter in March 2009 – 12 k tweets since then

Facebook followers: 1,038

Facebook likes: 931