

# COTTONWOOD



## County Historical Society

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

Summer 2020

### STAY SAFE MN



## Welcome Back!

The museum reopened to the public on July 20th. We encourage visitors to wear masks and sanitize hands upon entering. Only groups of 10 or less will be allowed to visit at one time, and anyone interested in doing research in the office/research library must make an appointment. This is a great way to ensure we can assist you in your research and yet have a minimum amount of volunteers at the museum. If you want to visit the museum on Saturday for the next few months, you will need an appointment. Please call 831-1134 to set up a time.

While it may not be comforting to say “We are living in historic times”, we are experiencing similar events that we heard in stories from our grandparents such as rationing during the World War II era, the isolation during the polio outbreak or how important family and good neighbors were to making it through troubled times. I wonder what our grandparents would say today?

Thank you for your membership at the Cottonwood County Historical Society and your continued support. These are “historic times” and it is comforting to know that you value local history. The museum has been around a long time and together we will weather the effects of this pandemic. Take care and stay safe!

*Supporting local non-profits has never been more important than it is right now! Give back to your local community by purchasing a \$2.50 reusable Red, My Heart Bag at the Hy-Vee located in Windom in July. We will receive a \$1 donation for every reusable bag sold. If you do pick one up, be sure to practice standard safety protocols. Thank you in advance for your support!*



IT'S A WIN-WIN!

HyVee



**BUY THIS BAG, SEND A \$1 DONATION TO US.**

Give back to your community and support the environment when you buy the \$2.50 red My Heart Reusable Bag this month!

## In the Remick Gallery:

COTTONWOOD COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# KNIT LOUD, KNIT OFTEN

JANE LEVERENZ



**Opening Reception**  
**Sunday, August 2**  
**2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

Knitting is an important part of our featured artist's life and has been for over 50 years. When she was in grade school, Jane's mother taught her how to knit and she has been forever grateful. While she uses her skills to keep herself and loved ones warm, knitting is also a way to express her creativity. She has knit many things including sweaters, shawls, socks, hats, mittens, afghans and even a mermaid tail. The show promises to be diverse in terms of what you will see knitted and will showcase over 50 items.

**This exhibit runs through**  
**October 24, 2020.**

## Round Tables: A New Addition!

On our wish list for a number of years were round tables for the Meeting Room. For our ladies tea, which we have every other summer (this was to be the year!), we would borrow them from BARC. After the necessary funds were raised, the museum purchased eight round tables for the meeting room last fall. We thank the following donors who made the purchase of these tables possible:

- William & Marilyn Peterson in memory of Waylon Madson
- David & Phyllis Werness
- Richard & Wendy Meyer
- Marilyn Wahl

We were excited when Ron Vought said he could build us some carts to hold the tables. After some carpet is placed on the wood bases, they will be ready to hold the tables. Thank you Ron for donating your time and materials to make these carts. For those who rent the Meeting Room, you now have the option of round or rectangle tables.



# Suffrage in Cottonwood County

By Janelle Kaye

The years between 1914 and 1919 when Minnesota ratified the 19th amendment were filled with suffrage activities including rallies, the distribution of pamphlets, marches, and speeches designed to change people's minds about the importance of women and why they needed to vote. There was stiff opposition, but women finally took their rightful place at the ballot box in 1920.

In Cottonwood County, suffrage activity was not as common as in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. However, suffragists from the cities did reach out to southwestern Minnesota on one notable occasion in August 1916. From August 1-3, a group of the most prominent women from the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association organized a tour by automobile from the Twin Cities to Pipestone with several stops in between: Shakopee, Le Sueur, St. Peter, Mankato, Lake Crystal, Madelia, St. James, Windom, Lakefield, Slayton, and Woodstock. The suffragists from the cities wanted to reach the most people possible throughout the state and organized several tours such as the one to Pipestone where each town had a parade of highly decorated cars and a town meeting where influential speakers spoke about suffrage and sold fans and sashes. Literature was distributed in liberal quantities. On August 2, the party reached Windom in the late afternoon, had dinner, and held a meeting on the Courthouse lawn followed by an overnight stay at the Park Hotel.



Clara Ueland, c.1918

According to the Citizen, Aug. 9, 1916, "Suffrage boosters...were not here in the numbers expected. Accidents along the way reduced the number significantly." However, Senator Gillam introduced the speakers which included "Miss Florence Monahan, one of the instructors of the Minneapolis schools, Mrs. Albert McMahan, an executive officer of the MWSA, and Mrs. Andreas Ueland (Clara) 'who gave as fine an address as one would wish to listen to.'" Ueland was the first president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association at the time.

After the speeches, a collection was taken since the financial support of the movement was obtained by voluntary gifts and offerings. In a statement retrieved by Rose Schmit at the Murray County Museum (Minnesota) the expenditures for this trip totaled \$38.32 and receipts totaled \$48.73. The profit presumably was spent on keeping the MWSA afloat.

Besides this event, mention of women's suffrage in Cottonwood County newspapers was sparse. There were several articles about the sanctity of marriage and how women's place was in the home. There were several cartoons depicting woman's suffrage, but no follow-up story. There were no stories about why suffrage was so important, or how to vote if you were a woman.

One article in the Reporter of October 18, 1918, showed a sample of the ballot for that year's election with a corner of the ballot devoted to the "Sample Women's Ballot." At that time women in Cottonwood County could only vote in local elections for the superintendent of schools. They had two choices: Alfred Iverson and Ernest Turner. Men voted for members of Congress, County Auditor, and Treasurer, the local Sheriff, the local Judges, etc.

By the time of the next election in November 1920, the local ballot had a few women's names on it. In August 1920, Congress had ratified the women's right to vote and that showed on the ballots for that year. A sample ballot depicted in the October 29, 1920 issue of the Reporter showed at least thirteen women who were part of the "presidential electors". Progress was happening. Two women were even on the ballot: Lillian Friedman for Lieutenant Governor, and Lily J. Anderson for Secretary of State.



Windom Reporter, March 19, 1920

**MEN!-WE HAVE WITH US**



Windom Reporter, August 28, 1920

There were a few women from the Windom area mentioned in accounts in newspapers who were depicted as having an interest in suffrage, but there were no substantial details given. Julia Huntington from Windom was an elected auditor for the MWSA, Helen H. Gillam was the Chairwoman for Cottonwood County's League of Women Voters, Mrs. George Robinson and Miss Noble were speakers on how to vote at a Republican Rally in October 1920.

The Windom Tourist Club's minutes for November 1, 1920, featured "instructive talks" about the ballot and the coming election. Mrs. R. D. Collins talked about "The Ballot", and Mrs. W. J. Clark talked about "How a President Is Elected". Other speakers were Mrs. D. W. Miller and Mrs. Hunter who spoke on governmental issues.

Although the information is sparse about Cottonwood County's involvement in the suffrage movement, there was an improvement in women's lives after Minnesota ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1919. The August 8, 1919 issue of the *Reporter* tells about how a new Minimum Wage Law which went into effect the previous week applies to women in any occupation. Weekly wage rates for municipalities of less than 5,000 population (Windom's population was about 2,000) was \$7.68 for 48 hours with an additional 16 cents per hour for additional hours. After three months, a

woman could earn \$9.12 per week for a 48 hour week, with an additional 19 cents for more hours worked. After her apprenticeship was completed, she could earn \$10.25 per week of 48 hours with an additional 21 ½ cents for additional hours.

The period of 1914 -1920 was complex. An influenza pandemic killed an estimated 50 million people around the world in 1918 and 1919. Twenty-eight percent of all Americans contracted the disease, and 675,000 of them died. By the spring of 1919, the epidemic had declined, but the disease had already killed 10,000 Minnesotans, including seventy-two residents of Cottonwood County. In addition to the pandemic, the United States was involved in WWI. Over 900 residents of Cottonwood County enlisted which left women to take on additional responsibilities of being the breadwinner in households. There were also natural catastrophes such as fires covering a lot of northern Minnesota and severe blizzards making travel impossible.

These were difficult times in which to make a cultural shift in thinking. The Woman Suffrage story is one of hope, courage, determination, organization, and perseverance. We owe a lot to our women ancestors who insisted on their rights as equal human beings and demanded and obtained the vote. Let's use that right wisely. Vote.



Windom Reporter, June 19, 1919

**Note from Janelle:**

*In the spring newsletter I asked for local stories about women in Cottonwood County who were suffragists or who had stories of voting for the first time. Coralee Phillips Krueger was the only resident who responded. Rose Schmit from Murray County also responded with some valuable information. Thank you, Coralee and Rose! I would like to extend the invitation to newsletter readers to submit your stories before the fall newsletter. Perhaps some of the names listed here will provoke some memories of these women or maybe you know more about suffragists in Cottonwood County. We would like to read your stories and include them in the next newsletter. —Janelle*

# Chronology of Suffrage Events in Minnesota

- \* March 4, 1875: A constitutional amendment was passed in Minnesota allowing women to vote in school board elections, the first capacity in which women were able to vote in Minnesota.
- \* 1881: The Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) was formed in Hastings.
- \* October 1885: The annual convention of the American Woman Suffrage Association was held in Minneapolis.
- \* March 24, 1919: The Minnesota congress ratified the 19th amendment.
- \* August 26, 1920: The 19th amendment went into effect giving women across America the right to vote.

<http://libguides.mnhs.org/suffrage/newspapers>

## General Fund Donations:

### Donations made between May 29—July 23:

Linda Fransen in memory of Ruth Hovden (Mother of Margaret McDonald); Grant Johnson; T. Carter; Gary & Jody Vanderwerf in memory of Larry Smith, Al Purrington, Lester Rupp, Charles "Bud" Gove; Doug & Priscilla Jacobson in memory of Verlan Ray; Leland & Marilyn Erickson in memory of Pat Baloun, Bill Fisher, Michael Foth, Patricia Miller, Colleen Swenson, Lois Castledine, Lucille Lewis Nelson, JoAnne Cowan, Ernest Swenson; David & Beatrice Muller in memory of James Redding; Gary & Jody Vanderwerf in memory of James Redding

A special thank you to Norma Loewen for donating hand sanitizer for the office, research library, and meeting room. The museum is grateful for those 6:00 a.m. Walmart shopping trips!!

## CCHS Membership

### CCHS Welcomes New Annual Members:

Don & Carolyn Enstad

### CCHS Welcomes New Lifetime Members:

Ron & Carol Vought

### CCHS Thanks Our Annual Renewals:

Dale & Laura Tibodeau; Maria Fitzgerald; Norma Loewen; Wallace Droegemueller; Joan Iverson; Wes & Elaine Kroeker; Dr. Peter & Marion Franz; Michael & Jean Foley; Lyman & Patricia Holmes; Martin & Anita Skow; Vay & Arleen Rodman

### CCHS Thanks Our Annual Patron Renewals:

Vera Rachuy; Judith Hintze

### CCHS Thanks Our Annual Sponsor Renewals:

Ernest & Judith Dellinger



# Cottonwood County Historical Society

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JESSICA BAK:	SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST

## 2020 Exhibits

### in the Remick Gallery:

\* "Knit Loud - Knit Often"  
by Jane Leverenz

August 2 - October 25

\* "A Century of  
Engagement: History of  
Women's Suffrage"

November 1 - 21

\* Festival of Trees

December 1-23

