



The Bulletin

Fall 2011

**St. Croix County Historical Society
The Octagon House Museum**

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Another Successful Eighth Grade Hudson History Tour

The Hudson Middle School's eighth grade students braved the cold weather for the 4th annual Hudson History Tour on October 19th. Students spent the morning on a walking tour starting in the cemetery where they visited the grave sites of former Hudson residents and a tour of the Humbird Chapel. Students then traveled down Vine Street to 3rd Street and learned about former residents, viewing their former homes.



Students stop at just a few more history booths before they catch the bus back to school

The next stop was at the Octagon House for a tour and to learn about the Moffat-Hughes family. Volunteers also showed the students artifacts that belonged to all of the former residents.

In the afternoon the students walked to Lakefront Park for a lunch. This was followed by visits to several history booths, listening to Hudson's early history and a tour of some of the Second Street businesses.

This is a big event for the Historical Society and much of its success is due to all of the wonderful volunteers who generously lend us their time and talents. Thank you to the volunteers who helped at the cemetery and on the walking tour: Heidi Rushmann, Jean and Wayne Haut, Heidi Boiteau, Leslie Taft, David Trebesch, Heidi Leeson, Pat and Burt Witthuhn, Peter Close, Connie Frantz, Sam Parsons, MaryEllen Cox, Barb Ivey, Tom and Jackie Hugdahl, Mary Jane Bridge, Michelle Pettee, Rebecca Bonesteel, Barbara George, Brook Miller, Tami and Kaia Tuliboski and Renee Snow.

Afternoon volunteers at the history booths were: Clayton Snow with the apple peeler demonstration; Meg



Guest speaker Peter Close talks about the early history of Hudson

Fronczak and Gloria Kramer who manned the artifacts booth; Renee Snow with quill pens and slates; Jacki Bradham with farming and wheat display; Donna Mae Seim with Perch Lake Homestead; Rigel Bloome and Erin Dimond from Camp St. Croix with a display on fire starting; and the Prescott Guards Civil War re-enactors James Karlson, Doug and Don Harmon.

See 8th Grade Tour on page 8

*President's
Letter*



Well, another year has passed and it has been a busy one for the Octagon House Museum. This year we had the House painted—I hope you noticed as you went by—it's much fresher looking and stands out more on Third Street. The brick steps to the porch were replaced, too, so they are sturdy and safe.

The gardens, as every year, looked perfect during our long summer. Dorothy Wilson and her crew worked hard to make it so.

We had our usual activities, starting with the Hot Air Affair. Next came the Chocolate March, Volunteer Tea in April, Mothers' Day, the Master Gardeners' Plant Sale, Member's Night Out, Father's Day, the Artful Garden Tour, the Civil War Re-enactors Saturday and our Annual Dinner meeting.

All our volunteers worked very hard on the Eighth Grade Tour, when almost all of Hudson's 400 eighth graders toured our museum, historic houses, the cemetery and downtown Hudson. A big thank you to all of our hard-working volunteers who planned and executed the big day.



In early June Heidi Rushmann welcomes guests during the FAM Tour (a tour for travel industry professionals)

Soon comes the Christmas Tour of Homes on November 19th and 20th. You'll want to see the lavish decorations at the House, where everyone has worked so diligently to get ready for the Tour. And on Friday, December 2nd, we'll host Victorian Christmas Night, formerly called Light-Up Night.

You'll want to make it a point to visit the Museum Gift Shop too, where Jean Haut has collected a beautiful selection of gifts for the holiday. Be sure to start (and possibly end) your shopping there. There are so many things to choose from, you might fill your entire list.

None of the things I've told you about could be done without our wonderful volunteers. If you are one, we appreciate you so much.

Thank you all for another great year at the Octagon House.

~ Dolores Taavola



House Director's Corner

This is my sixth season at the Octagon House, and it has been the best year yet. Our theme was "The Civil War Revisited." People have really enjoyed seeing the artifacts and hearing the stories that relate to this very popular topic in history. The object at the museum that has intrigued audiences the most has been the 1863 Springfield Musket, along with the bayonet, bullets, and "paper ladies" filled with gunpowder.

We have had many local guests this season as well as folks from several states, England, Scotland, and Australia. Several large group tours have come to the Octagon House. They include: Washington County Historical Society volunteers, Russian senior citizens from Sabes Jewish Community Center in Minneapolis, Red Wing Senior Center, many church groups, Boy Scouts, Red Hat ladies, and of course all of our Hudson third graders.

Be sure to stop by the Octagon House and see our "Civil War Christmas." Volunteers are busy decorating the house in its holiday splendor. Many thanks to all the wonderful folks that help us do what we do!

~ Heidi Rushmann



above: The mannequin is dressed in re-enactors gear on loan from Bill Lecky and on the Sid Starr's chest is the Springfield Musket that once belonged to former St. Croix County Sheriff Sam Campbell

below: During the Civil War women took on the dangerous duty of wrapping gunpowder and shot to make "paper Ladies" for ammunition



Civil War Encampment Draws a Crowd

The Annual Civil War Encampment was held on Saturday, July 16th from noon to 4:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Octagon House Museum. It was a very hot day and the fearless re-enactors (in their heavy wool suits) presented another wonderful demonstration.

Doug Harmon with the volunteer re-enactors of the Prescott Guards Volunteer Infantry, including James Karlson, and Mike and Brian Weyers, set up camp on the lawn of the Museum. The re-enactors shared stories of the everyday life of the Civil War soldier: from what they ate, to their uniforms and the equipment they used, to what they did for entertainment. The encampment is a great opportunity to learn about the Civil War up close and personal.

Living historian Kim Holbrook set up a display highlighting the life and work of women during the Civil War. Charlie Holbrook and Gene Lau talked to guests about recruiting troops.

New this year, Gary Krueger set up a medical tent display and shared information about Civil War medicine. Mike Baurichter was on hand to assist at the medical tent.

Other activities at the encampment included a display of Historical Society artifacts, old time children's games and refreshments sale.



The Prescott Guards at the Octagon House Museum Civil War Encampment (l-r) Mike Weyers, James Karlson, Doug Harmon and Brian Weyers



(l-r) Gary Krueger and Mike Baurichter



Gene Lau shows a bullet to a guest



The encampment is a popular event at the museum and it is all due to the volunteer re-enactors who so generously donate their time and knowledge. A big thank you to the re-enactors for another successful event.



top left: The Prescott Guards display their Regiment Flags (l-r) Doug Harmon and James Karlson

top right: Kim Holbrook talks to a guest about the life and work of women during the Civil War

bottom left: Re-enactors James Karlson and Brian Weyers pose for a photo

bottom right: Heidi Rushmann (center) mans the artifact display with junior guides Jessie Moore (l) and Sam Parsons.(r)

Annual Dinner Meeting on Civil War

The St. Croix County Historical Society's Annual Dinner Meeting was on Thursday, October 13th, at Mama Maria's Italian Restaurant in North Hudson. Following a social hour, guests enjoyed a tasty selection of either the Champagne Chicken or an Italian Sampler meal.

After a brief business meeting, local re-enactors Doug Harmon and Don Harmon from the Prescott Guards presented a program on the Civil War.

Don began the program with a summary of events leading up to the Civil War and shared several interesting facts, such as how Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin transformed Southern agriculture and the national economy and unintentionally lead to the expansion of slavery in the U.S.

Don also discussed the influence of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. This anti-slavery



The Historical Society members pose for a photo with the guest speakers. (l-r) Dora Rohl, speaker Don Harmon, Mary Harmon (Doug's wife), Barbara Rohl and speaker Doug Harmon

novel, published in 1852, was a best-selling novel in the 19th century, and second only to the Bible. The impact of the book was so great that when Abraham Lincoln met Stowe at the start of the Civil War, Lincoln declared, "So this is the little lady who started this great war."

After a very interesting and informative presentation, Doug and Don fielded questions from the guests.

Volunteers Lend a Hand at the Hanging of the Greens



Historical Society President Dolores Taavola (right) and her granddaughter Madeleine Bronner (left) help decorate the Octagon House for Christmas.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped at the annual "Hanging of the Greens." As the old saying goes "Many hands make light work" and the helping hands of our great volunteers made the day go quickly.

This annual work day marks the beginning of the holiday season at the museum. Volunteers will transform the Octagon House for the holiday season to reflect the 2011 winter theme of a "Civil War Christmas."

The Museum will reopen for the Christmas Tour of Homes on November 19th & 20th and for Victorian Christmas Night on December 2nd. Then the Museum will open for walk-in tours on the weekends of December 5th & 6th, 12th & 13th and 19th & 20th.

Volunteer Outing at Fort Snelling

On Tuesday, August 30, 2011 a group of about 16 SCCHS volunteers visited Fort Snelling Historic Site for our annual volunteer outing. House Director, Heidi Rushmann, was again able to find a fun and educational site for our visit. We met about 10:00 a.m. at the Octagon House and car pooled to Fort Snelling, a Minnesota National Historic site.

After a brief film depicting the history of Fort Snelling becoming a frontier military fort, the group made its way to the multi-building complex. The complex is still used today and we saw current military personnel on duty. Amongst the interesting activities seen were the Blacksmith making nails, The General Store merchandise and coins, the laundress washing clothes, the bunk quarters of enlisted men and watching soldiers in period costumes do drills. The soldiers then asked for audience participation doing the drills. Children were challenged by some of the common games of the era such as walking on stilts.

Thank you to the Historical Society for an enjoyable day from all of those who attended.

~ LaVonne McCombie

right: Sylvia Emery and her daughter Anna walk past a soldier at the fort



below: SCCHS volunteers enjoy the trip to Fort Snelling; (l-r) LaVonne McCombie and Pat & Bert Witthuhn



Donations: Childhood Treasures that Keep on Giving



The St. Croix County Historical Society is again the beneficiary of a legacy gift from one of our notable historians. Edna Gwin, a name that is synonymous with history and the Historical Society, is still giving through the Gwin Family Trust who has most generously donated Edna's treasured dolls, doll clothes and baptismal baby clothing.

It was largely due to Edna Gwin's efforts that the St. Croix County Historical Society was able to acquire the Moffat-Hughes Octagon House and turn it into the museum that we have today.

And what more precious item can there be than the dolls from her childhood? The vintage dolls and clothing will make a nice addition to our current doll collection donated to the Society by Mrs. Grace Bloom. We are sure that Edna would be pleased to know that her dolls will be in good company.



Much appreciation to the Gwin family for their generosity in sharing Edna's dolls, for all lovers of history to enjoy.

*above: Edna at age eight with her doll
right: The donated dolls*

~ LaVonne McCombie

8th Grade Tour *continued from page 1*

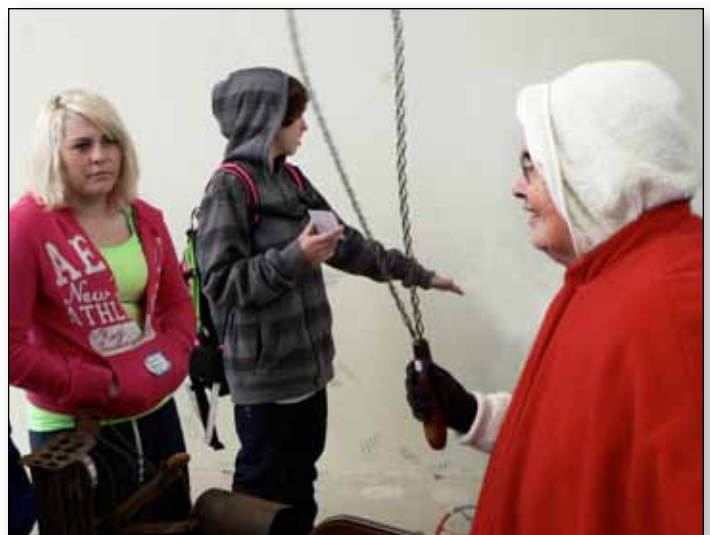
Second Street tour volunteers were: Tami and Kaia Tuliboski, Brook Miller, Cate Sering, Buck Malick, Ellen Olson, David Trebesch and Heidi Rushmann.

A special thank you to a Peter Close, our guest speaker, who shared Hudson's early History with the students. Also thank you to Dick Whitcomb for the use of the Hudson Rotary's speaker system.

The Hudson History Tour is a busy day for the students (as well as all of the volunteers) with much for the students to learn, see and do. It is a successful event when we can open the eyes, ears and hopefully a few hearts to the great history of those early pioneers who helped to build the city of Hudson.



Rigel Bloome from Camp St. Croix demonstrates how to start a fire



above left: Clayton Snow demonstrates how an apple peeler is used to peel and core apples.

above right: Meg Fronczak explains how a rug beater is used to clean rugs



left: Donna Mae Seim (on the right) talks to students about her family who homesteaded the Perch Lake area



the Gift Shop is Open

We are ready for Christmas with vintage inspired jewelry, ornaments and holiday decorations. The Gift Shop is well stocked with antique silver, glassware and linens. This is just the place for that hard to find one-of-a-kind item for your home or garden.

~ Jean Haut

Remember SCCHS members receive a 10% discount

Special Thank You

We are very grateful to the following supporters for their generous financial contributions.

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Other 2011 Donations

The Society wishes to acknowledge and thank all of the donors who have given to our organization.

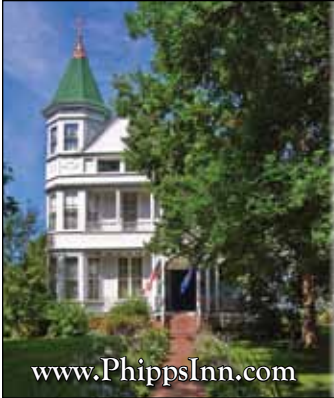
Jacki Bradham: artifacts, newsletters & decorations
Alta Belle Cloutier: clothing
Nancy Fouks: clothing
Meg & Ray Fronczak: supplies
Gwin Family Trust: dolls & clothing
Jackie Hugdahl: artifacts
Sally Kneeland: carpet
Keith Kozub: supplies
Marie Nelson: publication
John Parent: publication
Donna Mae Seim: quilt textiles
Helen Talle: publication

Mary Jane Bridge: artifacts
Elva Dahlby: artifacts
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Elaine Knopl: photos
Norma Larson: clothing
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Brian & Melia Pike: publication
Noma Stone Lewis: publication
Dorothy Wilson: artifacts & decorations

Washington County Historical Society: memorabilia

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Winter Calendar

December 2nd - 6 to 9 p.m.

Victorian Christmas Night

Visit the Octagon House and the Phipps Inn
lamp-lit tours, music & refreshments

Holiday Tour Season

December 3rd & 4th; 10th & 11th; and 17th & 18th

Open for walk-in tours on the Weekends
Saturdays 12 to 4:30 p.m. and Sundays 2 to 4:30 p.m.
*Also open by appointment for Special Tours of ten or
more guests. Please call to schedule your
group tour at (715) 386-2654.*

***Members remember your 10% discount
in the Museum Gift Shop!***