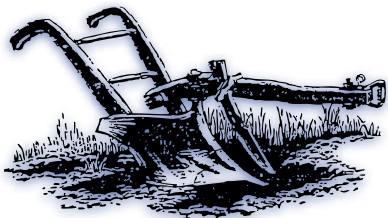


Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



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Historical Society-Illinois

Museum Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Group Tours by Appointment—Call for Appointment

The Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter is published four times a year. It is distributed to members of record free of charge via e-mail and USPS. Subscriptions start at \$10 for students annually.

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DEAR MEMBERS:

The Board of Directors hope you and your family are well thru this COVID-19 self isolation shut down. The Museum has been closed since the 17th of March. We did not hold our Board meeting in April. However, things were accomplished. We took the opportunity to have some maintenance done at the Museum.

- Foyer and bathroom area were retiled (both area had lifted from water damage).
- The carpeting was cleaned—the first time since we opened in 2009.
- Heating and cooling vents were added to our previously unheated/uncooled 'BUMP OUT'.
- The new tile was sealed so that future water should not do any damage to the tile.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED

The Board has met in May (social distance and with masks). At that meeting, It was decided that we would open June 11th—WE ARE NOW OPEN.

Normally nominations for the Board occur at the Annual Meeting. This year three members whose terms were up said they would continue being on the Board. They were JoEllyn Johnson, Theresa Lamb, and Marion Gore. So these members will stay on because of COVID-19.

Our New Officers are: Marion Gore, President; Donna Sroczyński, Vice President; Sue Cunnea, Treasurer; and Lisa Barkley as Secretary.

Our normal Annual Meeting at the end of May was cancelled for several reasons. We were not sure anyone would attend so soon after the shutdown. Any venue would probably not have been able to allow food service.

FUTURE PLANS

• *Liberty Arts Festival*

We had planned to have an exhibit of water color paintings during the Liberty Arts Festival and to have someone doing painting at the Museum. The Morris Water Guild is still willing to do the art exhibit but will not have anyone at the Museum doing an actual painting. Because of COVID-19, the Liberty Arts Festival is/maybe in October, so our plans are tentative for this.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

All our programs are free to members and nonmembers alike except for a dinner fee for our Annual Meeting. Unless otherwise noted, programs will be held at the Museum, 510 W. Illinois in Morris.

Future programs are on hold depending on COVID-19 issues. We will rebook Mr. Lou Aiello and his presentation on early Indian processes and cooking. **Thank you for your understanding.**

It is unknown as this time whether we will have any fall programs scheduled.

• *'Bump Out'*

This used to be a non-climate controlled storage space. Thanks to the Sereno Family, there were funds earmarked to insulate and enclose this space. It had been open at the top and birds, bats, and who knows what other flying critters dropped in for unwanted visits, so all items stored in the Bump Out had to be in closed bins. It was also open at the bottom, and ground squirrels, mice, and rats were making use of the space as well.

Narvick Construction was hired to close up the gaps at the top and bottom and insulate the space. Before they could proceed, however, we needed to accomplish the following tasks.

—Clean it up.

—Remove and throw out things that had accumulated such as fake pillars which may have belonged to Theatre Guild (who did not want them) plus other unwanted items including a GLASS basketball hoop which weighed a ton.

—Once these tasks were accomplished, we had to move everything away from the walls so that Narvick could come in and insulate the structure and paint the walls white.

—Dan Dransfeldt added three lights in the area.

—Everything that was moved out or into the center has now been moved back into the BUMP OUT. It is now very well organized and VERY BRIGHT.

• *Museum*

As indicated above, we had the carpet cleaned but when that was finished and finally dry, lockdown prevented us from having time to return all the ‘small’ exhibits to their exhibit areas. These items have now been merged back into the rest of our exhibits.

WHO AM I?

Last issue’s mystery person was Frank D. Condon. Can you guess, from the following description, who this issue’s mystery person is? Look for the answer in our next issue—October 2020. Now that the Museum has reopened, stop in to discover this issue’s mystery person.

I was born in Chicago and came to Morris in 1898. I opened a blacksmith shop on Main Street. I served as the mayor of Morris from 1909 to 1911. I also was a state conservation officer under Governor Len Small. I operated the Shabbona Gun Club for many years and served in the Spanish-American war. Margaret Busaytis of Coal City was my bride.

Who am I?

FACEBOOK



Besides our web site, we have a Facebook presence thanks to Dorothy Cunnea, web mistress of the Facebook page. So, a hearty hello to all 1,426 of our Facebook friends. We appreciate your interest in our Museum and your support. If you are not currently a member of the Historical Society, please consider joining the Society in addition our Facebook page. Friend us at the **Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois**. A Historical Society membership application can be downloaded from our web site. Visit www.grundycountyhs.org, click on the Membership/Newsletter tab. Thank you!

RADIO



Find the Museum on the radio the first Monday of every month. Tune in to “People Are Talking,” WCSJ, 103.1 on your FM dial, from approximately 9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

SPANISH FLU IN GRUNDY COUNTY

The current experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has much in common with what people experienced during the Spanish Influenza epidemic 102 years ago.

It was World War I. During August 1918, influenza was marching through army camps, killing soldiers. Dr. Joe Capps explained that “one of the most vital measures in checking the contagion is eliminating crowding . . . increasing the space between beds in barracks by stretching tent flags between beds is of proved value.” Dr. Capps also demonstrated an innovation with which he had experimented—the wearing of gauze masks by patients with respiratory diseases. This was a “crowd disease” spread most easily in crowds. It was also believed that people could catch the flu not only by inhaling it but by hand-to-nose contact. By late September 1918, there were 26 states reporting influenza cases. But the Surgeon General had still not made plans for an organization to fight the disease. Eventually there would be two to three million cases in the U.S. Unlike COVID-19, the influenza virus grows weaker over time. And there was no known drug or therapy to alleviate this viral infection. However, simply delaying its arrival in a community or slowing its spread would have saved thousands of lives.

During the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic, the Red Cross would find and pay nurses, furnish emergency hospitals with medical supplies,

and take responsibility for everything else. Each community would have to depend on its own resources. That’s exactly what happened in Grundy County.

The disease first appeared in early October 1918, in the coal fields—South Wilmington and Coal City. A Citizens Committee was organized to enforce a strict quarantine, namely: Fred S. Johnson was chairman; E. D. Martin, secretary; Dr. Sachse, City Health Officer; Mayor T. H. Hall; and everyone on the Grundy County Board. The Morris Daily Herald printed a full page Proclamation detailing the Morris City regulations required to prevent the spread of “the most dangerous and deadly epidemic in [Morris] history.” The Emergency Influenza Committee published a public broadside on how to avoid influenza, what to do until the doctor comes, and directions for householders, workers, and nurses.

On October 23, 1918, the Landy Hoge house on East Washington Street, Morris, was set up as a temporary hospital with 18 beds. Immediately, five beds were occupied. Mrs. Werner, state nurse, was in charge. Stena Matland and Mrs. A. H. Sorem were her assistants. Two more nurses were needed to serve six hour shifts. There were two other Influenza hospitals, one in South Wilmington and one in Coal City.

Every case of Spanish Flu had to be promptly reported and every home with a case quarantined. No theater, church, school, near-beer saloon, soft drink parlor, bowling alley, or other business or amusement where more than two people gathered would be open until further notice.

Symptoms included head ache and back ache, fever, and cough. Some patients recovered after two or three days, others developed pneumonia, meningitis, and inflammation, which killed them. It was believed that the influenza germ could be killed by air and sunshine. Sanitation was important. All mouthwashes, bath water, napkins, and so forth should be wrapped in clean newspaper, carried from the sick room, and burned. All linens and towels should be submerged in a large kettle of cold water, then carried to the kitchen and boiled for five minutes. There was no hand sanitizers as we know have today. So, care givers were warned to protect door knobs, faucets, and the like with scraps of newspaper which could be destroyed after use. But there was personal protective equipment (PPE): nurses were constantly masked (with gauze) and wore big over all aprons which they changed out of before entering any other part of the house. They knew about hand washing, they even had paper towels, and realized that running water was better and safer than using a basin of weak disinfectant.

The 1918 influenza virus killed 675,000 people in the United States. During this world wide pandemic between 50–100 million people succumbed to the disease. World population in 1918 was about 1.8 billion. In two years, 5 percent of the world’s population died from Spanish Influenza. There was no medication for it. There was no vaccine. But everyone knew that isolation worked. Yes, we have been down this road before, all in it together.

Sources: Barry, John M. *The Great Influenza*. Viking 2004.

Morris Daily Herald
October 21, 1918,
October 23, 1918.

The Landy Hoge house on East Washington. It became a temporary hospital for flu victims.

