



SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Henderson, Minnesota 56044 Ph: (507)248-3434

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From Illinois to The Minnesota Territory

part two

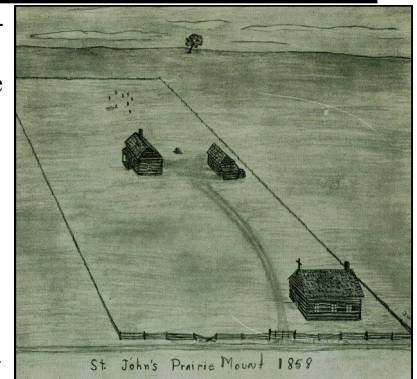
By Nicole Wedemeyer Miller, M.L.S.

Friends, Neighbors and Kinsmen

By 1865 five separate Lutheran Synods competing against each other to found obligations in Minnesota.³³ Complete religious freedom in America meant that Protestant Germans could follow whatever doctrine they wanted unlike in Germany, whether religion was decided by the head of the government. German Protestants splintered into many different denominations as a result of preferences for certain doctrines, liturgies, and customs. St. John's Lutheran Church in Arlington Township was founded by the Hessians who moved to Minnesota from the Elk Grove area near Chicago, and was

part of the Missouri Synod. You will notice that they gave this church the exact same name as the one they left behind! There were also members who came from other Midwestern states such as Wisconsin.³⁴ A comparison of the elders' names of the Hessians' churches in both Elk Grove, Illinois and the new St. John's in Minnesota, shows that one name was on both lists, Carl Dohme. But comparing the settlers in Elk Grove Township on the 1850 US Census, in 1855 Illinois state census, with that of pioneers of Arlington Township who received land patents, and who also were listed on

(Continued on page 2)



Calendar of Events

Check our website for 2013 programs. The next issues of the newsletter will have the programs listed, also page 8.

- Check website for details
- If you have suggestions or comments on upcoming events Contact Judy Loewe 507-248-3345 **Calendar Subject to Change.**



The Prez Sez

by Jerome Petersen

...a few of the goings on at SCHS.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, around the museum, and around Minnesota with a generous helping of snow. The volunteers having been busy working for weeks getting things ready for our Open House. The theme is "Gifts", and in various rooms mannequins are opening their gifts. The ladies have a *gift* of creating ideas for our visitors to admire when coming to the museum. We hope YOU will be coming to our Holiday Presentation on December 30 and enjoy the programs and displays. Among the many talents Arlene Busse has, decorating is near the top. She has that magic touch, like a good photographer. She knows what we have available for period clothing, artifacts and seasonal items. She artfully arranges it all together nicely with



the help of our staff of elves. There is more Open House information on the back page of the newsletter.

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the 1857 Minnesota territorial census, and 1860 U.S. Census, turns up several more names that overlap.

Hessian Hans "Henry" Roehler and his wife Frieda Maria "Mary" Nolte moved to Minnesota in 1856 as well, after they had been married in Elk Grove Township in Illinois.³⁵ They settled on section 25 of Arlington Township next to the Dohme's, and received their land patent on June 1, 1861.³⁶ Henry was a witness on Carl Dohme's homestead application³⁷ and we know from his baptismal record back in Hohnhorst, Germany that his godfather was a Meyer, the maiden name of Caroline Dohme,³⁸ so there is possibly a family connection as well. Henry Roehler was born in Nordbruch, a village a short distance to the north of where the Dohmes are from.³⁹ Not every German village was large enough to have its own church. Often one church served two or three surrounding villages, as well as the one in which it was located. This fact explains why Henry Roehler was born in one town, yet baptized in another. His obituary incorrectly listed the town name as "Ort Bruch". According to *Bits and Pieces; Celebrating 150 Years of Sibley County*. Roehler was one of the first Arlington Township supervisors. He and his wife had eight children, many of whom intermarried with neighboring Hessian families. Henry Roehler died January 11, 1894 and is buried in St. John's Cemetery.⁴⁰

Johann "Conrad" Roehler settled on section 27 in 1857.⁴¹ He was the brother of Henry Roehler, and they were the sons of Johann Otto Roehler, a *stellmacher*, or wheelwright, and his wife Engel Maria Sophia Bergmeyer. Both men emigrated to the US together in 1848. Conrad Roehler married Engel Maria Moehling in Elk Grove Township. Her parents had first emigrated there, but later moved to Des Plaines, also in Cook County.⁴² Conrad Roehler did not stay in Minnesota. By 1880, he had moved back to Elk Grove Township.⁴³

Another member of the group was Johann "Heinrich" Duehlmeier. He emigrated with his mother, Anna Sophia Latwesen, who never married, and his half brother Heinrich "Christoph" Wille, to Illinois. Henry Duehlmeier moved to Sibley County between 1855 and 1858 because his third child was born in Illinois, and the fourth in Minnesota,⁴⁴ which put him in Arlington Township on his farm in section 26 around the same time as his Hessian neighbors. Henry Duehlmeier was born in the village of Beckedorf, which was also part of the Lutheran parish at Hohnhorst that the Roehlers attended. His wife was Catherina Engel "Mary" Rohrson. They had eight children, most of who intermarried with neighboring Hessian families. He died in Sibley County on November 7, 1881, and is buried in St. John's Lutheran Cemetery in Arlington Township.⁴⁵

Henry Busse was enumerated in the 1855 Illinois Census in Elk Grove Township.⁴⁶ By 1860, he appears in the U.S. Census in Sibley County, Arlington Township with his wife Louisa and a son Henry W, age 20;⁴⁷ they settled in section 28. However, he must have moved to Jessenland Township, because he appears there in the 1875 Minnesota state census, living near someone who appears to be his son, Christian Busse.⁴⁸ Henry Busse's exact origins in Hessian-Kassel are unknown at this time. Nor is it clear if he is related to

the large group of Busses that stayed in Illinois. Also a mystery is whether he is somehow connected to a later group of Busses who came to Sibley County.

The Sibley County history mentions a Henry Blume who came to the US in 1854, stayed in Chicago four years, and then settled in section 32 of Arlington Township in 1858.⁴⁹ This is possibly a relative of the Dohme's, because Carl Dohme's mother was a Blume.⁵⁰ Hans Heinrich Blume was born in Hohnhorst March 7, 1822.

He came to the US in 1854 and settled in Illinois. He married Dorothea Pape there in 1856. In 1858 the couple moved to Sibley County and bought land in section 32.⁵¹ Henry Blume fought in the battle of Fort Ridgely during the Sioux uprising.⁵² He and wife Dorothea Pape did not have any children. They retired from farming in 1888 and moved to Arlington, dying in 1910 and 1918 respectively, and are buried in Brown Cemetery.⁵³ Henry Blume was survived by his nephews Henry Blume of Gaylord and Herman Blume of Kelso Township.⁵⁴

Another Blume in Arlington Township was Frederick, who settled in in section 24. But he lived in Ohio before he lived in Sibley County,⁵⁵ and by 1880, he had moved from the area. It cannot be assumed he is related to Henry Blume, because the name is fairly common in Germany; it means flower.

Ferdinand Soeffker was born December 19, 1827 in Segelhorst, Hessen-Kassel, Germany. His obituary incorrectly states it as being Zegensdorf.⁵⁷ He emigrated to Elk Grove Township



The Ferdinand Soeffker Family FRONT; Emma Nagel (William), Louise (Meierbachtal) and Ferdinand, Bertha Nagel (Henry) BACK; Emily Weihe (, Louise Bade (, Rosina Nagel (Martin), Henry, Louis, Fred and Ferdinand Jr. Three Soeffker sisters married three Nagel brothers.

in 1854 and spent two years there. He settled on section 28 of Arlington Township in 1856 with his wife Louise Meyerbachtal. They were the parents of nine children; three of his daughters married the sons of Philip Nagel. He died July 16, 1904 and was buried at St. John's Cemetery.⁵⁸

Philip Nagel was also a Hessian, and he came here in 1848.

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He settled in section 32 of Arlington Township in 1869, after he had previously lived in section 32 of Jessenland Township. He



Fredericka (Otto) Nagel and sons; Martin, Charles, William, and George.

and his wife Frederica Otto had 11 children, but only four sons Charles, Martin, William and George survived to adulthood. All this information comes from an essay entitled "Philip Nagel family" by Elaine Nagel Nelson in Arlington 1959 – 2006; Celebrating 150 years of Arlington history.

Christian Rischmueller was born in Hessen-Kassel in 1816, trained as a tailor, and then came to Elk Grove Township in 1850. By 1860 he had settled in section 23 of Arlington Township.⁵⁹ His wife was Dorothea, maiden name not known. He died October 19, 1884 and is buried in St. John's Cemetery.⁶⁰ One of the Rischmuellers' children was son August. According to his obituary in the Arlington Enterprise, he was born February 2, 1840 in Hessen-Kassel and emigrated with his parents. It also said the family moved to Sibley County in 1854. He joined the Eighth Illinois cavalry volunteers, Company D during the Civil War, but returned to Sibley County after it ended. August Rischmueller married Maria Wemeier on December 17, 1866, daughter of a Hessian neighbor in Dryden Township. He died April 8, 1919, survived by his wife and eight children, and was interred in the Arlington public Cemetery.⁶¹

Johann Conrad Rehling (sometimes spelled Roehling) was born April 1, 1813 in Riepen, Germany. In 1839, he married Engel Maria Steege in Beckedorf, and they and their two sons, Johann Konrad and Johan Hermann, emigrated to the US in 1847. His parents, Friedrich Rehling and Engel Maria Bock, who had both been born in Beckedorf, also settled in Elk Grove Township in 1847. His first wife died in Illinois.⁶² Then he married a widow, Mary Hoffmeister, in 1851.⁶³ In 1856, the Rehlings settled in section 27 of 34 of Arlington Township.⁶⁴ He died June 18, 1882 and is buried at St. John's cemetery.⁶⁵

Christian Philip Obernolte was born April 9, 1826 in Hohenhausen, Lippe-Detmold, an area just to the west of Hessen-

Kassel, and came to Illinois in 1855. He was a stone mason.⁶⁶ He moved to section 34 in Arlington Township in 1862 with his wife, Conradine Deran and family.⁶⁷ he died December 27, 1902 in Denver, where he had moved shortly before his death to be near his son. He is buried in the Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery in Arlington Township. There was an August S. G. Obernolte who was married in Cook County, Illinois in 1857 to Sophie Steinmetz, and then moved to Kelso Township, Sibley County in 1862.⁶⁹ it is likely the two Obernolte men were brothers.

The Behnings are yet another family who made the Germany, to Illinois, to Minnesota move. This surname is found spelled three different ways in county records: Behning, Benning and Bening. They came from an area technically in Hannover, but still close to the other Hessians. Johann Hinrich "Peter" Behning born July 15 1800 in Proebsten, moved with his children and second wife Catherine "Maria" Dorothea Meyer to Illinois in 1857. Peter Behning had five children from his first marriage and six from his second marriage. He settled in section 30 of Arlington Township in 1860. His son-in-law Frederick Theis, married to his daughter Dorothea, settled next to him. Peter Behning died March 26, 1872 and is buried next to his wife in Weckiworth



THE BEHNING FAMILY; FRONT; Rudy, Henry C., Alma, Dorothy (Behrems), William, Benny BACK; Louis, George, John, Art, Henry Jr., Albert

Cemetery in New Rome, Sibley County. Some of his children are also buried in the area, such as Cord Benning in Arlington Public Cemetery, and Henry Benning in the Weckworth Cemetery. This information was supplied by the Benning family.

Hans Heinrich Henry Christoph Bahe or Bade was born January 11, 1820 in Hoersten, near Bad Neundorf, Germany.⁷⁰ He and his wife Sophia Tannenbaum were married at Apelern January 20, 1850,⁷¹ and emigrated in 1859⁷² and "soon after settled in Arlington Township".⁷³ Henry Bade died October 29, 1883, and his wife on December 5, 1892, and are buried in the old St. John's Cemetery.⁷⁴

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Johansen "Christoph" Fisher came to Illinois from Germany in 1850, and then came to Sibley County in 1855 as a bachelor. This was unusual; most of the others came with wives and families. He settled in section 27, and erected a temporary shelter by turning his wagon box upside down on posts and tacking canvas to the sides. Later, he built a sod house. In 1857 he returned to Cook County to marry his sweetheart. She was Louisa, daughter of fellow Hessian Peter Behning.⁷⁵ A couple years later he built her a log cabin, which survived into the 1970s, when it was torn down. The couple had six children, but several died young.⁷⁶ Christoph Fisher and his wife are both buried in St. John's Cemetery. He died May 7, 1907, at 80 years, three months and two days, which makes his calculated birthdate February 5, 1827; his wife's stone reads 1836 – 1905.⁷⁷

Heinrich and Charlotte Weihe arrived in Cook County, Illinois in 1847. By 1857, they had moved to Sibley County.⁷⁸ Shortly after, Heinrich must have died. He is not listed in the 1860 census, and his final resting place is unknown. The Weihe land patent in section 29 of Arlington Township is in Charlotte's name.⁷⁹ The Weihe's eldest son Henry, born in 1836, ran the farm when he was not fighting in the Civil War.⁸⁰ He eventually married a neighbor's daughter, Maria Azal [usual spelling Asal].⁸¹ They remained in Sibley County. Some Weihe's are interred in the old St. John's Cemetery, others in St. Paul's Cemetery in Arlington.⁸²

Note: there are a handful of other families that I have identified as Hessian, but evidence in census records and other sources points to the fact that they did not come from Illinois like the others. They are the Paul's, the Kubes and the Nagels. Also the above list is probably not complete. There are likely other Hessian families that I missed due to the fact that they did not tell the census enumerator they were Hessian, they did not pay to have an article about themselves in a local history book, or their families did not list specific information about their origins in their obituaries.

Turmoil in 1862

By the summer of the following year, August 1862, life in Minnesota became frightening. Many Native Americans, frustrated by their poor treatment by the US government, and hungry because of crop failures, started attacking white settlers and destroying their homes. This occurred in a big area, eleven counties in the southern river valley region of the state. The Dakota uprising lasted about 12 weeks and killed around 500 whites and 150 Native Americans.⁸³ This attack occurred during the chaos of the Civil War. Even though no Civil War battles were fought in Minnesota, many men had already left the area to join the Army, leaving their homesteads vulnerable to the attacking Sioux.

Dohme family tradition says that Native Americans burned the Dohme farm, and that is why they left Minnesota. *Bits and pieces*, the Sibley County history, confirms that the Dakota were fighting in Minnesota in 1862 – 63, but claims very little of it occurred in Sibley County. Some did occur in the Norwegian Grove area in the southern portion of the county. Another strong piece of evidence that the Dohme's did not lose their farm buildings in the attack is the fact that they never filed a claim asking the federal government to reimburse them for lost

property. However, their neighbors Henry Bade, and Christopher Behning, who lived along the western edge of Arlington Township, did.⁸⁴ It is certain that many settlers fled the area because of the possibility that an attack would occur in their neighborhoods.

The Dohme's did not flee immediately after the Sioux uprising, because we know that Carl's mother Justine Blume Dohme died in Sibley County on January 19, 1863 and is buried in the old St. John's church cemetery.⁸⁵ Also, son, Frederick was born there on September 6, 1863.⁸⁶ Perhaps these two events account for their delayed removal, but the family did not leave until at least a year after the Indian attacks began. Undoubtedly, the Sioux uprising must have contributed to their decision to relocate. Many of the other Hessian families decided to stay.

Back in Illinois

The Dohmes retreated to Illinois, this time to Stephenson



The Bening Family; BACK; Friedrich, Walter, Henry, Clara, Emma, Martha
MIDDLE; John, Rosetta FRONT; Emilie, Amanda, Heinrich

County, in the north central part of the state, not far from Freeport. They made this move despite the fact that the Civil War was still being fought. Carl would have passed through this area on his way to Minnesota in 1855. Perhaps it made a favorable impression on him then, or perhaps he knew that this was yet another area where there were Germans, many of them from the Lippe-Detmold, an area close to Hessen-Kassel.

Unsatisfied with the soil quality of this area, the family moved one final time, in the spring of 1871, to Pesotum Township, in Champaign County, Illinois. Four of their nine surviving children married there and had families of their own, some of whom eventually moved to the Broadlands Illinois area, further east in Champaign County. For more details about the families time in Illinois see the article *The Dohme family: 140 years in Champaign County* in the December 2010 issue of the *Champaign County Illinois Geneological Society Quarterly*.

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Families Who Stayed

Many of the Hessian families of Sibley County stayed to weather both the Sioux uprising and the Civil War. Often, their children intermarried leading to many family trees with intertwined branches in Arlington Township. The work ethic of this group enabled them to also survive rapidly rising and falling farm commodity prices, weather disasters, and grasshopper attacks. They mastered new farming techniques and different crops then they were accustomed to in Germany, and many of them had to master farm management because they had only been employees on the farms of others before coming to America. These farmers also worked at other trades to supplement their farming income, such as stone masonry, leather work, and blacksmithing.

Undoubtedly, there are more Hessians who settled in other townships in Sibley County. Perhaps their descendants will be inspired to record the details of their heritage, to add to what we know about this group who migrated from Cook County, Illinois, to Arlington Township, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NOTES

34 St. John's Lutheran Church, Sibley County, Minnesota, congregational history, p. 1. This history claims that most of the congregation came from Cooper's Grove, IL (present day Country Club Hills), but the evidence I have found indicates that the majority came from Elk Grove township.

35 Obituary in the 18 January 1894 Sibley County Enterprise, found on www.karens-gen.com/buch/families/r/roehlerbergmeyer.php, accessed 21 May 2010.

36 Henry Rahlar [sic] (Sibley Co., MN), homestead patent no. 72712.

37 See #18.

38 See #35.

39 Ibid.

40 See #35.

41 Edward D. Neill and Charles S. Bryant. History of the Minnesota Valley (Minnesota: North Star Publishing Company, 1882), p. 444.

42 Information on the children of Johann Otto Roehler and Engel Maria Sophia Bergmeyer found on www.karens-gen.com/buch/families/r/roehlerbergmeyer.php, accessed 21 May 2010.

43 1880 U.S. Census, Illinois, Cook county, Elk Grove township, p.12, dwelling

94, family number 99, line 10, Conrad Rohler [sic]; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 May 2012); citing Family History Library microfilm 1254201, p. 384D, image 0762.

44 1860 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Sibley county, Arlington township, p. 45, dwelling 494, family number 494, line 34, Henry Dulmeir [sic].

45 www.karens-gen.com/buch/families/c-f/duhlmeierrohrssen.php, accessed 7 May 2012.

46 1855 Illinois State Census, Cook county, Elk Grove, p.34 (handwritten) Henry Busse.

47 1860 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Sibley county, Arlington township, p. 46, dwelling 502, family 502, line 15, Henry Busse.

48 1875 Minnesota State Census, Sibley county, Jessenland township, p. 862 (handwritten).

49 Bits and Pieces : Celebrating 150 Years of Sibley County History (Minnesota: Sibley County Sesquicentennial Committee, 2003), p. 116.

50 See footnote #13. Her burial record reads "Justine Dohme geb. Blume."

51 "Henry Blume Dead," The Independent, 3 June 1910.

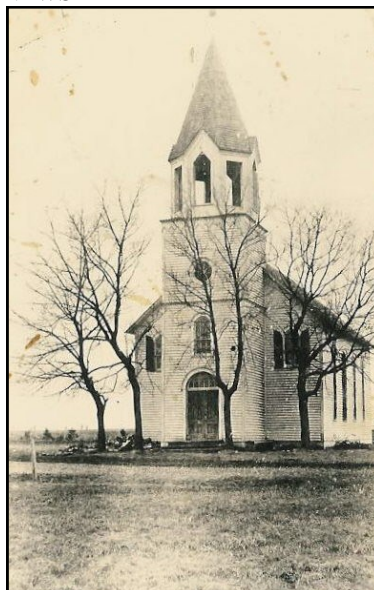
52 Neill, p. 442, entry on "Henry Blome" [sic].

53 www.findagrave.com, accessed 7 May 2012.

54 See reference note #50.

55 1870 U.S. Census, Minnesota, Sibley county, Arlington, pop. sch., p. 12, dwelling 96, family 88, line 28, Friedrich Blum

56 This is from information supplied by a member of the Soeffker family, found in the Soeffker family file at the Sibley County Historical Society, Henderson, Minnesota.



57 "Another of our old Pioneers Gone," Arlington Enterprise, 21 July 1904.

58 The rest of these facts all come from an article, "Ferdinand Soeffker Family," in Arlington, 1859-2006: Celebrating 150 Years of Arlington [Minnesota] History, (Arlington, Minnesota: Arlington Sesquicentennial Committee), p.173. The information is backed up by information found in primary sources such as censuses.

59 Neill, p. 445.

60 www.findagrave.com, accessed 1 December 2011.

61 "Old Resident Gone to Rest," Arlington Enterprise, 4 April 1919, p. 1.

62 www.karens-gen.com/buch/families/r/rehlingsteege.php, accessed 15 Dec 2011.

**St. John's New Church Dedicated
November 4, 1877.
Final cost: \$2,087.40**

63
See

58.
His

second wife may have been a Steege like his first wife. This history lists her maiden name as Mary Segar, which may be Steege misspelled.

64 According to the information from the History of the Minnesota Valley, Roehling came to Minnesota in 1856 and settled on section 17. But that section number is incorrect. His patent document and the plat map for Sibley county show that his land was located in sections 27 and 34.

65 See # 60.

66 Obituary, Arlington Enterprise, 1 Jan. 1903, found at <http://files.usgwarchives.net/mn/sibley/obitobenole.txt>, accessed 25 Nov 2011.

67 The website www.lippe-auswanderer.de/AuswandererLippe-USA/htmlp000456.htm, lists Christian Obernolte, steinmetz (stonemason), and his wife Conradine as having come over on the Ship Union, which reached New York on 11 Oct 1855.

68 Neill, p. 444.

69 See #65.

70 "Pass to That Great Beyond," Arlington Enterprise, 31 Jan 1907, transcribed at <http://files.usgwarchives.net/mn/sibley/obit/obernasg.txt>, accessed 25 Nov 2011.

71 His date of birth is listed as 11 Jan 1820 in the burial register of St. John's Lutheran Church, Arlington, MN; "Toten-Register 1883," p.269, entry 3. But he is listed with a birthdate of 13 Mar 1820 at www.karens-gen.com. I think this second date is actually his baptismal date.

72 There is a list of immigrants from Schaumburg, and data about them at www.karens-gen.com/sa/sa2005.php, accessed 7 May 2012.

73 Neill, p.444. I believe this means that they first briefly lived in Illinois like the others, but there is no way to prove it. This family arrived after the 1855 census in Illinois was taken. The Cook county tax records were burned in the Chicago Fire. They were in Sibley county when the 1860 U.S. census was enumerated. Also, there is no obituary for Heinrich Bade or his wife.

74 www.findagrave.com, accessed 10 May 2012.

75 Information from Eugene Bening. His family had hired a professional researcher to check church records in Germany.

76 Bits and Pieces, p.28.

77 www.findagrave.com, accessed 7 May 2012.

78 Neill, p. 445, the entry for "C. [Carl] Weike" [sic], their son.

79 Charlotte Weihe (Sibley Co., MN), homestead patent no. 78018.

80 see #31.

81 "Bright Wallert tree" at Ancestry.com, accessed 10 October 2011.

82 www.findagrave.com, accessed 7 May 2012.

83 June Drenning Holmquist. They Chose Minnesota: a Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), p. 21.

84 www.parkbooks.com/Html/res_depd.html, accessed 1 October 2011.

85 See #13.

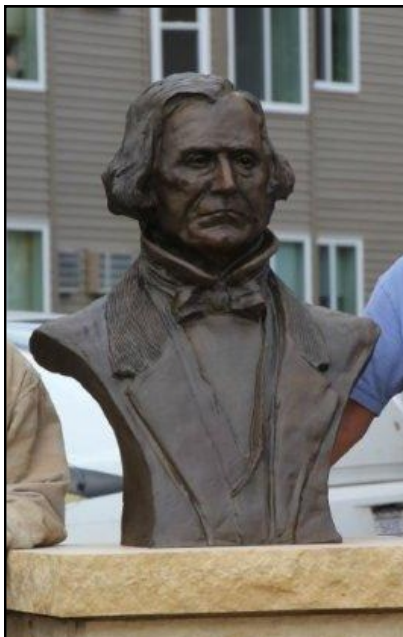
86 "F. Dohme, 74, Dies; Services on Thursday," from an unnamed newspaper clipping found in the Dohme family file, Champaign County Historical Archives, Urbana, Illinois.





(Continued from page 1)

A highlight of Henderson Heritage Days this year was the unveiling of the bronze bust of Joseph R. Brown in front of the historic 1879 Henderson Community Center, formerly the Sibley County Courthouse. There was a bus tour of historic sites and a program about the 1862 US Dakota War which took place in our area. On Sunday after the luncheon the Lucio Family Dakota Native Dancers performed, arranged and funded by one of our members, Glenn Kiecker.



We are in the process of putting all our VCR tapes on DVD. Ruth Ann Buck is working on this chore. We bought a machine that play VCR tapes and records it to DVD. It's complicated! After a dozen or so sessions I think the process has been mastered. We have some historic videos that date back to the 1980s. It has been fun seeing them again, and we have also noticed some people have gotten older looking in 25 years. Most are programs that have been presented at SCHS.



Our October program was Preserving Our Farm Heritage by Gordon Fredrickson. He grew up on a farm near Lakeville and puts on presentations

Mr. Fredrickson



and a slide show telling and showing his experiences. He has written several children's books about farm life 50+ years ago. It could be classified as historical fiction, interjecting his experiences into a fictional farm family of that generation. He is a retired English teacher.

I received a gift from Bert Karels. He made a notepad with a roller dispenser. The

witty note on the pad was so good I framed it and have it by my desk. Thanks to Bert! What a multi-talented guy!

Our country school project is ongoing. We continue to gather material and video tape people relating their experiences at country school. Would it not seem strange today to have a drinking water pail in the classroom and all the students using the same dipper? Are there teachers out there who would come to school an hour and

a half early to fire up the stove to warm the room in preparation for the school day? If you have photos, suggestions or ideas how to enhance this project, let us know. Steve has a section of the website devoted to country schools. Dorothy Peterson is in charge of the material we have gathered so far.



We added two 5 drawer file cabinets to our record storage. Millie Johnson had asked months ago for more file space. I was in Minneapolis with my pickup, and got two used files. They are very good quality, and heavy. The day I brought them to Henderson our strongest helper wasn't there, Sharon Shimota. Al Rostberg helped Ruth Ann and me unload the get them into place in Sharon H.'s genealogy room. I am glad to note none of us got a hernia. Did you know that Germans invented the hernia transplant? About spending SCHS money; Ray noticed some unusual bills in this month's VISA statement. WHOA!! I have my personal VISA card and an SCHS VISA card and accidentally used the wrong one 3 times. But I was caught red-handed, and Ray demanded reimbursement. Now I have a red ID tape on the SCHS card.

Our friendly group of SCHS volunteers want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. We hope none of you will get a lump of coal in your Christmas stocking and 2013 will be a wonderful year for you and your family.

See you on the 30th!
Rommi





SCHS Website Two-Year Anniversary



<http://sibleycountyhistoricalmuseum.com/>

Our site just turned two years old in November. During 2010, the site was building up interest and adding new features – we were seeing about 100 visitors per month. In 2011 we saw around 200 visitors per month. This past year we commonly see over 300 visitors per month! And they arrive from all over the world: Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, France, and elsewhere.

We have added a page for our Country School Project – **Remembering Country Schools**. We posted many old photos from various school districts and hope to post more. Rural School Eighth Grade Graduates from 1910, 1912, 1937, and 1940 are represented and we are seeking more years – might you have a photo to share? Remember, we have many publications at the museum to aid in your genealogy research – visit our page listing available publications. Visit our Cemetery Records page to find several Find-A-Grave links. Be sure to browse our Family History Books page – your family just may be one of over 60 listed and in our museum collection.

The Ostrom Photograph project continues to be alive and well; numerous photos are on our site. Readers of local newspapers really

OSTROM UPDATE

by Becky Briggs

The original scanner which was purchased in 2005 served us well for over six years, but quit working in October 2011. A replacement scanner was purchased in December 2011, so scanning of identified negatives has been proceeding through the past year.

We are pleasantly surprised at the number of photos that have been identified through the newspaper. Thank you to the many observant newspaper subscribers - we appreciate you taking the time to send identifications to the museum!



Ruth Klossner continues to coordinate the Ostrom project with participating newspapers although she is no longer with the Lafayette-Nicollet Ledger. A hearty thank you to Ruth from all of us at SCHS!

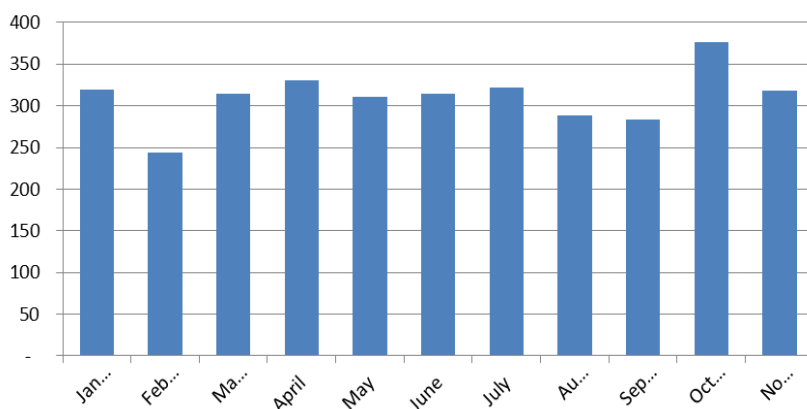
enjoy identifying people from old Ostrom photos. We love posting on our site and giving credit to those who provide us identifications. Keep your cards and letters coming! Don't miss out on our slide shows of various themes – Animals, Little Sailors, Double Weddings, and Servicemen.

By Steve Briggs, SCHS member and volunteer



Not actually
Steve Briggs
but a different
angel

Number of visitors in 2012



Month	Visitors
January	319
February	244
March	315
April	331
May	311
June	314
July	322
August	289
September	283
October	377
November	318

Fanciful Feather Trees For Christmas

By Arlene Busse

The above headline appeared in the Christmas Ideals publication in 1986. Excerpts from the article will follow but first know that a feather tree, the gift of the late Viola Otto of Gaylord, is again on display in the museum parlor. When offering it she explained, "Casey came home with this old thing from an auction years ago, do you want it?" It was a welcome gift then and is still a cherished part of the Christmas Collection. It appears ornamented with tinsel and decorations, gifts of several donors, all once perfect, now a bit shabby as are the trees described in the Ideals article:

Unpreened and often molting, with branches akimbo from years cramped in storage, feather trees seem unlikely centerpieces for Yuletide festivities. But ...become the epitome of an old-time Christmas.

It is assumed that some Christmas-loving German devised the first artificial trees during the late 19th century in response to forestry laws that prohibited the harvesting of evergreens for holiday celebrations.

Feathers, which had served so humbly in upholstery, bedding, and cleaning tools, were now transfigured in the foliage of fake conifers....

Some trees were tiny, just right for package decorations. Others were tabletop splendors.



This is our Feather Tree decorated for your visit!

Bigger still were giants that brushed parlor ceilings....

Whatever their size, the shape of feather trees was the same: that of Germany's beloved white pine.

"White Pines grew about a foot each year, then sprouted branches that circled the trunk like spokes on a wheel, leaving plenty of space to hang ornaments and to burn candles safely. So they were the perfect models for feather trees."

No one knows exactly how or when feather trees immigrated to the United States. But the consensus of Christmas his-

BIG TIME THANKS

Thanks to the following members for their generosity enabling us to operate our society. Memorials for Bob Busse; Dorothy Peterson, Clara Hebiesen, Holly Harjes, Judy Loewe, Karen Erickson, Jerome Petersen, David and Marie Main, and Arlene Busse. Memorials for Ruth Mueller; Margaret Hoffman and V. LaFrance. Memorial for Leona Skaro by Margaret Hoffman. Memorial for Pat Pinske by Margaret Hoffman. Memorials for Peter Petersen; Charles Meyer, Margaret Hoffman, Paula Nelson and Jerome and Mary Petersen. An additional thank you to Paula Nelson, William Mick and Beverly Christensen for their donations. A special thanks to Glenn Kiecker for his donation to fund the Native Dancers at Heritage Days in Henderson.

Rest assured we are very frugal with our funds. An example of a watchful eye; Our treasurer, Ray Meyer, called a few days ago and wondered what we got at the UFC Co-op for \$71. I couldn't remember. And there was a bill from Wiggly's in Mankato. And another from the John Deere dealer. Hmmm? What kind of a thief is charging stuff to our society? We caught the scoundrel. It was our president. Now we have yet another reason to get rid of him. He cannot be trusted. Maybe he can be impeached.

torians is that German wholesalers who exported millions of figural blown-glass ornaments to the United States between 1880 and 1920 also sent feather trees.

Feather Christmas trees were eventually manufactured in the United States and Japan, as well as Germany.

Production was mostly a cottage craft, with pieceworkers making branches in their homes, then returning components to a tree factory for assembly and shipping.

Work began with feathers. After the feathers were sorted and cleaned, the tufts were cut from quills, then dyed and left to dry.

The resulting bits of colored fluff were individually wrapped with fine copper wire and fitted together, like spoons in a drawer, one against another, creating small side branches. These were arranged along much thicker wire to create the large boughs, replete with red composition berries....

Establishing the age of a feather tree can be difficult because they were produced at least through the early 1950s and are now being replicated by contemporary folk artists.



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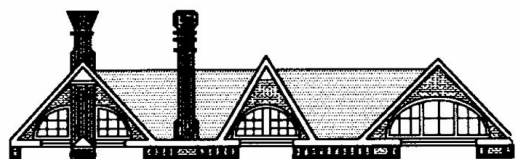
Regular meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month, March thru November at the museum in Henderson. The public is invited. The museum is open to the public for tours on Sundays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. June thru October and by appointment.

Send articles, announcements, photos and comments to the SCHS Newsletter, P.O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044 or Email: schs1@frontiernet.net



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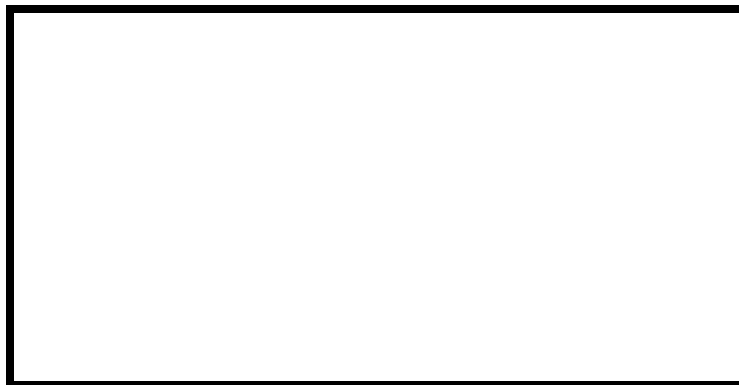
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A GRAND OLD HOUSE FILLED WITH GIFTS



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