

EXPLANATION

- Section Line
- Bound up Lot Line
- Wagon Road
- Railroad
- Creeks & Springs
- Ranges
- Churches
- School Houses
- Adjacent Lands owned by same party connected by a line, thus
- Post Office
- Coal, Lead, or Zinc Mine
- County Bridge

OUTLINE MAP  
OF  
**LE SUEUR CO.**  
MINNESOTA  
• 1898 •

Scale: 2 Miles to one inch.

# Les Nouvelles Historiques de Le Sueur

## State of Minnesota Approves Society's Grant Application to Restore Elysian Museum

The Le Sueur County Historical Society has recently been awarded a state grant to restore the red brick museum located at 301 NE 2nd St. in Elysian.

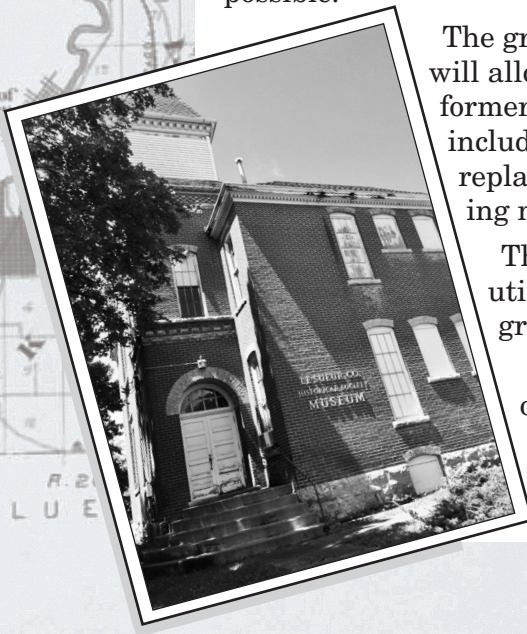
“We are excited and thrilled the state found our project worthy of the grant,” said Society President Bill Stangler. “It is because of the efforts of Board Secretary Ruth Collins and Treasurer Bonnie Reak this grant was even possible.”

The grant amount is for \$297,079 and will allow for extensive repairs to the former school building, built in the 1890's, include repairing the existing bell tower, replacing the cornices, repointing existing mortar, roof and chimney repair.

The Society is responsible for contributing \$31,278 as its portion of the the grant.

The former schoolhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Bids are being taken and work on the museum is expected

**Continued inside on page 4**



W A S E C A

C O.



## The President's Corner...

The Le Sueur County Historical Society has lost a committed and dedicated colleague in the recent passing of George Luskey on November 18, 2023. A member of the LCHS board, George helped steer the Society through some challenging times. He was instrumental in gathering volunteers to help move the contents of the historical museum in Le Sueur, Minn. He always served in the best interests of the community and county. He will be missed.

We have list an instrumental LCHS Board member in the passing of George Luskey, Friday November 18, 2023. He was instrumental in gathering those in Le Sueur, MN who volunteered to help move the contents of the historical museum. He always served in the best interest of the community and county as a member and board member of the Historical Society. He will be missed. We have been steadfast in our planning of projects for the LCHS and now have more to show for our efforts by the way of grants awarded. Thanks to the efforts of Bonnie Reak and Ruth Collins for their work with the LCHS specifically with the small and large grants awarded to LCHS by the Minnesota Historical Society. This is only a start, and we have a long road ahead of us with the Elysian School Museum, but we are on our way.

Projects: we need to store artifacts in a safe, climate-controlled environment and the location is not specific. A big area is needed for storage of the artifacts while the Elysian School Museum goes under rehabilitation and reconstruction. LCHS is attempting to find a place to call home. Any help with this from the membership is greatly appreciated.

Financially: LCHS is being miserly by operating and paying the bills to cover responsibilities such as electricity, mowing of properties, etc. The LCHS Board is grateful to the County Commissioners for the budget and showing fiscal responsibility. We are looking into charitable funding as a resource or option as a fundraiser for the Elysian School Museum matching funds.

Membership: You'll notice the 2023 membership ap-  
**Continued on page 6**

## LCHS Board News

Minnesota Historical Society – Small Grant awarded in September 2022: LCHS received a small grant for \$9,875 for the purchase of a Microfilm scanpro printer/reader/scanner. Receipt of the funds and acquisition/installation is in process. This will be in the Genealogy Center in Elysian. Funds in the LCHS budget included technology upgrades, and LCHS is purchasing compatible computer and accessories for the Genealogy Center currently.

Large Grant awarded in November 2022: LCHS received a large grant for \$297,079.00 for the Elysian School Museum rehabilitation, restoration and preservation starting at the roof, bell tower and other elements.

Elysian School Museum – During Summer 2022 the bell tower and roof of this structure began to leak, and the board chose to temporarily repair this structure at the cost of \$7,000. Unfortunately, contents under the bell tower have extensive water damage. The LCHS Board is seeking a volunteer who can remember to accession filing system of artifacts in the museum to assist in moving records and material to a safe location.

### George Luskey

June 12, 1948 - November 18, 2022



It is with great sadness we note the passing of George Luskey. George was a selfless stalwart of the Le Sueur County Historical Society. He was greatly interested in the Civil War era and participated in reenactments in Minnesota and around the country. Here he is pictured with a number of Civil War artifacts he had donated to the Le Sueur, Minn. museum. He is wearing his reenactment uniform.

Our challenge will be carrying on George's passion for history and continuing his work to make the Society strong for future generations.

Ottawa Stone Church – The doors on this Le Sueur County Historical gem was open once again for visitors. The Fall Celebration and Harvest meal was in September 2022. This was a spectacular event enjoyed by a full church attendance. LCHS Board is discussing opening the Church for private wedding ceremonies. More to come in 2023.

Le Sueur County Fair – LCHS Board representatives celebrated the highest attendance ever of 550 visitors who "signed-in" at the historical buildings on the fairgrounds including the Log Cabin and District #75 Schoolhouse. Visitors came from out-of-state and internationally.

Cleveland Church –  
**Continued on page 4**

# Christmas memories from the kitchen

By Ruth Collins, LCHS Executive Board Member

As with many families, Christmas Eve welcomed our family with anticipation of Santa Claus leaving gifts for children under the tree, and the hope that the piece of coal was saved for another. As children growing up, the holiday was an event bringing the hearts and souls of family together for an evening, or for a day. The mass or worship service was prepared for with choir practices, week after week until the final event.

The holiday brings a hustle and bustle described by those who feel shopping is the utmost equivalent of the Christmas holiday. This story gives honor to those who prepared the holiday through the handiwork from the kitchen and the smells from the baking. My memories of the rich-smelling aromas of the roasted turkey, the dressing and some squash from our garden bring me home each and every year.

The big meal on Christmas day was celebrated with the baked goose, roasted duck

and chicken, dressing and vegetables from the fall harvest. The aroma in the kitchen on Christmas morning was overwhelmingly delightful. The biggest excitement was the lights, tinsel and glitter, happy voices, and smiles of the family gathering around the tree. The day was filled with family, relatives, the old vinyl albums playing the Christmas music, and card games.

Christmas Eve brought us together at my grandparents' home. Over the creek and through the woods to my grandmother's home we drove. As we approached their home on the hill, the big and bright colorful star on the peak of their home showed us the way. It was even better in a snowstorm.

It was cold outside, but I knew inside her home, my grandmother's well-prepared meal filled the home with a wonderful, home-baked aroma. My grandmother kept her meal

Continued on next page...



## Divinity Candy

Makes 2-3 dozen

2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup light corn syrup  
1/2 cup water  
2 egg whites  
Pinch of salt  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup chopped walnuts

1. In saucepan, mix together sugar, corn syrup and water. Boil to a hard boil stage or 365° on a candy thermometer.

2. Whip egg whites with salt until stiff peaks form. Pour syrup over whites and continue beating on high speed until candy starts to lose its shine. When beaters are lifted out of candy, mixture should fall in a ribbon that re-bounds on itself.

3. Fold in vanilla and nuts. Drop by teaspoonfuls on to a sheet of waxed paper. Cool.

## Christmas Cut-Out Cookies

Makes 7-8 dozen

Cookie Dough:  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup shortening  
1/3 cup sour cream  
2 eggs  
1 tsp. vanilla or almond extract  
4-1/2 cups flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking soda

Frosting:  
3 cups powdered sugar  
3 Tbsp. milk  
2 Tbsp. butter  
1 drop food coloring of desired color

1. Cream together sugar and shortening.

2. Beat together sour cream and eggs. Add to creamed ingredients and mix well. Stir in extract, flour, salt and baking soda. Mix well. Chill overnight.

3. Divide dough into three parts. On lightly floured surface, roll out to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut with floured cookie cutters.

4. Bake at 350° for 7-10 minutes. Cool.

5. To prepare frosting, blend together all ingredients — adding more powdered sugar if mixture seems too thin. Frost cookies.

## Chicken Noodle Hotdish

Makes 8-10 servings

Chicken:  
5-6 lb. whole chicken  
1 tsp. whole allspice  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. pepper  
1-1/2 cups milk  
1-1/2 cups chicken broth

Homemade Noodles:  
4 eggs, beaten  
1 tsp. salt  
2 Tbsp. warm water  
2-1/4 cups flour

1. Cook whole chicken in large saucepan with water. Bring to a boil and cook 50-65 minutes until done.

2. While chicken cooks, prepare homemade noodles by combining ingredients in order given. Roll out dough into thin sheet and cut into 1/2-inch by 6-inch strips of noodles. Let dry.

3. Remove chicken from saucepan, cool slightly, debone, and cut into pieces. Skim fat from broth and reserve 1-1/2 cups of chicken broth. 4. In a roasting pan, combine noodles, chicken, allspice, salt, pepper, milk and chicken broth.

5. Bake at 350° for 45-60 minutes.

## Christmas memories continued

very simple and basic: homemade egg noodles with chicken or turkey baked in the oven. This was something only my grandmother could prepare due to the finicky recipe for the homemade noodles. The homemade noodles were made with love and earlier than the meat because they had to dry properly. The aroma of fresh-baked buns filled the senses and we ate those with the hotdish. The meal was made with love, and we all knew my grandmother would make enough for all of us to serve up a second helping of food.

From a genealogical and historical perspective: My grandmothers were born and resided in Le Sueur County their entire life. My Grandma Tres Stangler was born near Waterville, Minn. and her maiden name was Knish. My Grandmother Em-

## Elysian museum grant continued

to commence early in 2023.

Prior to its closure, the schoolhouse displayed many historical artifacts and artwork. These items now need to be cleared out to make room for the contractors. Volunteers will be needed to help in this process. If you're interested in helping, send us an email at [info@lesueurcountyhistory.org](mailto:info@lesueurcountyhistory.org).

LCHS is one of 42 organizations awarded Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Large Grants. This publication/project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota His-

## LCHS Board News continued

This building has suffered break-ins over this past year. The culprits remain "at-large" and assistance from the community is needed. The Church contents will be organized this next year. LCHS is seeking volunteers for this mission. The landscape has been cleaned up around the church, the boarded windows painted and the LCHS Board visited this site in October 2022.

LCHS Art Presentation Series 2022 concluded Oct. 5 with the David Maass presentation at the Elysian Tourism Center. The Adolf Dehn art presentation was at the Annual LCHS Board meeting in April and began this series. The Roger Pruess presentation was during Bull Head Days in June in Waterville, Minn. Gratitude and thanks to West Cedar Studios and Jeff Jarvis for this production and bringing some of the LCHS Art Archives to life and out to the community!

Genealogy Center – The doors opened this summer and saw much activity! Thanks to volunteers over this time for operations and connecting the visitors, online requests and updating records.

ily Pettis was born near Cleveland, Minn. and her maiden name was Hermel. And my Grandmother Susie Pettis was born in Kasota, Minn. and her maiden name was Olson, and her father was the town blacksmith. My grandmothers made their Christmas treats of divinity and cut-out cookies. The divine smells of the kitchen in my grandmother's home during Christmas time have made a lasting imprint in my mind, heart and soul; and I pass on the memories to all my readers to trigger your homemade Christmas memories from the senses.

I had my grandmother's recipes published in 1996 in the Quilter's Christmas Cookbook, by Good Books, PA. My grandmother's divinity, cut-out Christmas cookie and chicken noodle hotdish complete with her egg noodle recipe.

torical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Any views, findings, opinions, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society, or the Minnesota Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

The Le Sueur County Society would like to thank the Le Sueur County Commissioners for their support and assistance in seeing this project to its fruition.

LCHS continues to seek assistance from members to keep this center updated and the "hub" of genealogy.

Memberships – The LCHS Board approved a new list of Membership values starting in 2023. Please see the Membership notes in this newsletter. Our membership as of the November Board meeting is at 241 Life and Annual Memberships. We are looking to increase this amount in 2023. Invite family and friends to join.

Annual Meeting – This takes place each year in April. Prior to the Annual meeting membership renewals must be recorded and approved two weeks before the Annual Meeting for eligibility to vote. Watch for upcoming renewal notices in the postal mail.

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*The mission of the Le Sueur County Historical Society is to collect and preserve the story of Le Sueur County — telling its history through historic sites, a research center, collections, exhibits and educational programming.*



# Lincoln and the Holidays



By Bryce O. Stenzel

Both Thanksgiving and Christmas are holidays steeped in the rich traditions of good food and fellowship, passed from one generation to the next. It is worth noting where some of those traditions came from.

As any school child knows; Thanksgiving originated with the Pilgrims, and has been celebrated annually since 1621, or so the story goes. Actually, the truth is a bit more complicated. There was no national day of Thanksgiving until President George Washington proclaimed the first one in 1789. After that, some states observed it as a recognized holiday, while others did not. It wasn't until 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln established the "last Thursday in November" as America's permanent, national Thanksgiving holiday. Even that was eventually changed by Congress to the "fourth Thursday" in November.

Lincoln saw the unifying power of an annual holiday dedicated to reflecting on the blessings bestowed upon the nation. Two of those blessings (as he saw them) were the Union military victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, which prompted Lincoln to issue his Thanksgiving proclamation in early October. Nov. 26, 1863, became the first, permanent Thanksgiving Day.

President Lincoln wasn't the only member of his family responsible for setting a precedent, which evolved into a cherished holiday tradition. Lincoln's ten-year old son, Tad befriended a live turkey sent to the White House for the First Family's 1863 Christmas dinner, and named him "Jack." Tad fed Jack, and taught the bird to follow him around the White House grounds...

When the time came to prepare the turkey for the holiday meal, Tad convinced the "executioner" to delay slaughtering the bird, so he could bring Jack's case before the President. Tad ran and burst into one of his father's Cabinet meetings. Crying loudly, Tad told his father that Jack was about to be killed. "Jack must not be killed; it is wicked," Tad pleaded. President Lincoln replied, "Jack was sent here to be killed and eaten...I can't help it." Tad, sobbing, said, "He's a good turkey, and I don't want him killed." Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, paused in the midst of the Cabinet meeting. He took out a card, and on it he wrote an order of reprieve. Jack's life was to be spared, and Tad raced out of the Cabinet meeting to present the presidential order to the executioner. This began what has become an annual Thanksgiving tradition. Each year the President

Continued on next page...

## Lincoln and the Holidays continued

pardons a turkey before Thanksgiving, due to the turkey's association with this holiday (wild turkey may have been served at the First Thanksgiving feast by the Pilgrims and Indians in the autumn of 1621) over Christmas—even though Tad's pet was actually supposed to be a Christmas turkey!

A year later, in December of 1864, as the Union military advanced across the South, making Confederate defeat seem to be only a matter of time, Harper's Weekly artist Thomas Nast (he also invented the political cartoons of the Democratic donkey, Republican elephant, as well as the Americanized version of Santa Claus) drew a holiday illustration betokening mercy for the vanquished and sectional reconciliation for the nation. Under the traditional Christmas proclamation of "peace on earth and good will toward men," President Abraham Lincoln is depicted as the gracious host who generously welcomes the Confederates — President Jefferson Davis, General Robert E. Lee, and state governors — in from the cold, and gestures for them to return to their rightful seats at the sumptuous feast of the states. Seated at the table are the governors of the Union states, and on the wall behind them appear portraits of leading Union generals.

Framing the main banquet scene are four circular insets that convey the message that if the Confederacy will lay down its arms, surrender un-

## President's Corner continued

plication has a new look. The LCHS Board hopes to build on the Society's progress over the previous three years. A big part of that relies on the help of our members. Your commitment to the LCHS is needed and appreciated.

I am personally grateful for the experience to work with the LCHS as a member and President of the Society. We have more to do in 2023 and I would like to encourage the members who read this newsletter to invite a friend or relative to join. Our members reach to Canada (thank you!) and across the United States. Le Sueur County History is culturally rich and needs to be developed for all to share. Join us and Happy Holidays!

Your President,  
William (Bill) Stangler

## STORAGE NEEDED

The Le Sueur County Historical Society needs dry, secure storage for artifacts while the Elysian museum is being repaired. If you know of any potential sites, please contact us at [info@lesueur-countyhistory.org](mailto:info@lesueur-countyhistory.org) as soon as possible.

conditionally, and be contrite, then the Union will be merciful and joyously welcome them back into the fold. Viewing them clockwise from the upper-left, the symbolic figure of Victory, backed by the American Eagle, offers the olive branch of peace to a submissive Confederate soldier; the forgiving father from the biblical parable embraces his wayward son, whose sorrow for his past rebellion prompts the father to honor his son with a celebratory dinner; under the tattered American flag, the ordinary soldiers of the Union and Confederacy reunite happily as friends and brothers after the Confederate arms and battle standards have been laid on the ground; and, General Robert E. Lee, the Confederate commander, bows respectfully and offers his sword in unconditional surrender to General Ulysses S. Grant, the commander of the Union troops. In the lower-center is a scene from a holiday table at which a Northern family drinks a toast to the Union servicemen.

It is not mere coincidence that Nast depicted the reunification of the United States as a family, Christmas holiday dinner, in which the individual members are sitting together enjoying each other's company, despite their differences. In our own time, with families divided over martial or child care disputes, politics and religion; it is comforting to realize that as a nation, we have been there before and survived. Perhaps the greatest, lasting legacy of the Civil War era is that regardless of race or creed, we come to the table as equals. It was on New Year's Day, Jan. 1, 1863, that Lincoln signed the final Emancipation Proclamation, turning the Union Army into an army of liberation. That too, is worth remembering, and celebrating, during this special season. Happy Holidays!

Sources:

<https://timpanogos.wordpress.com/2015/12/23/thomas-nast-in-1864-the-union-christmas-dinner-pushed-reconciliation-in-time-of-war/>

<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/questions/which-president-started-the-tradition-of-pardoning-the-thanksgiving-turkey>

## This is your newsletter!

Have news to share? Or a little piece of local history people might find interesting? Share with other members of the Le Sueur County Historical Society! Send any newsletter items to board member Paul Malchow at 745 Ottawa Road, Le Sueur, MN 56058 or email [info@lesueurcountyhistory.org](mailto:info@lesueurcountyhistory.org).



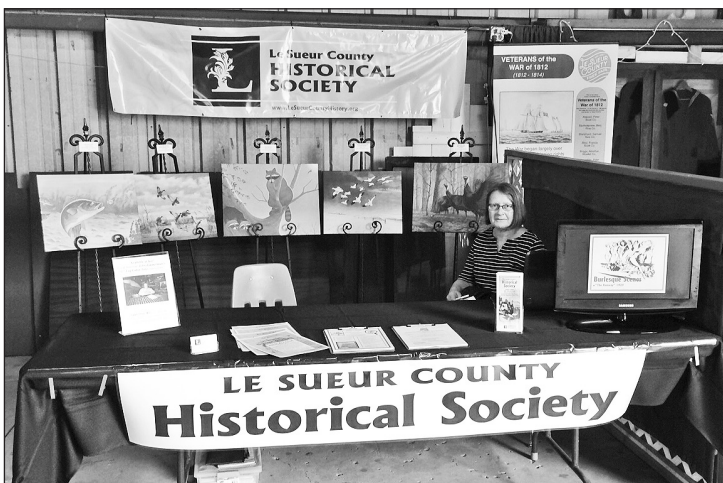


P.O. Box 123  
Le Center, MN 56057

**PRESORT  
STANDARD  
Permit #55  
New Prague, MN  
56071**

# Historical Society at the Le Sueur County Fair

The Le Sueur County Society made a big impression with fair visitors - operating three separate sites over the fair's four-day run. Along with a booth in the commercial exhibit building, the settlers' cabin exhibit drew history buffs from near and far. Dean Pettis (photo right) shared his expertise for much of the fair.



Fair patrons also got a look at the recently-refurbished Little White Schoolhouse of District 75. Not only did the 150-year-old wood structure get a new roof and fresh coat of paint; volunteers furnished the inside of the school to reflect the look of the era.