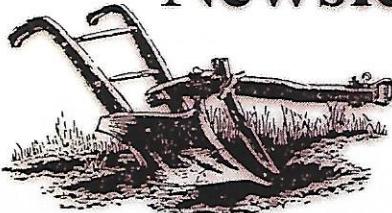


# Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 3,  
Issue 2  
April 2015

## WE NEED ASSISTANCE

Like most organizations in Grundy County, we depend on our volunteers—some do maintenance, some work only on the Festival of Trees, some do other varied jobs. However, we are in desperate need of help in the *following two areas*.

### SCRAPBOOKERS NEEDED

Our scrapbook is sadly out of date. We have the clippings but we need someone to put them into our scrapbook. If you have scrapbook experience or are interested in trying your hand at this kind of work, please contact the Museum at (815) 942-4880 or stop by any Thursday, Friday, or Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to see if this is something you can do.

### CABOOSE

As you may or may not know, the Society owns the caboose located at the railroad station by Liberty Street. The Caboose is open for tours on Cruise Nights, one day during the Corn Festival, and at least once during Liberty Days. If you are a railroad buff, can you help by volunteering to conduct tours of the Caboose??? It's not a huge investment in time: three hours on Cruise nights, three hours during Corn Festival, and another three hours during other festivals. *So, that's only 27 hours per year.* Are you interested?

## MUSEUM NEWS

### UPCOMING EVENTS



One room schoolhouse in Sulphur Springs, Maine Township, Grundy County

April 28: Michelle Micetich will talk about country schoolhouses, those tiny gems located according to federal land grant law in each township's Section 16. Grundy County had 98 of these country schools. Which landowners provided Section 16 land? How did a township finance its school? Who were the teachers? What did getting an education mean in this era? Photographs and stories of our country's country schools, teachers, and students, plus some details on standards and the history of the particular schools as

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e-mail: [grundyhistory@sbcglobal.net](mailto:grundyhistory@sbcglobal.net)

Facebook: Museum of the Grundy County 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 to the Society start at \$20 annually. Applications can be downloaded from our website, <http://www.grundycountyhs.org> or write to us care of the address above.

### Board of Directors

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examples, will be presented. Maps and artifacts will be on display. Attendees are welcomed to share their own experiences with these country schools.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26th, at the First United Methodist Church, 118 W. Jackson St. in Morris, IL. A mailing regarding the meeting will go out at the end of April. The agenda for the event is as follows.

6:00 - Social Time  
6:30 - Dinner catered by Weits  
7:00 - Business Meeting  
7:30 - Featured Program

We look forward to sharing the evening with as many of our members as possible. See you there?

### GRUNDY COUNTY TRIVIA

Can you name the first I & M canal boat to travel the whole length of the canal? Find the answer elsewhere in this newsletter.

### GOOD NEWS

Recently someone in charge of an estate sale remembered the Museum. They invited some of our staff to review items that were not to be put up for auction. We spent a great four hours perusing the items with the executors. The Museum has often asked for high school diplomas. Among the items were diplomas as well as an autograph book, calling cards, and programs.

We selected a number of handmade dresses from the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the various patterns used to construct them. Additionally, baby clothes estimated to be from the early 20th Century were chosen.

Among other items were aprons and rugs—both completed and under construction. The art of rag rug making, showcasing items from the estate, is now on display. View a rug under construction. Balls of fabric strips cut from old clothing and other soft goods were taken to a rug weaver by members of the Mazon World Neighbors Club. The display also contains a completed multi-colored "fat quarters" rug along with more stitched strips ready to be added to another rug.

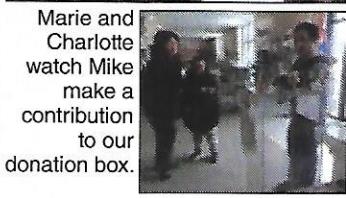
The estate also contained homemade craft paraphernalia, both from useful crafts such as quilt making, tatting, and crocheting; and others done purely for personal enjoyment or as decorative

arts, such as quilling. Quilling, or paper filigree, is an art form involving the use of strips of paper that are rolled, shaped, and glued together to create decorative designs. Among the quilling pieces received are doll house furniture and a variety of shapes of delicate, lacy Christmas ornaments. Many of these Quilling items are currently on display.

We are still in the process of cataloging all the items we received from the estate. We have plans for a future exhibit that will showcase other of these numerous items. Watch for information in an upcoming newsletter.



PHOTOS BY JOAN BLEDIG



Marie and Charlotte watch Mike make a contribution to our donation box.

## TRINITY SERVICES VISIT

Maria Luna and Jackie Anderson brought 14 special needs adults for a tour through our museum and its exhibits. Ken Sereno, Debbie Steffes, and Joan Bledig split the duties of explaining items housed in our Museum. Joan gave a presentation of our Mazon fossil collection. Each member of the tour group received an identified Mazon fossil to take home with them. The fossils were donated by Clay Davis, a Mazon collector.

## NEW MEMBERS

The following folks have joined the membership of the Grundy County Historical Society. We thank you for your support of the Society and the Museum!

Zora Baron, Morris, IL

Cherian Lautermilch, Little Elm, TX

Bert C. Nicholson, Danville, IL

Peter Poshepny, Downers Grove, IL

## RADIO



The Museum is on the radio the first Monday of every month. Tune in and listen to "People Are Talking," WCSJ, 103.1 on your FM dial, from approximately 9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

## FACEBOOK

Don't forget to visit our Facebook page, kept up-to-date by Dorothy Cunnea. Lots of Grundy County historical information and events are showcased there. If you wish to access the Museum's Facebook page, request a friendship from Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois. We welcome all comers. As of this printing, we have 350 followers.

## GIMMICKS AND GIVEAWAYS

Repeating the last newsletters request, we specifically said we are looking for gimmicks, giveaways, and such that were free giveaways: pens, pencils, yardsticks, tape measures, cooking utensils and anything else that advertises the local businesses in Grundy County. Remember—check your junk draw or desk for any of these items you no longer need. The Museum would appreciate adding them to its collection.

## GRUNDY COUNTY AGRICULTURE

Farming changed dramatically during the course of the 1900s. In the United States especially, the size of farms, the labor force farming them, the crops being grown, and the nature of the work have changed tremendously. If we could transport a farmer from 1900 through time to a large farm today, that farmer would not recognize much of what he sees.

### THE FARMERS

Over the course of the 20th Century, fewer and fewer people were employed exclusively as farmers. According to Carolyn Dimitri of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 41 percent of the workforce in 1900 were employed on farms. In 2000, only 1.9 percent of the population worked in agriculture.



Farming in the 19th century.

At the beginning of the century, farm families worked together on the farm. In 1930, one-third of the families had at least one family member who worked off the farm for more than 100 days. In 2000, 93 percent of farms were supported in part by off-farm income.

### THE FARMS

According to the National Agricultural Statistical Service, the number of farms in the United States has fallen by 63 percent since 1900. The farms, however, have grown in size. In 1900 the typical farm was between 100 and 200 acres. As the century progressed, farms became larger. By 1997, the average farm was nearly 500 acres. Today, it is much larger than 500 acres.

In the late 1880's and early 1900's, a typical farm would be an average of 100 acres. Farms were very different because back then, farmers used horses for everything; now tractors do the farm work.

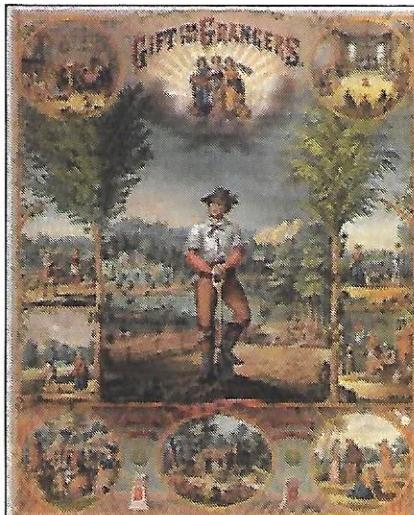
Farmers raised cows, pigs, chickens, and horses. They grew turnips, potatoes, carrots, grain, wheat, and corn. The buildings on a farm included a barn with horses stabled at one end and cows at the other. There was a milk shed where cream was separated from the milk. The wagon shed stored the farmer's wagons, and the hen house held the hens.

And, outhouses were in use until the late 1940s to middle 1950s.

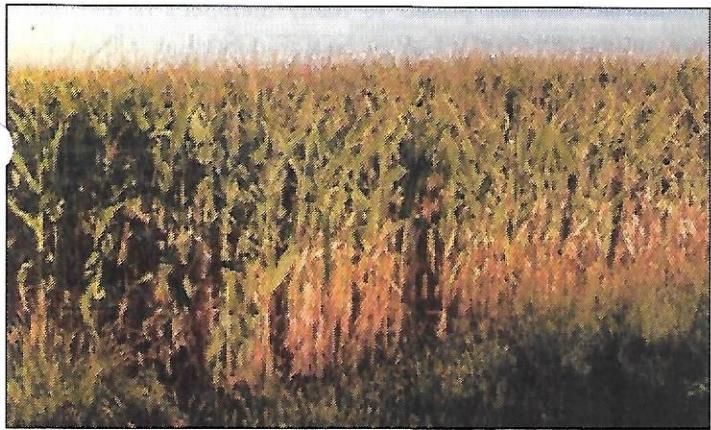
Some comparisons:

**1930:** 13 percent of all farms have electricity

**1940:** 58 percent of all farms have cars; 25 percent have phones; 33 percent have electricity



"Gift for the grangers ppmca02956u" by Strobridge & Co. Lith.



Corn

**1954:** 70.9 percent of all farms have cars; 49 percent have phones; 93 percent have electricity; and Social Security coverage has been extended to farm operators

**1968:** 90 percent of all farms have phones; 98.6 percent have electricity

## THE WORK

Growth in farm size was made possible by mechanization. Dimitri of the USDA said that in 1900, 22 million work animals helped perform farm chores, and farm work was mostly unmechanized, with heavy work being done by both the farmers and their beasts. The tractor was introduced in 1910. Tractor numbers grew to more than three million by 1960. Specialized machinery such as planters, hay balers, pickers, and harvesters, streamlined the process of planting and harvesting and made farming much less physically demanding. By 1960, only three million work animals were being used on farms. After 1960 the number was small enough that the USDA did not bother to collect these statistics.

## THE CROPS

According to the USDA, in 1900 the typical farm produced five different commodities plus food for animals and the people working the farm. Today, the majority of farms grow only one or two of those commodities. The type of crop grown has also changed. Oats, a major animal-feed crop during colonial days, became no longer necessary as the use of draft animals declined. Soybean planting grew from less than one-half million acres in 1920 to 55 to 65 million acres in 1977. Hybridization increased the yield of wheat, corn, and soybean acreage. Collection of seeds for replanting became uncommon as seed corn companies offered varieties with ever higher yields.

### Grundy County Crop Comparisons

Corn	Harvested Acres	Soybeans	Harvested Acres
1925	89,700	1927	Less than 100 acres first reported
1950	88,600	1950	32,300
1975	101,500	1975	81,000
2000	106,200	2000	95,700
2013	111,400	2013	83,900



Soybeans

Just a sampling of what was happening in Grundy County at the end of 1914 and beginning of 1915 according to *The Morris Daily Herald*. At this time, Hoof and Mouth Disease is rampant.

**November 24:** Arrangements are made for the slaughtering of a large number of cattle on A. D. Lamphere & Coveny Bros. farms in the southern part of the county which are suffering from Hoof and Mouth Disease.

**November 27:** A government inspector kills 61 head of cattle and 40 head of hogs on the Landphere farm in Mazon Township.

**December 1:** Isham Brothers herd of cattle is killed and a quarantine is placed on an adjacent farm.

**December 4:** Cattle and hogs at Martin Bros farm in Mazon are killed.

**December 7:** Hoof and Mouth Disease breaks out on the farm of Harry Peacock I Aux Sable Township.

**December 20:** A heavy snow storm makes good sleighing and ideal Christmas weather.

**December 21:** Hoof and Mouth Disease develops in cattle belong to Myron H. Wilcox.

**December 23:** More cases of Hoof and Mouth Disease are found in Aux Sable township.

**December 24:** The spreading of Hoof and Mouth Disease in north part of county creates apprehension.

**December 26:** The first of the Myron Wilcox cattle are killed and arrangements are made for the slaughtering others on the Enger farm. The Northwestern Novelty Co puts a new camp vending machine on the market for the sale of postage stamps. Thermometers go down to 21 below zero making it the coldest weather in four years.

**December 28:** Dr. J. A. Ragan, deputy state veterinarian, orders all hunters to cease trespassing on farms on account of Hoof and Mouth Disease.

**December 31:** F. H. Demaree, county farm advisor, reports on the outcome of his first series of township club meetings of members of the County Soil and Crop Improvement Association. He had 301 members in attendance. As a result,

52 farmers decided to take up "corn breeding" during the year. This is a larger number than he had in the whole state of Missouri during the first year that this science was introduced there under Demaree's direction several years ago. Water rose in the trenches used to bury the slaughtered herd of the Wilcox cattle on their farm in Erienna township, thus resulting in this herd not being killed when expected. It had been hoped to stamp out Hoof and Mouth Disease in the county before the start of new year.

**1915:** Grundy County Farm Bureau protested the sale and driving of cattle on roads in the county to prevent the spread of Hoof and Mouth Disease.

**January 2:** Myron Wilcox family has Hoof and Mouth Disease; 82 cattle killed valued at \$8,788. In today's money this would be about \$202,000.

**January 25:** Officers of the Farmers Institute meet. They decide to postpone their annual meeting because Hoof and

Mouth Disease has placed so many member's farms under quarantine.

**January 26:** The home of H. P. Dwyer of Minooka is damaged by fire. Miss Winnie Thorson and Steve Sangland of Saratoga township, marry. Soren Fosse, who lives north of Morris, celebrated his 90th birthday. Governor Dunne stays the execution of John Kinzie, setting the date of the hanging to February 26.

**January 27:** Lyman Lee, aged 56, has a narrow escape when his team is hit by a train at Verona. Both his are horses killed. Word is received of the death of Rev. C. C. Lovejoy, former Morris minister, at his house in Florida.

**January 28:** Thermometers drop to 20 below zero. David Thompson, a former Morris boy, marries Ethel Hurtt of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. On their wedding trip, they travel to Morris.

## **CURRENT AND FUTURE EXHIBITS**

### **APRIL-JUNE**

Quilling—from the estate mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. (See page 1.)

### **JULY-SEPTEMBER**

Local artists and their seldom seen work. The Grundy County Museum and Historical Society will display art and photography by Grundy County artists, including Larry Larsen, Virginia Brown, Elizabeth "Bunny" Mushro, Guy Osmonson, and Tony Minard.

### **OCTOBER-DECEMBER**

Celebrating the holidays

## **Grundy County**



## **Historical Society**

Grundy County Historical Society  
and Museum  
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Morris, IL 60450

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