

# Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 3,  
Issue 3  
July 2015

## WE STILL 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. We still 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Our scrapbook is sadly out of date.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 would like to do.

### CABOOSE

The Society owns the caboose located at the railroad station by Liberty Street. It 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 Caboose tours? It's not a huge investment in time: three hours on Cruise nights, three hours during Corn Festival, and three hours during other festivals. *So, that's only 27 hours per year.* Are you interested?

## MUSEUM NEWS

### OCTOBER MEETING

PRIVATE TELEPHONE COMPANY—Do you know that there are still private telephone companies in business today. AND, we have one in Kinsman, Illinois. Jack Dunn will be our speaker for the October meeting to explain how the Kinsman Telephone Company came into existence and how it works today. Don't miss this opportunity to hear about a telephone company which does not fit into the LARGE type phone companies we are familiar with today. Hope to see you on October 20th, at 7 p.m. Location is yet to be decided.

### FESTIVAL OF TREES

Yes, we are already thinking about our next Festival of Trees fundraiser. November 27, 28 and 29th will be here before you know it. Remember, we will start decorating trees, wreaths and centerpieces at the end of September so FOT is not that far in the future. Plan your holiday and come to the Museum to bid on a beautifully decorated tree, or wreath or centerpiece. If you have visitors, bring your guests with you. In the last couple of years a South Carolina family have managed to bid on and win trees and other items and squeezed them into their full size van to take home. Plus many small sized

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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 \$10 for students 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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trees are perfect for gifts to people in hospitals, nursing homes, or small apartments.

### CORN FESTIVAL

The dates for this year's Corn Festival are September 23 through 27. We would like to have a presence in the Corn Festival Parade on Sunday the 27th. We would like to do something simple, perhaps using an antique vehicle on which we would mount signs advertising our Museum. Or, if you have a vehicle with a trailer hitch, perhaps you can pull a small trailer decorated appropriately to bring Museum awareness to parade viewers. Are any of our members able to help with this? If so, please contact Donna at the Museum.

### JUNK IN THE TRUNK

Ken Willis runs Junk in the Trunk which is held the third Sunday of the month through the Summer. Basically, it is a garage sale run out of the trunks of your cars. People drive up, are shown where to park, pull out their tables and the items they are selling, and the fun begins at 9:00 a.m. What do we have to do with this event? Well, we show the exhibitors/sellers where to park their car. Usually two people volunteer and this year we received \$510.00 for our efforts. Dan Dransfeldt and Paul Weitz were our volunteers and, in three hours, showed 51 cars where they could exhibit their items. At \$10.00 a car, that is a fantastic amount of money raised for the Museum for only three hours of volunteer time. Thank you Dan and Paul.

### ADDITIONAL SPACE REQUIRED

*Running out of space*—we're bursting at the seams! Our last speaker, Michelle Micetich lectured about One Room Schoolhouses in the County to a overflowing room. We ran out of chairs and even had to utilize our school room exhibit benches. They must be very hard because some people ended up standing rather than sitting on them.

We are in desperate need of space. We are looking for space in Morris and we are also thinking about adding on to the Museum on the south side of the building. At this time, no decision has been made and we're still looking. The reasons for needing more space are many. Our meeting room is too small and could be enlarged into our current garage space. We have two display cases still at the courthouse which we could use, but have no space to house them in the Museum. And, we need climate controlled storage for the many, many treasures our Museum contains. A too hot/too cold/too damp environment is bad for photos, fabrics, books, and our many wooden artifacts.

### GRUNDY COUNTY TRIVIA

Can you name the first blacksmith to practice his trade in Morris? Find the answer elsewhere in this newsletter.



Elizabeth "Bunny" Mushro's Coal City panorama showing both sides of the mail street, circa 1895, in six separate panels. Above, this page: Panels

One through Three, top of next page, Panels Four through Six. Panels One and Six are approximately half the width of the other four panels.

## WHITE OAK SCHOOL TOUR

On May 29, Trudi Deslaurier, assisted by her daughter, Jackie, brought her White Oak School fifth grade class to the Museum where they spent time looking at one room schoolhouse photos, as well as participated in what it was like to attend an 1880-1900s one room schoolhouse, using slates and chalk rather than IPADS or other electronic tools. Millie Dyer was our volunteer teacher for the school room session. Ken Sereno, Debbie Steffes, and Joan Bledig split the duties of explaining items housed in our Museum including a special presentation in the fossil area. The boys especially were fascinated by the fossils and each student received a gift of a fossil upon leaving.

## 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! The following new members all hail from Morris, Illinois.

Bill and Tina Atkinson; Randy Weese; Julie Buck; Karen Avalos; L. Gehrig Dergo, Jr.; and Osman Dyleil.

## 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 384 followers.

## MUSEUM

The *Morris Daily Herald*, now named the *Morris Herald News*, called us as they are moving and asked if we were interested in things in their attic. Oh boy! Were we interested. This recently occurred and we have not had time to go through everything but at a quick glance we saw books, photos, and many articles. The newspaper said if we did not want the material it could just be thrown out, but of course we do want it.

**Remember**—if you are cleaning out a house where you find a lot of paper, photos, plat maps, or other material pertinent to Grundy County, box it up and call the Historical Society. Drop it off at the

Museum during normal operating hours, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or, call to arrange a pickup.

## LIBERTY ART DAYS

On June 25 through 27, the Liberty Arts Festival featured all types of creativity—musicians, vocalists, dancers, artists, theater, and much more! The Museum participated by displaying a number of pieces of art, all created by local artists, which had been in storage. Included were pictures of downtown Mazon, downtown Coal City, paintings of babies, as well as a stylish woman in a red dress. Our guest artists were Larry Larsen, Virginia Brown, Elizabeth "Bunny" Mushro, Guy Osmonson, and Tony Minard. Catch this display while you still can as the Museum plans on displaying them for the next two weeks. This is a great chance to see some of the treasures currently hidden in storage. Several of the pictures are shown above on this page and on the next of this newsletter.

In addition, we put two chairs up for auction at the end of Liberty Days. The chairs, painted by the *Morris Watercolor Guild*, were donated as fundraisers to the Museum. They were on display for a week at the Museum and then transported to Chapin's Restaurant where the auction was held on June 28th. The auction is slated to become an annual event and the Museum plans to participate in the future.

Latest contributions to our collections include:

Mourning and wedding outfits with matching shoes were donated by Claudia Rogers. They were worn by Nettie Cook Hume. Lately we have received items from former Grundy County residents, among which are a bow tie quilt top sent from Oregon and photos from South Carolina. People want their Grundy County treasures preserved and our museum is their choice to make sure the history of their items is passed down to future generations.

The membership year starts now. When you join, you get a full year of newsletters, information on our speakers, and facebook which contains flashbacks to 100 years ago: births, deaths, accidents.

## HEIRLOOM RECIPE WOES

In trying to duplicate heirloom recipes from our ancestors, one runs headlong into major differences in food staples of olden times as compared to today's commercial products.



Today, sugar and flour are more refined. Eggs have a different flavor because now hens receive special feeds. Likewise, meat products. Fruits and vegetables are hybridized to withstand vigorous



Immediately above, left to right: Mazon in 1876 by Elizabeth Mushro. The Lady in Red is Maxine Kussler's mother as painted by Jo Kussler. On loan from Joan Sereno. Melvin Ryder about 1900; he farmed the Ox Bow as an adult. On loan from Ken Sereno. Notice two locks of young Melvin's hair

have been included in the frame. Morris train station, ca. 1992, by Jaris Enger. Original art for Shabbona commemorative plates by Larry Larson. Larry also did art for another commemorative plate depicting the Morris Volunteers fire brigade, which is also on display in our Museum.

transportation and handling. Remember how easily tomato skins would split? Now, they have been bred to have thick, tougher skins, the better to remain intact during mechanized handling, transportation, and for extended shelf life. Milk products are homogenized and pasteurized. Let's face it. All of these factors affect taste.

### Cryptic measurements

If you are lucky enough to possess a written copy of an heirloom recipe, it might contain some rather cryptic measurements. Have you ever tried to figure out how much is a jigger, a wineglass, a tumbler, or a coffeecup?

There is help for deciphering those now obsolete measurement terms in the heirloom weights and measures conversion chart below. Many old (and new) recipes also use metric measurements. Just find the amount you need in this recipe conversion calculator and away you go!

Butter the size of a egg	1/4 Cup or 2 ounces
Butter the size of a hazelnut	1 Teaspoon
Butter the size of a walnut	1 Tablespoon
Coffeecup	1 Scant cup, or 1/2 pint
Cookingspoon	3 Tablespoons
Dessertspoon	2 Teaspoons
Gem pan	Mini muffin pan; openings approx. 1 1/2" in diameter
<b>Gill</b> 1/2 Gill	4 tablespoons
1 Gill	1/2 cup
1 Gill	1 small teacupful
4 Gills	3 1/2 teacupsful, or nearly 2 breakfastcupsful, or 1 pint

Indian meal	Corn meal
<b>Jigger</b> 1 Jigger	1 1/2 ounces
Liquor	Liquid
Loaf sugar	Hard cone of sugar; pieces (lumps) were broken off
<b>Oven</b> Slow	250°–275° F.
Moderate	350°–375° F.
Rather hot	375° F.
Hot	400°–450° F.
Very hot	450°–550° F.
<b>Pecks</b> 1/4 Peck	2 quarts
1/2 Peck	4 quarts
1 Peck	8 quarts, or 2 gallons
<b>Pony</b> 1 Pony	1 ounce
1 Pound	16 ounces
Receipt	Recipe
Rule	Recipe
Saltspoon	1/4 Teaspoon
Scald	Heat almost to the boiling point, or Treat with boiling water
Scant	Slightly less
Spider	Frying pan or skillet with 3 legs; also a long-handled strainer

Trivia question answer: Judge Patrick Hynds.

Tablespoon	3 Teaspoons
Teacup or $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup (scant)	4 Teaspoons of liquid
<b>Teaspoon</b>	
1 Teaspoon	60 drops
Tumbler	1 Scant cup
Wheys	Separates



However, even these lovely conversions won't help when your 1906 recipe calls for 25 cents worth of round steak. Don't have a clue!

Procure a twenty-five-cent round steak, sprinkle thickly with flour and chop with a chopping knife till flour is all worked into meat; put into a well greased hot skillet and fry a light brown on both sides, then cover with hot water, salt, and cook one hour, or until well done.

—Maggie A. Grenell, Mazon, IL  
(from a cook book dated 1906-1908)

Note! The skillet was probably cast iron.

How about a much newer recipe? A 1950s recipe for Sloppy Joes calls for a large bottle of ketchup. In the 1950s, this was a 12 ounce bottle as opposed to an 8 ounce bottle. Think about what a large bottle of Ketchup is today—64 ounces and even larger!

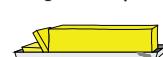
Many old dessert recipes called for cream. This referred to the cream one would skim off the top of a bottle of milk which was not white but yellow in color. One of my family recipes was for a fruit salad. This dish was made with cream (heavy cream) and fruit. It tasted great but certainly was not low in calories or cholesterol!

Remember, people worked physically much harder than today, whether on a farm or in a factory. Farm work was mostly manual

labor. Factories had few, if any, labor-saving conveniences, so consequently factory work was also very labor intensive. On the farm one ate breakfast in the morning, dinner at noon, and supper in the evening. An average farmer would easily consume 3000–4500 calories per day without gaining any weight.

Even an expert cook or chef today would have trouble duplicating recipes from years ago.

You are not being encouraged to get rid of your old cookbooks. We all probably have at least one. They are fun to read. But translating



into today's measurements are difficult, especially if the recipe starts out with a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of Crisco or lard.

That is what was used in many muffin, cookie, and pie crust recipes. Today most often one purchases pre-made crusts and who knows what might be in those.

### *Sugar 'n' Spice Cookies by Shirley Marsaglia, Coal City, IL*

$\frac{3}{4}$ C. Shortening	$\frac{1}{4}$ Tsp. salt
1 C. granulated sugar	1 Tsp. cinnamon
1 Egg	$\frac{3}{4}$ Tsp. Cloves
$\frac{1}{2}$ C. Molasses	$\frac{3}{4}$ Tsp. ginger
2 C. Flour	Granulated sugar
2 Tsp. soda	

Mix shortening, sugar, egg, and molasses thoroughly. Blend dry ingredients; stir into shortening mixture; form into 1" balls. Roll in granulated sugar. Place on greased baking sheet, and bake at 375 degrees for 10–12 minutes. Cool on rack.

Yesterday's food was natural, fresh, not modified. Today, our food contains many preservatives, the names of which one is often hard pressed to even pronounce.

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## Grundy County



## Historical Society

Grundy County Historical Society  
and Museum  
510 West Illinois Avenue  
Morris, IL 60450

Place Address Label Here