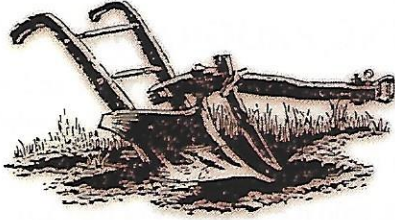


Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 6 Issue 3 July 2018

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E-mail: 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 start at \$10 for students annually.

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MUSEUM NEWS

MUSEUM ADDITION REPORT

by Donna Sroczyński

We're eagerly awaiting the completion of our new space which adds 4,560 square feet of room to our Museum and climate controlled storage for our collections. Only a few weeks more and we can begin moving in and setting up. You can't imagine how much we anticipate moving all the materials we already have received from the library, as well as the Morris Herald research tools and microfilm that the library still has.

The addition is now fully enclosed and we are waiting on installation of the security system. Paint and other finishing touches still need to be done. THEN the work begins—setting up exhibits, laying out the storage area, moving the archives to the new archive room. It will be a lot of work but just as in 2008–2009, step by step, we will complete the work needed for a GRAND OPENING of our Museum addition.

STATUS OF WORK ON THE MUSEUM:

Dan Dransfeldt is working with our general contractor, Narvick, and the following steps are currently in process:

- Gutters are up.
- The railing for the emergency exit is up and it is aluminum thus will not require any maintenance.
- Decorative lighting is up on the south side of the building but is not operational at this time.
- Valley Fire has installed the sprinkler system.

- Insulation is being finished on the west and north sides of the storage area. The west wall is not heated and the north wall is against the CYC and we have no control over what they do. (They do not have insulation on their side.)

- Drywall is up.

- Taping is proceeding now but heat and humidity are preventing completion.

- The last step will be drop ceilings and permanent lighting.

RIGHT NOW

Come in to the Museum today and see how crowded it is, then take a look at the empty addition. Then, after the grand opening, you will be able to see its transformation from an unfinished, empty space to a finished addition to our Museum and archives.

The last two display cases from the court house will be moved to the Museum as well as 16 storage shelf units received from a donor. What else has been waiting to be featured? Well, we have been given a wooden ice box from the Roth Bakery which the donor is currently warehousing for us, in addition to Robert Coop's donation of historic feed company items.

WILL WE BE DONE—NOT TOTALLY

Our meeting room still needs enlarging. It has not been big enough for some time now to accommodate attendance at our programs. Luckily there is a storage area behind the meeting room. We will have to take down the back wall, put in 2 × 10 floor supports to raise the height of the floor to match the existing meeting room, then follow up with plywood decking, electric, insulation, and so forth. Sound familiar? We just did this in constructing the new addition.

Fortunately, there already is a sprinkler system as well as an alarm system. Do we have the funds for this? Not yet, but we are getting there.

WHERE WE CAME FROM:

The GCHS started in 1923 but due to war years and other circumstances, it was dormant for some time, then restarted in 1967. If you reflect back, the Museum started with two exhibits given by Dr. H. E. WALSH and HARRY HOUGH who firmly believed that history should be preserved for future generations. The many presidents, boards and members have seen the Museum we have today open in 2009. Are some people more involved—yes, but it is important to understand that each and every member who supports the Society with their membership is the backbone of this Society. Without our members, we could not do what we are doing.

Thanks to the Sereno Family, we are seeing our Museum double in size. We are nervously looking forward to setting up the new section of the Museum—but we were nervous in 2009 also. This year, we have an additional challenge. Ken Sereno gave us his extensive archives. We need to merge them with ours and with those received from the Morris Library. We have two volunteers working on this with Debbie Steffes—Dave Finch and Molly Fisher who are learning much in the process. Thanks to Dave and Molly for their help. Marion Gore is working hard at merging the Library's collection with the Museum's collection. The Library has decided not to continue maintaining its Local History section, thus, ALL of its records, microfilms, card catalog, photos, and archives are being sent to us as soon as the new addition is done.

LIBERTY DAYS—JULY 19 THROUGH JULY 21

The Museum will participate in Liberty Days which will recognize 200 YEARS of statehood for the State of Illinois. We will have four exhibits.

1. An 1818 map of Illinois—see how little is on it.
2. An outline of Grundy County's history encompassing these 200 years.
3. Student artwork honoring or recognizing the Bicentennial of the State of Illinois.
4. Paintings by local artists.

Come enjoy these temporary exhibits.

70TH ANNUAL GRUNDY COUNTY CORN FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 26 THROUGH 30, 2018

"Harvesting Memories for 70 Years"

Mark your calendars! Don't forget to purchase your Corn Festival button. Hope your number is a winner!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

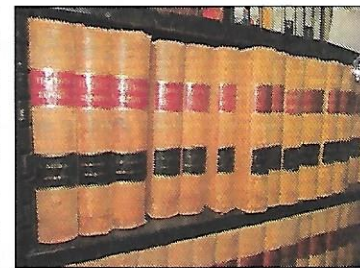
All our programs are free to members and nonmembers alike except for the dinner fee for the Annual Meeting in May. Mark your calendars!

September 25, 6:00 p.m.: History of the Corn Festival with Jewel Buttry and Sue Morse. The program will be presented at the Museum.

November 23, 24, & 25 2018: Festival of Trees—Professionally decorated trees and wreaths, silent auction, raffles, and much more, to be held at the Museum.

FOR SALE

The Museum has a series of leather bound books containing State of Illinois Supreme Court decisions which are of no use to most of us. However, they do make an attractive display in a book case. They are from the 1880s through the early 1900s. Doing decorating or needing to fill book cases? Or, perhaps you are a lawyer and would certainly benefit from owning these books. Come in to the Museum to see if they would fit your needs. The price is negotiable.



ALSO, coming soon, we will have duplicates of Morris High School yearbooks, Grundy County Atlas, and Grundy County Histories. First opportunity to buy any of these items will be given to our members and then we will list these items on eBay.

IRA CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION AND NEW TAX LAWS

Just for your information: Under the new tax laws, a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) is now permanent. A QCD allows those age 70½ to give money to charities directly from their IRAs in a tax advantageous manner. This allows IRA owners who have attained age 70½ to distribute money directly from the IRA to a qualified charity. Total annual QCD's from all IRAs cannot

exceed \$100,000 for individuals. Spouses can each make up to \$100,000 of QCDs.

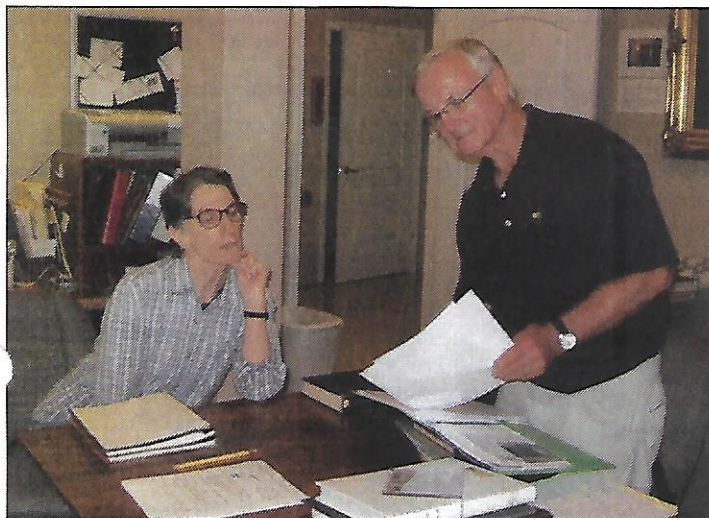
Making a QCD as opposed to a normal charitable gift has two main advantages. First, a QCD counts toward satisfying the individual's required minimum distribution for that year. Second, the distribution is excluded from the taxpayer's income. It is this second benefit that really shines under the new tax bill. With very few individuals expected to itemize (some estimates say around 5 percent of filers), the income tax deduction for contributions to charities will be lost for many people. However, if you make a QCD, you get a full exclusion of that income from taxes. So, for any retiree that is 70½ or older, owns an IRA subject to RMDs, and is charitably inclined, a QCD really works out as a way to preserve an income-tax-reducing charitable deduction under the new law.

Please note—talk to your investment counselor on this.

WALLY ARMSTRONG DISCOVERS HIS GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER PERRY AT THE GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

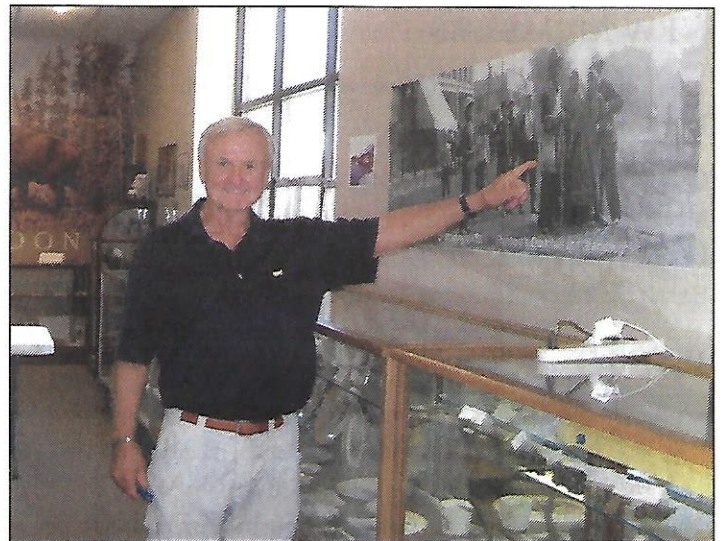
Wally Armstrong was a touring golf professional and has competed in more than 300 PGA tour events worldwide. He has also held clinics and speaking events on golf technique. He's coauthored six books, including *In His Grip*, *Playing the Game*, and *The Heart of a Golfer*.

Now living in Maitland, Florida, he flew into Midway and traveled here to Morris and our Museum to find out more about his great-great-great-grandmother, Elsie Strawn Armstrong. He had already been to Licking County, Ohio, tracing the Strawn entrepreneurships of distilling and wool manufacturing. And he has found the old Elsie Armstrong homestead located near Ottawa, Illinois. The



current owner opened his home to Wally and told him everything he knows about the property including the location of Elsie's house. On a return trip Wally and the current owner plan to go to there with a metal detector to see what they might find.

Wally Armstrong left the Museum with a copy of the video *Spirits of Evergreen Cemetery*, a doctoral thesis on Elsie, and a genealogy by another relative, Dr. John Armstrong. He gifted the Museum a copy of his latest book, *The Mulligan*, about golf and developing relationships. During his visit Wally demonstrated the fact that the pioneering Armstrong spirit of ambition, eloquence, and character is still present and strong in this current Armstrong generation.



And while we're on the subject of Armstrongs, the following appeared in the *Morris Daily Herald* on December 8, 1897.

Wiomex Was Her Name and She Lies Buried in Evergreen

The following letter from Hon. Perry A. Armstrong was published in the *Marseilles Plaindealer*:

MORRIS, ILL. Nov. 19, 1897—Editor of the *Marseilles Plaindealer*: Your article on Shabbona in your issue of the 12th inst is at hand. Thanks for the interest you manifest in this long neglected duty.

I am the sole survivor of the six pallbearers who consigned his mortal remains to the grave July 19, 1859.

Your likeness of Shabbona is hardly natural. He had no use for bow and arrow the last fifty years of his life, as he was an adept in the use of firearms and a dead shot with the rifle. The picture of his Pottawatomie wife is good but how or where you got the

name of "Pokanoka" I do not understand. Her real name was Wiomex: but when she became fleshy she was called "Canonka" or "Kanonka"—that is "the fat squaw." She was simply immense! She was buried by the side of her husband and their daughter Mary and their granddaughter Mary Okanto are likewise buried there. Their graves are about four rods back of the cemetery entrance.

Yours courteously,

P. A. Armstrong

GRUNDY COUNTY TRIVIA

Who was King of the Corn Festival in 1950 and 1951? Look for the answer somewhere in this newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS

The following people have joined the Grundy County Historical Society.

Cyndy Sampson, Morris, Illinois

Marilee and Tom McElvain, California

Donna J. Jones, Morris, Illinois

Sarah Matteson Edwards, River Grove, Illinois

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.

FACEBOOK



Besides our new web site, don't forget that we have a Facebook presence thanks to Dorothy Cunnea, our very dedicated volunteer who handles the Facebook page. So, a hearty hello to all 864 of our Facebook friends. We appreciate your interest in our Museum as well as your support. If you are not currently a member of the Historical Society, please consider joining not only our Facebook page *but* our Museum as well. Friend us at the Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois.

ONCE UPON A TIME . . .

Here is a recipe we should be happy that we don't have to follow anymore. The misspellings are as they were originally written.

Years ago a grandmother gave the new bride these instructions on how to wash clothes.

Build fire in backyard to heat kettle of rain water. Set tubs [there were two, one to wash and one to "wrench"] so smoke wont blow in eyes if wind is pert.



Shave one hole cake of lie soap in boilin' water.

Sort things, make 3 piles

- 1 pile white
- 1 pile colored
- 1 pile work britches and rags



To make starch, stir flour in cool water to smooth, then thin down with boiling water.

Take white things, rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, and boil, then rub colored—don't boil just wrench and starch.

Take things out of kettle with broom stick handle, then wrench, and starch.

Hang old rags on fence.

Spread tea towels on grass.

Pore wrench water in flower bed. Scrub porch with hot soapy water.

Turn tubs upside down.

Go put on clean dress, smooth hair with hair combs.

Brew cup of tea, sit and rock a spell and count your blessings.

And we thought we had it rough!

