

History Notes

**Waseca
County
History
Center**

What's Inside :
Rightfully Hers

*"The right of citizens of the
United States to vote shall not
be denied or abridged by the
United States or by any State
on account of sex."*

*19th Amendment, August 18,
1920*

2020 WCHS
ANNUAL MEETING

"VIRTUAL"

Live Streaming on
Facebook

Wednesday October 21
6 P.M.



Helen Erickson, Waseca, 1920's

History Notes is a publication of the Waseca County Historical Society ©2020
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www.historical.waseca.mn.us

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Museum Hours

Open Tuesdays-Fridays, 9-5

Bailey-Lewer Library

Open Tuesdays-Fridays, 9-12, 1-5

Traveling?

Please call ahead.



Hofmann Apiaries
Phase I Restoration
Was funded in part by
the Waseca Area
Foundation Community
Grants
and Funds provided by
the State of Minnesota
from the Arts and
Cultural Heritage fund
through the Minnesota
Historical Society.

**CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT**



From the Executive Director

Joan Mooney

Dear Members,

COVID-19 is still with us as you know.

When you visit the WCHS Museum

please follow our safe distancing measures.

Bailey/Lewer Research Library is open Tuesday through

Friday 9 a.m. - noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. **Research and**

genealogy assistance is available Tuesdays and Fridays only or by appointment. (507) 835-7700.

Parents, Teachers and Home Schoolers

The Waseca County History Center museum and Research Library welcome students of all ages. Curious about Waseca County history?

We have two Timeline exhibits to explore. Many fun facts and so much

information waiting to be discovered. Talk to your teachers and parents about visiting Waseca County History Center as part of your studies.

Upcoming Events

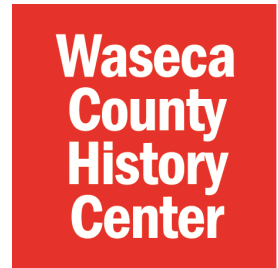
The WCHS Annual Meeting will be held online via Facebook. Copies of the agenda, minutes and financials will be posted on our website.

Good Stuff Online Auction is in the works. WCHS is accepting quality donated furniture or other quality items for this auction. Please contact Amanda (507) 835-7700 for more information. Funds raised benefit WCHS.

We are accepting used books for the **Used Books Sale** to be held during the Waseca County Fair 2021. Call to arrange a drop off at Hodgson Hall.

The WCHS Holiday Exhibit "Winter" will be on display December through the holidays. Due to COVID-19 (at this time) we will not be planning a Holiday Open House featuring the Waseca High School Choirs. We will miss the beautiful music and all the familiar faces that make the Holidays so special. If you have guests for the Holidays and would like to arrange a special visit, give us a call!

Thank you to all returning and new WCHS members. We hope you enjoy the online opportunities to explore our history from the comfort of your home or office. Staff is creating new opportunities for virtual exhibits and programs. Stay well everyone!



2020 Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting is going to be a little different than ever before. Because of COVID -19 restrictions we will not be able to have more than our board and staff in the building. However, we will be livestreaming and recording the annual meeting for all of our members to view.

Call Amanda for details. (507) 835-7700

Shady Oaks Nursery Tribute Garden

Thank you to Audra Nissen Boyer and Tim Boyer for the generous contribution to the new garden.

We are accepting donations of plants that came from Shady Oaks. Call Joan for more information. (507) 835-7700

We are currently collecting used books for the 2021 Used Book Sale.

Schedule a Hodgson Hall drop off time.

Please do not leave donation outside.

Thank you!

WCHS Word Scramble

LEMOAWPDO

AECWSA NINAOSTMEI

ONOL AEKL

SOIOC

NEAIJVELSL

WNE HLRNCAID

OTINWL

OITRDEGBRW AKRP

EOWIDVLLO

VAIVNI

TASIN RAMY

CTSOOI

AATNAWM

WANTED!

Still have one hanging in the closet?



WCHS STAFF

Pauline Fenelon

Artifact & Library Curator



Jan Hunter

Research & Genealogy



Virginia McCarthy

Research & Genealogy



Amanda Larkin

Admin. Assistant



Word Scramble Answers: Maplewood, Waseca Minnesota, Loon Lake, Isosco, Janesville, New Richland, Wilton, Trowbridge Park, Woodville, Vivian, Saint Mary, Otisco, and Matawan

Rightfully Hers by Pauline Fenelon, with research assistance by, Jan Hunter

Marking the 100th Anniversary of Ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”—19th Amendment, August 18, 1920

The ratification of the 19th Amendment was a landmark moment in American history that dramatically changed the electorate. It enshrined in the United States Constitution fuller citizenship for women and a more expansive democracy for the nation.

For decades, women of America had been advocating for the vote, and they had achieved limited success in several states and in some types of elections.

Even in Minnesota, before 1919, women could only cast a ballot in local school board or library board elections. Why did it take so long for American women to win the right to vote?

America was built on a social, cultural and religious system in which each young boy was taught that he had the God-given right and responsibility to grow up to be the chief provider and decision-maker for his family. With those rights and responsibilities, came the entitlement to represent his wife and children when community and wider governmental decisions needed his input or vote. It is not easy to give up that sort of power. When women began to question that moral authority, they were met with generations of resistance from a majority of the male population, and even in some cases from women themselves.

Anti-Suffrage Movements: As more and more women spoke out for the right to vote in the early years of the 20th century, negative propaganda ranged widely and freely in and around American states and territories. Arguments were listed in a 1917 publication entitled: “Anti-Suffrage Notes No. 158”:

“NO PATRIOT WILL FAVOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE AT THIS TIME!”

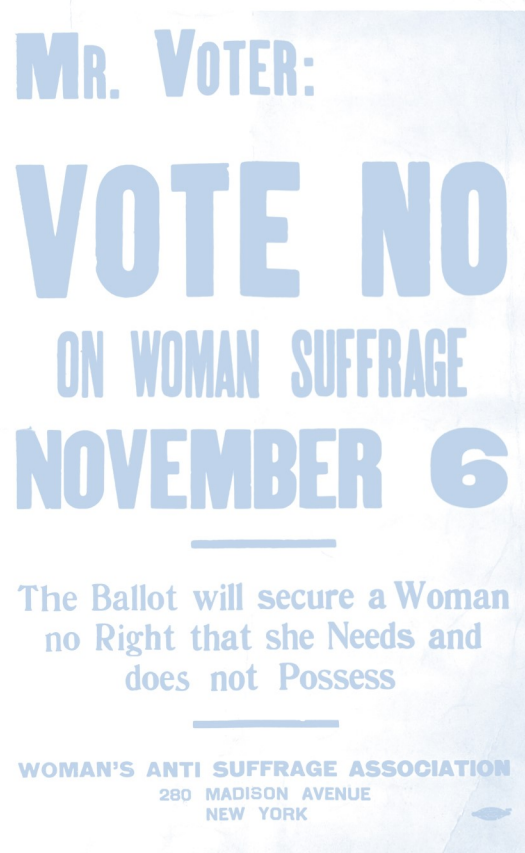
- “Woman suffrage would cost millions every year—money which is needed, every dollar of it, to win the war [World War I] if the United States is to remain a free nation.”
- “Woman suffrage would seriously weaken our government by putting the power to make the laws into the hands of those who could not enforce the laws.”
- “Woman suffrage would enormously increase the power of the socialists and pacifists who are opposing the draft and doing everything in their power to make our country weak and ineffective.”

Waseca County’s elected state representative, John W. Papke, included in his resume, that he was against equal suffrage. Not known, if he voted for or against the amendment when the vote was finally taken in 1919.

Waseca County Women’s Involvement: There were many strong women civic leaders in the Waseca County area during these years. Most of them were involved in study clubs or groups dedicated to the improvement of children’s lives, church and charity work that didn’t threaten the established male authority.

In the years preceding 1919, the county newspapers indicated that several local citizens continued to work to educate and inspire the public to become active in realizing a new order where women would become equal working partners in the operation of society.

Effie Winters Hartley, prominent Waseca secondary school educator presented a paper while participating in the regular meeting of the “Waseca Improvement League”. It was called “The Training of Future Citizens”. **Mrs. D. S. (nee Martha Ward) Cummings** was active in the Waseca Civic Improvement Club, a group that brought educational speakers in to present topics of interest and inspiration to local citizens. When they expected large groups, they would hold their meetings in the **Palace Theatre**.



When women became more assertive and attempted to change laws such as advocating for the prohibition of alcohol by picketing the bars and taverns, many citizens thought they were going too far. But when war in Europe broke out, many of women's more assertive activities gained approval when they eagerly turned to supporting the war efforts. Various women's groups or individuals joined the local township war committees, the **Red Cross**, promoted food and gas rationing, collected metal for military arms or knit stockings for soldiers. Through such efforts, women were being taken more seriously and were invited to serve on committees alongside men where they were recognized for their excellent organizational skills and hard work.

The Waseca County Women's Liberty Loan Organization was formed to answer the call of President Wilson for women to help popularize the national effort of buying and selling Liberty Bonds to finance the war. **Marion Buckman** was chosen as the Waseca chair of the town liberty loan effort. When the Woodville Township Liberty Bond committee published their public fundraising report, it included praise for everyone working in perfect harmony and especially mentioned the excellent work of the women solicitors, **Mrs. Louis (Augusta) Sheldon**, **Mrs. John (Mary) Donovan** and **Mrs. Chris (Hannah) Zimmerman!** Vivian Township's report also added that the work done by the two young women of the committee, **Janette Jennison** and **Constance Hill**, was highly praised by the township chairman.

Other women chose to work with the newly formed **YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association)**, an organization that provided recreation and a suitable social life for young women working in war service centers. In Waseca, **Mrs. M. M. (Minnie) Davidson** was the YWCA County Chairwoman. Leading the effort in Janesville was **Mrs. S. E. (Mary) Severson** and in New Richland, **Mrs. Henry E. Johnson.**

Another organization formed to supply books to the soldiers in every war camp was the **Library War Council**. **Mrs. M. M. (Minnie) Davidson** was named Waseca County Chairwoman of the Council, and assisting her were **Mrs. J. A. (nee Alice Jennison) Willis** of Janesville, and **Olive Seibert** of New Richland.

But underlying much of the activity was always the need of women to obtain a true voice and thereby more power in government. The Waseca newspapers of the era do not reveal many details of specific women suffrage leaders, but two prominent Waseca women, **Mrs. R. P. (Daisy) Ward**, 1870-1942, and **Mrs. M. M. (Minnie) Davidson**, 1865-1922, were reported to have been in charge of the installation of a traveling exhibit sponsored by the **Minnesota State Suffrage Association** in 1915. It appeared in the window of the **J. J. Coleman Furniture Store**.

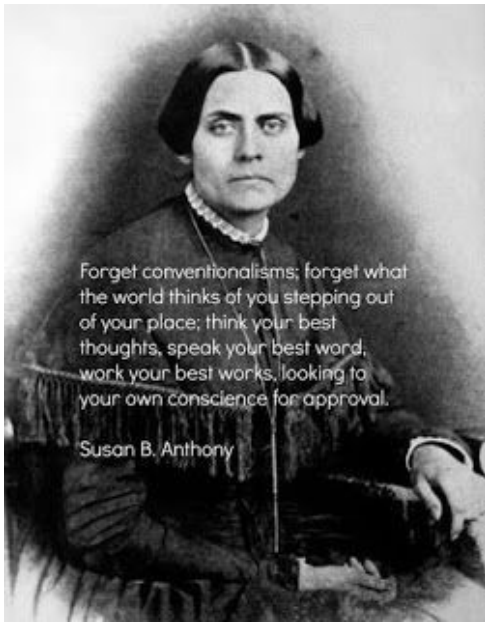


Imagine walking down State Street and viewing this exhibit in the large window of the corner furniture store: 11 costumed dolls representing 10 states and one territory which had by 1915 granted voting rights to women. Seven more dolls represented 7 countries that had woman suffrage. A blindfolded woman image representing "anti-suffragettes" is stationed beside the dolls bearing the motto, "Woman's place is in the home, not in politics"!

Next to these dolls were several satiric scenes: A Turkish harem with the motto, "A woman's place is in the harem"; a Chinese woman with bound feet and the motto, "No true woman would wish to walk"; a college scene of 1840 with the motto, "They said 'College education would unsex women'"; and a public school of 1800 with the motto, "Girls should not go to school".

The women activists of Waseca County and their supporters at the urging of the State Suffrage Association made a concerted effort in early 1919 to secure signatures to a petition asking the Minnesota legislature to ratify the Woman's Suffrage amendment when it passed Congress. Early in the fall the plans were laid to go house to house to secure the signatures. However, the Spanish flu epidemic seriously slowed the process down, but the town and township committees went forward anyway with the plea for cooperation and consideration in the "arduous task". (Reported in the *Waseca Journal*, 1-8-1919)

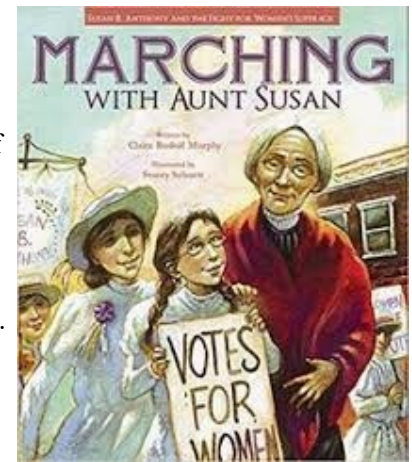
Women Win the Right to Vote: On August 18, 1919, the 19th Amendment was added to the United States Constitution granting women the right to vote for national and county officials. The local *Waseca Journal* editor felt compelled to condescendingly add, "Remember women, with privileges come responsibilities!" *continued*



.....continued

History refers to the struggle to gain the right to vote as being a long, continuous chain with no end in sight. The young suffragists who witnessed the end of the fight, were not even born when it began. Those first brave women had already died by 1919 when the last link in the struggle was forged, and the amendment finally passed.

In the November 3, 1920 edition of the *Waseca Journal*, it was reported that **Mrs. Ed (Rose) Castor** of the city of Waseca had the honor of casting the first “lady’s” vote in the November 2, 1920 election. **Miss Bess Kenage** tried to be the first to vote in the first ward, but due to a misunderstanding with procedure, she had to give up the honor of “first” to **Mrs. Frank Smith**. In the 3rd ward, **Mrs. Charles Buck** was the first lady to vote. A total of 317 women voted in the first ward.



Waseca celebrated the women’s victory by setting aside a day to honor the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Flags were displayed in both business and residential districts. From 8-9 p.m. that night, whistles were blown and horns were tooted! The Palace Theatre presented slides celebrating the victory: Twenty-six million new American voters!

County Women Participate in Their First Political Convention: March 1920:

Delegates assembled at the Waseca Firemen’s Hall following a heavy snow storm that week in March 1920 included for the first time eleven women! From Waseca: Mrs. M. M. (Minnie) Davidson, Mrs. L. A. (Minnie) Bullard, Mrs. D. S. (Martha) Cummings, Mrs. Albert (Ella) Bartelt, Mrs. W. W. Miller and Miss Marion Buckman. From Janesville: Mrs. Eugene Dieu-donne, Mrs. O. H. (Emma) Tollefson, and Mrs. M. J. (Stella) Taylor. The ladies were given a cordial welcome by Chairman F. W. Senn and others who spoke during the meeting. (*Waseca Journal-Radical March 24, 1920*)

It is important to remember that the right to vote still had to be fought for by both men and women of color, and voting rights extended to white women in 1919 excluded American Indians. American Indians were granted citizenship four years later, but many African-American men and women faced voting barriers until the Civil Rights Act of 1964!

All citizens need to be vigilant concerning the importance of voting rights of all. Political interference strategies like “gerrymandering”, cybersecurity hacking or the restriction of polling places and hours are still tactics being used to influence the outcomes of elections. Learning about our history and becoming more involved with our democracy at the local level goes a long way to ensuring that “every vote counts!” What a great way to honor all of the decades of work done by those who went before us.

More Work to be Done: Last March, the state House passed a bill to put a measure on the 2020 ballot regarding the Equal Rights Amendment, which Minnesota ratified in 1973. Supporters wanted to let voters decide whether to alter the state’s constitution to say people have equal rights regardless of gender. While the effort failed to pass the Senate, supporters are expected to keep pushing.

Sources:

1915-1920: *Waseca Journal-Radical* issues
 1911-18: *Minnesota Woman’s Suffrage Association Publication*
 1919: *Waseca Herald* issues
Waseca County in the World War 1918
St. Paul Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage ca. 1918

Fun Fact: Wyoming women were given the right to vote in 1870! Why? The Territory of Wyoming desired statehood and needed a larger population to qualify! The Territorial governing body hoped that by passing a women’s suffrage act, that more young, single women would be enticed to move to the Wild West Wyoming which was largely populated by younger single men! Several other territories soon followed suit!

Third Quarter Contributions: June 19th, 2020 – September 23rd, 2020

New / Renewing Sustainer Members

Born, Linda & Larry
Galvin, Carroll & Grace
Gjelten, Ann
Harguth, Char
Larson, Jim
Loxtercamp, Katie
Miller, Eugene & Bonnie
Schultz, Kent
Suek, Peter & Teresa

Appropriations

Byron Township
City of Waseca
Freedom Township
Otisco Township
Waseca County
Woodville Township

Volunteers

Beckmann, Dianne
Buum, Marty
Dunn, Dave
Groskreutz, Dale
Lechner, Karen
Raimann, Carol
Youngberg, Katie
Zika, Dave

New Members

Arneson, S.
Kanewischer, Aaron
Larkin, David & Peggy
Spyhalski, Paul
White, Stacia

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Renewing Members

Aamot, Chris
Aldrich, Donald
Amsrud, Mary
Barbknecht, Rosanne
Bathke, Patricia
Battenfeld, Myra
Berger, Doris
Bentley, Bethel
Bluhm, Joan
Boje, Cory & Susan
Breck, Andrew
Byron, John
Byron, Mark
Byron, Molly
Byron, Paul
Connor, Matt
Coyer, Gayle
Cunningham, Sheila
Curran, Colleen
Dey, James & Cathy
Eisenberger, Jane
Fell, June
Fritz, Loren
Fruechte, Neil & Sharon
Giesler, Paula
Gilbertson, Carolyn
Hagen, Robert
Hallman, John
Hatle, Rodney
Hodges, Gregg
Hoehn, DuWayne & Barbara
Jackson, Carol E.
Joecks, Becky
Josephes, Richard
Kanewischer, Trevor
Kroeger, Lester & Jane
Kubat, Michael and Kasondra
Kugath, LeAnn
Kunst, Dave
Laas, Julia
Lundquist, Jean & Olof
Madden, Patrick
Metzdorff, Thomas & Kristin
Miller, Kathleen & Andrew
Moyer, Brenda & Greg
Murphy, Michael

Renewing Members Cont.

Nicolin, Jay & Nancy
Pettengell, LuEllen
Pope, David & Vanette
Rathmann, Duane & Cheryl
Rausch, Bill & Carol
Ring, David
Roesler, Neil
Roessler, Karen
Root, Casey
Rosenthal, Darryl & Carol
Rudolph, Janet
Scheffert, Mary & Eugene
Schultz, Harlan
Singlestad, Scott & Vicky
Sutlief, Jo Ann
Walker, Roger & Roberta
Wegner, Geraldine
West, Tom and Francie
Wildgrube, Barb
Wildgrube, Beverly
Witt, Eugene & Fauniece
Wolff, Dennis & Beth Ann
Wynnemer, Jody
Zwach, Donald & Frances

Memorials

- In memory of Joseph Collins,
By Donna Fostveit
- In memory of Sean Forrest,
By Jackie Peters
- In memory of Mary Jackson Cahill,
By Carol E. Jackson
- In memory of Joyce Josephes,
By Richard Josephes
- In memory of Joan Arndt Larson,
By Bob and Janette Larson
- In memory of Janet Schultz,
By Harlan Schultz
- In memory of Irene Oliver,
By Bob and Janette Larson

Donations

Berger, Doris
Kanewischer, Trevor
Kratlley, Karri
Witt, Eugene and Fauniece
Wynnemer, Jody



Waseca County Historical Society

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Membership Renewal Date

