



Fall 2025

The Prairie View

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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President's Message

Dear Members,

The Eden Prairie Historical Society is always on an adventure. From the stories shared when our society was founded in 1969 to the new discoveries that continue to emerge.

SUMMER DISCOVERIES

The Williamson Family Mystery

We received an inquiry from John Daffrun, a genealogical writer from Stamford, England. His research revealed that a man who founded a major company in Stamford was born in Eden Prairie in 1858. The family was Thomas Williamson, his wife Caroline, his brother in-law and their two children. Thanks to our board vice president Paul Thorp (our map guy) we learned that they lived on Staring Lake, that was originally called Lake Caroline. Staring's had moved on the lake and re-named it after Williamsons returned to England. The Williamson property became the Goodrich property. Today the site is home to the Green Acres Barn Event Center. For years we have wondered why the lake had been named Lake Caroline!

MARY AND SHELDON SMITH

On our Eden Prairie Remembers Facebook site, we have shared stories about Mary and Sheldon Smith, who arrived from New York in 1857. They first settled near Duck Lake and built a log home. On a map (thank you Paul) we have found the exact area where they settled. Two farmhouses still exist that were built out of logs. This is also where the Stodola farm once was. In 1877 the Smith's built their beautiful red brick farmhouse which today is known as Smith's Cafe.

CAMP STORIES

Boy Scout Camp Snikapoh

A former Scout leader visited the museum looking for the site of a 1933 camp called Snikapoh. His research led us to Bryant Lake, where the Holasek family once had a dance hall, on the east side of the lake shore. The generous Holasek's family hosted neighbors, 4H clubs, Churches, and Scout camps. Over the years, Bryant Lake was also called Island Lake, Rowland Lake, and Long Lake.

WEST MINSTER HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CAMP

Further digging revealed a second camp site on Riley Lake. Today, the Bushey family lives on the property once owned by the Presbyterian Synod of Minnesota. While the girls cabins are gone, some of the boys cabins remain, along with the main lodge, now the Bushey family home. Photo's from 1968 show campers enjoying the grounds. At Christmas the buildings are decorated with white lights-a beautiful sight along Riley Lake Road. We welcome additional history you many have about this camp!

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

*Justice Paul Anderson donated an oil painting of his childhood family farm and his Eden Prairie childhood baseball jacket.

*Jill Hules, daughter of former Society president Marie Wittenberg, gifted a stunning 1862 crazy quilt believed to have belonged to the Mitchell family. The Museum remains open on Monday's 11am -1pm and we continue to welcome many visitors.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

*Annual Meeting - Featured local farmers Sever Peterson, Mike Rogers, and Terry Picha, who shared stories about farming past, present and future. They drew a full house!

Picnic on the Farm we joined the city event at the Geisler-Dorenkemper house. Animals, music, tours, fun family event. Ginny Dorenkemper greeted visitors to the house with pictures and stories.

*Sunbonnet Day - Outdoor Center Campers toured the CPG house and experienced 1879 home life.

*Coffee and Conversation "Open House" CPG house in September

*Camp Edenwood "True Friends" - We partnered with the great celebration of the Camp serving Children.

LOOKING AHEAD

*Prop Shop partnership VINTAGE SALE November 7th and 8th

*Santa returns in November to the CPG house!

IN GRATITUDE

I am deeply thankful for you, our members, as well as our dedicated Board, Honorary Board, the City of Eden Prairie, Staff, Facilities, the Heritage Preservation Commission, and all who love and care for Eden Prairie's past and future.

Warmly, Kathie Case



Please note: we are aware that our website is currently down, we are working hard to get it back up and running for you to enjoy!

Welcome to New Board Members

Cheryl Ahlcrona

I grew up in the Tonka Bay, Shorewood, Excelsior area. I served on the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS) Board from 2016 – 2023 as Treasurer. My term ended when ELMHS combined with other Historical Societies to form the new Lake Minnetonka Historical Society. I have lived in Eden Prairie since 1981. My two sons graduated from Eden Prairie High School. I decided it was time to learn more about the community that I have lived in for 44 years! Thanks to Kathie Case for meeting with me and encouraging me to join this wonderful Board. Thank you for approving my nomination and I look forward to supporting our Mission.

Ron Sorensen

There are many reasons for joining the EPHS. I am grateful for living in Eden Prairie and want to give back. History is intriguing and being involved with EPHS has broadened my knowledge of the city and its history. Additionally, I enjoy the events and connecting with neighbors and fellow board members.

Cindy Fletcher

When I was a Camp Fire girl in grade school we had a field trip to my town's historical society and I was so intrigued! We toured the historical home and made candles from scratch- I was hooked! I have loved historical photos and artifacts ever since I was a small girl so when I moved to Eden Prairie I loved seeing the historical photos around town. I always knew I wanted to join the Eden Prairie historical society.

Prima Sisinni

I joined the Eden Prairie Historical Society Board because of my deep love for this community and its rich history. Growing up here, I've seen firsthand how the stories, landmarks, and traditions of Eden Prairie shape the identity of our city. Serving on the board allows me to give back by helping preserve the heritage that connects generations of residents. I believe that protecting our history not only honors the past but also strengthens our future, giving families and neighbors a deeper sense of belonging. I'm excited to support the Society's mission of celebrating and safeguarding what makes Eden Prairie unique, while ensuring that our history remains accessible and meaningful for years to come.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathie Case, President;

Paul Thorp, Vice President;

Chris Honaas-Wildfang, Treasurer & Membership

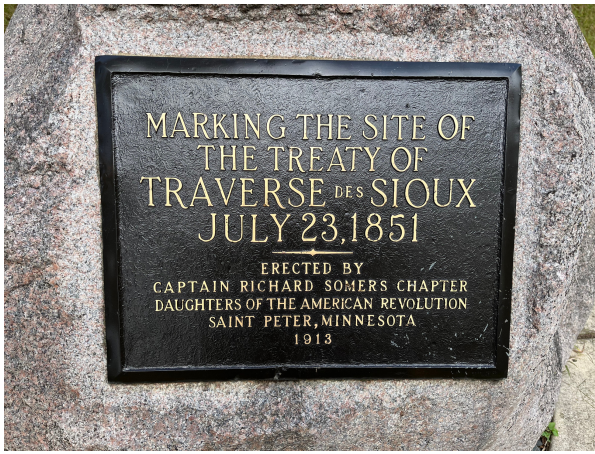
Chair; Mary Meier, Secretary;

**Cheryl Ahlcrona, Thomas Achartz, Ron Sorensen,
Suzanne Berg, Bob Bowes, Cindy Fletcher, Duane
Hookom, Bob Prince, Prima Sisinni, Devyn Stanton**



With the responsibility to protect its past, the Society's mission is to: gather, preserve and protect Eden Prairie's historic artifacts and memorabilia; share the stories of its people and places with audiences of all ages; and foster an understanding and appreciation for historic preservation.





Preserving Heritage in New Ulm: Highlights from the 2025 PreserveMN Conference, Bob Bowes

I attended the conference and learned a lot about historic downtown New Ulm and learned about the "four B's of early 1900 New Ulm", Beer, Bread, Butter, and Bricks. Schell's Beer is five generations of The Marti family who still own the brewery (second oldest privately owned brewery in the country), bread and butter reflects the farming influence of the area and bricks, as in prefabricated concrete bricks for both commercial and residential construction.

The other big takeaway from the conference was New Ulm's importance in the "Dakota Uprising of 1862" whereby the city was a safe haven for local farmers who were being attacked by Dakota Indians who were being starved by the US government. The Brown County Museum in downtown New Ulm, has an award winning exhibit regarding the 1862 event.

Celebrating 100 Years of the Glen Lake Children's Camp and True Friends Camp Eden Wood, Thomas Achartz

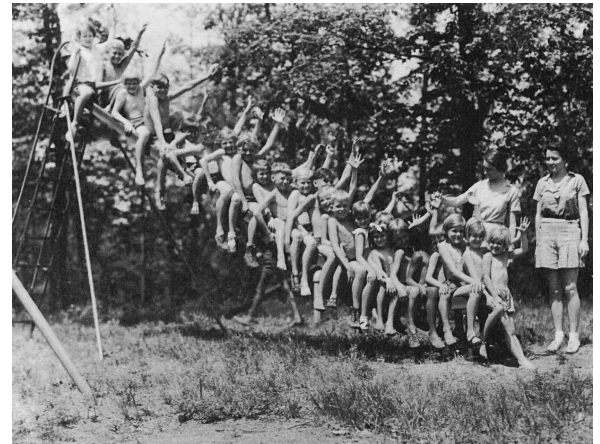
On September 11, 2025, the Eden Prairie Historical Society and the Lions joined with True Friends Camp Eden Wood to mark the 100th anniversary of the Glen Lake Children's Camp and Camp Eden Wood. Hosted by Board Member Nick Wilkie, the event featured reflections from President and CEO John LeBlanc, who emphasized the need for upgrades to the historic camp buildings, as well as words of encouragement from local leaders and longtime supporters. The gathering underscored the importance of continued financial support for these National Register of Historic Places landmarks.

Founded in 1925, the Glen Lake Children's Camp was established to help fight the tuberculosis epidemic, which had claimed more than 20,000 lives in Minnesota by the turn of the 20th century. George and Lenora Christian, well-known advocates for TB prevention, partnered with the Glen Lake Sanatorium to create a refuge for children exposed to the disease. The camp, built on a hilltop overlooking Birch Island Lake, welcomed children ages 4 to 14 for summers filled with sunshine, fresh air, healthy routines, and supervised activities aimed at prevention and wellbeing.

For 25 years, the camp provided a haven where boys and girls hiked, swam, built model airplanes, learned crafts, and enjoyed the outdoors, all while receiving medical oversight. By 1950, with the advent of antibiotics, tuberculosis cases sharply declined, and the camp closed its original mission.

Though the sanatorium was demolished in 1993, the children's camp buildings endured. Today, True Friends operates Camp Eden Wood, carrying forward the legacy of health, inclusion, and enrichment for children and adults of all abilities. With help from community partners, preservation efforts continue to protect the historic site for future generations.

The centennial celebration served as a reminder that Glen Lake Children's Camp is more than a place—it is a legacy of care, resilience, and community that has thrived for a century.



Note from Thomas Achartz

Thanks to a generous donation from the Lions Club of Eden Prairie, the Eden Prairie Historical Society (EPHS) has a new Epson 8550 photo printer and supplies, helping bring the city's history to life in a whole new way. With this new equipment, EPHS can now print high-quality photos from its archives for the first time. Historic images—from the Flying Red Horse to the Eden Prairie School Hall of Famers—are being restored and printed for those in the future to enjoy. EPHS is also continuing its oral history program, recording video interviews with longtime residents and community leaders. These personal stories help preserve the city's history for future generations. EPHS is grateful to the Lions Club for supporting local history and helping expand its preservation efforts.

Update on HPC Book Writing Project by Paul Thorp

Three Historic Society board members also sit on the HPC, Prima Sisinni, Bob Bowes, and Paul Thorp. The City of Eden Prairie and the HPC have commissioned two writers to research and prepare a book on the pre-settlement history of Native Americans in Eden Prairie. The book is in the research phase. The writers are Paul Maravelas and Zach Mohlis.

UPCOMING EVENTS



CUMMINS
FARMHOUSE MARKET
AND
Vintage Sale

NOVEMBER
7 - 8th 2025
FRIDAY, 12 - 7 PM • SATURDAY, 10 AM - 3 PM

CUMMINS-PHIPPS-GRILL HOUSE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
13600 Pioneer Trail • Eden Prairie

The Eden Prairie Historical Society
invites you to shop & tour the historic house.
Come see the newly restored upstairs!

FALL ANTIQUE SALE!

FEATURING:
Antiques and vintage finds from
The PROP Shop

FREE ADMISSION
www.edenprairiehistory.org

CPG HOUSE
Cummins-Phipps-Grill House
EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Santa will be coming to town and
setting up at the
Cummins-Phipps-Grill House
November 29th-December 23rd
Santasnorthpoleexperience.com



Edited by Prima Sisinni, Eden Prairie Historic Society Board Member