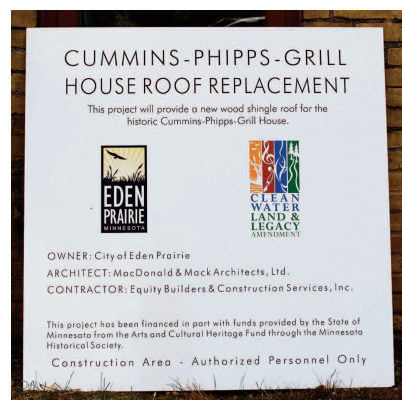


## Come and see us at the Antique Sale!

The  
Eden Prairie Historical Society  
invites you to tour the charming  
Cummins-Phipps-Grill House  
and shop antiques and  
vintage finds from  
**The PROP SHOP**



Check out the new  
wood shingle roof on the  
Cummins-Phipps-Grill  
House that was installed  
this summer!

The roof was funded  
partially by a Legacy Grant.  
The Eden Prairie Historical  
Society also donated \$8,000  
to the city for the project.

Preserving history with a  
beautiful new roof.

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY • (952) 949-8580  
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The Prairie View Editor, Katie Qualey • katie.qualey@gmail.com  
Please let us know of any changes or corrections to your mailing  
or email address by emailing us at: info@edenprairiehistory.org

**HISTORY MUSEUM**  
**HOURS: Mondays 2 - 5pm**  
LOWER LEVEL OF CITY HALL  
**(952) 949-8580**

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## The Prairie View

Fall 2022



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.

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EDEN PRAIRIE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Happy Fall to our Historical Society Members,**  
The HS Board is getting ready for several upcoming events.

**On October 5th (WED)** at 6:30pm, **Movie Showing of "The Doll"**.  
Come join us to view the scary short film made at the CPG house.  
We will serve dessert & beverages. The movie is 8 minutes long, so will  
likely show twice! Plenty of time to catch-up and visit.

**October 8th (SAT)** 11am - 2pm **Eden Prairie City-wide Open House**  
We hope to have the museum open on the lower level.  
If city hall is not open that day, we will be at a table outside.

**October 15th (SAT) Harvest Fest** 2pm - 5pm at the Geisler-Dorenkemper  
Homestead down on Lake Riley. If you have not toured the Riley-Jacques  
Barn or this wonderful log home, please come for a tour.

**November 4th & 5th (FRI-SAT)** the CPG house will partner with  
The Prop Shop for an **AUTUMN Vintage Sale**

Come **December**, the **Eden Prairie Optimists** will be selling their beautiful  
fresh cut trees at the CPG house, and the Historical Society will light the  
Sharing Tree. All is looking good for Santa to be at CPG this year.

We are working on a new website. Many thanks for the years our honorary  
board member, Jim Clark, spent updating and taking care of the site.  
Access will remain [www.edenprairiehistory.org](http://www.edenprairiehistory.org). You will be able to  
update your membership dues  
on-site and read what has been  
posted on the Facebook site,  
**Eden Prairie Remembers.**

Thank you to our dear members  
for your donations and support to  
our Eden Prairie History.

Warmly,  
**Kathie Case**, President  
Eden Prairie Historical Society



**Harvest Fest 2021**  
**Geisler-Dorenkemper House**



# 2022 Annual Meeting with Carol Kissner

## A wonderful evening with Carol –

You might think that going to hear a speaker on the history of the old section of Eden Prairie Cemetery would be rather eerie, but Carol Kissner, a volunteer, who spent two years researching and documenting the people, their graves and circumstances of their demise shared stories of mysteriousness and closure.

Norm Rogers had written an article about the EP Historical Society and at the end solicited for volunteers. Carol had been retired a couple of years and was bored and decided to respond. Norm interviewed her and then asked if instead of the HS would she like to work with a cemetery. “Yes! Cemeteries are my first interest, so of course!” she said. His cousin, Mike Rogers, needed some assistance in organizing the early cemetery records. He wanted an accurate mapping of the old part and a detailed accounting of each grave. Mike provided Carol boxes and boxes of information to be sorted and recorded. In doing so, she created 30 family trees to keep track of the relationships of the residents of the cemetery. When the north entry road and north edge of the cemetery were re-sloped the headstones were pulled off and using her records, were replaced in the right order. There was one headstone left over and Mike asked her to see what that was about. Turns out that someone had two headstones - the name changed from Edward to Edwin. Apparently the incorrect stone was placed beneath the right stone and they both were removed for the re-landscaping.

The story of the cannon is one told by Mike Rogers. When Cpl. Tyler Fey was killed in Anbar, Iraq his parents requested a burial in the old part of the cemetery, if possible, by another military death burial. PVT James Furgason, Civil War veteran, had a plot for 8 burials but only two of them were used so it was decided to place Tyler Fey head-to-toe with him. Furgason’s headstone had been damaged/removed or was missing and was being replaced. A local Civil War reenactors group was coming out to dedicate the new stone and it was arranged for both men to be honored. The first cannon shot, for Furgason boomed and echoed. The second shot, for Tyler Fey, did not. Mike said the silence from the group assembled was huge. Mike said his “hair stood on end.”



**CAROL KISSNER**  
Our guest speaker on the old section of Eden Prairie Cemetery



**MIKE ROGERS & CAROL KISSNER**

Eden Prairie Cemetery was first surveyed in 1864, Carol said the land was used as a cemetery for a decade before that — often with wooden crosses and coffins that have disintegrated.

When she leaned down to check out a broken, thigh-high grave marker on a recent research trek, she said to herself, "Now here's a mystery."

There was no name or date visible, just a partial inscription: "He lived a life of usefulness ... was beloved by all who knew him."

So Carol started digging around cemetery records, old newspapers and computer databases. And she thinks she knows to whom the tombstone belongs: Levi Neill, a Canadian-born private who served in Company D of Minnesota's Sixth Infantry Regiment nearly 160 years ago. Neill, the fourth of Sarah and Richard Neill's eight children, was 25 when he left the family's farm in Eden Prairie to enlist on Aug. 18, 1862, just as the U.S.-Dakota War erupted about 100 miles to the west. He died less than three months later on Nov. 11 in Mankato at the start of a measles outbreak that killed more than 200 Dakota and white settlers by the end of that deadly year. His body was transported 70 miles up the Minnesota River valley for burial.

"That Levi is buried in the Eden Prairie Cemetery is a fact, but the location is a bit wobbly," said Carol. She found an index card at the Minnesota Historical Society that put Neill in Plot 46. The broken headstone is at Plot 93, about 30 feet away. Both plots belong to the Neill family, and his parents are buried nearby. The numeral "2" of his age is visible on the broken gravestone. Levi's story gets fleshed out further, thanks to Corinne Monjeau-Marz's 2006 book on Dakota internment at Fort Snelling, 1862-1864.

"There were two brothers by the same name of Neill from Eden Prairie, both were taken down with measles nine days ago," according to a letter the author found dated Nov. 11, 1862, from Rev. Stephen Riggs to his wife, Mary — detailing Levi's death, the first recorded in the measles outbreak.

When the president of the cemetery association was asked, Mike Rogers graciously offered to replace the broken headstone with a new one. It was hoped that the Civil War reenactors could do another ceremony

but COVID stepped in and altered those plans. The first headstone cracked on installation so it had to be re-made. The following October, after the new headstone was placed, pumpkins appeared at the base of the headstones of Levi and his parents. A family member had found the graves because of Carol's work.

Carol has read several personal accounts, of one family helping another, even to the point of inviting a family to live with another for several months. The women bonded over mutual duties; men and children over fishing expeditions and brags of how many pounds of fish they caught. Some newspaper articles make it sound like the lakes were more fish than water! One family lost small three daughters in the same week. An 1864 newspaper account said that scarlet fever was the assumed cause of death, but later discovered that the mother had used “improper medicines.” Due to a memory mix-up when writing her memoir, it was thought the girls were buried in the EP cemetery, but further research proved them to be buried elsewhere; the children belonged to her “other” grandmother.

The stories that come from a quiet cemetery are profound, amusing, sad, creepy, and oh-so very interesting!

*Excerpts of this article were taken from Curt Brown's tales in the Minnesota Star Tribune.*

**Thank You Carol for the intriguing evening!**

