

The Prairie View

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2013-2014



what must they have thought when they saw the vast prairie ...

THE LAND, THE FOOD, THE PEOPLE

150 years ago our corner of the world was frontier land ... 150 years not being so long ago that some of our own grandparents or great-grandparents are the pioneers to have settled it. The culinary legacy of those pioneers, on the one hand, is delightfully American – as American as steak, sweet corn, apple pie and ice cream. On the other, it is deliciously European.

American Cooking: The Northwest from the series Foods of the World by Time-Life Books asserts that “ ... the best place ... to taste the cooking of many nations intermingled with typical American touches is within the six states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa and the Dakotas.” This immense and rich agricultural domain attracted hundreds of thousands of settlers and the food they raised themselves on their own fertile acres must have seemed the sweetest of rewards. For the cooking of a comparatively new region, it is in many respects surprisingly old, and some of the best regional recipes are heirlooms, handed down for generations from mother to daughter, constantly enriched in the process by love, lore and American ingredients.

Oh what those early settlers must have thought when



they first saw this vast land of rolling fields, flat plains and prairies! This land, that when worked, would provide unimaginable abundance – of milk, cream and butter, wheat, corn, hogs and cattle. People here don't just appreciate good eating – they celebrate it. Ours is the realm of picnics, fairs and festivals, where everything from American watermelon to German sauerkraut has its special day. Fortunately, even today, preferences and preparations remain uncomplicated, reflecting the simplicity of the European peasants and Yankee farmers, the men and women of the soil, who settled the region.

donation from an eden prairie first family

MORAN FAMILY LAMP COMES HOME



We received a call from Marshall Hunt and his wife from Pennsylvania. Mr. Hunt said his mother-in-law, in a nursing home there, would like to donate a “special” piece from the George Moran family to the Eden Prairie Historical Society. We agree that this gift is special and it is our honor to accept it!

The Morans were one of Eden Prairie's founding families and family lore has it that after settling here in the early 1850's, George brought a gift back to his wife Eliza from his travels. The gift was this lovely oil lamp. It was not only beautiful, it was very chic and modern for its day ... being the first lamp of its kind in Eden Prairie.

We are so appreciative of this thoughtful gift from the extended Moran family. The Moran Family Lamp now has pride of place within the kitchen vignette at our History Center & Museum ... back where it started.

lots happening and lots of opportunities to get involved

COMMITTEE REPORTS

THE CUMMINS-PHIPPS-GRILL HOUSE COMMITTEE

is made up of some very dedicated volunteers who are devoted to the preservation, restoration and promotion of our very own National Register of Historic Places-designated landmark. Built in 1879 and leased to the Eden Prairie Historical Society in 2010, we continue to refurbish and update the house in cooperation with the City of Eden Prairie. The CPG House Committee



back L to R: Katie Qualey, Ann Coates and Chris Honaas-Wildfang; front L to R: Jeanne DeSanctis, Kathie Case, Valerie Ross and Jan Mosman. Not pictured: Kelley Regan

(pictured) is excited to be able to share this charming, rustic farmhouse with the community! Whether you rent it for your private gathering or attend a public event, the house is ready for company! For rental info, please call Valerie Ross at 952.949.8300 or email: cumminshse@edenprairiehistory.org. **You won't want to miss Santa's North Pole Experience, Fridays-Sundays November 22 - December 22. Visit our website, www.edenprairiehistory.org, for more information.**

And always, feel free to ask any of us about the house or getting involved with the Eden Prairie Historical Society and CPG House Committee!

*Jeanne DeSanctis, jkdes2@aol.com and
Katie Qualey, katie.studio9@comcast.net, Co-Chairs*

THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, an on-going initiative, will provide many ways volunteers can participate and contribute: as part of the project planning team, as interviewers, transcribers and/or content advisors. To date, the Project Planning Team ... Kathy Nelson, JoAnn Wroblewski, Alison Noble and Leanne Brown ... is tasked with deciding how the project will be organized and

making decisions about the project content, mission statement and compiling a list of who will be interviewed.

Recognizing that we sit surrounded by a diminishing treasure trove of personal stories from the demographic often referred to as "the greatest generation" and given that they are the only ones with firsthand knowledge of early 20th century events, places and people in Eden Prairie, the Oral History Project intends to gather, organize, preserve and share their memories.

To that end, the project will center on ... and ask the questions: *During the years of the Depression, World War II and the 1950's economic boom, Eden Prairie was transitioning from a tightly knit agrarian community to a supercharged suburb. Who? What? Where? How? and Why?*

Sound interesting?

Betsy Adams, Chair, betsyadams@comcast.net

THE NEW CONSERVATION PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE will tackle some very important, long-range topics over the next few years:

- Firstly, the committee will address recommendations from the General Preservation Needs and Long Range Conservation Plan Report received from a recently-commissioned assessment survey, undertaken to provide insight into the standards for museum and site preservation practices for Eden Prairie Historical Society's wide-ranging collections.
- The committee will help develop a funding strategy, including grant-writing, to have resources necessary to undertake specific conservation projects (such as the oft-mentioned rehabilitation of the second floor of the CPG House to make it suitable and well-equipped and furnished to provide needed storage).
- And last but not least, the committee will address an initiative to fully inventory the EPHS collections, using current, museum-worthy and user-friendly software.

If organization, research and details are your strength, this is the committee for you.

Ann Higgins, Chair, ann.d.higgins@gmail.com

we are so proud and thankful to all our members and friends
HOW MUCH FUN WAS THIS!

The Calico Ball was a rockin' & rollickin' success! Over 190 Historical Society members attended ... 102 of those were new members! It is, of course, the Eden Prairie Historical Society's goal to keep each and every one of you interested and involved this coming year. Huge thanks go to our Green Acres hosts, Steve Schussler and Sunhi Ryan, The Lions Club, The Women of Today, SouthWest Metro, Primrose School of Eden Prairie, Marshall's Farm Market, and the tireless historical society Board of Directors. Definitely a labor of love. And special accolades go to the Calico Ball Committee: Kathie Case, Jeanne DeSanctis, Kelley Regan, Tracy Hope, Chris Honaas-Wildfang and Betsy Adams.

It all worked: mother nature helped out with a sunny 75° and the band, Light of the Moon, and caller Pat O'Loughlin lured us onto the dance floor with foot-stomping music and got many of us square dancing for the first time since grade school gym class! And Kelley's vintage, themed baskets for the silent auction were an awesome accomplishment, bringing in \$1200!

Your smiles and laughter, your *oohs* and *aahs* while looking around the amazing barn, your friendship and continuing support make it so worth it! Thank you, one and all!



Photos by Ken Ross



MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS



Because we were experiencing the Great Depression, Christmas in the 1930's was different than it is now! But different is not always bad. I have wonderful memories of those simpler, heartfelt times in Eden Prairie.

For Christmas dinner we did not have a traditional turkey or ham but enjoyed fresh chicken prepared in the pressure cooker, deliciously tender and flavorful, accompanied by cranberries, riced potatoes, sweet potatoes topped with

mint and pumpkin pie.

And, of course, we did think about gifts. A lot of time and thought went into gift selections ... for those on our Christmas lists and admittedly on our own wish lists. Many of our gifts were ordered out of the Montgomery Ward and Sears and Roebuck catalogs. I remember ordering a shaving kit for my dad, face powder for my mother, perfume for my sister and my brother just wanted money so he could pick out his own gift!

The main activity on Christmas Eve was setting up the tree which took forever because we had to check every light and replace the blown out bulbs. When everything was as close to perfect as we could make it, we opened gifts from out of town relatives while enjoying mother's oyster stew.

Christmas morning routinely began with delicious, homemade cinnamon rolls followed by opening the gifts from one another. My favorite all-time gift was a crokinole board made

by my father. My Grandmother Long crocheted the corner pockets. It provided hours of entertainment for our family on school holidays and was the source of many friendly competitions. That crokinole board still exists and is still occasionally brought out from the closet and enjoyed at family get-togethers. See my wife Lois and me with our board. ☺

The game of Crokinole can be traced back to 1876 and with its age come many variations. But, in general, Wikipedia says that it is "an action board game similar in various ways to pitchnut, carrom, marbles and shove ha'penny, with elements of shuffleboard and curling reduced to table-top size!" Players take turns shooting discs ... TAKE A LOOK AT THE DISCS ON REUEL'S FINGERS ... across the playing surface, trying to have their discs land in the higher-scoring regions of the board, while also attempting to knock away opposing discs.

interesting book, "the horse, the wheel and language"

AUTHOR DAVID ANTHONY BEGINS HIS BOOK WITH THIS OBSERVATION

"When you look in the mirror you see not just your face but a museum. Although your face is your own ... it is composed of a collage of features you have inherited from your parents, grandparents and great-grandparents." He continues by observing that, "You have four great-grandmothers. Each had a maiden name she heard spoken thousands of times and yet you probably cannot recall any one of their maiden names. If we are lucky, we may find [our great-grandmothers'] birth names in genealogies or documents, although war, migration and destroyed records have made that impossible for many Americans. Our four great-grandmothers had full lives and families and bequeathed to us many of our most personal qualities but we have lost these ancestors so completely that we cannot even name them."

Do you know your four great-grandmothers' names? I'm embarrassed to say that I don't. Maybe it's time to go looking.

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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