

# The Prairie View

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



WINTER 2013

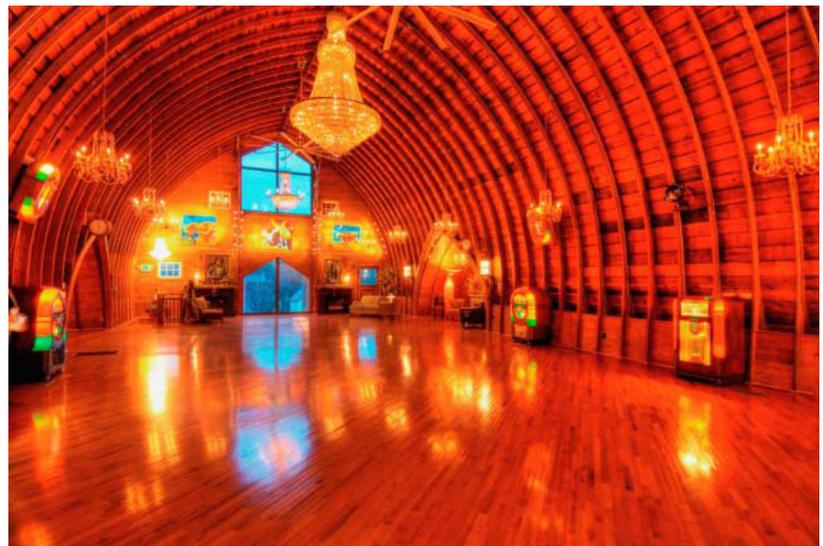
*save these dates 'cuz its time to party with the historical society!*

## TWO GREAT PARTIES AT TWO GREAT HISTORIC SITES

**T**hursday evening, May 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the Historical Society's Annual Meeting at the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House, 5:30-7:00, with Dave Lindahl as Guest Speaker. We'll kick it off with wine and appetizers followed by the meeting which includes election of board members and program. This year we are excited to welcome Dave Lindahl as our guest speaker. Dave has a unique perspective to share - as a native son, Eden Prairie's Economic Development Manager and a supporter of historic preservation. Members and guests are welcome. Let's cross our fingers that the peonies will have started to bloom!



**S**unday afternoon, September 22<sup>nd</sup> is the eagerly awaited Members-Only Green Acres Barn Party. The event will be congenial and cheerful with tours of the magnificently renovated barn, live music and lite appetizers. And yes, you still have time to become a new or renewing member which is, by definition, the way to get your invitation to the members-only party. Members may invite guests ... who will need to become members before the event ... by mail (*see below*) or at the door. What could be easier? We are so excited to share Eden Prairie's most recent adaptive reuse success story and for you to meet the man who made it possible, Eden Prairie Historical Society friend-extraordinaire, Steve Shussler.



**Y**our membership in the Eden Prairie Historical Society is indeed how you get to come to the Green Acres Barn Party but it is important in other ways too. The nominal \$20.00 annual dues helps defray the costs of postage and technology to enable us to keep you better informed with this newsletter, postcards, Facebook page and website ([www.edenprairiehistory.org](http://www.edenprairiehistory.org)). But more importantly, your membership lets us know that what we are doing for and about Eden Prairie's heritage matters to you. **Renewing and new members:** Please send your tax-deductible \$20.00 annual membership dues to Chris Honaas-Wildfang at 18397 Nicklaus Way, Eden Prairie 55347, with your name, full address, email and phone. Make checks payable to Eden Prairie Historical Society and reference "membership." Your \$20.00 membership is for 2 adults in the same household. Now, let's have some fun; let the parties begin!

## REMEMBERING ANOTHER ENEMY: COLD WEATHER



*EPHS Board member and World War II veteran Reuel Long wrote about some memories of the Battle of the Bulge for an article for the August 2007 issue of The Bulge Bugle, official publication of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. I have edited his article considerably but you can find it in its entirety on the*

*Historical Society's website at [www.edenprairiehistory.org](http://www.edenprairiehistory.org). The daring and endurance of American troops during the month-long fighting in the snow-clad mountains and gorges of Luxembourg in sub-freezing weather are legend. A year after this article appeared Reuel was contacted and interviewed by the History Channel for a 10-part series on General Patton entitled "Patton 360." The series aired in 2009 and Reuel appeared twice in segment 9.*

“ Although the information we had received about the Battle of the Bulge from articles in the ***Stars and Stripes*** was old and sketchy, the situation must have required help from our [90<sup>th</sup> Infantry] Division as we were headed north in trucks on January 6, 1945. We were always kept in the dark by our company commanders as to where we were headed next, except the immediate objective of hill, town or stream. We reached the city of Luxembourg and continued north after spending all night in the truck sitting up in what was below zero weather. I recalled seeing a road sign point directions to the town of Wiltz and St. Vith, which I later learned had been flattened by a battle in which the 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Division had heroically held up the German advance for a time to enable American defensive positions to form farther into Belgium, back in December.

Our division was evidently going to strike the enemy on the left flank of his salient into the American positions. I remember our trucks moving up the road with a steady stream of ambulances moving down the other side as we could now hear the noise of battle near the front.

Some of us stayed two nights in a farm house that had just been liberated by other American forces. The warm accommodations were welcome after two bitter cold

days in the truck. The father of this family brought out an all-wave table model radio that he had kept hidden from the Germans and our squad gathered around it to listen to the BBC and other broadcasts, including Nazi propaganda broadcasts in English. The farmer spoke little English but we enjoyed sharing his jubilation of liberation and a fine chicken dinner with him, his wife and 14 year old daughter. When we moved out I was assigned a different responsibility, being one of the “point men” for the squad. When in the lead, the point man had to be very alert for any movement or sounds up ahead, but with the ground now completely covered with a white blanket of snow, it was easier to detect the enemy. We still just had our leather boots and our feet were cold all of the time. Foxholes were harder to dig and even though strapped to our sides, the water in our canteens would always be frozen by morning. We were getting three square “K” ration meals per day though, and used the cartons to make small fires to melt our water. After digging our two-man foxhole at night and spreading our raincoats on the ground, each having one blanket, we placed one doubled under us and one doubled over us for what warmth we could get for one hour of sleep. At daybreak, we rose already dressed, thawed our water and ate our “K” ration breakfast. Our latrine was a slit-trench, and we had soap and ice-cold water for our hands. We had wool gloves with leather palms and stocking-cap style helmet liners which would pull over our ears. Following breakfast our squad leaders would receive instructions. We made certain our cardboard fires were out, folded our blankets, attached our shovels to our belts, shoulder-strapped our rifles and got ready to move out. If there was no enemy fire, leaning up against a tree lent support to the various paraphernalia that you had to carry. The M-1 weighed 9 pounds, extra ammunition, two grenades, canteen, pack, shovel, bayonet and helmet must have weighed at least 20 pounds more, making it almost easier to walk and get all those things on a synchronous motion than to try to stand still in one place. Advancing through woods, up a road or across an open field was always a cautious affair, looking to see what might be in the next group of trees, over a small rise or behind a hedgerow, particularly troublesome because they were usually built partially of stone with a thick hedge on top which obscured your visibility. The mental stress was more tiring than the physical strain though, I thought. [The Battle of the Bulge, the last major Nazi offensive against the Allies in World War II] was fought largely in 20 degree weather under overcast skies with an average of 8” of loose snow on the ground. Cold was an enemy. ))

*new exhibit at the minnesota history center*

## MINNESOTA AND THE CIVIL WAR

It was 1861 and the state of Minnesota was not quite three years old when it was swept into one of the stormiest chapters in American history, the Civil War. Though the state was new, Minnesota played a significant role.

The first man in the United States to volunteer for the Union was Minnesota's Aaron Greenwald, a miller from Anoka; ultimately 25,000 volunteer troops from Minnesota fought for the Union in the war.



The last surviving Civil war veteran? Albert Woolson of Duluth who died in 1956 at the age of 109.

"The exhibit, *Minnesota and the Civil War*, is not so much a chronological journey as it is a thematic journey through the Civil War," says Ian Lilligren, assistant exhibit developer. "You'll meet several Minnesotans and learn their stories and perspective on the war and life at the time." The exhibit opens March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. [www.minnesotahistorycenter.org](http://www.minnesotahistorycenter.org)

*... and there are more ... so many more history-centric adventures*

## RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN BACKYARDS

### Minneapolis Riverfront Then and Now, 1858 and 2008

Mill City Museum, Minneapolis MN  
[www.millcitymuseum.org](http://www.millcitymuseum.org)

Photographer Jerry Mathiason and Mill City Museum have embarked on a project to document change on the Minneapolis riverfront, selecting historic photos from the city's beginnings in the 1850s and 1860s and shooting photographs of the modern landscape from the same vantage point. The pairs of "then and now" photographs reveal the dramatic changes to the city over the past 150 years, including the disappearance of St. Anthony Falls, changes in transportation, bridge collapses past and present, the growth of a small village into a major city and continually evolving uses of the Mississippi River. The exhibit is located in the museum's central Mill Commons and is free and open to the public during regular museum hours through May 2013.



### The Landing

2187 County Hwy. 101, Shakopee, MN  
[www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org)



The Landing at Minnesota River Heritage Park, formerly Historic Murphy's Landing, was established in 1969. The 88-acre living history museum depicts life in the Lower Minnesota River Valley from the 1840s-1890s with authentic 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings (like the one-room schoolhouse, pictured), demonstrations and a scenic river trail. Original site features include Major Murphy's inn and ferry crossing, the Pond Grist Mill and a river overlook wall constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). So step back in time see what life was like for people who lived in the Minnesota River Valley 150 years ago. It's history happening right before your eyes. Costumed interpreters and authentic buildings help recreate late 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Minnesota, a time when settlers were establishing farmsteads and villages on the frontier. When's the last time you visited?

*we have so much to be excited about and thankful for*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Board members (from back left): Jeanne DeSanctis, Bob Pemberton, Bob Hirt, Kim Carlander, Val Ross, Betsy Adams and Kathie Case. Not pictured Aubrey Hookam, Ann Higgins, Jan Mosman and Reuel Long.

The date for the Members-Only Green Acres Barn Party is set for September 22! Plans are already underway. The theme will be the 1880's-era Calico Ball that was held annually at the old Goodrich Hotel. To reiterate, yes, this is for members only but so many have asked about bringing guests that we joyfully welcome them too. Members will be receiving invitations and can RSVP for themselves and their guests. Because regulations require that this party be only for members your guests will need to become members before they come into the party, easily accomplished by mail (see page 1, last paragraph, for details) or upon arrival at the party. FYI: a \$20.00 membership is for 2 adults in the same household.

And now, I'm pleased and proud to share updates on the Board's 2012-2013 Top Priorities! **An analysis and plan for increased preservation and safe storage for our growing historic collections.** In December the Eden Prairie Historical Society was awarded a Legacy Grant in the amount of \$5341 for Part I of this project to complete a General Conservation Assessment and Long Range Plan for our historical collections. Part 2 will be seeking funding for archival materials and equipment, preservation training and actual archiving and safe storage for all the historic objects in our care throughout Eden Prairie.

**Continue developing the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House as an educational and entertaining site for the community.** The Historical Society and City have recently installed a new locks/security system and an interior fire-suppression sprinkler system. The back half of the second floor (the hired hands' bedroom above the kitchen) has been repaired, painted and furnished. The last major project in the house will open up the rest of the second floor and include electrical upgrades and a passageway installation from the hired hands' bedroom to the front bedrooms. A grant for that funding will be submitted soon. Our goal is to make the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House a go-to educational, entertaining and business site for everyone in the community.

**Guidelines, training, equipment and volunteers to capture our rich history with the Oral History Project.** We have identified and will apply for grants this Spring.

So much to celebrate; so much to look forward to! As always, it is my pleasure to invite you to attend our Board of Directors meetings (third Thursday of the month, 4:00 at the History Center and Museum). Become part of our future. Hope to see you soon and often.

*Betsy Adams, President*

### *What's a Legacy Grant?*

On November 4, 2008 the voters of Minnesota approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment to preserve some of the most important elements that make Minnesota what it is today. This amendment to the Minnesota Constitution is sometimes referred to as the "Legacy Amendment" and mandates that a portion of the funding be used "to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage." One of the four funds within the Legacy Amendment is the Arts and Cultural Fund and it is from this fund that we have received, and hope to continue to be granted, funding for various worthwhile projects and initiatives.

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.

The Prairie View. Editor Betsy Adams, [betsyadams@comcast.net](mailto:betsyadams@comcast.net). Eden Prairie Historical Society, 8080 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Website: [www.edenprairiehistory.org](http://www.edenprairiehistory.org). Please let us know of changes or corrections to your mailing or e-mail addresses by leaving them at

