

OVERLOOK

Cook County Historical Society • Summer 2020

TWO MORE DEATHS IN THE BEARGREASE HOME

Peter and George Beargrease Died Last Thursday From Pneumonia.

Peter and George Beargrease both died last Thursday, Peter early in the morning and George the same evening. They were both suffering from influenza which had turned into pneumonia.

Local newspaper excerpt — December 18, 1918

"Spanish Flu" The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919

*"I had a little bird, it's name was Enza,
I opened the window, and In-Flu-Enza!"*

(Children's rope-skipping verse during the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic)

The 1918-1919 influenza pandemic caused an estimated fifty million deaths worldwide. Of these deaths, Minnesota itself suffered over 10,000. Although named the "Spanish Flu", it did not originate in Spain. Being one of the few neutral countries during World War I, Spain was the first country to report influenza cases since its newspapers were not under censorship during the World War I.

The influenza arrived in three waves: the spring and fall of 1918, as well as the winter—extending into early 1919. However, the second wave during the fall of 1918, with troops bringing the virus home, proved to be the deadliest.

Throughout Minnesota, in an effort to prevent the spread of the influenza, government officials initiated community mitigation strategies. Public spaces were closed and social gatherings prohibited—although these policies were carried out unevenly. Additional measures such as quarantine, practicing good personal hygiene and the use of disinfectants were encouraged—but not always followed.

"Postal carriers and the Boy Scouts delivered influenza information to homes, stores, and offices, but compliance with the regulations was variable...While some protested the changes, monetary cost, and income loss while complying with the rules, others blatantly defied them. Minneapolis and St. Paul health officials were inconsistent in managing the epidemic in their cities.

Dr. Henry Bracken, the secretary of the Minnesota State Board of Health during the epidemic, expressed frustration with the shortage of nurses and doctors to care for the sick. One-third of doctors were already supporting the war effort, and others were in northern Minnesota caring for forest fire victims. Others were sick themselves, had died from the flu, or feared exposure to the disease."¹

Like so many communities, Cook County's first link with the influenza was via the army. John Sigvald Toftey, a graduate of Grand Marais High School, was the first Cook County resident to contract and die from influenza. The son of Johannes and Sonneva Toftey, John was drafted August 26th, 1918 and sent to Camp Grant, where he died October 6th. A private funeral was held but, due to the contagious disease, no public service was offered. Within the week, notice was received reporting the death of Ingvard Larson at the same camp. Ingvard had recently immigrated to Cook County and had been a fisherman at Hovland until drafted. Arnold Nelson, oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Nelson of Maple Hill, also died while serving in the Army due to complications of the influenza.



Arnold Nelson c1918

Less than a month later, in the middle of November 1918, influenza appeared to have reached Cook County. Almost simultaneously, G.F. Lundquist and Ruth Soderberg were taken sick. G.F. Lundquist managed Cook County State Bank and Ruth Soderberg worked either at the bank or the courthouse at that time. Doctor Hicks of Grand Marais didn't state that it was definitely influenza, but efforts were made to prevent any spreading to the community at large. Both did recover, but in the case of Mr. Lundquist, the entire family had become ill.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings to all during this unprecedented time. Things have taken an unexpected turn since our last newsletter, and our plans for the coming year have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to share history with you through alternate methods as we work through this.

Our goal to complete a strategic plan, as stated in the last newsletter, is ongoing with the help of online meetings. Our Board has decided to pursue an off-site storage facility, because of our large collection of Cook County historical artifacts and current lack of suitable storage.

Thank you to all those who contributed to our fundraising efforts to purchase the Fordson Tractor and to restore the paintings by Anna Johnson. We will continue to seek donations for these two projects for the next couple of months.

We were sorry, along with the rest of the community, for the loss of three downtown businesses destroyed by fire. In addition to the loss of livelihoods for the families involved was the loss of three historic buildings that were almost 100 years old.

We appreciate your patience as we work to be safe in our program delivery.

-Barbara Backlund

COOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD AND STAFF

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Museum/Office Manager	Katie Clark
JHP Manager	Elizabeth Davis
Facility Caretaker	Doug Andrus

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in this 2020 issue of the Overlook*

ARCHIVAL STORAGE FACILITY TO BE BUILT AT CEDAR GROVE

The Cook County Historical Society Board of Directors has decided that a new archival storage facility is a priority since flooding in 2017 and 2018 has left our collections without a home. After considering many options, properties, and the needs of the collections, it was decided to purchase a lot in the EDA's Cedar Grove Business Park for new construction.

Thanks to a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society Legacy Fund, CCHS had a collections assessment conducted in 2019. It determined that storage of our over 28,000 individual items would be best in a 3,500 square foot off-site facility. While we manage several properties, none of them has enough space nor the ability to create proper environmental conditions for humidity and temperature controlled storage.

Our historic and artistic treasures are temporarily housed in a variety of spaces including former exhibits at the History Museum, an over-crowded JHP storage area, the shop at the Bally property, and three shipping containers. For their preservation, it is imperative to get these artifacts into a building with enough space and museum quality environmental conditions as soon as possible!

This collection, like our county, is one of a kind! The cultural legacy held in these objects cannot be emphasized enough. This organization began collecting in the 1920s, and it is our responsibility to ensure that decades of work is honored, while continuing to document and share our region's changing stories.

HELP US as we work to keep Cook County's history for future generations!

CCHS has committed \$64,400 of our own endowment fund toward this facility. This was a big decision but necessary to ensure the start of this urgent project. We are looking to our members first as our primary supporters. A rough estimate of the construction project is \$250,000 to create a simple but sufficient structure. In addition we will need to raise funds for storage furniture, supplies, and the staffing hours required to move and account for the safe relocation of each artifact.

Soon we will be preparing a major fundraising campaign - watch for a specific request to follow. **For now, we ask our members to consider making a donation toward a matching fund to be leveraged in our upcoming campaign.**

Please support us if you share our recently identified values: **Tradition, Stories, Education, Stewardship, Community, and Respecting the Past.**

DATES	ARTISTS/GROUP
July 24—August 16, 2020	TBD
August 21 — September 13, 2020	<i>Jo Wood, Cheryl Larson and Corrie Steckelberg</i>
September 11 — September 18, 2020	<i>Plein Air Grand Marais - Competition</i>
September 18 — October 11, 2020	<i>Plein Air Grand Marais- Exhibition</i>
October 16 — November 8, 2020	<i>David Johnson Photography</i>
November 13 — December 6, 2020	<i>John A. Spelman III Exhibition</i>
December 11, 2020 — January 3, 2021	<i>North Shore Artists League</i>
<i>The following exhibits have been rescheduled: Nan Onkka Block Printing Exhibition, 4/23-5/23/2021; Grand Marais Group Glass Exhibition, 12/10-1/2, 2022; Cooter Pottery Exhibit by Dick & Debbie Cooter, 5/27-6/19, 2022; Lee Englund Painting Exhibit, TBD</i>	

So, we've had to make a few adjustments...

Currently the Gallery is closed and the previously programmed exhibitions from March onward have all been rescheduled - *please note the date changes listed above*. When we are able to open our doors again to the public we will have new protocols in place to keep both staff and patrons safe. Our traditional opening receptions will be replaced with opportunities to schedule visits to the Gallery or visit virtually. We will be following all of the safe practices put forward by the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC that are necessary to ensure our visitors and staff are kept safe during these uncertain times. If you have any questions please email us at jhp@boreal.org.

Upcoming Exhibitions — We are featuring local artists in our future exhibitions and, even though we may not be able to host public gatherings for the openings, we hope you stay tuned to our news to learn how to join us in celebrating these shows! We will be announcing opportunities for viewing the artworks in the coming weeks.

Plein Air Grand Marais 2020 — The competition and exhibition will happen Fall 2020! With the uncertainties surrounding the health risks of group gatherings and possible travel restrictions, most of the event is being planned as online activities. There will be a live-streamed "Opening Reception & Award Ceremony", as well as a presentation by the Juror. Mini workshops will be live-streamed by instructors. Patrons will be able to purchase paintings online through a new www.pleinairgrandmarais.org website (which will go live in the upcoming months). Agreement was reached with the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota that artists will be allowed to paint in their homes and communities for submission to a new "Painting in Place" category. There will also be a "Plein Air Grand Marais Retrospective" category to which artists may submit works from previous PAGM competitions. Artists are invited to begin painting June 1st to allow for both more time and submitted artwork to help support the event, the artists, and the JHP Gallery. Artists will be asked to share photographs of themselves as they paint in place to be shared via the website. The PAGM Exhibition opens virtually September 18 and will run through October 11.



"Space Between the Breaths" by Greg Mueller whose work will be on exhibit in July

Support our artists and gallery — Facebook (@JohnsonHeritagePostArtGallery) and our website (www.johnsonheritagepost.org) are the best places to get live updates on all of the events, happenings, featured gift shop items, and re-opening details at the Gallery.

We appreciate your continued support and patience. Stay well!



Children like these pictured at Good Harbor Hill School in 1918, were kept out of school from mid-November until January 1st to prevent the spread of the influenza.

Quarantine, to prevent exposure, was the primary means of managing the epidemic. The local board of health closed all public meeting places such as the theater, billiard hall, and requested the community to refrain from holding any public gatherings of any kind until the epidemic was over. School was closed and parents were advised to keep their children off the streets and not allow them to go into stores or downtown. "If parents do not compel their children to obey this, the public will," the local newspaper stated.

It was obvious that the exact nature of influenza was not known. In 1918, viruses were unknown, and the cause of influenza was incorrectly attributed to a bacterium known as Pfeiffer's bacillus. It wasn't until the 1930s that scientists proved that the flu is caused by viruses.

Since there was no effective vaccine or antibiotics to treat flu complications, people focused on home and marketed remedies.

Wearing gauze masks to prevent airborne transmission was common, as was gargling with disinfectant solutions. Cacara quinine was also advertised in the local paper to combat the "Spanish Flu." Over in Roseau County, a Dr. Delmore recommended eating squirrel soup.

Cook County suffered a difficult winter as several more deaths were reported. The infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Allard of Cross River died of pneumonia following influenza. Nineteen-year-old George Wishcop of Chippewa City, suffering from tuberculosis, contracted influenza that turned into deadly pneumonia. Louise Beargrease, the widow of John, exhausted herself in the futile attempt to care of her son George and brother-in-law Peter Beargrease. She died from pneumonia caused by influenza and was followed by both her son and brother-in-law within a few hours. Many Native Americans in camps located from Gunflint, Saganaga, and Saganagons—up to Kawa Bay, died from the influenza due, in part, to delayed help from the government.

1. "Influenza Epidemic in Minnesota, 1918." *Laine, Mary*, first published: January 18, 2019 and last modified: April 9, 2020. <https://www.mnopedia.org/event/influenza-epidemic-minnesota-1918>

Honor the Past, Enrich the Future

HONORING ELDERS: COLLECTING MEMORIES DURING CORONAVIRUS

The coronavirus has caused so many disruptions for all of us. In spite of this disaster, we hope this newsletter finds you safe and able to enjoy time with your loved ones - whether in person or from afar. First and foremost, this pandemic has taught us to take extra care with our health and protect those we love by giving them space. At CCHS, in protection of our loyal volunteers, we have decided to cut back our regular schedules and programs. We will not be asking our volunteers to work with the many out-of-town visitors that we see in the summertime.

Normally, our summer schedule would be full with volunteers staffing the JHP, the History Museum and Chippewa City Church. Dates would be set for a Planked Trout Dinner and blacksmithing demonstrations at Ballys over Fisherman's Picnic. However, the risks involved working directly with the public and having large gatherings have caused us to rethink our summer. Watch our website and social media pages for updates on open hours and other programs. As of today, we do not plan to open to the public before June 26. As always, you can still contact our staff to gain access to our historic resources. Much more Historic Cook County news can be found on our website or social media pages.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HONOR OUR VOLUNTEERS AND THOSE LOVED ONES WHO HOLD OUR HISTORY... Take some time to record stories of people affected by the coronavirus. Make an effort to document the stories of your older loved ones. While you might only be able to do this remotely, consider trying to capture video of them during video chats or audio from phone calls. Their stories hold knowledge and wisdom about the past as well as insights about today's struggles. Help us capture their voices to better understand our place in history today. Share your stories with us to be placed in our archives and possibly shared with our audiences as we weave our current experiences into our historical content.

You can email your stories to Katie Clark at Katie@cookcountyhistory.org or mail them to Historic Cook County, PO Box 1293, Grand Marais, MN 55604.

The purpose of the Historical Society shall be the collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Cook County and to relate it to the history of the State of Minnesota.

COLLECT

Our collections include recorded oral histories, photographs, artwork, objects, documents, buildings, and videos



Audio cassettes and VHS video recordings of interviews, talks, and events



M.J. Humphrey's 1000's of negatives depicting Cook County c1933-1981



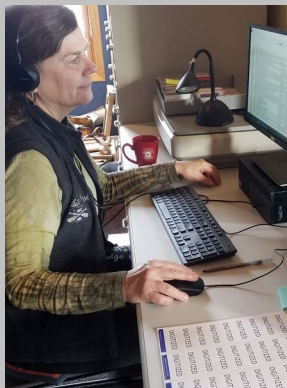
Historic Bally Blacksmith Shop c2013



Boxes of vintage Photo Art Shop postcards from the basement of White Pine North

PRESERVE

The items in our collections are preserved through accession, cataloguing, digitization, archival storage, and conservation



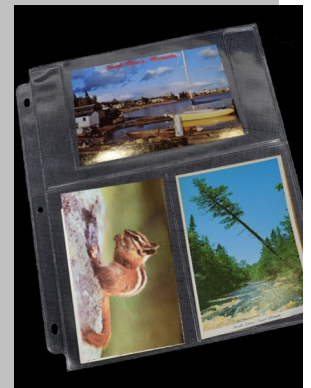
Leah Thomas preserving flood damaged items through digitization



Archival storage of catalogued sleeved negatives



Catalogued collection of ballpeen hammers from Bally's with object ID numbers



Prepped vintage postcards ready for archival storage

SHARE

We provide access to our collections through exhibits, an online searchable database, research opportunities, staffing buildings for public visits, social media posts, publications, tours, demonstrations, and presentations, and virtual content

Oral History of Gust Berglund, Interviewed by Ade Toftey March 19, 1974

Ade: When did you first come up here Gust?

Gust: I came up in 1930 from Chicago the first time.

Ade: Now what did you do in Chicago?

Gust: Well, I was a painter and a decorator there.

Portion of 1974 digitized transcript from an interview of Gust Berglund by Ade Toftey

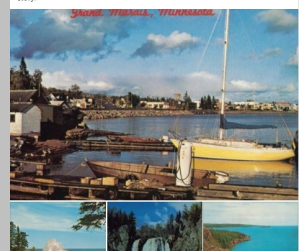


Published Milford Humphrey photo in the book *Downtown Grand Marais Vol. I, 2nd Edition* written by Gene Glader



Bally Blacksmith Shop Demonstrations

Blacksmithing techniques demonstrated and taught at Bally Blacksmith Demo Days



Images of vintage postcards featured in a Facebook social media post

The 91st Fisherman's Picnic is slated to be cancelled in 2020...

Do you remember any other Fisherman's Picnic that was affected by regional or world events?



A crowd gathered on a fish house and dock in what is believed to be the first picture of a Fisherman's Picnic event in 1928.



The weighing of the fish during the Fisherman's Picnic fish contest



While we have canceled our usual planked trout dinner during the Grand Marais Art Fair, we hope to honor our commercial fishing heritage by having a fish dinner of some kind—even if its take out—in tribute to the Fisherman's Picnic.

Gene Erickson and John Jacobsen tend to the fire at the Planked Trout Dinner in 2018.

New in 1939 was the "fillet booth". Mr. and Mrs. Fred Amyotte prepared and served 700 pounds of herring to an estimated 1,000 people. All herring was donated by local fishermen and given away free to tourists. "This fish snack is a wonderful means of advertising the product and should be broadened and built up to become widely known".

-Overlook, Summer 2009

Historic Cook County provides new online content in the age of social distancing! Stay tuned to our social media platforms for updates on new virtual content!

We have started creating more virtual content in order to allow safer access to Cook County's stories! Experiences are being created through the mobile and online app Vamonde, our Passport to the Past program site has been updated, and we are creating new videos—such as the upcoming feature on the recently lost businesses in downtown Grand Marais by board member Traci Crotteau. Stay tuned as we roll out more content in the coming weeks...

Cook County's Museums and Heritage Centers
Passport to the Past Program

Pick up your Passport Booklet!
Visit us online at www.PassportToThePast.org

An online interactive Passport to the Past map—
www.cookcountyhistory.org/passport-to-the-past-program

VAMONDE Destinations Events Nearby

The Sinking Of The America

The America's career ended near Isle Royale in the early morning hours of June 7, 1928. While leaving Washington Harbor, the steamer struck a reef between the main island and Thompson Island. Her stern settled to the bottom while the bow remained out of the water. The only loss of life was a dog belonging to the Clay family.

America sinking off the Isle Royale Coast in 1928
America sinking, 1928

Virtual learning experiences—
www.vamonde.com/adventure/link/1618

NEW THIS SUMMER, AN E-NEWSLETTER...

May 2020 was all arranged to be our Membership Drive month. A new committee was formed with board and community members to help reach out and find new members excited about Cook County's unique cultural heritage.

We have decided to postpone this effort due to the uncertain financial climate created by the coronavirus pandemic. Look for a membership drive this fall, in more hopeful times. In the meantime, we have decided to share as much as we can with our cherished members online—interesting content delivered in a variety of formats.

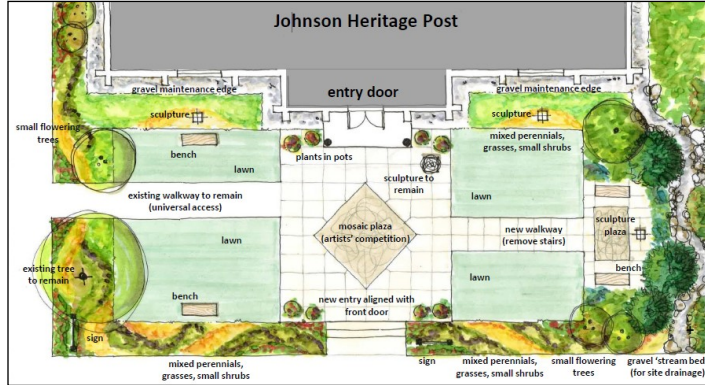
We will be starting an e-newsletter to be delivered by e-mail over the next few months. Only a small fraction of you receive our *Overlook* by email, and we are happy to continue to send out our paper version quarterly. However, to receive the more frequent e-newsletter, we invite you to **EMAIL US DIRECTLY** to get on our email list. Please feel free to invite anyone else to request the e-newsletter as well.

Our newest staff member, Museum and Office Manager Katie Clark, will be happy to hear from you! **katie@cookcountyhistory.org**

Your email will not be shared with any third parties

**Coming soon to the JHP Gallery...
NEW LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS!**

Work is starting on a beautiful new central plaza that will create a welcoming entryway for the JHP. Existing landscaping that impedes direct access to the front door will be removed and the ground will be prepared for new concrete, lawns, perennial beds, improved drainage, mosaic detail, and seating areas. The Lloyd K. Johnson grant supporting this project will also be directed next winter towards log repair on the JHP Gallery.



Drawing of board approved landscaping improvements for the JHP

Drawing and design provided by Bruce Jacobson

Improvements also continue at the Historic Bally Blacksmith Shop with Duane Ege directing the projects. Shown here is stump removal being done by Winchester Higgins.



MEMBERSHIP

BENEFIT FROM YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP AND BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW NOW!

- \$20 **Individual** Quarterly newsletter the *Overlook* delivered to your mailbox or inbox and 10% off one gift shop purchase
- \$30 **Family** Three digital photo reproductions
- \$50 **Friend** Half hour sneak peek prior to all art openings at the Johnson Heritage Post
- \$100 **Patron** 20% off a gift shop purchase
- \$200 **Business** Your business or organization mentioned in our newsletter yearly
- \$300 **Advocate** One free four-hour rental at the Johnson Heritage Post
- \$1000 **Lifetime** Name on permanent display and the book *Pioneers in the Wilderness*

All Membership level benefits include the benefits of preceding levels

**RETURN THIS FORM ALONG WITH A CHECK:
COOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 1293, GRAND MARAIS, MN 55604**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please send my *Overlook* newsletter by email

Membership payments can also be made on our website:
www.cookcountyhistory.org/become-a-member



COOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1293
Grand Marais, MN 55604
www.cookcountyhistory.org
history@boreal.org
218-387-2883

Nonprofit Org
Standard Rate
US Postage
PAID
Grand Marais, MN
Permit # 19

A friendly reminder—
your next membership
payment is due by the
date to the right of
your name on the
address label.

If you are a lifetime
member — no payment
is due, but please
consider an additional
donation to our
archival storage
construction matching
fund!

HISTORIC COOK COUNTY SITES

Please check our website (www.cookcountyhistory.org) or call us at 218-387-2883 for current updates to our hours at the JHP Art Gallery, History Museum, and Chippewa City Church.



At the JHP Art Gallery, our gift shop offers:

Original paintings and archival prints

Pottery · Jewelry · Carvings

Hand knitted and woven goods

Handmade bags

Felted and beaded artwork

Thomsonite stones and jewelry

Books of local and regional interest

Photo artwork · Dala horses · Hand-forged knives

Anna C. Johnson artwork featured on -

Tote bags · Pillows · Coasters · Notebooks

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 2020

We don't expect to have a normal summer schedule this year, and we will be without many of our regular amazing volunteers. As you think to the summer, please consider volunteering at the Cook County Historical Society to share the art and history of our community - at the History Museum, JHP Art Gallery, Bally Blacksmith Shop or Chippewa City Church. When we are able to open safely, we will be sure to have the necessary protective protocols in place. Help us honor the elders who have shared our region's heritage for many years—volunteer for Historic Cook County!

For more information or to sign up for volunteering, please contact Carrie at history@boreal.org.