



Grinnell Historical Museum

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

The Grinnell Historical Museum, 1125 Broad St., is a 10-room, late-Victorian residence open to the public from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday (Tuesday through Sunday in the summer). The house contains excellent examples of furniture and decor from the turn of the 20th century, arranged to create a feeling of family life at the time. Admission is always free. To contact the museum, call 236-7827 and leave a message.

MUSEUM BOARD

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NEWSLETTER

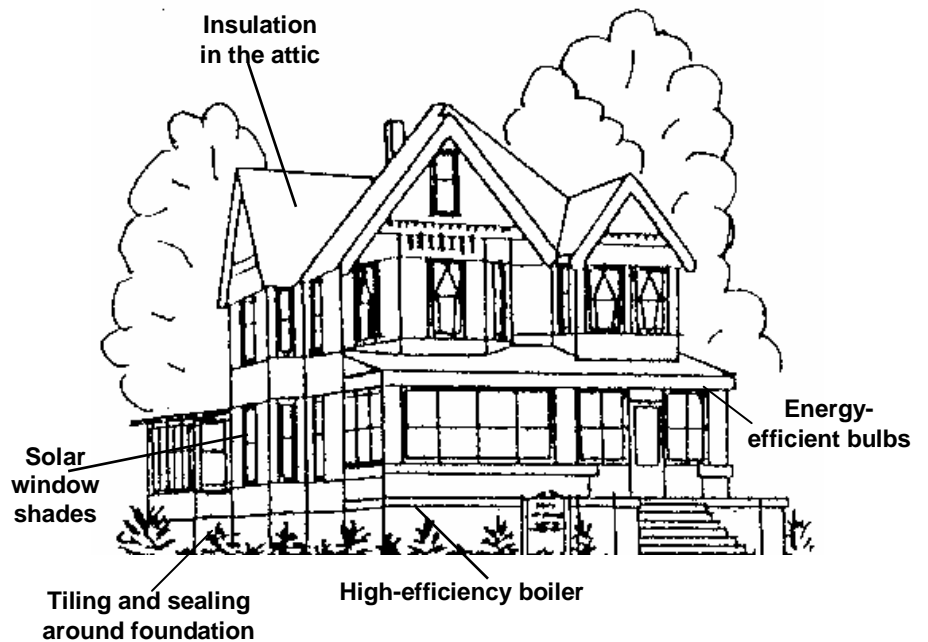
Contributors: Vera Cousins, Dorrie Lalonde, Howard McDonough, Michele Parslow

Editor: Mary Schuchmann

SPECIAL EVENT IN MAY

A play based on interviews with 15 women in the Grinnell community will be presented at the museum on two weekends in May. See page 2 for details.

Museum aims to be green — inside as well as out



GREEN was just another color when the McMurray home (now the Grinnell Historical Museum) was built in 1895. Today, green is the buzzword of building construction and improvement, and the museum is trying to do its part.

Over the past three years, a variety of projects have been undertaken to preserve the structure and, importantly, to make it as energy-efficient as possible.

Last fall, a construction crew tiled around the foundation and sealed the walls in order to eliminate water and dampness in the basement. (See

“From the President” on page 2 for details.)

In the last several years, a conventional (a.k.a. “ancient”) boiler was replaced with a high-efficiency model, and insulation was added to parts of the attic. On the first floor, solar shades were installed on the south and east windows to protect the rooms from harmful UV rays and, in summer, to cut down on the sun’s heat coming through the windows.

While electrical usage is minimal because the museum is open limited hours, energy-efficient light bulbs are being used where practical.

From the President

Greetings from the Grinnell Historical Museum.

Water continued to be a problem at the museum in 2009 – but we hope we have found a cure.

With financial help from the tourism group, we were able to tile around the house, seal the outer wall and begin insulating the inside. This spring we will be seeding the lawn and planting flowers and bushes.

I would like to thank all of the people who helped at and supported the museum. Without your help, we would not be able to have a museum like we have. It is something to be very proud of.

A very special thanks to the museum board members who spend many hours preserving, planning, cleaning, and recording the treasures that are housed at the museum, speaking to various groups, and participating in various community activities.

If you have not been through the museum lately, we invite you to do so.

*Howard McDonough
President*

On stage (in the parlor) at the museum

A ONE-WOMAN PLAY inspired by interviews with 15 Grinnell women will be presented at the museum on two weekends in May. Written and performed by Grinnell College student Gillian Hemme, the 40-minute performance consists of monologues that explore, among other things, the relationship between work life and personal life. The title is “Clean Start.” Music and movement will accompany the text. Gillian conducted the interviews last summer under the direction of Shawn Womack of the Department of Theater and Dance at the college.

Performances are set for 7 p.m. Saturday, May 1; 2 p.m. Sunday, May 2; 7 p.m. Friday, May 7; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 9. Admission is free.

HAPPENINGS

New to the board

Joining the board of directors of the Grinnell Historical Museum this year are Doug Cameron, Karen Groves, Teresa McCall and Catherine Rod

New brochure

An eye-catching new promotional brochure was created this year for the museum by the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce. Thanks to the chamber for covering the cost. Copies are available at the museum and at the chamber office at Fourth and Broad.

Stepping out

You could swing, waltz and polka (or simply tap your feet to the beat) at an old-fashioned dance April 10 at the Elks Club organized by museum board member Frank Heath. The music was provided by the Lynnville-Sully Big Band and Some Polka Guys of Grinnell. The event raised \$119.52 for the museum.

ACQUISITIONS

The museum received more than 30 acquisitions in the past year, many of them multiple items. Among the most significant are:

A SALESMAN’S WORKING MODEL of a Laundry Queen electric washing machine made in 1920 by the Grinnell Washing Machine Company was donated by Ernest J. Jones of Newton. Jones’ father was a foreman at the company and made the model. The mini-machine, which is 18 inches high, consists of a metal laundry tub with a hinged wooden cover and an agitator and wringer on top. A motor is mounted alongside. It is displayed on a shelf in the west room of the basement.

DOCUMENTS detailing the construction of the Monroe Hotel in 1899 were donated to the museum by Bruce and Laura Blankenfeld. Bruce’s aunt was a sister of the hotel’s last owner, George Hiser. The hardbound book, put together in 1948 for insurance purposes, contains footing plans and a complete list of materials used to build and furnish the hotel (down to the kind and number of salt and pepper shakers). The three-story structure – located near the train depot where the Monroe Apartments are now located – was demolished in 1970.

Many thanks to our donors in 2009

The Grinnell Historical Museum is grateful to the many individuals and groups who made monetary contributions in the past year.

Arnold and Harriet Adelberg	Art Heiman	Russell and Paula Osgood
Dan and Nancy Agnew	Arnie and Joan Heimsoth	Phil and Dorothy Palmer
Jon Andelson and Karen Stein	Nancy Hendrickson	Ruth Palmer
Phyllis Armstrong	Historical and Literary Club	Morris and Michele Parslow
Roberta Atwell	Leta Hollman	Mary Pearson
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Steve and Judy Bennett	Clark Jensen	John and Emily Pfitsch
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Grinnell College	Wendy Munyon	Gordon Wold
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Dennis and Tommy Haas	Cheryl Neubert	Eleanor Wozny
Gordon and Jackie Halverson	Carol Nielson	Larry and Jo Wray
Elizabeth Hays	William and Debra Olson	Mary Jane Zimmerman

IN TRIBUTE

TWO long-time supporters of the Grinnell Historical Museum died in 2009. Ralph Luebben and Ben Graham were both former members of the museum's board of directors.

Luebben was on the museum board from 1986 to 1992, serving as board president for two of those years. Graham was a board member from 1995 to 2006; he served as board treasurer for eight years.

As chairman of the committee to plan the replacement of the museum's garage, Luebben lobbied for building a replica of the carriage house that stood there in the days of the original owners, the McMurrays. His careful drawings became the basis for the project. His efforts are recognized by a plaque just inside the entrance of the building.

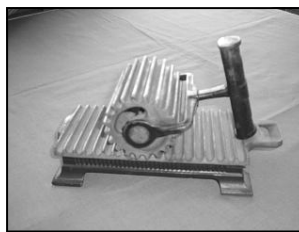
Graham oversaw the museum's finances during a period of investment growth. He also handled the successful merger of the museum auxiliary and museum society. The bracket holding the flag on the porch of the museum is a gift from Graham.

The current museum board is grateful to all those like Ralph Luebben and Ben Graham, who believed in using their time and talents to preserve the past.

Information from Michele Parslow

Treasures in the Basement

"WHATEVER is that?" is a question often asked in the museum's basement laundry room. Visitors are fascinated by the fluting iron, which was acquired from the Jack and Ola Preston Estate in the 1960s.



Fluting Iron

Made of cast iron by Shepard Hardware & Co., Buffalo, New York, and patented in 1878, the fluting iron is a device that has no equivalent in the 21st century.

Used primarily by middle- and upper-class woman to produce pleats and ruffles in collars and cuffs, it was also used on petticoat edgings and dress trims to give them flare. Fabric was washed, starched, and

wrung out to damp dry and was then placed on a base which had been preheated on the wood stove. The top half (the roller) was rolled over the fabric and pressed into the grooves, and when the fabric was dry, the pleats or ruffles were set firmly in place, at least until the next laundry day.

There were several types of fluting irons (the museum's fluting iron is a roller model), and all attest to fashion and fad in a period before electricity became the norm. On your next visit to the museum, be sure to look for it.

Dorrie Lalonde



Grinnell Historical Museum
1125 Broad Street
Grinnell, Iowa 50112
SPRING 2010

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

2010 FUND DRIVE

Grinnell Historical Museum

Join in support of the Grinnell Historical Museum with a contribution and/or an offer to volunteer

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

The Grinnell Historical Museum is a non-profit organization under Code 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

I AM INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING _____ *Volunteer opportunities include docent, exhibits and displays, garden and yard, house repairs, publicity, newsletter, research requests.*
(Please specify) _____

Make checks payable to the Grinnell Historical Museum
Mail to Vera Cousins, treasurer, 903 16th Ave., Grinnell, IA 50112

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