

The Scribe

HISTORY CENTER OF OLMSTED COUNTY

SPRING 2020 Newsletter



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STAYING RESILIENT AND INSPIRED IN TRYING TIMES

If you are a member of the tribe of historians (and if you are reading this you probably are) you likely look to history during times of public crisis, whether in politics, the economy, the environment, or public health. The stories of events and people of the past offer us perspective and examples of struggle, courage, and resilience in the face of experiences that may be entirely new to us. Perhaps a story has passed down through the family about a great-grandparent surviving the Spanish Flu or polio disabling an uncle, or a cousin contracting measles. Or maybe you fortify your resolve through a quote, such as Dr. William J. Mayo's from 1926: "The ills of today must not cloud the horizons of tomorrow." Others look to moments of leadership, such as President Roosevelt delivering his Fireside Chats to the nation during the Great Depression.

I take inspiration from historical U.S. flags. If you've driven by the History Center recently, you may have noticed a blue flag flying alongside Old Glory with the words: Don't Give Up the Ship. Those are the words that U.S. naval commander Oliver Hazard Perry flew on a flag at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. They were also the last words of Captain James Lawrence, Perry's friend and fellow officer who died in the battle. Despite long odds Perry and his ships and crew defeated their British counterparts. While the fight against Covid-19 is less dramatic





As I reflect on the events of the last few weeks, both professionally and personally, two words come to mind – “resilience” and “adaptable”. There is no playbook on how to react to a pandemic, everyone is adapting to new conditions at home and work. Everyone’s resilience will get us all one day closer back to normal.

Wayne and the History Center team have continued to be creative as they work from home and adjust to the new normal by planning for future events that align with our strategic plan while also documenting the current history being created! Members of the HCOC board have adapted very quickly and had two virtual meetings for the monthly Finance Committee and Board Committee meetings in March.

The resilience demonstrated by Wayne, the HCOC team, and the Board gives me confidence that when things return to normal we will be positioned to provide Olmsted County a breath of fresh air everyone will be looking for with our programs, events, and passion for history!

Tom Leimer
President

STAYING RESILIENT AND INSPIRED IN TRYING TIMES - continued

or violent, with scientists, physicians, nurses, and grocery store workers, rather than sailors, as heroes, we are all in it together and need to remain resilient.

We regret we had to cancel many spring programs and Mayowood Mansion tours but fighting the spread of Covid-19 is critical. We remain optimistic and are moving forward with our suffrage exhibit, “The Onward March of Suffrage” planned for June. If necessary, we will postpone it again to ensure public safety.

But we don’t want you going stir crazy. We’re going to be serving up fresh history content through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and platforms we haven’t discovered yet. Learn about pioneer cabins and schooling; fun crafts; public health; and how to start your diary or journal that future historians may study to understand the events we’re living through today. So, be sure to check out the History Center’s social media and our monthly e-newsletter. Stay connected to your history!



HISTORY CENTER
OF OLMSTED COUNTY

With all that has been going on, it is understandable if you’ve missed a big change in our look: **We’ve got a new logo!**

If you have visited the History Center, you know we conserve and display a lot of artifacts and archival material. You go to the History Center or Mayowood to explore, experience, and examine. But the stories we tell are bigger than the museum or the mansion. That’s why we designed a logo to symbolize places across the county. From rural farms to an historic skyline. From golden fields to blue rivers. We tell stories about Olmsted County’s diverse places and people. We think our new logo speaks to diversity in ways the old one could not.



Stay well and I look forward to seeing you at the History Center when we can once again shake hands—or bump elbows—and talk history!

Wayne Gannaway
Executive Director

INDIFFERENCE THREATENS LIVES BECAUSE OF FLU EPIDEMIG HERE

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

By Sean Kettelkamp

Putting a twist on the old adage that history repeats itself, Harry Truman once said, “The only thing new in the world is the history you don’t know.” In these strange times we are now living, we repeatedly hear that we are in “uncharted territory,” as if the likes of the Novel Corona Virus, more commonly known as COVID-19, has never been seen before. In fact, pandemics are not new, and though sicknesses such as the Black Death and Bubonic Plague are thought of as much as what one had for dinner last week, mass illness has been on Earth as long as the human race.

The Influenza of 1918 has passed from living memory, meaning there is no one left with direct knowledge of how the world was brought to its knees by a raging invisible killer, while simultaneously fighting the Great War. We are left now with historical research. The headline for the October 21, 1918, Rochester Daily Post and Record declared, “Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases, [and were] as dangerous as poison gas shells.” In November of 1918, the newspaper wondered if handshaking might become a thing of the past. Many believed this particular influenza outbreak to have originated in Spain, and thus it was (and often still is) referred to as the “Spanish Influenza.” The reason for this belief was based on the fact that King Alfonso of Spain had contracted the disease. As the most noteworthy person to become infected, it was mistakenly thought he must have been the source. While the misnomer remains, a newspaper article brought forth the idea that the then epidemic originated in “The Orient.” Researchers from

that time noted that the German Army mentioned the disease occurring amongst its soldiers along the Eastern Front in the summer and fall of 1917. There is no doubt, however, that the Great War, or World War I, was the main cause of the Influenza turning into a pandemic. With troops moving all around the world, the flu spread like prairie fire on a windy day.

Influenza was rampant in the spring of 1918, and while cases lessened in the summer, by the fall of 1918 it roared back to life with October being the worst month. The newspaper, again from October 21, 1918, in a column headlined, “Uncle Sam’s Advice On Flu; U. S. Public Health Service Issues Official Health Bulletin on Influenza,” noted that the disease was like a very contagious kind of cold, but with fever, and pain in the head, eyes, and ears. After several days many contracted pneumonia or meningitis, and those cases were fatal.

strong and tight - no public
dances or large gatherings
must be held with the present
"flu" situation.
After our receiving a letter from
Dr. Blanton for a wire message
as to whether you should lean
as scheduled or not, I called
Dr. Wattersline and asked him
what the situation was. He said,
"It is awful bad - just awful. We
can do pretty well with these
right here in town when we

- ▲ Letter written to Helen Douglas on December 22, 1918, describing gatherings, seclusion, and monitoring during the “flu situation”.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN - continued

Fast forward 100 years. The experiences of the Influenza of 1918 are not unlike those of COVID-19 in 2020. Sheltering in Place and Social Distancing may be difficult for some; Americans certainly have not had to make the sacrifices we find ourselves making now for generations, but we have done it before. President John F. Kennedy remarked in 1962 that, “The United States has gone through some rather difficult times, but it has passed through them.” Past generations could only have dreamt about today’s modern communications, which allow information to be sent from the other side of the Earth in seconds, keeping us informed with up-to-the-minute facts. While this offers hope to some, it can also be overwhelming, so it is worth remembering the line from the old song Everything Old Is New Again: “go backward when forward fails,” immerse yourself in historical facts with research, and it will take the fear away—this has all happened before. Though history is not a guide to the future, it should give us confidence that we have overcome many “difficult times.”

For more perspective, check out Albert Camus’ novel *The Plague*. This tale can perhaps help puzzle out the responses to challenges many are experiencing with COVID-19. Should you buy everything on the shelf, or leave some stuff for somebody else? While we have to be closeted indoors, should we really care about anyone other than ourselves? How much money do you need when there is nothing to buy? Does anybody remember what life was like a month or two ago? What will our lives be like six months from now?

As a community, together, we are stronger and we are lucky in our modern times to have so many ways to stay connected with one another.



HISTORY@HOME: CONNECTING WITH HISTORY AND COMMUNITY WHILE UNDER QUARANTINE

Like everyone else, the History Center has had to cancel some programs, postpone others, and do our best in planning events and activities that may still happen later in the year. But we are finding ways to serve you fresh content while keeping socially distant.

Regrettably, we have had to cancel SPARK! a monthly program designed specifically for people living with memory loss and their care partners

SPARK! is not about the objects, artwork, or documents, but rather the items serve as a jumping off point for sharing stories, conversation, and friendship. SPARK! is for adults living with memory loss and related dementia in the early to middle stages and their care partners. We want to keep our SPARK! participants, volunteers, and staff safe during the pandemic, so we gathered a host of online resources for caregivers to explore and use with their loved ones.



The Museum is CLOSED but History at Home happens daily!

Learn about our SPARK! online resources and other daily activities, videos and history in action on our website, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube! Let's stay connected!

www.olmstedhistory.com
[@olmstedhistorycenter](https://www.instagram.com/olmstedhistorycenter)

THE 2020 LIVING HISTORY FAIR

is planned for Saturday and Sunday July 18 and 19, 2020.

After months under quarantine, this event is sure to break through the boredom, with vendors, demonstrators, Civil War camp life, battle reenactments, fiber arts, Civil War firearms display, artillery, infantry, medicine show, cavalry, 1840s rendezvous, tinsmith, blacksmith, broom maker, Century Brass Band, and much more. Living History Fair is in its 6th year and the program is designed to be educational, hands-on, and interactive. If we must cancel the Living History Fair because of the covid-19 pandemic, we will create virtual offerings as an alternative to learn about the American Civil War.



STOPPEL FARMSTEAD TOURS THIS SUMMER

The History Center is planning to offer historic George Stoppel farm tours starting summer 2020. The tours will incorporate the Stoppel history, the architecture of the historic buildings, the preservation done on the historic property, and the continued need of preservation for the property. The History Center is planning to open up part of the barn and caves during the tour. The goal of the tour is to educate, examine, and explore the historic property and the lives of the pioneering Stoppel family. The tour will open the site up to the public for a chance to breathe new life into the farmstead.



▲ *Stoppel Farmstead, ca. 1920s.*



DOES FASCINATION WITH CELEBRITIES EVER GET OLD?

Our theme for Maywood this year is: “Celebrities!” Dan Nowakowski, curator, and Kevin Whaley, collections manager, thumbed through the Maywood Guest Books housed in the archives and picked fourteen celebrity guests to be featured in a mini exhibit throughout the mansion. Unfortunately, the pandemic has meant the cancelation of Maywood mansion tours during the regular season. (We’re crossing our fingers for a normal Christmas tour season beginning in November.)

Since celebrity stories never grow old, we will hold our “Celebrities at Maywood” theme in Spring 2021. The paparazzi of Rochester have been forewarned. The exhibit features popular celebrities from the 1930s to the 1960s who visited either Dr. Charlie or Dr. Chuck. During a regular tour, you might hear about celebrities like Helen Keller and Lou Gehrig, but this exhibit expands on these individuals, explaining why they came to Rochester and were guests at the mansion. We found answers to these questions by searching through the Maywood Guest Books and Dr. Charlie’s and Dr. Chuck’s papers, along with help from the Mayo Archives. For some celebrities, we can only guess at the reason they came to Rochester and Maywood: was it medical, business, or something else? Some things are simply lost to time. So join us to learn more about these individuals. Who knows, maybe you can help us solve the mystery of their visit.

Several years have passed since we have updated the Maywood guidebook so Kathy Dahl, our Maywood Tour Manager, has been going through archived

Maywood files to make sure we are giving accurate information during the tours. This process has uncovered several truths that needed correcting. Examples: the fan in the Music Room really belonged to a British Duchess, not Josephine, Napoleon’s wife. The German Castle is not a castle at all; it’s a replica of the Peace Palace in the Netherlands. Edith received her “Mother of the Year 1940” award from Mrs. Sara Delano Roosevelt” (president’s mother), not the “Boy Scouts of America.” It’s been fun to unlock a few mysteries.

Who knows what new truths (or old histories) we’ll uncover between now and the start of regular Maywood Mansion tours in Spring 2021.



▲ Lou Gehrig at KROC radio show, 1939

GREETINGS FROM WOMEN'S HISTORY CIRCLE

By Coralee Grebe

We're just completing our first full year of programming, lifting up the untold stories of women in our area's history and documenting our history-makers of today.

Our programs have featured the history of nurse anesthetists, the growth of women in sports through Title IX, pioneer recipes, the art of weaving rugs and women succeeding in the building trades. (To learn more about Title IX in our state, check out "Gaining Sweat Equity: Girls Push for Place on High School Teams," in spring 2020 Minnesota History magazine.)

We're also really excited to be involved in the planning of the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage exhibit coming together at the History Center of Olmsted County. Many of us know of one or two suffragists who worked on the national scene, but it's been an honor to get to know the amazing local women who fought to gain the right to vote.

Women's History Circle programs have earned a good deal of media attention. Local television newscasts featured our programs six times throughout the year, along with the March/April issue of Rochester Women Magazine for Women's History Month.



As with the everyone else, our programs have been postponed due to social distancing and closures caused by the pandemic. (Somehow women suffragists kept up momentum during the Spanish Flu.) But we're busy planning our upcoming year, partnering with the Diversity Council, the Boys and Girls Club and the Girl Scouts. Be sure to check it out as our new schedule for Fall 2020-Spring 2021 will be available soon.

We generally meet on the 4th Sunday of the month gathering at 2 p.m. with the program beginning at 2:30. Check our schedule on the History Center's website, as we do not meet every single month.

Whether or not you've been to Women's History Circle, we'd love for you to come and see what we are up to.

All are welcome!

Remember, Women's History: It's not just for women any more.

AARP® Real
Possibilities
Minnesota

The History Center and the Women's History Circle thank AARP Minnesota for generously sponsoring "Because of Her", a special program to celebrate the grand opening of the History Center's Centennial Exhibit "The Onward March of Suffrage."

The program is postponed due to the pandemic but watch for related programming in the coming months.

KEEPING COUNT OF OLMSTED COUNTY AND ITS HISTORY

By Krista Lewis, Archivist, CA

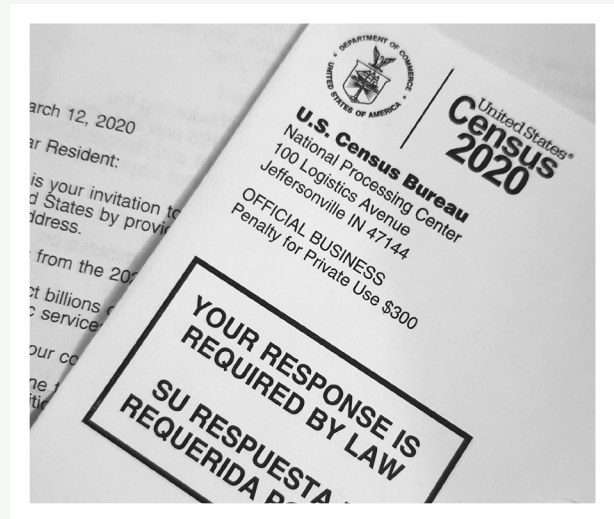
After a long winter, we look forward to springtime for many reasons: lengthening days, warming temperatures, returning life, opening windows, shedding extra layers, putting shovels back in storage - to name but a few. For many, including us here at the History Center, this time of year also means taking stock and spring cleaning. Every ten years, the U.S. embarks on the monumental task of counting its many inhabitants through a census. We'll be doing our part to help the country take stock by providing visitors to our website with information supplied by the Minnesota State Demographic Center that delves into the history of the U.S. census, why we do it, why it matters, and how it impacts everyday Americans. Visitors to the site will come away better understanding the significance and relevance of our census and be ready to be counted. Similarly, we in the Archives are almost continually taking stock of our holdings. Over the last few years, inventories of specific parts of the collection have been taken in order to better understand what we have, and perhaps more importantly, what we don't need. We've now reached a point where this spring we'll use these inventories to deaccession - spring clean, if you will - material that doesn't support our mission. The areas we'll focus on will be magazines, periodicals, and books. We went through a similar process a couple of years ago, resulting in a book sale during our annual Living History Fair.

If we make good progress with our spring cleaning, we hope to have another book sale at this year's Fair, so keep an eye out for that this summer!

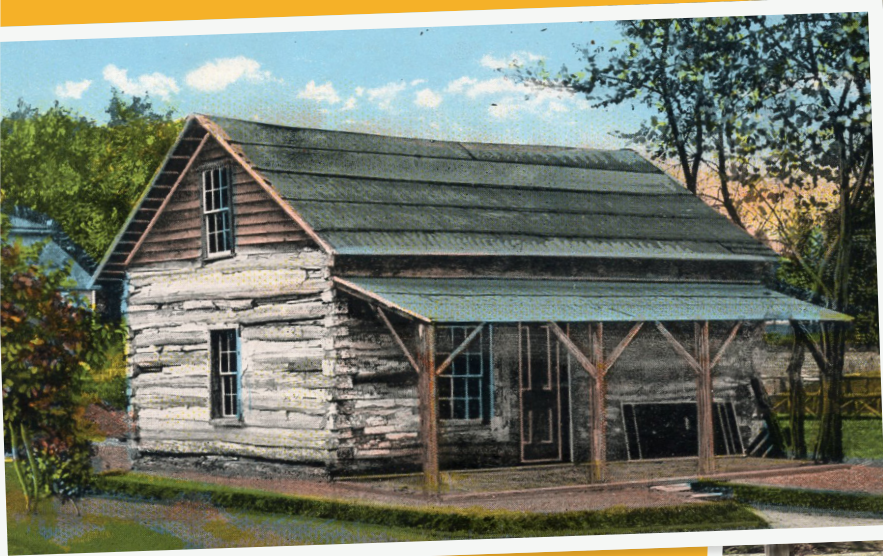
U.S. - Inhabitants of Olmsted County, Minnesota, enumerated by me this 21st day of October, 1857. Henry C. Kure Ass't Marshal, 391

NAME of every person who resided in this family on the 1 st day of September, 1857.	AGE	SEX	COLOR	PLACE OF BIRTH		OCCUPATION If any, of every male person over fifteen years of age.	VOTER
				State	Foreign		
33 Edward Gilbert	34 M			Pa		Farmer	1
34 Elizabeth Millard	29 F			"		"	2
Abner B. "	23 F			"		"	3
35 Martin Mc Amy	16 F			Ill		"	4
36 Amanda "	20 F			N.Y.		"	5
37 David "	3 F			Pa		"	6
38 Daniel "	7 M			Mass		"	7
39 James Coffield	6 M			N.Y.		"	8
40 Maria "	23 F			Ill		"	9
41 Charles "	13 M			"		"	10
42 Eliza "	2 M			Minnesota		"	11
43 Thomas Jones	25 M			England		"	12
44 Elizabeth "	24 F			Pa		"	13
45 James "	5 M			"		"	14
46 George B. "	3 M			"		"	15
47 Thomas "	1 M			"		"	16
48 John Nordant	19 M			"		"	17
49 John C. Shiloh	42 M			"		"	18
50 Eliza "	23 F			"		"	19
51 David "	18 M			Pa		"	20
52 Samuel "	17 M			"		"	21
53 Polly "	14 F			Pa		"	22
54 Thomas "	10 M			Ill		"	23
55 John "	8 M			Pa		"	24
56 Louisa "	6 F			Pa		"	25
57 Eliza "	4 F			"		"	26
58 Peter Walker	1 M			Minnesota		"	27
59 Elizabeth "	61 F			N.Y.		"	28
60 William "	26 M			"		"	29
61 William "	17 M			"		"	30
62 Charles "	14 M			Ill		"	31
63 Alfred "	10 M			Pa		"	32
64 Henry A. "	3 M			"		"	33
65 Mary A. "	15 F			Pa		"	34
66 Thomas "	1 M			"		"	35
67 "	1 M			"		"	36
68 "	1 M			"		"	37
69 "	1 M			"		"	38
70 "	1 M			"		"	39
71 "	1 M			"		"	40

▲ Excerpt of 1857 census for Olmsted County



▲ Photo by Enayet Raheem on Unsplash



▲ *Dee Log Cabin, ca. 1905-1910*
[located at 428 West First Street
(Mayo Park area)].



▲ *Dee Log Cabin 2020*

THE WILLIAM DEE CABIN HAS A NEW ROOF!

No roof lasts forever, especially a log cabin type that was intended to be expedient and temporary. The new cedar shingle roof will keep water—a wood structures worst enemy—from entering from above. The cabin has sported a variety of different roof types over its more than 150-year lifespan. Historic photos show aluminum (in 1988), wood shingle (1961-72), and tar-covered standing seam (1905-10). For the replaced roof, the cedar shakes were likely split by hand or by a vintage machine.

Long-time admirers of the cabin know that William Dee built it in what is now downtown Rochester at West 6th Street in June 1862. Dee arrived in Rochester in 1855 from Joliet, Illinois but was an Irish immigrant born in 1835 in Tipperary County. On the day construction began, his wife, Bridget McKeen Dee, gave birth to their first of five children. According to William Dee, he and his new family occupied the dwelling from June 1862 to the fall of 1866. When the cabin made its first move, from its downtown location to Mayo Park in 1911, the question of who built the primitive home became a brotherly dispute. In a June 30, 1911 Post and Record article, William Dee's brother,

Michael, claimed "I bought a tract of land where is now First street and built the log cabin for my brother. There were four of us who did the labor. I never occupied it myself." A week later, the newspaper published a letter from William, which stated: "Certainly the weight of years must have blurred my brother Michael's memory, as his statements are very much in error. The connection he had with [the cabin] was that he hauled one load of logs and helped raise the building with many others."

What is certain is that the Rochester chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) championed saving the cabin, ensuring its relocation from First Street to Mayo Park. After fifty years at that location, the pioneer dwelling was moved once again, this time next to the historical society's then-home at Third Avenue Southwest. In 1972 it made its final move to its current location.

We thank the Rochester Chapter of the NSDAR for their long-time stewardship of the Dee Cabin, including a generous gift that helped put a new roof on an old dwelling.

“

Woman should be emancipated from the bonds imposed by fashion, false education and blind prejudice and brought on to a higher, nobler plane of thought and labor.

– Sarah Burger Stearns, November 7, 1869



The History Center's centennial exhibit, **"THE ONWARD MARCH OF SUFFRAGE,"** is coming in June!

think
BANK



▲ Generously sponsored by Think Bank, People's Energy Cooperative, and The League of Women Voters of Minnesota.

THERE IS NO HISTORY WITHOUT YOU!

In 2019 your History Center earned almost \$87,000 from admissions to Maywood mansion during the regular season (March-October). In 2020 we were forced to cancel the entire regular season due to the pandemic. That, along with other program cancellations, has created a substantial gap in our funding.

If you are in a position to give, now is a critical time to show your support with a financial gift. As Dr. Will said: "The ills of today must not cloud the horizons of tomorrow." We have a vision and plans to create a revitalized History Center. But we need your help during these challenging times.

You can donate securely on our website, www.olmstedhistory.com or contact **Wayne Gannaway**, executive director, for more information at execdirector@olmstedhistory.com or **507-258-3284**.



HISTORY CENTER
OF OLMSTED COUNTY



2020 EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Please check our website and Facebook regularly as schedule is subject to change in the event of public health concerns.

- **Annual Members Meeting** ▶ June 24—watch for additional details on time and agenda
- **Living History Fair** ▶ July 18, 9am–5pm and July 19, 10am–5pm
- **Rooster Home Games** ▶ July 18 and July 19, 10:30am and 2:30pm
- **History Center Booth at the Olmsted County Fair** ▶ July 27-August 02
- **Summer Day Camp** ▶ July 29, 10am–2pm
- **Days of Yesteryear** ▶ August 8 & 9, 9am–5pm
- **Roosters Home Game** ▶ August 8 at 2pm
- **Oakwood Cemetery Walk** ▶ September 26, 11am–3pm (rain date: September 27)
- **Harvest Moon Fall Festival** ▶ October 15, 1pm–3pm
- **Creepy Doll Cocktail Party** ▶ October (*see website for date and time*)
- **Halloween Trick or Treating at Historic Buildings** ▶ October 31, 1pm–3pm
- **Women's History Circle** ▶ Meets on the fourth Sunday of every month
- **Olmsted County Genealogical Society** ▶ Meets the second Thursday of every month
- **Rochester Civil War Roundtable** ▶ Meets the second Wednesday of every month

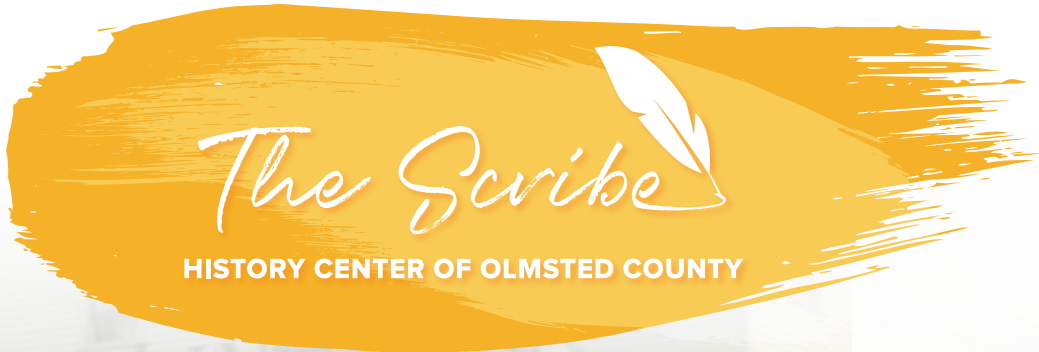


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◀ *Picture postcard of the Lincoln Hotel ca. 1900s. The hotel was located just west of 11th Avenue and Second Street SW, one block east of St. Marys Hospital. This hotel later turned into a Pest House, or a home for people with communicable diseases, and was in use as such during the 1918 flu pandemic.*