

Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator
for the week of March 3 – 9, 2019

March is Women's History Month, and this March I hope to focus on the centennial of women in the United States gaining the right to vote and to serve in office. Specifically we'll look at Vernon County women running for and serving in elected office.

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving full suffrage to women, was approved by the U.S. Senate in June of 1919, and then sent to the states to be ratified. Wisconsin was the first state to ratify the amendment, also in June of 1919. (Note that the amendment didn't actually apply to all women in the U.S. at that time, because some minority groups were denied citizenship, and others were denied access to the polls.)

Looking through Vernon County's "Official Directories" from the 1920's and 30's, we can find several women starting to serve as clerks and treasurers. Luna Gosling served as Clerk of Circuit Court for about 10 years during that time period. Flora Dake served as Harmony Town Clerk, and Minnie Vance Flikkie served as Sterling Town Clerk. Alice Webster, and then Maud Chute, both served as Hillsboro Village Clerk. Mabel Danielson served in the village of Readstown as treasurer, and later as clerk. And Ella Hufford served in the village of Viola as treasurer.

Vernon County women of the 1920's and 30's also made a place for themselves as educational officials. In the past we have talked about Maud Neprud, the first Vernon County woman elected to public office, who served as County Superintendent of Schools from 1917 to 1919. Later, Nell Mahoney filled that office for some time, and then Elsie Thompson was elected in 1938. Women also served on the Board of the Vernon County Training School, or Normal School, including Nell Mahoney, Etta Gorman, Matilda Rentz, and Mattie Seiler.

Next week we'll have more Vernon County stories for Women's History Month.



Luna Gosling, Vernon County's first female Clerk of Court, who served from 1923 to 1934.