

# WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## News Release

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## St. Croix Valley Business Women's Open House at the Warden's House Museum

Stillwater, Minn. – The St. Croix Valley Business Women's organization will host an open house at the *Warden's House Museum* in Stillwater on Sunday, April 25, 2010 from Noon to 4:00 p.m.

The open house is free and open to the public!

Join us as we celebrate the start of another season. Stop by the museum to learn more about the history of the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) and see the season's new exhibits. Each exhibit will focus on the theme of "place," a theme that will be carried throughout all Society activities in 2010.

The first exhibit, *A Place of Mourning: Victorian Mourning Traditions*, was created by WCHS volunteer and University of Oklahoma graduate student Melissa Sterling. The exhibit will show how people viewed death in the Victorian Era (1837-1901). On display will be various mourning artifacts: women's shrouds, mourning hats and veils, and a sampling of postmortem photography. Visitors will learn what life was like for a widow in the nineteenth century.

The second exhibit, *Prison Art: Creativity in a Place of Confinement*, will discuss the creative outlet used by many prison inmates to get through the long days of confinement. Several artifacts, including a horse bridle, bookstand, wooden doll cradle, and wooden goblets, from the WCHS collection will be on display. In addition to these items, WCHS will borrow a sewing box from the Northfield Historical Society. The box was allegedly

made by notorious outlaw, and Stillwater Prison inmate, Cole Younger. Also featured will be the poetry of inmate John Carter, a man who “won his freedom with his verse.”

The third and final new exhibit, Drawings of Place: Architectural Plans for the Minnesota Territorial Prison, will discuss architectural drawings and the process behind the creation of early blueprints. One of three sets of architectural plans submitted for the construction of the prison will be on display. In addition to these plans, architectural drawings for a house in Stillwater and a one-room school in Washington County will also be on display.

No guided tours will be given, but all rooms will be open for viewing. Volunteers and board members will be on hand to answer questions. No admission will be charged for the open house, but donations are appreciated. All proceeds will go toward the operation of the Warden’s House Museum.

The Warden’s House Museum is located at 602 North Main Street in Stillwater, Minnesota.

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*Washington County Historical Society collects, preserves, and disseminates the history of the county and state of Minnesota.*

*Founded in 1934, the Washington County Historical Society is a private, donor-supported, nonprofit organization with more than 700 individual, family, and business members. WCHS is supported by individual gifts, memberships, earned income, and foundation grants. For more information, please visit [www.wchsmn.org](http://www.wchsmn.org).*