



[The Flight](#) | [Flight Timeline](#) | [Spirit of St. Louis](#) | [Spirit Designer](#) | [Spirit Reproduction](#) | [Spirit Log](#) | [Guggenheim Tour](#)
[Charles Bio](#) | [Anne Bio](#) | [Timeline](#) | [Maps](#) | [Airmail Pioneer](#) | [Emergency Jumps](#) | [Gliders](#) | [Orient](#) | [My Lindbergh Story](#)
[Contribution to Rocketry](#) | [Contribution to Cardiology](#) | [Contribution to Conservation](#) | [America First](#) | [WWII Pilot](#) | [FBI Files](#)
[NY Times Articles](#) | [Kidnapping](#) | [Movie Clips](#) | [Audio Clips](#) | [Music Clips](#) | [Lindy Documents](#) | [Lindy Pictures](#) | [Lindy Paintings](#)
[Lesson Plans](#) | [Awards](#) | [Lindy Links](#) | [Boyhood Home](#) | [Press Releases & Info](#) | [Memorabilia](#) | [Search This Site](#)
[Have a Question?](#) | [About Developer](#) | [Purchase Books & Videos](#) | [Historic Aviation Store](#)
[Lindbergh Discussion Center](#) | [Home](#)

You are here: [Home](#) | [My Lindbergh Story](#) | The Lindbergh Legacy by Charles A. (Chuck) Stone

The Lindbergh Legacy by Charles A. (Chuck) Stone

Lindbergh Historic Home and Interpretive Center

The Lindbergh Historic Home and Interpretive Center is located on the west side of the Mississippi River at the edge of the Little Falls city limits. It is connected to Lindbergh State Park, located across the road. While the Historic Home and Interpretive Center, encompassing around seven acres of wooded land, is controlled by the State Historical Society, the Park, itself, is under the management of the MN Department of Natural Resources. Both entities operated at different levels of staffing and public service, depending on the season of the year.

Under normal conditions, the Historic Site was staffed for public visitation from May through October with the assistance of seasonal employees under the supervision of a year-round manager. From November through April, the Site Manager looked after the safety and security of the property, worked in cooperation with the home office on program and exhibit upgrading issues, and served as a year-round link with the Minnesota Historical Society and the general public.

In actual practice, during my tenure, the Site was open for visitation and guided tours of the historic home, seven days a week from 10:00 to 5:00. The September and October schedule varied, depending upon the state of the U.S. and State of MN economy and funds available for Historic Sites operation. Initially, into the early 1980s, the site was staffed and open on a daily basis in September and October. As funds became more limited, we moved to an open on weekends only basis during the fall season. As the decade progressed, there was a time when I was ordered to close the doors after Labor Day, due to lack of funding.

With a great many senior citizens, the fall season was an ideal time to be on the move. School children were in school and senior citizens had less competition for lodgings and other services. During these times, though officially closed, I found them pulling on the front door of the Lindbergh Interpretive Center and I could not bear to say "we are closed."

During those periodic funding droughts, minus most or all of my support staff, I found myself hosting visitors in the Interpretive Center, alone, almost seven days a week. This was not a problem for me, as I was loving every minute of it. Our visitors were almost invariably filled with nostalgic memories of the late 1920's and early 1930's, had vivid memories relating to the Lindbergh History, and wanted to remind themselves of where their life paths crossed those of the Lindbergh



The boyhood home of Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr. Little Falls, Minnesota

Family.

When I first stepped in the door of the Interpretive Center, there was no parting manager to check me out on what was where and how things worked. The snow was drifting through the parking lot and clogged the walking path leading down to the Interpretive Center, buried in the side of a steep hill, located on the banks of the Mississippi River. I found a snow blower, got it running and proceeded to blow out the path. In short order the blower blew a rod right through the crankcase of the machine and I began to learn how to process emergency purchase orders through the MHS and State of MN funds management system. The relative quiet of the late winter season gave me time to become familiar with the various elements of my job and the methods I would use to work with my supervisors at the MHS Headquarters.

The month of April arrived all too soon and my recent efforts to locate, and learn from past seasonal employees and benefit from their counsel and advice began to pay off. I went through the usual advertising, interviewing and hiring of the best qualified applicants available and we were soon ready for the May First opening. For much of my time as Site



The Manager of the Lindbergh Historic Site in his spacious 8' x 10' office. Small but with a great view.

Manager, visitors could come and go without buying a ticket. It was such a pleasure to offer this remarkable historic site facility, with its most remarkable history, as a gift to the general public. We did have a museum store where they could invest their money, if they so chose. Visitation at the Center involved seeing a Lindbergh history film in the theater and then touring self-guided exhibits that began in the lobby, leading up a couple of ramps to a complex of exhibit halls on the second floor. This was followed by our invitation for guests to walk over to the Historic Home for a guided tour. Having rehired as many experienced seasonal staff members as possible, we were off to an effective, harmonious and meaningful operation from the start. I was filling out my knowledge of Lindbergh history as rapidly as I could, while learning to take care of administrative tasks, assuring the safety of buildings, property and visitors. It was a joy, and in all truth, if I had just won the lottery, I would have done it for free. This wasn't quite the case though. My wife and I have never invested in lottery tickets.

As the summer wore on, and I had an opportunity to become familiar with the grounds, as well as the buildings, I realized that it would be great to have a Nature Walk that would provide our guests an alternative way to move from the Center to the Home. There was a lot of work involved in a project of that scope, work that I was not staffed to do. By this time, I had been authorized a contract maintenance worker who could put in a specific number of hours each month doing a variety of maintenance tasks. Through local Job Service personnel, I learned that they had a variety of young (adult?) men and women who needed work along with various forms of rehabilitation training. As I recall, I accepted responsibility for four of these individuals, all women, to work on our Nature Walk project every week, under the secondary supervision of our maintenance man. As the summer progressed a trail was cut that took a visitor from the Center, along the banks of the Mississippi, below the Historic Home, then providing a choice of a short loop to the House for a tour, or a longer loop down to the Weyerhaeuser Museum, next door, and then looping back to the House. It was wonderful to see how this working group developed a bond of mutual interest, friendship and purpose. The trail was covered with bark chips, donated by the local paper mill debarking plant, and was soon finished. As the years passed, we began a new tradition of hosting a special Mother's Day Nature Walk along the river with one of our guides lecturing along the way. It is in use, even today.

As I moved through the Interpretive Center, I was frustrated by the amount of blank wall space that seemed to be crying out for something to share with the passing public. To deal with this on an interim basis, over time, I conducted a number of art shows where area artists could show off their works. The art openings were designed to be public social events with food



The Lindbergh Interpretive Center as it was in the mid-1980s.

and refreshments available. These went over very well and the local public, that had gradually become apathetic regarding this historic site on their doorstep, found themselves with renewed interest.

In the Spring Season of 1981, as I was making preparations to attend the May 21 Lindbergh Fund events in New York, the upcoming Memorial Day and memories of my Uncle Herb caused me to write and submit for public use "A REMINISCENT MEMORIAL DAY LETTER TO UNCLE HERB. I have reproduced this letter for your review. [View Memorial Day Letter](#)

A remarkable lady by the name of Laura Jane Musser

This was particularly true of a remarkable lady by the name of Laura Jane Musser. She and I had become acquainted soon after our arrival in Little Falls, through our work in support of the Weyerhaeuser Museum and other arts-related projects. Laura Jane was the daughter of the Musser Family who were partners with the Weyerhaeusers in the Logging-Lumbering boom of the late 1800's and early 1900's. She was the only remaining representative of that group and was owner of all of the original Musser - Weyerhaeuser home properties in Little Falls. She had an extended history of philanthropy relating to all forms of the arts in the local area, Minnesota and, to some extent, Nationally. When she learned I had been hired as the Historic Site Manager, she would periodically ask me to drop by and brief her on our progress and special needs that had been identified that were not in the MHS budget for our site.

[Note: As I write this, Laura Jane's property has been made available in public service under the supervision and management of the City of Little Falls, If you would like to learn more about this subject, please click here to jump over to the Linden Hill web site and return through use of your back button feature. the URL is: <http://www.lindenhill.com>]

Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation

At the time of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Lindbergh's flight from New York to Paris, The Charles A. Lindbergh Fund was established. This organization still exists with the name changed to the Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation. If you are interested in the Foundation's history and objectives, you can skip over to their web site by clicking on this URL: <http://www.lindberghfoundation.org> By the time I became involved with the Lindbergh Historic Site, the Lindbergh Foundation was picking up speed in their stated purpose of promoting a balance between technology and the environment.

Lindbergh's original JN-4D Jenny

I believe it was late winter of 1981 that I mentioned to Laura Jane that I thought it beneficial for me to attend the Lindbergh Fund Annual Awards Banquet in New York, scheduled in late May. I had mentioned that if I got that far from home, it would also be productive for me to go to Washington and do some Lindbergh research at the Air and Space Museum. She volunteered to pay the bills and I was able to attend the Banquet, and visit and overnight with George C. Dade, the person responsible for locating and restoring to flying condition Lindbergh's original JN-4D Jenny. George had visited the historic site in the summer of 1981 to give the Interpretive Center an autographed, framed photograph of the restored Jenny. While in New York, George, after inviting me to sleep over at his home, took me to visit the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Long Island where the Jenny was on display. That evening, we attended the banquet together and he put me on an airliner to Washington the next day. This was the beginning of an ongoing relationship that took a few interesting twists.

I collected a considerable number of photos at the Air and Space Museum that were added to the negatives I had been accumulating through my photo copy processing at the MHS archives and other sources. By late 1981, my collection was sufficiently extensive that I was increasingly tempted to find ways to add stories to some of the empty wall spaces at the Interpretive Center.

Typically, major exhibits built for the MHS historic sites were contracted out at considerable expense. The visions I was having involved smaller, relatively untold stories, that I could carry off using my own shop facilities. When hired, I had told the MHS staff that my shop was available to them and all they had to do was pay for materials used. Over time, this became increasingly true as I built display stands, wood frames to hang video projection equipment, and a variety of displays and



George Dade presents commemorative, framed, document and Lindbergh Jenny Restoration Crew Photo to Lindbergh Historic Site Manager, Chuck Stone, Summer 1981.

frames for special displays. It was truly a labor of love on my part.

Display of Lindbergh memorabilia

Later in the summer of 1982, the Director of the MHS called me and asked if I could help him out of a jam. He and I had been working with the Lindbergh Fund to bring the Jenny from New York to Minneapolis where it would be hung in the atrium of the Northwestern National Bank, along with a display of Lindbergh memorabilia and a collection of displays relating to different elements of the Lindbergh, and the Foundation's formation history. In this process, he had promised the Fund's Chair of their Board of Directors that MHS would provide the exhibit at MHS cost. Due to a state budget shuffle, these funds were no longer available. He asked me if I could design and build the exhibit, with the larger eight foot high mounting panels being fabricated by the Foundation resources. I immediately agreed to do the project, as it gave me an outlet for my drive to use my newly acquired negatives and information.



George Dade's Lindbergh Jenny Restoration Crew

For the thirteen weeks, I managed the Historic Site with major assistance from my loyal and talented staff of remarkably resourceful and capable women, designed and received the approval for the exhibit plan, produced and mounted the enlarged photos. This meant days, evenings, weekends of continuous effort. There were times when I was falling asleep in my photo lab. The related text was printed by a new kind of machine called a computer provided through the Lindbergh Fund resources.

Disassembled Jenny

On a Friday night, before the scheduled show opening on the Monday before Thanksgiving, I loaded the exhibit materials into our Chevy Love Pickup and headed for Minneapolis in a real snow storm. I recall that the piles of snow had covered many of the directional signs, making it even harder for a country boy to find his way into the big city. Arriving at the bank, I parked next to a large semi that contained the disassembled Jenny. I joined the crew, hauling wings, tail assembly, fuselage and smaller parts up the escalator to the second floor that would house our exhibit. We worked on into the night and eventually, with my own truck unloaded, fell into my bed at our daughter's home in south Minneapolis. It was soon back to work for the entire team. The Jenny crew came with the Jenny from New York. These were a few of the 40+ volunteers who had actually restored the aircraft in George Dade's remodeled basement under his leadership. We gave them a lift when needed, but concentrated on getting our exhibit mounted on the birch door panels that were being assembled under the guidance of a room layout manager.



The Lindbergh Jenny Exhibit opening at the Northwestern National Bank, Minneapolis, MN, the Monday before Thanksgiving, 1982

Thanksgiving evening, 1982

The exhibit opened on Monday morning with participants of the Lindbergh Family, the Lindbergh Foundation, and visiting dignitaries from around the U.S. It looked just smashing, as you can see by the color photo of the exhibit, as it was just before Thanksgiving evening, 1982. Exhausted and thankful, I drove back to Little Falls to join my wife for the Thanksgiving celebration. That evening, well fed, we sat down to watch the evening news. What was the main story?

IT WAS THAT THE NORTHWESTERN NATIONAL BANK BUILDING WAS ON FIRE!!!

Jenny had gone up in smoke?

I sat in my chair in total disbelief. The building looked like a torch from about the 6th to the top floors (about 17, as I remember). The announcer told the world that the Jenny had gone up in smoke, along with the entire bank contents. After a few phone calls, I agreed to meet the Lindbergh Fund folks at the bank the next morning. We got together, on schedule, and the Fire Chief, on site, took us on a tour through the building that could be safely toured. There was Lindbergh's

Volkswagen, on the first floor, intact, though standing in a couple of inches of water. Up on the atrium level, 2nd floor, his motorcycle was intact, our exhibits were intact, all standing in an inch or more of water. Hanging from the third floor ceiling was the Jenny, ready to fly away with just a few drops of water on her. As we toured above and saw office machines melted into blobs of metal, we realized what must have happened. There was a fire stop floor at the sixth floor level. The fire had been started, supposedly by children playing with a gas torch they had found, in the wreckage of a building being torn down next door. The fire had started there, blasted across the alley through the banks windows at the sixth floor level and set everything from the sixth floor on up on fire. The air feeding the fire above, sucked fresh cool air in through out exhibit areas. Water put on the fire, ran down the stairwells and elevator shafts.

We had lucked out, big time!

A very dynamic man, Don Padilla, a Public Relations Corporation partner and member of the Lindbergh Fund Board of Directors, created and coordinated an alternate plan in a matter of hours. He made a deal with the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Airport Commission to move the entire exhibit out to the main concourse of the airport. We pitched in, removed the airplane, exhibits, the works, and took it out to the airport and within a few days the entire exhibit had been recreated.

Our friends from New York survived the experience without a single heart attack and we all became fast friends in the process. The exhibit remained in the airport for at least six months and was viewed by millions of people as they came and went, by air, through that location. The Jenny may currently be viewed at the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Long Island, NY.

One of the Jenny restoration crewmembers, chose to build a scale model of the Spirit of St. Louis, fly it to Minnesota, drive to Little Falls and personally help me install it for display in one of our upper exhibit rooms as a gift.. Through the generosity and dedication I experienced in so many different ways, on a regular basis, I was increasingly aware of the deep and positive impact the Lindbergh Legacy had on our entire Twentieth Century culture. What a gift it was to me to spend a decade of my later life, striving to learn more about it and share it with others.

While this was going on, other events were transpiring through the growing publicity that was coming to the Lindbergh Historic Site. A wonderful man and award winning radio control model builder, from Hudson, WI, offered us his prize-winning JN-4D Jenny flying scale model with a six foot wing span as a gift. He had almost cracked it up while getting in some flying time and decided it was too valuable to eventually end up in a heap. With permission from the home office, we accepted his gift. He delivered it to us and helped hang it in our upper exhibit area. Soon after an ageing model builder from the Dakotas, a man who built Lockheed aircraft during WW II, offered us two scale models. A large authentic model of the Lockheed Sirius, on floats, and a smaller model of a P-38 WW II twin engine fighter. He too chose not go to his grave without giving some longevity and continuing value to the products of his dedication and fine craftsmanship.

Through the financial support of Laura Jane Musser, two Little Falls artists of great reputation were commissioned to create conceptual art works relating to the Lindbergh History. An oil painting, by Wesley Sod, of the Spirit of St. Louis flying the Atlantic at wave-tops, commissioned and prepared for display. It was also converted to a scanmural at least twelve feet wide that we installed in the upper exhibit area to solve an intolerable problem we had with malfunctioning slide projectors that attempted, haltingly, to play the same role. Paintings by Charles Kapsner, relating to the successive generations of the Lindbergh Family and a triptych combining three related paintings into a single display were soon being enjoyed by our visiting public. Both Wes and Chuck did additional works of art that were either on display in the Center or for sale as reproductions in the Museum Store. The use of conceptual art in this historic setting was a controversial issue in the halls of the MHS, but they were kind enough to permit us to make these adjustments to the satisfaction of Laura Jane, our staff and the general public. If you would like to see a sample of more recent work by Charles Kapsner, please click on this URL and then return to this story: <http://www.buonfresco.com>

People who had played a direct role in the Lindbergh History



The Lindbergh Jenny exhibit, reborn within 48 hours, at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport



L to R: Anne Morrow Lindbergh, daughter Reeve Lindbergh, Chuck Stone, and Elizabeth Lindbergh Brown, discuss the Spirit of St. Louis model display.

From my earliest participation in the work at the Lindbergh Historic Site, I had strived to tape the recollections of as many people who had played a direct role in the Lindbergh History as I possibly could. This had included Lindbergh's half-sister Eva Lindbergh Christi Spaeth and Alex Johnson, one of his, for-real, boyhood playmates. One day we were visited by Retired USAF General Hal Gray, a pilot that had flown P-38s with Lindbergh in the South Pacific. I sat with him on a bench along the Mississippi River on a beautiful summer day, recording his memories. Sharing his memories brought laughter and tears to his eyes and voice. Getting to know him was very special, among the many gifts I enjoyed.

Chance to meet and greet Jimmy Doolittle

One of our more memorable experiences occurred in the spring of 1984. Nell and I chose to travel to Houston, TX, for the Lindbergh Fund annual banquet and awards ceremony. Except for my original trip, paid for by Laura Jane, these excursions were very much at our own expense. Arriving at the Hotel in Houston, the first thing that happened was to have a chance to meet and greet Jimmy Doolittle, a main speaker at the event. Later on, we had the chance to meet the six living original astronauts and hear their own words in various presentations. We had the opportunity to present a private slide presentation to the Lindbergh Family and Fund Board of Directors, touring and talking about the Lindbergh Home and Center that was warmly received.

Anne had written the speech on the plane

One of our best memories was that Nell had the opportunity to help Anne Morrow Lindbergh out of a jam in getting her speech typed. She was subbing for her daughter, Reeve, who had to remain on the east coast, caring for an ill child. Anne had written the speech on the plane, enroute to Houston, and needed to have it typed. For a variety of security reasons, they could not find a way to get the speech typed until one of their members said that Nell had already found a hotel typewriter and typed a speech for another needy participant. They asked Nell if she would do it, and naturally she said yes. She was quickly closeted in a quiet room with Ann where they could discuss Anne's draft of the material. After more than 30 to 40 minutes of close coordination, Nell rushed back to our hotel room and typed up a storm, finishing just in time to step out the door, hand the speech to Anne as she strode by with her companions on their way to a press conference. Her speech, during the banquet, was just great! About a month later, Nell received a letter from Anne, written on the pages of her book "Gift from the Sea," expressing her appreciation.



Chuck Stone, left, with airport manager in front of a replica of one of the early aircraft used by Northwest Airlines

Historic Home was thoroughly renovated in the early 1980s

During my tenure at the Historic Site, the main entrance lobby area space proved to be a remarkably flexible tool to deal with unique hospitality challenges. In the early years, it was the opening gallery setting for art shows. We hosted uncounted catered dinners in that space. Our guests for these, on different occasions, included members of the Lindbergh Family, the Lindbergh Fund Board of Directors, busloads of senior citizens who would come by appointment in the winter months for an extended visit from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on weekdays. The Historic Home was thoroughly renovated in the early 1980s, resulting in a slight change of emphasis in our manner of interpreting the Lindbergh History. During this same period, the MHS Commandant's House at Fort Snelling was destroyed by a fire set by an arsonist. With MHS support, we quickly created a 24-hour security patrol to protect the Lindbergh Historic Home. As part of this effort, we installed the first monitored security alarm system in both the house and center.

Little Falls community and the Historic Site

As the years went by, our relationship with the work of the Lindbergh Fund became increasingly close. They began to plan special educational gatherings in Little Falls to facilitate their sharing the stories of their grant awardees who were identified at their annual banquets. Numerous individuals, who had demonstrated creativity and progress in finding a meaningful balance between technology and the environment were awarded cash gifts amounting to \$10,580.00 (The original cost of the Spirit of St. Louis). While these grant amounts were not large gifts, they were symbolic of the quality of the individual's or a team's quality of research and work. Often this recognition would lead to an infusion of additional research funds from other sources. The Lindbergh Fund (now Foundation) has continued this growing relationship with the Little Falls community and the Historic Site. As I write this memoir, the Lindbergh Foundation, the Community of Little Falls and the MHS are

preparing for a major celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Lindbergh's landing in Paris, here in Little Falls. The Interpretive Center is currently undergoing renovation and expansion and planning committees are at work to create a major series of events that will play out in the summer of the year 2002.

1983 Air Fair

In 1983 one of our special activities over the summer months was to conduct what we called an "Air Fair" event. This was not an air show, as such, but a gathering of people and machines for a relaxing day together at the airport to show off a variety of types of aircraft, enjoy bus shuttle trips to the Lindbergh Historic Site. We did this once again a few years later with great success. Back in early 1985, plans were developed through the combined efforts of the Fund and MHS to commemorate the naming of the Minneapolis - Saint Paul International Airport Terminal facility after Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr.

During the planning phase of this event, I received word that the owner of a variety of movie props was ready to sell a replica of the Spirit of St. Louis, previously used in ground shots for shooting the film "The Spirit of St. Louis" starring Jimmy Stewart. I passed this news on to my supervisors and the Lindbergh Fund staff. They soon had identified funds for me to travel to Los Angeles to check out the situation. I flew to LA and soon found the replica perched in between the trusses of Dennis Metosinka's Antique Auto Display Room. This replica was not structured to actually fly, it just looked like the Spirit of St. Louis. The flying version, used in the film, was already on display in the St. Louis Airport. The price for this ground-bound version was about \$10,000, as I recall. The deal was closed and arrangements made to truck it to the Twin Cities. I flew back and Don Padilla was already lining up volunteers in the aircraft repair business to do some restoration work on it, on arrival. This became a display for the main event, hanging in the concourse of the airport terminal. This was another occasion that brought members of the Lindbergh Family and a variety of dignitaries to Minnesota and on to Little Falls for a catered dinner in our lobby and a quick tour of the historic site. The replica has been relocated with the terminal building a few times and more recently received a major restoration job. It can still be seen by the millions of people moving through the Twin Cities International Airport. This is just one of the multitude of wonderful opportunities that came our way through my employment with the Minnesota Historical Society.



The EAA Spirit of St. Louis Replica makes a pass over Le Bourget Airfield at the time of the unveiling of a Lindbergh bronze statue, "The Boy and the Man" on the airfield grounds. May 21, 1987.

Paris, May 1987

In May, 1987, after developing some exhibit materials for the Lindbergh Fund, Nell and I flew to Paris in order to participate in their annual awards presentation event. It was a remarkable experience in every way. Following that, we headed for Edinburgh, Scotland, where we visited for 10 days with Bill and Cathie Fraser. Cathie and Nell had been pen pals since 1937, but had never had a chance to meet. Bill and Cathie toured us through as many parts of Scotland that one could squeeze into a 10 day visit. It was a heartwarming experience. Bill has since passed on, but we remain in close touch with Cathie.

Golden Deeds Award

The rewards and satisfactions that were mine through opportunities to work with the Minnesota Historical Society, The Lindbergh Fund and the community of Little Falls are almost beyond count. In April of 1988 I received the shock of my life to learn that the local Exchange Club had selected me to be the awardee for their annual "Golden Deeds Award." For a number of years, I had enjoyed celebrating the Exchange Club's presentation of this award to a succession of people that I truly admired, some who had been role models for me for many years. To be recognized in this manner, for doing work that I loved to do, was almost overwhelming. This is not to say that there were not stresses and strains along the way, but serious work, well worth doing, is bound to

test and stretch those involved. An example of this follows.

In the summer of 1988, the MHS staff asked me to add the temporary management of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, for three months, to my list of duties. My Lindbergh Site staff was experienced, motivated and loyal to MHS, each other and the general public. Knowing they could carry on with minimal support from me, I agreed to do it. From Memorial Day to Labor Day of that summer, it was an early morning one and a half hour drive over to Mille Lacs Lake and a late evening return. This proved to be a most remarkable experience in management and human relations. During this time period I made many very good friends in the Indian community.



Bill, Nell and Cathie, touring Edinburgh on the first day of our visit. Their home was in Callendar, a small community in central Scotland, north west of Edinburgh.

Most memorable, on arrival, I had remembered that they had needed, and never obtained, air conditioning for their Museum Store and Exhibit facilities. As I got my feet on the ground, I shared this need with Laura Jane Musser. She was a loyal fan of the Indian community and immediately

expressed an interest in helping to fund the installation of air conditioning. We worked out an arrangement where she would split the cost with the MHS. The job was soon done by contractors that had been my salvation many times over at the Lindbergh Site. The Indian community was so pleased that they held a special dinner and pow-wow in Laura Jane's honor and did she ever enjoy it. This celebration came near the close of the summer season and I returned to my regular duties at the Lindbergh Site.

Laura Jane died very suddenly soon after. She had been advised of her need for heart surgery, but had declined the opportunity. This wonderful woman left a legacy of generous funding and encouragement of projects in the Little Falls area, the State of Minnesota and around the Nation. Her estate continues this process through the Musser Trust. I would estimate in our decade of work together, Laura Jane invested more than \$90,000 in a variety of what would be unfunded projects that related to my work. Her support multiplied my own productivity and gave me encouragement in so many ways. Wherever her spirit may soar, I suspect that seeing her property used in continuing public service as a Retreat and Conference Center, brings a sense of both joy and satisfaction. She was a truly complex, brilliant, somewhat handicapped, individual with a generous caring heart that truly cared about people of all races, throughout the world. She was both a challenge and a gift to all who knew her and a blessing to the multitudes of people who didn't even know she ever existed.

Lindbergh History and Legacy

As 1999 came around, I was nearing my 65th birthday and had developed a longing to carry out a few projects that were out of the range of my work with the MHS. I had some surgery in the spring of the year that made my life more comfortable and day-to-day health more predictable. This was the year that the MHS determined that the Lindbergh Site would become a "pay" site. This meant selling tickets for what we had been giving away for so many years. As hard as it was for me to accept this, I realized that in the existing governmental and economic climates, there was no alternative. Our annual visitor counts usually varied from 25,000 to 35,000 per year. This is no record-setting total, compared to many National Parks, historic Sites and Monuments. To me, though, what was significant, was that refreshment or learning from scratch, the Lindbergh History and Legacy, that had made such a



As Don Padilla, left, conducts the ceremony, Little Falls Mayor, Pat Spence, presents a quilted wall-hanging, made by Little Falls children, to Le Bourget Mayor, Andre Cadot.

deep impression on our visitors.

In spite of the strange and sometimes distorted stories that are floated about the Lindbergh History, in my view, it is a case where "FAMILIARITY BREEDS RESPECT."

Anne Morrow Lindbergh passed away

Anne Morrow Lindbergh passed away in February, 2001. Hearing of her passing, I was moved to write a letter to her as a memorial. That letter is published and you may access it by [clicking here](#).

Retired in January of 1990

I retired on schedule in January of 1990. My replacement, Don Westfall was well suited for his work and he continues in that position at this writing. I will always consider my eleven years of service with the Minnesota Historical Society as some of the most enjoyable and productive years of my life. But, this was no time for extended nostalgia, as I had a plan of action for the next decade that burned within me for exploration and testing

Reprinted with permission from Chuck Stone, Little Falls, MN,

<http://www.rb-29.net/HTML/biomaster/biocastone/biostone/13.01biostn.htm>



Right: On a bright, but cold, wintery day in January, Nell and I were entertained at the Interpretive Center by representatives from the community of Little Falls and the MHS home office. It was time to move on.

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