

Congrats
to the

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class of 25

Pages 5-7

InsidethisIssue

Northern Celebrations	2
It Was Front Page News / Legal Notices	3
Women's Club Donations / Prairie Fare	4
Velva Class of 2025 Graduates	5-7
From the Bleachers	8
From the Students	9
She's Not From Around Here / McHenry Co. 4H.....	10
Classifieds / Business Directory	11
DA Class of 2025 / Good Luck to the Aggies	12

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VelvaareaVoice

\$1.50

Thursday, May 22, 2025 • Volume 26, Issue 21 • Velva, North Dakota 58790

A Reminder of Home for the Velva Class of 2025

Reporter Heather Tudor

This year’s graduating class had the opportunity to pick out a quilt of their choosing as a reminder of “home” after they go off to college/begin their work journey in life. Approximately seventeen ladies in our community worked for months to piece together quilts, some quilt pieces were cut several years ago and finally put into a quilt this year, and forty-three lucky Velva graduates will get to snuggle the quilt and remember memories of home.

- Submitted Photo



Remembering A Velva Veteran and Homesteader On Memorial Day

Submitted by Kathy Holte

George Washington Strong was one of the early pioneers of the Mouse River Valley and a veteran of the Civil War. He was born in Florence, St. Joseph County, Michigan on February 5, 1839, where he lived until 1855, when he moved with his parent to Chickasaw County, Iowa. He was united in marriage to Miss Harriet Tennis at Forest City, Iowa, in September of 1861.

When the Civil war broke out and the call came for volunteers, Mr. Strong enlisted in Company C of the 38th Volunteer Infantry from Chickasaw county, Iowa, in 1862 and served three years as a soldier in his country. He was with the Army of the West and was in the siege of Vicksburg, the siege of Yazoo City, the siege of Fort Morgan and the charge of Blakeley and many other less important engagements. He served as a soldier with honor during the three years of service and was mustered out September 1865.

He returned immediately to Fayette County, Iowa, where he remained until 1873, when he and his family started for South Dakota. They got as far as Lake Mills, Iowa and on account of sickness in his family he remained there during the winter; changing his mind and settled in Faribault County, Minn., where they lived until April 22, 1886. At that time Minnewauken was the terminus of the Great Northern Railway and soon he brought his family and household effects across the country to the

Mouse River Valley, settling upon a homestead claim three miles northwest of Velva. No land bounties were offered to Civil War veterans, but Union soldiers could deduct the time they served from the residency requirements of the Homestead Act of 1862.

During his residency in the Mouse River valley, Mr. Strong was one of the hardy citizens and had done his full part in the development of that section. G. W. Strong was a Land Locator specializing in locating settlers on government land, deeded farms and stock ranches in the Mouse River Valley during the 1900s.

He was one of the first commissioners of McHenry County and served several terms as assessor of the district. He was a school director continually when this district was first organized. Mr. Strong was a member of the Masonic fraternity since early adulthood and was instrumental in the installation of the Masonic Lodge at Granville. He was a charter member of the Star in the West Lodge at Minot and a charter member of the G.A.R. and took an active interest in that organization, having been instrumental in the organization of the Post in Velva years ago. He always took a deep interest in Memorial Day celebrations and during his residency here had only been absent from one.

George and Harriet’s children were: Mrs. (Georgia) Roebke, Rienzi, Miss. (1862-1947); Mrs.

Robert (Mary Harriet) Johnson, Minot, ND (1866-1926); Mrs. Nels M.(Jennie) Muus, Velva (1869-1958); Sam Strong, Velva ND; Mrs. C. R. Knudson, Los Angeles, CA; Joseph Centennial “Joe” Strong, Velva, ND (1876-1955); and Mrs. Lewis (Wanda) Sanders, Velva, ND (1881-1957) There were 20 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren at the time of George’s death at the age of 77 on May 5, 1916. He is buried at the Velva Cemetery.

Mr. Strong used a pair of sheep-lined gauntlet type mittens constantly when on long drives in the early days. At one time they were refaced with deer skin, the work being done by Mrs. L. T. Erickson, one of the early pioneers of this community back then. Mrs. George Strong gave the mittens to her son Joe, who once served as Sheriff in McHenry County. Another interesting item belonging to George was passed down to their daughter, Jennie (Strong) Muus. She inherited her father’s souvenir cannonball in remembrance of his time served in the Civil War.

Nels Muus was born on December 29, 1869, in Norway, the son of Jacob and Julianna Muus. He came to the United States in1886 at the age of seventeen, moving to the Mouse River valley in 1893. He set up a store in a boxcar at the railroad site in what is now Velva before the townsite was subdivided carrying a general line of merchandise until a frame building was built and became



“Over the years, the family wondered if Grandpa Strong’s cannonball was real.” Richard Muus remarked.

known as N.M. Muus General Store and Groceries. In 1903 Nels and his brother, John Henry, erected the sandstone building, which was one story at the time, namely Muus Brothers Economy Store. The brothers were in partnership until 1910.

Nels married Jennie Strong in 1896. Jenny had received her education at the North Dakota State Normal School in Valley City and was the first teacher in the South Bend School District after it was organized in 1886. She taught for 10 years. Nels donated land for

several churches in Velva and he and Jennie were active in the Methodist Church.

George’s cannonball had been passed down to Nels and Jennie’s son, Harold (WWII Veteran), and onto grandson, Richard, who is 95 years old and living in Minot. He is a Veteran of the Korean Conflict.

The Civil War field artillery cannonball is authentic, and the smallest of three sizes, weighing 23 lbs. 9 oz. The cannonball has been donated to the Velva Area Museum.

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CORRECTION:
Commencement Exercises for Sawyer Seniors is on Saturday, May 24 at 11am, at the Sawyer Public School Gymnasium.

MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE:
A Memorial Day service will be held at 10am, Monday, May 26th at the Velva American Legion Hall, lunch to follow. The lunch is a free will offering, provided by the Legion Auxiliary.

VELVA COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY:
2025 Dates: June 17, July 15, Aug. 19, Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 16.
The food pantry is open from 5:45-7:15pm in the Fellowship Hall of OVLC, Main Street. The pantry is short of these items: canned meats, canned fruit, personal hygiene products and laundry pods and can be dropped off at OVLC Mon.- Fri. 9am-3pm.