

Crow Wing County

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM & LIBRARY - EST. 1927

SUMMER 2018

PRESERVING HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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MISSION:

THE CROW WING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM IS THE PREMIER INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND DISPLAYING ARTIFACTS AND INFORMATION RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF CROW WING COUNTY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EDUCATION, ENJOYMENT, AND RESEARCH MATERIALS TO THE PUBLIC.

STAFF:

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

MARGARET O'ROURKE
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

SUE DUDA
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT

Restoration to Get Underway

Thanks to Crow Wing County, our historic sheriff's residence and museum are about to get some much needed care. In 2017, Crow Wing County Facilities, the owner of the building, applied for and was awarded a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. They received \$224,557 to preserve, restore, and renovate the historic building. The County itself will contribute a matching amount. Work by Baratto Brothers Construction, Inc. will begin late summer.

Built in 1917, time has taken a toll on the building. Many repairs will be made to the building's exterior, including changes to drainage and repair of the brick. This will stop further decay of the brick and prevent water damage to the interior of the structure and its precious contents. Issues with the windows will also be addressed. The conversion of the jail into a museum in 1980-1983 changed some of the character of the building, most specifically the windows in the former jail. These will be restored to their original appearance and the original windows that remain in the residence portion of the building will be preserved. Replacement of all heating, ventilation, and cooling equipment will be beneficial to the museum by providing safe climate conditions for artifacts such as wood and paper that cannot withstand extreme changes in temperature or humidity. Other changes will meet compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This improvement of accessibility will also ease the transport of artifacts throughout the building. All of this work should maintain and preserve the building for years to come.

In 1976 the people of Crow Wing County voted, and passed by 82%, to convert the former sheriff's residence and jail into a county museum. It is admirable that Crow Wing County is still upholding this sentiment by not only maintaining, but preserving this historical gem for future generations. This building not only provides a place for the Society to keep its collections, but the building itself is an artifact, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. We are thankful to the County for providing these updates and for taking part in maintaining this history for its residents.

Long-time Volunteers Recognized

At the Crow Wing County Historical Society Annual Volunteer Luncheon two special, long-time volunteers were honored. Ray Frisch and Lucille Kirkeby were recognized for their many years of service. Both of these individuals began volunteering in the late 1970s and are still willing to come in and help today. Ray served on the Board, is a favorite tour guide, and has volunteered in nearly every position at the museum. Lucille is our resident librarian. She keeps our research library in order and can help people find anything on just about any topic. Without volunteers like these, the Crow Wing County Historical Society would not be able to operate. The Historical Society is thankful to Ray and Lucille for all of their years of help.

President's Report

The summer took a long time in getting here, then rain, and heat, and bugs. But the Crow Wing County Historical Society continues to do well. More and more visitors are coming through. So next is our annual challenge of the Crow Wing County Fair. We are having a harder time each year in finding volunteers to help out at the five buildings we have to maintain. And then there is the cost of upkeep. We most likely can't continue to pour more and more money into keeping these buildings up without some help. So #1, if you could spend a couple of hours the week of the fair, it would be appreciated. And #2, if you have any ideas on how to maintain our buildings at the fairgrounds, that too would be appreciated. Our monthly Board Meetings are held at 3 P.M. on the third Tuesday of the month. All are welcome.

Don Samuelson
President



FROM THE DIRECTOR

"Are you from this area?" This is often the first question I am asked when I introduce myself as the new Director of the Crow Wing County Historical Society. The answer is, "Yes." I grew up in Brainerd and graduated from Brainerd High School. The truth is, however, I have learned more about this area in the last six months, than after decades of living here. I have always had a passion for history. I earned a master's degree in art history with a specialization in museum studies; however, like most people, regardless of our appreciation for history, we take

for granted the things that surround us on a daily basis. Now, as I sit in my office I think of all of the families who lived in this building and the inmates who spent time in the jail. When I look out the window at the Historic Water Tower, I picture men painstakingly pouring layers of concrete and a beautiful bustling train depot close by. As I drive through town, I tell my family stories of what used to be located where and that people used to have to cross the river by ferry. It has been an immense pleasure to learn this history and also to meet all of the wonderful people who share these stories with me. As Director, my goal is to continue to expose as many people as possible to this history. So yes, I am from this area, but now I am appreciating it in a whole new way.

Sincerely,

Hillary Swanson

From the Collection

The Crow Wing County Historical Society recently welcomed two special pieces into its collection from the John Coates Liquor Company: a half-gallon stoneware jug and a green glass brandy bottle with the paper label still intact. Why are these significant and what was the John Coates Liquor Company? In 1903, a gentleman from St. Paul by the name of John Coates purchased a wholesale and retail liquor business from local businessman, George S. Gardner. He also rented the Gardner Block located at 5th Street and Laurel. Coates quickly became recognized for his Coates Club Whiskey, which came in Red Wing stoneware jugs. He was also known for distributing high-grade California wines and brandies, which he purchased directly from vineyards in California. Coates was also the local supplier of Schmidt Brewing Company products. In 1910, he relocated to South 7th Street, just south of the Imperial Block on 7th and Laurel. He also operated a saloon in the First National Bank block of South 6th Street. By 1916, John Coates was no longer listed in the Brainerd City Directory and the Brainerd Dispatch documents a lawsuit between Coates and his manager, John E. Brady, regarding their partnership. The business dissolved and Brady began selling Schmidt's Malta – a non-intoxicating beverage. It is exciting that after one hundred years and only 12 years of business, we still have evidence of Coates' products. The survival of the brandy bottle with its paper label is remarkable and a great addition to the collection of what is now four whisky stoneware jugs: a one gallon, two half-gallons, and a two-gallon. We sincerely thank our donors. There is yet another size and other colors we have yet to acquire. Please stop by and see our collection, or if you have an item to add, please contact the museum at (218)829-3268.



People From Our Past

By: Brian Marsh



Many great people were instrumental in the growth of Brainerd in the late 1800's, and one such person was Charles N. Parker.

Born on April 6, 1834 in Bridgeton Maine, he was early on employed as a machinist and locomotive engineer, eventually making his way to St. Paul. While there, he started the first foundry in Brainerd in 1872 and moved to the city in April, 1885. At that time, he teamed up with H. W. Topping to form the Parker & Topping Company, a foundry business which contracted with the Northern Pacific Railroad to provide all the castings for its main line and all branch lines east of Helena, Montana.

In addition to the foundry business, in 1892, he also started up Brainerd's first and only electric street railway system. With a power house and car barn located west of Mill Ave. and south of the river bridge, and with 3 ½ miles of track, the first streetcar ran on May 4, 1893. Unfortunately, this venture was short lived as it was not profitable. It ceased its operation on August 15, 1897.

Also, Parker started up the Northern Pacific Bank in November, 1889. Located at 201 S. 7th Street, the name was changed to the Citizen's State Bank in 1906. After a fire destroyed the bank building in 1907, he erected a new building for the bank on the NW corner of 7th and Laurel Streets. That distinctive building still stands today and is occupied by E. L. Menk Jewelry.



If all of this wasn't enough, he also started up Brainerd's first telephone service in 1895.

He owned property on the south side of North Long Lake, which came to be called Parkerville. It was there that many of the Brainerd elite gathered for social events. It was also a place where tents were pitched and people swam in the lake – an early "resort". He later sold part of that property, which became Legionville.

A very civic-minded gentleman, he passed away on December 20, 1911. As a result, Brainerd lost a man who was responsible for part of the city's evolution.



PAST HISTORY...



By: Lucille Kirkeby

Today you can do much of your shopping online from home not leaving your easy chair. It might surprise the younger generation that shopping was just as easy in the early to mid-nineteen-

hundreds. All you had to do was get out your Sears, Roebuck mail order catalog. Products were available for just about every need you might have.

Everything you would want was listed for sale in that catalog. You could buy a grand piano for \$98.50 or a parlor organ for \$27.45. Buggies of all kind ranging from \$22.35 to \$69.00 in price were available. Farmers could buy a walking plow and a hay loader and even a windmill. If he wanted to do his own horse shoeing, kits were available to aid him with that task.

For the woman of the house, her needs were met. From the catalog there were listings for kitchen ranges and heating stoves. She could find clothing, fabrics and all her sewing needs. Sewing machines and washing machines could be ordered to make life a little easier. Mothers could buy baby carriages and baby furniture. One could even buy groceries. All you needed to do was pay 15 cents for your list of available items and then send for them.

If you were a hunter or fisherman, there were items in the catalog for you—guns, fishing tackle and whatever you needed to land that “big one.” One rather unique item for the goose or duck hunter was a grass suit. The suit was of long tough imported marsh grass made into a cape-type coat with a hood. It was advertised as convenient to wear and shoot from.

Even some of the early patent medicines appeared for sale in the catalog. The German Liquors

cure permanently cured your desire for intoxicating drink of any kind. You even had a choice of brands for the White Ribbon Secret Liquor Cure was advertised as doing the same. Any woman who didn't feel herself well-endowed could purchase the Princess Bust Developer Bust Cream or Food. It was guaranteed to enlarge any lady's bust from three to five inches. Sears advertised a low price of \$1.50 as compared to a retail price of \$5.00

If you wanted to upgrade from that small log house you or your ancestors built, Sears sold catalog and kit houses primarily through mail order. According to records maintained by Sears, the company sold more than 70,000 of these homes between 1908 and 1940. More than 370 different home designs and sizes were

All you had to do was get out your Sears, Roebuck mail order catalog.

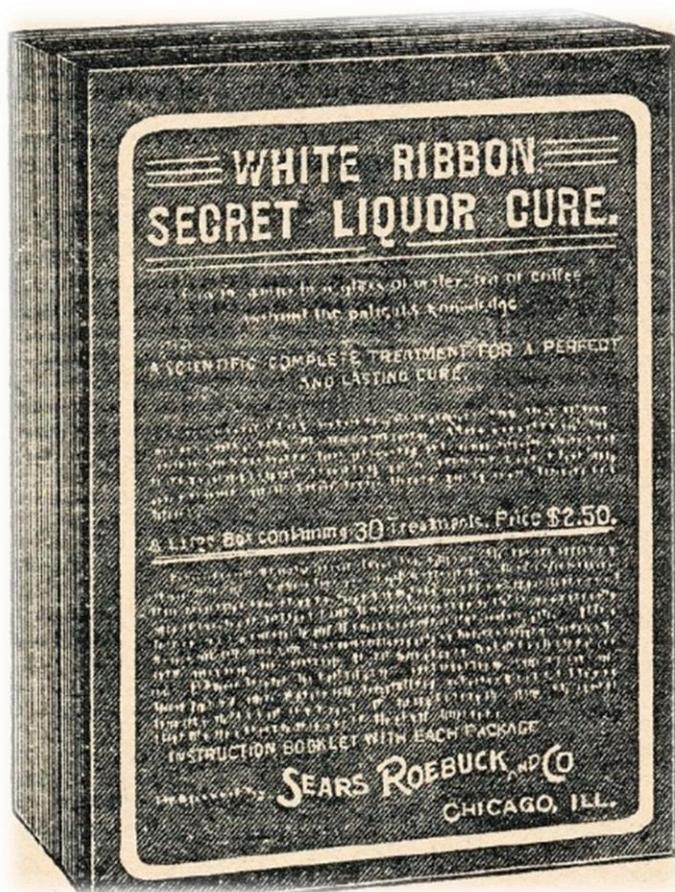
sold through the program's thirty-two-year history. Sears had a specialty catalog for houses, *Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans*, featuring forty-four house styles from

\$360 to \$2,890. The first order for a mail order house was filled in 1908. By 1916, pre-cut and fitted lumber was offered. The material was shipped by railroad boxcar and usually trucked to the site. The purchaser put together the house. In the early years of this program the purchaser had to cut his lumber to size after Sears supplied the materials. By 1916 it was shipped pre-cut. In later years when building materials changed, some parts of the building required the use of professional and skilled carpenters.

Sears advertised themselves as the cheapest supply house on earth. One way to save was to have items shipped directly from the factory to the customer. For example, a buggy came from a factory in south Michigan, a stove from central Ohio, and a windmill from southern Wisconsin. Orders had to be cash paid by

(continued from page 4) bank drafts, money orders, cash or stamps. If you sent stamps, an added fee was charged. No orders of less than 50 cents were accepted. An exception was made for small items like sewing machine needles or for items where no other suppliers were available. All small orders were mailed in four pound packages. Freight was used for larger items. The earliest catalogs cost fifty cents. Later that charge was dropped.

The museum has reprints of two of the early catalogs, a Sears 1902 catalog and a Montgomery Ward 1922 catalog. These catalogs were truly the "wish books." Anything you might wish for was right at your fingertips. All you had to do was fill in the order blank, send the cash and put it in the mail.



WE THANK OUR VOLUNTEERS!

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Crow Wing County
 City of Brainerd

Supporting Townships

Crow Wing	Oak Lawn
Ideal	Platte Lake
Irondale	Roosevelt
Long Lake	Ross Lake
Nokay Lake	St. Mathias

Thank you!

Upcoming Events

Crow Wing County Fair July 31-August 4

Come see us at the fair! We are also looking for volunteers to staff our historic buildings at the fairgrounds. We have many different shifts available in four different locations. Please call us at (218)829-3268 to be scheduled. We appreciate any amount of help!

Brainerd History Week 2018 Schedule of Events

Showcasing the Mississippi River
and West Brainerd

Thursday | August 9 | Northern Pacific Center

1-5pm: NP Center Tours. 30-minute tours, starting at the Clock Tower, every half hour.

1-7pm: Hotrod & Antique Car Show including B.I.R. 50th Anniversary Car Collection. Located in the open courtyard of the Northern Pacific Center.

5:30pm: Reception & Announcements at the Roundhouse Brewery

All Day: Food Trucks & Round House Brewery

Friday | August 10 | Mississippi River & West Brainerd

10am: River View Brainerd History Walk. Meet near the vacant lot south of Mississippi Terrace Apartments.

1pm: Daughters of the American Revolution Gregory Park Historic Marker Dedication. Meet near the water fountain.

2:30pm: Downtown Brainerd History Walk. Meet at the Brainerd Public Library.

1-5pm: Central Lakes College 80th Anniversary Celebration & Open House. Tours at 1:00 & 2:00. Reception at 3:00 and Slideshow from 1-4.

5pm: Community Paddle from the boat landing near Evergreen Cemetery to Boom Lake. This is a fundraiser for New

Pathways. Meet at Evergreen Cemetery Landing. Launch at 5:30 pm. Paddle to Kiwanis Park. Shuttle bus provided. Contact Ashley for more information and to get registered. ashley.storm@live.com, 218-831-9717.

Saturday | August 11 | Old Crow Wing & Pioneer Day

10-6pm: Paul Bunyan Land & This Old Farm Pioneer Village

10:30-11:30am: Evergreen Cemetery History Walk

1pm: Community Bike Ride from Brainerd/Baxter to Crow Wing State Park. Contact Jeremy for more information and to get registered at blueberrywar1872@gmail.com.

2pm: Crow Wing State Park - Historical Presentation about the history of Old Crow Wing and the 150th anniversary of the assassination of Chief Hole-in-the-Day.

7pm: Downtown Brainerd History Walk. Meet at the Brainerd Public Library.

Sunday | August 12 | Lum Park Day

10am-6pm: Paul Bunyan Land & This Old Farm Pioneer Village

1pm: River View Brainerd History Walk & White Park Historic Marker Dedication. Meet near the vacant lot south of Mississippi Terrace Apartments.

3pm: Lum Park Brainerd History Walk. Meet at the north end of the park by the old fire pit and learn about four historical places of significance within Lum Park.

5pm: Brainerd Ski Loons Water Ski Show. Bring the family down to the shore of Rice Lake to take in this show, featuring local ski enthusiasts. This is a free event.

We thank the following individuals for their generous DONATIONS

James & Carol Erkens
in Memory of Erkens Reichert

Robert Fitzsimmons
Joanie Hill

Leonard & Fran Hollingsworth
Lois Jubie through State Farm

Sheila Northrop
Sharon Nyberg

Maurice Olson
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Joyce Kaufman
Anonymous

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The Crow Wing County Historical Society Museum, Sheriff's Residence, and Research Library is located next to the historic Courthouse

Phone: 218-829-3268 Fax: 218-828-4434

Email: history@crowwing.us Web: www.crowwinghistory.org

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10AM-3PM (closed major holidays and holiday weekends)

CWCHS Yearly Membership Levels:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| \$500.00 – Patron | \$50.00 – Sustaining |
| \$250.00 – Benefactor | \$40.00 – Family or Non-Profit Org. |
| \$100.00 – Booster | \$30.00 – Supporting Individual |
| \$75.00 – Sponsor | \$20.00 – Individual |

To become a member of the Society, send your name, address, and telephone number along with your membership dues to the Crow Wing County Historical Society, P.O. Box 722, Brainerd, MN 56401. If you would like to give a gift membership to the Society, please send the name and address of the person for whom the membership is intended. Memorials of loved ones are also accepted. Donations can be sent to the same address and are tax deductible. Membership forms are available on our website or at the Museum. You can also pay online using PayPal.

NEW MEMBERS

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**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR SUPPORT!**



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