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:

HILLARY SWANSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER EDITOR
MARGARET O’ROURKE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
DAYLA HART COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT
POUALAK BOWL

Description by John E. Swift
C.W.H.S. Museum Designer

Discovered by F. T. Gustavson on October 15, 1930, the Poulak Bowl is the only culinary earthen vessel of this type ever found intact. It was unearthed in an underground ruin four feet below surface level approximately three miles north of Pequot Lakes, just north of a long parallel mound in the Poulak group.

This rare specimen is part of the fabulous Gustavson Collection housed in the Museum. It is said to be of the type made by early Indian Mound-Builders, people of Asiatic background who lived in our country 300 to 1000 years ago.
WINTER 2021

President’s Report

Like everybody, we just stay at home. Let’s hope things get back to normal soon. Your Board of Directors has the meeting by virtual, which isn’t as good but it works for now. With our new library now completed, it would be nice to have a grand opening to show it off. All we can do is wait and see. Well at least our staff is able to get a lot of work done catching up on displays and getting things organized. We miss our expert librarian and researcher. Lucille Kirkeby. She had a fall, but is recuperating. Another volunteer we will miss is Ron Crocker. Ron passed away last fall and his volunteer work at our museum and at the fairgrounds was so helpful to our staff. So stay safe, wear your mask, and pray we all get through these tough times.

Don Samuelson, Board President

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is understood that times have been hard. With all of the negative, I have seen one positive—extra time. I have had extra time with my family. Extra time outside. With the museum closed, staff has had extra time to do things that have been set aside. While cleaning and organizing, I found archived newsletters. I was proud to see what a legacy I follow. I decided to revive two of the articles (see page 2 and 5) and include some of the old headers. I hope some of them look familiar to long-time members.

Collections Assistant, Dayla Hart has had extra time to sort through and organize objects. She has regathered the F.T. Gustavson collection. Some items, including the Poualak Bowl are, unfortunately, no longer in our collection after being transferred to the Minnesota Historical Society decades ago. We still have many remaining items that will now be back on display.

Many treasures were discovered while organizing and during our attic shelving project. New exhibits throughout the museum will feature these items. Only time will tell when we are able to reopen. It is difficult with our limited staff and unusual building to follow social distancing and sanitizing guidelines. We will be excited to welcome you back to an utterly new museum including the now complete, beautiful James Olav Saboe Library.

Take care,

Hillary Swanson
People From Our Past

By Brian Marsh

As white settlers moved steadily west in the middle of the 19th century, one group of people was either among them or preceded them, and that group was made up of Christian missionaries. Some tended to the needs of the settlers, while others were engaged in converting Native Americans. One of the latter of these was the Rev. James Lloyd Breck.

Born in Philadelphia, PA in 1818, he was ordained in 1842 in Wisconsin as a priest in the Episcopal Church and moved into what is now Minnesota in 1850. In 1852, he started a mission church on the east shore of Gull Lake, just west of present-day Highway 371, to work with converting the Ojibwe population to the Christian faith. He named the mission St. Columba and it was the first Native American Christian church in the United States that was west of the Mississippi River. Many of you have heard of St. Columbo Road and Mission Road in that area.

In 1855, he married Jane Maria Mills, one of the teachers at the St. Columba mission. He continued his work here until 1857, when he moved to Faribault to work with another priest to begin a mission school to train clergy to work in Minnesota missions. In 1867, he moved to Benicia, CA, where he passed away in 1876.

He was called “The Apostle of the Wilderness”, and although his stay in Crow Wing County was a short five years, he played a very important part in spreading the Christian message in the area.
HUNTING HERE 100 YEARS AGO... The above article was printed in our 1972 newsletter. Nearly fifty years later, its subject is still interesting. It demonstrates how things have changed in our ecosystem and our transportation. These train cars were the private jets of today. Something else that has changed are our membership dues. In the bottom corner, you will see a regular yearly membership was $1.00. Unfortunately, today one dollar would not go far in the purchasing of much needed archival, office, and exhibit supplies. Membership dues are so important to everything the Society is able to accomplish. We are so thankful for those of you who have continued your membership through this time when the benefits have been limited by our closure.

HUNTING HERE 150 YEARS AGO... The above article was printed in our 1972 newsletter. Nearly fifty years later, its subject is still interesting. It demonstrates how things have changed in our ecosystem and our transportation. These train cars were the private jets of today. Something else that has changed are our membership dues. In the bottom corner, you will see a regular yearly membership was $1.00.

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Both spring and fall, succulent passenger pigeons and sandhill cranes (both now extinct), plover, partridge, and grouse were abundant throughout the state. (Only the ring-necked pheasant was absent; he had not yet been introduced to the state.)

Hunters travelled by horse and buggy or used a wagon for more room. Some of the wealthier hunters kept complete wagon outfits ready to be driven off or loaded onto boxcars for long trips.

All the railroad lines had special coaches called "business cars" which were outfitted like today's campers and run over the lines to any point desired. Some hunters even rented handcars to take them where they wanted to go.

The Northern Pacific from Brainerd west was one of the favorite routes. At Brainerd trains rested over Sunday, and there, according to Forest and Stream Magazine, "Colonel Weed's Head Quarters Hotel abounded with well-heeled gentlemen—sportsmen, their dogs, and retinues of servants."

The classiest hunters to hit the area were a group from Worcester, Mass, who came to Brainerd every year from 1875 to 1878 to hunt upland game birds.

The NP furnished them with at first one, then two specially outfitted cars. In 1878 they arrived with their own car, "The City of Worcester."

There was a reading room, grand drawing room and dining room, 12 double berths, great amounts of storage space in and under the car, washrooms, a butler's pantry and china closet, a complete kitchen, silver-plated oil lamps, and two French plate glass mirrors with embossed borders. (Who said Winnie-bagos are fancy?)
On May 26, 1923, four women from Brainerd set out on an adventure by automobile from Brainerd, Minnesota to San Diego, California: Lydia McKay, Hildegarde Erstad, Thora Ingebridsøn, and Dagny Ingebridsøn. The Ingebridsøn sisters wanted to be present at the birth of their brother’s child. Tuberculosis had confined the brother to a sanitarium and his lonesome wife wanted the company of his sisters. Thora was a nurse and Dagny was in nurses training. Friend and fellow Red Cross volunteer, Lydia McKay, was the main financier of the trip. She was married and much older than the others. Hildegarde Erstad was a friend with relatives to visit along the way.

The vehicle, a used Starr that they nicknamed “Whiz-bang,” was purchased specifically for the trip with help from Lydia’s husband. It was a typical great road trip of the 1920s with sightseeing, picnics, and stops for repairs. Many of their nights were spent camping under a tarp that extended from the roof of the car. They otherwise stayed with friends and relatives.

Lydia McKay kept a log of the trip expenses that is now housed in the Crow Wing County Historical Society Archives along with dozens of photographs of the trip with notations on the back. There are images of roadside sellers, tourist sites, shenanigans, and the women always wearing their kerchiefs and men’s attire. There are photos of people they visited along the way, even an “accidental meeting” with two other women from Brainerd traveling through Montana. They took multiple photos of Native Americans with notes on the back stating they had paid them to take their photos.

The women were away from home for nearly two months. This was not a concern for the younger single women, but for Lydia McKay, a wife and mother of four, it was momentous. Lydia left her daughter’s Mabel (age 15) and Hortense (age 13) in charge of keeping house for their father and two brothers.

Lydia McKay’s example along with these other strong, caring female role models led to a future courageous nurse—Hortense McKay. Hortense was set on a path of caretaking and strong bold womanhood that propelled her to survive the Philippines during WWII and become a Lieutenant Colonel at a time when women were new to the military. Look for a new exhibit featuring Hortense when the museum opens.

Along with their male attire, they acquired nicknames like Mac and Don. Notation on back of photo: “Our steak in Arizona. Taken out of Flagstaff, Arizona. Mac, Hildie, Don”
Without our major fundraiser for the year, we cannot be more thankful for the outpouring of donations we received from the following generous individuals.

**We thank you!**

- Bill Ash
- John Baker
- Bob Brekken/Brekken’s Clothiers
- Donna Buttendorf
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- Reva Snell
- Dwight & Linda Thiesse
- Barbara Vielma
- VisitBrainerd
- Jack Warden
- Carol Wermter

In Memory of Doug Birk
Lynda Weiss

In Memory of Erkens-Reichert
Carol Erkens

In Memory of Ron Lindner
Joe Fellegy

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**Supporting County/Municipality**

- Crow Wing County
- City of Emily

**Supporting Townships**

- Crow Wing
- Dagget Brook
- Garrison
- Ideal
- Irondale
- Long Lake
- Nokay Lake
- Oak Lawn
- Platte Lake
- Roosevelt
- St. Mathias

**Thank You!**

Notation on back of photo: "Men remove your hats when entering this church, Women in male attire barred.' Church at Isletta New Mexico, Typical Indian village, Don standing as close as she dared with her male attire."
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
- $250.00 – Benefactor
- $100.00 – Booster
- $75.00 – Sponsor
- $50.00 – Sustaining
- $40.00 – Family or Non-Profit Org.
- $30.00 – Supporting Individual
- $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.