

# **AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

## **DEPOT HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER**

### **Winter 2014 – Volume 19, Issue 1**

#### **2013 was a great year for the Aitkin County Historical Society and Depot Museum.**

Our membership broke the 400 mark for the first time and is staying there. Our current membership is 439 and our goal for this year is to surpass the 472 mark which would be double what our total was starting in 2009 (236). Only need 33 more members by the end of the year. Consider giving a gift membership to someone who loves history.

The Annual Garage Sale set another record with sales of \$8048.00. 2009 was the first year that we broke the \$4000.00 mark. Please remember the Historical Society when you are cleaning out your garage, attic, sheds, barn or basement as a place to donate those unwanted items. Buying new furniture, replacing your old kitchen or bathroom cabinets, donate the old to the society. **Remember, that all donations are tax deductible.** Once again we will have two buildings at the County Fairgrounds. We are already taking donations for this event. Donations can be dropped off at the Depot Museum or call for us to pick your items up.

Our Annual Raffle was a huge success this year. 2012 was the first year that we had ever sold over 2000 raffle tickets (2024). In 2013 we shattered that record with sales of 3648. It helped that we had 89 prizes that were given away. Boyd Bremner collected 80 prizes, Ron Kemmett and I collected the rest. Boyd and Ron also each sold over 500 tickets. When you see them, please say thank you. On top of that, Boyd Bremner and Elaine Hallbeck sold 658 tickets during our Garage Sale. A great big **Thank You** goes out to all three of them.

This year we received 110 donations from individuals. This was not money donations, but donations of artifacts, photographs and information. One of the donations actually had 150 items, another had 54. So that 110 donations was actually a donation of close to 500 items or more. We received all of the scrapbooks, photos and history of the Aitkin Drum & Bugle core. One of the more unique items that we received was the seal for a KKK unit in Aitkin County.

One donation that was received during 2012, a Cedar Strip boat built by Arnold Westling in the 1950's, was repaired by volunteers and put on display last March. Five volunteers stripped and sanded all of the paint off of the outside of the boat, replaced the transom, seats, bumper boards and upper part of the nose, stained the wood and clear coated it. Along with the boat we have 4 Johnson Outboard motors on display. Another donation was a set of metal runners from a log sleigh. The wood was all rotted, the metal runners rusted. The runners were sanded down and new white oak boards were cut down to fit in the runners. The sleigh was rebuilt and moved over to the yard outside of the museum.

A space in the (Hodgedon/MacDonald) Butler building was made available to us for a display. We put up information about: Schools, Riverboats, Butler building, Warren William, Judy Garland, Walter Abel, Marcus Movie Theater, Logging and pioneers. This display will be up until the middle of April. The display gives visitors a small taste of what is available at the Depot Museum.

The Depot Museum hit a new high for visitors with a total of 4894. Visitors from 10 Foreign Countries, 37 US States, and 193 Minnesota communities visited during 2013. During 2012, 4610 visitors came from 3 Foreign Countries, 32 states and 145 Minnesota Communities. This year we should break the 5000 visitor mark. Now we need to encourage more local residents to visit the museum and bring visiting friends and relatives.

Seven glass display cases were donated to the museum during the past year. Five are currently being used in the Depot and the other two in the Butler building. These cases have allowed us to display items that we would not have been able to. In the Depot they currently house musical instruments and a Land-O-Lakes display.

As our membership has grown, more and more of the museums needs have been fulfilled. Our newsletters are reaching a wider audience which creates more awareness about the museum and what we are doing. More and more businesses are stepping forward and helping us with our fundraisers and fulfilling the needs of the society. We encourage our membership to support those businesses that support us and the society tries to buy from local businesses whenever possible. It is important that we support our local businesses, because if we don't they will not survive. **SHOP LOCAL!**

We have a big year ahead of us. Numerous research projects will be worked on with the possibility of another book by the end of the year. We will print a Historical Map of Aitkin County, which we will be sharing with everyone in the County. If you have some free time to help with one of our projects, please contact me to see where you can help.

**Gregory Leach (Administrator)**

**Board of Directors:** Darlene Maciej (President), Cheryl Meld (Vice-President), Colleen Bremner (Secretary), Alice Dotzler, Connie Pettersen, Arlene McNevin, Susan Benson, Carol Bailey, Ron Kemmett, John Hendrickson, Bob Lake, Lorraine Liljenquest, Mark Wedel (County Commissioner), Sherry Arvidson (Accountant), Greg Leach (Administrator)

### **AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP**

Business Members – 34, Individual Members – 28, Senior Members – 104, Family Members – 255,  
Life Members – 16, Perpetuity Members – 2

**TOTAL MEMBERSHIP – 439**

#### **BUSINESS MEMBERS**

Aicota Health Care Center  
Aitkin Body Shop  
Aitkin Chamber of Commerce  
Aitkin County Abstract Company  
Aitkin Family Chiropractic Center  
Aitkin Flowers & Gifts  
Aitkin Furniture & Carpet  
Aitkin Independent Age  
Aitkin Iron Works  
Aitkin Lodge #164 IOOF  
Aitkin Motor Company  
American Legion Post 86  
Arvidson Tax & Accounting  
Bremer Bank  
Crosby Eye Clinic  
D.Q. Grill & Chill  
Enberg TV  
Eyecare Center of Aitkin &  
McGregor  
Garrison Disposal  
Gobles Sewer Service  
Gravelle Plumbing & Heating  
Hasskamp Brox. Well Drilling  
Hudrlik  
Jim Blakesley Enterprizes  
K & J C-Stores, Inc.  
KKIN-KEZZ Radio  
Lundberg Plumbing & Heating  
Members Coop Credit Union  
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative  
Paulbecks County Market  
Peoples National Bank  
R & K Cabinets  
Security State Bank  
Sunset Bav Resort

#### **SUPPORTING BUSINESSES**

Aitkin Bowling Lanes  
Aitkin Dairy Queen  
Aitkin EZ Stop  
Aitkin Flowers & Gifts  
Aitkin Furniture  
Aitkin Glass  
Aitkin Independent Age  
Aitkin McDonalds  
Aitkin Pet & Farm  
Aitkin Rental  
Bare's Bootery  
Bill's Sportsmans Service  
Birchwood Cafe  
Brandl Motors  
Bremer Bank  
Cedarbrook Lumber  
Coombs Cuts  
Cross Woods Golf Course  
Cuyuna County Auto  
Cuyuna Lanes  
Cycle, Path & Paddle  
Deep Systems  
Duane's Photography  
Emily Greens Golf Course  
Enberg TV  
Farm Island Repair & Marine  
Farm Island Store  
40 Club/Players  
Freedom Gas Station  
Garrison Disposal  
Grand Casino Mille Lacs  
Gravelle Plumbing & Heating  
Grandmas Pantry

#### **SUPPORTING BUSINESSES**

Hawkeyes Inc.  
Healthy Connections  
Hometown Building Supply  
Hot Stuff Foods  
Hyytinen Hardware  
KKIN AM & FM Radio  
Lake Country Auto & Tire Center  
Lightning Motorsports  
Lorries Hair Studio  
Lundberg Plumbing  
Mille Lacs Energy  
MN Gold Buyers  
Nordlake Reflections  
Northern Air Heating & Plumbing  
Northwood Equipment  
The Office Shop  
Paulbecks County Market  
Rasley Oil  
RDJ Products  
Rialto Movie Theater  
Ripple River Motel  
Roadside Restaurant  
Salon Inspire  
Security State Bank  
Security State Insurance  
Sew Much & More  
Shiperio Games  
Shirts Plus  
Simply Chic  
Tire Barn  
Traditions Mini Golf  
Unclaimed Freight North  
Whistling Wolf Mini Golf

#### **SUPPORTING TOWNSHIPS**

**FARM ISLAND TOWNSHIP  
IDUN TOWNSHIP  
LAKESIDE TOWNSHIP  
CLARK TOWNSHIP  
NORRLAND TOWNSHIP  
AITKIN COUNTY**

#### **Model Trains Needed**

We have two cases in our Railroad room for displaying model trains. Currently we have 14 trains on display and need 10 more to fill up the display. Do you have a train set that you would be willing to donate to the museum? Or maybe a train set that you would be willing to loan to the museum for this display. We have trains of all gauges on display. (HO, N, O, etc.)

#### **Volunteer**

Your time  
Your memories

#### **Donate**

Artifacts  
Information  
Family Histories  
Photographs  
Money

## Members Lost During 2013

### **Ray Morris**

8/30/1930 to 1/12/2013

### **Kern Ridlington**

9/25/1926 to 3/23/2013

### **Marilyn Kullhem**

7/15/1933 to 5/24/2013

### **Jerome Poland**

1/21/1938 to 9/20/2013

### **Eugene Grolla**

1925 To 12/02/2013

### **Clyde A. Ammala**

3/14/1942 to 12/26/2013

## New Members

Robert & Marjorie Wold

Mary & Gary Larson

Kathleen Buckholtz

Joan Thompson

Randy C. Wall

Kay Olson

Maxine Schroeder

Robert Zasmeta

Paula Justen

Bill & Lou Anne Berndt

Richard R. Ladd

Paul & Pam Magnuson

Kevin & Carol Hoge

David Monse

Donald Christians

John & Joyce Grimsbo

Carl A. Boberg

Julie Hansen

Bill & Sue Fox

Aitkin D.Q. Grill & Chill

## Members Lost During 2014

### **Gordon Root**

6/20/1939 to 1/24/2014

## Memberships

**Senior - \$7.50**

**Individual - \$15.00**

**Family - \$20.00**

**Business - \$30.00**

## Country Schools of Aitkin County

We are now in the process of collecting photographs and information pertaining to our Aitkin County Country schools for our next book. Do you have any information or photographs of one or more of our Country Schools? Or, do you know someone that does? Please contact the Depot Museum.

## GRANT WRITER NEEDED!

Need grants for the following:

- Purchase land under depot.
- Purchase Armory building.
- Publish Historical map of Aitkin County.
- Purchase Caboose for Depot.
- Purchase scanner for negatives.
- Promote ACHS Museum
- Research Aitkin Co. Churches.
- Research Riverboats of Aitkin

## 2013 GOALS

1. Membership over 420 members. **(Done - 434 members end of year)**
2. Complete Obituary files.
3. Visitor count surpasses 5000. **ALMOST! (4894)**
4. Raffle sales reach 2500. **ACCOMPLISHED!**
5. Garage sales surpass 6500 **ACCOMPLISHED!**
6. Increase number of displays in museum. - **DONE**
7. Lending library set up and running.
8. Clean up museum files.
9. Organize museum supply areas. - **COMPLETED!**
10. Find a Caboose.
11. More grant money to promote museum.

## BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

1. Cost only \$30.00 a year.
2. Businesses are listed in our quarterly newsletter for other members to support.
3. Businesses are listed on our web site with links to their web site or email.
4. ACHS uses our business members first.

## 2013 COMPLETED PROJECTS

1. Repairs of Cedar strip boat completed and placed on display in building #2
2. Wheels attached under glass cases
3. Shelf for supplies built/installed.
4. Shelf built in Military display for flag
5. Swing from porch re-stained/Painted
6. Photo album for R/R room completed
7. Thermostat moved in building #3
8. Light switches added in building #3
9. Wicker furniture repaired and painted.
10. Drawing barrel for raffle constructed
11. Prize spinning wheel constructed.
12. Outboard motor display stand built.
13. Outboard motors put on display.
14. Log cabin display in Depot doubled in size to display more artifacts.
15. Walls in Log Cabin display finished.
16. Shadow box for trains built and installed in railroad room.
17. Trains displayed on window sills, shadow box and glass cases.
18. Water sealer put on lumber wagon.
19. Aluminum paint put on deck of small railroad speeder.
20. Green bench on north side of depot repaired and painted.
21. New web site up and running. [www.aitkincohs.org](http://www.aitkincohs.org)
22. 2<sup>nd</sup> Railroad luggage wagon painted.
23. Log Cabin storms and doors sealed.
24. Six picnic tables water sealed.
25. Administrator time-line book completed.
26. **"Barns of Aitkin County" published**
27. 2<sup>nd</sup> Train shadow box built
28. Additional storage shelves for photo archives installed.
29. Display built in Butler building.
30. Log sleigh rebuilt with new lumber.
31. Black paint touched up on all artifacts and depot building.

## 2014 PROJECTS

1. Complete Obituary files.
2. Historical Map of Aitkin County.
3. Research/assemble/publish Country Schools of Aitkin County book.
4. Riverboats of Aitkin County book.
5. Adding additional information on WEB site.- **ONGOING**
6. Complete our set of AHS yearbooks.
7. Increasing membership. - **ONGOING**
8. GPS Walking Tour of the City of Aitkin.
9. Developing research facility at Depot.
10. Obtaining title to land under Depot.
11. Increasing local interest in Museum.
12. Create photo albums for each display connecting artifacts to Aitkin County.

## FOURTH QUARTER ACCESSIONS

Florence Brooten	Quilt - feed sack
Marie Tyren Peterson	1941 -AHS Yearbook
Marceilla Rivers	Antique Baby Stroller
Dawn Kellen	2 - Centennial Plates
Gerald Hedberg	2 - miniture cameras
Lewann Sotnak	3 - event programs
Marie Peterson	1941 - "A" Book
Julie Lindgren	photo
Unknown	city books, many buttons, plates
Evon Peterson	photo - Pearson Homestead, book of poems
Joan Thompson	8 - Post cards of AK Sar Ben Gardens
Toby Gabrio	24" Nut Cracker
Cheryl Crawford	Vernon Boss ACR photos
Doris Nordean	R/R Thermometer
Lu Leistiko	Disc. With info on CC Sutton and riverboats

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Aitkin County Historical Society needs help with accessioning items into the museum. Do you have a couple of hours free every week or every other week that you could volunteer? Learn how to accession items into the museum. (Photographs, paper & artifacts) We need people to learn how to accession items into the museum. Currently accession work takes place on Friday mornings. Coffee is on at 9am, visit with other volunteers and then learn how it is done. Display work is usually done on Wednesday mornings.

In April we have to remove our display in the Butler building and in May we need to take down our log cabin display in the Depot building to make room for the MHS display "Electrifying Minnesota". In June we have to set up our display in our Log Cabin for the County Fair and at the end of July we have to rebuild displays in the Depot building. This will be a very busy time of moving and building displays. Please consider giving us a hand with these projects.

Need volunteers to interview Aitkin County residents about their memories of going to Country schools. Volunteers needed for interviewing Aitkin residents about their memories of growing up in Aitkin County.

How about volunteering to staff one of our booths or help at one of our events. (Commerce & Sports show, Aitkin County fair, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade tour, Cookie walk)

Volunteers are needed to staff the front desk to welcome visitors to the museum, answer the phone, and learn how to take people on tours of the museum. Learn about all the different types of information that we keep in our files.

## 2013 RAFFLE PRIZE LIST

1. Chanhassen Dinner Theater for two donated by KKIN radio – Mary Rea - Aitkin
2. Grand Casino Mille Lacs Hotel/Buffer for two package – Pine Agency - Aitkin
3. Night stay at the Ripple River Motel – Jenny Servatius – Upsala, MN
4. 2 in 1 Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm donated by Northern Air - Bob Cummings - Aitkin
5. Jeanie & Co. – Agnes Weimier - Aitkin
6. Burt's Bees Gift Basket donated by Lundberg Plumbing – Don Niemi - Aitkin
7. Metal Fondue set – donated by Hawkeyes Inc. – Roxy Wigton - Aitkin
8. Digital Thermostat donated by Gravelle Plumbing & Heating – Joe Enberg - Aitkin
9. 18" Rope STER Chain + Eagle donated by MN Gold Buyer – Deby Zarling - Aitkin
10. Digital Thermostat donated by Gravelle Plumbing & Heating – Kim Fuller - Aitkin
11. Cross Woods Golf Course – One round of golf /w shared cart – Penny Anderson - Palisade
12. Camp Lantern 20 LED donated by Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative – Rich Ritchie - Aitkin
13. Free Lube, Oil and Filter from Brandl motors – Greg Christensen - Aitkin
14. Lake Country Auto & Tire Center Oil Change – Paul Zenke - Aitkin
15. Squirrel Feeder donated by Hyytinen's Hardware - Alice Dotzler - Aitkin
16. Subscription to the Aitkin Independent Age –Lois Smedber - Aitkin
17. Cuyuna Country Auto – Full Service Oil Change – *Betty Pasell - Aitkin*
18. Roadside Restaurant – Rol Hill - Aitkin
19. Framed Eagle Print donated by Aitkin Furniture – Joyce Knowlen -
20. Birchwood Café – Steve Lehmen - Aitkin
21. Rialto Movie Theater – Lemire - Aitkin
22. \$25.00 Pre-paid VISA card donated by Security State Bank – Bonnie Swanson - Crystal
23. The Office Shop – (\$25.00 Gift Certificate) – Catherina Just
24. Players or 40 Club – (\$25.00 Gift Certificate) – Neal Thornbloom - Aitkin
25. Freedom Gas Gift Card – (\$25.00 value) – Nancy Lamke
26. Secret Hideaway framed print donated by Aitkin Rental Center – Carol Wiherski - Aitkin
27. Fall Table Runner donated by Sew Much & More – Rich Anderson - Palisade
28. Rialto Movie Theater – (\$25.00 Gift Certificate) – Pauline VanOverbike
29. Hometown Building Supply – (\$25.00 Gift Certificate) – Joe H. Voller - Aitkin
30. Simply Chic – (\$25.00 Gift Certificate) – Matt Nelson - Aitkin
31. Tea Light Centerpiece donated by Thrifty White Pharmacy – Amanda - Deerwood
32. One 8" Dairy Queen Cake from Aitkin Dairy Queen – Elaine Hill - Aitkin
33. County Market – (\$20.00 Gift Certificate) – Nancy Rosemore
34. The Beanery an Internet Café – Brian Anderson - Aitkin
35. Gift Certificate for 5 tans donated by Lorries Hair Studio – Paul Zenku - Aitkin
36. Framed Fishing print donated by Unclaimed Freight North – Nancy Jacobson - Aitkin
37. Universal Remote Control donated by Enberg TV – Matt Hill - Aitkin
38. Tall Flower Vase donated by Giada's Boutique – Kathy Sparks - Aitkin
39. County Market – (\$20.00 Gift Certificate) – Lisa Westerlund - Aitkin
40. Shakespeare Fishing set – donated by Greg Leach (\$20.00 value) – Gary Miller - Aitkin
41. ACHS Family Membership – (\$20.00 value) – Bob Zasmata - Aitkin
42. Free Hair cut at Coombs Cuts – (\$18.00 value) – Cody Hanson
43. Salon Inspire – Free Haircut – (\$18.00 value) – Donna Appel - Aitkin
44. 25 Piece Tool Kit with Flashlight – donated by RDJ Specialties – Joann Oaks - Aitkin
45. 12 Suet cakes & holder donated by Aitkin Pet & Farm Supply – LaVonne Fox - Aitkin
46. Cedarbrook Lumber Company – (\$15.00 Gift Certificate) - Marilyn Johnson - Aitkin
47. Free Large Farm Island Store Pizza – (\$15.00 value) – Greg Leach - Crosby
48. Healthy Connections – (\$15.00 Gift Certificate) – Lauren Coleman - Aitkin
49. Stars & Stripes Windsock donated by Nord Lake Reflections – Paulett Anderson
50. Whistling Wolf Mini golf – One adult + one child – Jo Paetznick - Bloomington
51. Two rounds Mini –Golf – Traditions in Deerwood – Dan Barron
52. Stereo Headset donated by Deepsystems – Woody Rian - Aitkin
53. McDonalds – (\$10.00 Gift Certificate) – Zack Marlow - Hopkins
54. Rasley Oil Co. – (\$10.00 Gift Certificate) – Dave Danielson
55. Aitkin Bowling Lanes – Sherry Arvidson - Aitkin

56. McDonalds – (\$10.00 Gift Certificate) – Laurel Larson
57. Sports bag donated by Bremer Bank – (\$10.00 value) – Irma Boerhove - Aitkin
58. Road Atlas & mug donated by Security State Ins. – (\$10.00 value) – Lu Leistiko - Aitkin
59. T-shirt – “Buffalo Trace” – (\$8.00 value) – Vanessa Brockway - Burtrum
60. Shiperio Card Game of Golf donated by Shiperio games Chanhassen – Sarah Johnson - Aitkin
61. Shiperio Card Game of Golf donated by Shiperio games Chanhassen – Kathy Sparks - Aitkin
62. John Deere Baseball Cap donated by Northland Equipment – Sonja Hakes - Aitkin
63. John Deere Baseball Cap donated by Northland Equipment – Susan Gamble - Aitkin
64. John Deere Baseball Cap donated by Northland Equipment – Billie Forst
65. Aitkin County Naturally – (\$5.00 value) – Casey Ek – No. St. Paul
66. Rand McNally 2013 Road Atlas – Nathaniel Zahn-Snyder - Aitkin
67. Rand McNally 2013 Road Atlas – Don McKay - Aitkin
68. Rand McNally 2013 Road Atlas – Sonja Hakes - Aitkin

### **GOALS FOR 2014**

1. Membership surpasses 472
2. Raffle over \$3000.00 again
3. Garage Sale over \$7000.00
4. Publish book about our Aitkin County Country schools.
5. Visitor count over 5000.
6. Research facility set up.
7. Find a Caboose or railroad car for display.
8. Publish Historic map of Aitkin County.
9. Publish GPS walking tour of the City of Aitkin.
10. Find additional funding for the Depot Museum.
11. Add another museum sign south of Aitkin on Hwy 169.
12. Lending Library set up and running.
13. Find additional grant funding.
14. Update Past Perfect Software.

### **2014 GARAGE SALE**

We have already started to collect sellable items for this year’s garage sale. Items that are not accepted are: hide-a-beds, computers & accessories, T.V.’s, large appliances or clothes. Items will be marked during May, June & July. We are looking for tools, furniture, books, movies, games, glassware, holiday decorations, household items, jewelry, fishing items, hunting items, toys, etc. On Tuesday after the Aitkin County Fair we will set up tables in the buildings and on Wednesday all of the merchandise will be moved to the Fairgrounds. All merchandise will then be sorted and checked for pricing. The sale will take place on August 1<sup>st</sup> (9am to 4pm) & August 2<sup>nd</sup> (9am to 3pm) which is half price day. **All items donated are tax deductible.**

### **2014 RAFFLE**

We will start to collect raffle prizes for this year’s raffle in April of this year. Last year we collected 89 prizes for our raffle which led to our best raffle in the history of ACHS. Let’s make this year’s raffle even better.

### **IDEAS NEEDED**

We need ideas for new fundraisers to help fund the Depot museum. If you have an idea for a new fundraiser, please contact Greg at the museum, and share that idea with him.

## **Aitkin Chamber Commerce and Sports Show**

**March 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> at the Aitkin High School**

The Aitkin County Historical Society will once again have a table at the show. This year we will sell copies of our book “Barns of Aitkin County, Minnesota.” Also information about membership and the museum will be made available to the public. We will need volunteers to staff our table. A signup sheet is available at the Depot Museum. March 8<sup>th</sup> the hours are 10am to 4pm and on March 9<sup>th</sup> the hours are 10am to 3pm. On Saturday we will need 6 people to work a two hour shift (2 per shift) and on Sunday we will need 4 people to work two and a half hour shifts. Our booth will need to be set up on Friday March 7<sup>th</sup> and taken down on Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup>. Come early and walk around the event, work a shift and then go home or work a shift, have some lunch, look around the show and then go home. This is a fun event to attend during the final gasps of winter. Visit with your friends and neighbors who are in another booth or attending the event. It is also a good time to find deals on some of those spring projects around the house.

# MUSEUM VISITORS

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
January	40	40	86
February	22	55	29
March	23	187	99
April	48	153	48
May	50	100	110
6th Graders	101	91	91
June	472	183	127
July	266	356	251
County Fair	1171	0	1500
August	214	202	248
Garage Sale	0	1814	1723
September	128	118	132
Rendezvous	0	1077	0
October	75	72	102
November	93	41	150
Open House	83	71	66
<u>December</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>132</u>
	<b>2834</b>	<b>4610</b>	<b>4894</b>

## Jeannette Marie Zilverberg

The Aitkin County Historical Society was named in her Last Will & Testament and will receive 5% of her Estate. Although, not as much as we were first told, the money will give us an opportunity to make some needed changes to the museum. It was very thoughtful of her to have included us to receive a part of her Estate.

## What is your legacy?

Have you set aside part of your Estate to the Historical Society or your favorite Charity? It's time to figure out what will happen to your estate when you are gone. Maybe, it is not money, but a certain artifact that tells a part of our Aitkin County History. Or, maybe it is information about Aitkin's past. If you wish that certain items should go to the Historical Society or some other organization please let your Heirs know.

## THE FOLLOWING COMES FROM OUR AITKIN COUNTY HERITAGE BOOK

### AITKIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

In the autumn of 1832 at the urgent request of the trader, Mr. Aitkin, Rev. Ayers, a Presbyterian Missionary came to Sandy Lake and opened a school for the children of the voyagers and Indians. This was the first school in Aitkin County and is said to be the first in Minnesota.

Rev. Ayers and other missionaries who were interested in the "Three R's" were also interested in the spiritual welfare of the people. They also felt these people had to learn to be good farmers and home builders. Several spots in the Sandy Lake area show evidence of having been farmed in those early days.

The missionaries found that in order to teach the voyagers and Indians, they first had to learn their language and in turn teach them English. Mr. Ayers completed an Ojibwa spelling book. In 1833 Mr. E.F. Ely became the teacher of the Sandy Lake School. The first school consisted of a large room in Mr. Aitkin's home, which served as both classroom and lodging room. He started the school with 6-8 scholars and in a short time had 15. Thus started the school system in Aitkin County.

School District #1 was organized February 13, 1873, and included the whole county. This school as well as most of the schools to come started in a home. After a couple of years a log school would be built, then a large school. Aitkin started with the first school being built by some of the men in town, resulting in no cost to the school district. Two more schools were built and then in 1901 the large school was built with two sections added later. In 1929 the high school was added, including an auditorium and gymnasium. Most of this was torn down when the present school building was constructed. Rippleside Elementary was built in 1957.

In 1887 there were several schools started throughout the county, and in time each township had one to five schools depending on the population of the township.

It is difficult to research all the rural schools that existed in Aitkin County. Many schools in the McGrath area had already closed in 1916 when they consolidated to form the bigger school in the village of McGrath. It is estimated that at least six schools closed at that time.

In the Hill City area, where several schools along the railroads, were closed when the logging came to an end and the railroads were no longer needed. Many of the little towns along the railroad became ghost towns and the settlers had to move on to find more logging or stayed to farm. By the early 50's many schools had to consolidate with the towns in their area: Hill City, Palisade, McGrath, McGregor, Aitkin, some of the southern schools with Isle, Mora, Finlayson and Pine County districts.

Most of the school pictures in this book were taken from a collection of pictures donated to the Aitkin County Historical Society by former Aitkin County Superintendent of Schools, Wally Newstrom, which he had taken during the 1940's. We are aware that there were at least 40 to 50 more schools that we were unable to get pictures or related information on.

It is our wish that you enjoy the information and pictures bringing back memories of days gone by. *Research and stories by Myrl Curtis.*

#### **BALL BLUFF SCHOOL - DISTRICT #34**

The Ball Bluff School (1920-1939) also known as the River Road School was located about four miles south of Highway 34 (200) in section 28 of Ball Bluff Township. This school also had a round entry and it is believed that it along with one of the Jacobson schools were both built by Louis Johnson of Aitkin.

#### **CEDAR BROOK SCHOOL – DISTRICT #15**

Cedar Brook School (1895-1949) was located northwest of the city of Aitkin in Aitkin Township by the former Frank Johnson place. The original building burnt and the district bonded and a new one was built by contractor, John Koenig. This school building is presently located at the Aitkin Athletic field and used for early childhood development.

#### **CEDAR LAKE SCHOOL – DISTRICT #68**

John Swing opened his front room for a School, the first building was built about 1903 on the northwest corner of Clear Lake on land donated by John Swing. Della Johnson was the first teacher and Mayme Geyer was the last. The new school building was built about 1943 and consolidated with Aitkin in 1952. Sunnyside School was moved from Malmo and formed a second room. Pupils came from Swamp, Glory, Isle of Pine, Malmo, Sunnyside, and Rabbit Lake to attend the Clear Lake Center. They now had electricity, hot lunch, two busses and a janitor. The school was closed in 1967 and all pupils went to Aitkin.

#### **CUTLER SCHOOL – DISTRICT #90**

The Cutler School was in session from approximately 1907 to 1957. In the early years a Mr. and Mrs. Finch were teachers, he at Nichols and Mrs. at Cutler, later exchanging schools. The Nichols school was located near Mille Lacs Lake with no other information available. Possibly it had the same district number as Cutler. The Cutler school is presently a private home.

#### **HASSMAN SCHOOL – DISTRICT #56**

The Hassman school was formed in 1902 and the one room school opened in 1905. Lucian Chale gave the land for the school building. It consolidated with Independent District #1 in 1963. As most schools of that time the students walked two or three miles and often had frost bite. During winter recess the girls played jacks and the boys marbles. In warmer weather the girls jumped rope or joined the boys playing ball or pump pump pull away.

#### **JACKSON SCHOOL – DISTRICT #48**

The Jackson School was in session before 1910, located in Logan Township. When it burned, (about 1930) the Raalon School was moved to the site on a sled especially built to cross the Willow River. The school consolidated in 1949 with Palisade with Ernest Tyren as bus driver. 1953 the building was moved to Palisade for an annex. It was later sold to Mt. Olive Lutheran Church.



Greetings,

The holiday seasons are over and the book "Barns of Aitkin County" was well received. I received calls from several after purchasing one of the barn books asking for another. One gentleman looked at the book and stated, "My barn is in here." He was surprised because his barn collapsed two years ago. Photos of barns that were standing years ago and are now vanished were requested. The book with Greg and Laura Thornbloom's design and layout was done exceptional well. Thanks to Greg and Laura for all the hard work they put into getting the book completed for publishing. Over 800 photos were collected and several did have life history attached to the barn.

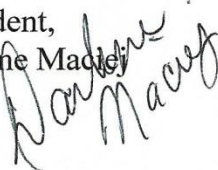
I am excited about the next project about collecting information on the schools in Aitkin County. I spoke with Larry Schoenrock and he had documents on five (5) of the early schools in Wagner Township. There are so many from the early 1900's with children expected to walk two miles or less to school. Now-a-days it is a walk to the bus. Any information in regards to these early schools will be collected at the office of the Aitkin County Historical Society or McGrath Historical Committee. The Society is also collecting information on Riverboats and churches in the county.

The topic of preserving historical items came up and one of the ways of preserving clothing is to use padded hangers. Attached is a sheet on how to make the padded hangers. There are so many different ways that help with preserving our history. Humidity, acid paper or not, photos without tape or glue are a few of the concerns that have been questioned. We will have to extend on the topic of preserving older items.

Recently I did some reading about the Townships in the southern part of Aitkin and came across information stating that in the early years there was a post office called the Boston Post Office. It was located in Seavey Township from 1899-1904. In 1904 it became Seavey and was discontinued in 1938.

President,

Darlene Maciej

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Darlene Maciej", written over the typed name.

# AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## DEPOT MUSEUM

### EVENT SCHEDULE FOR 2014

**March 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Aitkin Chamber Commerce & Sports Show** – We will have a table at this event and will sell “Barns of Aitkin County, Minnesota” and promote membership to the society. The event runs 10am to 4pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10am to 3pm on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers will be needed to staff our booth.

**May 7<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Tours** – Volunteers guide the sixth graders to different areas of the museum where presenters explain the areas. Two shifts of children (9:30-11:00 and 12:30-2:00) come to the museum. We provide a lunch for all of the volunteers that help with this event.

**May 15<sup>th</sup> thru July** – Minnesota Historical Societies Traveling exhibit “**Electrifying Minnesota**” at our museum. This display is part of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration for Mille Lacs Electric.

**June – Commissioner Lunch** - We invite the County Commissioners to the museum to see what changes have been made during the past year, show them what we have planned for this year and we serve them lunch.

**July 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> – Aitkin County Fair** – Visit our Log Cabin, located on the S.E. corner of the fairgrounds. Volunteers will staff the building from 10am to 8pm during the fair. This year’s display will feature items that would be found in a log cabin.

**August 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> – Annual Garage Sale** – Held at the Aitkin County Fairgrounds during Riverboat days. This is our largest fundraiser of the year and will again use two buildings on the fairgrounds. Setup for this event will start on July 16<sup>th</sup> and go right up to July 31<sup>st</sup>. 100’s of man hours will be required to haul, sort, price, and work this sale. As we get closer to this event a signup sheet will be at the Depot Museum. Sign up and help us make this our best sale ever. We have already started to collect items for the sale. Don’t forget to donate those unwanted/not used items. **Remember, all donations are tax deductible.**

**December 6<sup>th</sup> – Spirit of Christmas Open House/Cookie Walk/Raffle Drawing** – Join us as we open our Depot Museum to cookie buyers and guests. Consider donating a prize for our raffle drawing. Bake some cookies to be sold at our Cookie Walk. Our special Christmas displays created by member and volunteer Jo White are always a treat.

### MUSEUM HOURS

**Summer Hours** – (June, July & August)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday – (10am to 4pm)

**Winter Hours** – (September thru May)

Wednesday, Friday & Saturday – (10am to 4pm)

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