



Bennettville School

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

20 Pacific Street S.W. / P.O. Box 215
Aitkin, MN 56431

We are located just 2 blocks south of the stoplights in downtown Aitkin, south of the railroad tracks and west of highway 169.

Phone: 218-927-3348

Email: achs3348@embarqmail.com

Web Site: www.aitkincohs.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015

Sports and Commerce Show

March 14th & 15th

We will need volunteers to sit at our booth, visit with people who stop at our booth and sell our "Barns of Aitkin County" book.

Aitkin County Fair

July 8th – July 11th

Volunteers are needed to staff our log building during the fair. Building will be open Wednesday from noon – 8pm, Thursday & Friday 10am – 8pm and Saturday from 10am – 4pm.

Annual Garage Sale

July 31st & August 1st

This event is our largest fundraiser of the year and is held at the Aitkin County Fairgrounds. Setup starts the Wednesday after the fair (July 15th).

Volunteers are needed to help move all the merchandise to the fairgrounds, setup, organize and mark all the merchandise. Help is required every Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday until the sale. Many volunteers are needed to work during our two day sale. We fill two of the large buildings with merchandise. Donations of merchandise can be dropped off at the Depot Museum or call us for a pickup.

Remember, all donations are tax deductible!

JOIN ACHS TODAY!!

MUSEUM HOURS

June thru August

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday &
Saturday 10am to 4pm

September thru May

Wednesday, Friday & Saturday
10am to 4pm

THE PRESERVATION OF
OUR HERITAGE
DEPENDS ON YOU

**Editor: GREGORY
LEACH**

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Business Members – 33, Individual Members – 28, Senior Members – 121, Family Members – 285, Life Members – 16, Perpetuity Members – 2
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP – 485 (NEW GOAL IS 500)

Board Members

Darlene Maciej – Prez.
Cheryl Meld – VP
Colleen Bremner – Sec.
Susan Benson
Carol Bailey
Ron Kemmett
John Hendrickson
Bob Lake
Lorraine Liljenquest
Joel Hyytinen
Allen Ladd Hakes
Russell Peterson
Mark Wedel – Co. Com.
Sherry Arvidson – Acct.
Greg Leach – Admin.

Members Lost During 2014/15

Gordon Root

6/20/1939 to 1/24/2014

Elsie Dotson

11/22/1938 to 5/30/2014

Larry Nelson

11/26/1937 to 6/5/2014

Lucille Young

3/11/1933 to 9/21/2014

Warren Nelson

4/16/1949 to 12/30/2014

Shirley Meyer

6/14/1927 to 1/11/2015

NEW MEMBERS

Karen & Raymond
Klennert
Bryan Baugh
Kevin Futhey
Dave Fohner
Donetle Root
Pat Blunt
Pete McGinn
Marty Tolvanen
Dan Koper
Ronald Fitch Sr.

BUSINESS MEMBERS

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

**Please Support Our
Business Members!
They Support us.**

2014 PROJECTS

COMPLETED

1. Past perfect software updated.
2. Train display case repaired.
3. Loft built in log cabin. Bldg. #4
4. Fence repaired at Depot.
5. Property line surveyed.
6. 2-Glass display cases repaired for use in Depot.
7. Electrical outlets added to Homestead room in Depot.
8. Walls for log cabin display in Depot removed.
9. Radiator removed from homestead room for added space.
10. Metal hauled to recycle.
11. Walls repaired and painted.
12. Two additional outlets added.
13. Two built in window cases moved.
14. File cabinets moved into research room. (family, school, events, business, churches, obits, cemetery, military, and community)
15. Microfilm reader moved to the new research room.
16. Flat screen TV ordered for research area to show Warren William movies and interviews.
17. Family histories moved to new research room.
18. Copies of photos moved to new research facility.
19. Ladders and tools organized in Depot storage area.
20. Commercial color copy machine added to our office.
21. New appraisal of depot property completed.
22. Railroad notified of our intent to try and purchase land under our display buildings.
23. Flat screen TV mounted on wall in research center.
24. Shelf added under TV for electronics
25. Bookcases added to research room.
26. Brokerage account opened to receive donations of stock.
27. Third display case for model trains installed in railroad room.

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DEPOT HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2015 – Volume 20, Issue 1

Our membership continues to grow. Current membership stands at 485. We only need 15 more members to reach the 500 member mark. Please help us reach our goal of 500 by donating a membership or by encouraging others to join. **A Family membership is only \$20.00 a year!** Membership is an important key to the success of the Aitkin County Historical Society. We started 2009 with 236 members. Since then we have encouraged membership and have grown steadily. Increased membership allows us to reach a larger audience to draw information, and expertise from. **If you are not a member now, it is time to join!**

RESEARCH CENTER IN THE DEPOT MUSEUM IS ALMOST COMPLETED.

Research materials are in place. We are waiting for grant money to purchase 2 computers for visitors to use. We need to figure out the correct configuration of the tables in the center of the room to optimize our research space. Our grand opening will be announced in the Aitkin Independent Age. Or come in now and help us organize our research library; watch an interview on our new TV. We have started to display artifacts on top of cases in the room. This room is already being used by many of our volunteers to do their work. **We are still looking for a 60 drawer card catalog for 3X5 cards.** If anyone knows where we can find one or have an idea where to look please let me know.

In 2008 the Aitkin County Historical Society was in the process of purchasing the land under the Depot building and our second display building. We own the buildings but, lease the land from the BNSF railroad. At that time we were told that if we could get the crossing west of the depot closed they would give us the land. When we were able to convince the city to close the crossing, the railroad had donated money to help the city purchase the Tibbetts property the Historical Society property was taken off the table. Seven years later we are once again trying to negotiate with the railroad to gain title to the land under our buildings. An appraisal was done on the .46 of an acre of land, half of which is located under Pacific Street in front of the Depot. The appraisal came in at \$20,500.00. The railroad rejected our appraisal saying that they felt it is worth around \$60,000.00. To me \$20,500 for less than half of an acre seems even high. The railroad is now paying to have a new appraisal done. And the saga continues.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS OF AITKIN COUNTY

Greg and Laura Thornbloom are working hard digging through our files, books, court house records and the internet for any information that they can find on Aitkin County Country schools. With each discovery come more questions. Do you have the answers? We need your help researching this book. If you have any information or photos that you could share, please contact Greg at the Depot Museum soon. (218) 927-3348

The search for a new Administrator will begin in April with ads going in local papers and in all Minnesota Historical society publications. Applications and interviews will take place in May. I will spend the month of June working with the new administrator showing them where everything is located and getting them settled in.

Greg Leach - Administrator

2014 EARLY-BIRD DRAWING

1. 18 - holes golf + cart for four at Emily Greens – **Adam Christensen - Aitkin**
2. Dinner & Show for 2, Chanhassen Dinner Theater – Donated by KIN radio – **Janet Miller - McGregor**
3. 2-18 hole rounds of golf with cart donated by Cross Woods Golf Course – **Sheryl Wiechert**
4. \$55.00 Gift bag from Jeanie & Co. – **Maryann Holden - Aitkin**
5. Amana Digital Thermostat donated by Gravelle Plumbing & Heating – **Korena Hammond - Aitkin**
6. Coffee basket donated by Lundgren Plumbing – **Gayle Janzen – Aitkin**
7. Duane's Photography Family Portrait sitting – **Gary Seiger, Sr. - Aitkin**
8. Necklace donated by Jessica's Treasure Chest – **Tom Brand - Aitkin**
9. Oil Change donated by Brandl Motors – **David Blakesley - Aitkin**
10. Case of Canoe Wild Rice – (\$30.00 value) Donated by Mille Lacs Wild Rice Corp. – **David Hasskamp - Aitkin**
11. \$25.00 Verizon Gift Certificate – **Justin Hendricks - Bloomington**
12. \$20.00 Gift Certificate to Aitkin Municipal Liquor Store - **Dee Munson - Aitkin**
13. \$20.00 Gift Card for Auli Z's & the Bippity Bop Ice Cream Shop – **David Braskowski - Aitkin**
14. \$20.00 Gift Card from Bare's Bootery – **Gloria Olsen - Aitkin**
15. ACHS Family Membership – **Dorothy Glidden - Aitkin**
16. "Barns of Aitkin County, MN" book – **Pete Welshen - Aitkin**
17. 2 Rounds of Mini-golf at Whistling Wolf Mini golf – **Lane Fischer - McGregor**
18. \$15.00 Gift Certificate for Simply Chic – **Sue Fox - Aitkin**
19. 1 Large Take n Bake Pizza from Hot Stuff Foods – **Nancy Jacobson - Aitkin**
20. \$10.00 Gift Card from Aitkin Flowers & Gifts – **Gale Leach - Crosby**
21. \$10.00 Gift Certificate for Bill's Sportsmans Service – **Ross Wagner - Aitkin**
22. Subway 6-inch fresh Value Meal – **Linda Hommes - Aitkin**
23. Two McDonalds Sandwiches – **Kathy Novak - Crosby**
24. Shiperio Card Game of Golf by Shiperio games Chanhassen – **Harold Larson - Willmar**
25. Subway 6-inch Fresh Value Meal – **Jim Hausaur - Aitkin**
26. Vikings womens T-Shirt (L) donated by the Landing – **Corrine Becke - Isle**
27. Two McDonalds Sandwiches – **Jay Ferdelman - Aitkin**
28. Pine Insurance Agency cozy and flashlight – **Cathren Just - Aitkin**
29. Child Guard for Firearms donated by American Legion – **Toby Gabrio - Aitkin**
30. 12 pack of Pepsi donated by EZ Stop – **Bonnie Mickelson - Aitkin**
31. Tech Stain Remover 2oz bottle donated by Hudrlik Carpet & Tile – **Doug Olson – Aitkin**

2014 RAFFLE PRIZE'S COLLECTED

1. Dinner & Show for 2, Chanhassen Dinner Theater – **Bernard James - Chanhassen**
2. Mille Lacs Grand Casino Hotel/dinner for two – **Leslie Coleman - Fridley**
3. One 18" x 68" Dressing Mirror donated by Aitkin Glass – **Bob Wold – Harlingen, TX**
4. Ripple River Motel Jacuzzi Room – **Kay Olson - Aitkin**
5. Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Alarm donated by Northern Air Plumbing & Heating – **Rick West - Aitkin**
6. 2013 US Mint Proof Set donated by Peoples National Bank – **Elaine Hill - Aitkin**
7. Amana Digital Thermostat donated by Gravelle Plumbing & Heating – **Owen Seervatius – Upsala, MN**
8. Necklace donated by Jessica's Treasure Chest – **Tom Laplante – Maple Grove**
9. Necklace donated by Jessica's Treasure Chest – **Leslie Coleman - Fridley**
10. Oil Change donated by Brandl Motors – **Doug Olson - Aitkin**
11. 20 LED Camp Lantern – **Danielle Tetrick - Aitkin**
12. Squirrel Feeder – Donated by Hyytinen's Hardware Hank – **Shawn Lindberg**
13. Welcome Bear donated by Aitkin Furniture – **Bill Gravelle - Aitkin**
14. Garstang Loving Monkey donated by Crossroads In Time – **Erica Wojcik**
15. A gift Subscription to the Aitkin Independent Age – **Brenda Steinberg - Minneapolis**
16. Oil Change donated by Cuyuna Auto – **Sue Phenon – Maple Grove**
17. Oil Change donated by Cuyuna Auto – **Vicki Wagner - Aitkin**
18. Case of Canoe Wild Rice – Donated by Mille Lacs Wild Rice Corp. – **Ardis Ivory - Aitkin**
19. \$30.00 gift card from Paulbecks County Market – **Gale Leach - Crosby**
20. \$30.00 Visa Card – Donated by Security State Insurance – **Lyle Klinghagen - Aitkin**
21. \$30.00 Visa Card – Donated by Security State bank – **Marlene Kingsley - Palisade**
22. \$30.00 gift card from Paulbecks County Market – **Sara Karr - Deerwood**
23. Minnesota Sweat shirt donated by Shirts Plus – **Jeanne Switala**
24. \$25.00 Rialto Movie Theater Gift Certificate - **Jane Lenzen - Aitkin**
25. \$25.00 Verizon Gift Certificate – **Bob Cummings - Aitkin**

26. \$25.00 Roadside Restaurant Gift Certificate – **Jim Benda - Aitkin**
27. \$25.00 Gift Card to Freedom Gas Station - **Gravelle Plumbing - Aitkin**
28. \$25.00 Gift Certificate Aitkin Pet & Farm supply – **Marilyn Johnson**
29. \$25.00 Verizon Gift Certificate – **Tim Salzl**
30. \$25.00 Rialto Movie Theater Gift Certificate – **Dennis Ruschmeier - Aitkin**
31. \$25.00 Gift Certificate for Hometown Building Supply – **Tom Brand - Aitkin**
32. \$25.00 Roadside Restaurant Gift Certificate – **Shirley Davies - Aitkin**
33. \$25.00 Gift Certificate for Gramma’s Pantry – **Carol Bailey - Isle**
34. Lawn Chair donated by Bremer Bank – **Darlene Maciej - McGrath**
35. \$25.00 Verizon Gift Certificate – **Melissa Gregor - Shakopee**
36. Sterling Ring donated by Jessica’s Treasure Chest – **Kay McKersie – Apache Junction, AZ**
37. \$25.00 off a \$50.00 purchase at Lightning Motorsports – **Jim Saba - McGregor**
38. Universal Notebook Case donated by American Legion – **Adam Christensen - Aitkin**
39. 8” DQ Cake – Donated by Aitkin Dairy Queen – **Peggy Larsen - Aitkin**
40. \$20.00 Gift Certificate for the Office Shop – **Lacey Spolanch**
41. \$20.00 Gift card to 40 Club Resaurant – **Paul Gross - Aitkin**
42. Universal Remote – Donated by Enberg’s TV – **Terry Kullhem - Palisade**
43. 3-in-1 Power Tools for kids donated by Midwest Machinery Co. – **Cathy Larsen**
44. \$20.00 Gift Card from CVS Pharmacy – **Tom Arnold - Hibbing**
45. \$20.00 Gift Certificate for Aitkin Lanes – **Chris Anderson - Baxter**
46. \$20.00 Gift Card from Toby’s Thrift Shop – **Lu Leistiko - Isle**
47. 10 ½” X 15” Picture donated by Unclaimed Freight North – **Bruce Nelson – Superior, WI**
48. First Aid Kit from Riverwood Healthcare Center – **Gale Leach - Crosby**
49. \$20.00 Gift Certificate to Aitkin Municipal Liquor Store – **Mike Hawks - Crosby**
50. ACHS Family Membership – **Harold Larson - Willmar**
51. \$18.00 Gift Certificate for Lorrie’s Hair Studio – **Erin Rom - Aitkin**
52. Coombs cuts gift certificate – **Marlo Dommann**
53. Stonetech Stone & Tile Cleaner donated by Hudrlik Carpet & Tile & Tech stain remover – **Chris Johnson - Aitkin**
54. Hand saw donated by Aitkin Rental Center – **Traci Patwell - Aitkin**
55. Tire Rotation – (\$16.00 value) Donated by the Tire Barn – **Julie Hughs - Aitkin**
56. Umbrella donated by Bremer Bank – **Trix Wyant - Aitkin**
57. Snap Fitness cup plus one week pass – **Amanda McDonald - Aitkin**
58. 1-Large 2 topping pizza donated by Farm Island Store – **Mark Wedel - Aitkin**
59. 1-Large 2 topping pizza donated by Farm Island Store – **Joan Hasskamp - Crosby**
60. Mohawk Carpet Stain Remover donated by Hudrlik Carpet & Tile & Tech stain remover– **Janet Miller - McGregor**
61. 40-Club Restaurant & Bar shirt (XL) – **Nancy Berg - Aitkin**
62. 1 Large Take n Bake Pizza from Hot Stuff Foods – **Zola Thompson - Tamarack**
63. 1 Large Take n Bake Pizza from Hot Stuff Foods – **Scott Kittleson - Aitkin**
64. \$10.00 Gift Certificate for Sew Much & More – **Dene’ Josten - Aitkin**
65. \$10.00 Gift Certificate for the Beanery an Internet Café – **Sharon Lindberg - Aitkin**
66. \$10.00 Gift Certificate to Cedarbrook Lumber Company – **John Newstrom - Aitkin**
67. \$10.00 Gift Certificate for Rasley Oil Co. – **Leslie Coleman - Fridley**
68. Snap Fitness Journal – **Lisa Westerlund - Aitkin**
69. Two McDonalds Sandwiches – **John Newstrom - Aitkin**
70. Subway 6-inch fresh Value Meal – **Marissa Raushel - Aitkin**
71. Shiperio Card Game of Golf donated by Shiperio games Chanhassen – **Connie Pettersen - Aitkin**
72. Two McDonalds Sandwiches – **Fredrickson**
73. Subway 6-inch Fresh Value Meal – **Scott Kittleson - Aitkin**
74. Shiperio Card Game of Golf donated by Shiperio games Chanhassen – **Blake Larson**
75. Two McDonalds Sandwiches – **Ardis Ivory - Aitkin**
76. Subway 6-inch Fresh Value Meal – **Lori Nelson - Aitkin**
77. Shiperio Card Game of Golf donated by Shiperio games Chanhassen – **Bruce Branch**
78. Measuring Tape Holder for belt donated by Aitkin Rental Center – **Lacey Spolanch**
79. Aitkin County Soil & Water hat – **Mary Rea - Aitkin**
80. Pine Insurance Agency cozy and flashlight – **Linda Bauer - Aitkin**
81. Aitkin County Naturally bird book – **Bob Cummings - Aitkin**
82. 12 pack of Pepsi donated by EZ Stop – **Lacey Spolanch**
83. Tech Stain Remover 2oz bottle donated by Hudrlik Carpet & Tile – **Erin Rom**

2014 VISITS TO OUR WEBSITE

	Page	Unique	First Time	Returning
	Loads	Visits	Visits	Visits
January	755	387	279	108
February	1,016	475	362	113
March	1,290	605	464	141
April	884	439	360	79
May	1,087	530	416	114
June	1,395	686	592	94
July	1,498	847	716	131
August	1,405	652	533	119
September	1,118	538	452	86
October	954	556	442	114
November	940	437	366	71
December	998	565	496	69
Totals	13340	6717	5478	1239

2014 MUSEUM VISITORS

January	30	24	40	40	86	45
February	18	22	22	55	29	46
March	30	61	23	187	99	307
April	28	36	48	153	48	61
May	77	72	50	100	110	116
6th Graders	84	109	101	91	91	74
June	84	157	472	183	127	180
July	149	229	266	356	251	294
County Fair	1331	1441	1171	0	1500	1695
August	202	201	214	202	248	213
Garage Sale	1232	1356	1423	1814	1723	1825
September	42	68	128	118	132	126
Rendezvous	0	0	0	1077	0	0
October	77	141	75	72	102	95
November	30	43	93	41	150	75
Open House	77	60	83	71	66	81
December	13	23	48	50	132	112
	3504	4043	4257	4610	4894	5345

**Any Idea How We Can Make Our
Museum More Interesting and Fun
For Visitors?**

TRAINS NEEDED!

The Aitkin County Historical Society is still looking for model trains to put on display in our Depot museum railroad room. Do you have a model train of any size that could be donated for this permanent display? Not ready to get rid of it. Could you loan it to us for our display. We need seven more to fill our current display and fifteen when we build our third display cabinet. Please help us fill up our display. The trains have been a great addition to our railroad room.

SCRAP COPPER

The society is now **collecting scrap copper as a fundraiser.**

Pieces of scrap copper pipe, connectors, or electrical wire. Do you have small pieces of wire taking up room in your garage or basement? Not enough to make it worth your while. Please consider donating it to the historical society. Wire or copper plumbing pieces can be dropped off at the Depot museum during open hours. (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 9am to 4pm.)
THANK YOU!

What does the museum need?

1. Toilet Paper.
2. HP 564 Ink Cartridges.
3. Get Well cards
4. Desk Calendar.
5. 8.5 X 11" Copy paper.
6. 8.5 X 11" photo paper.
7. Folgers Decaf Coffee.
8. Regular Folgers Coffee.
9. Wrapped chocolate candy.
10. Cleaning supplies.
11. Mop heads.

DEPOT MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

When doing your holiday shopping do not forget about our gift shop. Over 200 book titles and a variety of wooden toys are available for purchase. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases, plus purchases help to raise funds for the society. We carry many books written by local authors. The store has books about history (local and national), nature, site seeing, railroads, Native Americans, and kids' books. Stop by the museum and check it out.

New book titles in Store

Minnesota Trivia Don'tcha Know!
 Shadows of Time (R/R Depots)
 Who Goosed the Moose?
 Whose Butt?
 Minnesota Running Trails.
 Birds of the Midwest
 Rocks & Minerals
 Birds of Prey of the Midwest
 Animal Tracks
 Waterbirds of the Midwest
 61 Gems of Highway 61
 Grandparents Minnesota Style

Featured titles in Store

Barns of Aitkin County
 Minnesota Memories & Images
 The Seven States of Minnesota
 Warren William
 The Oranges are Sweet
 Little Minnesota
 Betty's Pies favorite Recipes
 The Pie Place Café
 Among the Pine Needles
 Minnesota Activity Book
 You Know You're a Minnesotan If..
 Can't Never Did Nothin'

Volunteer Benefit

As a member you receive a 10% discount but, if you also volunteer at the museum or one of our events you will receive a 15% discount on all purchases in our gift shop. The museum could not operate without volunteers so please consider volunteering.

FOURTH QUARTER ACCESSIONS

10/10/2014	14.127	Roger Nelson	U.S. Railroad Map
10/29/2014	14.128	Gary C. Reiter	Photos – Arnold Westling Cedar Strip Boat
10/29/2014	14.129	Cuyuna Country Heritage	Misc. School photos and information
10/31/2014	14.130	Richard Burman	Dr. Ratcliff Crib, 5 – A books, 4 photos, School Dist. book, Photo – Sander School Dist. #21
11/12/2014	14.131	Carol Munson	1940's Public Health Nurse hat/cap
11/12/2014	14.132	Laura Thornbloom	Dresser set
11/19/2014	14.133	Jeff Norman	Bible
11/22/2014	14.134	Larry Hayes	Train Engine, 6-shoe lasts & stand
12/14/2014	14.135	Myron Larson	2 Security State Bank Riverboat Heritage Hankies.

WHATS NEXT FOR GREG LEACH?

This spring my wife and I will put our home in Crosby up for sale. Our realtor is sure it will sell quickly. Of course there are several fun projects to complete before we can put it on the market. When our home sells we plan on moving to the Twin Cities to be closer to our families.

The plan is to rent an apartment for a couple of years so that we have no yard work or snow shoveling to do and have the ability to just leave. We would like to start traveling around the United States and Canada. In the next couple years we would like to visit every state in the continental U.S. There is so much to see in this country and my wife Gale and I would like to see as much of it as possible while we both still have our health.

After spending two years traveling around this country we will decide where we want to live. Then I plan on volunteering.



McGrath 1950 – 2nd Grade Class

McGrath, a city in Williams Township, section 5; incorporated as a village on March 23, 1923, and separated from the township on August 8, 1923. James E. McGrath, who had 17 logging camps on the Snake River and Chesley Brook, began work in the area about 1885, and in 1907 donated 40 acres for a town site, which the Patterson Land Company platted as Elmwood; renamed McGrath at the time the post office was established in 1908.

James E. McGrath bought his stumps from the Patterson Land Company. His first problem was how to get men and supplies into this area. He decided to come in from the Willow River. His men cut a tote road through the rough country covered with white pine, spruce, balsam, tamarack, birch and oak. Tom, Bob and Jim Dougherty helped cut the road and later ran camps for McGrath.

Now dams were built all along the Snake River. In the spring the water was released and the logs floated down the Snake River and into the St. Croix to Stillwater and the saw mills.

The sound of saw and axe was now heard in camps all through this area. Frank, Joe, Paul and Will McGrath, brothers of James E all worked in the camps. Other names to be remembered as teamsters, cruisers, clerks or foremen are those of Sandy McGillin and his son John; A.E. Arndt; Gus Gilbertson, Mr. Este; and C. J. Hicky.

A large saw mill was built at White Pine.

After the tote roads were cut and some camps started, the settlers began to arrive and take up homesteads. The first family in the McGrath area was that of the Herbig's. They lived in section four, on a road past the present Simon Schwarzbauer place. The Adolph Ziesmer family then followed. They built a cabin at an inland lake about two miles from the present August Ziesmer place.

In 1898, George Schwarzbauer and his wife and two children came to their homestead. They came in a covered wagon by way of Mora.

The Christenson family arrived in 1898. They went to Willow River by rail and then took the wagon and tote road to their homestead in Section 20.

And so it went. John Field and Andrew Martinson families arrived by the same route. Mr. Allison wrote us that men walked and the women and children rode in the wagon. The road was so rough that riding was almost unbearable. One team was completely exhausted on the journey and the men had to get another to finish the twenty-two mile trip.

More settlers arrived each year. They cleared some land and built log cabins for homes. Life was hard. The men worked in the logging camps in the winter and cleared land and tried to improve their homes in the summer. Gardens supplied a great deal of the family food. Potatoes, rutabagas, cabbage, onions and other garden vegetables were sold to the camps and often exchanged for other supplies.

As was often the case in frontier towns, the first building was a “blind pig” or saloon. The next buildings were two small grocery stores built when work was begun on the railroad right-of-way. These were owned by John Landi and Gus Hagberg.

Finally the great day came in the fall of 1908. The railroad was finished! There was one train a week which went through on Sunday. It went as far as Moose Lake. The depot was built very soon after and became the center of the shipping out of wood products and the shipping in of camp supplies.

After the railroad came through, McGrath was a thriving village. In the winter both sides of Main Street were lined with teams at the hitching rails. Everyone has a load of pulp or ties or potatoes or something else to sell.

Building went on in the town. In 1910, the Shamrock Hotel was built. About this time the school house was built. It was the building now known as the “old teacherage.” The railroad donated two lots and the Catholic Church was built in the summer of 1912. The bank was built about the same time but was moved away in 1929.

Two other churches followed later, a German Lutheran and a Norwegian Lutheran.

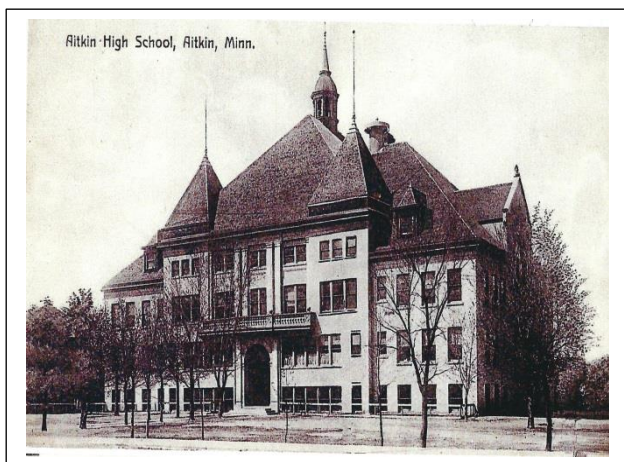
August Hengel operated a livery stable in those early days.

The first consolidated school was built in 1916.

Fire, that great enemy of man, played a great part in the decline of McGrath. Two fires destroyed many of the buildings.

In 1920 a fire burned out the White Pine headquarters of James E. McGrath. A sawmill, planer, boarding house, and a store were all leveled.

Many of the men who had worked in the camps, now settled on small farms. But they never completely stopped working in the woods. During the Second World War and since, McGrath once more felt the thrill of supplying material from the woods. This time it was great rows of pulp that lined our right of way waiting for cars. Although the white pine and the other “lumber” trees were gone, men still found in their woods, products that their country needed. Second growth timber provided a cash crop during the period of turning wild land into farms and still does.



1901 Aitkin High School



Northern Pacific Dining Car

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEPOT MUSEUM

EVENT SCHEDULE FOR 2015

January 21st – Annual Meeting/Dinner – This year’s event will take place at the 40-club. The cost this year will be \$12.00. Event starts at 5:30pm – Social time, 6pm – Dinner, 6:30pm – meeting.

March 14th & 15th - Sports and Commerce show – We will need volunteers to sit at our booth, visit with people who stop at the booth and sell our “**Barns of Aitkin County book**”.

March 26th & 27th – Aitkin Pre-school Tour – The Aitkin pre-school children visit the museum. One morning and one afternoon tour each day. This event gives us an opportunity to show young children the museum.

May 8th – 6th Grade Tour – 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 with a lunch provided for the volunteers.

June – County Commissioner Lunch - Every year we serve lunch to the County Commissioners and show them the progress made over the past year. The County provides around 40% of our Annual budget.

July 8th – 11th – 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.

July 31st & August 1st – 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. We have already started to collect items for the sale. **Remember, all donations are tax deductible.**

December 5th – 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 Christmas 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 – 4pm)

Winter Hours – September thru May

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

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Web: <http://www.aitkin.com/achs/>

GOALS FOR 2015

1. Membership surpasses 500 members.
2. Sell over 3000 raffle tickets again
3. Garage Sale over \$10,000
4. Publish book about our Aitkin County Country schools.
5. Visitor count over 5500
6. Open Research facility
7. Find a Caboose or railroad car for display.
8. Publish and distribute Historic map of Aitkin County.
9. Publish GPS walking tour of the City of Aitkin.
10. Purchase land under museum display buildings.
11. Add 40' addition to building #2.
12. Build Cold storage building to the South of building #3
13. Collect enough model trains to fill up our display cases.

GARAGE SALE

I would like to remind you that we collect items for our Annual Garage sale all year long. When you are replacing furniture, cleaning out your garage, basement, shed or extra rooms in your house please consider donating those unwanted items to the Aitkin County Historical Society. Moved to a smaller home or apartment and find that you brought too much stuff? Donate your extra stuff. Items can be dropped off at the Depot museum in Aitkin or give us a call and we can pick your donations up. Remember, this is our largest fundraiser of the year.

Donations are tax deductible!

NEW ADMINISTRATOR

1. **Needs to be comfortable working with social media.**
2. **Available to work Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays year round and Tuesdays during the three summer months.**
3. **Open to new ideas**
4. **Able to work with Senior Volunteers.**
5. **An interest in History & Aitkin County.**
6. **Be able to give tours of museum and talk to various groups in Aitkin.**
7. **Able to write grants.**

2015 PROJECTS

1. Cut down trees south of building #3
2. Bring in clean fill for area south of building #3
3. Repair plaster walls in depot and repaint.
4. Clean out basement of the depot building.
5. Transfer VHS tapes to DVD.
6. Create a larger presence on social media.
7. Put list of all obits in our files onto our website.
8. Organize our research library.
9. Purchase Warren William movies.
10. Put wood seal on all wood artifacts outside.
11. Repaint flag poles.
12. Build shelf unit in basement of Depot to hold old light fixtures.
13. Clean out back room in log cabin.
14. Move cast iron stove from Depot to back display building.
15. Move accession area from building #2 to Depot office area.
16. Add two computers and copy machine to research room.
17. Display artifacts on walls of research room.
18. Have prints of depots framed and hang in Railroad room.
19. Frame old map of Aitkin County and hang in research room.
20. Train new administrator.
21. Clean out and organize old museum files.
22. Organize the area upstairs in Depot.
23. Clean out roll-top desk.
24. Assemble more photo/info books for displays and rooms.
25. Repair steps back of log cabin.
26. Hang photo of back drop in log cabin.
27. Make description cards for items on display in research room.
28. Label unique items on display in museum.
29. Put wheels under remaining cases that do not have them.
30. Work on copying obits located in the Aitkin Republican Newspaper.
31. Continue to collect photos and information about; churches, resorts & riverboats.
32. Repair windows in basement of Depot.
33. Repair cracks in outside walls of Depot.
34. Complete our set of AHS A-books
35. Create more hands on displays for children to interact with in museum.