

# AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## DEPOT HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER

**Winter 2018 — Volume 25, Issue 1**

### FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Greetings all. I hope you are having a marvelous winter despite the chilly temps. The most common question I have been asked these last 3 months is “How do you like the job?” My answer is, “I love it!” I have always been a bit of a history nut and the volunteers I work with are a stellar team, so I am always looking forward to heading in to work. My hope is that ACHS will have a season of growth and vitality during my tenure here.

The beginning of our winter started with an excellent Spirit of Christmas celebration with the cookie walk, raffle, and festive holiday displays. Many thanks to all who made cookies (51 cookie makers this year!) and donated raffle prizes. We are now gearing up for some new displays and working toward a self assessment process.

2018 marks the 100-year anniversary of the triple tragedies of war, epidemic, and fire. These tragedies had significant impacts upon our community which is why they will be highlighted in new temporary displays at the museum. While these displays are being developed we have been posting pictures of some of Aitkin’s World War I veterans on Facebook. So if you are a Facebook user check the photos posted on our page! In the Snippets From the Past section you can check out a couple front page newspaper articles from 1918. Unfortunately the images of the clippings are not the best. Let me know if you would like to continue seeing these snippets in subsequent newsletters despite the less than perfect appearance.

This summer we will begin a process of self-assessment utilizing a tool developed by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) called StEPs which stands for Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations. StEPs is a tool that will help us benchmark ourselves against national museum standards for small to mid-sized museums. This comprehensive assessment will allow us to rate our practices and policies as basic, good or better. With this information in hand we will then be able to take the next step of creating an informed strategic long-term plan that will improve our ability to accomplish our mission of collecting, preserving and sharing the history of Aitkin County. Keep your eyes peeled for opportunities to lend your voice to this process!

When I was first hired I realized reviving the 6th grade visit day for our local school kids was a high priority for many of you, and I am happy to announce that it will be happening again this Spring. But for it to be a success we’ll need many of you to help! Check out the Volunteer Opportunities section to see how you can lend a hand to make this day a hit for our local 6th graders.

Another quick, easy and free way of promoting ACHS is through Facebook. We now have a page and I encourage you to search for Aitkin County Historical Society on Facebook to find us. This is online word-of-mouth advertising you can help us with. We are putting up a lot of photos of people, places and activities from Aitkin’s past that you can enjoy. Like our page and posts so that your friends can see what we are up to.

Finally, be sure to read about the immigrant’s trunk that was recently donated to ACHS in our Museum Happenings section. It has a great story behind it and will soon be on display at the Depot museum!

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## Business Members

Aitkin County Abstract Company  
Aitkin Family Chiropractic  
Aitkin Flowers & Gifts  
Aitkin Motor Company  
Allen County Public Library  
American Legion Post 86  
Antoine Electric  
Arvidson Tax & Accounting, Inc.  
Brands Small Engine Repair  
Bremer Bank  
Eyecare Centers of Aitkin & McGregor  
Goble Sewer Service  
Gravelle Plumbing & Heating  
Hasskamp Brothers Well Drilling  
Lundberg Plumbing & Heating  
Members Coop Credit Union  
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative  
Neighborhood National Bank  
Paulbeck's County Market  
Security State Bank  
Shirts Plus  
Sunset Bay Resort



**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS!**

## ACHS Is Supported by These Local Governments

Aitkin County  
Beaver Township  
Farm Island Township  
Hazelton Township  
Idun Township  
Lakeside Township  
Nordland Township  
Pliny Township



**IF YOU DON'T SEE YOUR TOWNSHIP LISTED. PLEASE CONSIDER ASKING YOUR TOWNSHIP BOARD TO SUPPORT THE ACHS AT YOUR NEXT ANNUAL MEETING!**



**ACHS is still collecting your scrap copper. If you have bits laying around in your way bring them on down to the Depot Museum and we can use them!**

## BOARD MEMBERS

Cheryl Meld—President  
Jennie Hakes—Vice-President  
Laura Thornbloom—Secretary  
Colleen Bremner—Treasurer  
John Hendrickson  
Ron Kemmet  
Lorraine Liljenquist  
Bob Lake  
Nancy Jacobson  
Sherry Arvidson—Accountant  
Mark Wedel—Aitkin Co. Com.



**Please send in your unsold raffle tickets as we need to keep them on file with our raffle documentation!**



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Linda Erlandson  
Deanna Glumac  
Janice Hasselius  
Jennifer Henry  
Byron & Diane Schlagel  
Robert Skogman  
Bradley Landgren  
Lisa Westerlund  
Antoine Electric

# WINTER 2017/2018 ACCESSIONS

17.67 Bunny Voll	Clothes, Oil Painting, Umbrella	18.01 Gary Peterson	Round Lake Cemetary Transcriptions
17.68 Mike Wayrynen	School souvenir, McGregor school bklet	18.02 David Leighton	Photograph
17.69 Ladd Hakes	Wood train set	18.03 Sally Bowser	Wooden potty chair
17.70 James Zeese	Map & photo of Aitkin	18.04 Jennie Hakes	Picnic basket
17.71 Tom Shutz	WWI & WWII items	18.5 ECRL	3 bks on Aitkin history
17.72 David Leighton	Immigrant's Trunk	18.6 Diane Schlagel	Pilot's Logbook
17.73 Sandy Schleh	Hill City yearbook	18.7 Carlton CHS	2 books, photo
17.74 John Henderickson	Train set, sign, nativity	18.8 Pam Landgren	2 cook books

## Gifts and Memorials

We are thankful to these generous folks who have given special gifts and memorials.

Bob and Karen Hillman — \$120.00

In memory of Mike Hillman

Mike and Pam Jensen — \$100.00

In honor of the Bridgewater family

Kathryn Kaplan — \$250.00

In honor of Charles Kaplan

In memory of F.C. "Kap" and Hazel Kaplan

Bob Skogman — 6 display cases

Antoine Electric — \$500.00 of construction material

### Napoleon Bonneville: An Aitkin World War I Veteran

Napoleon Bonneville was part of the American Expeditionary Forces lead by Commander John J. Pershing in France during World War I. Napoleon was involved in two of the most important military events of the later part of the war, the battle of St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Both the battle and the offensive had massive casualties, yet Napoleon survived to return home to his wife. They raised 5 children in Aitkin and one of their grandchildren is currently Aitkin's mayor! This picture features Mr. Bonneville in his World War I uniform. It is one of many military related photos in our extensive photograph collection.



# EVENTS

## Commerce and Outdoor Show

March 10-11

Once again ACHS will be having a booth at the Aitkin Chamber of Commerce's 14th annual Commerce and Outdoor Show at the Aitkin Highschool. We will be showcasing our newest published book *Schools of Aitkin County Minnesota* as well as other selected titles from our bookstore. Membership forms will also be available for those who would like to become members or renew their membership (we will send out renewal notices to our current members in April).

Volunteers are needed to help attend the booth during the show as well as set up and tear down. If you are interested in helping check out our Volunteer Opportunities section to see how to sign up.

If you plan to attend the show please stop by our booth and say "hi". There might even be a prize drawing to sign up for!

## 6th Grade Visit Day Relaunching!

May 9

ACHS is happy to announce that we will be re-launching our 6th Grade Visit Day on Wednesday May 9th.

Approximately 110 6th graders will be visiting us from Rippleside and McGregor Schools as well as area homeschools. We will be giving the students a taste of Aitkin history through presentations on homesteading crafts, the fur trading era, a lumberjack's life from our very own camp cook Joe Gerty (aka Boyd Bremner), and what immigrating to Aitkin would have been like at the turn of the 19th century. We will also show the students how to use our resource room for doing family research.

This event will need many helpers to make it go smoothly. Check out our Volunteer Opportunities section to see how you can help out with this worthwhile event!

**Help us save money on postage by requesting your newsletter to be emailed to you. You can let us know by calling us (218)927-3348 or by emailing us [achs3348@embarqmail.com](mailto:achs3348@embarqmail.com)**

## ITEMS NEEDED AT THE DEPOT:

**Upright Vacuum in good working condition**

**Small cash till for front desk**

If you have any of these items that you would like to donate to ACHS they would be greatly appreciated!

*Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run him over.—Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## Tech Corner

### 2017 Website Visits

We had a busy website this year with 10,266 visits. Of those visits 9,079 were first time visits. Many thanks to Jennie Hakes for keeping our website up and running so that we have a presence on the internet!

### Facebook

We are now on Facebook. Search for Aitkin County Historical Society on Facebook and you'll find our page. We are utilizing this page to highlight our photo collection, announce ACHS events and ask people to help us identify folks in pictures. Be sure to like our page on Facebook!

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## Helpers and Booth Attendants at the Commerce and Outdoor Show:

Sign up now to help out at the Commerce and Outdoor Show which will be held March 10-11. We will need helpers to set up the booth on Friday, March 9th, booth attendants on Saturday March 10th 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and helpers to clean up after the show on Sunday. If you would like to help us at this event let us know when you can volunteer. Thanks in advance!

If you are out of town you can now order books from our bookstore on Amazon.com. At present we are adding books here and there when we have a moment. The books we have published (*Schools of Aitkin County, Barns of Aitkin County, etc.*) are yet to be added as there are some extra steps to be taken before we can sell those online. They should be available online by the end of March!

## Multiple Volunteers for 6th Grade Visit Day

We need your help for the 6th Grade Visit Day. So reserve Wednesday, May 9th on your calendar and come volunteer at the Depot Museum for the day. About 115 6th graders will be touring our museum and your presence will ensure this day will be a great experience for them.

We have needs for presenters, group guides (we will be dividing the students up into groups of about 10), time keepers, and food preparers. You can volunteer for the whole day (9:00—2:30) or just the morning session (9:00—noon) or the afternoon session (11:00—2:30). If you are interested in volunteering let us know and we'll get you signed up. Lunch will be served for our volunteers from 11:00—noon. This is a great opportunity for you to invest a small amount of time yet make a big impact. Hope to see you there!

## Represent ACHS At Your Township Annual Meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup>!

Township annual meetings are a time for you, as an elector, to make your desires known to your town board. Many town boards traditionally consider making contributions during the annual meeting in order to get input from electors. Although the ultimate responsibility for appropriating funds belongs to the town board, sometimes the board will need authorization from the electors before they are able to contribute. Thankfully for county historical societies such as ACHS, the Minnesota Legislature has made it easier for townships and cities to contribute to our organization. Your town board or city council is authorized to do so through MN Statute 138.053,

*"The governing body of any home rule charter or statutory city or town may annually appropriate from its general fund an amount not to exceed 0.02418 percent of estimated market value, derived from ad valorem taxes on property or other revenues, to be paid to the historical society of its respective county to be used for the promotion of historical work and to aid in defraying the expenses of carrying on the historical work in the county. No city or town may appropriate any funds for the benefit of any historical society unless the society is affiliated with and approved by the Minnesota Historical Society."*

Even though town boards do not need elector authorization to support ACHS we encourage you to go to your town annual meeting and voice your support for us. We have sent out financial appeal letters to all 40 townships in Aitkin County. These letters will ensure each town board is introduced to ACHS. Your voice and presence at the annual meeting will show the board that their electors are in favor of supporting Aitkin County Historical Society.

We have also recently sent out financial appeal letters to all of Aitkin's organized cities. So if you live in one of Aitkin's cities you can also voice your support at an upcoming council meeting.

Let's see if we can make 2018 a record year for Aitkin townships and cities partnering with us. We'll need your help to make that happen!

# MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

## An Immigrant's Trunk Returns Home

Late in 2017 David Leighton of Colorado donated his Grandmother's immigrant trunk to ACHS. In addition to being in fine condition with all of the original Rosemaling still vivid, this trunk has a uniquely Aitkin story to tell. In black paint Leighton's grandmother's name, Ingaborg Markison, is written on the side of the trunk along with an Aitkin address. Ingaborg was an early Aitkin resident arriving around 1885. We have found a few pieces of information regarding her (obituary, marriage certificate, birth record of her first son) and will be doing some more research in preparation of setting the trunk out for display at the Depot. If you might have any information on Ingaborg, the Markison or Leighton families please let us know!



Ingaborg's trunk being uncrated at the Depot Museum.

## Upcoming Displays

War, fire, and flu epidemic will be the subjects of our upcoming temporary display at the Depot. In 1918 these three tragedies came together to make it an especially difficult year for many communities including ours. As it is now the 100th anniversary of these events we would like to highlight what was going on in Aitkin county during that time through these displays. If you have any information, photos, or artifacts relating to these disasters please share them with us.

## 2107 Visitor Numbers

We have tallied up our registered visitors to the museum for 2017 and here is what we have found. We had 551 visit and sign our guest book at the Depot Museum. 868 folks visited us at the Log Museum during the Aitkin County Fair. We had visitors from 24 different states and two other countries (England and Canada). Be sure to bring your out-of-town guests to the depot museum this year so that we can share a slice of Aitkin history with them.

## Building project update

The addition to Building #3 is now complete. With this addition we have an extra 960 square feet that is climate controlled and ready to store our expanding collection of artifacts as well as our garage sale donations. Many thanks to Matt Lueck Construction, Antoine Electric, and Gravelle Plumbing and Heating on the superb work they did on this project. We would also like to give an extra special thanks to Antoine Electric for donating \$500.00 of materials to the project.

## A History of Law Enforcement at the Fair

In honor of the old jailhouse that will come down this spring to make way for the new county administration building the ACHS will focus on law enforcement history at our Aitkin County Fair display in the Log Museum. As we prepare for this display we are on the lookout for any artifacts, photos or information that would help tell the story of Aitkin's law enforcement history. If you have anything that you would like to share for this display please let us know!

*There is nothing new in the world except the history you do not know.—Harry Truman*

# SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST

## TWO AITKIN COUNTY TOWNS DESTROYED LAST SATURDAY

Forest Fires of Wide Extent Wipe Out Bain and Lawler on Soo Line, and Threaten Many Other Points, Village of Aitkin Included.

## LOSS OF LIFE IN COUNTY ABOUT TWELVE

Adjutant General Rhinow Orders Many Home Guard Units to Aitkin to Assist Citizens in Fighting Fires Here and in Vicinity.

## GUARDS UNDER COMMAND OF MAJ. CHASE.

Two towns, Bain and Lawler in Aitkin county, have been destroyed by the fire, which swept over the northeastern part of Minnesota last Saturday. Although forest fires and bog fires had been burning in the county for several days, the danger to their homes that morning. But a terrific windstorm came up about noon, and at two o'clock Bain was utterly destroyed. Many people who had gone to Palsade for the Red Cross dinner and Liberty Day celebration there, rushed home in their cars—some of them finding no homes to go back to.

At Lawler the fire broke out somewhat later in the afternoon. Men had been going out from there into the country to get farmers who were in danger into town, and many of them lost their own homes in their efforts to save others. Train number 188-189, which was at Riverton, was ordered to Lawler at five o'clock; it was seven before they could get there, and then the town was gone, but only three lives were lost in the village. There was a greater loss of life in the farmhouses in the vicinity, for there was no place of safety for the refugees. The hotel, the schoolhouse, and ten residences and a store were standing at Lawler, Automba, in Carlton county, has been entirely lost, and twenty-two people burned to death. The burning of the bridges between there and Lawler made it impossible for the train to reach the town and the only shelter that could be found was an open meadow. The station agent, staying by the wire as long as he dared, finally saved himself by jumping into a well.

At Palsade Poston's saw-mill and the adjoining residence was destroyed. The report that the whole village had been devastated is false. Tamarack was surrounded by fire, and it crept up to the very edge of town, but there was no loss.

Refugees from Lawler were brought into Aitkin late Saturday night, and cared for here until they could go back. Supplies from the Red Cross were sent up, and Monday a car of food and clothing from Minneapolis was received here and taken on the special train to Lawler and Automba. Miss Louise Fre, who had charge of the relief work in Tyler a few weeks ago, was put in charge, and on Wednesday, Miss Henrietta Lund and Rev. Robert Bennett, both of Minneapolis, were sent by headquarters there, to Automba.

Lawler is under military law now; camps are being built, homes are being erected anew, and little houses built there and sent to Automba on flat cars.

The Soo line up to Duluth is

running on schedule time again; telegraph connections are possible; people are going back and beginning over again. Meanwhile, Aitkin has taken on a very military aspect, with its 250 soldiers, who have been sent up to fight the fires in the vicinity. Every means of preventing further disasters has been taken.

## AID EXTENDED TO FIRE SUFFERERS

## Red Cross and County Unite in Efforts to Give Temporary and Permanent Relief

Immediate and exceedingly generous has the response of the people of Aitkin County been to the appeal of the fire sufferers for help in the sweeping disaster which has befallen them. On Sunday morning when the news of the burning of Lawler and Automba reached the village, Red Cross headquarters were opened, clothes were gathered, women left their homes to help sew and distribute supplies, and the homeless ones from Lawler who had come in during the night were fed and clothed. During the day Adjutant General Rhinow and staff passed through the town, and Monday morning great supplies of clothing came from Minneapolis to the Red Cross here. They were checked off and sent to Lawler the same day; boxes came from Brainerd, Crosby and Valparaiso; contributions of food and clothing were made by the people of Aitkin, and the faithful little train 188-189 on the Soo carried the welcome supplies to Lawler and Automba.

There were several residences, a hotel, and the schoolhouse left at Lawler, and many of the refugees went back on Sunday and Monday; on Wednesday the town was put under martial rule and is rapidly being rebuilt.

On Monday evening a meeting was held at the court house to plan organized relief work for the destitute. Mr. Boekenoggen, chairman of the Aitkin County Red Cross, presided, and it was the sense of the meeting that the Red Cross and the county were to work together to give temporary and permanent aid. The project was well outlined in a talk given by Mr. C. H. Warner, in which he urged that a strong organization be at once effected to work with, supplement and back up the Red

## INFLUENZA IS ON THE WANE HERE

65 Cases at the Hospital; 61 Have Already Been Discharged.

That the influenza is on the wane here, despite the number of deaths which have occurred during the week, is quite evident from the present number of patients in the hospital; there are now 65, as compared with 84 only a few days ago, and over 100 for a few days last week. Over 200 patients have been treated since the hospital was established and 61 cases have been dismissed.

As an especially stringent check upon the spread of the disease, there has been an appointment of an additional physician, whose duty it is to go out into the outlying districts, administer aid in the home when the patient cannot be moved, and to see to it that those cases which can be taken to the hospital are brought in. Dr. F. H. Dubbe, of the Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis has been chosen for this work, and arrived Wednesday.

A new dietitian has been secured also, as Miss Estrop was detailed to Fort Snelling by the War Department. Miss Adeline E. Tuft is taking her place. Four new nurses, Miss Bertha Houkebo of St. Barnabas, Minneapolis, Mrs. Vita Conn of Plainview, Mrs. C. W. Barge, and Miss Ryan of Minneapolis, has been added to the staff.

There is great need of more help however, and the hospital has been very grateful for the aid received by the Home Guards, two of whom report for kitchen duty each day; also for the services of Mr. Ed. Plaster of Grayling, Alex. Howard of this village, and of Mrs. Garlinghouse, who have given very generously of their time and energies. And there have not been lacking material evidences on the part of the community of appreciation for the work of the hospital staff; \$9.45 in money has been donated; a box of apples was given by Mr. Zoerb, three fine chickens by Mr. Nate Way, and a box of candy and a carton of cigarettes by Mayor Morris.

And last Sunday the heart of every patient and every member of the staff was gladdened by a present of five gallons of Ives ice-cream from Minneapolis sent by the brother of Miss Ilopper, one of the nurses. A brother connected

## WORLD WAR ENDS IN VICTORY FOR U.S.

County Greet News of Great Event With Cheers of Joy.

On Monday, November 11, at 2:45 in the morning, the announcement that the Great War was ended was made at the State Department at Washington.

Following so quickly upon the false report of the Thursday before it was received with little credence by some doubting Thomases; but the greater part of the population rose up—and that quite, literally—to celebrate this greatest of all events. The Twin Cities and Duluth, though closed because of the influenza gave vent to unrestrained joy for twenty-four hours; most of the places of business were closed.

The presence of so many influenza patients in our own community made a boisterous celebration impossible; but the feeling of relief and elation was none the less keenly felt.

On page 2 of this issue will be found the terms of the armistice which Germany signed.

## WM. BOYD OF SWATARA PASSES AWAY NOV. 11

Wm. Boyd of Swatara died at his home, Monday, November 11, of influenza. He was buried at Aitkin Wednesday afternoon at two o'clock; the funeral ceremonies were conducted by the I. O. O. F., Palsade lodge, Dr. J. O. Werntz, officiating.

Mr. Boyd was born in Aitkin May 10, 1894. He leaves a wife and three children, the wife being the daughter of Mr. A. H. Young of Swatara. His father, Mr. James Boyd, and sister, Mrs. Margaret Bailey, also survive.

with an ice-cream company may prove a blessing for an entire community.

Anyone desiring to offer their services to the hospital may report to the Dispensary on the second floor.

Aitkin Independent age., Collection: Aitkin Independent age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1912-1922

Minnesota Historical Society 345 Kellogg Blvd. W. St. Paul, MN 55102 - This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code Title 17)

Aitkin Independent age., Collection: Aitkin Independent age (Aitkin, Minn.) 1912-1922

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Frontpages of Aitkin Independent Age, October 19, 1918 and November 16, 1918.



## **Aitkin County Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 215**

**Aitkin, MN, 56431**

We are located just 2 blocks south of the stop-lights in downtown Aitkin. South of the railroad tracks and west of highway 169 at 20 Pacific Street Southwest.

Phone: (218)927-3348

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Website: [www.aitkincohs.org](http://www.aitkincohs.org)

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **Commerce and Outdoor Show**

March 10 - 11

We will again be having a booth at the Commerce and Outdoor Show. Check out the Volunteer Opportunities section to see how you can help out!

### **6th Grade Visit Day**

May 9

We're restarting the 6th Grade Visit Day at the Depot Museum again! Check out the Volunteer Opportunities section to figure out how you can be a part of this important program!

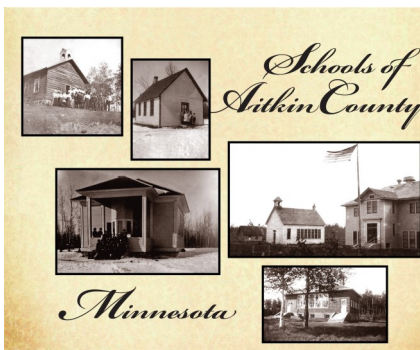
## **MUSEUM**

### **HOURS**

#### **Fall & Winter**

Wednesday, Friday, &  
Saturday  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**EDITOR:  
Mathew Nix**



ACHS' latest book, *Schools of Aitkin County Minnesota* is available for sale at the Depot Museum for \$19.95 plus tax. Members receive a 10% discount.

With hundreds of photographs and many recollections, this book is a rich resource on the old country schools that were present throughout Aitkin County. A great gift for those who like to reminisce!