



AITKIN COUNTY HISTORY & ANECDOTES



Welcome to Aitkin County...

History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.

~Robert Penn Warren

2020 has been quite a year. So many people and businesses affected by these trying times. In the spirit of supporting "Shop Local" and supporting local businesses, I want to give a special shout out to the businesses who support us by maintaining a yearly business membership:

Aitkin Motor Company

Sorenson, Root, Thompson Funeral Home

Allen County Public Library

The Office Shop

American Legion Post 86

Clear Lake Grange

Gravelle Plumbing & Heating

Dr. Paul Kuiken

Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative

Neighborhood National Bank



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OPEN HOURS

October-April
Wednesday-Friday
10am-4pm

May-September
Wednesday-Saturday
10am-4pm

We depend on the support of people like you!
Thank you for your generosity!



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.



When Life Gives You Time.....

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I think everyone is familiar with the proverbial phrase “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade”, and we could certainly look at 2020 as a challenge requiring some effort to find the positive. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an experience in modern life that is unprecedented, putting restrictions on 21st century lifestyles that many of us find unwelcome or stressful. However, the pandemic has given us at least one thing we may appreciate: time, a pause in our over-scheduled lives.

What does the gift of time provide to our historical society? During the extended closure of the Depot Museum, the society has been able to complete an assessment of the condition of the depot building, and give that assessment the focus of attention it deserves, without trying to squeeze the report and responding plan of address into an agenda item or between public fundraising events. Having the time to focus on the assessment report allows us to really understand the needs of our physical facility and prioritize its care well into future decades. Time allows us to devise a budget and fundraising efforts that are intentional, specific and relevant.

Our organization’s administrator, Heidi Gould, has used time to her advantage to work with those involved in conducting the assessment, the ACHS board of directors, and possible donors, to create viable strategies for addressing needs.

What else has the gift of time provided? The closure of the museum has allowed us to scrutinize our exhibits and exhibit space and create plans for fresh and dynamic displays that will provide visitors with interesting, accurate information about historic events and places specific to our community. I am excited to look forward a few months to the time when new exhibits can be unveiled and the positive public response to the society’s hard work is experienced. I think I am safe in saying that any visitors’ local or seasonal, will be impressed.

And finally, the gift of time has given our historical society the opportunity to look at how we build up and maintain our resources; financial, human and historic. Limited space is an issue and we need to look at how we collect, research, and interpret area history. What artifacts and how many of each is pertinent to telling the story of Aitkin County? What is the cost of maintaining collections? How do we revitalize fundraising campaigns to make the most of social media, online donating, in person events, estate planning and grants? And how do we use resources to draw in new members, and how, from within the membership, do we regenerate a corps of enthusiastic volunteers?

In closing, I’d like to take this last bit of time to thank those who have contributed their time to our historical society in 2020. Volunteers have given their time this year in many ways: early in the year many hours were given to plan for events that eventually did not happen, mid-year brought opportunities for volunteers to help ensure the building was secure and necessary operations continued despite the museum being closed, late summer brought volunteers together to hold a modified annual garage sale. Hat’s off, and a big thank you, to all of you who have helped us make lemonade this year!



Ghost Towns and Lost Communities of Aitkin County

**Thank you to all ACHS Donors,
New and Renewing Members
August-October**

New and Renewing Members

The Office Shop (Scott & Jodie Johnson)
Ruth Carlstrom
Sally Prill
American Legion Post 86
Jennie Kline
Mary Rea

Henry Fellerman
Allen Peterson
Jon & Nancy Jacobson
Janet Miller

Aikin Motor Company
Idun Township

Donors
Libby Township
Floe International



ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

As we continue forward with updates and changes at the ACHS, we are moving onto removing the old exhibits and displays in preparation for the creation of new fresh exhibits. One history theme I always enjoy exploring and learning about personally is Ghost Towns. I love exploring the history and stories of these small towns, some that still have homes and a few businesses, some that only exist in memories. Sometimes the best history to share is what you yourself are passionate about learning— some of that passion for the subject can be passed on.

With that in mind, the new exhibits will have a section dedicated to telling the stories of some of these towns, at least the ones we can find details about. However, all are included on the map you can see on the preceding page. What you are seeing is approximate locations for the communities, based on old maps, oral histories, family histories, and newspaper descriptions of the area the town was in. This is but a small version of a large map that will be printed and hung in this exhibit.

As you look over this map, hopefully there are no communities missing. If there are, please let me know so I can rectify this.

If anyone has old business records— signs, advertising materials, goods— from these communities and would be willing to donate, contact Heidi at achs@aitkincohs.org.

2020 Memorial Donations

- Joann White, in memory of Ron White
- Robert & Betty White, in memory of Ron White
- J.A. Miller, in memory of Ron White
- Mark & Rosalyn Anderson, in memory of Ron White
- Christine Bailey, in memory of Ron White
- Mary Rea, in memory of Ron White



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 P.O. Box 215
 Aitkin, MN 56431
 www.aitkincohs.org
 (218)927-3348

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

INDICATE YOUR LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP ____ new ____ renewal

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$20.00
Senior (over 60)	\$7.50
Life	\$200.00
Business or Club	\$30.00

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone: _____ Cell phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Membership Amount Enclosed: _____

I would like to receive the newsletter via email instead of US mail
 I am interested in volunteering
 Make checks payable to: AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL or ACHS

Mail check and application to: **Aitkin County Historical Society**
P.O. Box 215
Aitkin, MN 56431

Board of Directors:
 TBD, *President*
 Cheryl Meld, Tamarack, *VP*
 Laura Thornbloom, Aitkin, *Secretary*
 TBD, *Treasurer*
 John Hendrickson, Aitkin
 Kirk Peysar, Aitkin
 Roxy Wigton, Aitkin
 Mark Wedel, Aitkin,
County Commissioner Liaison

Staff
 Heidi Gould, Aitkin
Administrator
 achs@aitkincohs.org

If it's time to renew your yearly membership, or you know someone who should be a member, use this handy form.

If you are unsure of your member renewal date, please call (218)927-3348 or email achs@aitkincohs.org