



# AITKIN COUNTY HISTORY & ANECDOTES



“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?”

~Marcus Tullius Cicero



*"Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference."*  
~Kathy Calvin, United Nations

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It's that time of year again, time for membership renewals and our Annual Fund Drive.

Donate to the Annual Fund Drive to support the Depot rehabilitation and our work towards making the building accessible to all with ADA upgrades.

*Watch the mail for your letters!*



## OPEN HOURS

October-April  
Tuesday-Friday  
10am-4pm

May-September  
Tuesday-Friday  
10am-4pm  
Saturday 10am-2pm



We depend on the support of people like you!

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# COLLECTIONS INVENTORY

Our 64-week inventory is coming to a close, and it's time to bid farewell to our hard-working Collections Specialists, Aurora and Sarah. After over a year of photographing, re-housing, and data entry, ACHS now has better intellectual control of our collection, a new database to assist in monitoring conditions and searching for artifacts, and a beautifully organized collections space.



On to other projects such as a mold mitigation and cleaning grant to safely clean the damaged archives.

## FROM THE COLLECTIONS

Effie Mary Steele was born January 25, 1878 at Seaforth, Ontario, Canada. In 1902, she and her family moved to Aitkin, where Effie would marry, raise a family, and pass away in 1966.

Very artistically inclined, Effie kept multiple sketchbooks (see samples at right) and was an avid writer of poetry which she often sent to the *Aitkin Independent Age* for publication.

Typed here are copies of two of her poems for your enjoyment.



### Winter in Minnesota

The winter sun's low slanted rays  
Gild snow crowned hills and woodland ways  
And, high on the fir tree's tapered tip,  
Gay blue-jay screams his saucy quip.

An antlered stag, whose arduous climb,  
Gives panting breath it's frosty rime,  
Turns brilliant eyes in quick alarm,  
As smoke plumes rise on distant farm.

A sudden pause in headlong flight,  
A flashing glance, through fading light,  
But no rude sounds reach wary ears,  
And peace and beauty calm his fears.

So, easing his heart with one long sigh,  
He looks for a sheltered place to lie,  
When bright stars light his vast blue tent,  
Paws him a bed, and sleeps content!

~EMS



### Wedding of the Waters

Hark ye, midcontinent, I am the Sea!  
Than and his minions conquer not me!  
Out of my fathomless caverns I come,  
Mine is the song that the hurricanes hum!

Heard in the great booming voice of the deep,  
Telling two nations my trust will I keep!  
Lovely Superior, Bride of the Sea!  
Send for the edict! Wed shall we be!

Michigan, Huron, and little St. Clair,  
Erie, Ontario, bridesmaids so fair!  
Two friendly nations, your sponsors shall be,  
Lovely Superior, Bride of the Sea!

Niagara's thunderous pipe-organ shall play  
Processional march for our wedding day!  
Your sparkling head dress a gift of the sun,  
Your gown from Aurora, gossamer-spun.

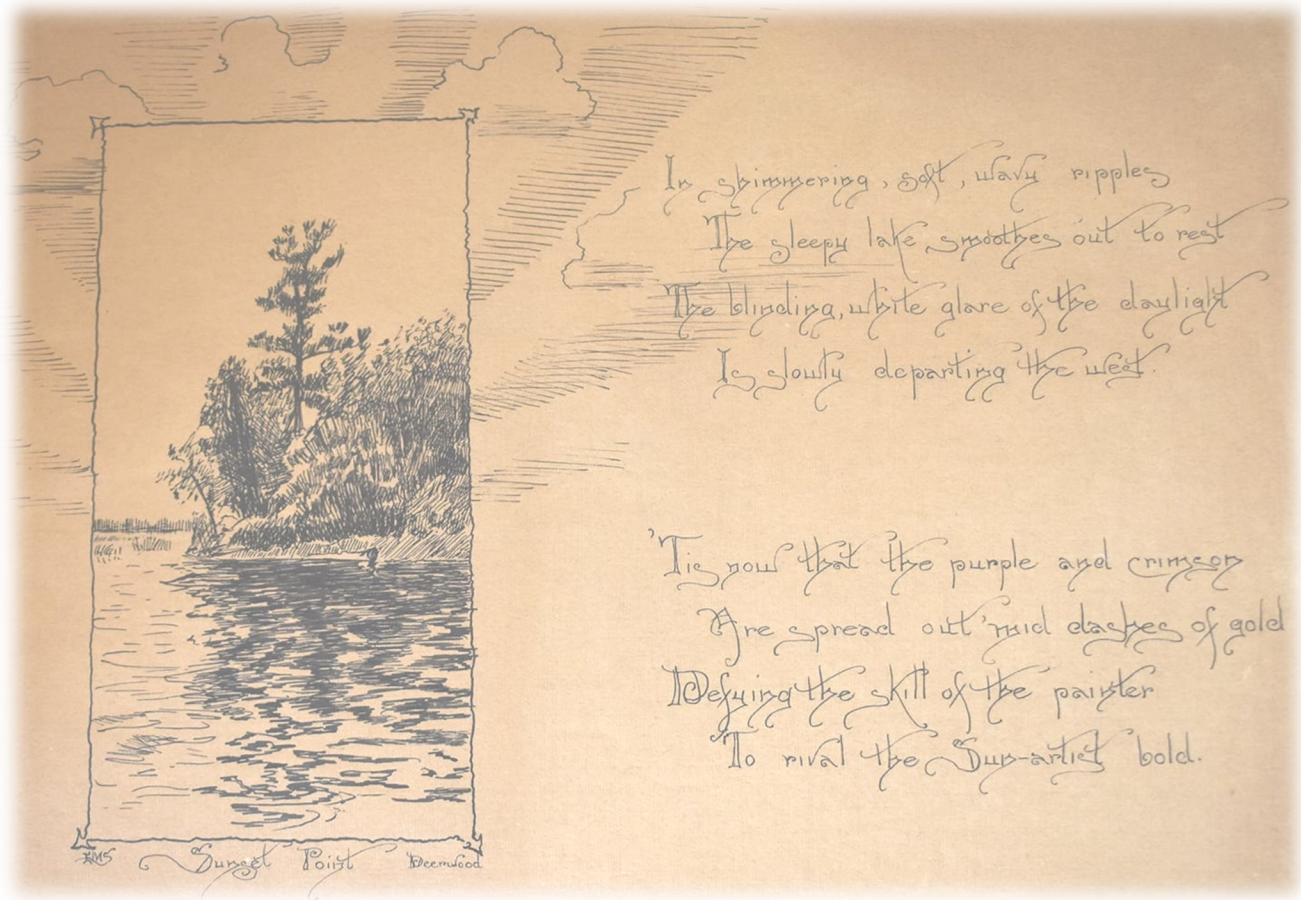
Ermine from Canada, mist for a veil,  
Mighty St. Lawrence, your long silken trail!  
The same two nations to you shall bring  
A border-lake necklace of pearls on a string.

Into your harbors together shall pour  
Their gas and their oil, their coal and their ore;  
Their wheat and their milk, and ripe golden corn,  
Into your harbors on wedding morn.

Shipping their surplus from lake to lake,  
That earth's starving children may freely partake.  
Hark ye, Midcontinent! I am the Sea!  
Out of my fathomless caverns I come.

To make your midcontinent industries hum!  
Great opportunity knocks at your door!  
See that no selfish ones hinder us more!  
May four winds of Heaven softly roam  
This land of Enchantment, your pine-girdled home!





Above: Elm Island, Cedar Lake, 1910.

Below, L-R: "Now be Dignified a Moment", "The Dainty Belle of the Flower Ball", and "Jenny", 1910.





# COURTSHIP AND PERSONAL LETTERS OF GEORGE & MINNIE (KRUMHAUS) FRANZ

Love was in the Air!

When Heidi handed me two metal boxes bursting with correspondence and asked if I would like to transcribe the contents, little did I know what an adventure it would be. In 1910, George and Minnie, two young lovers, wrote constantly to each other until they married in January 1912. George Franz farmed outside of Aitkin and courted Minnie Krumhaus, who lived in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Although they rarely saw each other in person, the letters quickly went from "Dear Cousin" (yes, they were cousins) to "My Dearest George" and "My Dearest Minnie."

Every day I look forward to what Minnie and George and their families have to say. Entertainment included going to plays, dances, and playing cards. Letters told of weddings, farming, weather,



Mar 14 1911  
Cittis

My dear Minnie  
I received your  
most welcome card today so I  
thought I would answer while  
in town. Today is election day  
so John and I came up to vote  
our families is very small now  
adays only us three for awhile  
Oh but how I miss you just  
think my dearest Conrad & I  
were out fishing Sunday fore  
noon did not get any in the after noon  
we had the farmer's meeting  
I was at my old job again. pos-  
ing the hour around. I also got the  
ring to-day which I will send do-  
and those postals if they are finish

local news, etc. One morning I was sad to read that a relative who had given birth passed away two weeks later at age 22. A stamp cost 2¢ for a letter, 1¢ for a postcard.

I have a long way to go, with just under 100 letters transcribed and perhaps as many yet to do. It makes me wonder what we will leave to our descendants. Who prints emails and texts and saves them? Something has been lost with the near passing of the hand-written letter.

Thank-you to Robert Peterson, who donated these boxes, and thank you to George and Minnie for saving them in the first place.

- Jennie Hakes, ACHS volunteer

*\*We will be sharing these with the Waukesha, WI historical society upon completion of the project.\**

**Thank you to all ACHS Donors,  
New and Renewing Members  
February-April**

*New and Renewing Members*

Allen Peterson  
Gary C. Reiter  
Paulette & Jim Anderson  
Gravelle Plumbing & Heating  
Aitkin Motor Company  
Mary Larson  
Bob & Gayle Janzen  
Ross & Vicki Wagner  
Todd Carey  
American Legion Post #86  
Clear Lake Grange  
Robert Pool  
Marty Tolvanen

Beverly & Marvin  
Midthun  
Roger & Dorothy  
Glidden  
Charles Armstead

Aitkin Township  
Beaver Township

*In Memorium*

**Donors**

Gravelle Plumbing &  
Heating  
Aitkin Motor Company  
Blackbaud Giving  
Fund- Medtronic  
Pliny Township  
Farm Island Township



# SEEKING SPONSORS



The ACHS is looking to replace it's weather damaged, and sadly, unreadable, outdoor sign.

With so many other projects to fund via grant, we are instead seeking sponsors to fund the purchase and installation of an updated sign.

Sponsor names & logos will recognized on a thank you placard in the Depot lobby.

If interested, send a note with your donation, or write in the memo line that the donation is for the sign project.

*thank you!*

Aitkin County Historical Society  
 20 Pacific St. SW  
 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:**

John Hendrickson, Aitkin, *President*  
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 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 before renewing to avoid paying extra.*