

*Sheriffs of Crow Wing  
County  
1865 to the Present*

*Compiled and Written by  
Ann M. Nelson*

*October 25, 2019*



## Introduction

The contract for the new court house was let to Charles F. Haglin & Charles Morse, very prominent contractors and builders of Minneapolis, for \$31,018, in June of 1882. This court house was built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and completed in August 1883 on the southeast corner of Kingwood and North Fourth Streets. A new sheriff's residence with its attached jail was built next door, south, at the same time. Sheriff Peter Mertz was the first sheriff to live in this combined residence and county jail structure. On July 23, 1896, John Pryde, confessed murderer, was executed by hanging. Since Mr. Pryde was housed in the county jail, attached to the sheriff's residence, he was provided the opportunity to watch as the specially constructed, temporary building housing the scaffold, rose outside his jail-cell window. Mr. Pryde's last meal consisted of fried chicken,



fruitcake, apple pie, peach sauce, and a bowl of cream. Sheriff Henry Spalding was in charge of the execution and Pryde was buried without ceremony in an unmarked grave in the potter's field of Evergreen Cemetery. In 1933 the County Commissioners offered the court house and sheriff's residence with its attached jail for sale. Apparently there were no acceptable offers for the sheriff's residence and attached jail; at some point, both were demolished. These buildings were allegedly built with Brainerd cream brick from the Schwartz brick yard in northeast Brainerd.



At the meeting of the county commissioners on February 1, 1916, a resolution was adopted employing Alden & Harris, architects of St. Paul, to prepare plans and specifications for and to

supervise the construction of a new county jail and sheriff's residence to be erected by Crow Wing County on Fourth Street between Laurel and Maple Streets. The value of the building contemplated was estimated at \$28,000. It was to be one of the most modern in the state; the structure, measuring 50x100 feet, two stories high, was to contain a twenty-cell jail and sheriff's residence. It was to be built of Twin City mat brick and have a tile roof. H. J. Frandsen of St. Paul was the general contractor, Slipp-Gruenhagen Company of Brainerd did the plumbing, heating and lighting. The Diebold Safe & Lock Company of St. Paul did the cell work. It should be noted that Alden & Harris were the architects for the City Hall and Fire Hall built in 1914-15, the Crow Wing County Jail built in 1916-1917 and the Crow Wing County Court House built in 1919-20. On November 18, 1927, the Daughters of the American Revolution held a mass meeting for the purpose of organizing a Crow Wing County Historical Society. Samuel R. Adair was elected the first president of the newly organized society. In 1928 Leon Lum bequeathed \$500 plus a number of historical artifacts to the society and the first museum was opened by the society in 1931; it was located in the first county court house, which is still standing at the corner of north Fourth and Kingwood Streets. Later in 1931, the museum was moved to the basement of what is now the Historic Court House where it remained until 1982. In 1975-76 the county board decided to build a new law enforcement center and demolish the old 1917 jail. The historical society board



then petitioned the county to set aside the building for a museum. The county board agreed to submit the issue to the voters on the November 1976 ballot and 82% of the voters were in favor. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The museum moved to its new location in the spring of 1982 and was opened to the public in June. In December of 2017 it was announced that the Minnesota Historical Society had awarded a \$224,557 grant to Crow Wing County to restore and update the historical museum. A Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage grant was given to Crow Wing

County for its "Preserving History: Crow Wing County Historical Museum and Research Library" project. The renovation restored and updated the more than 100-year-old historical museum. Exterior work included repairs to the roof, concrete and mortar repairs to the steps and brick as well as fixing the drainage system. Windows were replaced with double hung windows to bring back the original look of the building. Interior work consisted of updating building code compliance and ADA accessibility, renovating three bathrooms and an attic walkway. The largest part of work inside was the upgrading of the existing HVAC system to improve the environmental conditions within the building. Total cost of the project was estimated at

\$419,856. The remaining cost was matched from a Crow Wing County Capital Improvement Fund which was funded by levy, county program aid, lease payments and tax forfeited settlement dollars. The grant for the project was financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

### **Crow Wing County Sheriffs**

#### **William Walter “Billy” McArthur (ca 1865-1870)**

William McArthur was born on December 25, 1839 in Ontario, Canada. He was living in the village of Crow Wing in 1865, in White Earth in 1880 and 1895 where he was operating a hotel. In 1868, Billy was accused of conspiring, along with his uncle, Clem Beaulieu, and several others, to assassinate Chief Hole-in-the-Day. He was a brother of Ellen McArthur who disappeared in Crow Wing while walking to a neighbor’s house in April of 1872. In July of 1872 two American Indian brothers were arrested and charged with her murder. On July 23, 1872, the two brothers were forcibly removed from the local jail and lynched by a mob in front of the Last Turn Saloon in Brainerd. The brothers plead not guilty, were never tried and no verdict was ever brought in the case. Five years later, Ellen’s remains were found by boys who were out hunting in June of 1877. William McArthur died on May 17, 1901 at White Earth, Becker County, Minnesota.

#### **William Wade (ca 1870-1871)**

William Wade was born about 1841 in Maine. According to the census of July 1870, he was a grocer in the village of Crow Wing. Upon Wade’s death, the *Brainerd Tribune* reported, “Mr. Wade was born in Maine in 1841, came first to Little Falls in 1854, in his thirteenth year, and may be classed among the oldest settlers of northern Minnesota. He has held several positions of trust in this vicinity; among them he was the first [*sic*] sheriff of Crow Wing County, and a member of the last Board of County Commissioners of Cass county. In partnership with the late E. B. Lynde, the firm—Lynde & Wade—carried on a heavy business in the village of Crow Wing during the years 1869-70-71. The first year the writer [Wilder Wellington Hartley] spent in Crow Wing County was in the employ of this firm as clerk in their store. Closing out his interests to Mr. Lynde in 1871, Mr. Wade took up his abode at Leech Lake, where he has since resided the most of the time until in April last he joined Major Whitehead’s party and went to the Black Hills. Among the Indians he was known by the name, O-gitch-e-tah (The Brave), a name given him by them in his early days in this country, and which he has carried ever since, and among them the sad news of his death will find many deep mourners. Quite touching indeed was the scene on yesterday when we communicated the fact of his death to an old Indian from Leech Lake. The tears rolled down his cheeks, and he brushed them away with the corner of his blanket while he expressed in the most touching manner the sorrow that filled his heart.

“The following is the letter of Major Whitehead giving the account of his death:

CROOK CITY, D. T., Sept. 16, ‘77.

*W. W. Hartley:*

DEAR SIR.—I have a sad story to relate to you today—the sudden, unexpected and melancholy death of our old and well-trying friend William Wade. Our party had been haying at

the Belle Fourche, and, having finished, returned to this city on the evening of the 13th. William has been complaining of his lungs troubling him for the past few weeks, but continued to drive the team. He was feeling quite as well as usual this morning, and through the day, it being the Sabbath, was enjoying a social chat with his friends until about five o'clock p. m., when he walked over to the stable and took the horses out to water them at a well just across the street, and about ten rods from the stable he fell and expired almost instantly without a struggle or the slightest distortion of his face or any signs of pain. It is about three hours now since his departure, and his countenance is so natural that I can scarcely believe he is dead. He was much pleased to receive a letter from you a few days ago, and your *TRIBUNE* comes regularly now. Kind regards to all friends, though one of the most faithful and trusty has just obeyed the great summons, and I feel that he has left me but a few days behind.

Yours truly,  
JAS. WHITEHEAD.”

### **Henry Dressen (ca 1871-1871)**

Henry Dressen was born in 1840 in Prussia. He had been a non-commissioned officer at Fort Ripley for several years, and then leased the Thomas Cathcart house (hotel) at Crow Wing in 1870. He was living in Brainerd and operating a barbershop in March of 1872. Dressen died of a stroke on September 5, 1880 in Brainerd and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

### **Henry Depew (ca 1871-1871)**

Nothing is known of Henry Depew other than he is listed in the historical records of the Crow Wing County Historical Society as the sheriff of Crow Wing County for at least part of 1871.

### **John “Jack” Gurrell (1872-1873)**

John Gurrell was born on June 18, 1837 in Georgetown, Sagadahoc County, Maine. Sometime prior to his arrival in Brainerd, Gurrell was sheriff of Carlton County where, as ex-sheriff, he made a complaint about a man named Pat Griffin, implicating him in a robbery. A short time afterward the two Griffins, Pat and Tom, met Gurrell, and after a few words, each of the Griffins drew a revolver and fired at him. Pat's shot hit Gurrell in the jaw, causing a severe but not dangerous wound, while that fired by Tom passed through both Gurrell's legs above the knees. By 1872, Crow Wing County Sheriff Gurrell was located in Brainerd and was in control of the first county jail built in Brainerd; it included the sheriff's office and cost \$971.60. In February of 1872, the *Brainerd Tribune* reported, “We think Crow Wing County can boast of as accomplished, faithful and untiring a Sheriff as any county in the State. Sheriff Gurrell has had an extended experience as an officer of the law, principally in the country west of the Missouri River. All the way from Mexico to Montana, and from the Missouri to the Pacific, he is well known as a terror to all evil-doers. He was City Marshal of Cheyenne during its bloodiest history, and U. S.



Marshal in Wyoming and other of those gold-bearing territories, besides serving a long term as a U. S. officer in Utah among the Mormons. He has a jail-pet confined in our county jail that he has arrested before in three different territories west of the Missouri. Sheriff Gurrell has, probably, a better knowledge of all the roughs, and their deeds and character, that have been or will be along the Northern Pacific Railroad during its construction, than any other man in this country. We feel gratified, with the entire community, that we have an officer in Mr. Gurrell who knows his duties and is willing to perform them to the letter.” Jack Gurrell was Crow Wing County Sheriff at the time of Ellen McArthur’s disappearance in April of 1872 and it was he who arrested the two American Indian brothers for her murder in July of 1872; they were lodged in Gurrell’s jail while they awaited trial. On the evening of July 23, a mob of allegedly unknown men marched to the jail where they used a railroad tie to smash in the door, gaining entry. Gurrell, who was sitting at his desk writing, claimed he was totally surprised by the attack and found himself completely in the power of the mob. They got hold of the keys to the cells and in another instant the two prisoners were in the street marching under a massive guard back to the big pine tree at the corner of Front and Fourth Streets, in front of the “Last Turn” saloon, which had two large limbs reaching over the sidewalk. It was upon this pine tree that the two brothers were lynched without a trial. No one was ever arrested for the lynching. Sheriff Gurrell died on July 12, 1874 and is buried in the Pembina Cemetery, Pembina County, North Dakota.

#### **Arthur F. McKay (1874-1875)**

Arthur McKay was born on June 10, 1843 in Cattaraugus County, New York. He enlisted in Captain Charles W. Hackett's Company C, Tenth Regiment, Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, on August 15, 1862, and continued in the service until mustered out in June 1865. McKay participated, with his company and regiment, in the expeditions against the Sioux, under General Henry Sibley in 1862 and 1863. After the war, he went to Rochester, Minnesota, where he engaged in contracting and building; he was sheriff of Swift County for two years, and of Crow Wing County for one year. On April 26, 1886, he was appointed deputy United States Marshall for two years at Brainerd. He died on May 24, 1895 and is buried in Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul, Minnesota.

#### **George W. Whitney (1876-1879)**

George Whitney was born in 1838 in New Brunswick, Canada. Sheriff Whitney was the person who brought Ellen McArthur’s remains to Brainerd after their discovery in June of 1877. In 1880, he was a bartender. George died of consumption [tuberculosis] at the Northern Pacific Hospital in Brainerd on April 23, 1886 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

#### **Peter “Pete” Mertz (1880-1886)**

Peter Mertz was born on February 2, 1851 in Auglaize County, Ohio. Mertz was undoubtedly the most colorful, daring and enterprising sheriff Crow Wing County has ever elected to office. At about 10 a. m. on the morning of August 13, 1886, a man by the name of Sanford went into Tom Carey’s saloon in Brainerd, and asked the bartender, Hugh Dolan, for a quarter to buy his breakfast; Dolan gave him a quarter and Sanford left, but soon returned and wanted to shake dice

with Dolan for drinks; Dolan told him to go get his breakfast and not lose the quarter in gambling; Sanford became angry and drew a revolver and threatened to shoot Dolan, who came out from behind the bar and was about to seize and disarm him when Sanford shot him and ran into the street, pursued by Dolan, who overtook him outside the door and threw him down; in the squabble, Dolan got the revolver and tried to shoot Sanford who then ran away, but he was pursued, captured and lodged in jail. Dolan, who was shot through the body, was taken to the Northern Pacific Sanitarium, where he remained about ten days, gradually getting worse until August 22, when he died. Sheriff Mertz gave this account of the planned lynching of Sanford to take place on August 23, "During Monday evening, about dusk, six wagon loads of men came into Brainerd from Gull River, where Dolan was well known and well liked. They were quickly joined by a number of Brainerd citizens. I had my suspicions aroused that something was in the wind during the afternoon, and felt sure that an attempt would be made to lynch Sanford that night. I saw spotters on the corners of the street during the afternoon, and I became apprehensive that, do what I might, the mob would get away with me and take my prisoner. I concluded the easiest and surest way to save Sanford from the lynchers was to spirit him away quietly if possible. I therefore awaited my chance anxiously, and finally a feasible plan occurred to me. About 10:30 o'clock Monday night I took my prisoner with only handcuffs on his wrists, out through the back yard of the jail to an old building which stands a short distance back of the jail. We arrived there without being observed, and secreting ourselves within its walls, we awaited developments. About 1 o'clock that night a large mob appeared and all poured into the jail building. While the attention of the mob was thus averted, I hurried my prisoner out of the old house and we made for the woods, in the suburbs of the town, as fast as our legs could carry us. We reached the sheltering timber without detection. Sanford was frightened almost to death, and he frequently broke down and cried like a baby. I had made arrangements early in the afternoon to have a trusty man meet me with a carriage if I succeeded in getting away from the jail in safety, some distance south of Brainerd. The jail being in the northerly part of the town, I had to first go north till I struck the woods, then go around the town in an easterly direction; this led me through East Brainerd, around the lake and a large tamarack swamp, before I reached the south part of town where my carriage awaited me. Our walk covered five miles or more; we stumbled and waded through swamps and being very wet you can imagine our condition when we met the man waiting for us. While passing through East Brainerd, twice I heard a crowd approaching us, and on both occasions I hurried my man back into the woods and made a detour about the points of danger. I found my team all ready and I at once took my prisoner to Ft. Ripley, took a train south bound and within a few hours had Sanford within as good a jail [in St. Paul] as there is in the state...." Sanford was tried and convicted in Brainerd and was put aboard the train for Stillwater within six hours of the beginning of his trial. The *Dispatch* wrote, "He will tarry at the penitentiary for life and the verdict meets with the approval of all familiar with the case, except perhaps a few of the more blood-thirsty who would have been pleased to assist at his hanging." Mertz left Brainerd in 1889 for Tacoma, Washington Territory; he had been a resident of Brainerd since 1877. In 1891 he was elected chief of police by the city council of Spokane, Washington and served until 1895. He died on September 22, 1938, in Spokane, and is buried in Greenwood Memorial Terrace, Spokane.

### **Malcolm McLaren (1887-1888)**

Malcolm McLaren was born about 1853 in Canada. On August 5, 1887, the *Brainerd Dispatch* wrote, "The crowd of thieves and gamblers following Barrett's circus, which visited Brainerd in August of 1887, were many in number and bold in their robbing operations. As a rule, Brainerd had more of this class of people than was necessary but, when a hundred three card monte workers and men of that stripe were dropped into the city in a bunch and who proceeded at once to fleece boys and men who were foolish enough to be deluded by their fine talk and promises, patience ceased to be a virtue and every mother's son of them needed to be arrested. The streets were thronged with people from all parts of the city and county; the gentlemen set up their barrels, carriages, etc., from which they worked, at the corner of Sixth and Front streets. The first man that attempted to move the little pea around under the walnut shells was politely told by Sheriff McLaren that he could work no such game as that in the city; the man showed a license but it didn't work. This started a general rustling among the gamblers and during the parley that followed a half a dozen other games were started up. They were all stopped and sent across the track into the Second ward, and when the people in that part began to kick the sheriff stopped the whole business and quiet reigned for several hours but, when the circus show began, the gambling started again. The city police, whose business it was, did not interfere with it and the sheriff took the matter into his own hands. After this, the excuse of the city's chief of police was that the sheriff had taken the matter out of his hands; therefore, he would not stop the gambling at all." After a year-long uproar, Malcolm McLaren resigned as Crow Wing County Sheriff on February 7, 1888, after it was discovered he had been born in Canada and was not a United States Citizen.

### **Henry Spalding (1888-1896)**



Henry Spalding was born on March 20, 1857 in Vermont and arrived in Brainerd with his family in 1872, at the age of fifteen, and for several years he was a very popular conductor for the Northern Pacific Railroad. On February 7, 1888, Spalding was unanimously appointed Crow Wing County Sheriff by the Crow Wing County Commissioners to fill the remaining term of Malcolm McLaren who resigned. Spalding was responsible for the execution, by hanging, of John Pryde in July of 1896; a duty which he found very distasteful. Pryde had been convicted of murdering Andrew Peterson. Although Spalding did not believe in capital punishment, which made the ordeal much harder for him than it otherwise would have been; he personally saw to all the details, and felt that it was his duty to perform the official act rather than transfer it to a deputy, much as he might have desired to have done so. Spalding did not run for re-election and his wife said the execution "haunted him" until the day he died. Isabelle Spalding, Henry's wife,



was considered a very fine cook and during Henry's term of office, kept the prisoners in the county jail well supplied with good food. Built in 1910, and still standing in Crosby, is the Spalding Hotel, named after Henry, which he owned and operated, after serving as sheriff. Henry died on March 22, 1918 of "chronic appendicitis" in Ocean Park, California and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

**Ole Peter Erickson (1897-1908)**

Ole Erickson was born on February 4, 1857 in Sweden. He died in Crosby on June 11, 1914 of complications from a hernia operation and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.



**Fred J. Reid (1909-1915 & 1923-1926)**

Fred Reid was born on December 5, 1862 in Fall River, Columbia County, Wisconsin. Arriving in Brainerd in 1878 and prior to entering his law enforcement career, Reid was employed as a farmer, road contractor, supervisor, and foreman of a logging camp. After serving his elected term as sheriff, Reid served as chief deputy under Frank Little and George Ridley. Fred Reid died on April 4, 1941 in Minneapolis and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Brainerd.



**Claus Albert Theorin (1916-1922 & 1927-1930)**

Claus Theorin was born on April 27, 1875 in Sweden. He was a Crow Wing County sheriff's deputy for seven years prior to becoming sheriff, serving under Fred Reid and Ole P. Erickson. It was during Theorin's term that the second Crow Wing County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, located on Laurel Street, was built. He died on May 30, 1937 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.



**Franklin Edward "Frank" Little (1931-1936)**

Frank Little was born on April 7, 1884 in York, York County, Pennsylvania. In 1907 Mr. Little entered employment at the Northern Pacific Railroad shops; he continued that affiliation when he was elected mayor about ten years later, serving through 1922 and 1923. In 1926 he was returned to the office of mayor and while serving as mayor, he entered the campaign for sheriff. Elected sheriff, he resigned as mayor. Sheriff Little died of a heart attack, in office, on May 15, 1936 while attending a meeting of the county board of commissioners in the court house. After his death, Sheriff Little's body was transported to the rotunda of the court house, where he laid in state until his funeral, which was held from the court house. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.



### **George Allan Ridley (1936-1938)**

George Ridley was born on December 9, 1875 in Austin, Mower County, Minnesota. In 1909, he operated the bar at the Ransford Hotel in Brainerd. Chief of Police Ridley was a passenger on an early airplane flight taking place in Brainerd on October 30, 1912; the *Brainerd Dispatch* noted, “The chief is no lightweight and when his avoirdupois settled snugly in the front seat back of the



whirring propeller and the professor gave the signal to let go, the machine started away with a roar like an angry wasp, darted about the field, lifted five feet or more, bobbed down for another spring up in the air and struck an undulation on the field and broke a wheel on the port side when it plumped down.” “Well, I didn’t go far,” said chief Ridley, “but I had all the sensation of flying and it was exciting as long as it lasted. I am glad I had the chance to go in the aeroplane and I am sure Dr. Bell has done the best he could under the circumstances.” In January of 1913, the city jail was newly steam heated, but, to prevent a general emigration to Brainerd of all hobos in the country who may have relished a warm room and a nice bed, Chief of Police Ridley remarked that rations would not be elaborate, probably just bread and

water. In 1920 and 1930 , he was a police officer in Ironton. Ridley was the deputy sheriff at the time of Frank Little’s death in 1936 and he finished the remainder of Little’s term. In 1940, Ridley was, again, a police officer in Brainerd. George A. Ridley died on October 11, 1947 and is buried in Lakewood Cemetery in Crosby.

### **Roy Wickland (1939-1958)**

Wickland was born in Brainerd on April 6, 1891. He was 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighed 350 pounds, making him the largest Crow Wing County Sheriff. Wickland had a bloodhound by the name of Prince and it was rumored Prince was so dumb he couldn’t find his way out of the court house. From 1910-1930 Wickland was a machinist working for the Northern Pacific Railroad in Brainerd. Prior to becoming sheriff, Wickland operated a grocery store at the northwest corner of Washington and North Ninth Streets in Brainerd. After retiring, Wickland died of a heart attack on May 2, 1962, during a meeting at Van’s Cafe; he is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.



### **Albert J. “Al” Krueger (1958-1962)**



Al Krueger was born in Perham, Otter Tail County, Minnesota on February 26, 1911. According to Sheriff Charles Warnberg, “Al Krueger was the best sheriff we ever had.” Krueger, who attended schools in Crosby-Ironton where he was an outstanding athlete, began his law enforcement career in 1940 as a sheriff’s deputy. In 1942 he entered the army and served three years in the South Pacific, in 1945 he rejoined the sheriff’s office as a deputy. His brother, Ray, a highway patrolman, was killed in a car accident in November of 1959. Sheriff Krueger was the last resident of the second combined county jail and sheriff’s residence, which became the Crow Wing County Historical Society Museum. In November of 1976, the citizens of Crow Wing County voted to house the Crow Wing County Museum in this building. After successful fundraising efforts, the building was remodeled in July of 1981 and the museum was opened to the public in June of 1982. Sheriff Krueger died in office on October 13, 1962 of a heart attack; he is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

### **Charles Erwin “Chuck” Warnberg (1962-1986)**

Sheriff Warnberg was born in Brainerd on December 17, 1927. He served twenty-four years as sheriff, the longest ever. He began his law enforcement career in 1951, serving as chief deputy under both Sheriffs Wickland and Krueger prior to being elected sheriff. He completed Al Krueger’s term as sheriff after Krueger died in 1962. In an oral history given to his daughter in 1990, Warnberg said his first position at the sheriff’s department was as a bookkeeper, a summer job he received through Krueger, who was then a deputy. In 1958, after Wickland retired, Krueger was elected sheriff. In 1962, Krueger was the only candidate on the ballot, but died before the election, so Warnberg and another candidate got the 1,000 signatures needed to be on the ballot, and Warnberg was elected sheriff. In a 1999 interview with the *Dispatch*, Warnberg said that when he started, there were two deputies and one jailer in the sheriff’s office, with the sheriff’s wife cooking for the prisoners. Deputies used their own cars and responded to calls more than they patrolled. Guns were seldom worn and often left in the car. The biggest crimes



were cabin break-ins. There was a boat for use in drowning searches that took six men to lift and a bloodhound named Prince who reportedly could get lost in the court house. His daughter recalled that when her father moved into Bethany Good Samaritan Village in 1999, after suffering a stroke, another resident said, “Hey, you used to be the guy that locked bad people up,” to which her father responded, “No, I locked up good people who made bad decisions.” Former Sheriff Frank Ball said he would miss Warnberg’s keen wit and sense of humor. Ball, who succeeded Warnberg as sheriff in 1987, said Warnberg had a compassionate nature that contrasted with how law enforcement officials were often perceived. “He was revered by all.” In 1989 Warnberg, a star basketball player, was elected to the Brainerd Warriors Athletic Hall of Fame, in 1997 he was elected to the Central Lakes College Raiders Hall of Fame and in 1999 he was named to the *Brainerd Dispatch* All-Century Men’s Basketball Team. Charles Warnberg died on November 19, 2006 in Brainerd and is buried in the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery, near Camp Ripley, Minnesota.

### **Frank Russell Ball (1987-1990)**

Frank Ball was born on June 16, 1949 in Brainerd. After graduating from Brainerd High School in 1967, Ball enlisted in the United States Army and was discharged in 1971, after serving four years. In 1972 he went to work for the Nisswa Police Department where he was given the keys to the squad car, a .357 Magnum and a ticket book and was told, “Go be a cop.” Ball said the early years in Nisswa were his most formative. On his first day as a Nisswa police officer, he wanted to see how fast the squad car could go. He floored it, spun the vehicle into the ditch and got stuck. In Nisswa, Ball learned that being a smart cop was sometimes better than being a strong cop, “I got my clock cleaned in bar fights.” In 1974 he helped Chuck Warnberg run a campaign for Crow Wing County sheriff; after Warnberg won, he brought Ball into the sheriff’s office with him. During this period, Dick Ross and Ball were the best of friends and worked together. In 1986, Ross, as chief deputy, and Ball, as chief investigator, ran against each other for the office of sheriff. Ball won the election in a very heated campaign, one that would be repeated in 1990. That year Ross won the sheriff’s position in another hard-fought election. Ball endorsed Ross as sheriff, and Ross, in turn, endorsed Ball for the vacant position of police chief. Effective July 31, 2000, Ball resigned as police chief to accept the position of director of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Alcohol and Gambling Division. Frank Ball was the only person of modern times to serve as both county sheriff and chief of police in Brainerd.



**Richard Otto “Dick” Ross (1991-2002)**

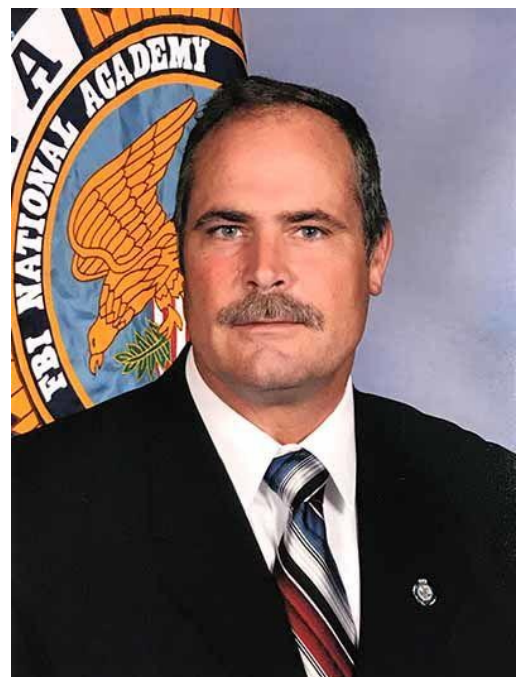
Dick Ross was born on August 14, 1939 in Fort Dodge, Webster County, Iowa. He attended



grade school in Chicago, moved to Crow Wing County when he was twelve and was a graduate of Crosby High School. He began his law enforcement career in 1960 as a police officer in Ironton before being hired by Sheriff Al Krueger as a deputy with the Crow Wing County Sheriff’s Office in 1962. He retired from law enforcement in 2002, with forty-two years of service. Throughout his career with the sheriff’s office, Ross served as a jailor, sergeant, captain, and chief deputy. Dick Ross died on November 15, 2017 and was cremated in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

**Eric Klang (2003-2006)**

Eric Klang was born on November 28, 1965 in Duluth, St. Louis County, Minnesota. Sheriff Klang grew up in Hermantown, Minnesota before moving to Crow Wing County in 1990, where he started his law enforcement career. He began as a drug operative for the Heartland Drug Task Force and later joined the Patrol Division of the Crow Wing County Sheriff’s office. He was elected Sheriff in 2002, serving one term. Klang continued working at the Crow Wing County Sheriff’s office until July 2011, then became Chief of Police of Pequot Lakes. Klang holds a bachelor’s degree from Bellevue University in Nebraska and holds an Associate of Arts Degree in law enforcement from Hibbing Community College. He is also a graduate of the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. The eleven-week program provided him with the latest training, philosophies and new techniques used in law enforcement.



**Todd Owen Dahl (2007-2018)**

Todd Dahl was born on July 3, 1965 in Brainerd. He began his career with the sheriff's office in the Water Patrol Division while in college, serving an internship there, and was hired full time in May of 1986. He knew he wanted to be Sheriff of Crow Wing County from the start. "I was going to school at Bemidji State and I just happened to pass Sheriff Warnberg's desk, in his office, and he was there with a couple of captains and he said, 'You know son, what are you



going to do? What do you want to do? You're from here. I know your grandparents. I know your parents. What are you going to do?' And I said, 'You know Sheriff, with all due respect, I want to be Sheriff here someday.'" That is exactly what he did. He graduated from Brainerd High School in 1983 and went on to receive his criminal justice degree from Bemidji State

University. Dahl has spent over thirty years working for the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office and has served as Sheriff for the last twelve. There are 130 employees under the sheriff's office umbrella that include deputies, jail staff and clerical workers. Sheriff Dahl said the upgraded technology has been beneficial to the office and has assisted the attorney's office in prosecuting cases, as video and audio recordings cannot lie. The sheriff's office does not have body cameras yet as they were unable to fit them in the budget, but the equipment is something the office will get in the near future. Dahl said another change was having the jail go from a 40-60 bed facility when he was first elected to a 280-bed jail. Throughout his career, Dahl said he has had the privilege of working under former sheriffs Charles Warnberg, Dick Ross, Frank Ball and Captain Dan Bentley, who was a jail administrator, all who helped guide his career.

**Scott David Goddard (2019-Present)**

Scott Goddard was born on June 1, 1970 in Crow Wing County. He grew up in the Pequot Lakes/Jenkins Township area, graduating in 1988 from Pequot Lakes High School. He earned his law enforcement certificate in 1993 from the then Brainerd Community College, now Central Lakes College. His first law enforcement post was as an officer with the Breezy Point Police Department and he also was a part-time officer with the Pequot Lakes Police Department. Goddard went on to take a position with the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office, but went back to Breezy Point, and then decided to go back to the sheriff's office. Goddard was promoted from patrol deputy to patrol sergeant and assigned to the Boat and Water Division in 2007. He then

was promoted to lieutenant in 2013 and to captain in 2017. Goddard was responsible for overseeing the boat and water division, dive team, patrol, 911 dispatch, court security, transport and civil process of the sheriff's office; prior to his election as sheriff he oversaw the patrol functions, investigations, dispatch and volunteer-related divisions and personnel. Goddard filled a variety of roles over his law enforcement career, including being a field training officer, a background investigator, firearms instructor, departmental armorer, Force on Force instructor; served as an operator, assistant team leader and co-commander of the tactical team; and the ALICE-Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate-trainer.





## Notes

- The years shown in parenthesis are the years each man served as Crow Wing County Sheriff, NOT the year in which they were elected.
- Many thanks to **BRIAN MARSH** of the Crow Wing County Historical Society without whose invaluable assistance, this compilation would not have been possible; thanks to **Chip Holk** for his very helpful assistance.
- Thanks to Mackenzie Erickson for the image of Dick Ross; thanks to Karen Krueger for the image of Al Krueger; and thanks to Carl Faust for the image of the CWCHS Museum.
- The images of Sheriffs Warnberg, Ball, Klang, Dahl and Goddard are from the *Brainerd Dispatch*; the image of Fred J. Reid is from the *Brainerd Tribune*; the image of Henry Spalding is from the Crow Wing County Historical Society Collection; the sources of the images of Erickson, Theorin, Ridley, Little and Wickland are unknown.
- The information contained herein was gleaned primarily from the *Brainerd Tribune*, *Brainerd Dispatch* and *Brainerd Journal Press* along with information from the records of the Crow Wing County Historical Society.

### More Information About Brainerd History Can be Found Here

#### Crow Wing County Historical Society Website

<http://www.crowwinghistory.org>

- **A Brief History of Early Northeast Brainerd**

<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/downloads/BriefHistoryOfEarlyNortheastBrainerd.pdf>

- **A History of the Northern Pacific Railroad in Brainerd**

<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/npr.html>

- **Along the Mississippi from Rice Lake to Boom Lake**

<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/downloads/AlongTheMississippiFromRiceLakeToBoomLake.pdf>

- **Brainerd City Bands**

[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_bands.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_bands.html)

- **Brainerd: City of Fire**

[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_fires.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_fires.html)

- **Brainerd Newspapers**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_newspapers.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_newspapers.html)
- **Brainerd Papermills**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/paper\\_mill.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/paper_mill.html)
- **Brainerd Street Views**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_street\\_views.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_street_views.html)
- **Brainerd Utilities**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_utilities.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_utilities.html)
- **Bridges, Dam, Jumps, Steamboats and Ferries**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_stuff.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_stuff.html)
- **Buildings & Parks of Some Historical Significance to Brainerd**  
<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/buildings.html>
- **Downtown Brainerd: Then and Now**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_downtown\\_buildings.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_downtown_buildings.html)
- **Early Accounts of Brainerd and its Surrounds**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/early\\_accounts.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/early_accounts.html)
- **Happenings in Brainerd in 1914**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd\\_1914.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/brainerd_1914.html)
- **N. P. R. R. 1888 Directory**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/npr\\_r\\_directory\\_1888.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/npr_r_directory_1888.html)
- **Northside History Walk Booklet**  
<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/downloads/NorthsideHistoryWalk2015.pdf>
- **Sheriffs of Crow Wing County 1865-Present**  
<http://www.crowwinghistory.org/downloads/CrowWingCountySheriffs.pdf>
- **Soiled Doves Roost in the City of Pines**  
[http://www.crowwinghistory.org/soiled\\_doves.html](http://www.crowwinghistory.org/soiled_doves.html)
- **Evergreen Cemetery Burial Records**  
<http://www.evergreencemeterybrainerd.com/dotd.html>

- **Crow Wing County USGenWeb**

<http://crowwing.mngenweb.net>

- **City of Brainerd Historic Newspapers, Maps, etc.**

<http://www.ci.brainerd.mn.us/documentcenter>

- **Brainerd History Group**

<http://fertfaust.wixsite.com/brainerd-history>

© 2019 Ann M. Nelson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, at the address below:

Administrator/Executive Director  
Crow Wing County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 722,  
Brainerd, Minnesota 56401