



**Crow Wing County Museum
& Research Library
Restored Sheriff's Residence**

MISSION STATEMENT

*The Crow Wing County
Historical Society
is committed to
preserving the history
and telling the story of
Crow Wing County.*

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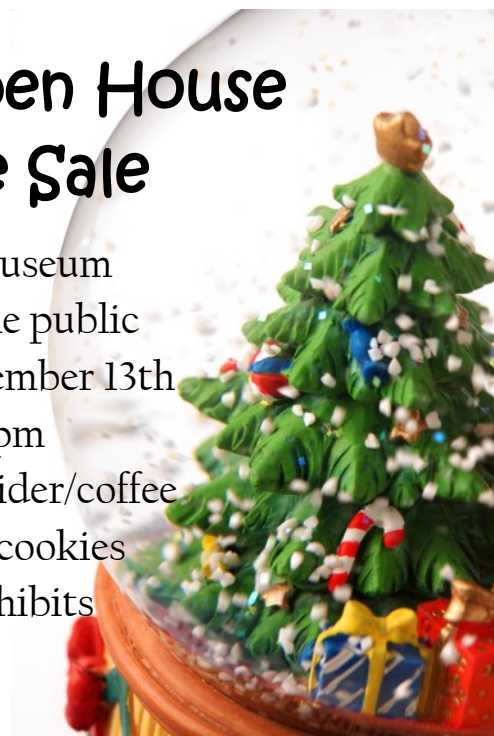
Lyn Lybeck
Bonnie Novick

NEWSLETTER

Holiday Open House & Bake Sale

At the Museum
Open to the public
Friday, December 13th
3 - 7 pm

Enjoy hot apple cider/coffee
Punch & cookies
New exhibits



Brainerd book available in the museum gift shop



President's Report

It's hard to believe we are well into November with Christmas just around the corner. We have had a busy yet eventful year. Our annual meeting was a success, although there is always room for more attendees. Our museum continues to receive rave reviews from our visitors that tour our building. The remodeling has added room for more displays, thank you to the staff and volunteers who worked very hard to make these improvements a reality. A special thanks to board member Ron Crocker and his son Jeff for making it all possible.

The open house in October highlighted the unveiling of a large portrait of Lyman White. We were fortunate to have Mayor James Wallin do the honors before a very nice crowd. Lyman White is the gentleman who is recognized as the person who actually laid out the boundaries of the city of Brainerd. Mr. White was very active in the city, including being the first school board chairman, and a mayor of the city. Among many other things his company donated the land for Gregory Park.

The Historical Society has agreed with a mutual effort between our organization and the Crow Wing County fair board, to restore the Carbine house located at the fairgrounds. This log home was built in Brainerd in the 1800's and has been a very popular site to visit by fair goers. Next will be our annual Christmas open house, watch for details. Good ideas for improvements at the fair grounds and museum are greatly appreciated. Volunteers are always needed, especially during fair week.

Don Samuelson,
Crow Wing County Historical Society
Board President

HOLIDAY
OPEN HOUSE

and Bake Sale

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Friday, Dec. 13
3-7 pm

Cider, Coffee, Punch
and Cookies



The museum will be closed to the public for the month of January. Happy Holidays!

Crow Wing County Historical Society/Museum
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Greetings and Happy Holidays!

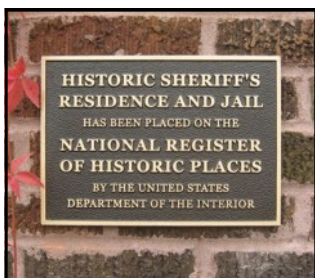
From Pamela Nelson,
Director/Administrator

The Annual Holiday Open House will be held on Friday December 13 from 3 pm to 7 pm. There will also be a bake sale. If you would like to donate baked goods, please drop them off that day before 3 pm. Hope to see you there!

“What’s New at the Museum” Open House was held on Saturday, October 12th. Mayor James Wallin was on hand to unveil the portrait of Lyman White. There were a lot of ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ from those present. The oil painting and frame were restored by the Midwest Conservation Center in Minneapolis. The portrait was painted by J. M. Jones in 1886. The painting certainly has a colorful past concerning where it came from and where it has been. Apparently the White portrait was donated to the city sometime after Lyman’s death in 1902. It was displayed several times and forgotten. The portrait, we hope, has found its final resting place.



The state grant for the restoration of the Lyman P. White portrait was made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.



A bronze plaque recognizing the sheriff's residence and 3rd county jail's listing on the National Register of Historic Places was also unveiled during the open house. The building was placed on the register May 23, 1980.

The much anticipated “Brainerd” book authored by the Historical Society was sold and autographed at the open house. If you still haven’t purchased your copy, the museum gift shop is the place to buy one or several. They are selling for \$21.99. Proceeds from the sale of the book will go towards the restoration of the fair buildings that the society maintains at the county fairgrounds. The book would be a great gift.

Refreshments were served including the famous oatmeal raisin cookies from the old Scott store that was located in downtown Brainerd. A special thanks to caterer Connie Ritter from Connie’s Kitchen for the use of her baking facility. The recipe and photo of the store can be found on page 63 in the “Brainerd” book.



The Paul Bunyan Exhibit has been completed. As part of this exhibit, society member Chip Borkenhagen painted a Paul Bunyan face cut-out board. Young and old alike can pretend to be tall Paul. The Mayor couldn’t resist, and this photo was snapped on the day of our open house.



Mayor Wallin



Chip Borkenhagen

Chip made sure he joined in the fun too.

Thanks, Chip, for this fun addition to the exhibit!

We are fortunate to have Bonnie Novick as our new Experience Works person. She has many memories about growing up in Brainerd. Welcome Bonnie!

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE



By: Lucille Kirkeby

Mystery at the Museum

The Travel Channel has a program called "Mysteries at the Museum." It features stories about what look like very common items that have been collected as museum artifacts. All of these items have a very fascinating history connected to them.

The Crow Wing County Museum has its own such artifact. Located in a glass topped case on the top floor of the museum is what looks like a picnic basket or called a market basket in the 1930s. There is nothing unusual about the item; it is a common household item.

Why do we have this basket at the museum, prominently displayed? The answer goes back to Oct. 23, 1933. In the morning at six, bank employee, George Fricker opened the door of the First National Bank and was immediately confronted by a bank robber with a pistol. Two other men with submachine guns joined the lone gunman. One of these three was later identified as Baby Face Nelson, a notorious criminal. As employees entered the bank at their regular work schedules, they were all herded into another room where they were forced to sit on the floor. The men were able to access the cash from the teller's drawers, but the time lock prevented any access to the vault. There was nothing else to do but wait until 8:30 when the vault could be opened.

While the robbery was going on inside, two men remained outside. One was the driver of the getaway vehicle and the other was the lookout. The lookout was later identified as Homer Van Meter, a machine gunner of the John Dillinger gang. Van Meter, sitting on a bench, held the basket we have at the museum. Concealed in the basket was a machine gun. As the holdup men finally fled the bank,

Van Meter fired shots ricocheting against the YMCA building. Shots were fired by other gang members at the bank entrance and other businesses. In the confusion, the basket was left behind. Later the gang members were identified as Baby Face Nelson, Homer Van Meter, Tommy Carroll, Eddie Green and John Paul Chase. Although all of the men were identified, none were ever brought to justice for the Brainerd robbery. All were either killed or caught and charged with other crimes.

According to museum records, the basket was donated to the museum by the Sheriff's Dept. A museum volunteer recalls that as a child she first found out about the basket when it was in the possession of James Alderman Sr. Kids in her neighborhood would ask their neighbor, Mr. Alderman, to show them the basket and tell them about the bank robbery. They were all fascinated by the story of the robbery and the gun hidden in the basket. According to Mr. Alderman, he had been on the crime scene shortly after the bank robbers made their getaway. He picked up the basket from where the robbers had left it.

The museum acquired the basket from the Sheriff's Dept. in 1973. Our volunteer recalls seeing the basket in the early quarters of the museum in the Court House basement. How the Sheriff's Dept. acquired the basket remains a mystery to us.





SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT

By Darla Sathre

Are you one of the many antique glass collectors in this world? One of the most popular types of glass to collect is cranberry glass. Glass workers call it Rubino Oro, and it's known as gold ruby in Europe. In the United States, the term gold ruby usually refers to a red glass colored by tin, not gold. Gold, used in the making of cranberry glass, is what gives it its rosy pink or cranberry red color. The more gold that is used, the more red the glass becomes. It's always been an expensive endeavor, not only because of the cost of gold, but also because of the painstaking process involved. Most collectible glassware was mass produced; cranberry glass was blown or molded one piece at a time. Even a small miscalculation in the amount of gold used could result in a muddy looking batch of glass that could not be used. In the mid 1800s most cranberry glass was unadorned. Then they became much more ornate. Some say that the early Romans first discovered how to make cranberry glass. However, its heyday was about 1870 to 1930. Some companies still make it today.



Con (Cornelius) and Elizabeth O'Brien, early Brainerd residents, had a large collection of beautiful cranberry glass. Come to the museum if you'd like to see some of it on exhibit. I'd like to tell you about three of my favorite pieces of cranberry glass – all in the lighted cabinet in the dining room of the restored sheriff's house. On the left you see a five inch tall vase with the fluted top edge covered with milk glass – which is another popular glassware collectible. In the center is an eight and a half inch tall pitcher with an inverted thumbprint design and an applied clear glass handle. But my favorite by far is a three and a half inch high tumbler. It is decorated with clear pressed glass trim around the base. The most interesting part is the etching. One side says "Julia" and the other side says "Feb. 19, 1895." Who is Julia? We don't know. Con O'Brien had a younger sister named Julia. Could it be her? Was there a custom of engraving glassware to commemorate births, baptisms, and other milestones similar to the tradition of giving engraved silver cups as baby gifts? So many questions – so few answers!

MORE TO CROW ABOUT

We love getting old photographs here at the museum. Each one has importance, but once in awhile one really touches our hearts. This is one of those extra precious ones. David Ruttger (1934-1994) and his dog Wimpy are both kneeling at his bedside saying their prayers. Actually there is a third one kneeling. If you look closely, on the wall you can see a picture of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The photo was taken at Ruttger's Birchmont Lodge on Lake Bemidji. David was the grandson of resort pioneers Joseph and Josephine Ruttger of Brainerd. How do we know so much about this photo? The Ruttger family has given us a wonderful treasury of artifacts, and wonder of wonders, they have included the provenance! When you decide to donate photographs to us, please help us by including complete names, dates, and other pertinent information. Just think like a reporter – include the who, what, when, where, and why!



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and/or Donors**

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*(Donations were designated for the Carbine house restoration.)

NEW MEMBERS

We thank you for your support!

| Family Member | Individual Members |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Elroy & Karen Raddatz | Tanya Kirk |
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Memorials

Thank you... to the following people who have given gifts to the Society in memory of friends & relatives

In Memory of ...

Elmer & Phoebe Reichert

Given by:

Carol Erkens

Hubert L. O'Konek

Given by:

Lois Marie O'Konek

**Monetary Donations
And gifts in kind
Thanks!**

Ed Menk for donating a glass case
Rod & Avis Converse

For restoration of the Carbine house:

Jack Mehaffey
Sertoma

*See our website for full listing
of Carbine house donors*

INVITATION

We will be hosting a “snowball” tea party January 22 & 23 (Wednesday and Thursday). We have seating for 8 guests, so we are planning to have a tea on 2 consecutive days at 10 am. Please call the museum at 829-3268 to reserve your seat. Cost is \$25.

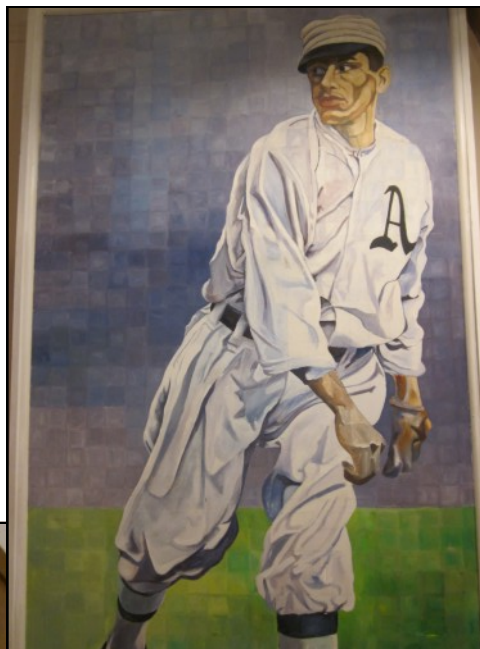


BAKE SALE

If you're a baker and would like to donate to the **Friday, December 13th** bake sale, you may drop off your goodies at the museum on that day. We will be open our normal time at 10 am. Needed are a variety of baked goods to sell and serve. Cash donations are always welcome and proceeds go to the society.

NEW EXHIBITS

The new Ryan Law Office Exhibit showcasing artifacts and memorabilia from 4 generations of Ryan attorneys, including Crow Wing County Attorney Don Ryan, will be completed soon. We are also expanding our Baseball Exhibit. We have received awesome paintings by Brainerd artist and teacher Maurice Olson. Look forward to seeing Brainerd's famous pitchers Bullet Joe Bush and Hall of Fame legend Chief Bender. The fishing exhibit will also include some of Maurice's artwork.



THANKS VOLUNTEERS!

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THE CROW WING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM,
 SHERIFF'S RESIDENCE AND RESEARCH LIBRARY
 IS LOCATED NEXT TO THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

PHONE: 218-829-3268 FAX: 828-4434 E-MAIL: history@crowwing.us

WEB: <http://www.crowwinghistory.org>

HOURS: TUESDAY THRU SATURDAY 10 AM - 3 PM (Closed Major Holidays & Holiday Weekends)

Call the museum to schedule appointments or tours after hours.

CWCHS Yearly Membership Levels:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| \$500.00 - Patron | \$40.00 - Family | Business: |
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| \$100.00 - Booster | \$30.00 - Supporting Individual | \$75.00 for 11 to 25 |
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| | | \$200.00 for over 50 |

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To become a member of the Society, send your name, address, and telephone number along with your membership dues to the **Crow Wing County Historical Society, P.O. Box 722, Brainerd, MN 56401**. If you would like to give a gift membership to the Society, please send the name and address of the person for whom the membership is intended. Memorials of loved ones are also accepted. Donations can be sent to the same address and are tax deductible. Membership forms are available on our website or at the Museum.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

