



**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.

STAFF

Pam Nelson
*Director/Administrator
Newsletter Editor*

Margaret O'Rourke
Assistant Administrator

Sue Duda
Administrative Assistant



Open House
Friday, December 8
3—6 pm

NEWSLETTER

The Historical Society's baggage cart/wagon is back and is fully restored! Thanks to railroad enthusiast, Andy Mack, from Bemidji, MN for restoring the iconic railroad artifact. Andy informed us that the wagon is probably a 1940's era Great Northern-built wagon. He stated that since the carts didn't change much, the vintage is hard to determine. It could be anywhere from the 1880's to the 1940's. The project included replacing 100% of the wood. Oak and hickory wood was used. A previous repair effort was good, which likely kept it with us until a year ago, but the modern-day treated lumber did not hold up. Period-correct color and anti-rust paint was used, and its carrying capacity has been restored to original.

Andy said that these carts were pretty generic, and when a town lost their rail service or depot, the wagons would be sold to other railroad towns. The restoration process took Andy a little over a year and was his 8th restoration project.

One of Andy's stipulations was that the Society would provide a proper covering for the wagon upon delivery. As you can see in the photo above it had been left to the elements. It was decided to house the wagon at the fairgrounds in one of the buildings we maintain until a proper awning could be built. This got us thinking: Do we really want the wagon in its old location? Hopefully, in time, the wagon will be displayed in an area that will allow people of all ages to enjoy it.



(L) Andy Mack and (R) Leo Soukup
From Bemidji



President's Report

Snow already! I'm not ready for it, but that's Minnesota, and we'll get used to it. We have had one of the best years for visitors coming to the museum, and the comments by the public about our facility and our displays were very positive. Thanks to our staff and volunteers, we have one of the best county museums in the state. We are coming through the year in good shape, but we still need to do better in terms of more members and volunteers. The buildings at the fairgrounds are a huge financial problem. I don't know how long we are going to continue supporting that part of our program. Without a separate source of funding, it will be more and more difficult to keep up. In addition, we never have enough volunteers to cover the 5 buildings during fair time. Any ideas you may have are always welcome. The next major event will be our annual dinner in April. I'm Looking forward to seeing you there.

Don Samuelson
Board President



Museum Holiday Open House

free admission • open to
public

**Friday, December 8th
from 3-6 pm**

- Bake Sale
- Enjoy cookies, coffee and cider
- Free drawing for door prize!
See you there!

Greetings

From Pamela Nelson,
Director/Administrator



This is the 23rd Newsletter that I have published for the Society! I started as the Assistant Administrator in July of 2006 and have been the Director since December, 2011. I am planning to retire in February.

I have enjoyed meeting and working with some awesome people! That I will miss! I believe that if I leave a place in better shape than when I started, I will be happy. There will always be lots to do at the museum, so there really isn't a good time to leave. I still have things I want to accomplish, and I hope to see those projects still come to fruition.

One of those projects is attic archival storage. The Society applied for but did not receive a grant for proper storage units. Because of structural and construction issues associated with the building, we were left with a loss of storage space. This loss of space makes it even more important to have space-saving units. Our goal is to get the collections organized and easily accessible.

Another project involves 2 donated bridge rails from the 1898 Laurel street bridge. The hope is to place them in front of the museum along Laurel Street.



Since Bonnie Novick, employee of Experience Works, moved to Nebraska to be with her family, we still don't have a replacement for her. Bonnie was our front desk greeter. Please consider volunteering as a greeter. The volunteer time can be as little as a three hour time slot. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm.

Hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season!



MUSEUM EXEC DIRECTOR

24hrs/week - \$15.00/hour

- Oversee daily operations
- Supervise/train assistants and volunteers.
- Implement policies
- Promote the museum
- Maintain inventory
- Oversee research

requests, support other local historical societies
*Full job description at the
museum or at*

crowwinghistory.org

Email resume to

Pamela.Nelson

@crowwing.us

Deadline is Dec 1, 2017

Supporting County/Municipalities

Crow Wing County
*Cities of Baxter & Brainerd

***Townships**

Crow Wing	Oak Lawn
Daggett Brook	Platte Lake
Ideal	Roosevelt
Irondale	Ross
Long Lake	St. Mathias
Nokay Lake	

Thanks!

*(Donations were designated for the restoration of our fair buildings.)

Thank you for donations

Monetary

Avis Converse
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In kind

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Memorial

In Memory of:
Howard Bodle

Given By:
Dr. Robert Geist

**Holiday Open House
at the Museum!**

free admission • open to public

Friday, December 8th

from 3-6 pm

Bake Sale

Enjoy cookies, coffee and cider

Free drawing for door prize!

See you there!



What child wouldn't love to play with this miniature replica of the Maghan home!

The original home was built on Crooked Lake around 1905. Robert and Alice Maghan raised their 12 children on the homestead.

Lorna Maghan (daughter-in-law) and William Nelson took on the job of building an exact miniature version of the home. It was built using a 3/4 inch to the foot scale, with all of the furnishing being built as near as possible to the original. Items were added as someone remembered a specific item, including a mouse and mousetrap!

For the Maghan family, this model represents cherished memories of the old homestead.

This house will be on display for the Holiday Open House!

Sue Duda, Archivist



HISTORY ON-LINE

Our website, now approaching its 10th birthday, was created by volunteer Ross Hoffmann and is currently maintained by volunteer John Van Essen. The home page keeps visitors informed of Society events and new website features and has several other items of interest on the main menu.

The *Research Library* page lists many of the key resources in our museum's library, including microfilm of newspapers and more, plus books and maps. We also have links to online resources from the museum, such as the written interviews conducted in the '30s and oral histories recorded in the '70s, '80s and '90s. There are also links to the *Losey & Dean Mortuary Records* – photographed and indexed records from 1889 to 1914 hosted on our website. Plans are afoot to add more historical mortuary records.

Other menu items link to pages about *Volunteering, Donating, Membership Renewals, Museum Exhibits*, our space at the *County Fair* and the "*Images of America: Brainerd*" Book.

We host several *Special Features* pages authored by Ann M. Nelson, using articles from early newspapers going back to 1872 as well as other historical material. Links are on the right-hand side of the home page and include:

- *Buildings & Parks of Some Historical Significance to the City of Brainerd*
- *Bridges, Ferries, Jumps, Mills, Rinks, Railways, Slides, Steamboats, & More in the City of Brainerd*
- *Brainerd Utilities (Dam, Gas, Electric, Water & Tower)*
- *Early Accounts of Brainerd*
- *'Soiled Doves' Roost in the 'City of Pines'*
- *Brainerd City Bands*
- *Brainerd: City of Fire*
- *Brainerd Newspapers*
- *Paper Mills In Brainerd*
- *Northern Pacific R. R. in Brainerd*
- *Brainerd Street Views*

Brainerd Street Views has photos from back in the day showing what Brainerd was like. These photos are posted on poles around town at approximately the viewpoint of the photographer. Each of those has a QR Code that takes you to this page for more information.

Below the Special Features links are links to the Society newsletters going back to 2012. There is also a list of individuals and businesses that have memberships at the \$50 level or above. Thank you for your support!

Website space has been generously provided by Syvantis Technologies, of Baxter, MN.

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE



By: Lucille Kirkeby

A common item a few years back was the pocket watch. Almost every man had one. I have one that a relative had. The museum has a number of them. In today's world

the pocket watch isn't commonly in use any more. Up until the start of the 20th century, the pocket watch was the favored time piece of most men. The wristwatch was considered feminine and unmanly. The change began around the time of World War I when officers in the field began to realize that a watch worn on the wrist was much easier to access than a pocket watch. Pocket watches did make a slight come back in the 70s and 80s when three piece suits returned into fashion. The vests had a pocket for the watch. When these suits went out of fashion, the only place for the pocket watch was the trouser pocket. This wasn't very handy. Once mobile phones and clocks on many appliances came into being, the pocket watch became obsolete.

In the 1880s where did one go to buy the best and cheapest pocket watch? In the Midwest, you went to the railroad station. No, the railroad did not sell pocket watches, but the telegraph operators who worked out of the railroad stations did.

How did this come about? In Redwood, MN a huge crate of pocket watches arrived. No one came to claim the shipment and the manufacturer did not want to pay the freight back so he wired the telegrapher to see if he could sell them.

Richard, the telegrapher, sent a wire to every agent in the area to see if they wanted a good, inexpensive pocket watch. In less than two days all the watches were sold and with a handsome profit. Richard saw a business opportunity: He ordered more watches from the company and encouraged his fellow telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering quality watches at a reasonable price to all travelers. It didn't take long for the word to spread and people came to the station just to buy watches.

For about nine years, watches were sold at railroad stations. Richard could not keep up with the business, so he hired Alvah to help with the orders. The business boomed, and soon the two men began to sell other dry goods as well, not just watches. Richard and Alvah did so well that they quit their jobs at the railroad station and moved their business to Chicago.

Have you guessed the rest of the story? The two young entrepreneurs were Richard Sears and Alvah Roebuck. A forgotten fact! This is how Sears and Roebuck, with their stores and mail order business, came to being.



Sears-Roebuck & Co. "Special" - Produced by Illinois Watch Company, ca. 1898



Say what...an OUTDOOR museum???

Part of the duties of a historical society is to collect and preserve artifacts from our area's past. But where does one put a 16' tall concrete vintage light pole or a 150 pound section of 1890's granite curbing? How about a large baggage wagon or a section of NPRR rail from the 1875 bridge collapse? Then, there are the 125 pound 1904 sandstone window sills from the Ransford Hotel! The society has been keeping track of and listing these items, just waiting for a "home" to display them. The idea of finally rounding them up really got going after that baggage wagon got refurbished and required a rain shelter. It is now in a building at the fairgrounds, begging to be shown off!



Bench made out of sandstone window sills from the Ransford Hotel

We are hoping to get some movement towards getting our history out there more. "Out there" like the great huge murals in west Little Falls or the new town square in Crosby. It seems like much physical evidence of history in Brainerd has either been torn down or given away. Such items include granite curbs, concrete street light poles, 1887 manhole covers, the M & I caboose at the NPC, the locomotive at Lum Park, the last six 1898 Laurel St. Bridge railings from Hawkins Drive, and the caboose at the fairgrounds.



railroad cart

Now is the time to get that baggage wagon covered, AND make a nice display of these outdoor artifacts, all in one place! Reid Thiesse at CWC Facilities has suggested that if funding can be secured, there is a large section of grass in between the County's Law Enforcement Center, Land Services building and the CWCHS museum that could be available. There is no place to sit and relax on the grounds, like a gazebo or even a park bench, and this thought has been on their radar. This shelter could provide that. It could also serve as an interpretive center to highlight the county's connection with Brainerd and how the county seat wound up here.



man hole cover

Our roots are tied to Crow Wing Village, yet there is little on display to explain this connection and why the NRR crossed the river here instead of there! The display items have been secured and just need to be placed. Some will require mounting in concrete and some 1880's Brainerd-made bricks can be used to make plaque pedestals and benches. The grass would be replaced with a pavilion and concrete floor. At the present time, this is just an idea. There hasn't been a formal proposal submitted nor funds raised. It would depend entirely on what decision or direction the county would want to take, if any. This will be no small project. However, if done, it could be a first!



monument concept

Can we do it?

By: Carl Faust



possible structure example

space between Museum & Land Service building



horse tie-ups

People From Our Past

By: Brian Marsh

How did the communities in Crow Wing County become what they are today? What is it that they all have in common? Well, they've all been shaped and influenced by the people who came before us.

One such person in our history was a Roman Catholic priest and missionary by the name of Franc Pirc. We know him better by his English-translated name of Francis Pierz. Born in 1785 in the central European country now known as Slovenia, he was ordained a priest in 1813. After several years in that area, he came to the United States in 1835 to work as a missionary to convert the native peoples, primarily the Ottawa, Ojibwe and Chippewa, to Christianity. After some time in Michigan and Wisconsin, Fr. Pierz arrived in the village of Crow Wing on June 18, 1852. That fall and winter, he built a church and school there.

Due to the shortage of priests in territorial Minnesota, he also ministered to the white population in Crow Wing. In the next three years, he also founded parishes in Sauk Rapids, Swan River, Belle Prairie, St. Cloud, St. Joseph, and St. Augusta. In 1856, a party of five Benedictine priests arrived to take over the white parishes, leaving Fr. Pierz to give all of his attention to his Indian missions, such as Crow Wing and Mille Lacs.

By 1871, he had to accept the limitations that his age (86) placed on him and retired to the German parish of Rich Prairie, where he still managed to build a school. The citizens of Rich Prairie decided to honor him by renaming the town to Pierz, which we all know of.

As his health declined, he wanted to spend his last years back in his native country. He left for Slovenia in 1873, where he passed away in 1880 at the age of 94.

By building churches and schools and spreading the Word, Fr. Francis Pierz contributed much to our local history.



CROW WING COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM & LIBRARY - EST. 1927

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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 Annual Membership Levels:

\$500.00 - Patron	\$50.00 - Sustaining
\$250.00 - Benefactor	\$40.00 - Family or Non-Profit Org.
\$100.00 - Booster	\$30.00 - Supporting Individual
\$75.00 - Sponsor	\$20.00 - Individual

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. You may also choose to pay on line using our website PayPal account.

VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU!

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Listed on the National
Register of Historic Places.

