

# Crow Wing County

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### MUSEUM & LIBRARY - EST. 1927

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PRESERVING HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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#### MISSION:

THE CROW WING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM IS THE PREMIER INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND DISPLAYING ARTIFACTS AND INFORMATION RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF CROW WING COUNTY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE EDUCATION, ENJOYMENT, AND RESEARCH MATERIALS TO THE PUBLIC.

#### STAFF:

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ASSISTANT  
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ASSISTANT

## \$47,649 Grant Awarded

The Crow Wing County Historical Society is the proud recipient of a historical and cultural heritage large grant approved by the Minnesota Historical Society Executive Council. Following the nearly half-million-dollar renovation, we applied for and received \$47,649 to replace the storage shelving in our attic and second floor closet. This grant was made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.

This funding will allow us to remove our existing wood shelving, which is heavy and led to previous structural damage of our historic building and can be damaging to artifacts by releasing chemicals that accelerate deterioration. The new shelving will be pH neutral and powder coated as suited to professional museum standards. Designed and installed by professionals, the shelving will increase our storage capacity, safety, and allow the Society to properly care for items donated by area residents. It will also improve our ability to share these items with the public through increased accessibility to items for research, digital cataloging, and ease the creation of temporary and rotating exhibits.

Many generous donations were received from community members that provided a matching donation of \$4,035 for this project. Thank you! Thank you also to Pam Nelson and Lynda Hall for spearheading the idea and providing the foundation for the success of this grant. Mostly, thanks go to Rachel Breun and Crow Wing County for pursuing the grant to rehabilitate the building, without which this funding would not have been given.



## Building

### Restoration Update

If you have been by the Museum recently, you have seen some of the wonderful improvements. Although 80% of the construction is done, it will be a while before we are complete. The early winter weather has postponed the window replacement in the museum gallery until spring. The new gutters will also need to wait for warmer weather. Regardless, it is wonderful to see the repaired brick, fresh paint, and stairs replaced by accessible ramps, not to mention a roof that will not leak. There is still construction left to be done and also a lot of work our staff needs to complete to get us back up and running. Large portions of our collection had to be moved for the work to be complete. Members will be informed as spaces continue to open up and everyone will be invited to celebrate upon completion.



## President's Report

The years seem to go by faster every day, and 2018 was sure one of them. But 2018 was a great year for the Historical Society. More and more people were interested in what we do. And thanks to the County Board, a major remodeling project is taking place. Because of the weather, there is a bit of a delay, but it will resume in the spring. We're looking forward to a new re-opening this summer, where everyone will be excited on what changes there are. We're closed in January, but open again in February. We always have a lot to do and can use more volunteers. Our annual meeting will be in April where we have election of two new Board Members. If you are interested, let us know. We have big decisions to make about the Fair Grounds. Keeping up the buildings there is a real challenge. Any ideas are welcome. Our Board meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at 3 p.m. and all are welcome to attend. Let's hope 2019 is a good year for everybody.

Don Samuelson  
President



### FROM THE DIRECTOR

They say, "time flies when you are having fun." Now, I have proof. I cannot believe it has been a year since I took my position as Director of the Crow Wing County Historical Society. What an exciting year it has been. I have thoroughly enjoyed learning more local history and getting to know our volunteers and members. The building renovation has also provided me with the opportunity to familiarize myself with our building and collections in ways I would otherwise have not.

Additionally, I tackled my first Annual Meeting and my first week at the Crow Wing County Fair. There have been challenges along the way, but it is always an opportunity to learn. I enjoy looking back on the past year and I am even more eager to look forward to the new challenges that will come in 2019. There will be more moving and organizing as we make way for our new shelving. The completion of the building restoration will be followed by a new construction project to make way for our new James Olav Saboe Research Library. I will keep our members apprised of our happenings and always feel free to share your news, opinions, and ideas with me. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Hillary Swanson

## From the Collection



The Crow Wing County Historical Society is home to a wonderful collection of visual arts. During our renovation, a group of eleven paintings referred to as “the WPA paintings” by staff, needed to find a new location within the museum to stay safe. Because of their location in our meeting room, the paintings were lacking some deserved attention. Upon investigation, they prove to be not only visually appealing, but the story of where they came from and how they came to be part of our collection is of equal interest.

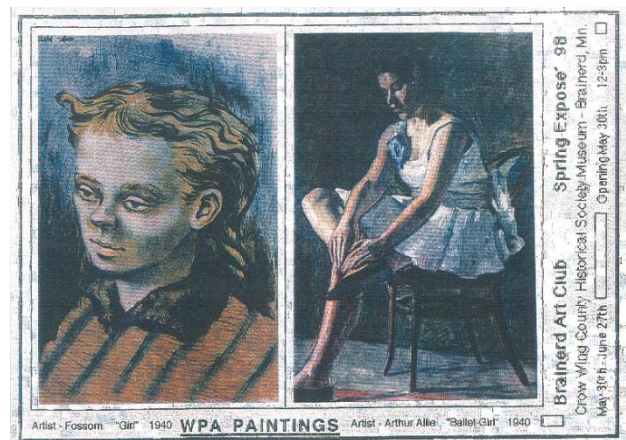
During the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt created a number of agencies as part of his New Deal program to increase employment and the morale of our country. One such agency, the Works Progress Administration (1935-1942), not only built buildings and roads around the country, but also employed thousands of artists in its Federal Art Project to create public works of art for the viewing benefit of U. S. citizens. As part of this program, over 200 works of art were created for the Ah-Gwah-Ching (Ojibwa for out-of-doors) Sanatorium in Walker, MN, a clinic built in 1907 for the treatment of tuberculosis patients. After the need for such a clinic waned, in 1957, this facility became a part of the State Hospital System. At that time, the hospital inherited the large

art collection. Shortly after, in the 1960s, forty-six works from the collection were gifted from the Walker location to the Brainerd State Hospital. Many of the pieces were soon dispersed among area junior colleges, but sixteen remained. In 1985, the hospital changed names to the Brainerd Regional Human Services Center. The Center permanently closed its doors in 2008.

Thankfully, the art was not lost. In 1999, the eleven paintings were located and displayed as part of the Brainerd Art Club Art Expo, which took place at the Crow Wing County Historical Society Museum. After that exhibition, the Brainerd Regional Human Services Center decided to gift the paintings to the Society.

These paintings represent an important period in American art and represent important Minnesota artists of the time, including Miriam Ibling, Arthur Allie, and Syd Fossum. They also represent themes common to the period, including landscapes and the so-called “American Scene”. As public art, subjects were expected to create civic pride and to avoid controversial or offensive subject matter.

No longer hidden in our meeting room, they now have a prominent location on the gallery walls between second and third floor. Please stop in and take a look.



# People From Our Past

By: Brian Marsh



Starting in 1871, much of the growth in population and commerce in Crow Wing County centered around Brainerd and remained that way for over 30 years. However, shortly after the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was rapid growth to the northeast of Brainerd, and that expansion can all be traced back to one individual: Cuyler Adams.

Born on August 20, 1852 in Canton, Illinois, Adams had quite a varied work background in his lifetime. He had been an Indian trader, trapper, sawmill operator, farmer, and surveyor, among other things. He became a rodman and later a land examiner for the Northern Pacific railroad, which is what first brought him into the Deerwood vicinity in 1873. After profiting \$100,000 in land speculation, he bought a lot of land in Crow Wing County and in 1881 settled in Withington (renamed Deerwood the next year).

In 1890, he was surveying for his property lines when he noticed that his compass was acting erratically. Further exploration by him revealed that this strange magnetic activity extended for several miles. Knowing that iron ore mining had started in the Mesabi Range, he wondered if his strange readings might be the result of a similar iron ore deposit.

He formed the Oreland Mining Company that, in 1903, started exploratory drilling operations to see if iron ore existed. Many deposits were found, which brought about several mines. The iron ore mining boom had begun in Crow Wing County. As a result of this activity, several new towns sprung up, including Ironton, Trommald, Manganese, Crosby, Oreland, Woodrow, Cuyuna, Iron Hub, Barrows, and Riverton. Although he wasn't the only one who wound up opening and running mines in the county, it was his initiative that started it all.



Large areas of iron ore deposits northeast of Crow Wing County came to be known as the Vermillion Range and the Mesabi Range. In our area, these deposits came to be known as the Cuyuna Range, but where did the name Cuyuna come from?

It's a hybrid word derived from the first three letters of Adams' first name - Cuy - and the name of his beloved dog and traveling companion - Una.



For several years, Adams continued his involvement in the mining industry as well as other ventures. He passed away on November 29, 1932 in Tryon, North Carolina.

Crow Wing County owes a great deal of gratitude to this man and his vision.

**A HISTORY LESSON...**



**By: Lucille Kirkeby**

It is easy to not pay attention to some of our artifacts. They are labeled so we know what they are, but we do not know the stories associated with them. Have you ever passed by the pieces of six

inch wooden Brainerd water main and not given them too much thought?

Water and its related issues have always made history in Brainerd. In the last couple decades, it was forced fluoridation. Brainerd boasted drinking water that came from three deep water wells and thick beds of gravel. Some said it was the most wholesome drinking water that nature had given the city, water not doped or doused in chemicals. There was a long bitter fight to keep fluoride out of the city's water supply. Finally, the water was fluoridated, but opposition forces were somewhat appeased by the fact that there would be a pump provided for anyone to use to get water without fluoride. The pump exists today and according to one of the Water and Light Board members is used a lot.



Brainerd's earliest water main was six-inch pipe laid in 1881 by the NP Railroad Co. along what is now Washington Street. Its purpose was to carry water from the Mississippi to the new railroad shops that were being erected. These pieces of the

line were found in 1950 between North 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Going back as far as 1903, there still was only a very short stretch of 10-inch pipe from the pump house, the rest was six or four-inch pipe. The city was not in the business of supplying its residents or its businesses with water. Buildings were of wood frame construction so went up in flames without proper firefighting. There just wasn't the water or the water pressure.

A Water and Light Board came into being in about 1908-1909. Things didn't improve very rapidly, however. Eleven miles of thin shelled pipe was added, but every time pressure was applied, it sprang a leak. By 1915 there were 15 miles added and in 1918 twenty-five miles were added.

Things began to change when insurance companies let it be known they were going broke insuring Brainerd businesses. Things had to change or else.

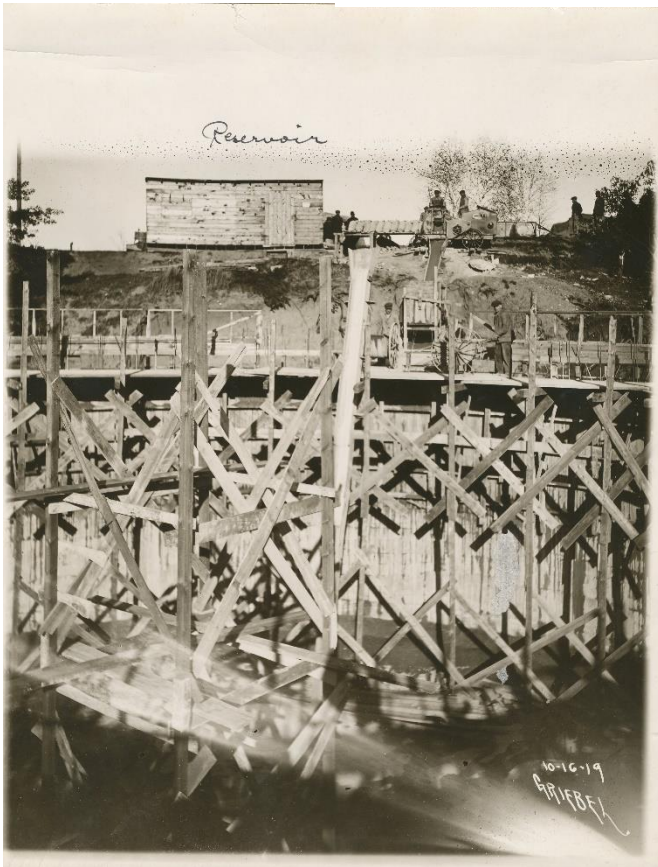
Brainerd made history in the early 1920s when the Water and Light Board began planning an elevated storage tank, 134 feet tall with a capacity of 300,000 gallons of water. According to Carl Zapffe Sr. in his book *Brainerd 1871-1946*, it was the first municipal water supply to have a concrete tank. The bowl was made in a single continuous pouring. The Water and Light Board insisted on such a structure because of its architectural beauty and it not requiring painting. It would also be relatively maintenance free.

When these improvements and additions were added to the water system, all the old was scrapped except the debt, of course. A completion date was set for Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> of 1922.

We suffered through road work on 6<sup>th</sup> Street this summer. Just think, we shouldn't have to put up with anything like that in our life time. Today's water mains, according to our Water and Light people, are made of ductile iron and should last a hundred years. Today with a population of slightly over 13,000, we have 105 miles of city water main. Water is metered and we have to pay for usage, but it's worth it.

Next time you're in the museum, stop and think what we started with after looking at these early water pipes.

# One Hundred Years Ago



Building the reservoir for the Brainerd Water Tower, October 16, 1919.



Excavation of the Crow Wing County Courthouse on August 5, 1919.



After a tornado near Gregory Park, 1919.

## We Sincerely Thank Our Volunteers!

Bill & Sandy Ash  
Elaine Axtell  
Jan Burton  
Ron Crocker  
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Board Members

# BOARD OPPORTUNITIES

The Crow Wing County Historical Society is looking for two new members to join our Board of Directors in 2019. If you are interested in history, enjoy collaborative planning, and have time to dedicate to improving our organization, please consider applying. Board member duties include, but are not limited to:

- Defining and perpetuating the Society's mission.
- Serving as an ambassador for the Society.
- Involvement in strategic planning and development of long-range goals.
- Developing and implementing the Society's annual budget and monitoring fiscal responsibility.
- Hiring, supporting, and evaluating the Museum's Executive Director.
- Playing an active role in fundraising.
- Be a Crow Wing County Historical Society member in good standing.

Board members meet on the third Tuesday of every month and occasionally at other times as business requires. Board members are elected in April and serve a three-year term. If you are interested, please contact the Museum at (218)829-3268 or [Hillary.Swanson@crowwing.us](mailto:Hillary.Swanson@crowwing.us).

We thank the following  
individuals for their generous

## DONATIONS

Lavonne Danzl  
Larry Mowell  
Mark & Cathy Gray  
Randahl Hoghaug  
Linda Huffmeier  
James Froemming  
Kathleen Mahoney-Hermerding  
Sheila Northrop  
Linda Philp  
Picture Perfect  
Mary Saboe  
John Van Essen

### Supporting County/Municipality

Crow Wing County  
City of Brainerd

### Supporting Townships

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

Thank You!

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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: 218-828-4434

Email: [history@crowwing.us](mailto:history@crowwing.us) Web: [www.crowwinghistory.org](http://www.crowwinghistory.org)

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10AM-3PM (closed major holidays and holiday weekends)

**CWCCHS Yearly 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 can also pay online using PayPal.

**NEW MEMBERS**

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Brainerd Hardwoods

BOOSTER  
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CTC

SUSTAINING  
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FAMILY MEMBERS  
Jamie Bieser  
Neil & Mary Sather  
Kevin Schumann

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS  
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