

# BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

## News Lines



### ANNUAL MEETING 2008

The Benton County Historical Society Annual Meeting was held on September 16, 2008!

We had a great group of people in attendance at the Benton County Museum!

People who had not been to the museum for a while complimented the new military display that we had just finished!

Social hour included some interesting conversation, Subway sandwiches, chips and beverages and it felt like a family reunion! Familiar faces, sharing history with each other and catching up on the events of the year.

During the meeting part of the evening, there was an election for Board Members. Three positions were up for election with six people submitting information for the positions to be on the board. The general membership opened up nominations and four people were nominated and put on a ballot for general

membership election. After the Board Member positions were filled, we held the election of Executive Officers for the Board.

Our two new Board Members are Melissa Keller, and Michelle Watercott,; elected to fulfill three year terms! Ernie Wollak is returning to the Board of Directors to fulfill another three year term! Officers are Pres. Ernie Wollak, VP Char Dhein, Treas. Renee Kampa and Secretary Michelle Watercott.

Ann Zemke was here to do the presentation of her grandmother's quilt story "The Brave Journey of an Orphan Train Rider" The story of riding the orphan train to the area was very interesting and Ann Zemke brought her newly released book for all to see.

Bill Morgan was also present to give a presentation to the members about the local area landmarks. The release of his new book the day before was great!

Both author's had books on hand to sell and personally sign for the members!

We thank everyone who attended and participated!



Social Hour!

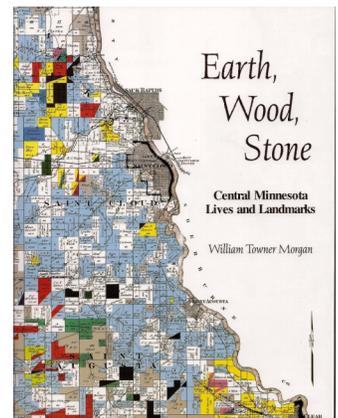
**Anyone who believes that you cannot change history has never tried to write his memoirs!**

**David Ben Gurion**

#### Bill Morgan's New Book Release!

Judy, Bill's wife, had called the day before the Annual Meeting and let us know that Bill's new book was hot off the presses! The membership had an early opportunity to purchase a signed copy at the meeting and had the pleasure of a presentation of the books contents and the importance of preserving the Central Minnesota architecture and landmarks.

*Earth, Wood, Stone: Central Minnesota Lives & Landmarks* is for sale at the Benton County Historical Society and has wonderful information and pictures with chapters on: Central Minnesota Beginnings, St Cloud's Founders, Pandolpho's Dream, Farms, Disasters, Ghosts, Schools, Churches, St Cloud Houses, Downtown St. Cloud, Landmarks and Lost Landmarks. The chapters and contents read a wealth of understanding of the community surrounding us through its information!



**FOND FAREWELLS AND BEST WISHES!**

Alice Trushenski and Donna Schafer were the two Board Members that decided not to serve a new term on the Board of Directors.

The Benton County Historical Society Board Members and staff would like to wish both of them well with their new endeavors!

Alice Trushenski is looking forward to a slow down in life after more than 18 years as a board member and volun-

teer. She was at the Annual Meeting and was presented a plaque of honor by President Ernie Wollak for her extended years of service!

Donna is working towards completing her personal goals in life. We wish her well in her new adventure as she has served the Board of Directors for three years of her time!

Thank you to both who gave so much to BCHS!



Alice honored, pictured with President Ernie Wollak

**The miracle is this— the more we share, the more we have.**  
*Leonard Nimoy*

M e e t i n g s	M e m b e r s h i p I n f o r m a t i o n	
Benton County Historical Society's Board of Directors meetings are held of the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Benton County Historical Museum at 218 1st Street North, Sauk Rapids.  Members of the public are always welcome!  Meeting Dates: November 18, 2008 December 26, 2008	<u>Household</u>	
	Seniors	\$9.00
	Single	\$13.00
	Family	\$18.00
	Contributor	\$27.00
	Supporter	\$50.00
	<u>Business</u>	
	Annual	\$50.00
	Supporting	\$75.00
	Maintaining	\$100.00
	Patron	\$150.00
	Benefactor	\$500.00

Month/Visitors/Emails/Phone	Renewed Memberships	New Memberships
<b>August</b> 34    6    2 27 local visitors/ 7 out of towns	Donna & Randy Schafer Margaret Neary	Meredith Du Pree Sharon Cairns
<b>September</b> 41    8    3 21 local visitors/20 out of town and international visitors	Brian & Jennifer Pozorski Membership Renewals will be going out in December! Watch for them in the mail!	Melissa & Jeremy Keller Family  <b>Thank you all</b> for your membership!
<b>October</b> 68    30 11 55 local visitors/ 13 out of town		 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Member are an essential piece to our success!</b></p>

**S O M E T H I N G ' S N E V E R C H A N G E !**

Recently in casual conversation I was talking to someone who told me how times had changed so much, especially crime. They thought it was up considerably. I said it was always there, the news just brought it forth more!

So, I thought it was rather interesting and funny when I found this next article in a 1910 newspaper something's never change I guess; here it is from - *The Foley Independent* on April 28, 1910:

**Chicken Thieves**

**Make Big Haul in Morrill Last Week**

According to the reports received from our Ramey correspondent, chicken thieves are abroad in the land. One night last week the visited the coop of E.E. Crowe, the well known Ramey farmer, and helped themselves to 165 well-bred chickens, leaving no trace behind that the that would aid in discovering the guilty parties. Mr. Crowe places his loss at \$165 which is a considerable amount for one to lose in that manner.

It is clear, that no amateur could have handled a job of that size without getting caught and it is a pretty safe guess that it was the work of professionals. If this should be the case we would advise our readers to keep watch over their poultry until the perpetrators have left this section of the country.

**W A N T S , W I S H E S A N D W O N D E R S**

**Wants**

- CD-R's and DVD's- for documenting oral interviews
- Male mannequins for military uniforms
- Display cases for the museum

**Wishes**

- Museum volunteers to help organize Members!

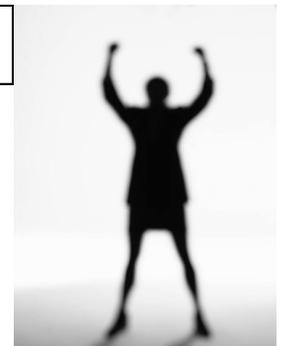
**Wonders**

We are always looking for information on historic events , buildings and people out in the community. Copies of information, pictures and collection pieces for the museum are always welcome!

**Teamwork allows common people to attain uncommon results!**

**B o a r d o f D i r e c t o r s V o l u n t e e r s W e b s i t e S t a f f**

President: Ernie Wollak	Fred Joesting	Ron Zurek-website
Vice- President: Char Dhein	Marjean Keehr	<u>Staff</u>
Treasurer: Renee Kampa	Nellie Henry	Mary Ostby- Executive. Director
Secretary: Michelle Watercott	Caren Kalenda	Meredith DuPree
Directors: Butch Bukowski	Andy Schwalboski	Marilyn Hiscock
Bud Lubbesmeier	Jack Toliver	320-253-9614
Melissa Keller	Lorane Walsh	Email:
Bob Moon	Jenny De Wenter	bchsmus@charterinternet.com
Ken Schiller		



**Thank you for all you do!**

## NEW FACES AND RESOURCES DONATIONS!

We have been seeing quite a few new faces in the museum working on quite a few different projects!

One of those faces was Jeanne Behling from Duluth Minnesota!

She had contacted us about information about the Glendorado Methodist Episcopal Church, established in 1905 and Schoolhouse district 33, also located in Glendorado. We had little information on the school, and no information on the church.

I explained to her that we would love to know about anything and everything that existed in Benton County!

Jeanne drove down to see us after our phone conversation and spent the afternoon doing research on her family. An enjoyable afternoon and she said she would be back to see us.

Today an envelope showed up at the Museum with the mail and we were pleasantly surprised by the contents!

Jeanne sent us three pictures of the school, three pictures of the church and started filling our gaps in the knowledge of the history of both!

She also provided us with a copy of the Article of Incorporation for the church signed by 4 members of her relatives.

The school picture enclosed was identified with the students names on the back; from the class of 1906!

We truly appreciate being able to retrieve information about Benton County history from the people who have the information in their files. We are so thankful for people who have the information and take the time to share it!

The pictures are below to refresh anyone else's memories and to try to acquire any additional information anyone out there may have!

Thank you Jeanne for providing us with so much!

## GLENDORADO METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



One of three pictures that were sent to us by Jeanne Behling of Duluth, Minnesota. We had no information on this church until Jeanne provided it. Anyone else having information on this church, services and congregational would be great! Call Mary at BCHS- 320 253-9614- see article above!

## SCHOOL DISTRICT 33 - CLASS OF 1906



District 33 Class of 1906- picture compliments of Jeanne Behling. The class roster of 1906 is listed on the back, but any additional information that anyone may have would be a great addition to the file on this school. Contact Mary at 320-253-9614 -see article above!

## AN AMAZING DONATION

## Benton family's past appears on book's pages

By Sue Halena  
shalena@stcloudtimes.com

Walter Vaughan was sorting through the clutter one day and decided it was time to find a better owner for a small clothbound book published in 1923.

Vaughan, who runs a bike shop in Post Falls, Idaho, called the St. Cloud Times to say that he had a copy of the Russell Genealogical Register — a book about a pioneer family that settled north of St. Cloud.

The Benton County Historical Society is now home for this book that's much, much more than just about genealogy. Readers may see parallels between themselves and of a family struggling to get by.

The county group did not own a

copy, and executive director Mary Ostby will be combing the book to see if the information fills any gaps in local knowledge.

The book documents the arrival of Robert and Agnes Russell, who came from Glasgow, Scotland, to what is now the Royalton area. Robert arrived in the late 1840s; the rest of the family joined him in the early 1850s.

The book was compiled by two of the settlers' grandchildren: Nelson and Robert F. Flint.

Among the statements in its pages:

■ Agnes Russell gave birth to the first white child born in Benton County (then a far more expansive area) when daughter Janet arrived

in 1852.

■ Winnebago Indians from Iowa lived on a reservation west of the Mississippi River, between the Crow Wing and Long Prairie rivers, between 1848 and 1855. They had a village on Winnebago Prairie — now Brockway Township.

The book provides rich detail about three generations of Russells and their spouses, plus photos and diary excerpts. Some commentary about American Indians could be offensive.

The book came with a bonus: Six newspaper clippings and six letters related to Russell family history.

The oldest clipping, from 1920, is the obituary for Jennie Russell Flint, daughter of the settler couple and mother of the book's authors.

Russell family reunions began that same year; one has to wonder if Jennie's funeral sparked the annual gatherings that are documented in two-page typewritten reports 35 years later.

It's clear from the book and letters that the Russells ar-

Recently we were fortunate enough to have a donation of the *Russell Genealogical Register*; a book that came to our museum through some very unusual circumstances.

The book was mailed to a St. Cloud Times reporter, who contacted us and then donated the book to us in the name of the man who originally sent it to her. Thanks to Walter Vaughan of Post Falls, Idaho, who took the time to send the book to the reporter, and to Sue Halena, who took the time to read it, and get it to us for our resources!

Along with the book, there was other documents including family reunion reports, and newspaper articles about the attending parties.



Times photo by Paul Middlestaedt, pmiddlestaedt@stcloudtimes.com

**The Benton County Historical Society acquires a copy of the Russell Genealogical Register.**

### ABOUT BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Location:** 218 First St. N, Sauk Rapids.

**Hours:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Phone:** 253-9614.

**Web:** members.aol.com/bchsmus.

rived in Minnesota with few farming skills but a passion for words and education. Every day living was document-

ed. Pioneer schools were a priority. Many descendants took teacher's training in St. Cloud.

Some members of the family continued the westward emigration and settled in Montana or Washington.

That might explain how the slim book landed among items that Vaughan picked up at an auction a few years ago.

Now the book has come home to the county where Robert and Agnes Russell carved out their pioneer lives.



## OUR MILITARY VOLUNTEER WANTS YOU!

Most of you read in the last newsletter about our military volunteer, Jack Toliver.

He has the military display in the museum looking mighty fine! He is currently working on compiling military histories and also needs some information from the community.

Some people may have not heard about the Home Guards in the area. There

were Home Guards in Foley and Sauk Rapids. We have limited information on this item for the towns in the area and would love pictures, documents relating to this.

Jack has been doing the research through newspapers, but would love some personal interviews, or documentation catering to it. As time goes on people have forgotten about the Rosie the Riveter's, the Civil Air Pa-

trols, and the stories from the people who were using ration stamps, collecting metals, and trying to support the troops with the local people at home helping the communities.

If anyone has military uniforms, stories, items, call the Museum or stop by as Jack would love to talk to you!

Military item, histories are always welcome!



## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NOTICE

In the past year's we have held our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner/Party in December of every year.

At the Board meeting in October, the Board Members made a decision to move the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to the "Volunteer Appreciation Week" in April of the next year (2009).

I should be getting letters out

to all volunteers shortly, but thought this would be a great chance to let everyone know about changes at the museum.

Changing the date of the party/dinner will allow us to be celebrating our volunteers dedicated work with the rest of the community organizations! It also helps with the hectic holiday schedules that everyone has!

Volunteer Appreciation Week is usually the third week in April and details of that special event will be available to all our volunteers!

Thank you for every thing that you do!

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

We have updated our list of inventory of all the oral interviews in the museum records!

Doing oral interviews with people of the community has been a wonderful and interesting way to document events in history. Interviews about businesses, lifestyles,

people and their communities! Every year we are missing opportunities to keep our history alive with information.

Over the years we have lost touch with some of the programming, and after updating the current inventories, we are ready to get back out in the community!

We implemented a process to be able to the interview with the newer technology and then import the interviews into the computer and get the information on CD or DVD. It is a faster process, easier to inventory, and we have data that can be listened to or transcribed for future references.

We are pleased to have a volunteer who is willing to do the interviews. Now, we are looking for people who would be interested in doing one, or a referral from people who would like to recommend someone that should have an event, happening or story in our files!



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

As we come upon the end of Fall and ease into the Winter months; the days have become shorter and at the Museum we have become busier! A quick look at October's visitors numbers tells me there is a bunch of people who would like to get their research done before the snow hits Minnesota! Then they can sit down in their warm houses and write their books or put their research together in some kind of organizational binders!

We have met a lot of great people who are interested in all aspects of history of Benton County! Some are writing books, some are filling in pieces of family history, some come to look at the artifacts, and some come to look at our information to see what we have to offer! The smiling faces are welcome and the information they have to offer to us as we help them is always a good experience!

We are moving forward! We just finished a PowerPoint presentation that Board Members, volunteers or staff can take out into the community and do presentations to explain our services. It is an exciting time to be able to not only have services available in the Museum, but on the website and portable out in the community.

Thank you to the volunteers and the staff for making the movement forward possible! I am excited to see the possibilities in the next few years working towards the organizational goals!

If you have not been in the Museum lately, please stop by, we would love to see you!

*Mary Colby*

**C E M E T E R Y R E C O R D S A N D U P D A T E S**

We have been very fortunate to have Lorane Walsh working on updating and verifying the cemetery records. She has been diligent in helping by talking to people, gaining access to caretakers, walking cemeteries, searching stones, matching records and helping to update our new computer records! Special thanks to her for helping with this HUGE project!

It has taken a lot of people out in the community; more special thanks to Frank Gadacz, Margaret Carlson- Brain, Georgeanne Brenny, Pastor Douglas Gjerset, Linda & Darrell Keeler, Pat Lezer, and Karla Winkelman to help us out with information. Thank you to all the people who have helped as we update! We are the first stop for people looking for information on locating

graves and we welcome having the information not only in the community but

There are 26 cemeteries in Benton County that we know or are aware of. We would appreciate if the community would let us know if they have information about any of them. Our thanks again to all who have been helping us work through this project!

**In every conceivable matter, the family is a link to our past, and a bridge to our future.....  
Alex Haley**

**Museum Closings for the Holidays!**

November 11, 2009- Veterans Day

November 27, 2008- Thanksgiving Day

December 24 and 25th -Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

January 1, 2008- New Year Day

# BCHS

## BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

P.O. Box 426  
218 1st St. N.  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

*PRESERVING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT FOR THE FUTURE....*

### **NEW WEBSITE LOCATION FOR BCHS!**

Ron Zurek, our webmaster contacted us last week and let us know that we would have to be changing the website address! Ron found our website a new home at : [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mnbchsm/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mnbchsm/)

As of November 1, 2008 we have been relocated to the new website address. We will be correcting the brochures and information at the shelter, but please make note of it for anyone who has our current brochure of information.

Many thanks to him for having found us a new site , transferring all the files of information and keeping it up and running with little or no trouble!

We updated a few things and there are new pictures from the Benton County Fair Booth at the Heritage Building and Watab Schoolhouse District 2 exhibits.

**Click on and see us!**

