

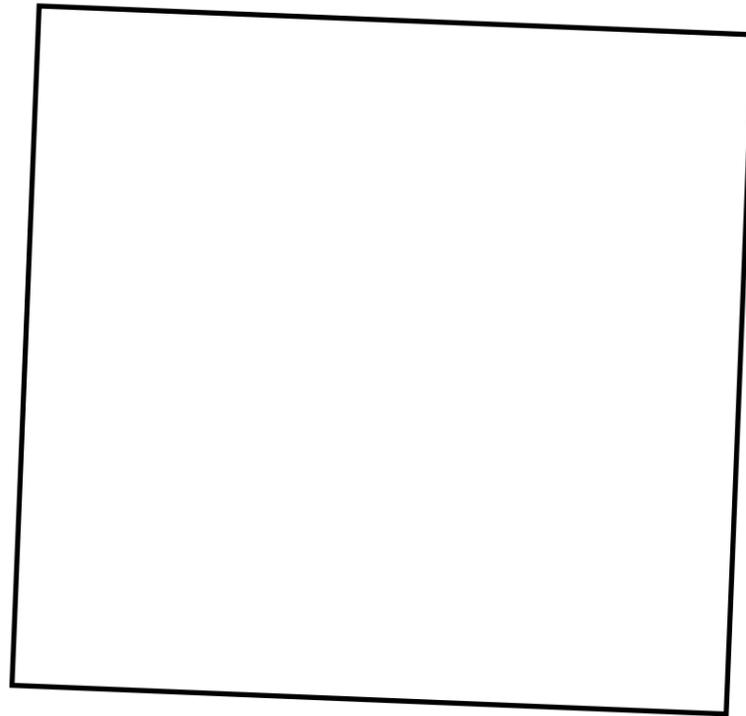
## Benton County Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 426  
218 1st Street North  
Sauk Rapids, Mn 56379

Phone: 320-253-9614  
Fax:320-253-9614  
E-mail:bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com

Preserving the Past for the present  
and the future

<http://mnhistory.org>



\*Please use the PO Box 426 address for mail- the Local Post Office has "returned" mail using the street address

## Board of Directors, Staff Volunteers and Meeting Information

**President:** Ernie Wollak  
**Vice-President:** Char Dhein  
**Treasurer:** Renee Kampa  
**Secretary:** Jean Stark  
**Director:** Earl "Butch" Bukowski  
**Director:** Pat Gerchy  
**Director:** Randy Schafer  
**Director:** Merle Stowe  
**Director:** Lorane Walsh



Happy Holidays To All Our Members!

### Staff

**Jack Toliver**-Military Support  
**Miles Christie**-Office Support & Military Support  
**Meredith DePree**- Office Support  
**Mary Ostby**- Executive Director

Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings start times are 6:30pm unless otherwise posted on the front door of the museum.

Meetings scheduled may be changed by Board Motion and approval. Meetings may be cancelled due to inclement weather and this information will also be posted at the museum when necessary.

**Volunteers:** **Fred Joesting** - Research Specialist, **Marjean Keehr** - Research, **Andy Schwalboski**-Research & Displays, **Caren Kalenda** - Oral Interviews, BCHS Tour & Data Input, **Bob Kalenda** - BCHS Tour & Data Input, **Wendy Wheeler** - History Mystery, Where's Wendy & Photography, **Jan Rothanburg** - Photography, **John Stafney**-Database Coordinator & Website, **Maureen Athman** -Transcriptionist, **Jenny Josephs** - Displays, & Resources, **Jenny DeWenter**- Museum Support Thanks to all your time and service to volunteer!



Benton County  
Historical Society &  
Museum

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## Benton County Historical Society NewsLines

January 2013

## Women In History Nominations 2013

It is that time of the year when we are looking for some great Benton County women and the community's help with Women In History nominations! Every year we work with National Women's History Month and want the public to nominate deserving women of Benton County to be our honorees!



Spring will be coming!

If you know of a woman in Benton County who you would like to be honored for her participation in family, community organizations and our lives in Benton County then please contact us at the museum with a short biography and we will be happy to put her on the list of nominations for the Women In History Luncheon we hold in March. The list of nominees is taken to the Board of Directors meeting and the board members will choose the 2013 honorees!

We will be holding the Women In History 2013 Luncheon in Foley at Henry's Catering on March 24, 2013. We always have the luncheon open for the friends, family and to the public. Tickets are usually around ten dollars and it is a very nice way to celebrate Benton County women and support the local Benton County Historical Society programming. We hope to see you there!

## Lyndon Johnson Agate Display 2013

Lyndon Johnson will be bringing the agates in for display during the month of January and February of 2013. We still have quite a few people who call, ask, and stop in to see them around here. Lyndon has time to bring them in for the two months, and to do some tours for the local scout groups, schools and community groups. Please pass the word around the community if you have a chance. If you have not seen the collection, it is truly worth stopping by to see this Benton County collection! Additional hours are listed on page 3 under Tours, Research and Agate Collection.

## Cool Historical Items

Recently we were contacted by a home owner wanting information on the house that they bought. We have what we call a “hit or miss” history on the houses of Benton County. Not a lot of people had the money or means to take pictures, not everyone had cameras around (unlike today) and people had so much to do in their daily lives that it had to be a pretty special occasion for a house to be in a picture. There are exceptions to that, but those exceptions are far and few in between in our records. Same with information on houses– usually only legal abstracts, or mortgage deeds, not a lot of blueprints, building permits, or structure records.

So, we told the people that if they gave us the address, we would do what we could to look it up, but would probably find more under the owner’s names on the abstract. As soon as she gave me the address, I knew which house it was! We had looked up some information on it about a year ago and so I sent out what we had.

A couple of days later, an email arrived and lo and behold, Kay had posted the information up on a blog about the house. I visited the blog and was so surprised to find a great blog with pictures of the house as it sits now, along with some interior pictures of the house before they start to restore/renovate it. It is the George Becker house in Minden Township and the granite marker in the corner of the foundation is 1903. We find it exciting to be able to see on the blog, and the progress that will be made in the future! Kay’s blog is great and called Mayhew House and you can get there with this internet address:

<http://mayhewhouse.blogspot.com/>.

You can see the picture at the right that she has on the blog and it looks like a great old brick house with some interesting architecture to work with! We wish them luck and will be watching to see how the project moves forward!

We love this idea of a blog for the restoration and history! If you know of more, let us know!



## New Ebook of Genealogy

Meredith brought in a newspaper article of a new E-book that has been released out on Kindle. The author, Vickie Chupurdia of Two Harbors, had done a large amount of research over the years on her family genealogy. She gathered all her knowledge and put it in an e-book to help the do-it-yourself genealogist get started in the right direction. The e-book is called : “*Jump Start Your Genealogy Research*” and is available at: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$2.99. We have not reviewed it, but it was No. 1 genealogy e-book in the Kindle Store and just another resource for the family history world! Vickie’s best advice “ Interview the elders now. Don’t lose the chance to lose their stories.”

Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world. John Muir 1838-1914

## Membership Renewals Form for 2013

We put out a request in the last newsletter that if anyone wanted to renew their 2013 membership before the holiday season the form was enclosed. Thanks to the many who did! It saves us stamps, paper notices, and much time!

We added the membership renewal form for the January newsletter too, for those who may want to still renew early. The membership rates are still the same amount for 2013. So, this is another opportunity to renew before we send out letters in late January 2013. In January, we only send out one letter for membership renewal if you have not renewed before that time, you will receive a letter.

We look forward to a New Year of serving you as members!



Happy Holidays to all our members!



<u>Household</u>		<u>Business</u>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Seniors	\$9.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual	\$50.00	Name: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Single	13.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	75.00	Address: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	18.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining	100.00	City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributor	27.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	150.00	Phone: _____ 2013Membership Dues!		
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	500.00	Email: _____		

Make your check payable to: Benton County Historical Society or BCHS.

Thank you for your continuing support of Benton County Historical Society and Museum!

Thanks to all those members that have renewed their memberships for 2013!

## Graham Evangelical Church

We are always excited to have “old” historical information to show up “new”! We are also very pleased that the community shows up and is willing to share the information! Pictured at the right is a picture of Graham Evangelical Church sometime between 1936-1940. The church historian, Cliff Weitgenant stopped in with a copy for us for the records. We added it to our Graham Church information that Cliff has so willingly collected for the preservation of history. The church pictured burned down in 1941, and the Social Hall is the building behind the church.



Graham Evangelical Church 1936-1940

What a wonderful and important item to add to the church history and the Historical Society collection!

## Jack Toliver's Crocheted Lap Blanket Presentation

Jack was recently presented a Crocheted Lap Blanket at the Museum by Richard Gryczkowski and Margaret (Peggy) Turner.

Some of you will remember that Jack helped Margaret with her book, *Red Wing to Hong Kong* with the military information. Margaret has taken up a new past time of crocheting lap blankets for the “No Veteran Dies Alone” program at the VA Medical Center. Richard Gryczkowski is very involved in the program and asked Margaret to help out using her crocheting skills. Margaret and Richard decided that Jack deserved one too and so, they stopped in the museum and formally presented a Red, White and Blue Lap Blanket for his service!



Richard Gryczkowski (Left) presents Jack Toliver with a surprise for helping in the community with military information!



Margaret (Peggy) Turner (left), Jack Toliver (middle), Richard Gryczkowski (right) pose for a picture after the presentation!

## Museum Tours, Research, Agate Collection Hours



Come on in and see us!

Benton County Historical Society and Museum is open 10am– 4pm Monday thru Friday and the first Saturday of every month from 11am– 4pm. We will be closed on the first month Saturdays that fall on holidays or if we have inclement weather.

The closure of the museum for weather will be if the school districts are closed, then we are closed.

If you have need for a group tour or need a special time for research, you can stop by the museum during open hours, call the museum at 320-253-9614, or contact us by **Email: [bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com](mailto:bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com)** and we can get an appointment set up for you. We do our best to work with the community to accommodate special requests, so if you need some extra hours, please contact us!

As per the front page article of this newsletter; the museum will be hosting the **Lyndon Johnson Agate Collection** here for the months of January and February. We are adding two Saturdays to the schedule of hours. **The Saturday schedule will be January 5, 2013, January 19, 2013, February 2, 2013, February 23, 2013 and March 2, 2013 the hours will be 11:00am– 4p.m.** Lyndon will be here on those Saturdays for people who may have questions or would like have him assess individual agates. He also is available during some weekday hours, but to make sure he is here, or is available it pays to call ahead and schedule with him. Most people love to talk agates with Lyndon and he likes to share information with agate collectors of all ages and types.

We are also in the process of putting up a Sartell Paper mill display with some interesting information. Now that the mill is closing, it will become a major part of the Benton County history information. There have been many Benton County people employed there over the years! If you have history to add please contact us– we would like to do interviews and have written stories!

Don't stand by the water longing for fish, go home and weave a net...  
Chinese Proverb

## Books/ Looking for Information

We still have books for sale:

**Lyndon Johnson's** Agate Book *What to Look For Lyndon's Story*-\$20.00

**Margaret (Peggy) Seiz Turner's** *Red Wing To Hong Kong*- \$20.00

**Harold Zosel's** *St Cloud Postcard History*-\$21.99

**Margaret Neary's**- *Margarita*- \$12.00

**Ed Sowa's** re-releases on: *Benton County and Sauk Rapids History*

**We are also still looking for Yearbooks to complete our collection for Foley and Sauk Rapids!**

## Watab Pulp & Paper/St. Regis/ Verso Paper Mill



**Watab Boiler Room– produced steam to run the turbine which made electricity and the steam was also used to dry the paper-around 1920**

Most of us in the Central Minnesota area were surprised at the news last year of the Verso Paper Mill accident (May 2012) and the un-timely closing of a place of employment in Benton County since the early 1900's.

The history we have here at the museum says: The original company Watab Pulp and Paper Corporation was formed on May 10, 1905 with a capitalization of \$200,000. The stock shares were \$100.00 each.

The plant started operation with No. 1 paper machine in September, 1905. The company produced newsprint until 1930. This is when the conversion to ground wood book and magazine papers began.

During the 1930's recycled magazines were a prime source of pulp. The waste magazines were brought by railway from Chicago in bales weighing up to 2000 pounds each. In the "sorting" room paper clips and staples were removed. The waste was then sent to the cookers for de-inking and bleaching. The conversion plant operated through the 1930's until the end of WWII. At the end of the War, the mill closed the finishing operation, where the paper was sheeted and cut to size. After that, the mill manufactured paper that was shipped in roll form.

St. Regis bought Watab Pulp & Paper Corporation and its properties in 1946. The transition was smooth with minor changes in mill management. Sartell Mill was considered to be a desirable place to work and pay rates continued to be favorable to other local industries. (continued on page 5)

**Left- The Dam was released in the Spring when the river became too high**



## Donations October, November, December 2012

**Ken Philippi**– Loyal order of the Moose information, Military gas face mask, and 1918 Military helmet

**Jerry & Julee Sticha-Webster**– Chicago Electronic memory machine– wire string recorder

**Pat Cripe**– Sauk Rapids Indian Princess outfit, moccasins, arm bands, pictures and information on Sauk Rapids Indian Days

**Merle & Sue Stowe** –Four rolls of Kodak film,3 Gold Bond Stamp Books, Braided Plastic Bread Bag rug made by Delores Stowe

**Stephen Schuster**– Fire Department Dress Uniform Button found in wall of remodeling Sauk Rapids Home

**St. Cloud Times**– Legislative Manuals

**Anamae Lauermann**-Green Esselman Store sweatshirt– business promotion

**Gordon & Dolores Rehder**-Funnel, Box of Porcelain Door knobs

**Cathy Holroyd**- June/July 1989 Memories Magazine

**Lewis Coffey**-Old Newspaper copy

**Judy Hoofnagle**– Easter Bunny, Chicks, Baskets, maps, Mohair sweater, Baby Blankets, Various Clothes, Boy Scouts uniforms, Baby clothes, Confirmation dresses, Bathrobe, Head scarves, Long underwear suit, Christmas decorations, ornaments & light set, tablecloth, set of glasses

**Norm Mendel**-Picture of Jefferson Elementary School 3rd Grade class

**Lynne Welsh**– Len Trushenski plaques from snowmobile races, retirement plaque, desk name plaque when serving as county sheriff, scrapbooks, newspapers, and election teletypes for Minnesota elections

**Jerome Then**– Two copies of the book *The Chemnitzer Conertina* documenting concertina history and the maker of Hengel Concertinas in Central Minnesota area authored by Lavern J. Rippley



Thanks to all who preserve Benton County history!

Only a life lived for others is a worthwhile life  
Albert Einstein

## Where's Wendy? Sauk Rapids Pictures Drawing!

We have finished publishing the *Where's Wendy* pictures in the Sauk Rapids Herald for this contest and drawing. We will be pulling the winning ticket at the January 15, 2013 Board Meeting and will notify the winner this week by phone or mail.

Thanks to everyone who participates in the photo contests. The feedback I am getting from the community has been great.

We will be setting up some more photo guessing contests– Wendy is thinking about past business history pictures, some still here, some not.

Watch the Sauk Rapids herald for our next announcement!



Where's Wendy drawing will be in January 2013 Board Meeting- on the 15th

## Membership New & Renewals 2013

Don Abfalter  
 Charles & Nancy Anderson  
 Donna Barnickol  
 Shirley Benoit  
 Benton County News  
 Sharon Cairns  
 Pat Cripe- **New!**  
 Robert Danaher  
 Elaine Fleck  
 Veronica Friehammer  
 Art & Barb Gracheck  
 Darlene Gronau  
 Susan Hackman  
 Julia Helgeson- Helgeson Farm  
 Nellie C. Henry  
 Pauline M. Hoover  
 Roger E. Cantor  
 Ruth & John Kilkelly  
 Dennis & Marella Larson  
 Margaret Larson  
 Elizabeth ( Libby) Levinski  
 JoAnn Marshall  
 Jim & Pam McMahan  
 Jerome & Glenice Mehrwerth  
 Midway Iron & Metal Inc.  
 Jim & Geri Moshier  
 Mary Neiman  
 Joan Neyssen  
 Michael O'Donnell  
 Steve & Mary Ostby  
 M. Lucille Peschl

Dorrain Petron  
 Dorothy Piasecki  
 Chris Rasmussen  
 Gordon & Dolores Rehder  
 Bob Rofidal  
 Jan & Tom Rothanburg  
 Ken Schiller  
 Lyle Schmidt  
 Robert & Andy Schwalboski  
 Mary Agnes Shimota  
 Jan Sorell  
 Les Sova  
 Pat & Dick Soyka  
 Harold Storkamp  
 Merle Stowe  
 Then Installations Inc.  
 Conrad & Linda Urbik  
 Elly Van Diest  
 Cecil Wade  
 Erin Wallace-**New!**  
 Paul Weber  
 Bernie Wesenberg  
 Wollak Construction

**These are renewals so far, if I missed you, please let me know so I can check our records and correct them!**



**Thanks to all our members!**

### I'm My Own Grandpa!

Many, many years ago when I was twenty-three;  
 I got married to a widow, who was pretty as could be.  
 This widow had a grown-up daughter, who had hair of red;  
 My father fell in love with her, and soon the two were wed.  
 This made my dad my son-in-law and changed my very life;  
 My daughter was my mother, for she was my father's wife.  
 To complicate the matters worse, although it brought me joy;  
 I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy  
 My little baby then became a brother-in-law to Dad;  
 And so became my uncle, although it made me very sad.  
 For if he was my uncle, then that also made him brother to the widow's grown up daughter, who of course, was my step-mother.  
 Father's wife then had a son, who kept them on the run;  
 And he became my grandson, for he was my daughter's son.  
 My wife is now my mother's mother, and it makes me blue  
 Because although she is my wife, she is my grandma too!  
 If my wife is my grandmother, then I am her grandchild;  
 And every time I think of it, it simply drives me wild!  
 For now I have become the strangest case you ever saw;  
 As the husband of my grandmother, I am my own grandpa!

## Watab Pulp & Paper Company

Dam Construction sometime around 1907 Watab Pulp and Paper Company



(Continued from page 4)

In 1984, St. Regis Corporation was merged with Champion International Corporation. By the early 1990's Champion made more kinds of paper for more kinds of customers that any other country in the world!

In June 2000, Champion International was purchased by International Paper making it the world's largest paper and forest products company.

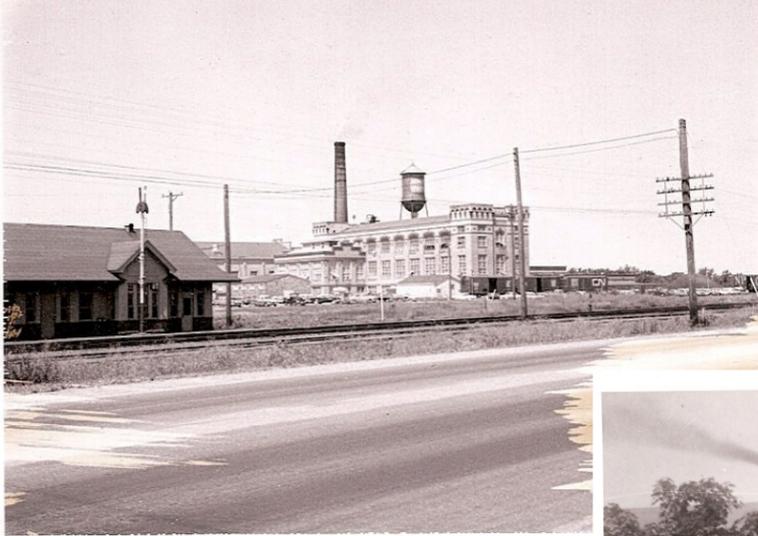
In 2005 and 2006, International Paper undertook significant restructuring and sold their coated paper business (four mills in Maine, Michigan and Minnesota) were sold to Apollo management and were operating as Verso Paper. Verso paper was the operating name when the accident took place in May 2012.

To the left is a picture of the outside of the paper mill in 1964- notice the full length of the building versus the picture at the left below- water tower still visible along with the smokestack- in black and white, the architectural design is not as noticeable as below.

To the left is a cropped picture of the original coloring and architecture of the Watab Pulp & Paper Corporation building-this part of the picture was when the remodel of the 1980's was occurring. The use of the yellow and red brick and the inlaid design over and around the windows the triangular patterns that flowed to the arches and the small crosses that were inlaid into the building made for a striking architectural statement of design for the early 1900's.

Page 6 more pictures continued

Paper Mill 1964 and the Sartell RR Depot on left



Many thanks to the Verso Corporation who retired much new additional historical information to us that we are now processing. We would like to put together a timeline of history and some of the timeline pictures together for a public presentation.

If you or some of your relatives have pictures or information, please have them give us a call so we can add that to the collection!

Right- 1910 Picture of Watab Pulp & Paper



Below- Arial Picture -1990's Sartell Paper Mill



## Program Volunteers & Demonstrators Benton County Fair 2013

We will be participating in the Benton County Fair of 2013 and the dates will August 5– 11, 2013! This is the 101st Benton County Fair and the Benton County Agricultural Society will be celebrating this with the publication of a 100th Year Anniversary book that is currently being put together.

We are looking for volunteers to work our BCHS booth from 10am-9pm and we are also looking for demonstrators to schedule for the Heritage Building stage. If you have a talent, skill or program that you would like to share, please contact us. Currently we have had Weaving rugs, Spinning wool, Felting, Honey Extractions, Corn Shelling, Lefse Making, Corn Husk Doll Making, Treadle Sewing, Recognizing noxious weeds, and many other educational items.

Contact Mary at 253-9614 or email: [bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com](mailto:bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com) if you would consider helping the educational demonstrations listings expand. We would love to see the schedule of events run continuous throughout the daily fair schedule.

We will also be needing volunteers to help staff the Watab District Number 2 Schoolhouse. If you would like to be part of this program, please give me a call or email. We would love to expand that program to the evening hours and historical programming.

## Executive Director Corner

I hope everyone enjoyed their holiday season with family and friends!

We had some days we were closed to celebrate our holidays, but when we came in, it was still very busy with more visitors and requests to process in less time! Cub Scout tours, Video Documentaries by students on the tornado (still the number one requested informational item) and family information requests all around! We then realized that “school vacation” was longer than ours!

We are looking forward to a new year of contacts, visits and preserving the local history! We should be putting 100,000 + new entries of our records onto the database within the next 60 days, so check in with the database!

We also will be working with the community to find the Women In History honorees for this year's luncheon! If you know of someone, let us know!

The Agate Collection is in house and already receiving visitors. Lyndon will be here on the Saturdays to help anyone with questions or agates to assess.

We are pleased to have had the Verso Paper historical records that came in. It is a beautiful collection of original pictures and history! We are looking forward to finishing the display for the community. In the community loss, it is very nice to know that the Verso Corporation recognized the impact and importance of the company history for all of us!

Thanks to everyone who supports the organization! We are looking forward to working with our members and the community in the New Year!

Until next newsletter..... Mary Ostby