

## BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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<http://mnbentonhistory.org>

### *Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and Meeting Information*

#### Board of Directors

**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

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

Meeting schedules may be changed by Board motion and approval or meetings may be cancelled due to inclement weather. This information will also be posted at the museum when necessary.

#### Staff

**Jack Toliver**– Military Support

**Miles Christie**–Office Support & Military Support

**Meredith DePree**– Office Support

**Mary Ostby**–Executive Director

#### Monthly Meetings Scheduled

**July 17, 2012**

**August 21, 2012**

**September 18, 2012**

**October 16, 2012**

**November 20, 2012**

#### Volunteers & Staff

**Fred Joesting**– Research Specialist

**Marjean Keehr**– Research

**Andy Schwalboski**– Research & Displays

**Caren Kalenda**– Oral Interviews, BCHS Tour & Data Input

**Bob Kalenda**– BCHS Tour and Data Input

**Wendy Wheeler**–History Mystery and Photography

**Jan Rothanburg**– Photography

**John Stafney**– Database Coordinator & Website

**Maureen Athman**– Transcriptionist

**Jenny Josephs**– Displays & Resource Support

**Jenny De Wenter**– Museum Support

**Thanks to our volunteers!**

Benton County Historical Society & Museum

## BENTON COUNTY NEWSLINES

**JULY 2012**

**July 31st– August 5th-Benton County Fair!**

### *Benton County Fair -The 100th Anniversary !*

Come on down to the Benton County Fair to celebrate 100 years of local agriculture and community!

Ed Sowa, a local historian left the community a great history on the beginnings of the Benton County Fair and here is some of it:

The Articles of Incorporation was signed by community members on the 19th of May, 1913 and an option to purchase the land for the Benton County Fairgrounds was signed in August 1913.

The land that the Fairgrounds sits on was 14 acres of bush and several lots of Sweet's Addition which totaled 15½ acres. The first Fair was held on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of September of th3 1913 year.

At the time, the site they picked out was considered an ideal spot as it was located on the boundary of Sauk Rapids and St. Cloud. Transportation was readily available to come to and from the Fair as the streetcar line ran just one block from the entrance to the Fair. At the time, it was known as Grand Street, by today's name it is 2nd Avenue.

The trains running on the other side of the grounds allowed the circus to come to town because it was easily available to load and unload the animals. During these early years, even the railroad, during the Fair dates had reduced rates for passengers.

The first year premiums amounted to over \$1300 to exhibitors.

The Minnesota Governor at the time, Governor Eberhart was in attendance and gave a lengthy speech, paying high tribute to the prosperity of the county and its surroundings.

Tents were used for the first shelters, as the buildings had not been built yet. Entertainment that year was a variety of activities including: tug of war between farmers clubs of the county, barrel races, 100 yard dash, team pulling contest, ball games between towns.

So come on down and Join us all in celebration at the Benton County Fair!

### *Volunteers and Demonstrators Needed For the Fair Booth!*

We will be doing a display and handling some of the demonstrator's scheduling for the Benton County Fair. If you have some time, I have some open hours on Wednesday(31st-late afternoon), Thursday, (most of the day) Friday (most of the day) and Saturday (varied times during the day) The buildings are open from 10am-9pm and if you have some time to sit with the booth or would like to share a demonstration of crafts, skills or education– please give me a call at 253-9614 and I will be happy to get you on the schedule!



**Red Wing to Hong Kong– New Book by: Peggy Seiz Turner and Rolf Turner**

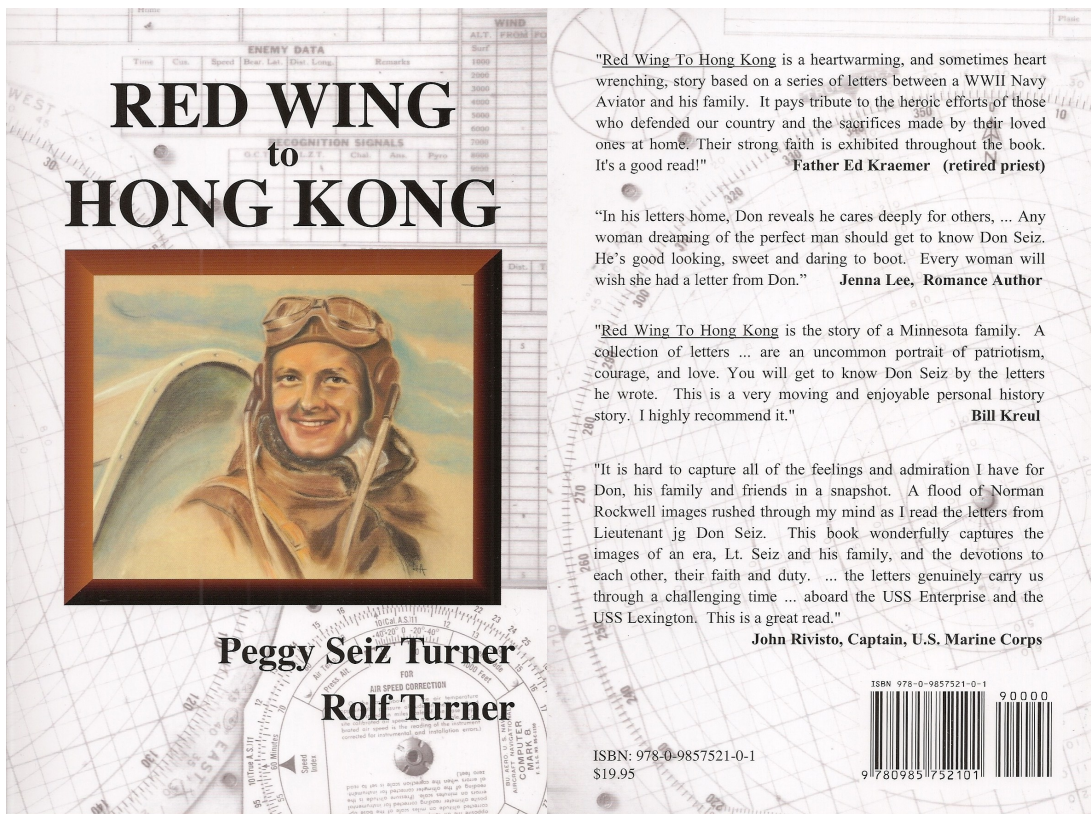
Our newest release of book came into the museum last week and we were happy to see it!

We first met **Peggy Seiz Turner** when she came into the museum looking to do some research on the military and to get some pictures of the medals, documents and other military items she had donated to the museum years before. We found the items and she explained her mission– to write a book of her brother’s story.

Her brother, **Donald Seiz**, served as a pilot in the military during WWII. He sent letters home while he was in college and when he was in the military. After Donald’s death, her mother rarely spoke of him again because it was too painful and when Peggy found the letters after her mother’s death; she read them all, and the mission and dream was started. At 90 years “young”, she was worried at times about getting the book done, but I knew with the passion she had, that it would be done! The book has been delivered and after reading it, I am impressed with how well Peggy’s dream and mission have been put together into an understanding of this period in her brother’s and her family’s lives! A beautiful story with some amazing details!

Peggy’s meticulous dedication and a passion for understanding was clearly visible! She was in the museum talking to **Jack Toliver** about the battles, the war and the necessary detailing she needed to put the story together. She also kept busy talking to everyone she could to put ALL the pieces she could together, with the letters. Her son, **Rolf Turner** jumped in with his flying experience (as a pilot and an instructor) and *Red Wing to Hong Kong* is the product of their dedication, time and research.

We have copies at the museum for your purchase (\$19.95 plus sales tax) or you can order your copy: Checks or Money Order (\$25.00 includes shipping) can also be sent to: Popple Creek Air 6953 Golden Spike Rd NE, Sauk Rapids, Mn 56379



**Left: Front Cover and Back Cover of Red Wing to Hong Kong by Peggy Seiz Turner and Rolf Turner**

Words, once they are printed, have a life of their own....

Carol Burnett

*Donations April, May and June 2012-Thanks To All!*

**Cliff Johnson**– Sauk Rapids artist-Donna Jarve- “Cows” picture and “Winter” print, Lessons Learned in Water-color author Sharon Nieters (Rice), newspaper articles, Gold N Plump packaging items.

**Karen Machula**– old copy newspapers and clippings

**Lois C. Anderson**-women’s hats and hat boxes, men’s top hat, mink stole, mink scarf wrap

**Diane Haffner, Michelle Peacock, Cheryl Reberg**– Sauk Rapids Indian Days Boys Costume that was worn by Ronald Reberg in 1967, buttons and bumper sticker from Indian Days, Newspapers, wedding dress cover, slip bottom chenille top (Aunt Ella Verkines) 1915 Pianette, tablet writing paper, Howard Reberg’s ice skates, 2 infant/toddler overalls,Tech high School alumni directory, Chamber of Commerce pictures with Howard’s plaque and chamber Indian headdress bonnet, Lions Club patches, hat and packet information, Raleigh cigarette coupons, Chamber of Commerce Indian Head sign for new business publications– hand painted by Howard Reberg

**Dolores Supan**-literature– travel and nursing, yearbook, German Book and maps

**Mark Erickson**-Hem Measuring Stick

**Marge Keehr**-8 Track tapes, Radio Player, numerous pictures scanned, Book

**City of Sauk Rapids**– 1990 Community Room plaque , City Hall Plaque of Councilmember's from old city hall

**Alphonse Halfman**– Veterinary diploma for Al Cota of the Cota Barns in Duelm

**Georgia Plumadore**– Vintage Easter/Get Well greeting Cards

**Tom Sauer**-Polish Notebook Foley Development Map –1960

**Bill & Kathy Holroyd**– caricature plaque of hunter-sister’s, children’s metal tea sets, wool scarf &pins, cigar box, 1858-1958 State Celebration, 8 military books. Cigar box, grape crocheted trivets, handkerchief/napkin, matchbook, Reader’s Digest Copy

**Alberta Township**-Birth & Death Records from the township files-copied

**Bernie Wesenberg**– Three pictures– one of Rosemary super and Bernie, one of Bernie sitting inside Schwankl Drug at the counter, one of Bernie and her sister Lorraine in front of old Sauk Rapids bridge entrance.

**Wendy Wheeler**– Two Ron’s Cabinets business promotion goblets

**Joanne Carlin**– Marriage certificate for Mamie Schroeder & William Barthelemy, Leisure Hat (William’s) Pipes, Tobacco Canister, Coin Purse, and Watch

**Rita (Thiessen) Bartlett/ Judith Bergerson-Estey** Organ from Grace Episcopal, Picture of church & house, Bible hymnal-song book-

**Teresa A. Baron**– St. Cloud Diocese Registry Newspaper and 5 unidentified photos

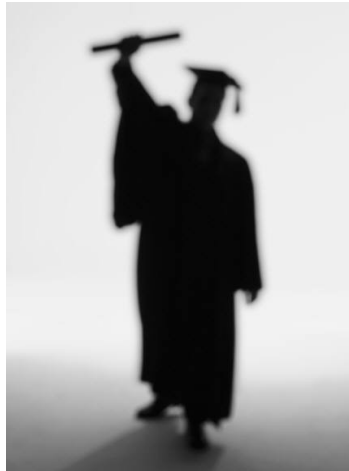
**Maxine Olson**– Office Chair of Burton Olson

**Marjean Keehr**- One telephone cover, Manual Radio, Sauk Rapids High School Play information/documents

**Gordon Rehder**– metal car, straight edge razor, business guide, framed hand-crafted German picture, German reading book, ice shaver, Sign Making kit, Printing kit, frying pan, compass, ashtray, 1914 High School Announcement

**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING WE CAN EXPERIENCE IS THE MYSTERIOUS. IT IS THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUE ART AND SCIENCE. ALBERT EINSTEIN**

### Sauk Rapids and Foley Scholarships



Benton County Historical Society has participated in the local High School Scholarships' program for Foley and Sauk Rapids High School for many years.

We participated with this year's programming and provided two \$250.00 scholarships, one to each organization.

**Brandon Burggraaf** of Sartell was the BCHS Sauk Rapids recipient and the \$250.00 scholarship was presented at the Academic and Scholarship Awards Program on May 16, 2012 by one of our Board Members **Earl "Butch" Bukowski**.

**Krista Grosland**, daughter of Phillip and Earline Grosland of Foley High School was the recipient of the \$250.00 Scholarship at the Foley School District. Krista's name and scholarship amount was announced to the school by Principal Alan Niemann during the commencement exercises on June 2, 2012.

Congratulations to both students! Good Luck in your future educational adventures!

### Josephine Johnson and Margareta Svensson (Fred and Mary in the middle)

**Josephine Johnson** called the museum on a whim checking in to see if we could find her grandmother's grave. Her mother spent time looking for it; brother had spent most of his life looking for it, and she just called to re-check. At 90+ years of age she said she, and her older sister thought they should try. I said we would try, even though her brother had called years, before with no luck.

I took the phone call and the information, told her we would call her back. Benton County Cemetery search by Meredith turned up no Johanna Anderson. Andy and I began to go back through the old records by hand. We found the obituary for a Mrs. Casper Anderson, who died a short time after coming to Sauk Rapids, left a small child (Josephine's mother) and was buried in the cemetery in Sauk Rapids. We pulled the old hand written maps and found a Sophia Anderson! We went back to Benton County Cemetery, matched the obit to the dates listed for Sophia Anderson- Josephine confirmed that her grandmother's name was *Johanna Sophia Anderson*, had died a short time after coming to Sauk Rapids, husband was Casper, that her mother had been raised by another family, and we reported to her that we had found the grave site, but it had no stone. Elated, she contacted relatives (**Margareta Svensson**) who came from Sweden because they had been trying to figure out the story too! They visited the museum, Fred & I helped find some more pieces and confirmed paperwork.. Josephine shared that she called on her mother's birthday and her mother's life's mystery was solved! We always love a happy ending and this one was great!



### Museum Hours & Tours

Benton County Historical Society and Museum is open 10am to 4pm Monday thru Friday and the first Saturday of every month from 11am-4pm for most Saturdays. If you have need for a tour, or need a special time for research, please call the museum at 320-253-9614, stop by and arrange, or contact us by email: [bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com](mailto:bchsmus@bentoncountyhistorical.com). We do our best to work with the community to accommodate special requests, so if you need extra hours, please contact us!

**Saturdays Schedules:** July 7th, 2012-Saturday-OPEN/ August (Museum closed- we are at the Benton County Fair/ September 1st -Labor Day Weekend-Closed- Holiday weekend



### New & Renewals of Memberships 2012

- Special note for renewals: I missed two membership renewals on the last newsletter: Tim & Renee Kampa, Mae Kampa

#### New Memberships

Marge Nierengarten  
Sharon Schulte  
Ken Schiller  
Cheryl Reberg  
Mary Alice Tomporowski

#### Renewals

Conrad & Linda Urbik  
Lloyd & Marjean Keehr  
S.J. Tomporowski



In a gentle way, you can shake the world...

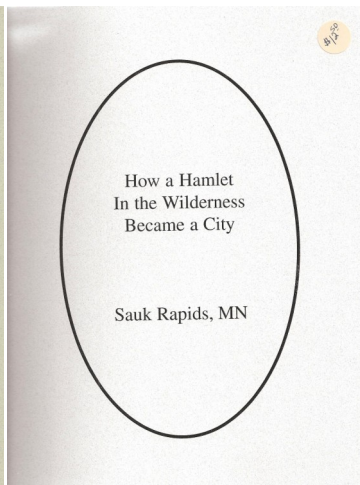
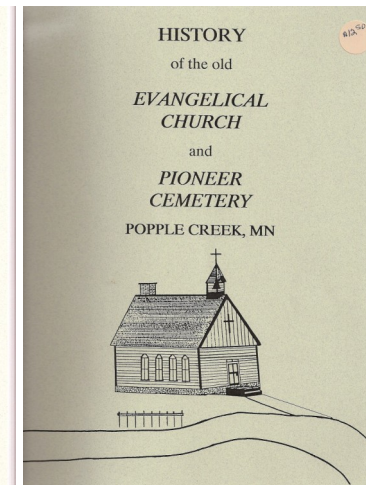
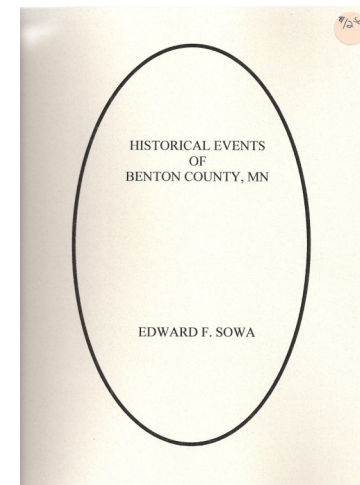
Mahatma Gandhi

### Ed Sowa's Books For Sale at the Museum

Ed Sowa was a member of the BCHS organization and was very involved in all areas including writing history articles for the newspaper, serving on the Board of Directors, as well as serving in the Office of President. His passion for local history as well as his interest in documenting both the family and local community history brought him to a place in his life of writing numerous books. He is sadly and immensely missed at the BCHS organization! His books were written on his family history, the Pioneer Cemetery and the Evangelical Church in Popple Creek, the Sauk Rapids early history and Historical Events of Benton County. We have all his books available for resources, and we have re-printed the following titles and have the copies for sale again: *Historical Events of Benton County, How a Hamlet In the Wilderness Became A City, and History of the old Evangelical Church and Pioneer Cemetery, Popple Creek, MN.* Stop in and check them out- we kept the cost low \$12.50 so those people in the community who do not have them can now get them!



Ed Sowa, local historian



### New Displays—Sauk Rapids Indian Days— Community Identity

Sauk Rapids has a long, rich history in its' existence! The Sauk Rapids History from the 1850's is about trading posts, trading with local Indian tribes. development, railroads, bridges and Sauk Rapids participation in being the "gateway" to the Benton County area. Sauk Rapids held the early land office and recruited immigration to the area of Benton & Stearns County. Stearns County received a land office in the 1860's and they began to do the same. The early history notes that were written and passed down over the years included references to the Indians coming to town to trade and celebrating in the streets a successful trade and/or celebrating a successful altercation with a tribal dispute. So, in honor of the history, the people of Sauk Rapids identified with the community identity of Indians in their history

District 47 started using the label of Indians with the school district on their yearbooks and their sports teams. (somewhere around 1938) The Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce started using head-dresses to welcome new businesses, the City government started using the head-dress on patches, posters and logos. The community celebration of Sauk Rapids Indian Days started in 1964 and then ran through to at least 1979. History is not always politically correct, so we are featuring some of the items to share! We get asked A LOT about the Sauk Rapid Indian Identity!



Above: Chamber of Commerce Indian sign for new businesses— made and painted by Howard Reberg— donated by his daughters- Diane Haffner, Michelle Peacock and Cheryl Reberg. A special thanks to them for preserving and donating it!



Sandra Skeate— 1966 Sauk Rapids Indian Days Queen  
Picture: Courtesy of Sauk Rapids Herald

Below: School Spirit Flag for the Sauk Rapids High School



### Looking for Buildings and Information on Benton County Tour

I am posting a couple of pictures below for everyone's review. Bob & Caren Kalenda have been out finding old historical buildings in the Benton County area. They took the lists of what to look for and found a few extras! Now, they have taken some great pictures and are mapping out the driving tour, and we need a little help with some information. So, I am putting a few of the pictures in the newsletter hoping that the community can help!



Above: They found this interesting building in Ronneby – if you know the history please contact us!

The structure to the right is a barn made of field stone just off of highway 25 and the structure on top sits in the same area— we need some help!!!



### New Display Case and New Display!



Pictured on the left: The new display case that was donated to the museum by: Robert (Bob) & Jerome (Jerry) Schwalboski. A beautiful, customized case, made especially to house the 1873 Winchester Rifle that Bob & Jerry donated! They made sure that it fit right into the museum with its style and grace! It not only holds the rifle, but also left a few shelves for us to feature the History of Winchester, the history of the three generations of family members and left the last shelf for us to feature some hand carvings done by a former Sauk Rapids resident who was named Bernard Fagerman. Thank you Bob & Jerry~!

### Looking for Country School houses and more information!

Caren and Bob took a drive with a 1950's County map marked with school district locations and tried to find the schoolhouses that are left in the Benton County Area. They got some great pictures, but are looking for additional information on the districts, students and what number they were ( they were re-districted many times in some cases) I am putting in four pictures of what we believe to be schoolhouses out there at the locations. We are looking for help to put together information for the tour!



LET YOUR LOVE  
LIKE THE MISTY  
RAINS, COMING  
SOFTLY, BUT  
FLOODING THE  
RIVER.

MALAGAZY  
PROVERB



### Executive Director Corner

Hope everyone is surviving the HOT summer! We have been VERY busy at the museum! The database has brought in the travel season visitors and at least four groups have come in from international traveling because of information that they have found referenced in our database! That means we are getting the information out and people are utilizing it! If you have not checked the website, please do! We have a lot of information to look at to help you find resources!

Lots of news in the newsletter— hope you enjoy it! I always welcome comments, questions and concerns!

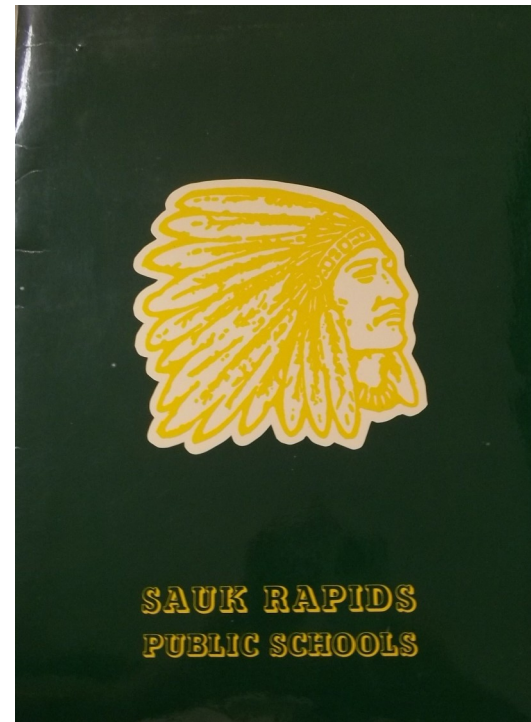
I am hoping to see a few of you at the Benton County Fair! They are celebrating a 100 year anniversary at their location! A lot of history in those buildings, activities and events! We will be in the Heritage Building, so come on down and say “Hi”!

I will close with a special thanks to everyone who has donated history items and supports the BCHS! We appreciate your involvement and your help!

*Mary Dabry*

### Sauk Rapids Community Identity

Sauk Rapids Indians was also used at the District 47 Public schools  
To the left; Sauk Rapids Public School folder featuring the figure-head of an Indian with head-dress



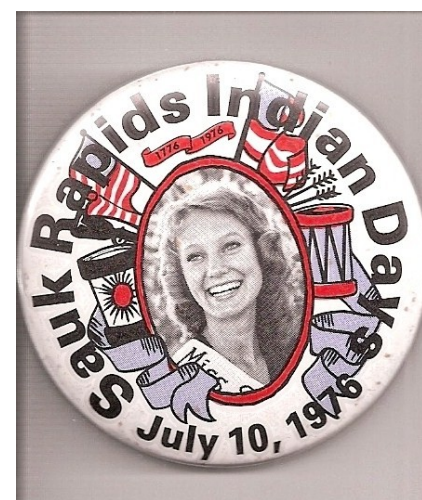
To the Right: A poster at the BCHS museum displays the use of the Indian Chief head-dress from the City of Sauk Rapids Police Department



Right: Volunteer Jesse Morford models one of the Indian Head dresses that was donated to the museum from the Howard Reberg Family!



Below: 1979 Indian Days ad from newspaper with list of activities!



Above: Sauk Rapids Indian Days Button from 1976 featuring Sauk Rapids Indian Days Queen Kathy Stromwell

**Boost Sauk Rapids - Wear an "Indian Day Button"**  
Lunch and Refreshment Stands Open 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 10th . . .  
**featuring genuine Buffaloburgers!**

SATURDAY EVENTS . . . July 7, 10	SUNDAY EVENTS . . . Sun. July 8, 1979
<b>INDIAN DAYS SUMMER RUN</b> — Sauk Rapids High School All Ages — Trophies for winners! 9:00 am—3 K Marathon Run 9:45 am—10 K Marathon Run 9:00 am to 12:30 pm—Junior Olympic Competition, Sauk Rapids High School track area. All ages, 3 to ??? Ribbons awarded in all events 12:00 Noon to 11:00 pm—Food served by Sauk Rapids Jaycees 12:00 Noon to 11:00 pm—Cash Bingo, proceeds Benton County Historical Society 12:00 Noon to 11:00 pm—Carnival Rides - Fairgrounds 9:00 pm—Dance- Fairgrounds Ballroom	12:00 Noon - 11:00 pm—Food served - Sauk Rapids Jaycees 12:00 Noon - 11:00 pm—Refreshments served - Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce - Fairgrounds 12:00 Noon to 11:00 pm—Carnival Rides - Fairgrounds 2:00 pm—Grand Parade - Route: South Broadway and Second Avenue 3:30 to 9:00 pm—Cash Bingo - Sauk Rapids Mrs. Jaycees, Fairgrounds 3:30 pm—Band Awards, Sauk Rapids Pop Singers, Fairgrounds 4:00 pm—Horse Show - Royal Riders, Fairgrounds 5:00 pm—Queen Coronation, Fairgrounds Ballroom 7:00 pm—Water Fight - Area volunteer fire departments Fairgrounds 6:30 pm—Grand Prize Drawing



**To the Left: Part of a newspaper article with the Sauk Rapids High School band and an Indian dance celebrating the opening of Benton Drive as it was turned back to Sauk Rapids with dignitaries of the area including Mayor Ben Gratzek, Sartell and St. Cloud representatives, Benton County Commissioners**

**INDIANS KEEP STEP TO BAND** — While the Sauk Rapids High School band played, two chiefs, braving cold winds, did an Indian dance celebrating the new Benton Drive opening. Steven Ellefson, president of the Sauk Rapids Chamber of Commerce introduced D. Mike Noonan, master of ceremonies, who in turn introduced Mayor Ben Gratzek, and representatives from Sartell and St. Cloud, including State senators and representatives, Benton county commissioners, members of the Minnesota highway department, who turned the road back to Sauk Rapids. (Times photos by Myron Hall)



**To The Left: Sauk Rapids Float featuring Indian princesses, Chief and Horse in the Jaycees Summer Festival Float held in St Cloud, Minnesota**

**Sauk Rapids parade**

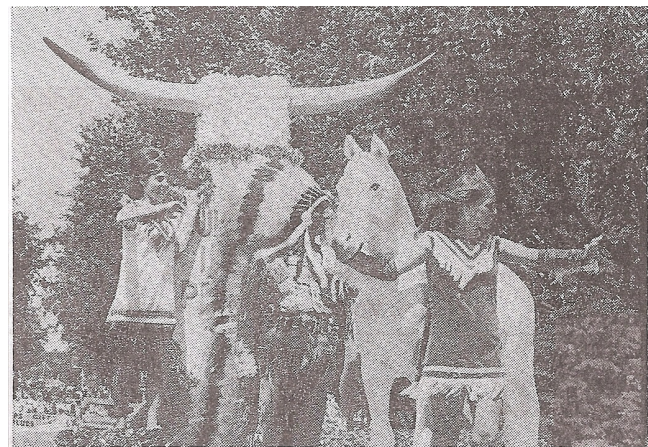
The Sauk Rapids float led the way for the Indian Days parade Saturday. The parade, highlight of the two-day festival, consisted of 150 units and lasted one hour and 45 minutes. Officials estimated the crowd at 15,000 persons, making the event the biggest attraction in the history of the village.

Times photo by Peter Hall



**To the Right: Ronald Reberg— 1967 Boys Costume Winner for Sauk Rapids Indian Days. Special thanks to Diane Haffner, Michelle Peacock and Cheryl Reberg for the wonderful donations to our collection!**

**To The left: Sauk Rapids Indian Days Parade with Chief, horse, and Indian Princesses. The Sauk Rapids Float let the way for the Indian Days Festival which officials estimated the crowd at 15,000 people watching 150 parade units making this event the biggest attraction in the history of the village.**



**SR float**

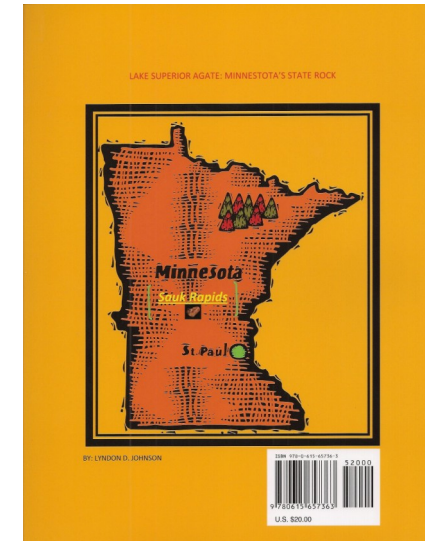
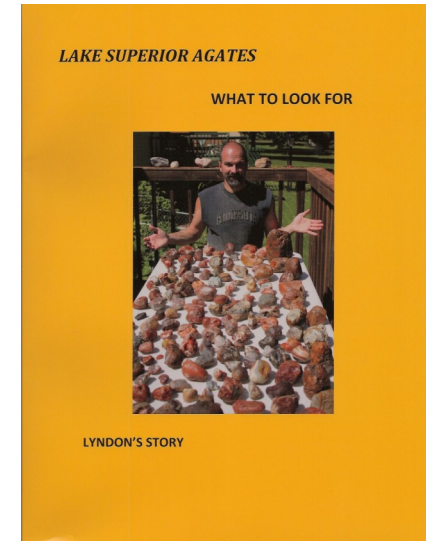
One of the participants in the Jaycees' Summer Festival parade Sunday was the Sauk Rapids Indian unit. The parade, which traveled the route from the old airport to Lake George had 100 units, including Jaycees from New Jersey and Atlanta, Ga.

Times photo by Myron Hall

## Lyndon Johnson's Agate Book Released!

Lyndon Johnson has been working on a book this past year! He has finished writing it and is having it published as I write this. For those of you who were in the museum to see his complete collection, you know he has some of the greatest specimens that you could ever possibly see!

I have seen the preview of the book and it looks to be an excellent resource for collectors and also a great story of how Lyndon got into agates with a tremendous amount of pictures of the agates in his personal collection! The final copy should make a great coffee table book as well as a resource book for collectors of all ages! For those of you who will be interested in the book, it should be available at the end of this week. They will be available here at the museum for \$20.00 plus sales tax (1.48) so come on down and pick up a copy if you are interested. Lyndon will have the book available at other local retailers, and the libraries in the area. He is still doing presentations and talks, so you can give him a call to arrange that too. (320-761-5482)



At far left: Lyndon's Book cover and also at left: Back cover of the book. Lyndon features his collection in pictures.

Most of Lyndon's collection (98%) is from the Benton County area. A very interesting part of the local history! Very few people in the area have not picked a few gates in their time living here!

## New Items on Display!



Estey Organ from the early 1900's was donated to the museum by Judith Bergerson in the name of her mother, Rita (Thiessen) Bartlett.

The information we have is that this organ was sold to Rita's dad when it was taken out of Grace Episcopal Church in Rice. Judith also gave us a partial picture of the church which was next to a residential home in Rice. The church was torn down and we are looking for additional information on the church. We have no church records, location, or any other information, so if you have some, please give us a call! We appreciate it when the community comes into to help us out!