



August 2008

## Upcoming Event!

- Benton County Historical Society Annual Meeting
- When: September 16, 2008
- Where: At the Museum- 218 1st Street North, Sauk Rapids
- Time: 6:30pm
- Register by: September 12th, 2008

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## Benton County Historical Society Annual Meeting– September 16, 2008

It is that time of year to contact **ALL MEMBERS** and let everyone know that the Annual Meeting is coming up!

The annual Meeting this year will be held at the Benton County Historical Society Museum at 218 1st Street North in Sauk Rapids. Meeting time will be 6:30pm, and we will be having a presentation from Ann Lemke called "The Brave Journey of an Orphan Train Rider". (More information on this presentation is on the bottom section of the newsletter!) The menu will include sandwiches and beverages for a \$6.00 charge.

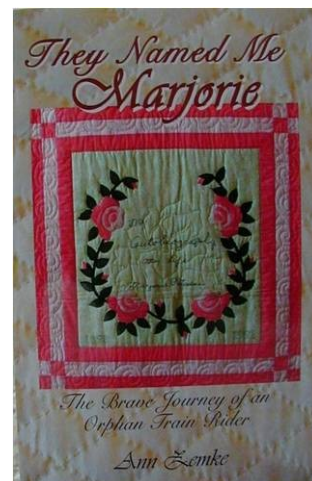
The Annual Meeting will allow members to participate in an election of Board Members and the 2009 slate of officers for the Board. Ernie Wollak, Donna Schafer and Alice Trushenski are up for reappointment. Alice Trushenski is

choosing to not be re-appointed and so, there is a Board Member position open if anyone is interested. Exercise your right to vote and be involved!

We are enclosing a registration sheet with the newsletter for your convenience and so register as quickly as you can! We know it is short notice, but registrations are due by September 12th.

This meeting is a chance to connect with other members of our organization with history interests! It is also a chance to meet the Board Members and discuss anything that is happening at the Museum and with the organization! You will also have the opportunity to see a great presentation of important historical significance for our county!

Hope to see you all there!



**Ann Lemke, author of "They Named Me Marjorie" will be at the Museum to do her famed presentation-The Brave journey of an Orphan Train**

## Anne Lemke Presentation-"The Brave Journey of an Orphan Train Rider"

Anne Lemke will be at the Museum for our Annual Meeting! The presenter is also author to a book: "They Named Me Marjorie" and will be doing a book signing for those interested!

From 1854 to 1929 an estimated 29,000 children rode trains from New York and other overpopulated areas of the United States, mostly in the Midwest, to find a new home.

Some of these children were orphans; others were abandoned, while others were put on trains by their parents hoping they would have a better life. The trains were called, "orphan trains."

Anne will be giving a presentation using a special quilt she made in memory of her grandmother, Marjorie Peterson, who was an orphan train rider. She now gives her presentation to

museums, schools, quilt guilds, senior residences and churches.

We are proud to have her present at the museum for our Annual meeting for the benefit of our members and the public! Please encourage your friends and family to attend!

**Bring a friend– this presentation is wonderful!**

## Benton County Fair August 5-10th, 2008

**Appreciation  
is a wonderful  
thing; it makes  
what is  
excellent in  
others, belong  
to us as well....  
Voltaire**

The volunteers did a great job of working the Heritage Building at the Benton County Fair!

We featured a display with Military Uniforms, history on military involvement in Benton County and a 1919 Model T truck.

Many thanks to President Ernie Wollak who brought over to the Fairgrounds a variety of vintage tractors and the 1919 Model T to show! The visitors absolutely loved looking at all of them! The most common question – “does it run?” The answer, “yes-it does”

The Military Uniforms were also a huge success with people talking to the volunteers about their family members in service, either in the past or currently. We handed out 600 brochures, 75 membership applications, 250 newsletter and 200 Sesquicentennial brochures with over 3500 visitors to our booth!

The first demonstrations at the Heritage Building were corn husk doll making, trundle sewing and butter churning. A huge thanks to Board Member Donna Schafer in doing those demonstrations as the public was involved, interested and loving it!

We had Karen Sakry doing some Lefse- making on a grill and there was a line waiting for a sample! Thank you to her! (and she said she will be back next year!)

Anita Warner entertained and educated the crowd with spinning of wool! She was huge success, enjoyed working with the people and talked to many people who sat and watched her while she answered questions and was spinning! Thank you Anita!

Elisa Korenne entertained the public for two concerts on Friday the 8th of August. Elisa is a singer/songwriter who wrote numerous songs for historical figures in Minnesota Counties for the Sesquicentennial. We were fortunate enough to be able for her to come and do two one hour concerts! Two of the songs she wrote were for Benton County figures of interest. One was Jane Swisshelm, a female newspaper editor and the other, Joseph Studer, the moonshine maker. Elisa did a great job with vocals and history, entertaining fairgoers and having a great time doing it!

The Pandolfo speaker also was a great asset to the Heritage Building presentations! With the Pantown car there for display, it was a marvelous tour back into history of the area!

Heartfelt thanks to our Fair volunteers listed below! 150 hours worth of volunteer time put in working the Fair at eh booth, and that does not include the hours of the demonstrations! Thanks to everyone who helped out!

Carol Behrendt/Elaine Fleck

RJ Dalaher

Renee Kampa/Jack Toliver

Melissa Keller/Pat Soyka

Annette and Harold Legatt

Ed and Helen Maier

Bill and Judy Morgan

Joann Olson/Steve Ostby

Marilyn Patterson

Donna Schafer and family

Ken Schiller/Ernie Wollak

Leslie Schumacher

## One-Room Schoolhouse Success at the Benton County Fair!

Thanks go out again to the St Cloud Retired Educators for staffing the schoolhouse at the Benton County Fair!

This year 2726 visitors were through the one-room schoolhouse and visited with the teachers. Every year they have done an excellent job of preserving the history of the rural schoolhouse through the interactive program at the Benton County Fair.

**A HUGE amount of appreciation goes to:** Donald Abfalter, Mrs. Floyd Ayers, Floyd Ayers, Ginny Bisek, Barb Bloomer, Marge Boekennoogan, Warren Bradbury, Carolyn Garven, Art Grachek, Barb Grachek, Nellie Henry, Pat Hill, Beulah Rose Hutchins, Mike Thomas, Barbara Hall, Ellie Joseph, and Ellie Joseph's friend, Ruth Knutson, Jean Madsen, Marie McConnell, Marjorie Moore, Dorothy Olson, Frank Roehl, Rose Mary Roehl, Fran Hill Rowen, Marilyn Savage, Howard Sylvester, Carol Vick, Chuck Vick, Joyce Wittenhagen, Haidako Wolfen

If we have missed anyone – we apologize – thanks to all who put in 90 volunteer hours voluntarily staffing the Watab District 2 One Room Schoolhouse!



## Sesquicentennial Flag Winner at the Benton County Fair Raffle!

We would like to congratulate, Phil Neske of Sauk Rapids , who was our raffle winner of the Sesquicentennial Flag!

The Sesquicentennial Flag was bought by the Benton County Agricultural Society and was the prize in a raffle that Benton County Historical Society held in conjunction with the Benton County Agricultural Society and the St Cloud Retired Educators

to benefit the Schoolhouse! The money from the raffle tickets sold will go towards the maintenance of the one-room schoolhouse currently housed at the Fairgrounds.

Thanks to all who purchased raffle tickets!

Special Thanks go to the Ag Society who purchased the Flag in the Sesquicentennial year to

promote the history of the state!

We are all fortunate to have people who are interested in history and support the Schoolhouse success and want to preserve it for the future!

**Alone we can  
do so little;  
together we  
can do so  
much.**

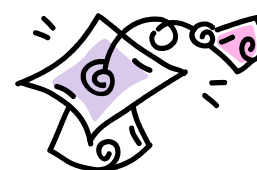
**Helen Keller**

## Karl Albright– Foley Scholarship Award

Kari Albright was the student from the Foley High School 2008 graduating class that was chosen to receive the Benton County Historical Society Scholarship earlier this year.

The \$250.00 scholarship will be put towards Kari's education, as she will be attending Central Lakes College at the Brainerd Campus. Kari will be working on her prerequisites to get into the two year Licensed Practical Nurse program. She said she will be trying to get a job when she finishes the LPN program working at a hospital. Kari then plans to continue her education doing a four year Registered Nurse Program!

All the members of Benton County Historical Society would like to wish Good Luck and Great Success to Kari in the future!



**Good Luck Kari!**

## Wants, Wishes and Wonders

### Wants

We are still looking for a small-medium size safe for documents. It must be water/fire proof. If you have one, please give the Museum a call!

We are also looking for mannequins for displays–specifically for the men's military uniforms, if you know someone or someplace that would be willing to donate them, please call the Museum!

### Wishes

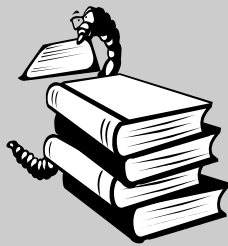
Museum Volunteers to do a variety of tasks in areas of: gardening, displays, and helping with events.

We are currently looking for a photographer who would like to help with a power point demonstration for the public. If you have skills and would like to volunteer to help with this–please call us!


### Wonders

We are always looking for donations to our history collection of Benton County. Items of Benton County background with a story or history to go with it are always welcome!

**Members  
are an  
essential  
piece to  
our  
success!**



**People helping people  
thru resourcing!**

| New Memberships   | Meetings  | Membership Information |          |
|---|---|------------------------|----------|
| Leslie Schumacher<br>Marilyn Patterson<br>Beverly Abraham                         | Benton County Historical Society Board of Directors Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at the Benton County Historical Society Museum at 218 1st Street North, Sauk Rapids<br><br>Members and the Public are always welcome! | <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 |

### Great River Regional Library Genealogy Sources

Benton County Historical Society has many resources available at the Museum for people to research family history on.

There are however, 32 branches of the Public Library in the 6 county area that the Great River Regional Library serves. ( Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright Counties) These libraries have access to genealogy ar-

eas and compliment our services in order for people to be able to access information.

In Benton County we have a satellite location of the library available in Foley at 251 North Fourth Avenue and their phone is : 320-968-6612

Here at the Museum we have brochures that lists some of the information available at the library locations. Some of

these items include: microfilm/ microfiche sources, Online Sources and Reference Sources.

It is great to see that genealogy is a goal that people are working towards; to know their heritage. It is also great to see that there are resources available in a couple of areas with county historical societies and libraries .

| Month/Visitors /Emails/Phone   |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|
| June   | 32 | 28 | 12 |
| (24 Locals/8 Out of Town-Traveling)  |    |    |    |
| July   | 64 | 34 | 17 |
| (59 Locals/5 Out of Towns-Traveling)   |    |    |    |
| We started keeping track of local visitors and out of town/ traveling visitors here at the Museum. |    |    |    |
| Thanks to all people who keep the history alive- thanks for your contacts!                         |    |    |    |

### Museums Hours

Monday thru Friday- 10am-4pm

Other hours by appointment!

Contact Information:

Phone: 320-253-9614

Email:bchsmus@charterinternet.com

| Board of Directors  | Volunteers and Research  | Web Site and Staff   |
|---|--|--|
| President: Ernie Wollak<br>Vice President: Char Dhein<br>Treasurer: Renee Kampa<br>Secretary: Ken Schiller<br>Directors: Butch Bukowski<br>Bid Lubbesmeier<br>Donna Schafer<br>Alice Trushenski<br>Bob Moon | Fred Joesting<br>Marjean Keehr<br>Nellie Henry<br>Doraine Petron'<br>Caren Kalenda<br>Andy Schwalboski<br>Jack Toliver<br>Melissa Keller<br>Jenny DeWenter | Ron Zurek – Website<br><br><b>Staff at the Museum</b><br>Mary Ostby– Executive Director<br>Meredith DePree<br>Marilyn Hiscock<br>320-253-9614<br>Email:<br>bchsmus@charterinternet.com |



All in a day's work!

## Executive Director's Notes

Things are going well at the museum and the transition is working. We are in the process of working with a couple of different organizations on some future projects. We are hoping to be more active in the area of presentations and outreach. Many thanks to the **Healthy Organizational Partnership** Grant, as we have been able to have a supply of Benton County Historical Society and Museum brochures with our information on it available for people and contacts. **Nancy Anderson**, our HOP mentor has been instrumental in helping me figure out where we are in the process. A personal thank you to her in keeping the Board and myself functioning well, and moving forward!

A special thanks to our newest volunteer, **Jack Toliver**. Jack came into the Museum one day just to see what was here! He saw the inventory of Military Uniforms, and it was a perfect fit for him to volunteer. He volunteered alright; and he volunteered to do a complete inventory of military items! !! Day in and day out for the past month he is painstakingly going through each item, writing up descriptions of each badge, uniform, cap, sword, shoes, socks, gloves etc. and we are putting it altogether with the donation information for a very organized display. Jack loves being at the museum, and he knows the Military stuff! Please stop down to the museum if you have a chance and say "Hi" to him because he has been doing a wonderful job in doing the inventory, and organization of these items. Welcome Aboard Jack- I have already told him he can volunteer here for a very long time! We enjoy him, I know you will too!

**Marilyn Hiscock** is currently out on medical leave, and so, I would love to wish her a safe and happy recovery time! Meredith, the volunteers and I have been busy with her absence, but want her to take care of herself and recover so we will see her back!

Special thanks to **Melissa Keller** a new volunteer who has been diligently filling the gaps of everything that we need, whenever we need it! Also, special thanks and welcome back to **Andy Schwalbowski** who has returned from vacation and dug right back in!

**Lorane Walsh** has been working on updating cemetery records for us, and has gone ABOVE and BEYOND to help Meredith keep that project moving forward- THANK YOU LORANE!

So, many things, and not enough space to graciously thank all who help at the Museum. If I forgot anyone, I apologize-I truly appreciate everyone who helps with the mission of Benton County Historical Society!

*Mary Ostby*

**The measure  
of a man's  
character is  
not what he  
gets from his  
ancestors, but  
what he leaves  
his  
descendants.  
-Unknown-**

### Minnesota Star of the North Genealogy Conference

This event will be sponsored by the Minnesota Genealogical society. The dates of the event are Friday and Saturday, dates of September 19-20th, 2008.

We have brochures of information available at the Museum for people that want additional information.

The event will be at the Minnesota History Center 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St Paul, Minnesota.

The event starts on Friday evening and they are celebrating the state's sesquicentennial. The reception will feature a

book signing with Christina Rose, Annette Atkins, Joe Amato and others. A dinner and presentation of the Minnesota Genealogy awards will follow.

Christina Rose is a Certified Genealogist, Certified Genealogical Lecturer and Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists, and was awarded the Donald Lines Jacobus award for her two Rose Genealogies. She has written numerous genealogy guides, including ; "The Complete Idiots Guide to Genealogy, Courthouse Research Index for Family Historians, and Courthouse Indexes illustrated

Annette Atkins has written the books; *We Grew Up Together: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth Century America*, *Harvest of Grief: Grasshopper Plagues and Public Assistance in Minnesota* and *Creating Minnesota: A History of Inside and Out*. She is a Professor of History at St John's University and the College of St. Benedict.

Joe Amato is a professor emeritus of history and rural studies at Southwest State University and is the author of *Jacob's Well: A Case for Rethinking Family History*, and *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History*.

### Sesquicentennial Adventures

The Sesquicentennial Celebration is half over for the year 2008. The State of Minnesota celebrating its 150th Anniversary is a year long birthday party!

One of the items that has been promoted in honor of the sesquicentennial is visiting the Minnesota Historical Society's 26 sites and museums in the state. Here is list of sites/cities

#### Mill City Museum-

Minneapolis

#### Minnesota State Capitol

St Paul

#### Minnesota History Center

St Paul

#### James J. Hill House

St. Paul

#### Alexander Ramsey House

St Paul

#### Sibley House Historic Site

Mendota

#### Historic Fort Snelling

St Paul

#### Minnehaha Depot

Minneapolis

#### Marine Mill

Marine on St Croix

#### Folsom House

Taylor's Falls

#### Northwest Company Fur Post

Pine City

#### Split Rock Lighthouse

Two Harbors

#### Historic Forestville

Forestville

#### W.W. Mayo House

LeSueur

#### Traverse des Sioux

St Peter

#### Harkin Store

New Ulm

#### Fort Ridgely

Fairfax

#### Birch Coulee Battlefield

Morton

#### Lower Sioux Agency

Morton

#### Lac Qui Parle Mission

Montevideo

#### offers Petroglyphs

Comfrey

#### Oliver H. Kelley Farm

Elk River

#### Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site

Little Falls

#### Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post

Onamia

#### Forest History Center

Grand Rapids

#### Comstock House

Moorhead MN



*The Sauk Rapids Herald* Wed 4 Jan 1995

## From Out of the Past...

The following story was run across by lifetime Sauk Rapids resident, Erv Blatter, in the magazine "Wild West". It pertains to orphan trains that travelled to the West and moved through Sauk Rapids in the late 1800's. The story was written by Lonnie R. Speer and we would like to share it with our readers.

The four-car passenger train slowly steamed into Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. As it neared the town's small depot, the big engine, with several powerful chugs and a final, long, loud hiss, came to a grinding halt. Quickly, a large, excited crowd, comprised mostly of farmers and townspeople from there and the nearby village of Sartell, converged around the cars to get a closer look at the train's occupants. It was Wednesday, July 23, 1873.

One by one the passengers emerged from the cars—nearly 100 children, both boys and girls, ranging in age from 5 to 15 and chaperoned by a few adults. With the crowd following close behind, they were led at once to the town hall, where the children were treated to a hearty dinner.

As the children ate, they were constantly interrupted by members of the crowd who circulated among the tables and spoke to them briefly, or would reach down and feel their arms and legs to see how muscular they were. When they had eaten, the children were then lined up at the front of the hall. There, child by child, individuals, couples or entire families in the crowd selected youngsters to be taken home and raised as their own children. Children who were passed over were sent by train to the next town for a similar distribution.

On that July day, several children were lucky enough to be chosen on that first stop. A boy named Albert was picked by the town's physician, and it was thought he would eventually be taught that profession when he was older. His two younger brothers were placed with two different farm families in the area. Although separated, they would at least live close enough to occasionally visit. A 5-year-old named Johnny was taken by the town's mechanic, whose wife was childless. Two other brothers, Frederick, age 8, and John, age 10, were also placed

in separate homes but would attend the same school. An older boy, referred to as "English Harry" and said to behave "wildly", was taken by a family from Sartell who would provide him with a good home and monthly wages for working on the farm.

The following day, just before the "placing-out committee" left town, one newly placed youngster approached a member of the committee and excitedly told him his "new father" had given him a "big, live cow" that was all his own! The new father chimed in that the boy had never seen a cow before and had been riding her as well as the family's horse.

"On the whole," declared Charles Loring Brace, one of the organizers of the placing-out program, "the choice of homes (in Sauk Rapids and Sartell) was equal to any we have ever secured. Nothing in the whole difficult process of helping human beings to help themselves is ever half so satisfactory as seeing a homeless orphan, who has too early fought the up-hill battle of life all alone, and has met, thus far, nothing but hardships and defeat, placed in a kind, religious family, with all the boundless chances and hopes of the most fortunate community in the world on his side. Equally satisfactory is it to get such accounts of these unfortunate children as we continually do in their new homes, or to see with the eyes the change from rags and wretchedness and temptation to their present comfort and good chance in life."

We happened to be doing some research for someone and found this article in the back of one of the books, so we excerpted part—Great timing for it to turn up at the Museum when we were working on the news letter!

We also turned up another article in the Sauk Rapids Sentinel of July 15, 1873 which read:

Distribution of Boys— On Saturday last, 26 boys arrived at St Cloud, from New York, in charge of Mr. Rust, agent of the Children's Aid Society of that city, and by 6 o'clock of that evening, all but two of them were provided with homes. By this, it will be seen that the people of this section of country are willing to assist in taking care of the fatherless and homeless.

**BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY AND MUSEUM**

P.O. Box 426  
218 1st St. N.  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379  
Phone: 320-253-961  
E-mail: [bchsmus@charterinternet.com](mailto:bchsmus@charterinternet.com)  
Web: <http://members.aol.com/bchsmus>

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

**Annual Meeting Information-September 16, 2008**

Registration Information Enclosed– RSVP before September 12th!!

WHERE: Benton County Historical Society Museum

TIME: 5:30pm-Social 6:30 meeting and presentation

Cost: \$6.00 per person (Cost will include sandwiches and beverage)

Presentation Feature: Anne Lemke will be presenting “The Brave Journey of an Orphan Train Rider” and will be available to sign copies of her book: “*They Named Me Marjorie*”.

*The Annual Membership meeting will include the election of officers and Board Members along with regular business including financial information.*

**Ann Lemke**

