

Benton County Historical Society

NewsLines

Tornado, Cyclone, Twister, Call it what you want, but it was here in 1886!

Public Television's *Almanac* Program contacted Benton County Historical Society to help them with information to do a documentary on Minnesota's Greatest/Largest Weather Tragedies!

The Sauk Rapids Cyclone of April 14, 1886 still qualifies as the biggest weather related events of our Minnesota history! We were asked to provide documentation for the event. We have the newspapers, the pictures, and some oral interviews, but I am asking the members to help us out with one of the programming requests!

We need to find people out in the Benton County communities who are descendents of the victims, or have stories about the cyclone that have been handed down from their relatives!

I know somewhere out in the community that there are family members that had relatives involved with this. With 70 people losing their lives in this Benton County storm and \$300,000 done in damages (which is about 6–7 million in today's dollars) someone must have stories to share with the television team. They would also like to do an extra focus on the wedding party that had injuries and deaths, in the Rice area. Henry Friday, (surname Frietag) the groom died and Minnie Schulz, the bride was left a widow after the storm. Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud, Rice, wherever the stories are!

Please contact Mary at BCHS by email or phone if you can share. If you know someone who no longer lives in Benton County but has information, please have them contact us also!

We are so proud do be able to provide the documentary team the information that they require to do this project! We will be working on this through the end of August, so we need HELP as quick as we can get it!

THANK YOU!



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Board of Directors Articles in the Next Newsletter!

In our Action Plans that we started with the Initiative Foundation and the HOP grant; we are trying to get out into the community and make the public aware of our presence and our mission.

As part of this, we will be featuring a corner (or a page depending on the length of their article) for our Board of Directors to write about themselves and their involvement with the Benton County Historical Society.

Our Board Members volunteer their time to the organization and are out in the community with our events and activities. They are also open to input from the members/public on ideas and fundraising opportunities.

After discussion with the Board, we thought the community should get to know the dedicated people that keep this organization moving forward!

I am looking forward to publishing their articles in the next newsletter and I hope you will enjoy reading about each and every one!

Heritage Building Demonstrations

We have been working cooperatively with the Benton County Agricultural Society trying to get on people in the Heritage Building to do demonstrations. This year we have **Anita Warner** spinning wool; **Sandy Meyer/Wendy Wheeler** making bird baths out of rhubarb leaves; **Donna Schafer** will be back to do some butter churning and some Treadle Sewing. **Pat Soyka** will be Knitting and working with Felt Purses. **The Bee Keepers Group** will also be doing a demonstration on processing honey. **Karen Sakry** will be grilling some Lefse. The schedule will be posted on the Board outside the Heritage Building— Come join us for some fun and some educating!

Check out the next page (3) for

the rest of the Benton County Fair events and activities that we are working with! We are looking forward to seeing everyone there!

*One generation plants the tree
and the next generation gets the
benefit of the shade!*
Chinese Proverb



Spinning Wool at the Fair with Anita Warner August of 2008!

Benton County Fair August 5th-9th, 2009

Volunteers

By now the members have received letters from BCHS stating the need for volunteer help staffing the booth at the Fair. Thank you to the members who have already called and scheduled times! I have a few openings on the schedule yet, if anyone is interested. 253-9614 if you have time to work a shift. We will be staffing from 10am-9pm on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We are running shifts from 10am-Noon, Noon-3pm, 3-6pm and 6-9pm.

We will be promoting Benton County history with the booth in the Heritage building. (The old “chicken” building for those of you have not been there in awhile!)

Railroads

We will be displaying some railroad history items along with a short history on the building of the railroads. Benton County was quite involved in the process with the Foley Brothers building railroads and lumbering. Thanks to all the agricultural pursuits, the railroad ties were made clearing the land, and sold to Great Northern for additional railroad lines in other areas.

East St. Cloud, Foley, Oak Park, Sauk Rapids, Rice and Parent had depots all at one time on the line. Railroads were instrumental in bringing people to the area, and gave Benton County a great start to commercial ventures such as granite, lumber, and agriculture.

Thanks to volunteer, **Andy Schwalboski** for putting together the items for our display! The railroad has been an instrumental piece of a lot of lives, especially the families of the section workers. Many

thanks to my Grandmother, **Merlin Youso**, for helping with some of the items for display. My grandfather, **George Youso**, worked for the railroad as did his father, **Fred Youso**. It was a tough, physical job for many, many members of the community, but also necessary to the livelihood and success of the county!

Genealogy and Creativity

We will also be displaying a quilt done by **Lorane Walsh** of the Popple Creek area. Some of you know Lorane as she was Head Nurse at the Foley Nursing Home for years and is still involved with a lot of areas in the community! Now that she has retired and life has slowed down (somewhat), she is putting some creativity and artistry into making quilts of her family history! So many of us have scrapbooks and family history, and I am impressed that Lorane has put this information into a quilt that can also be a heirloom! Stop on by and see it if you can at the Benton County Fair Heritage Building.

If you know of other creative and talented people with artistic ideas, give us a call so we can start to plan for next year's fair!

Watab District 2 Schoolhouse

Benton County Historical Society is always pleased to work with the Retired Educators Association of the St. Cloud area.

Each and every year the schoolhouse programming has improved as a community resource and education format. This year is no exception as the Retired Educators are providing an interactive programming and replicating the classroom experience!

This year the Educator's involved are dedicating a “Living Memorial” to **Marie McConnell**, who was actively involved in the schoolhouse until this past year. Marie loved the Watab Schoolhouse and the one room classroom memories. She worked at Watab District 2 schoolhouse over the years with the program and would be honored to know that “live” classroom experiences were being offered in her memory.

Bring the children, grandchildren, or the great grandchildren, as the teachers will be in session teaching items such as: Reading, Writing, Math, German, Health. The schedule will be posted outside the schoolhouse, so make sure that you attend when “Class is in session!”

Flag Raising

Every year **Ken Schulte** of the Sauk Rapids VFW has arranged for people to raise the flag at the schoolhouse for us at 10am sharp. Our thanks to him for this public service! It is an important part of our programming to educate the public on the history of the flag, the military events and of course, the schoolhouse!

We do not accomplish anything in this world alone...

And whatever happens is the result of a whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one person to another that creates something.....

Sandra Day O'Connor

Let's work together and create!

Executive Director's Corner

Hello Everyone!

The summer months have moved way too fast for me!

The visitor numbers that I spoke about in the last newsletter have a factual basis. At the Board's request we ran a comparison of the first 6 months of 2008 visitors and the count was 194. The first 6 months of 2009 we had 360 visitors! Not quite double the amount of visitors, but we now understand why we were busy!

We have had some interesting requests for information! I am amazed at the diversity of information that people are looking for.

*I had a few people searching their memories for "Stanley's Cabins" which a lady, Susan; emailed me, remembered and stayed in during the late 40's. **Marj Keehr** was a great help as she talked to a few people that remembered cabins on Benton Drive which were in the area of Seanger's gas station (which is also now gone). Then came **Wendy Wheeler** (thank you Wendy) in the Museum and allowed us to scan her Sauk Rapids postcard collection and there was a picture of Voight's tourist Camp (see page 6 for picture) and there were cabins in the back of the station. Evidently Voight's owned the Service Station, and a Tourist Camp on US Highway 10 when it was running on Benton Drive. I emailed the scanned postcard to the lady- she is sending some of her own items, including pictures and a story back. Amazing how a request from another state can cause us to ask questions about out history and pay attention to find more pieces.*

Personally, there are times we just "get lucky" that we talk to the right people, ask the right questions and then something crops up and we get close. In this instance, we do not know if Voight's is Stanley's Cabin's- it seems there was another set of cabins across Highway 10 in that area too. We will wait to see if Susan can send us a piece of information that can lead us to the correct and real answer.

I say it often, (probably more that you want to hear), but JOIN US, help us find the information and keep the memories and history alive!

*For today, we have done what we can. My thought is I am missing **Ed Sowa** who was available to call and paid attention to the Sauk Rapids/ Benton County community. Bless his heart and soul for the information he allowed us to retain. Thank you **Marj, Wendy, Fred, & BCHS members** that support the importance of life as we knew it, as we know it and the adventure of the changes to come!*

Best wishes to you until next time!

Mary Ostby

Donations

- Wendy Wheeler**– porcelain gas stove, 1892 Sauk Rapids Graded School Program
- Jan Rothanburg**- vintage pictures, schoolbooks, Brennyville milk can, Toys Baby clothes, Women’s clothes sheriff token
- Steve & Mary Ostby**– Blue speckled canner, military uniform, military medals, patches and badges,
- Meredith DePree**- Bulletin Board and White Board for the office
- Merle Stowe**-Foley Community Band Picture, Band Roster and Band Hat, school books, and 4-H certificate
- Richard DuHamel**-family history information
- Ruth Kilkelly**– Swimsuit/ Military Overcoat from Norris and Laura Freecheck’s life
- Dorothy Supan**- 3 Brown Bottles and wooden bread bowl/ German Books
- Bill Holroyd**– Video Cassette Recorder
- Gary Bauer**– WW II Newspaper– Schwankl Drug Bottle
- Judy Moldenhauer**– Family History of the Keefe farmstead
- Bob Hoofnagle**– baby clothes, shoes, blankets burp pads rattles, gloves, slip night gowns, 1935 wedding dress and complete trousseau from bride
- Jon Swenson**– baseball, letter and chalkboard slate found in wall of remodeled Sauk Rapids house
- Harold Graham**– Womens Clothing/Coat/ Jacket /Shoes Corsets
- Sara Stueve**– Religious Vestment
- Karen and Larry Sakry**– Memorial Donation for Harland Skuza
- Melissa Keller**– Volunteering Always Pays Donation
- Steve Ostby**-Volunteering Always Pays Donation
- Anonymous**– Military “Sweetheart” Flag Pillow Cover

Museum Information

Hours and Contact Information:

Benton County Historical Society is open Monday through Friday 10am-4pm.

Appointments are available for after hours tours, visits and travel requests.

Phone: 253-9614

Fax: 253-9614

Email: bchsmus@charterinternet.com

Next BCHS Board Meetings:

August 18, 2009

September 15, 2009-Annual Meeting

In-House Volunteers:

Fred Joesting– Research

Marjean Keehr-Research

Andy Schwalboski– Research & Displays

Caren Kalenda– Data Input

Jack Toliver– Military Support

Jenny De Winter-Museum Support

Sara Weeres– Museum Support

John Stafney– Database Support

Lorane Walsh– Cemetery Support

Maureen Athman– Oral Interview Transcriber

Ron Zurek– website

Staff:

Mary Ostby– Executive Director

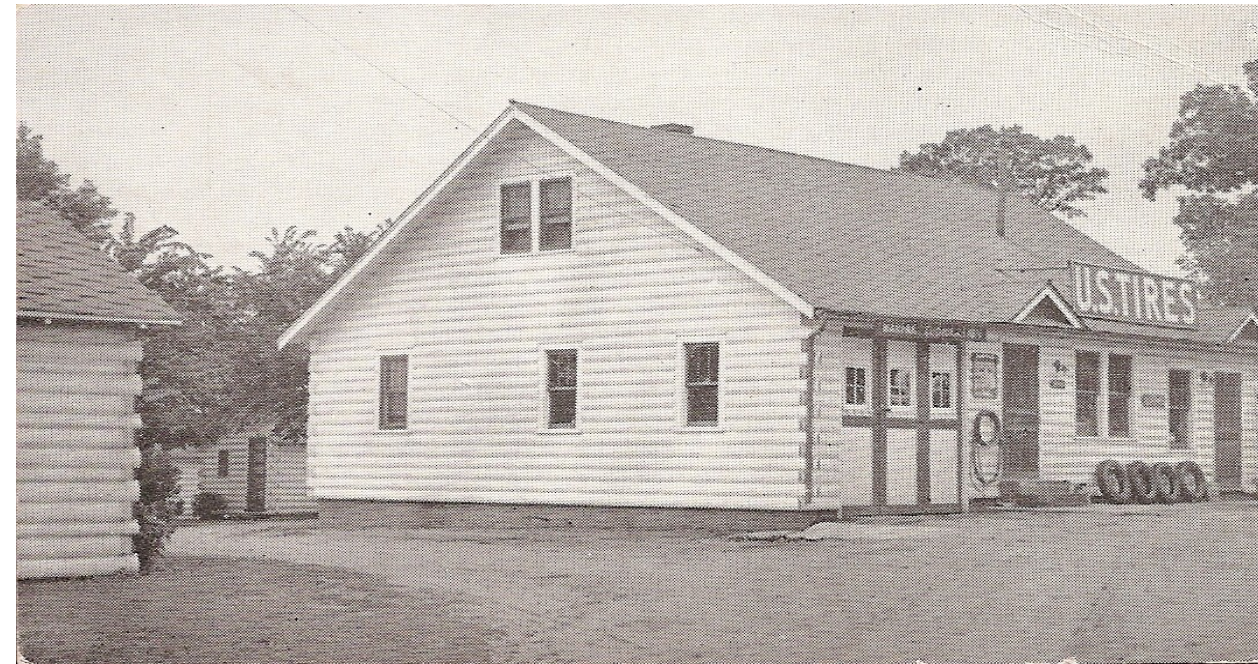
Meredith DePree– Office support

Carol Bundy-Office Support

Jack Toliver– Military Support



Voight's Service Station on Highway 10



Wendy Wheeler brought in a collection of area postcards that she is allowing us to scan into our systems. On the back of this postcard it reads “Actual photo showing front view of **Voight's Tourist Camp and Service Station on US Highway No. 10 Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.**

I have made a few phone calls and talked to a few people, we are looking for additional information on this building (area of Seanger's Gas Station that used to be on Benton Drive) We also have an out of state request for information on “Stanley's Cabins” that may have been in that area also.

Please let us know if you are aware of any information on Voight's or Stanley's Cabins!

Many thanks to Wendy for allowing us to scan the postcards for our collections. We are glad that she is involved with our local history!

New Staff!!!! Carol Bundy and Jack Toliver

Carol Bundy has joined us for the summer staffing. She is with Quality Careers and is spending her summer doing support office and administrative help. She has been here for a month, and is learning the wonders of working with area history. We welcome Carol on board and hope that she enjoys learning about lo-

cal history.! Come and meet her to say “HI”.

Jack Toliver who is a volunteer for us, was also hired for 2 hours per week to help staff the Museum on Fridays as this is our busiest day!

Jack's experience and knowledge in military has been a huge benefit to the Museum. He also

has work experience in handling artifacts at a military museum in employment in the past.

We are pleased that Jack will be around for awhile to help with our organization. Congratulations to Jack on joining the team!

Annual Meeting Coming for September 2009

Just a reminder ahead of time that the Annual Meeting for the Members of Benton county historical Society will be held on the third Tuesday of September. The date will be September 15, 2009.

Mark your calendars ahead of time if your schedule is busy!

We will be featuring a speaker this year again as we have the last couple of years. This year’s speaker has written a book about the lifestyle changes, and how life was in the WW II times from adults

that were children during the years. Sandra Schulte will be releasing her book during the month of September and will have books for purchase and author signing. She will be doing a short presentation on the book and her experience doing research. The author did part of her research in the Museum here in Sauk Rapids.

The Annual Meeting is also a I chance to get to know the Board Members, and other members of the society. It is also a wonderful opportunity

to see any new displays that we have at the Museum.

We will have elections of Board Members and supper. This year Board Members up for election/re-election are:

Char Dhein

Renee Kampa

Randy Schafer (who is filling the term of Ken Schiller)

You can always fill out an application if you are interested in a Board position.

Hope to see you there!

Membership Information

We have attached our membership information into the newsletter for the convenience of everyone who would like to join. If you are a member, dues are not due until December of each year. Feel free to share this Membership with anyone that you may feel would like to join. We will putting them in each newsletter as we are looking for members! Just clip out this section and send it to our mailing address: BCHS PO Box 426, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379. Please make checks payable to BCHS or Benton County Historical Society. Thank you for continuing support for the organization!

Benton County Historical Society Membership Slip

Household

Senior-\$9.00

Single -\$13.00

Family- \$18.00

Contributor- \$27.00

Supporter- \$ 50.00

Business

Annual -\$50.00

Supporting -\$75.00

Maintaining - \$100.00

Patron - \$150.00

Benefactor-\$500.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State** _____ **Zipcode** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Benton County Historical Society

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future!*

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Board Members

Ernie Wollak– President
Char Dhein– Vice-President
Renee Kampa-Treasurer
Melissa Keller– Secretary
Earl “Butch “ Bukowski-Director
Pat Gerchy-Director
Bud Lubbesmeier-Director
Randy Schafer-Director
Merle Stowe-Director

Board of Director Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month
at 6:30pm.

Members and the Public are always welcome!

Monday through Friday
10am-4pm
Special appointments on request