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Roseau County Historical Society

ROSEAU COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY *2005 ANNUAL REPORT*

The Roseau County Historical Society is the official county society as designated by the Minnesota Historical Society. Organized seventy-eight years ago on April 22, 1927, it was incorporated as a private non-profit organization under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The mission of the Society is to collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge about the history of Roseau County and to relate it to the state of Minnesota as per Article 11, section 1, 2, and 3 of the Society's by-laws. This includes preserving written materials, electronic data/media, photographs, and three-dimensional items. The Roseau County Historical Society is sole owner of the collection.

The Roseau County Historical Society (here after referred to as RCHS or historical society) operates the Roseau County Historical Museum and Interpretive Center, which houses the county archives and artifact collections, and serves as the hub of the Society's activities.

The Historical Society serves the residents of Roseau County and surrounding area. Visitors to the Roseau County Museum in 2005 came from eleven states, four Canadian Provinces, and foreign countries such as Japan, Sweden, and Norway. Over fifty-five hundred individuals made onsite visits to the Museum. Approximately 1,550 students from Roseau, Kittson, and Pennington Counties received educational programs sponsored by RCHS. Nursing home residents, research scholars, genealogists, and the public visited the museum and research center. RCHS reaches county residents and visitors through off-site programs such as the Roseau County Fair, the Greenbush Centennial, Hometown History Night, and genealogy programs during the Roseau Scandinavian Festival. RCHS partnered with area schools in Roseau and Kittson County to present a Pioneer Immigration lyceum. The Roseau County Historical Society and the Roseau Public Library co-sponsored the enlightening WWII Bus-eum exhibit "*Behind Barbed Wire: Midwest POWs in Nazi Germany*" from the Traces WWII Museum, St. Paul, Minnesota.

2005 Highlights

Throughout 2005, the Roseau County Historical Society strived to provide various programs even under the adverse conditions of preparing and moving the collection in readiness for the new Roseau City Center which will contain the museum. RCHS is one of many county historical societies that have their museum in city owned facilities; an example is the Clay County Historical Society and the Hjemkomst Interpretive Center in Moorhead.

Museum Move

On April 11, 2005, Governor Tim Pawlenty passed a state bonding bill which provided funds to replace the buildings which were damaged during the 2002 flood. RCHS moved the research center to the Eventide, formerly Budd Hospital, and stored the remaining collection in the reduced museum/library building. Many individuals and organizations assisted in the move including students from county schools, Sentencing to Service, members of the Greenbush community, and the Royal Rangers.

Annual Meeting

On April 22, RCHS held its annual meeting at FineTymes in Greenbush. Over 70 individuals enjoyed Roger R. Hellesvig's presentation on what it was like to emigrate to the United States. Roger is a historical interpreter; playing the part of Norwegian Ole Olson.

The annual business meeting followed the program which included the election of board members, plus a report on the events of 2004. Elected as new members to the Board of Directors were Eunice Korczak (Greenbush) and Helen Wagner (Roseau), Glenn Holm and Jeff Pieterick were reelected to the board.

Sixth Grade Minnesota History Contest

Eighteen top students represented six schools (Badger, Goodridge, Greenbush-Middle River, Grygla, Lancaster and Warroad) in the Northwest Minnesota Sixth Grade History Contest in May. Contest sponsors, Border State Bank, Citizens State Bank, Farm Credit Services, and Security State Bank, provided trophies and savings bonds to the winners. Winners included Kord Maurer – 1st, Giles Lien – 2nd, Kampton Carpenter – 3rd, all from Warroad, Alyssa Langaas, Greenbush-Middle River – 4th, Tess Monsurd, Badger – 5th, and Taylor Baier, Badger – 6th.

The contest fosters excellence in learning by providing area student with the ability to show their academic knowledge about Minnesota history.

Greenbush Centennial Celebration

Throughout 2004-05, several members of the Greenbush community prepared for the upcoming 2005 Greenbush centennial by researching, the history of the people, places, and activities in Greenbush and the surrounding area, at the Roseau County Historical Society (RCHS) research center. On the Fourth of July weekend, Greenbush was the hub of activity with over 5,000 former and present residents celebrating the centennial event. Those who took in the parade and activities enjoyed the historic photo board. The history of Greenbush was RCHS newspaper article focus through 2005.

Following the celebration the Centennial Book Committee presented RCHS with a generous monetary donation for the research center to purchase storage equipment for the many items of research the committee had collected and donated to RCHS.

Being a part of the Greenbush centennial was truly a memorable experience for all who participated.

Home Town History Night

On February 10 the Roseau County Historical Society presented the first, *Home Town History Nights* at the Four Seasons Senior Center in Roseau. Following this programs success, it was determined that it should be pursued. Charleen Haugen applied and received grants from Polaris Industries for a projector and to the Roseau Community Fund for a lap top computer and audio stand. This program will be launched in 2006. It will be adapted for student education and organization programs.

Holiday Open House

Finetymes Supper Club in Greenbush hosted the second annual Christmas program on Thanksgiving weekend. Over 75 attendees enjoyed a night of music and humor presented by Master of Ceremonies Shayne Isane, singer Rhonda Rothenberger, the Accordion Band, and Ray Green. Three lucky winners of a drawing took home either a Maggi Adams print, Roseau County Heritage book or a Roseau County Historical Society 75th Anniversary Cookbook.

EDUCATION

School Educational Programs and Tours

Throughout the year, the historical society provides educational opportunities for students in area schools. The museum is the best setting to educate youth in the history of the county. Advanced training for eighth graders involved educating them in using research center equipment similar to university equipment and guiding them in using a research center for local and county history projects. Seventh grade science classes studied the natural history in the museum. Pre-school and K-12 student tours for area schools and home schools were a highlight for staff. Northland Community and Technical College used American Indian items from the museum for Ancient America history classes. The Roseau County Historical Society has many objects that date back to the Clovis Indian times as well as an extensive collection of projectile points.

A main history presentation took place when RCHS collaborated with the Badger, Greenbush-Middle River, Karlstad Tri-County, and Roseau schools to present an ethnic immigrant program to over 1,100 students. The historical society strives to develop programs that will enrich and educate area residents in how our past affects the future of the county development.

Behind Barbed Wire: Midwest POWs in Nazi Germany

In April, RCHS and the Roseau Public Library collaborated in bringing the traveling exhibit, *Behind Barbed Wire: Midwest POWs in Nazi Germany*, to Roseau County. Over 160 individuals visited the bus museum while it was in Roseau for the one-day showing. This outstanding exhibit offered an excellent example, through photographs and objects, of the life of a German POW during internment in the Midwest.

Genealogy Seminar

Kathryn Otto, Head of Reference department at the Minnesota Historical Society, conducted an informative genealogy class in June. Those who attended received information on where to go for birth, death, and marriage records. Her program presented information on how to access information via the internet and through historical societies. This was the third annual genealogy seminar offered by RCHS and attracted people from across Northwest Minnesota.

EXHIBITS/COLLECTION ACQUISITIONS

Exhibit

Although major exhibitions for 2005 was curtailed due to the construction of the new museum, exhibits continued to interest the local communities when they were displayed at the Roseau County Fair and the Greenbush Centennial. New exhibits displayed the winter of 2004/2005 included toys of the recent past. Included in these exhibits were Barbie dolls and GI Joe toys from several collectors in the area.

A WWII exhibit spoke of the conflict between the Allies and Nazis during the war. Uniforms, rations, posters, photographs, and other items enhanced this exhibit and helped the viewer understand the drama that took place.

Collection

Charleen Haugen and Toni Donarski attended seminars on the care of the archival collection and photographs during the spring of 2005. Kathryn Otto, Jason Roy, and several other Minnesota Historical Society staff members presented these informative programs.

RCHS participated in the first part of a Minnesota Historical Society Sesquicentennial digital project. With this project photographs from across Minnesota will become available via the internet to the world. Roseau County will be represented by photographs from its conception to the present.

Acquisitions

Over 1,200 artifact donations from across the county were received in 2005. These items included photographs dating back to the beginning of Roseau County, manuscripts and family histories as well as several three-dimensional objects. Several items were received from the Greenbush area, including sports clothing, and commemorative items from years past. The documentation of the history of the Greenbush community by the Centennial book committee provided the historical society with most complete compiling of Greenbush history to date. Their hard work and dedication will be treasured far into the future.

LIBRARY/ARCHIVES

The library/archives is dedicated to safeguarding the documentary heritage of Roseau County for the use of all.

Over 700 manuscripts, reunion booklets, and photographs donated by people to enhanced the county collection.

Greenbush Centennial Book Project

In 2004/05 Greenbush Centennial book committee spent over 300 hours researching topics for the Greenbush Centennial book. The book is a wonderful collection of history and heritage of the western area of the county. It details the history of communities, schools, businesses and human life in the region from the early development of the area to the present time. The successful book sold out within weeks of production.

The Greenbush Centennial book committee's donation of materials they researched includes photographs (both digital and paper) and the extensive documentation of the history of Greenbush. Following this donation, a generous contribution from the committee provided file cabinets, newspaper stands and miscellaneous material for storing the research center material.

Hartz Grant

Following a substantial grant from the Hartz Foundation, we were able to purchase a digital microfilm reader and a Canon digital copy machine. These machines offer a full scope of opportunities.

Both the microfilm scanner and the copy machine are networked to office computers and have PDF format capabilities. RCHS now has the ability to scan microfilm newspaper articles or copy any document in the files and send them to patrons via e-mail. Staff uses this quick delivery to send documents across the world. An example of this was a research project staff did for an individual in Sweden. He requested information on a local doctor who lived in the area during the early 1900s. Photographs and documents were sent to him within hours of receiving the request.

Due to the ability to produce PDF files so easily, a project to place historic newspaper articles on the internet is planned. A Northland Community College professor suggested this project as it would enhance research projects. This is a long-range project set for 2007.

Newspapers

Once again, local businesses purchased 2004 bound and microfilm editions for the research center. The businesses included Border State Bank of Greenbush providing the Tribune; Lake Country Chevrolet the Warroad Pioneer, and Pat Moren Law Office the Roseau Times-Region. These newspapers are used by patrons for many areas of research from newspaper columns, family history, professional research, and student education. The newspaper collection contains bound editions and microfilm of all county newspapers dating back to 1894.

Minnesota Sesquicentennial Digital Project

As the State of Minnesota looked toward the 2008 Sesquicentennial, one of the projects designed by the Minnesota Historical Society and the University of Minnesota was the Minnesota Digital Project, an on-line photograph exhibit of Minnesota history. The purpose of the project is to "support education, scholarship, and personal enrichment through Internet access to [the] collections. (" *Who we are*, Minnesota Digital Library website www.mndigital.org/)

The project presented a challenge to most historical societies within Minnesota when they were asked to participate. One of the largest challenges was not having the staff to perform the work necessary to find and document a good representative collection. The Roseau County Historical Society found this a great challenge following a \$5,000 cut in Roseau County allocation funding for 2005. Even so, the staff decided the project was one that would give Roseau County recognition and decided to pursue it. To date over one hundred photographs have been submitted and are available though the state website at <http://www.mndigital.org/>

BOARD of DIRECTORS, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS

Board Members

A twelve member Board of Directors serve the Historical Society. Board members serve unlimited three-year terms. The board of directors strives to develop a Historical Society that presents an accurate and historic record of Roseau County. They serve on several committees, providing guidance to the staff and setting policy.

2005 board members included Glenn Holm (Roseau) - President, Irene Olson (Roseau) - Vice President, Helen Wagner (Roseau) –Treasurer, Sheila Winstead (Fox) – Secretary, Bruce Olson (Badger), Anne Erickson (Moose Township and area), Laurel Ulwelling (Warroad and east end of county), Darrell Borgen (Badger), Ida Novacek (Roseau), Jeff Pieterick (Greenbush), Eunice Korczak (Greenbush), and Lola Grafstrom (Salol).

Board members up for re-election in April, 2005 were Glenn Holm, Jeff Pieterick, and Neal Johnson. After serving

over 9 years on the board Neal Johnson retired. He nominated Helen Wagner from Roseau to take his place. Laurel Ulwelling of Warroad filled Bennie Heppner's position after he retired, Lisa Hanson withdrew as a board member due to a conflict of interest following her appointment as assistant County Attorney, Eunice Korczak was nominated to complete her term.

One of the major areas of focus for the past three years was the new county museum. Following grant funding from the State of Minnesota, the historical society museum committee, board members, and curator continued to implement an area that would meet the needs of the county residents. Community members, researchers and educators will find a museum that provides a environment for learning about Roseau County.

Long-time emeritus board member Milt Sather passed away in the fall of 2005. His wisdom and area history collection was invaluable to Roseau County.

Administration

The staff consists of two full-time employees and one Experience Works federal employee, Charleen Haugen, Curator/Director; Toni Anderson-Donarski, Museum Assistant; and Marie Kompelien, Research Specialist (Experience Works).

The staff is responsible for various areas of work within the museum. Charleen Haugen works with the Board of Directors, serving as curator and director of the museum and research center. Duties include overseeing the collecting, maintenance, and exhibition of the collection and research center, community and educational programming, grant writing, and administrative functions. Toni Donarski catalogs all incoming donations, enters past collection records into the museum software PastPerfect program, scans photographs, works with the veteran's project, gives educational tours, and assists the director as needed. Marie Kompelien has worked for the historical society for about 12 years. She researches the county newspapers and records all births, deaths, and marriages, placing them on 3/5 index cards for patron access. She assists patrons who come to the research center to do research and researches requests the historical society receives. She also assists the director in programs and other areas of museum work.

Volunteers

Over 50 volunteers played a vital roll at the historical society, in 2005. They assisted with the annual meeting and the county fair booth. They provided invaluable support in the museum and research center by setting up exhibits, working with the research center archives, helping with the Minnesota Digital Project and moving the collection.

The Roseau County Sentencing to Service put together shelves, designed platforms for file cabinets, moved the large object collection from the auditorium back to the museum prior to the building of the new facility and the setting up of the research center at the Budd Hospital. Students from the Badger and Roseau School, community members from across the county, including the Royal Rangers, assisted in the move of the collection to the old museum. These individuals provided talent and experience that was invaluable.

FINANCIAL

The Roseau County Historical Society operates through various funding means. The Roseau County allocation provided a means for the Society to educate the public, collect, conserve and care for, and exhibition items of historical interest to Roseau County. Other funding comes to the society through membership donations, publication income, research, grants, fund raising, etc.

The Roseau County Historical Society apologizes for any oversights or errors in this report.