

CASS COUNTY CLIPPINGS

October 1, 2011

CASS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 505
201 MINNESOTA AVENUE W., WALKER, MN. 56484

email: casscountymuseum@gmail.com
web: www.casscountymuseum.org
phone: 218-547-7251

Cass County Fairs of the Past

Can you believe that at one time we had seven fairs in Cass County?
Quoting from the *Walker Pilot* of 1922:

This is the time of the year when the lordly pumpkin and the big beggas and other celebrities of the garden, pastures and fields vie with one another for honor and glory. It is fair time and every one takes the day off as a sort of general celebration. Residents of Cass County are especially fortunate to have several good fairs each year in various parts of the county so that it is possible for all to attend at least one fair without covering too much territory to get there. This week the **Pine River Fair** is on in full blast and is attracting good crowds. They have the advantage of a racetrack, which is always a drawing card at the fair.

Next week, all will have an opportunity to attend the **Cass County Fair at Pillager**. One of the free attractions there will be a wrestling match. Then there will be horse racing and many other contents to interest the visitors. There will be free entertainment galore. Riggs, the world's greatest aerial acrobat will be seen in daily exhibitions of marvelous feats of brute strength and uncanny skill. The mysterious Finch does escaping and novelty acts. Handcuffs cannot hold him. There will be radio concerts and band music a plenty. Nic Harrig and Mike Cullen of Walker will be in on the greased pig stunt. A prize will be given for the oldest, noisiest Ford on the grounds! The fair is always full of first-class agricultural exhibits. The Pillager Fair Association was the first one organized in Cass County and has had a wonderful record in the



Cass County Historical Society
Calendar of Events 2011

October 18, 2011 – Annual Meeting

December 13, 2011 – Board Meeting at the Museum, 4:00 p.m.

Cass County Historical Society Annual Meeting

All members are encouraged to attend our annual meeting on Tuesday, Oct 18th. We will meet at the Ranch House Supper Club north of Walker on Hwy. 371 at 6:00 p.m. for dinner. Everyone may order from the menu, but PLEASE RSVP by calling the museum at 218-547-7251 before Oct 15th. If no one answers, please leave a message.

Following dinner, CCHS board president, Dan Eikenberry will briefly speak about activities of the Society and future plans. Karen Keener, former president of AGC Historical Society, will present a highly informative program, “The History of Ah-Gwah-Ching.” A historical documentary DVD of Ah-Gwah-Ching sanatorium 1907-1961 will be available for purchase. Non-members are welcome to attend this event.

Cass County Research Center

Every so often we get a call here at the museum to help various organizations that are working with cold case files. Such was the case sometime ago when we received a call from a group working on a cold case file concerning the infamous Alaskan serial killer, Robert Chris Hansen. We looked up information that we had on Stony Point Resort and found that his parents Chris and Edna Hansen owned Stony Point Resort on Leech Lake from about 1959 to about 1965. Robert, a student, spent the summers here with his parents at the resort. We were asked to look into any young Native American children who went missing during this time from the Onigum area. It seems that every once in a while Robert would come up with a good story when he wanted special privileges in jail. When news of his trial hit the *Walker Pilot Independent*, people here were stunned as many knew his parents well. He was convicted and sentenced to 465 years in prison without parole. A movie “Frozen Ground” starring Nicolas Cage will begin filming October 10, 2011 in Anchorage where these crimes were committed in the 1970s and 1980s. Did the information provided by the research center add anything to the script? We’d like to think so. Looking for family history, special events, or general history of the area? Call the museum and see if we can help you.

Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors

Dan Eikenberry, Pres.

Lois Orton, V-Pres

Karen Keener

Elsie Nelson

Sue Eikenberry

Don Beadle

Martha Winter

Alexis Hadrava - Treasurer

Cass County Research Center

The research center is staffed by the Cass County Historical Society at the Cass County Museum in Walker. Through the winter, research help is available by appointment. The research library, obituary indexes, newspaper microfilm, and other archival materials are accessible for a \$10 research fee for non-members.

Congratulations and Happy Birthday

Remer 100 yrs.

Federal Dam 100 yrs.

past, this being the 24th annual Cass County Fair. Friday Sept 22 is Walker day and that is the day the Walker delegation will head for the southern metropolis, and if all is favorable, many from here will make the trip.

Another fair of much interest is right under our noses. It is the **Longville Fair** and next Saturday, Sept 16th is the date. The people of Longville have the reputation of putting on one of the best county fairs in the state and this year will be no exception. They claim to have the best soil in the world and we believe they are nearly right at that. The thing to do is for as many as possible to attend the Longville Fair this year. The Longville boosters are expecting to meet a lot of us at the fair that day and it would be a crime to disappoint them. Longville will show us some farm exhibits worth looking at. Saturday is the date, Longville is the place. Get going early!

The Tri-County Fair, now being held at Cass Lake, is a comparatively lately organized concern but nevertheless, has held several good fairs, in fact, so far they have all been up to or a little better than the usual standard of county fairs. This year the Cass Lakers have prepared to put on a better exhibition than ever and they know how. Drawing an attendance and exhibits, as it does, from three counties, the Tri-County Fair is destined to become quite an institution and it is already doing a vast amount of good.

Other Cass County Fairs of the Past

The first annual **Deerfield Township Fair** was held September 14, 1920 at the North Deerfield School grounds. A picnic feature will be added and it looks like a big time in Deerfield. The famous Walker band will be on hand throughout the day. They will have a Bowery, which means a fine dancing floor for those who wish to partake. At their fair in 1921 people from Deerfield, Bull Moose, McKinley and neighboring townships were on hand, and goodly delegations from Hackensack, Backus, Walker, Akeley, and other villages attended. Exhibits were arranged in a large circle around which were many small pines, the whole constituting "Fort Deerfield." The Deerfield Livestock Association offered 15 registered Duroc Jerseys ranging from 5 weeks to 5 months, to promote the industry in this part of the county. In 1922, a band of Leech Lake Indians will execute the Wild Wolf Trot and other dances. By 1923, they did not hold a fair but put a booth in the Backus Fair.

The first **Walker Fair** was held on Tuesday, Sept 30, 1913 with over 600 entries taking every available floor space with displays. The ladies demanded equal floor space to display their needlework, preserves and kitchen delicacies and somehow were able to exhibit their wares quite nicely. A blooded herd of Holsteins, with C.C. Sargent, the Ah-Gwah-Ching sanitarium farmer in charge, the H. A. Hanson cows, and the Gruber Bros. Draft horses were among the livestock on display. Potatoes of all varieties, 60-pound watermelons, corn and other late crops showed beyond a doubt what could be done in this locality notwithstanding reports of early frost in other parts of northern Minnesota. An exhibit of Indian ware with Gust Kuhlender and Miss Pauline Colby in charge, was exhibited along with produce from the Indian agency farm. The Onigum ladies displayed their fine Battenburg laces which they made under the tutelage of Miss Colby. In the afternoon Onigum school children from the government boarding school gave a march and drill demonstration. John Ogema took home a blue ribbon for prize potatoes grown on his allotment.

The citizens of Backus have done excellent work this year in boosting their town by trying to build up the dairy industry in the vicinity of the village and through the Boys' Club and the Backus Auto Club, a large number of high grade Guernseys were brought into the community. The **Backus Fair** had a booth where the choicest vegetables, grains, apples, plums, and grapes gave evidence that while Cass County could not move the Fruit Belt, the Fruit Belt had widened out until it now included this county. A canning demonstration given by a Remer team consisting of the Misses Eliza Miller and Edna Larry gave a practical demonstration in canning. Harvey Meyer and Carl Boe, also of Remer, treated the audience to a very interesting demonstration of how to handle eggs and make money with them.

The Pine River Fair, also known as the Cass County Fair, is the only county fair to survive on into today. In 1905, the fair was located near the old train depot. The fair then moved to its present location on the north side of Pine River.

In 1951, record crowds were in attendance with the best record of attendance in the history of the fair. This fair had county financial support throughout the years, but in 2003, the fair lost funding of \$7,000 from the county. Weather also contributed to sparse entries in garden goods. They celebrated their 100th year in 2005.

Back in the days, ribbon winners and exhibitors could have their produce and any articles they wished exhibited at the State Fair. Produce, grasses or articles properly packed, tagged and marked with the name of the exhibitor went forward to the State Fair ground by express, which of course was a special car on the M & I railroad.



We would like to add to the “Fair” file in the museum and ask that if you have any information you would like to share, please contact us at 547-7251, or at [casscountymuseum@gmail](mailto:casscountymuseum@gmail.com), or at PO Box 505, Walker, MN 56484. We can scan photos so you may keep your originals.

Looking Back -- Fifty Years ago

“Finis” was written to a record of a killer she-wolf who this fall (1961) had killed 40 sheep belonging to Ole Sumption and Barney Harder of the Longville area. George Garner trapped the killer on October 14th. A large number of wolves were trapped in the county and a \$25 bounty for each was paid to each of the following: Rudolph Sepin (5), Walter Swankier (1), Robert Jones (1), and Earl Patterson (5) all of Remer; Walter Putnam of Longville (4); Melvin Keep of Hackensack (1), and Larry Husman (1) of Backus.

The Halloween Ball sponsored by the Longville Junior Class was well attended. Remember the fish pond, the cake walk, Bingo, wrestling matches, costume judging, lunch counter? Mrs. Blumentritt won the door prize, a blanket. The King and Queen, Prince and Princess were Judy Welk, Gaylen Ford, Carol Seastadt and Allan Weaver.

New Acquisitions

This 1914 Round Oak Stove was donated by the estate of Donald and Nancy Nieman. Thanks to Richard and Jean Spear for their loving gift, originally the property of Interlachen Resort (Hackensack) in 1964. The Niemans refurbished the nickel trim shortly after they received the stove. This is quite an addition to our collection and it will have a permanent home in our parlor exhibit. Thanks to Nancy and her son Dave, for preserving the stove for all our visitors to enjoy for years to come.



Mrs. Jim O'Neal of Federal Dam donated a Campfire Girls uniform that belonged to her mother Mrs. Mabel (Hampl) McKeig. The dress dates from approximately 1925. She also donated a photo of Mabel Hampl wearing the dress and of a group of 8 girls in uniforms standing in front of the Hotel Rex in Federal Dam. Mabel Hampl taught at the Federal Dam School before her marriage to Ed McKeig. She later returned to teaching at Boy River and Federal Dam, and was a volunteer teacher at the Pioneer School House here at the museum.

CCHS Board Appoints Executive Director

At its August meeting, the board appointed Dan Eikenberry as executive director of the Society. This is an unpaid position which will continue as long as the board feels it is necessary. Duties will include but are not limited to the following:

1. Oversee the operation of the Museum and Library archives
2. Employee relations
3. Assist in the functions of the five permanent committees
4. Be the voice of the Society
5. Find and submit grants
6. Oversee duties of the treasurer and manage Society monetary assets
7. Outreach to all parts of the county
8. Liaison with County and City
9. Liaison with Region 5 History Coalition and Minnesota Historical Society.



Membership - 2011

Individual (\$10)

Patricia Abraham
Karen Arson
Bob Bean
Francis Bean
Vi Blackburn
Margaret Dewey
Ricky Johnson
Karen Keener
Karen Kezele
Steven Mecklenberg
Elsie Nelson
Frank Olson
Robert Redfield, Jr.
Dr. Otto F. Ringle
Tom Salwasser
Arthur Shenk
Jeanette Silbaugh
Glenna Tappe
David Yde
Betty Zaffke

Family (\$15)

Don & Tanis Beadle
Bob & Dodie Burdick
Don & Karen Jensen
Glenna & Patricia Mechelke
Pat & Diane Pitzen

Sponsor (\$250-\$999)

Anderson's Cove
Chippewa Lodge
Bob & Nita Frink
Grand Vu Lodge
Ron Libertus
Northland Lodge
Lois Orton
Spirit of the North

Harry Winter Memorial

Benefactor (\$20 - \$99)

Virginia Abullrade
Dale Barto
Doug & Linda Birk
Audrey Chelberg
Robert & Florence Crow
Terrie Cornell
Tom & Sarah Cox
Gordy & Liz Dahn
Leland & Dorothy Delger
Jim & Shirley Dowsen
Richard & Joan Downham
Michael J. & Karla Elsenpeter
Dick & Donna Evenson
Don Flyckt
Tom & Lori Gamache
Jerry & Renee Geving
Nancy Jacobson
Bob & Shirley Jewell
Steve & Kay Johnson
Robert & Betty Kangas
Keith & Janice Matson
Cecelia McKeig
Noel Mills, M.D.
David Nieman
Norbert & Rosemary Ochs
James & Leona O'Neal
Chris & Dorothy Opheim
Hugo & Jana Pence
Carole Sargent
Richard & Elizabeth Sauer
Erma Schantle
Dana & Bev Sheldon
Gary & Margaret Trimble
Bob & Ann Winegar
Martha Winter

Business (\$50+)

Acorn Hill Resort
D. W. Jones, Inc.
Huddle's Resort
Little Apple Paperback Exchange
Orton Oil Co.
Alice Groth
Sandra (Hedlund) Spitzack

Friend (\$100-\$249)

Willard Arends
Carl & Judy Berg
Dr. Steve Bilben
Don & Margaret Brown
Dan & Sue Eikenberry
First National Bank, Walker
Betty Hutt
Gramma Jo's House
Leer Title Service
Kelly & Jeanne Nelson
Dick & Kathie Stoneking

Cities & Townships

City of Backus - \$50
City of Lake Shore - \$50
City of Walker - \$500
Blind Lake Township -- \$100
Fairview Township - \$200
Gould Township - \$100
Kego Township - \$500
Leech Lake Township - \$200
Pine Lake Township - \$200
Pine River Township - \$100
Powers Township - \$150
Rogers Township -- \$50
Salem Township - \$30
Shingobee Township - \$1,000
Smokey Hollow Township - \$100
Sylvan Township - \$85
Town of Loon Lakes - \$100
Torrey Township - \$50
Trelipe Township - \$250
Turtle Lake Township - \$500
Wabedo Township - \$50
Walden Township - \$50
Wilkinson Township - \$250