

## ROSEAU COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

In 1927, the Roseau County Historical Society was organized by forward-thinking men who recognized the need to maintain a history of the county. It has been designated as the official county historical society by the Minnesota Historical Society. It is registered as a non-profit organization with 501 (C) 3 status.

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

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

The historical society serves the residents of Roseau County and surrounding area. In 2008, the society had 6,716 visitors. They came from twenty-five states including Minnesota, five Canadian Provinces, and several foreign countries including Australia, Denmark, France, Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

RCHS partners with various community organizations to present programs. In 2008, over 400 Head Start-age through grade 12 students received educational tours. Area nursing home residents from Greenbush, Roseau, and Warroad received special tours and programs at the museum. The research center was used for various projects by genealogists, professional researchers, and students. Off-site programs were given to schools, at township meetings, and whenever a request was received. The society welcomes requests to present programs to organizations and groups.

As of 2008, the historical society is fully recovered from the 2002 flood. Progress has been made in several areas to meet the strategic plan goals. Working with the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota's Historic Northwest Consortium enhanced the museum/research center's ability to improve in the areas of collection care, exhibition, and community outreach. The historical society strives to look for new areas that will meet the needs of county residents.

### 2008 Highlights

#### Annual Meeting

On April 4, 2008 the historical society held the 81<sup>st</sup> annual meeting in the Roseau City Center community room. Approximately fifty attendees participated in an informative and enjoyable evening. During the business meeting, progress on the Pinecreek Lutheran Log Church Restoration Project was reported by Bruce Olson, chairman of the committee.

An update on the progress of the museum and research center was presented by Curator Charleen Haugen. She thanked the many volunteers who assisted in the various museum projects that took place in 2007 including the Smithsonian exhibit *Key Ingredients: America by Food*.

Nominations for the Board of Directors were opened with Eva-Jayne Krueger of Warroad elected to serve on the board as well as incumbents Glenn Holm (Roseau), Helen Wagner (Roseau), and Brenda Sather (Greenbush). Board members serve a three-year term and may be re-elected an unlimited number of terms.

Guest speaker Paul Knochenmus shared several experiences he had while serving as former Roseau County Sheriff.

#### Off-Site Events:

In preparation for the first annual Woman's History Month, which would take place in March 2009, a committee was organized. They designed a special **county fair** exhibit meant to encourage fair visitors to participate in the selection of a woman for the *One Woman* program that would take place in the county cities and townships. Newspapers, atlases, and other items were available for fair visitors to examine and read. Approximately 6,000 fair attendees visited the RCHS fair booth.

During the **Roosevelt Flea Market** a case with a variety of small items from the museum collection was displayed. Over 700 visitors saw this exhibit. Later that fall, a request was received to have a small exhibit at the **Badger Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church's Crazy Smorg**. Over 400 people attended the Crazy Smorg and enjoy several pioneer items and Flax Day buttons from the early Flax Day celebration from the museum collection.

### **Holiday Open House**

A Holiday Open House and Pot Luck dinner was held November 29th at the Roseau City Center. Roseau County Commissioner Alan Johnston cut the ribbon opening the first traveling exhibit designed by the Minnesota's Historic Northwest consortium, *Traveling through Time in MN's Historic NW*.

The evening program's MC, Phil Sallberg, presented the evening program which included a Christmas reading and music with Barb Gear playing the piano. Ed Alexander presented a humorous Thanksgiving story from the CBC radio program *The Vinyl Café*.

### **Education**

#### **School Educational Programs and Tours**

School programs are a popular educational component for the museum and research center. Both in-house and off-site programs are available. Former Warroad educator Lola Grafstrom presents off-site programs in area schools. In 2008, one program she presented was a Scandinavian program using RCHS collection items.

As usual, May was a busy month for student tours. Over 400 students from Head Start-age through grade 12 received tours. A scavenger hunt for student visitors was offered for the *Key Ingredients: Roseau County by Food* exhibit which closed in the fall of 2008. This exhibit was a complimentary exhibit to the Smithsonian exhibit *Key Ingredients: America by Food*, which was displayed in 2007.

Museum staff worked with Roseau teacher Aaron Nelson on an oral history project involving county WWII veterans. During Memorial Day services, RCHS was presented with the work the students had accomplished. This work included several oral history interviews and videos of the veterans.

Museum staff worked with Northland Community College and Technical School history professor Aliza Olson on a class project. She expressed an interest in presenting American Indian artifacts to her students. Several items were lent to her for the class project.

#### **Northwest Minnesota Sixth Grade History Contest**

The 2008 Northwest Minnesota Sixth Grade History Contest was held in the Roseau City Center. Over the years the historical society has seen an increase in the number of schools who are interested in participating in the program. In 2008, school participants came from Badger, Goodridge, Grygla, Karlstad Tri-County, Lancaster, Roseau, and Warroad. Students with exceptional academic knowledge of Minnesota history participate for trophies and \$50 savings bonds. The following students were 2008 winners: 1<sup>st</sup> place - Alex Heppner - Warroad, 2<sup>nd</sup> place - Lynn Afrtrup - Warroad, 3<sup>rd</sup> place - Elle Oftedahl - Warroad, 4<sup>th</sup> place - Nick Shaske - Goodridge, 5<sup>th</sup> place - Kate Howell - Badger, and 6<sup>th</sup> place - Tara Whitlock - Roseau. Three students with the top test score on the NW Minnesota test received trophies. The top six scores received savings bonds from sponsors Border State Bank, Citizens State Bank, and Security State Bank.

#### **Summer Programs**

Each summer the museum holds scavenger hunts for children the three weeks prior to the opening of the school year. The program is partnered with Dairy Queen, and each Friday a weekly drawing is held. Each day three objects in the museum are chosen for the children to find. The children must tell where they located the items by writing down the exhibit case numbers. This year's winners were Anthony Peppel - age 3, Jordan McMillian - age 9, and Henry Sanford - age 8.

### **Exhibits/Collection Care/Acquisitions**

#### **Exhibit**

In 2007, the museum partnered with the Minnesota Humanities and the Minnesota Historical Society to bring a traveling exhibit to Roseau County. RCHS hosted the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street Traveling Exhibit, *Key Ingredients: America by Food* to Roseau County. The society staff had designed a complimentary exhibit that hit the five areas Land of Plenty, Local Flavors, Dynamic Delivery, Festival of Feasts, and Home Cooking that the Smithsonian exhibit had explored. This exhibit was displayed until the fall of 2008. The museum exhibit, titled *Key Ingredients: Roseau County by Food*, was used as an educational tool during student tours to educate students in

how Roseau County history has evolved in these areas. Agriculture, Native American foods, dining out, and our grocery stores were examined to show how these areas have changed and adjusted to modern times.

Museum platforms, used for displaying period rooms and other types of exhibits, had to be replaced following the move into the new museum. During the summer of 2008, carpenter Wayne Holmgren constructed panels that could be placed many different ways when needed for display. That fall, Mr. Glassman's senior class installed the platforms. Museum staff then redesigned several exhibits, focusing on military, Native American living, and pioneer/immigration life. Staff will change exhibits in the gallery frequently to educate the public in the county history. The platforms were made possible through funding from Central Boiler and Fireplace, Doug's Supermarket, Security State Bank, and Polaris Industries.

As the society prepared for the first Women in History exhibit and events it was evident that volunteers would be critical to the success. Program Chair Linda Vatnsdal organized two committees. One committee was in charge of the One Woman area, who would contact with all township supervisors and city councils in the county inviting them to participate by selecting a woman from their communities who has made a difference through service and be in charge of all events. The other committee was Women in Education. They would compile the names of all women who have worked in the county school system in any way. This exhibit would honor these woman and exhibit information about the rural school system.

Beginning in the winter of 2007-08, the Minnesota's Historic Northwest consortium of historical societies began designing a sesquicentennial photographic exhibit. A \$5,000 grant from the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Committee was obtained. The criterion was to design an exhibit and a historic book of 150 photographs depicting the area. This popular exhibit traveled to ten counties in Northwest Minnesota, and Roseau County received the exhibit in November.

#### Collection Care

The historical society maintains a collection of approximately 28,000 archival and three-dimensional objects. Each item is cataloged using a software program (PastPerfect) designed for this purpose; items can then be located more efficiently. Protective care is provided by placing items in proper containers so they will not be damaged by light or other contaminants. Photographs are placed in Mylar sleeves and made accessible to the public; that way they are not damaged when handled. Powder-coated file cabinets and acid-free boxes are used for documents that need special storage. Small objects are given special treatment by being wrapped in a special tissue and placed in special archival boxes or placed on shelves covered with Ethafoam material to protect them.

The storage area has continued to need additional shelving and in 2008, some shelving was purchased and installed by a Sentence to Service crew under the direction and leadership of Frank Haubrick.

#### Acquisitions

In 2008, over sixty-one patrons and organizations donated artifacts or archival items to the society. Photographs, memorabilia, organization records such as Civil Air Patrol records, military, and township records have enhanced the archive collection. A wide variety of objects from dial telephones, textiles, household items, cameras and many other items have become part of the collection which will be a useful exhibit tools for educating future generations.

We continue to encourage donations of items from the past century to the present so the historical society will have a collection that covers all facets of human living.

#### Technology within the Museum

Through the generosity of the donors to the 2008 Fund Drive, the society was able to purchase a new scanner. Following the recommendation of the Minnesota Historical Society, a Microtek scanner was obtained.

Three years ago, CenturyTel provided funds for the historical society to purchase a plotter. We are now able to print large exhibit posters in-house. This has saved the organization money and given staff the ability to change exhibits more frequently.

The museum is fully networked, and although the server is old and should be replaced, staff is able to access records placed on it easily. The server is frequently backed up to prevent loss of data.

The society maintains a website which informs the public of upcoming events and exhibits and gives information of various other types.

Through the generosity of CenturyTel, the museum has a five-telephone system which networks all areas of the museum.

### **Board of Directors, Staff, and Volunteers**

#### **Board Members**

RCHS is governed by a twelve-member Board of Directors. Board members serve terms of three years for an unlimited period. They support staff by setting policy, serve on various committees, and volunteer for different projects and programs.

2008 board members included Glenn Holm (Roseau) - President, Irene Olson (Roseau) - Vice President, Sheila Winstead (Roseau) - Secretary, Helen Wagner (Roseau) - Treasurer, Anne Erickson (Badger), Bruce Olson (Badger), Darrell Borgen (Badger), Eunice Korczak (Greenbush), Ida Novacek (Roseau), Jeff Pieterick (Greenbush), Eva-Jayne Krueger (Warroad), Lola Grafstrom (Salol), and Brenda Sather (Greenbush). Board member Anne Erickson retired from her position in August 2008. A new board member will be nominated at the 2009 annual meeting.

#### **Administration and Training**

RCHS staff includes two FT employees, one PT employees, and one federal funded employee under the Experience Works program. Employees are Charleen Haugen, Curator/Director; Britt Dahl, Museum Assistant; Marie Kompelien, Research Specialist, and Robert Johnson.

Staff responsibilities cover all areas of museum and research center management. Museum staff participate in and provide community and educational programs for residents both onsite and offsite.

RCHS is a member of the Minnesota's Historic Northwest consortium, a twelve-county organization for historical societies and museums in Northwest Minnesota. The consortium provides collaboration and educational training for the members. One staff person attends all consortium meetings. Charleen Haugen serves as a Vice President for the organization.

Training is received through various workshops and grant programs. The NW Minnesota consortium group offers training to members with guest speakers and grants. Past NW MN consortium training has included how to conduct an oral history project, interpretation and exhibit designing, program management, and other areas. In 2008, the Minnesota Historical Society provided a workshop called Systems for Success. The workshop dealt with ideas on running annual fund drives, board development, cataloguing photos and more.

In 2008, Britt Dahl and Charleen Haugen attended the first workshop in connection with the Smithsonian Institute's Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) Main Street exhibit, *Between Fences*. The workshop was an introduction to the exhibit, which the society will host beginning the end of March 2010. The workshop was sponsored and funded by the Minnesota Humanities Commission.

#### **Volunteers**

Volunteer projects vary from year to year. Basic projects may include exhibit designing, program development, education tour docents, filing, data entry, and working with collection care. Over 30 volunteers assisted in various ways in 2008.

Cataloging is one of the major volunteer projects, and in 2008 several individuals assisted in this area. They numbered objects and entered the information in the PastPerfect database; reorganized clothing to take up less space; changed the database to reflect the new location of the items. This was all done by volunteers.

Volunteers provide an invaluable service to the historical society with their talents and the time they invest.

#### **Financial**

General operating funds for the historical society come from county allocations, memberships, donations, gift shop proceeds, research requests, the Roseau County endowment fund, a yearly fund drive, and grants. The Roseau County Historical Society endowment fund is established with the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. This endowment provides capital for special projects and is supported by donations and memorials from supporters. In 2008, it provided funding for shelving and year-end general operation.

Additional information will be found in the 2008 financial report.

The Roseau County Historical Society apologizes for any oversights or errors in the annual or financial report.