

ROSEAU COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The Roseau County Historical Society was organized in 1927 by individuals who recognized the need to maintain a history of the county. The Minnesota Historical Society designated the Roseau County Historical Society as the official county organization. The historical society is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit organization.

The mission of the Roseau County 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 society is governed by Board of Directors consisting of twelve trustees from across Roseau County. 2009 board members included Glenn Holm (Roseau) - President, Brenda Sather (Greenbush)- Vice President, Lola Grafstrom (Salol) – Secretary, Helen Wagner (Roseau) –Treasurer, Darrell Borgen (Badger), Harriet Heinen (Warroad), Eva-Jayne Krueger (Warroad), Ida Novacek (Roseau), Jeff Pieterick (Greenbush), Bruce Olson (Badger), Irene Olson (Roseau), and Sheila Winstead (Roseau).

Attendance at the historical society museum including off –site exhibits and programs increased dramatically in 2009, with on-site visits increasing by 5% to 7,098. Visitors came from thirty-one states including Minnesota, fifteen foreign countries including Australia, Norway, Mexico, Sweden, China, and six Canadian Provinces. Approximately 13,000 individuals enjoyed off-site exhibits and programs at places such as the Roseau County Fair, Northland Community and Technical College, and county schools.

The historical society partners with area schools, organizations, and assisted-living residents to present programs. Children from preschool to grade 12 received both on-site and off-site educational programs. Special on-site tours were organized for senior citizens and organizations. Off-site programs were presented at township meetings and whenever a request was received. Students, professional researchers, and genealogists use the Roseau County Historical Society research center throughout the year.

2009 Highlights

Annual Meeting

The 2009 Annual Meeting was held on April 18, 2009 at the Roseau City Center. Changes to by-laws were submitted to the members and approved. Harriet Heinen from the Warroad area was elected to the Board of Directors. The evening program was presented by Jerry and Marion Solom. Jerry is the skipper of the sailing yacht *Indian Summer*, which the couple has taken on several Scandinavian and European trips. Jerry and his son sailed the North Atlantic back to the US on the *Indian Summer* from Norheimsund, Norway to Maine after spending the summer sailing south from Norway along the coast of Europe. Attendees also enjoyed the Blue Grass musical group *Northern Posse* during the potluck dinner and program.

Off-Site Educational Programs and Events:

Educational opportunities continue to make it possible to present additional programs to residents. In 2009, the society was asked to partner with the Northland Community and Technical College Visual History Club as the club designed exhibits for hall and lobby display cases at the college in Thief River Falls. The club's advisor, Aliza Olson, and members displayed several items from the Roseau County Historical Society collection. During *American Indian Heritage Month* many Ojibwa and Sioux objects from the society were

displayed. These exhibits were located where foot traffic was consistent. Approximately 7,000 concert and sports program attendees and students had visual access to the displays.

The historical society expanded programs for county schools. During December, RCHS volunteer educator Lola Grafstrom presented an off-site program about Scandinavian heritage to 244 students at the Badger, Roseau, and Warroad school elementary grade classes.

For many years the historical society has exhibited at the Roseau County Fair. During the 2009 fair, photographs and items representing Roseau County rural school education were displayed. Of special interest to fair attendees were the early teacher training photographs. Many individuals looked at the photographs hoping to recognize rural teachers who had taught them. A second part of the exhibit focused on the 2010 Woman's History Month exhibit *Roseau County Women in Military* as the historical society researched for the names of women who had served in the past and now.

A RCHS goal is to have exhibits in the libraries and/or schools in the county and expand the presentation of programs to cities and townships, schools, and senior citizens through more outreach programs.

School Educational Programs and Tours

School programs are a popular educational component for the museum and research center. Students from Badger, Greenbush/Middle River, Karlstad, and Roseau participated in tours and programs at the museum during 2009. Over 600 students received programs and tours during the spring. RCHS offered an immigration program for elementary students which were taught on-site by RCHS volunteer educator, Lola Grafstrom.

Roseau civics teacher Aaron Nelson and the historical society partnered on a military oral history project starting in the fall of 2009. Mr. Nelson's Advanced History Class students interviewed Korean and Vietnam War veterans. Information on the conflicts was gathered with the intent of designing an exhibit that would be displayed in the museum. All project information will be added to the research center military archives in the spring of 2010.

The society presented a program on handling museum artifacts to the Northland Community and Technical College Visual History Club prior to the club designing the Northland exhibits. The workshop taught the students how to handle and pack a variety of fragile museum objects to protect them when they are to be moved, in transit and installed in an exhibit.

Northwest Minnesota Sixth Grade History Contest

The annual history contest was held at the Roseau City Center on May 14. Museum Program Educator Lola Grafstrom assisted with the program. Seven schools from Badger, Greenbush/Middle River, Grygla, Karlstad Tri-County, Lancaster, Roseau, and Warroad participated. The following students received trophies and medals: 6th place - Madiline Huglen, Roseau; 5th - Morgan Amsley-Benzie, Warroad; 4th - Holly Coffield, Lancaster; 3rd - Mariah Modahl, Badger; 2nd - Molly McDonald, Warroad; and 1st - Sydney Mosher, Warroad. Border State Bank, Citizens State Bank, and Security State Bank helped sponsor the event.

Exhibits/Collection Care/Acquisitions/Technology

Exhibit

Each March since 1981, the United States has formally recognized "Woman's History Month". Following a year of intense research, the first Woman's History Month was celebrated by the Roseau County Historical Society in 2009.

In 2008, the RCHS began organizing to celebrate Woman's History Month. A committee chaired by Linda Vatnsdal and including Carolyn Eeg, Dawn Johnson, Leanne Johnson, Lorelee Marvin, and Carole Wilson set out to organize the *One Woman* program which would honor Roseau County women who have made a difference in their communities. County cities and townships were asked to select a woman from their area to receive this honor. In February 2009 the Roseau County Commissioners designated March as Woman's History Month.

A Grand Opening event was held March 1 with Roseau County Commissioner Mark Foldesi opening the exhibit. Eighteen *One Woman* selectees were honored by their city or township: Lois M. Johnson, City of Badger; Agnes Paulson, Barto; Hilda Erickson, Deer; Nelsine Dahl, Dieter; Irene Kristofferson, Enstrom; Ruth Eeg, City of Greenbush; Clarice Bolin, Grimstad; Delores L. Andol, Jadis; Amelia G. Janson, Lake; Lorraine Hedlund, Malung; Florence Hanson, Mickinock; Luella Solberg, Reine; Marie Budd, City of Roseau; Gladys Venaas, Ross; Maxine Penas, Stokes; Pat Westman, Spruce; Verna Grafstrom, Unorganized Townships; and Margaret Marvin, City of Warroad.

Woman's History Month also recognized *Woman in Education* with an exhibit and programs. *Woman in Education* was designed to honor any woman who had worked in any capacity in a Roseau County school from early rural schools to present day. The *Women in Education* committee consisted of Pam Solberg – chair, Janice Branden, Diane Churchill, Kelly Falk, Katie Hedlund, Gail Johnson, Elaine Lang, Sharon Lund, Aliza Olson, **Shelia** Olson, Lori Schaible, Marion Solom, and Joyce Woidtke.

Several programs covered the two exhibits during the month. The committees and several volunteers prepared everything from setup to exhibit designing. Over 850 patrons enjoyed the exhibit and events during Woman's History Month.

In November, the historical society and Roseau Public Library partnered with the North Dakota Museum of Art to bring the exhibit *Snow Country Prison: Interned in North Dakota* to the area. County Commissioner Jack Swanson opened the three-week showing. 655 people toured the exhibit. The exhibit explored a period during WWII when Japanese U.S. citizens and Germans were interned at Fort Lincoln in Bismarck, ND. Area schools transported over 500 students to see this exhibit. SMART Board PowerPoint presentations explained the relationship between the United States and U.S. Japanese citizens who were interned during the war.

Collection Care and Acquisitions

In 2009, sixty-seven patrons and organizations donated artifacts or archival items to the society. About 3,500 items were received. When the United Methodist Church dissolved in Roseau, all church records and history that were not required to go to the church headquarters were given to the historical society as well as several objects. The Badger Veterans of Foreign War Auxiliary #3832 entrusted the historical society with their organization records. Examples of gifts from other donors include a 9th District American Legion band uniform, several patches/pins from Polaris snowmobile events, women's military uniforms, and church records from the Pinecreek Lutheran Church.

Thanks to the generous donations of over 100 fund-drive donors, proper storage boxes and materials were purchased for the items received.

Technology

Technology is ever-changing, and the ability to use it within the museum is wonderful. Through generous funding from a private donor, a grant from the Minnesota Historical Society and the Polaris Foundation, the Roseau County Historical Society was able to purchase a SMART Board. The SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard that is connected to a computer. The large whiteboard acts as the computer screen with the additional benefit of allowing individuals to interact with what is shown on the screen just by touching it. This feature allows museum patrons to activate a video or audio recording, a prepared informational presentation or a game. A dedicated laptop for the SMART Board was purchased with funding from the Polaris Foundation.

This technology has greatly improved the society's ability to offer hands-on programs to patrons. The SMART Board has been used with each exhibit the museum designs providing an additional educational tool in the museum. Thanks to the IT departments of Roseau and Warroad schools, the SMART Board camera was set up wirelessly which helped with the cost.

Board of Directors, Staff, and Volunteers

Administration and Training

RCHS staff includes two full-time employees, Charleen Haugen, Executive Director; Britt Dahl, Museum Assistant; and one part-time employee, Marie Kompelien, Research Specialist. Museum staff responsibilities include administration of all areas of museum management. They also organize and provide community and educational programs.

In addition to the museum staff, three federal paid Experience Works trainees work with data entry in the 3-dimensional and archive departments. In October, two individuals began a six-month training program through a grant from the Northwest Industry Council to the MN Department of Employment. These individuals work with exhibit display, data entry, and other museum-related work areas.

Staff receive training from the Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota's Historic Northwest consortium, the Minnesota Humanities Center, Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit department, and the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. Participation in training is determined by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. The training programs teach techniques in improving collection care, effective exhibits designing and programs, technology, and developing community outreach.

As a member of the Minnesota's Historic Northwest consortium, the society benefits in various ways. The consortium partners with the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), which provides educational opportunities. Each year MHS develops workshops for consortium members. In 2009 a Modernizing History workshop was attended by staff. The workshop focused on two areas: one was on collecting artifacts for the future, and the second was on using technology to set up websites and social media and how to use them to promote the society. Following this workshop, the society set up a Facebook site and reexamined the way the society used its website.

In preparation for the upcoming 2010 Smithsonian *Between Fences* exhibit, Charleen Haugen and Britt Dahl attended a training session in April 2009 at the Minnesota Humanities Center.

Volunteers

Over 80 volunteers provided countless hours of service to the historical society in 2009. Projects such as cataloging incoming artifacts and memorabilia, database entry, working with student education, exhibition and many other areas of museum management were worked on by volunteers. Approximately 2,000 hours of volunteer hours were donated to projects and programs. All of their work is greatly appreciated!

The Sentence to Service program hours are not included in the volunteer hours. Crew leader Frank Haubrick and those working under the program helped with many construction projects during the year.

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 was established with the Northwest Minnesota Foundation in 1995. The endowment provides capital for special projects and is supported by donations and memorials from supporters. In 2009 endowment funds were used to assist the society with general operation.

Grants

Five requests for funding were applied for in 2009.

During the *Women in Education (WIE)* portion of the Woman's History Month preliminary planning, the *WIE* felt that the museum could benefit from having a SMART Board, and it was suggested that we seek funds for one. Grant funding submissions were sent to the Minnesota Historical Society, a private foundation, and the Polaris Foundation. These grant requests were approved and make the society one of the few museums in Minnesota to provide their patrons with this technology

The Minnesota's Historic Northwest, a 501 (c)3 organization which includes the historical societies in the ten counties in NW Minnesota, submitted a grant request, which was approved, to the Hartz Foundation for a traveling exhibit for NW Minnesota. Supplies and grids for a church exhibit were requested. Eighteen grids for each historical society that was a part of the consortium were purchased through this grant making it possible to design a church exhibit and additional traveling photo exhibits in the future. Having the grids also

allows each organization to design exhibits for the grids whenever the consortium does not have a traveling exhibit.

The Minnesota Legacy Amendment was passed during the 2008 General Election. The amendment provides grant funding for several areas and included an Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The amendment stated that the Minnesota Historical Society would distribute the grant funding for the Cultural area of the amendment. The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums, the Council for Minnesota Archaeology, the Minnesota Archaeological Society, and Minnesota Historic Northwest partnered with the Minnesota Historical Society to form the Minnesota History Coalition. This organization would work with MHS on grant distribution and would organize grant training sessions to be conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society.

In November, the society applied for a technology grant to do oral history projects.

Fund Drive

The historical society initiated a fund drive several years ago. The fund drive supports many areas of museum administration, from collection care to exhibition and educational programming. During the 2008-09 fund drive, over 100 corporations, businesses, families, and individuals supported these programs by donating \$8,878, which included a major contribution from the Shetterly family. Thrivent Financial partnered with the historical society in 2008-09 on the fund drive.

Fund Drive donations make it possible for the society to host traveling exhibits and supports other projects such as Woman's History Month.

Bequest

A lasting legacy to the historical society was left by Kenneth Holm, son of former Roseau County residents, Rudy and Elsie Holm. Kenneth spent many hours in the museum as a child and had wonderful memories of those hours. When he passed away he bequeathed \$10,000 to the Roseau County Historical Society.

Additional information is available in the 2009 financial report.

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

Glenn Holm, President and Charleen Haugen, Executive Director