Archival Compressible Storage Grant, “OPEN HOUSE”
Sunday, June 2nd  2-3 PM
Museum Library & Archive

Please join us as we unveil our new Archival Compressible Storage space. This $60,500 Cultural and Heritage Legacy Grant will double our storage capacity and allow for many collection items to be housed in the Archive that until now, should have been stored here, but just did not fit. This new compact storage system will allow room for more items to be donated to our growing collection and make them easier to find and share with researchers and guests. Music to any avid genealogists ears, the new archive is a huge advancement for the research library and will sustain our collection space needs for years to come. Our Archive “OPEN HOUSE” will also give us a chance to thank all our great volunteers and staff members, who’s hard work made this project happen! Many hours of hard work have gone into preserving our archival collection and this project just adds to that legacy of dedication.

Tours of the space will be given after a special program honoring the memory of Maureen Hantge as well as a display of artifacts she had donated during her life and years devoted to preserving her family and McLeod County’s History.

Before:

During:

Come to see the After:

In this Issue:
Archival Compressible Storage Grant, “OPEN HOUSE”…………………………………………………………………………………1
Sunday, June 2nd-2-3 PM-Museum Research Library and Archive

Directors Review…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………2
Historical Excerpts from, “Murder and Mayhem in McLeod County” -MCHS 2013 Theme Booklet………………………………………3-4
Donations, Memorials, Accessions & Artifact/s of the Month…………………………………………………………………………………..5
Business Sponsors/KDUZ Radio Show…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………6
**Director’s Review:**

Is it Spring yet? This is the question we all keep asking here at the Museum. I know I have put away and dug out my winter coats twice already, and the threat and actuality of snow has dampened more than one of our activities to date.

I want to thank the brave souls who made it to the Blue Note Ballroom in Winsted, MN during one of these spring snowstorms, for our 1920s Nostalgia Nite Fundraiser. The attendance was low, but the spirits were high. At the right are just a few pictures from this fun evening that had dancing to a live Jazz band, a costume contest winner, and prizes for those smarty's who knew our 1920s trivia answers! I also want to thank all our local Winsted Business Sponsors who donated to our event.

I also want to thank the Museum’s staff and volunteers for the huge effort that has and continues to be made to complete our Archival Compressible Storage remodel project. A huge part of the Museum’s matching contribution to this Cultural and Heritage Legacy Grant is in in-Kind and volunteer labor hours. These donated hours equal a contribution of over $8,000.00 that we would have had to pay someone to do, if were not for our generous volunteers who have and continue to donate their time and talents to the project!

I also want to apologize for any inconvenience this may cause to our avid researchers who will be unable to use the research library at the Museum until this project is wrapped up. We thank you for your patience and know it will be worth the wait, as we will be able to house research materials and collections that otherwise would have had to be turned away for a lack of space.

One more exciting piece of upcoming news! The MCHS board of Directors recently approved the revamping of our website to enable us to add a searchable database of our collection. This is still in the early stages, but we are so excited to explore another way we will be able to share McLeod County History with our guests near and far!

**The MCHS Library will be closed to researchers during our Archival Compressible Storage Remodel from May 1st-28th. Gallery tours & staff research look ups, still available.**
main residence blocks away, followed Ahlbrecht. Schade found Ahlbrecht on his porch with smoke not only coming from the pipe that he was smoking, but belching from the windows and doors of that home, too.

Meanwhile, a neighbor had alerted the fire department. McLeod County Sheriff Tessmer also arrived at the scene. When inquiries were made regarding Ahlbrecht’s wife, he revealed, “She’s in the bedroom.” When Ahlbrecht was asked why he did not rescue her, he replied, “We don’t have to; I killed her.”

Newlyweds

William Ahlbrecht was, by all accounts, a newlywed. Although this retired farmer had been married only a few months to his bride, formerly Mrs. Albertina Ranzau, age 57, there was trouble brewing. This was Ahlbrecht’s fourth marriage. Ahlbrecht had been a widower and had three sons and three daughters from his first marriage. Albertina Ahlbrecht had three sons and two daughters. After their marriage, the couple initially lived in Ahlbrecht’s older home in east Glencoe; then two months prior to the murder, the pair purchased and relocated to their present home. On the night of the murder, Ahlbrecht confessed to county authorities that he and his wife had been bickering over money since their marriage. Ahlbrecht stated that he had recently paid off Albertina’s farm mortgage, located seven miles south of Glencoe, with the intention of living there with his new wife. Shortly after paying off the property, however, he contended that his wife had deeded the property to her daughter and son-in-law. The couple, Ahlbrecht conceded, had troubles from that time forth.

Marriage, Money, and Murder

What began as discord over a farm and finances turned into fuel for murder. Ahlbrecht confessed that on Monday night, November 9, his wife and he were involved in a heated argument. At 10 P.M., the couple went to bed. At 1:30 A.M., November 10th, Ahlbrecht confessed that he got up, took an axe, and struck his wife once in the head with the butt-end, murdering her in her sleep. After he slew her, Ahlbrecht set fire to the bedroom, using paper and bed-clothing for fuel. Then he left the home, located in the north part of Glencoe, about three blocks east of Highway 22, and went to his other vacant home, about seven blocks east. He set fire to the garage, in which his car was located, and

The McLeod County Historical Society will be researching the topic of Murder for our 2013 theme!

Through the research done by board member and McLeod County Sheriff, Scott Rehmann, the Museum has compiled a number of the most sensational crimes to occur in our boundaries. Each month, the Museum will feature an excerpt from our theme booklet, “Murder and Mayhem in McLeod County”, which will be available for purchase in the Museum’s gift shop in May. The booklet will cover McLeod County’s earliest Murders in the 1800s, through the 1950s. Each case has its own mystery and historic lore to explore and we hope you will join us as we play detective and learn more about a small part of our County’s notorious and tragic past.

35 Hour Justice!

In the dark, sleepy quiet of a fall morning in small-town Glencoe, MN, a blaze of light emerged - not the peaceful light of a candle or a street light welcoming and watching over the town - but the angry licking of flames, threatening to ravage the structure of a local man’s garage. Chief of Police, Fred Schade, going about his duties, detected the blaze. Schade, who knew that 83-year-old local, William Ahlbrecht, owned the vacant property and who just spied Ahlbrecht walking to his-
then he started a fire in the house. After that, Ahlbrecht returned to the first house, where he intended to enter the home after the flames intensified. Ahlbrecht confessed that he had murdered his wife and set fire to his homes in order to destroy all his property so that the children would have nothing to fight about. “If the policeman Schade had not caught me,” Ahlbrecht admitted, “I would have gone in the house and burned up with it.” Thus, marriage and money woes had become a motive for murder.

In the aftermath of the ax-murder and arson, the garage of the vacant home burned to the ground, but firefighters extinguished the flames in both homes and rescued the body of Albertina Ahlbrecht. Since the fires in the homes had not gotten a good start, only the victim’s feet were burned. Also retrieved from the home was $1050, (1-$50 bill and 50-$20 bills), in crisp new currency inside a box in the attic of the home.

Justice at Record-Speed

Ahlbrecht was arrested by Sheriff Tessmer early Tuesday morning. That same morning, he signed a confession of murder and the attempted burning of his two houses. Ahlbrecht was held in the McLeod County Jail. Judge Joseph Moriarty immediately issued a call for a grand jury. Jurors were summoned by the McLeod County Sheriff’s Office, and on Thursday, November 12, regular court was postponed. Ahlbrecht was arraigned before a grand jury on charges of first degree murder.

The petit jurors were:
Mrs. Ed Dostal,
Mrs. J. E. Zovoral,
Ed Vorlicek,
Mrs. Joe Lowy
Alfred Tupa
Joseph Molva

At four o’clock in the afternoon on that same day, Ahlbrecht, represented by several attorneys, was sentenced to life imprisonment. The charge was reduced from first to second-degree murder because the length of premeditation had not been established.

McLeod County Attorney McNelly stated that this was a near-record in the swift-moving justice of a murder case. Only 35 hours had elapsed from the time that William Ahlbrecht had slain his bride until he was sentenced to life in prison for her murder. Ahlbrecht’s only response, at the time of his sentencing, was that they had been quarreling about money matters. On his way to prison at Stillwater, MN, he told Sheriff Tessmer, “It wouldn’t have happened if she had kept her promise.”

Mrs. Albertina Ahlbrecht, age 58, was laid to rest on Saturday, November 14, 1942 at the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Glencoe, MN, in one of the largest-attended funerals in the history of the city at that time.

References:
Glencoe Enterprise, November 12, 1942.
Hutchinson Leader, November 13, 1942.
Hutchinson Leader, November 20, 1942.
Silver Lake Leader, November 14, 1942.
Donations & Memorials:

Log Cabin Home:
In memory of Dorothy Warnke from Bill & Liz Schwarze

General Fund:
In memory of Doug Jilek and Edna Hovern from Bill & Liz Schwarze, Red Hats Club; 3M Foundation; Clifford Johnson

Archives:
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Ron & Karen Sommerdorf

Endowment Fund:
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Dorothy Schwarze
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Kay Johnson and Jim & Linda Fahey
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Anne & Vern Hahn

Genealogy Fund:
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Marlys Fredrick
In memory of Maureen Hantge from Eunice Peters and Robert & Meryl Peters; In memory of Hubert Reimer from Wayne Burville

Technology Fund:

Restoration Fund:

Annual Support Fund:
Roger & Lois Krantz; Norma McNeil; Larry & Joan Karg; George Bonniwell; June Schulz;
James & Shirley Schwarze; Ron Makovsky; Karen Hendricksen; Marilyn Krueger; Ardis Waller;
Donald & Anne Rudy; Val Pikal; Leonna Donnay; Temple Lodge #59/Masons; Crow River Glass;
Mary Ailsleben; Dorothy Lindeman; Cheryl Rusch; James Hanson; Jane Kirby; Kay Husfeldt;
Marietta Neumann; Joyce Johnson; Wilma West; Barbara Olson; Emmy Lindeman;
Everett & Katherine Hantge; George Quast; Betty Pulkabek; Loren & Miriam Jilek; Nancy Marth

1920’s Nostalgia Nite Fundraiser:
Littfin Lumber Company; Sheehan Chiropractic Center; Keaveny Drug; Keg’s Bar; The Pantry Café; V’s Grill;
Custom Comfort Beds; Blue Note Ballroom-Bar-Restaurant

Welcome New and Life Members:

June McLean, St. Paul, MN

Museum Artifact Donations: The society thanks you for your donation!

Diane Rosenow    Sharon Miska    Mavis Kottke
Marjorie Ruzicka  Abby Dahlquist  Shirley Cutlar
LaVonne Kaufmann  Julie Jensen    Margaret Selleseth

Artifact/s of the Month:

Donor: Margaret Selleseth   Accession #: Wedding Dress-2013-0056 002,
Wedding Photo-2013-0056-003

History: Handmade cream colored silk crepe wedding dress. Has wrap style bodice over inner panel, drop waist with side bow, short sleeves, & three shirred top panels on skirt front. White seed beads are sewn along front edge of bodice and in a floral design on the three skirt panels. Mid-calf length. Worn by Marie Miska Dostal for her April 26, 1927 wedding to Matt Dostal. They were the donor’s parents. Their wedding photograph is shown at the top right. Marie Miska was born September 1, 1906, daughter of Josef and Anna Fimon Miska. Her father died when she was one year old; her mother married Joseph Halva on February 11, 1908. Marie Miska was the first woman to get an automobile operating license in McLeod County. She died February 7, 2000. Mathias W. Dostal was born February 24, 1897, died January 31, 1971.
McLeod County Historical Museum’s Historical Happenings Radio Show

Tune into AM 1260 KDUZ the last Friday afternoon of each month to catch the latest in Museum Programs & Events, Local History, and special topics on Preservation

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