I am so excited to invite you to our second annual Basket Social Fundraiser at the Crow River Winery here in Hutchinson, MN. Just like last year, we will be sampling five featured wines from the winery’s finest offerings along with delicious appetizers from McCormick’s Family Restaurant. The expansive and exquisitely designed and decorated winery spaces, inside and out, will be seen on private group tours throughout the evening. New to this year’s fundraiser is a special Jazz piano concert by Benny Weinbeck. Benny grew up in Winsted, MN and now lives in Minneapolis. Benny performs, composes, and produces, and has traveled the world playing the music he loves. Weinbeck has released four albums of original compositions, with a newly released CD of famous jazz standards. Many of Benny’s works have been used in television and radio advertisements, as well as movies. This will be a concert you will not want to miss!

No Basket Social would be complete without an auction of goodies that you and maybe your sweetheart will not be able to leave without. Each basket will be filled with gift cards to local eateries, gift items, treats, and of course wine! The silent auction for each basket will end at 9 PM, so make sure you get your bid in early and often. Hope to see you at the Winery!
Minnesota Archeology Week
Presented by McLeod County Historical Society & Museum:

“McLeod County’s Earliest Residents”
Sunday, September 15th-2-4 PM
Museum Educational Media Room

Carbon-Testing & Prehistoric Environments:

Aaron Nathan Moen, a retired professor of Wildlife Ecology, taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York from 1967-1998. Nathan has a B.S. from Gustavus and a Masters from St. Cloud State. He received his PHD from the University of Minnesota. Moen has published many research publications and books over his career in Wildlife Ecology.

Aaron is still very active in Ecology and will give a talk on Carbon Testing, which was done on our dugout canoe through a Cultural and Heritage Grant. Carbon Testing, which is one way to determine the age of an artifact, has certain specific degrees of accuracy, and Aaron will walk us through these aspects. Moen will also explain the environment that this 900 year old canoe came out of, and the people who would have made and used it. Aaron, who is a collector of old canoes, has two wood and canvas canoes that are over 100 years old.

Finding the Dugout Canoe:

Ken Schumann, retired DNR Fisheries, will share how the dugout canoe was found back in the 1950s by a crew of Fisheries workers on Big Swan Lake. His unique story explains why the canoe was preserved and gives insight to how the canoe was used. Ken will answer questions on finding of the canoe and be available to sign booklets after the program.

Legacy Grant & New History Booklet:

Lori Pickell-Stangel, Executive Director for the McLeod County Historical Society and Museum, will explain how after fifty years the Museum was able to do carbon testing and an archeological evaluation on the canoe. Plus, she will cover the publication of a new Historical booklet available at the Museum’s Gift Shop that covers not only the history of the dugout canoe, but the Museum’s entire collection of prehistoric stone tools and pottery sherds. Each piece highlighted in the booklet is from the Museum’s vast collection and helps us to understand “McLeod County’s Earliest Residents.”
John Isch, retired volunteer for the Brown County Historical Society in New Ulm, MN, has put together a power point presentation on the story of the Dakota and Winnebago tribes after the US-Dakota War of 1862. John is also the author of two books, and co-author of a third on the US-Dakota War. The program will include the Dakota trials, the imprisonment, the internment camp, and the reservations in both the US and Canada. There will also be a discussion of the return of some of the Dakota to Minnesota and the Native American communities in Minnesota today. The stories of two teenage Dakota boys who survived the war will also be highlighted, and will help to illustrate the challenges facing the Dakota after the war.

We hope you will join us for this insightful look into the aftermath and consequences of the War of 1862 here in the Museum’s new Educational Media Center. Coffee and refreshments will be served, and tours of the gallery spaces will be given.

John Isch
Presenter

McLeod County Historical Society Newsletter
Director's Review:

The McLeod County Fair has always been a fun and great way to educate the public on their rich history, but this year takes first prize! Just look at the pictures at the right, and how happy everyone was to go to jail for history.

The Silver Lake, Glencoe, Hutchinson, or Biscay jail, depending on who you ask, was a huge hit and raised much needed funds for the Museum! Each of these pictured inmates, and many more, did hard time for cold cash; each raised $100 or more in donations. Wow, we are so lucky to have such dedication to preserving our past. Some passersby also took a turn in the slammer and their photos are posted on the McLeod County Historical Society and Museum Facebook page. It took us a few days to get them all on there, but we welcome you to download your picture and be sure to Like us and Friend us on Facebook while you’re there. It’s another great way to keep current on history!

We have sold most of our supply of Julie Jensen’s book, “Images of America, Hutchinson”, so if you have not picked one up yet, be sure to do it soon! We encourage you to buy your copy at the Museum, as all proceeds go directly to us. It has been a huge success and when you see Julie, be sure to congratulate her on a monumental achievement.!

One small note on the book, on page 123 in the caption beneath the photo at AFS park, it should read: “Tall Friend, Old Friend”, instead of “Tall Friend, Short Friend”. Thank you Janice Beytien for bringing that correction to our attention.
On October 31, 1899, a few miles north of Hutchinson, a group of local boys was gathered “…to cut up a few pranks and capers as boys are wont to do on that night.” At the farm of Peter Jensen, however, the pranks mutated from mischief to manslaughter. The youths, among whom was Willie Rahn, spied Jensen’s wagon. With the boys’ assistance, Willie picked up the tongue of the wagon to move it, presumably to play a trick on farmer Jensen. On that dark Halloween night, however, the wagon became the vessel of a deadly trick — a trick on the trickster. Simultaneously, as Willie began to push the wagon, the deafening sound of a gun blast ripped through the night. A spring gun in the wagon box, loaded and ready for the pranksters, had found its mark. Willie, shot in the groin and covered with blood, ran a few rods and fell.

Farmer Refuses to Help

The boys sprung into action. After they assisted Willie, the boys tried in vain to get help from farmer Jensen. Jensen refused to come out of his house. Finally, one of the boys ran to the nearest farmhouse and the neighbor, who came to help. Jensen refused to allow Willie into the house, but the group insisted and laid the boy on the floor since Jensen had refused a bed. Jensen refused to go to town for a physician or to allow the use of his horse to get help, so the boys got one of the neighbors to go. Jensen refused to go after the dying boy’s mother or to allow his team to be used to retrieve her. Finally, with Willie dying, Jensen spouted, “Well, if the damn fool had let my property alone he would not be in this condition.” Within two hours, Willie Rahn breathed his last breath and died.

Funeral for One, Freedom for Another

Peter Jensen was arrested after an inquest by the coroner. The verdict of the jury was: “We, the jury, find that the deceased came to his death by reason of a gun shot wound received from a shot gun loaded with powder and shot and placed upon a wagon of Peter Jensen by said Peter Jensen and by him set as a spring gun without the intent to effect the death of any person.” Jensen was housed in the McLeod County Jail to await the action of the grand jury.

Jensen was indicted by the grand jury on two counts: manslaughter in the second degree and setting a spring gun. On the day of the trial, Peter Jensen, with his attorney, pled guilty in court to manslaughter.
He was fined $600 and $72 for costs, and the charge of setting a spring gun was withdrawn by the county attorney. Peter Jensen left court a free man.

Public Outcry

Among local newspaper sources, there was an outcry of denied justice and applied favors. In the discussion of the court proceedings, one source noted:

“several ‘well-known Hutchinsonians’ had come down to the court and interceded for Jensen with the good effect as seen above. We wonder what would have happened had not these friends... appeared to help him out, why Jensen would have got it to the full extent of the law, of course.” It was also said: “...he ought to have been sent up for five years at least besides a heavy fine for setting a spring gun. It is a farce, and law is brought into disrepute by such actions.”

Finally, it was summed up:

“We contend that this not just or fair. These officials were put there by the people of prosecuting and suitably punishing those who break the law, and this they have not done. There were no extenuating circumstances that we have been able to discover and therefore no excuse so far as we can see. It is a bad precedent to establish, and it will not make good in this country, the people having a poorer opinion than ever of the law.”

Thus, the Halloween-night tryst ended in turmoil for this rural farming community. At the close of the century, a night of double tricks led to the close of the story: the funeral of one boy, and the freedom of one man.

References

*Lester Prairie Journal*, November 17, 1899.
*Lester Prairie Journal*, November 24, 1899.

Mrs. Fred Wagner-1912

Night Of Drunkenness Ends In Death

On Tuesday, January 16, 1912, after a night of heavy drinking in Howard Lake, Fred Wagner and his wife returned to their home in Winsted township, west of the city of Winsted. Charles Guyott, the Wagner’s hired man, had joined them in their evening ritual. Upon their return home, the trio continued their drinking spree and finally went to bed.

Guyott was the first to awake at about 8:00 a.m. After “clearing his head,” he went outside to complete his chores. Meanwhile, Fred Wagner and his wife continued to sleep. Around 10:00 A.M., Guyott finished his chores and went back into the house. Late in the afternoon, Fred finally awoke from his alcohol induced slumber; and, shortly after, Fred and Charles began drinking.

Around 2:00 P.M. having prepared a meal, Fred and Charles sat down to eat. Mrs. Wagner, whose bed was located in the dining room, woke up, still under the influence of the previous nights drinking binge. Her bottle was still under her pillow. Wearing only a short chemise, Mrs. Wagner began grabbing dishes from the table and throwing them against one of the walls.

“Oh, you can’t scare me,”

Wagner ordered her to stop and asked her if she was crazy. Mrs. Wagner did not respond and continued smashing the dishes. Wagner reached into his pocket and grabbed out a .32 caliber revolver. He fired several rounds into the floor and over Mrs. Wagner’s head. When the shooting began, Charles Guyott, fearing that he might get shot, fled to the kitchen.

While Fred continued to fire, Mrs. Wagner scoffed, “Oh, you can’t scare me.” Fred responded by shoving his wife toward the bed. As she tumbled backward, he impulsively fired his pistol at her head. Mrs. Wagner fell back across the bed, dead.

Charles Guyott, still hiding in the kitchen, did not witness the act of murder. Fred emerged into the kitchen and reported, “Well, Charlie, I’ve shot the old woman, she’s deader than hell.” Guyott quickly went to investigate and found Mrs. Wagner’s dead body. He returned and asked Fred to surrender the revolver. Without uttering a word, Fred complied. Attempting to hide the revolver, Guyott tossed the weapon in some garbage in the Wagner’s pantry and went to a nearby home to report the crime.

When Guyott returned with help, Fred was sitting on the floor, passed out in a drunken stupor. Game Warden Burt Hainlin was the first to arrive at the scene of the crime. Hainlin spoke with Fred, and the latter gave a full confession of the crime. Hainlin held Fred at the scene until McLeod County Sheriff Klaus and Coroner T. W. Hovorka arrived. Fred was taken to the village jail in Winsted.

Reportedly, this display of drunken violence was commonplace between the Wagners. It was also reported that, when sober, they both acted respectfully to one another and worked hard together on their farm. With the results of the autopsy and examination of the facts, the Coroner’s Jury returned a verdict “of premeditated and willful murder...
Donations & Memorials:

Log Cabin Home:
In memory of Joyce Wurscher from Juanita Urban

General Fund:
Framed Expressions; in honor of Frances Olson and Harold Sanken from Leroy & Darlene Karg

Archives:
In memory of Stanley Svoboda from Anne & Vern Hahn

Heritage Garden:
Janice Beytien

Endowment Fund:

Genealogy Fund:

Technology Fund:

Restoration Fund:

Annual Support Fund:
Joyce Young

Welcome New and Life Members:
Ronald & Judy Ondracek, Citrus Heights, CA; Bob Skogman, Isle, MN; Angela Johnson, Maple Grove, MN; Dennis Matuska, Glencoe, MN; Dennis & Betty Rehmann from Winsted, MN; Ronald Kern, Amy Hahn and Dick & Dorothy Desens, all from Hutchinson, MN

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

Mary Ebent
City of Hutchinson
Diane Daniels
Mavis Kotke
Arnold Koenig
Wallace Warnke
Julie Jensen
Barb Matuska
Brenda Hornick
Scott Rehmann
Dale Ewald
Twice is Nice
Nancy Shamla
Sue Dwyer
Gilbert Debner

Artifact/s of the Month:

Donor: Unknown
Accession #: 1987-0969-000

Guess the Gadget
2013 McLeod County Fair

History: We had so much fun with this artifact at our McLeod County Fair Booth this year. We had several very close guesses, and everything from a mirror to a fly swatter. The gadget is a paddle that was used in 1892 for beating and fluffing up feather pillows, or feather ticks. Those of you who guessed a rug beater were put into a drawing, with Jennifer Chrast as our drawing winner!
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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