McLeod County Fair: August 19th-23rd
Open: 10 AM-10 PM
Commercial Building

Relive your Country School days or bring the kids and grandkids and share your memories and make some new ones at the McLeod County Fair! The Museum’s booths will feature a large map showing where each of the Country schools, Districts #1-85 were originally located in the County as well as photos of many of the districts, the date the school was organized and closed. See Museum artifacts used by teachers and students at McLeod County Country Schools and the interior of a Country School, with desks, slates, books, water fountain and much more! The Museum will be hosting a “COUNTRY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE” program each day of the Fair at 2 PM. Guests will join our Country School Teacher in our classroom to learn what a day at the country school would have been like! The Museum will be bringing our largest Country School artifact, District #54 School bell and belfry to the Fair. The bell once stood at the top of Country School, #54 in Lynn Township. Students loved the chance to ring the bell, and for $1 donation, you can ring the school bell, too! The Museum’s Director will be giving a special presentation on Martin McLeod on the Legacy Stage on Wednesday at 1PM and on McLeod Country Schools on Saturday at 11AM. We hope to see you at the Fair!!
Director’s Review:

It’s Fair time already! The summer has just flown by, but you still have time to get in on the Museum’s 2015 theme at this year’s McLeod County Fair. We have so many things planned that will bring back great memories of Country School Days.

A huge thank you to Rich Valley Township Hall for allowing us to hold our Country School Potluck Picnic at the old District #66 schoolhouse. The photos at the right show the beautiful day and great group of guests who came out to help us relive this time honored tradition of rural life.

Our drainage and parking lot project is almost done, with use of the parking lot starting again August 31st. This has been a long and expensive project for us, but one that had to be done. I want to thank the citizens of McLeod County, McLeod County Administration and especially our County Commissioners for their financial support of this project. Access to both displays and our vast research library depend on a safe reliable place for guests to park, so let your County Commissioners know you appreciate their efforts and for working with the Museum to preserve our history!

The newly formed MCHP-(McLeod County Historical Partners) have held interviews for our new Developer position, with hopes to announce our new hire in our next newsletter, so stay tuned for more exciting things to come!

"Faces of the Past"
-19th Century Crayon Portraits from the MCHS Museum’s Permanent Collection-
Exhibit @ The Hutchinson Center for the Arts
15 Franklin Street, SW- Hutchinson, MN
320-587-7278

Exhibit:
September 7th-October 5th
Open House
Presentation:
September 13th – 2-4 PM
By Lori Pickell-Stangel
The McLeod County Historical Society and Museum is pleased to bring you the private award winning photography collection of long time local photographer, Milt Brinkman.


It was during this time that the couple sought out individuals and landscapes for artistic subjects for their submissions to the Minnesota Professional Photographers Association and the Professional Photographers of America. These prints went on to win many awards for the Brinkmans. After retiring from his Photography business in the 1990’s, having taken professional photos for every type of celebration, community event and program, Milt had amassed a huge photographic history of McLeod County life. He then made the decision to donate that collection to the Historical Society and Museum, where it is still being cataloged, identified and preserved today.

These photos, as a part of our museum’s archive, can be researched by our volunteers or staff and reproduced for private use. They can also be used to showcase the history of our people and communities as they changed throughout the 40+ years that the Brinkman Studio operated. We will be featuring some of Milt’s work over the next few months with an exhibit and program by Milt Brinkman in late September, 2015.

The Award winning artwork prints need to be identified. Many of the subjects are unknown, and it is Milt’s wish to reunite the photos with the people who sat for the photographs. If you can help us with any information, please contact the Museum’s Collection Manager Bev Swenson-320-587-2109 or artifactdonations@mcleodhistory.org
The McLeod County Historical Society is thrilled to announce our 2015 Historical theme, “History of the Country Schools of McLeod County”! The Museum will feature the development of free public education in the state of Minnesota and in McLeod County. We will feature our collection of country school artifacts, photographs and documents that help tell the story of rural McLeod County education. We are also looking for your memories of teaching and/or attending a McLeod County country school. Contact us or go to our website to share your story! I think I hear the school bell ringing...so don’t be late for class—and be sure to join us for a year long look at all things country school!

**District #60—Glencoe Township:**
Known as the “Lincoln” School
Organized in 1874 and closed in 1953

*Taken from McLeod County History, 1978, p 642–* Teaching in the Rural Schools of McLeod County by Ardis Zimmerman Weets

My teaching career started in District #4 in McLeod County in 1933. As I think back, it seems a long time ago, and yet, I can hardly believe my teaching career will end at the close of this school year, 1979, forty-six short years later. There certainly has been a great change in our educational system in that span of years.

After completing one year of college at St. Cloud Teachers’ College, as it was called at that time, I was supposedly prepared to teach in the rural schools. Six weeks of my college year were devoted to teaching in a supervised one-room rural school near Princeton, Minnesota, along with another student teacher. As I recall, I taught fourth grade reading, fifth grade language and little else for the entire six weeks. How unprepared we teachers were compared to those who attended the normal training schools in Glencoe and Hutchinson under the able guidance of Susie Huff, Agnes Hatch, Jennie Burge and others. It was a good thing I was blessed with bright pupils who learned in spite of me! The first year was the most difficult—the teacher learning much more than the pupils.

Districts varied somewhat in size. My first year I had 24 pupils and all eight grades. We had spring primary for six weeks for the next fall’s beginners. The daily schedule was one of many short classes, with no time between classes. I can’t recall students not being prepared for each class. If ever there were a reading problem, an older student would help that child by listening to him read, either in the cloak room or outside.
I recall ordering 60 dollars worth of supplies the first year. After all we were suffering from depression and I felt terribly guilty ordering that much! That was five dollars more than I earned each month. My guilt feeling didn’t last long, so by the second year we were as well-equipped with supplies and new books as any other district.

It wasn’t until I had burned all the wood meant for kindling wood and told the school board I needed more wood, that I learned I should have informed them of my need for coal! Most of the responsibility of running the school seemed to be in the hands of the teacher.

The first day of school was rather much of a shock to me. Two tall young men arrived, escorting younger brothers and sisters to school, I thought, but no they were eighth grade pupils, each not quite 16 years and I was 18. I didn’t know if I should stay or leave, but what a Godsend they were. They “split the kindling and chopped the wood”—and, well, we got along fine. Of course it may have helped that this city slicker from the big town of Brownton who had never attended one day of rural school, did like to play softball. I don’t know who had more fun during the noon hour, the students or the teacher.

Back in the thirties, students had to pass state board exams before they could officially graduate from eighth grade. Some of the farm boys had to help with the work on the farm in the months of April and May and sometimes a month or two in the fall. So no way could they score high enough on the tests for a passing grade. Therefore, they had to repeat eighth grade until they were 16 or passed the exams, whichever came first.

Very few students went on to high school, since there was no busing at that time and most parents could neither afford to have their children room and board in town nor could they transport them into town on a daily basis. Most teachers roomed and boarded in the district where they taught—a little heavier on the boarding! Those farm women could really cook—at least, Mrs. Herb Lee, Mrs. Clem Martin and Mrs. Chas. Grenke could. And how I loved to eat. Never thought of dieting, just buy a size bigger. The 12 dollars a month I paid for room and board my first year of teaching must have left Alma Lee in the red!

One of the biggest events of the year was the Christmas program. It took weeks of practice, using the language period and every other conceivable bit of time. Folding chairs were brought in, kerosene lamps cleaned, arrangements made for Santa to appear and school-made gifts wrapped for parents and grandparents. I can remember “setting” some of the girls’ hair the day of the program. The setting lotion was made of boiling water and flax seed. When the program was over, Santa mysteriously appeared with a bag of boxes of candy to
be distributed to all the children. He also passed out the gifts which were under the tree. Before everyone departed for home, there was homemade candy for all. This was all furnished by the teacher. How times have changed!

Each spring the students diligently studied for a spelling contest. The best spellers from my school met with those from other districts at the big new two-room school at Biscay. Winners from each group of districts met at the courthouse where the final spelling contest decided the winners to compete in state competitions.

The normal training departments of Glencoe and Hutchinson farmed out the girls, (maybe a boy now and then), to various districts where they were to get practice in rural teaching as part of their training. The first day the student teacher observed. The second day and all days following she taught reading to all grades. The third day she added the language to her teaching schedule, etc., until by the end of the week, she was handling all subjects in all grades. At least twice during the two weeks, the normal training teacher came to observe, encourage, criticize and whatever. The last day of the two weeks, the student teacher was left on her own, and the regular teacher was required to visit in the districts where there were no student teachers. It was almost like a day off!! In the spring and again in the fall we had a two day institute. The state supervisor of education spent Monday through Wednesday visiting rural schools with the County Superintendent of Schools. On Thursday and Friday we all gathered at the Courthouse where we spent a very enlightening two days getting new ideas and enjoying meeting again with all our teacher cohorts. We departed anxious to get back to school and put into practice some of the many things we learned at institute.

All year long we saved booklets, samples of penmanship, sewing, coping saw carpentry, posters and what have you for the McLeod County Fair. The Fair was held in September and always there was a day off from school to attend. Admission was free to all students. Much of the teacher’s time at the Fair was spent admiring any blue ribbons her group may have received and getting ideas for next year’s Fair from the exhibits on display from all the other districts. The school exhibit building was a crowded place with all the students, parents and grandparents gathering there to admire work done especially by the ones they were most interested in.

The grand finale for the year was the school picnic held on the last day of school. It was an “all district affair”. Each child went home with a list of the food the family was to bring to the picnic. Why hadn’t potluck meals been thought of!! The school board furnished the ice cream. First we ate, (around noon), and then we had contests with prizes—such as large five cent candy bars!
Donations & Memorials:

Log Cabin Home Fund:
General Fund:
Park Elementary School;
In memory of Max and Wilma West from Warren W. West;
In memory of Wally Grochow and Neil Katzenmeyer from Pat Schmidt
Archives Fund:
Heritage Garden Fund:
Janice Beytien
Endowment Fund:
Cora Wortman; In memory of Neil Katzenmeyer from Ron & Karen Sommerdorf
Technology Fund:
Annual Support Fund:
Jess Mingo; Irene Micka
Restoration Fund:

Welcome New and Life Members:

Elizabeth Kurth, Hutchinson, MN

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

Gina Elke
Judith Carl
Tyrone Wacker
Joanne Keilen
Dr. Gerald Close

Lucy Huhn and Erven Lorence
Ron Pulkrebek
Clifford Johnson
Annette Zimmerman

Donn Birkholz
Matt Evers
Mark and Janey Christensen
Butch Kroeger

Donations Needed for the Collection:
The Museum is missing photos and stories from the following Country Schools:
Dist. #21, 23, 28, 43, 44, 45, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 62, 65, 68, 70, 71, 75, 82

Spotlight on the Collection/Artifact of the Month:

Donor: Helen Piehl
Accession #: 2004-0110-030
History: (Far Right) Perfect attendance Certificate book mark. This was given out to Helen Pofahl, of District #20, to certify her perfect attendance. The Certificate Book Mark is dated March 4th, 1938. It was signed by both the teacher, Miss Olson and Superintendent of County Schools, Dan Vorlicek.

Donor: Donna Anderson Lemke
Accession #: 2009-0278-067
History: Blue Card of Honor for Fifteen Merits. It states: “YOU CAN IF YOU WILL”. It was signed by Teacher E. C. (Edward Cornelius) Buck, who taught in Bergen Township Country Schools. After teaching, he became a farmer. The Certificate has a copyright of 1877.
Return Service Requested

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 Guests!

McLeod County Historical Society Business Sponsors:
(Please support the local businesses who support the preservation of McLeod County History)
~ Citizens Bank & Trust ~ Dundee Floral ~ Crow River Floral ~ Ace Hardware
~ The Village Shop ~ Main Street Sports Bar ~ Littfin Lumber Co. ~ Benny’s Meat Market ~
~ Family Farms Wholesale of Minnesota ~ Crow River Winery ~ McCormick’s ~

Make a donation, become a member or make a purchase from our Gift Shop, now accepting:

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The Museum's Parking lot will be under construction for the Summer Season. The Museum and Research Library will still be open to the public, but we request that you call ahead for details on parking. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.