McLeod County Historical Society
2015 Annual Meeting
Monday, October 26th 5:30-8:30 PM
$15 with RSVP or $20 at the Door
Wine Tasting tour for $5 extra

Guest Speakers:
Retired Country School Teachers
Dorothy Lindeman & Alice Boller
7th Grade Historical Character
Isaac Wehler as FDR

The McLeod County Historical Society and Museum would like to invite you to our 2015 Annual Meeting at the Crow River Winery in Hutchinson, MN. The Crow River Winery now has a bistro featuring artisan style pizzas, and our dinner will be comprised of an artisan pizza buffet of sausage, pepperoni, cheese, buffalo chicken and Margherita style pizzas. For an extra $5 you can have a wine tasting tour of five featured Crow River Wines.

Dorothy Lindeman and Alice Boller, both retired McLeod County country school teachers, will share their memories of country school. Isaac Wehler will also present his portrayal of FDR that he did for the 7th grade historical character presentations.

MCHS will also be awarding nine 7th graders with our 7th grade history project awards; 6 did displays and 3 did character portrayals. We will also be honoring a special Volunteer and Donor of 2015 and thank our retiring board members for their many years of service on the MCHS board! Come help us celebrate another historical year!

Please RSVP by October 23rd!

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Director’s Review:

Happy Fall! As the leaves are falling, the Museum’s dedicated volunteers are rushing to finish the last bit of work on our parking lot project. And what a project it has been! Underneath the concrete a new drainage system was also added. This will protect the Museum from water damage and prevent an ice pond from forming in our parking lot in the winter. I want to thank everyone for their patience as we completed this needed improvement to our facility. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who worked on the project. So feel free to come and visit us and enjoy the great new parking lot.

This past month was filled with outstanding programs, like our All Country School Reunion and District #54 School Bell Dedication. Top right photo shows the kids who attended District #54 in front of the school bell and tower. Bill and Joan Arndt donated the school bell this year, just in time for our 2015 theme: “History of the Country Schools of McLeod County”. The Bell was displayed at the McLeod County Fair and will now make its home at the Museum. The Arndt’s also provided hot dogs and corn on the cob for guests at the reunion, with everyone getting a chance to ring the old school bell one more time! Thanks to everyone who shared their memories of country school at the program, and if you would like to share your memories about Country School, just go to our website: www.mcleodhistory.org and click on the “Share your Country School Memories” button right under the photo slide show on our home page. There you can submit your story for the Museum’s collection with just a click of the mouse.

Middle photo above shows just a few of the award winning photographs showcased at our Milt and Lydia Brinkman exhibit. Milt gave a great program at the Museum that covered the history of many of the photos and his 40+ career as a local photographer. Thanks Milt for your time and all your talents!

I want to also thank Lisa Bergh, Director of the Hutchinson Center for the Arts, for allowing us to exhibit and hold a program on our “Faces of the Past” Crayon Portraits. The art center was the perfect venue to showcase these historical works of art, and we hope to work together again in the future.

Well, we never rest here at the Historical Society, so it’s off to the next project! Our Les Kouba Wildlife Art Gallery will be under construction for the month of October, thanks to a Southwest MN Arts Council Legacy Grant. This grant will allow us to take out the old drop ceiling and replace the outdated florescent lighting with new UV safe art track lighting, that will showcase the artwork in the very best light! Stay tuned for a grand re-opening of the space!
District #30 Country School Sign Dedication

Sunday, November 1st-2-3PM
Sumter Township
Wildlife Management Area

Directions to Sumter WMA:
From the Round-about on State Hwy 15-
Go East on County Road 8 - 1.96 miles
Then South on County Road 25 for 5.2 miles
Then East on 120th Street for 0.2 of a mile.
The parking area is on the North Side of 120th Street.

District #30 Country School was built on land donated by John Reimers for the purpose of building a schoolhouse in 1866. All eight grades attended the school until it closed in the 1953. As a part of our 2015 theme, we will mark this historic site and use it as an example for all of McLeod County’s Country Schools. We hope to ensure that the importance of the Country School to the students and communities that they served will never be forgotten.

We hope you will join us for our sign dedication program. We will hear personal stories from the Karsten family, who attended District #30 and Virgil Voigt, representative of the McLeod County Chapter of Pheasants Forever, who are funding our sign project.

1953 Photo of McLeod County School District #30, Sumter Township

1942 Photo of Students Outside District #30 Schoolhouse

MN Department of Natural Resources aerial photo showing the Sumter Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The sign will be located at the WMA parking area off of 120th Street. District #30 school stood at this site until it was torn down after it closed in 1953.
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 #17–Hassan Township:
Known as the “Biscay” School
Organized in 1862 closed in 1959

Taken from “Memories of Biscay”, by Mrs. Marie Ulrich

In the spring of 1925 someone approached me and asked if I would consider applying for a teaching position in the lower grades at the Biscay school. My home was at Cokato, and I had never been to Biscay. At first I was not interested but soon began thinking about it. I was teaching at the time so the following Saturday my Father and I drove to Biscay in a Model T Ford, because the school board wanted a personal application. I cannot tell you my feeling when we got to the top of Hopper Hill and could see Biscay. Hopper Hill was much higher than it is now, and it was a fantastic sight. A new roof had just replaced the old one on the schoolhouse. A storm had damaged the old one. Then to see the interior of the school. Two classrooms, a library, cloakrooms, a recreation room, a furnace and indoor plumbing. They even had a janitor. A very superior rural school. We then went to call on the board members. Edward Jensen-northeast of school, Joseph Moravec-southwest, and Adoph Lietzau-south of school. Mr. Lietzau was replaced by Arthur Jergens at the spring election. I seemed to pass the test and the only personal question I was asked was if I had any plans to get married, as they would not want to lose a teacher during the year or have one that was married. Little did I know that two months after school started I met the man I married and he lived north of Biscay. My children attended the school too. For some who do not think rural schools produced many influential citizens, I could mention many teachers, business people, nurses, successful farmers, etc. that attended the Biscay school. Two doctors who have gained public attention are Dr. Martin Bechtel and Dr. Chester Anderson, the son of a farmer-teacher Albert A. Anderson, got their start here. There are also two graduates of the Naval Academy of Annapolis, Robert Moravec and Captain Charles Ulrich...
District #40–Hassan Township:  
Known as the “Valker” or “Fratzke” School Organized in 1867 closed in 1957

Taken from the Hutchinson Leader 5/31/1984  
“Country School Picnics offer Classmates chance to Reminisce”

...A School picnic had always been a tradition and although two and a half decades have passed a combination potluck picnic and reunion takes place on Memorial Day each year since 1961 for School District #40. The 1984 picnic, planned at the Biscay park, was moved to the Biscay Hall due to cool weather.

Brothers Warren and Raymond Peters were two of four persons present who actually attended the school.  “I didn’t miss a day of the school the first year.” Raymond said with pride.  “I have my report card at home to prove it.”

Going to school meant walking for Ray, but his younger brother, Warren, with whom Ray now resides, recalls that he didn’t do too much walking.  “I usually hitched a ride with the neighbors,” he said.

Both remember sitting in single seats in the school, often called the Fratzke School as it was located across the road from the Otto Fratzke farm.

“We had different teachers,” Warren said. “One I remember was an Ida Schultz.  There were about 15 to 20 pupils at the time I attended.”

The brothers remember having duties such as keeping the stove going and cleaning the blackboards.  Subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, history and geography.  Recess included mostly playing ball.

Neither brother can remember ever being daring enough to warrant a licking at the school.  When the school closed and an auction took place, the Peters bid on the school blackboard and had the top bid, but when they were about to take it home as a souvenir, it had disappeared.

They’ve kept their report cards as remembrances.  The School was remodeled into a home for some time and has since been taken down...

District #73–Hassan Township:  
Known as the “Bowman Peak” School Organized in 1888 closed in 1955

Taken from the memories of Russ Laraway-  
Accession # 2006-0034-071

...My grandfather’s farm was 5 miles northwest of New Auburn, MN.  I rented the Schmidt farm west of Hutchinson.  I bought the Hugo Tews farm, then worked as a guard at 3M, and then rented the farm out and later sold it.  I taught school south of Hutchinson.  Bowman’s Peak was 1/2 mile away from the School, and we took kids sledding there.  Students included Earl and Roy Alsleben and John, Christopher and Dorothy Klawitter and Paul Haag and Irene Nemitz.  Russell left the school about 1941-42 and went to Alaska where he worked on the pipeline for about 3 years.  Then he came back and started farming.
Donor: Kenneth Dahlke

Accession #: 2008-0320-001

History:
Welcome New and Life Members:

Marvin Artmann, Andover, MN;  Milton Brinkman, Hutchinson, MN;
LeAnn Chapa, Buffalo Lake, MN;  Karen Baldwin, Brownton, MN

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

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<th>Carmen Reed Ziemer-</th>
<th>Lois Stuedemann Cardarelle</th>
<th>John Lyman</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Correction from last month)</td>
<td>Mary Blanchard &amp; Ann Fay</td>
<td>Raymond Pavlish</td>
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<td>Elaine Thies</td>
<td>Ralph Huls</td>
<td>LaVonne Hansen</td>
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<td>Myra Franke</td>
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<td>Karen Stohl</td>
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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, 62, 65, 68, 70, 71, 75, 82

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to gain more information on the McLeod County Country Schools!
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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