

- November 4
6 PM
Annual Meeting
at the Hormel
Historic Home
- November 25
Office Closed
- December 10
4-6 PM Pre-Sale
Bake Sale
- December 11
3-7 PM
Christmas in the
County
- December 24
Office Closed

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Museum Messenger

Fall 2010

MCHS Lights Up for Christmas in the County!

Come see the historical society grounds all lit up during the Christmas in the County festivities! On Friday, December 10 from 4 -6 PM in the Administration Building, the public can get their first chance to buy bake sale items during the Pre-Sale Bake Sale. Then return on Saturday, December 11 from 3-7 PM to enjoy wagon and sleigh rides in the snow, blowing the 1004 engine whistle, buy more baked goods at the bake sale, enjoy a kid's

holiday craft, and meet Santa!

This year's event will have a silent auction with many donated items from local businesses and supporters of



MCHS. There will be a tree raffle again this year with two Christmas pencil trees being

raffled off. Raffle tickets are \$2 per ticket or 6 for \$10.

With the help of volunteers, the site will be lit up for the holidays with lights on many buildings. Some of these lights dance to music! Bring the family out for one of Mower County's favorite holiday events! Watch your local papers and media outlets for a full listing of activities closer to the event.

Historical Society in the Mix for National Grant Award

In August, MCHS submitted a proposal to participate in a national grant award competition to assist with preserving its collection. The award, named the Heritage Advocate Award, is being offered to organizations within the Midwest that participated in the Connecting to Collections program. In order to qualify for the award, participating museums had to attend a two-day workshop in Davenport, IA and then submit a proposal for educating the public on artifact conservation and preservation work. MCHS is competing against 28 other organizations for this award. A final report needs to be submitted in January in order to be eligible for the \$3,750 award, which will be announced in the spring.

The MCHS staff and Board of Directors have focused on completing our requirements through public education and fundraising. There is no set goal in mind but the end goal is to have funds set aside for purchasing storage equipment, enhancing the museum environment of our buildings, and purchasing archival materials.

A component of the fundraising program is to find people that would be willing to host a house party fundraiser. These fundraisers are very simple and can be very successful. A host/ hostess or a group will invite friends and neighbors to their homes for a social gathering. During this gathering, a representative of MCHS or the hosting party will give a

presentation about the work of MCHS followed by a direct ask of funds. If you would like more info on this type of fundraiser or would be willing to host such an event, please contact the Executive Director at the MCHS office.

As part of the public education piece of our work, MCHS will be hosting a series of open houses during November and December to showcase the improvements made to the Pioneer Building and show the public how our inventory process is being carried out. All members will receive notice of these open houses and information will be posted in local newspapers and media outlets.

Help MCHS receive this award by participating! If you'd like more information on how to help, please contact MCHS staff.



Support MCHS on Give to the Max Day

November 16, 2010

Once again, MCHS is participating in GiveMN.org's Give to the Max Day. Each hour, someone's gift will be matched with \$1,000! Please give to MCHS on November 16 through <http://www.givemn.org>.

DISCLAIMER: Give to the Max Day is an online only event but we encourage our members to drop off donations at any time. We will never discourage donations given in person or by mail. This is just another avenue for interested donors.

WANTED: MCHS has received a request to locate copies of the following books as there are interested parties wishing to purchase them: *History of Lansing* by Mike Wollschlager, *1911 Mower County History*, and *Mill on the Willow*. If you'd like to donate a copy of these books for MCHS to sell to interested parties, please contact our office. We receive numerous requests like this year-round as well as requests for other town/county history books. If you or someone you know has extra copies of local history books that MCHS could sell, please contact the office.

2010 MCHS Board of Directors

Executive Board

Jeff Austin	President
Garry Ellingson	Vice President
Barbara Lewis	Secretary
Diana Stone	Treasurer

Directors

Bill Lewis	DeWayne Habermann
Kathy Paine	Cathy Roser
Dave Spinler	Miguel Garate
Josie Cummings	Don Konken
Paul Sween	Jackie Holst

MCHS Staff

Dustin Heckman, Executive Director
Sue Doocy, Curator

The Mower County Historical Society Board of Directors monthly meeting is held the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7 PM in the Administration Building.

Members and the general public are welcome to attend any meeting.

Meeting Dates for this quarter:

**October 27
November 17
December 22**

Director's Dispatch—

Fall is upon us here in Mower County and we are still waiting for things to slow down! MCHS has been extremely busy this summer and early fall, which is a good thing. Here is a quick recap of what's happened since our last newsletter:

- In July we held our annual Teddy Bear Picnic. A total of 70 children and adults came to our activities and went home with a free teddy bear.
- At the end of July, we hired two new staff members to carry out an inventory project, funded by a Legacy Grant from the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. Thomas Bauer and Afton Esson had been volunteering at MCHS since the summer of 2009. Please take the opportunity to stop in and welcome them when you have a chance.
- Fair Week was a huge success for us during August despite the sweltering heat and humidity. Many people enjoyed our new exhibit *Let's Dance* and the outdoor concert featuring Christine Rosholt. Over 20,000 people visited the historical society grounds in between Tom Thumb donuts and enjoying the rides on the midway.
- Throughout September, MCHS staff and volunteers began removing artifacts from the Pioneer Building in preparation for our energy efficiency project. The work wrapped up the last week of the month and contractors will begin insulating the building around October 11. Two of the three new

furnaces have been installed to date.

- Despite flooding and heavy rains, the Fall Harvest Celebration was held September 25 & 26. The event drew an estimated 400 people to buy bake sale items, watch oat threshing and baling demonstrations, and enjoy the kids activities. This event exceeded everyone's expectations for visitation and revenue!

So that is what happened since our last newsletter in July at MCHS!

On a personal note, the end of summer was extremely busy for myself. In between planning events and organizing moving schedules at MCHS, I was planning a wedding. On September 4, I married my beautiful bride, Lynn. So for this newsletter, I thought it was appropriate to change my picture to one of the two of us from our honeymoon. A big thank you to everyone that helped Sue out in the office during the week and half that I was away. It was much appreciated!

Now that we have survived the summer, it is time to start thinking about the fall and upcoming winter! On November 4, we will have our Annual Meeting at the Hormel Historic Home. This year's guest speaker will be Michael Eckers. Michael is a retired postmaster that resides in Owatonna. To his credit, he has written two books about the Civil War and will present that information at the meeting. More information can be found on page 7 about the meeting.



Dustin B. Heckman
Executive Director
mchsdir@smig.net

Check out the insert to this newsletter for information about a proposed change in membership levels. These changes are being requested to assist MCHS continue their operations in the face of potential cutbacks from our county funding.

The second weekend in December will be a splendid one to visit the historical society. We will be having our Christmas in the County celebration! Like last year, we will have our pre-sale bake sale on Friday evening from 4-6 PM with all of our regular activities plus the bake sale on Saturday from 3-7 PM. We are looking for items to put on our silent auction. If you have items you would like to donate for this, please bring them to our office before Wednesday, December 8. Check out the article on the front page for more information on the event.

Since this is our last chance to talk before the holidays, I want to wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a joyous New Year! See you at the Annual Meeting and Christmas in the County!

Membership & Donation information for July-August-September 2010

New & Renewed Members

Klouse Concrete Construction
 Woody & Marilyn Vereide
 Kathleen Sherman
 Wallace Bustad Excavating Inc.
 Charles Wilson
 Kermeth Northwick
 Beverly Smith
 Glen & Mary Ann Davis
 Overhead Door Company of Albert Lea
 Kent Sewright
 Dave's JDs
 Marion & Kathleen Stanton
 Jay Lutz & Kelly Rush
 Boe Brothers Tiling Inc.
 Gehling Auction Inc.
 Broskoff Structures Inc.
 Central Valley Cooperative
 Stine Seed - Adam Richards
 Pioneer Seed Representatives
 Prinsco
 Robert & Elaine Bicking
 Janice Harvey
 Scott Murphy
 Marilyn Noel
 Amanda Stoa
 Mary Lou Kough Hainer

Donations

Ulven Hardware Beverly Smith
 Mildred Moeller Chris & Cathy Roser
 Janice Rugg Sybil Pickett
 Mower County Sarah Broadbent
 LeRoy Senior Citizens
 Cliff & Elaine Anderson
 Minnesota Historical Society
 Weis Landscaping Design
 Robert & Elaine Bicking

Memorials

Fred Konken from Gene & Polly Jelinek

Deceased Members

William Sucha

Cliff & Elaine Anderson
 Mark Mullenbach
 Peter Grover
 Ben & Arlene Bednar
 Connie Van Gorp
 Weldon Johnson
 Grace Conway
 Roger Bhend

Memorial or Gift Donation

I'm happy to enclose a gift to be used by MCHS to carry forward the objectives of the society!

I've enclosed a \$_____ memorial in abiding memory of _____.

My name _____

Family Address _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

City/State/Zip _____

_____ Check here if you do not wish to have your name printed in the Museum Messenger with this gift.

Mail Donation to: Mower County Historical Society, 1303 6th Avenue SW, Austin, MN 55912

Massaugas in Mower County?

Yes, according to early death records and various newspaper accounts in Mower County, there were rattlesnakes within our borders. The early pioneers learned quickly to watch out for these dangerous critters, and react quickly if a loved one had been bitten by a rattler.

In one account in 1872, a father heard his child's cry and immediately scooped her up, carried her into the house and gave her a pint of gin to drink, while he put tobacco on the wound. Once this was completed, George Corneveaux made the gallant ride for Dr. Thornhill, saving her life in the Brownsdale area.

The Waltham Township board declared a bounty on gophers, rats and rattlesnakes on April 2, 1867, offering 5 cents for each rattle or tail severed from each animal to eradicate these pests.

James Mahaffy, instructor at Dordt College, Iowa, has done some extensive research about rattlesnakes, and while continuing his search for information, asked MCHS for our assistance, along with Dodge and Mitchell Counties. He discovered that the timber rattlesnakes dwelt in the rocks and hills of the bluff country, but the massaugua preferred the prairie grassland along the river beds.

Other news articles tell of men of all ages killing snakes to rid the county of rattlers, bragging at who had just recently killed the most rattlesnakes.

Frankford and Grand Meadow citizens reported that several rattlers had been killed in the area by one or two people, giving sport to the friendly competition, including the neighboring town of Spring Valley, Fillmore County. But, Mahaffy's discovery that the Sargeant area account may have been the most reported with 132 rattlesnakes having been killed in 1875.

The appearance of the rattlesnakes, as recorded in newspapers and death records, range from before the 1860s to the 1900s, with the possibility of more years involved. In LeRoy, the death of 5-year-old Daniel Bosworth was caused by a rattlesnake bite in 1878. LeRoy is near the Upper Iowa River. In 1874, another 5-year-old perished from a snake bite in the Adams area. And at harvest time, farmers stepped carefully around bundles of oats, for one never knew where these cranky critters would hide. Comstock saw three snakes one afternoon, killing two of them and watching a third escape into a hole.

Even the Austin area was not immune to the venomous bites of the rattler, as one young boy



Sue Doocy
Curator
mchs@smig.net

was bitten in 1870, and another rattler was killed just south of town in 1900.

Mahaffy's research shows that the last person reportedly bitten was in 1911, just south of the Mower County border half way between Lyle and Otranto.

Apparently, no one was safe in the early years of settling Mower County, but fortunately for us, rattlers are not very socialable critters and do not dwell in populated areas where plow and tractor travel, nor are they seen any more in wooded parks along rivers and streams. To see them, one must go hunting into the bluff country along the Mississippi River, Whitewater State Park and the limestone hills of Fillmore County.

Please let us know if you have a story to share about the massaugua in Mower County. We will add it to our files, and pass the information along to Mahaffy to help him complete his research.

**What's happening at the museum?
Check out our event photos!**



Intern Ben Eirikson helps some young visitors during Fair Week with the archaeology dig.



Board member Don Konken waits for another customer to the general store in the Headquarters Building.



Dean Johnson, from the Austin Area Amateur Radio Club, demonstrates equipment needed to operate radios.



Christine Rosholt and her jazz band perform at the kickoff event for "Austin Celebrates Minnesota's Greatest Generation".



The Fall Harvest Celebration was held the last weekend of September. The picture on the left features board members Bill Lewis and Diana Witt baling straw. On the right, Terry Donovan puts clothes on the line to dry, much like a pioneer family would do on washing day.



2010 MCHS Annual Meeting



**REGISTER
TODAY**

**Guest speaker:
Michael Eckers
Cost is \$12 per
person. Signup
before Friday,
October 29.**

November 4, 2010 6 PM

Hormel Historic Home Banquet

The Mower County Historical Society will hold its annual meeting on November 4, 2010 at the Hormel Historic Home at 6 PM. A catered meal including baked chicken, baked potato, peas and carrots, cranberry fluff salad, and pumpkin pie bars.

Following the meal will be a business meeting and entertainment provided by our guest speaker Michael Eckers. Mr. Eckers is an author and Civil War historian. Door prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the evening.

To vote during the business meeting, attendees must be a member of the historical society. The public is invited to attend.

Return the bottom portion with payment to MCHS at 1303 6th Ave. SW, Austin, MN 55912 by Friday,



Name: _____

Number Attending the meeting: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

I am unable to attend the meeting but I have enclosed a donation of \$ _____ instead.

2010 Keep the Doors Open Sponsors

Platinum Level Sponsors

Barbara Lewis
Clayton Township
Grand Slam Construction
Lansing Township
Younkers

Diamond Level Sponsors

Udolpho Township

Gold Level Sponsors

Austin Township
Mildred Moeller
Mower County Shopper
Solid Rock Photography
Stacy Bennett
Studio Ten Design
Tradexpos

Silver Level Sponsors

Adams Township
Akkerman Inc.
Bill & Sharon Lewis
David Spinler Construction, Inc.
Dexter Township
Helen Hocker
Hormel Foods Corporation
James Huntting
Pleasant Valley Township
Racine Township
Red Rock Township
Viking Glass & Lock
Wagner Construction
Windom Township
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Bronze Sponsors

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Clair Allen
Damel Corporation Inc.
David & Millie Weness
David Ebertz
Farmers & Merchants State Bank
Farmers State Bank of Elkton
Fox Electric
Frank & Carol Bridges
Grand Meadow Township
Hanson Tire Service of Austin
Harold & Kathy Paine
Harvey & Alice Sathre
Heartman Insurance Agency
Hill, Larson, Walth & Benda, P.A.
Home Federal Savings Bank
Ice Haus Bed & Breakfast
Ivan & Mary Witt
Kenny's Oak Grill
Kent Sewright
Lloyd & Ramona Swenson
Lou's Forever Framing
Marshall Township
Medgaarden's Southwest Sales
Mower County Farm Bureau
Mower County Farmers Mutual Insurance Co.
Mower Vehicle Registration Inc.
Nelson Family Dentistry
Nystrom Signs
Robert & Colleen Weimer
Roger & Ila Johnson
Russell & Cheryl Potter
Sargeant Township
Super Fresh Produce & Garden Center
Travelin' Picnic Tables
Twin Towers Craft Room
U.S. Bancorp
Ulven's Ace Hardware
Vern & Sue Grove
Weis Landscaping & Design
Worlein Funeral Home

2010 Ag Building Sponsors

Tucker Company	Mower County Corn & Soybean Producers	Mower County Dairy Association	Northern Country Coop
Witt Fabrication	M&H Tent Rentals	Hanson Tire Service of LeRoy	Absolute Energy
Freeborn-Mower Coop Services	Freeborn County Co-operative Oil	Shady Lane Farms	Klouse Concrete Construction
Overhead Door Co. of Albert Lea	Dave's JDs	Boe Brothers Tiling	Gehling Auction Inc.
Broskoff Structures	Central Valley Cooperative	Stine Seed - Adam Richards	Pioneer Seed Representatives
Prinsco			

A big **thank you** from the Mower County Historical Society:

Thank you to **Monica Lonergan and Dick Hall** for helping with research of the local bands and the history of music in the area. It has been a pleasure working with them on the "Let's Dance" display. Their knowledge of the musicians, bands and ballrooms is truly a treasure.

Thank you to the following for their contributions of stories, photographs and objects to the display: **Ramona Peters, Donna Dahlgren, Ben Bednar, Sue Bastyr, Barry Rush, Earl Weiland, Ted & Ken Thiele & family, Jill Wedeking, Dorothy Schulz, Linda Madson, Arlene Hueman, Don Erickson and Greg Johnson.**

Thank you to **Heidi Adams, Ben Eirikson, Afton Esson and Thomas Bauer** for their hard work and help with research and setting up the display.

With everyone's help, the "Let's Dance" display was a hit with the community.

Mower County Through My Eyes: An Oral History Project of the Mower County Historical Society

“History is an account of things said and done in the past. In this sense, each of us has a history—an account of where we come from and how we got to be who we are. Communities, likewise, each have a history. So, too, do nations, families, and human groups of every sort. History serves us in many ways. It can inspire us with stories of exemplary lives or caution us with tales of human folly and wickedness. History can inform and educate us by providing the context and perspective that allow us to make thoughtful decisions about the future. And history has the power to delight and enrich us, enlarging and intensifying the experience of being alive.”

Taken from an article titled “The Gift of History” from the American Association of Local History Museums.

Many people have a story to tell. Some do not believe that they have anything of significance to tell us. Trust us: everyone has a story to tell! Thanks to grants from the Austin Area Foundation and the Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation, MCHS is looking for people to interview and tell their story. These stories will be collected and added to our permanent archives to be shared with future researchers. If you have ever thought of leaving a legacy for your children, grandchildren, or the future residents of Mower County, please participate in this project. Everyone’s story will help us as we remember Mower County. Here are some answers to questions that participants may have:

What will the project require of me?

Participants will only need to be willing to share their story with our Executive Director Dustin Heckman and retired Austin Daily Herald reporter Lee Bonorden. Preferably, the interview will be recorded with a video camera and tape recorder to be used in various forms later on by MCHS. Interviews can be conducted almost anywhere depending on the comfort level of the interviewee. The interview can be as long as you want it to be or be done over a period of time. *If you are not comfortable with being formally interviewed, please see the colored insert to this newsletter for a list of questions to get you started on writing your story to share with MCHS.*

I do not feel like my story is important, why should I participate?

Everyone has a story to tell! You may feel that you lived an ordinary life but in reality you remember things about the history of Mower County that no one else does or you have family information that can be useful to future researchers.

What kind of oral histories are you looking for?

MCHS is looking for oral histories on general history of Mower County and its communities, event specific history, business history, family history, service club/organization history, immigrant group history, government and political history such as state legislators or local government officials, and profession history such as a rural school teacher or police chief.

Are there any items that you may be interested in during or after the interview?

During the interview, you are more than welcome to show off family heirlooms, photos, journals, diaries, or other objects pertinent to your story. After the interview, we will ask for permission to take photos of any three dimensional objects used during the interview. For photos, journals, or diaries, we will ask your permission to scan copies of these objects as a formal acquisition to our archives. Following the conclusion of the interview, each interviewee will be asked to sign a release form allowing immediate release of the interview for public consumption or a delayed release to be made public at a later date. The release form will also give the rights to MCHS to use your interview in any capacity they see fit.

I want to participate! What do I do now?

Contact Dustin at MCHS by calling (507) 437-6082 or via e-mail at mchsdir@smig.net to begin arranging the interview.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Mower County Historical Society is to discover, collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge about the history of Mower County and to relate it to the history of the State of Minnesota.



1303 6th Avenue SW
Austin, MN 55912

Phone: 507-437-6082
E-mail: mchs@smig.net
Website: http://

www.mowercountyhistory.org



**TIME
TRAVELERS**

Mower County Historical Society's 2010 Membership Form

Join today to help save the history of Mower County! Membership benefits for individual and families include:

- Subscription to our quarterly newsletter, *The Museum Messenger*
- Vote at our Annual Meeting (votes depend on membership level)
- Free tours for those listed on the membership
- Reduced library access and research rates
- Automatic enrollment in the Time Travelers Program which entitles you to perks at over 265 museums in 41 states!
- Memberships run from January 1 to December 31
- Know that you are helping to preserve the history of Mower County!

Individual memberships are \$15 per year with one vote at the Annual Meeting and Family memberships are \$25 per year with two votes at the Annual Meeting.

Please return this portion with your membership

I'd like to be a member of the Mower County Historical Society. Enclosed you will find a check for \$_____ for a **Individual/Family (please circle one)** membership.

My name is _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I would like to receive the newsletter: Direct Mail Via Email

FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY, Please list any children in your household 18 years or younger that you wish to include with this membership.

Child 1: _____

Child 2: _____

Child 3: _____

Child 4: _____

Child 5: _____

Mower County Historical Society, 1303 6th Avenue SW., Austin, Minnesota 55912

Where the Present Meets the Past.

**MOWER COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

1303 6th Avenue SW
Austin, MN 55912

Phone: 507-437-6082

E-mail: mchs@smig.net

Website: [http://](http://www.mowercountyhistory.org)

www.mowercountyhistory.org

Open year round
Tuesday through Friday,
10 AM—4 PM



Non-Profit Organization
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events

Thursday, November 4	6 PM	Annual Meeting
*This year's meeting will be at the Hormel Historic Home and feature guest speaker, Michael Eckers. Mr. Eckers is a Civil War historian and author.		
Friday, December 10	4-6 PM	Pre-Sale Bake Sale
Saturday, December 11	3-7 PM	Christmas in the County

Watch for press releases in your local paper about events or visit our website at www.mowercountyhistory.org

Make your year-end donation now!

Looking for a last minute tax deduction before you go see the tax man in January? Why not make a special end-of-year donation to the Mower County Historical Society! Any amount is accepted but donations must be postmarked by December 31 to get credit! List in your memo one of the following categories to have your donation be used for:

Heritage Advocate Award
General Operations
Minor Repair
Research Library Purchases