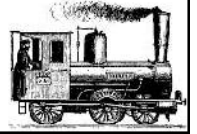




THE DEPOT EXPRESS

THE BELTRAMI COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Spring 2014

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Beltrami County Disasters by Dan Karalus

Starting June 14 the Beltrami County Historical Society will host the *Minnesota Disasters* traveling exhibit, made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. As the title suggests, the exhibit tells stories of catastrophes, from the Hinckley fire of 1894 to the Interstate 35W bridge collapse in 2007, and how they shaped Minnesota communities and landscapes. Beltrami County residents also experienced their share of disasters. The photographs on this page from the BCHS archives showcase a few of these calamities, but **we need you and your memories** to create a better and richer story. Do you remember any urban or forest fires? Do you have memories of a particularly frightening storm? **Contact us with your stories, photographs, video footage and other items** related to Beltrami County disasters, large or small, so together we can complete *Our Story* of harrowing experiences and how they not only wreaked havoc, but also strengthened local communities and brought individuals together.



[Clockwise from bottom-left]

Fire at the Lakeview Hotel, Bemidji Avenue, Bemidji, June 15, 1964, aerial photograph by Waldo Wattles. According to Cecelia Wattles McKeig's *Bemidji*, some of the onlookers came outside just to see the big fire. (BCHS-18514)

Pine River Depot, Engine #273, Pine River, 1922. A snowstorm and gale hit the region in February, hampering rail service. The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* on February 23, 1922, noted that "drifts have now become packed so hard that it is impossible for some trains to get through at all." (BCHS-15602)

Rex Hotel fire, Bemidji, 1912. The *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* on November 5, 1912, describes how the fire likely started from a cigarette or match thrown down a laundry chute early in the morning. It goes on to say that "many guests [were] caught in bed and forced to flee in scanty attire." (BCHS-1181)

Two boats crushed by ice, Red Lake, 1916. A storm that piled ice on Red Lake as much as 25 feet high also threatened the shoreline. The storm was "one of the worst in years," according to the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, April 20, 1916. (BCHS-10763)



The Beltrami County History Center
Follow us on Twitter: @beltramihistory
Find us on Facebook or Google+!

Summer Hours (Apr-Oct): Wed-Sat, 12-4pm
Winter Hours (Nov-Mar): Sat, 10-4pm
Groups and Researchers also by appointment.

President's Report

by Linda L. Lemmer

Although the calendar does indicate that the vernal equinox on March 20 is the first day of spring, here in Bemidji I am thinking that is not going to happen. What is going to happen, in spite of a winter that reminds old folks of the past, is the Beltrami County History Center springing forth with new exhibits and exciting plans.

Our Executive Director, Dan, brought a traveling exhibit, *Innovators, Inventers, and Entrepreneurs*, to the History Center that opened on February 20. If you have not seen it yet, come see the wonders that people from Northwest Minnesota were able to create. It will be on display until at least March 20. Our official summer hours start April 2, and we will be having a special Spring Into History sale from April 2 to April 5 with discounts on gift shop merchandise, new memberships, and a book signing and presentation so plan to be at the History Center then, too (see the Calendar of Events for more details).

A plan for the Historic Beltrami Bus Tour is being finalized for May 3; a traveling exhibit called *Minnesota Disasters* will be here June 14 – July 31; Depot Day and the Beltrami County fair are in August (come visit me at the Doud Cabin during the fair!); And our Second Annual Night We Light Bonfire is in the works for November.

We are hoping to revamp the gift shop with new depot-related gifts as well as items from local artists and crafters. Feel free to e-mail ideas of things you think visitors (and you) would want to buy. Then stop in to see what we have done.

We still have 2014 calendars with interesting photos sponsored by local businesses. I know it might be silly to buy 2014 calendars in March or April but the pictures for those months are still good.

To paraphrase what the beautiful movie star (what was her name?) once said, "Come up and see us sometime."

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The mission of the Beltrami County Historical Society is to provide connections to county history through public archives, collections, interpretive exhibits, and programs that educate, invite dialogue, and inspire self-reflection.

From the Desk of the Director

by Dan Karalus

After you finish reading Cecelia McKeig's stories of life on Irvine Avenue, smiling at Sue Bruns' column on the population boom in Funkley, and taking note of all of the important information Linda L. Lemmer provides in her President's Report, please take stock of our Calendar of Events highlighting the upcoming opportunities for you and other visitors to connect to local and regional history.

Pay particular attention to the opportunity to support BCHS and enjoy the all-inclusive Historic Beltrami County Bus Tour on May 3. Our volunteers, board members, and tour hosts are working hard to make the tour a unique experience that both entertains you and showcases the history of Beltrami County.



Group outside a Bemidji Bus Lines bus, 1950s-60s (BCHS-8979)

BCHS also has new exhibits scheduled to open this summer at the History Center, thanks to support from the State of Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. The *Minnesota Disasters* exhibit travels across the state and stays with us for just a limited time. It is your opportunity to see a professional, state-wide exhibit without taking that long drive to St. Paul and back.

Our *Revisiting Beltrami County* exhibit will bring the opportunity for members and visitors to conjure up old memories and think deeply about the ways Beltrami County's communities and environment transformed. Photographer Todd Geiger and BCHS staff and volunteers will select photographs from our collections for the exhibit. Todd will then "rephotograph" the locations in the present, capturing the same angle and lighting of the originals as close as possible. The exhibit promises a fascinating trip through the landscape and past of Beltrami County, telling stories of both change and continuity.

Your membership offers you the opportunity to connect to history through these exhibits and our other activities and events. Remember to take advantage of BCHS member benefits and swing by the Great Northern Depot to see how your support helps create valuable experiences. And please share these opportunities with friends and family, as now is a great time to get on board.

Calendar of Events

February 20—March 20: *Innovators, Inventors, and Entrepreneurs*

The Minnesota's Historic Northwest traveling exhibit *Innovators, Inventors, and Entrepreneurs* is on display at the History Center through March 20. It tells stories about creative people and companies who offered big ideas to Minnesota and the world. Financing for the exhibit comes from the Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and the Hartz Foundation. Scheduling changes may keep the exhibit at the History Center past March 20—call for details and special exhibit hours.



April 2—April 5: Spring Into History Sale!

Spring Into History in April at the Beltrami County History Center! From April 2 to April 5 the History Center will offer half-price admission to non-members, 20% off merchandise in our gift shop (that is in addition to the 10% discount members already receive), and 20% off new annual memberships!

April 5: Dan Rice, *This Side of a Wilderness* Presentation & Book Signing

Join us at the History Center on Saturday, April 5 at 10:00 a.m. for a presentation and book signing by Dan Rice, author of *This Side of a Wilderness*. He will discuss his book and his experiences exploring and living in northern Minnesota. Presentation and refreshments are FREE! Admission to exhibits is half-price, FREE for members!

May 3: Historic Beltrami County Bus Tour & Fundraiser

Get on board a Bemidji Bus Line bus and experience Beltrami County's historical and natural landscape. Fuel up with refreshments and museum admission at the Beltrami County History Center, test your reading and arithmetic skills at Saum School, tour the North Beltrami Heritage Center, enjoy lunch at the West Wind Resort in Waskish, and explore Big Bog State Park. Plus earn prizes for high marks on historical quizzes and other activities along the way! The experience starts at the History Center at 8:00 a.m. and the bus leaves from the parking lot at 8:30 a.m. and returns at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45 for non-members and \$35 for members, all-inclusive. Call (218) 444-3376 or e-mail depot@beltramihistory.org for more information and to support local history by reserving your spot today!



June 14—July 31: *Minnesota Disasters: Stories of Strength and Survival*

BCHS hosts the Minnesota Historical Society's *Minnesota Disasters: Stories of Strength and Survival* traveling exhibit. From man-made catastrophes to Mother Nature's fury, disasters leave an indelible mark on our landscape and our memories. *Minnesota Disasters* brings these events to life with stories told through extraordinary photographs and film. BCBS will complement the exhibit with stories and memories about disasters in Beltrami County and Northwest Minnesota shared by local community members, as well as photographs, newspaper accounts, objects, and stories from the archives about the many natural and human-caused fires that swept through the region. Made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society. **Contact us to contribute your disaster stories!**

June 28: *Minnesota Lost Towns* Presentation and Book Signing by Rhonda Fochs

History teacher and author Rhonda Fochs will give a presentation on *Minnesota Lost Towns*, her book featuring nearly 150 of Northern Minnesota's lost towns, vanished villages and long ago places, including Buena Vista, Fowlds, Farley, and the Lake Julia Sanatorium. Presentation is FREE. Time TBD. Standard admission fees apply for exhibits.

August 1: *Revisiting Beltrami County*

Our *Revisiting Beltrami County* rephotography exhibit opens August 1 at the History Center. The exhibit shows past and present photographs of Beltrami County's urban and rural landscapes to highlight the region's change over time, featuring historical images from the BCBS collections and rephotography (or repeat photography) images from photographer Todd Geiger. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Region 2 Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



Other events include: the BCBS Annual Meeting June 21; BCBS at the Beltrami County Fair, July 31-August 3; and Depot Day, August 9. Head to the BCBS website (<http://beltramihistory.org/events>) or visit BCBS on Facebook or Twitter for updates and the latest information about events.

On the Street Where You Live by *Cecelia Wattles McKeig*

Irvine Avenue

The new Bemidji Post Office facility opened on Sept 24, 1980. The one block area bounded by Fourth and Fifth Street and Irvine and Mississippi Avenue was chosen as the best site for the new post office facility. In 1979, the council said that while it was a residential area then, business development in that area was predicted with the completion of the Highway 2 bypass. The site also had the fewest and the oldest houses of the three sites considered and the least assessed valuation. Here are three of the homes that bordered Irvine Avenue on that block.

413 Irvine Avenue

On the west side of Irvine Avenue there was a very large house which was owned by Fred W. Rhoda in 1904, and next by Fredrick Eberlein, a German beer brewer, who was the president, treasurer and manager of the Bemidji Brewing Company. After it was occupied by D. C. Breneman in 1910, it next was occupied by M. E. Smith, owner of the Smith Retail Company located at 424 4th St. This house was large and appears to have had two families living there most of the time. On a summer afternoon on July 24, 1913, it was the scene of a small wedding when Miss Alice Senear hosted a wedding for her cousin Carrie Cochran and Mr. Peter Kanz, and the room was reported to be beautifully decorated with ferns and flowers.

By 1918, it was the residence of Reuben "Rube" Miller and family. He was a machinist and had Miller's Repair Shop at this address also. He came to Bemidji in 1900 with his parents and operated a gunsmith and locksmith shop with his father until the latter's death. From 1916-1941, he operated the shop alone. He joined the Bemidji fire department in 1911 and continued until his death in 1941.

Michael Downs, his wife Kathleen, daughter Kathleen, and adopted son James all lived here from 1922 to about 1935. Canadian M. A. Downs came to Bemidji about 1899. He went into business with George Fleming and formed the firm of Fleming and Downs. By mutual consent, they went out of business in October 1905. Fleming continued the business and Michael Downs then went into business with Fred O'Leary and opened the Downs-O'Leary Grocery Store in 1906. They were featured in the 1909 Souvenir edition of Bemidji. It was considered an exclusive grocery store. It didn't work out and they went bankrupt on Sept 9, 1909. He went to work as a switchman for the M & I Railroad. Michael Downs married Kathleen Walker on Sept 13, 1904 in Bemidji. They lived at 506 Fourth Street from

1905 until they moved to the Irvine Avenue address sometime during the early 1920s. Michael died by 1935 and his family moved to the Lakeview Apartments.

Wendell and Addie Gregg lived here in 1946, about the of the photograph below. It was then purchased by Wilfred and Agnette Marks. Mr. Marks was the agent for Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance (1951). In 1953, it was the residence of Louise Anderson and the Hair Fashion Studio. There were several owners after that including Herman Ihde and his family from 1956 into the mid 1960s.

417 Irvine Avenue

The first resident listed in the 1904 directory for this address was Joseph Barney, a local bartender and his wife. By 1907, it was the home of Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Ibertson, the local undertaker and coroner for Bemidji for many years. Mrs. Ibertson entertained the members of the Eastern Star at the Ibertson home in 1907. On Feb 2, 1909, Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Ibertson celebrated their fifteenth wedding anniversary on Friday evening with a "crystal" wedding at their home. There were twenty-six guests present and all enjoyed a social evening. The Ibertsons received many cut glass presents in commemoration of their crystal wedding. The Ibertsons then moved and this became the residence of John and Grace (Toombs) Hormann, who were married in 1911. He was associated with the Peoples Meat Market and



413 Irvine Avenue [left] and 417 Irvine Avenue [right], 1949.

then Hormann's Meat Market on Third Street. His young wife, Grace, died at the house in February of 1914 when she was only 25 years old after a relatively brief illness. Her daughter Grace was only sixteen months old. The funeral was held at the house as was common in that period. Mr. Hormann hired a housekeeper and stayed with his daughter

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| <p>Beltrami Electric Cooperative 4111 Technology Dr NW Bemidji—444-2540</p> | <p>Northwoods Lumber Company 5102 US 71 Bemidji—759-0633</p> | <p>Bemidji Bus Line 1507 Naylor Dr SE Bemidji—751-5311</p> | <p>FIRST NATIONAL BANK BEMIDJI 751-2430</p> |
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in the house until putting it up for sale in 1920. It was advertised as 5 rooms and bath, on a 50 ft. lot, surrounded with an iron fence. He then married Sophia Larson Gustafson on May 5, 1921 and continued to work as a meat cutter. They moved to Nymore.



417 Irvine Avenue [left] and 421 Irvine Avenue [right].

Dr. Ed Franklin and his wife moved into the house. Dr. Franklin traveled in northern Minnesota for Drs. Larson and Larson but spent whatever time he could with his family at the house. His father, Wilbert Franklin, a retired carpenter, was staying with the family in 1924 when he took sick and died at the Lutheran Hospital. Between 1930 and 1942, Leo and Gladys Phillips owned the house. He was proprietor of a billiards room on Third Street for 24 years. He retired and moved to California about 1946.

Michael and Beatrice (Gould) Corrigan owned the house in 1946. Sons James, John, and Thomas also lived there. In the 1930s, Michael owned a hotel on Third Street. Michael and James worked for the State Highway Department in 1946. Thomas was a student. John was manager of the VFW. By 1953, Beatrice was a widow and lived with her son John at this address. He was sales manager for Land O'Lakes Motors in 1953.

By 1956, Ed O'Malley and his family had become the new neighbors and lived there until the house was removed and replaced by the post office. The O'Malley girls were the neighborhood babysitters. Ed O'Malley was a linotype operator at the Northland Times and then for the Bemidji Pioneer.

421 Irvine Avenue

Matt Thome, a saloon owner, moved to Bemidji in 1899 and settled with his family at this address. You may have noticed the Thome name on a building or two in town. His saloon was in the Rex Hotel and then at 400 Minnesota

Avenue. When Bemidji was declared to be in Indian country and the saloons were forced to close, Matt did not give up his business interests. In 1915, he made front page news when special officers discovered and confiscated wines, whiskey and champagne, valued at approximately \$200, in the cellar of the residence. The officers upon introducing themselves, went directly to the cellar of the residence, found a barrel containing 35 gallons of port wine and a keg in which they found five gallons of blackberry cordial. In suitcases well hidden were found four pints of champagne and 10 quarts of imported wine. In a small hole beneath the flooring of the cellar the officers found 37 quarts of whiskey. The entire "plant" was destroyed. Thome retired from business and took up farming in Wisconsin. After that, the house had new owners about every five years until it was purchased by the city from the last owner, Dewey Johnson.



417 Irvine Avenue [right with car parked in front] and 422 Irvine Avenue [center], 1940s. Taken from 5th Street.

Also find this feature on our blog: <http://beltramihistory.org/blog>



beltramihistory.org

BCHS welcomes its newest volunteer, Darla Sathre. Find out who had phone number of "1" and read about how she gets "Sidetracked" in her column.

P.J. Reynolds writes about the history of the Paul Bunyan Vintage Auto Club. Learn about the organization's origins, mission, and annual events.

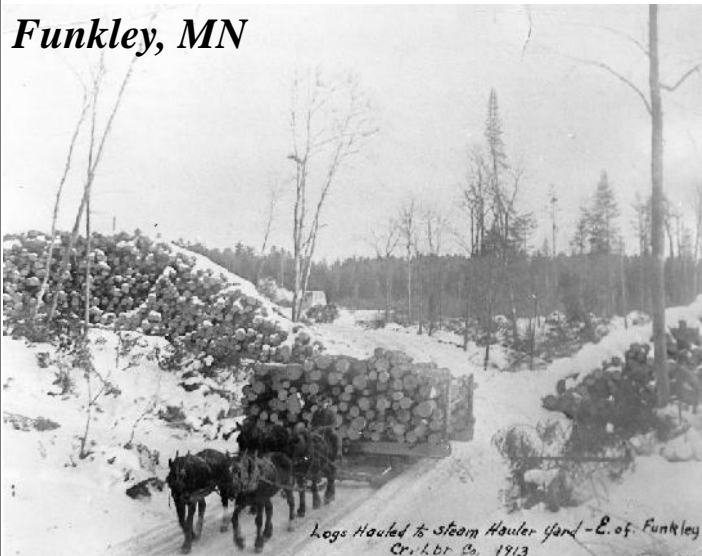
Explore these stories and more on our website!

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
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| <p>Northern Psychological Services, 403 4th St NW Bemidji—759-2825</p> | <p>Turtle River Electric, Inc. 4357 Minnkota Ave. NW Bemidji—751-0286</p> | <p>Bemidji Woolen Mills 301 Irvine Ave NW Bemidji—751-5166</p> | <p>Ink Spot Press, Inc. 502 3rd St. NW Bemidji—751-4441</p> |

What's in a Name?

by Sue Bruns

Funkley, MN

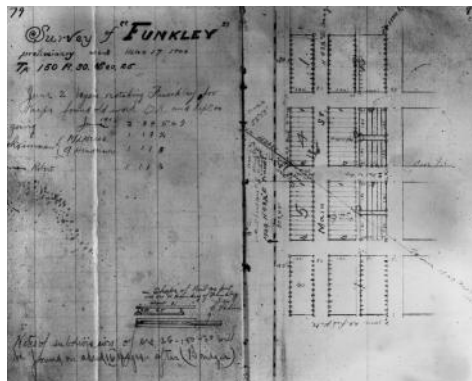


Logs hauled to steam hauler yard, east of Funkley, Crookston Lumber Company, 1913 (BCHS-52).

With a population of **FIVE** for the 2010 census, Funkley, Minnesota, is the smallest incorporated city in the state. The village, named for County Attorney Henry Funkley (1867-1951), was incorporated in January 1904.

In the early 1900s, the town was buzzing with logging action, its population peaking in 1930 at 60 people. By 1953, the population shrunk to 25, but *LIFE Magazine* featured the tiny town in an article about the entire village receiving an all-expense-paid, five-day sight-seeing trip to New York City.

The trip was paid for by Pacific Mills, a manufacturer of sheets and textiles. The company wanted to acknowledge the little town and their Women's Missionary Society of the Evangelical Free Church which had been meeting monthly to tear up old bed sheets to make into dressings for the American Cancer Society.



Survey of Funkley, 1903 (BCHS-17699).

In November of last year, Funkley was featured on WCCO's *Finding Minnesota* by Mike Binkley as Minnesota's smallest town.

In January of this year, Allen James featured Funkley on *NewsCastic* as one of the 10 Minnesota Towns with Really Cool Names.

Find this story and links to the *LIFE Magazine*, *Finding Minnesota*, and Allen James stories on our website: <http://beltramihistory.org/blog>

In the Archives...

by Dan Karalus

In January, BCHS received a \$4,325 grant through the Minnesota Historical Society from the State of Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund to digitize a large collection of photographic negatives. Work on the project started in the same month and will continue through June, providing access to over 1,900 photographs at the History Center and online when complete. The images (including the two below) highlight educational and agricultural activities in the Red Lake area, as well as the general life and environment of the region in the 1930s and 1940s.

The project also serves as a way to preserve the images. Note the white streak in the second photograph below—it is deterioration from age and inadequate storage. We digitize the negatives to capture the images before further deterioration occurs, and then store them in higher-quality materials to slow future damage. This is one of the ways we use grants and member support to preserve history!



BCHS Spring Photographs



[Top] Students posing on a tractor, near Red Lake, 1938-1941 (BCHS-13740-002); [Bottom] Loading threshed seed, near Red Lake, 1940 (BCHS-13719-002).

You can find more photographs in our online Photograph Database: <http://beltramihistory.org/research/photographs>

Thank you for all the New and Renewed Memberships!

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Thank you for supporting our Make History! giving campaign

Tom & Bonnie Swanson
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Rose Vesely
Joy Riggs
Eva Stengel

City of Tenstrike
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There is still time to **Make History!** Help us meet our
\$10,000 goal with a donation to BCHS!

Local History. National Benefits.

Did you know your BCHS membership earns you a *passport to history* through the Time Travelers network (timetravelers.mohistory.org)?

By supporting us, you also receive free admission or discounts at locations across the country, like the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson and The Hershey Story in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Check out the map to the right to see where your BCHS membership will take you.

Contact us, and let us know if you take advantage of these benefits. We want to hear about how far you take your BCHS membership!



The Depot Express

A publication of the



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Bemidji, MN 56601

Phone: (218) 444-3376

Fax: (218) 444-3377

depot@beltramihistory.org

<http://beltramihistory.org>

Thank you for supporting the Beltrami County Historical Society!

Your *tax deductible* donations preserve collections of manuscripts, textiles, maps, photos and artifacts.
Donations also support operating expenses for the museum.