Are you continuing to celebrate the 150th birthday of Beltrami County? As I was sorting through stacks of accumulated papers, I was sidetracked by a bag of receipts, all dated 1966. I started wondering about the differences in prices from when Beltrami County was 100 years old in 1966 and now, 50 years later.

Let’s start at home – property taxes. A typical three bedroom home in a residential section of Bemidji was charged $478.68 for the year 1966. The same house in 2016 cost the owners $1,564.00 for property taxes. Higgins Heating, which started in 1946, responded to a furnace repair call at this house in October of 1966. The full bill, including labor and several parts, came to $36.90. Today, the same service would come to between $161.00 and $249.00. Fuel oil for that furnace cost 15.5 cents per gallon; today it sells at $1.97 per gallon.

Telephone service prices have changed, too. In 1966, the monthly local service charge ranged from $3.81 to $4.07. Today, the monthly bill (before adding long distance, caller ID, etc.) averages about $36.00. By the way, in 1966 Northwestern Bell was located at 519 Beltrami Avenue. The manager was Howard Menge, who also was the mayor of Bemidji.

Television sets in those days were repaired, not replaced. Naylor Electrical Construction Company charged $3.50 for an RCA TV service call on February 1, 1966, plus $5.90 for three parts for a grand total of $9.40. SIDETRACK: My dad worked as an electrician for Naylor’s at that time, but he did not fix appliances. Frank Rex was an appliance repairman. Today, where would you even go to get your TV repaired?!

Remember the days when engaged women would register for their favorite china and silverware at the jewelry store? Ken K. Thompson Jewelers was located at 418 Beltrami Avenue and sold a six-piece place setting for $4.00, which you could expect to pay from $40.00 to $60.00 for a place setting today. One place setting typically consisted of one each of a dinner plate, salad plate, soup bowl, cup, and saucer. That same day Ken K. Thompson Jewelers sold a six-piece place setting of steel silverware (knife, fork, salad fork, tablespoon, teaspoon, and probably either a demitasse spoon or cocktail fork) for $5.40. Today you would be looking at $60.00 to $90.00 for a comparable set.

Tim’s Implement at 209 America Avenue sold a large ball of twine for a dollar and a half. Today that would set you back about $25.00. Erickson-Hellekson-Vye Company (who specialized in building materials and coal) at the corner of First Street & Minnesota Avenue charged $4.80 for a four feet by eight feet sheet of pegboard; that would cost about $14.00 today.

What if you wanted to take music lessons? Or run for office? Or join the Chamber of Commerce? The Melody Shop, located at 208 Third Street in 1966, charged $1.50 for a guitar lesson. Today it would cost at least $12.50 for a 30-minute lesson. To file to run for a Beltrami County office, it cost $20.00, while today it would be about $50.00. An individual yearly membership in the Bemidji Chamber of Commerce (which was first known as the Bemidji Commercial Club) cost $12.50 compared to $65.00 today.

Let’s look at transportation costs. To insure a one year old Chevy in 1966 cost $54.50 through State Farm agent G. L. Dodge at 700 Beltrami Avenue. Today it would run about $500.00. To fly North Central Airlines from Bemidji Aviation Services (as it was then called) to Washington, the Chamber of Commerce. Now it would be $500.00 to $600.00.

(Continued on Page 6)
President’s Report
by Sharon Geisen

I would like to thank our dedicated Beltrami County Historical Society (BCHS) Board of Directors who spent long days at the Beltrami County Fair. As mentioned in an earlier column, we are a “working board.” This board gives countless hours to helping in many ways to share history and raise funds to support our mission.

Board members worked before and during the fair to make events outside the Doud Cabin and inside the cabin itself interesting to the public. Several of us are researching and hoping to create a booklet that will more accurately provide information about the Doud family, their life in Bemidji, and their cabin, once located at Diamond Point Park. It appears it was located about where the goal posts are at the Bemidji State University football field.

Every year many visitors from near and far go through the Doud Cabin. Some have mentioned they go through every year. Our scavenger hunt inside the cabin looking for items from the past, such as a butter churn, popcorn popper, and toasters, makes interesting discussions for both the children and their parents. Some grandparents enjoy sharing their stories from “the good old days.”

Thanks to our board for making homemade ice cream, showing kids how to make butter in baby food jars, and showing kids and adults how to make a piece of rope — also for having two local woodcarvers come and demonstrate their craft and skills.

The weekend of our annual Depot Day and white elephant rummage sale saw many events going on in town. Thank you to those who stopped by for this annual event, and thank you to those who donated items for the sale.

We hope you will join us on Sunday, October 16 at 2:00 p.m. for the BCHS Semi-Annual Meeting at the Saum School for a tour of the school, updates, and a light lunch.

Watch this newsletter, our Facebook page, and the newspaper for activities during the fall and winter months.

From the Desk of the Director
by Dan Karalus

As fall approaches and the busy tourism season ends, the Beltrami County History Center typically receives fewer museum visitors, but BCHS Board Members, staff, and volunteers continue to stay busy. Please see our Calendar of Events & Programs on Page 3 for what we have on tap so far for the rest of the year.

In addition to events and programs, we continue to work to make Beltrami County’s history and our historical resources more accessible to BCHS members and the public. Thanks to a grant award from the BNSF Railway Foundation, we just updated the exhibits in the Great Northern Depot Telegraph Office (see some highlights at right). And we have plans to open an exhibit (working title: Museums Work), highlighting our inventory and deaccession project, the importance of museums and collections, and the type of work conducted by museum staff and volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, BCHS volunteers deserve a special shout out for the work they already completed. Over the past year, they documented thousands of objects, and input many of them into our archival database, making them easier to preserve and locate. We may not be done yet, but their hard work is already making a difference.

BCHS staff, board members, and volunteers are also discussing ideas for new programs and exhibits for 2017-18. One idea in the works is a Community Collections exhibit, showcasing the interesting things people collect. So if you have a collection of something odd, unique, or even mundane to share, please contact us. And, as always, if there are specific programs or stories you would like to see us offer, please contact us. We welcome your input!

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.

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<th>Board of Directors</th>
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<td>Kathy Anderson</td>
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<td>Linda Lemmer, Vice President</td>
<td>Judy Dvorak</td>
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<td>Steve Caron, Secretary</td>
<td>Georgia Erdmann</td>
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<td>3610 Comfort Dr NW Bemidji—751-2753</td>
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Calendar of Events & Programs

September 22: Beltrami County Courthouse Tour
Join us for an open house and tour of the historic Beltrami County Courthouse on
Thursday, September 22 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Hosted by Beltrami County
and the Beltrami County Historical Society for the Beltrami County
Sesquicentennial, this is your chance to explore the ins and outs of the courthouse,
learn about its history and designation on the National Register of Historic Places,
and find out more about its Beaux Arts style design and the architecture behind the
building's tower and dome. Explore on your own or get a guided tour by staff and
volunteers! Plus, refreshments and informational brochures highlighting the history
of the courthouse! FREE to the public!

September 29: Voices of the Past Cemetery Walk
Enjoy the fall weather and join us for the Voices of the Past Cemetery Walk (Beltrami County Sesquicentennial Edition)
on Thursday, September 29 at 6:00 p.m. Volunteers and performers will lead a walk through Greenwood Cemetery and
tell stories about select Beltrami County figures buried there, including County Coroner Ed Achenbach, County Treasurer
Earl Geil, County Commissioner A. P. Ritchie, and more! Cost is $5 per person and FREE for BCHS Members (Also
FREE for kids 12 & under with paid adult). Sponsored by Cease Family Funeral Home! Meet at Greenwood Cemetery
office. Advanced reservations requested. Contact BCHS at (218) 444-3376 to reserve a spot and get more information.

October 16: BCHS Semi-Annual Meeting at Saum School
Head to the historic Saum Consolidated School on Sunday, October 16 at 2:00 p.m.
for the Beltrami County Historical Society Semi-Annual Meeting. Learn about
upcoming events, find out about the plans of local historical organizations, give
input on historical and cultural activities, take a tour of the Saum One-Room
Schoolhouse and Saum Consolidated School, and enjoy a light lunch. FREE to the
public! Saum School is located at 41982 Pioneer Rd NE, Saum, MN 56650.

November 10: Veterans Dinner
Support Beltrami County Historical Society programs, exhibits, and collections at
the BCHS Veterans Dinner on Thursday, November 10 starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Eagles Club, 1270 Neilson Ave SE,
Bemidji. Recognize the contributions of United States Veterans, choose a dinner of Chicken Kiev or Jumbo Shrimp, and
enjoy musical entertainment by Annalise Aakhus. Also featuring: Beltrami County Veterans Stories by Scotty Allison, the
Bemidji High School Junior ROTC Honor Guard, Beltrami County history displays, prize raffles, door prizes, and more!
$25/Adults, $20/BCHS Members, $15/Veterans, $15/Kids (12 & Under). Doors Open and Social Hour at 5:30 p.m.,
dinner at 6:00 p.m., and music at 7:30 p.m. All proceeds from tickets and raffles support Beltrami County Historical
Society programs, exhibits, and collections preservation. Sponsored by Paul Bunyan Communications and other local
businesses and organizations. Call (218) 444-3376 for tickets. Must purchase tickets by November 4.

November 25: Night We Light Bonfire
Join BCHS on Friday, November 25 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Beltrami County History Center for the Night We Light
Bonfire after-parade event! Warm up outside with hot chocolate, hot cider, and cookies thanks to Raphael's Bakery Cafe
and Lueken's Village Foods. Then head inside to explore the museum, check out model trains from the Northern Iron
Horse Railroad Society, shop for unique holiday gifts in our gift shop, and enjoy railroad songs and cowboy music by
Franklin Valley! FREE to attend!

Also: Do not forget to “Save the Date” for the History Mystery on December 31, 2016, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.!

For the latest calendar updates go to our website: http://beltramihistory.org/events

Bernick's
959 Industrial Park Dr SE
Bemidji—751-5752

Bob Lowth Ford
PO Box 726
Bemidji—751-3140

Carpenter & Wangberg, P.A.
201 7th St. NW
Bemidji—444-7564

Cease Family Funeral Home
2807 Irvine Ave NW
Bemidji—751-9700

Chester Berg Toyota
705 Paul Bunyan Dr NW
Bemidji—444-3040

Cool Threads
206 Third St NW
Bemidji—444-4552

Dondelinger GM
2310 Paul Bunyan Dr NW
PO Box 545
Bemidji—751-1220
The property located just south of Bemidji’s downtown area, extending from Park Avenue to the area near the Mississippi River has often been described as the “rail corridor” because of its former use by trains passing through Bemidji. But what was that area like when the only tracks were those of James J. Hill’s Great Northern Railroad, and those of the Brainerd and Minnesota Railways, (later the M & I), which were laid in 1898?

In 1906, Mose Curry, who batched in a little tar covered shack on Minnesota Avenue near First Street was robbed in the wee hours of the morning by an unknown man with a revolver. The victim had $30 hidden under his pillow. Mose’s roommate was sound asleep in another part of the room and did not hear a thing. Mose was employed by “Bill, the popcorn man,” who ran a stand near the Star Theatre on Second Street.

On Block 20, Delmonico’s Restaurant was on the corner of Minnesota and First Street near the Great Northern tracks. Street addresses were not assigned until 1904, but this was about 100-102 Minnesota Avenue. It was owned by Hicks and C. C. Blake. Blake is a name associated with the shadier side of Bemidji’s early history!

C.C. Blake had a variety theatre called the Olympic Theatre where Bemidji’s first recorded tragedy occurred. Russ Whipple and his companions came in from Solway to see the show at the theatre on February 5, 1900. They entered the bar room of the Olympic Concert Hall and got into a tiff with Bennie Moore, who was considered one of the most dangerous men in town. One thing led to another and Whipple shot and killed Bennie Moore. He was then arrested at the Oringer Saloon, which was formerly Delmonico’s. Despite strong evidence, Russ Whipple was later acquitted of the crime.

The residents of the theatre in 1900 consisted of Blake as theatrical manager, two barkeepers, a musician, three very young actresses, a cook, a dressmaker, and a couple of laborers. The property was sold to Ethyl Blake in 1904. According to the Bemidji Daily Pioneer, C. C. Blake, “who has been notorious in Bemidji for several years past” left Bemidji, bag and baggage, for a happier home at Cass Lake. A few months later, he purchased lots in Nymore. His move was violently opposed by many of the citizens of that village, but without avail. Two months later, he was arrested and confined on charges of assault and battery. Mrs. Blake claimed he had beaten her and threatened her life with a revolver. Blake was confined to the county jail, and she was granted a divorce two months later.

Ethyl Blake then operated the Northern Hotel on Block 21. It was set afire a few weeks after Mr. Blake went to jail. The building was ignited in two different places, in front and on the west side, but the fire department was on the scene before the flames got much of a start.

C. C. Blake ran the Nymore establishment, while his ex-
wife Ethyl operated the Northern Hotel and despite their quarrels, also helped operate the Nymore establishment. After all, business is business.

Mrs. Blake’s problems continued as the Blake building, now an empty structure, was again set on fire in 1907. Mrs. Blake offered a reward of $1,000 to be paid for evidence sufficient to convict the person or persons who instigated setting fire to the building standing on lots 13 and 14 of Block 21 on February 19, 1907. “I do not care anything about the person actually setting the fire, but wish to punish the persons really to blame.”

The building was damaged but due to a quick response from the fire department, the building again survived with mostly water damage and damage to the plastering. She then offered to sell the property, with or without the buildings, in March 1907.

One could ask how Mrs. Blake managed to keep her “business” operating in Bemidji, but in a Grand Jury hearing against the Justice of the Peace, it came out that she was a special friend of a prominent attorney in Bemidji and that she often appeared on his arm in public.

When Gilbert Bordeaux applied for a city license to sell intoxicating liquors in his hotel on Block 21, his application was rejected. One of the reasons given was that “the building in which Bordeaux desired to engage in the sale of liquor was outside the beat usually covered by the police of the city.”

You may or may not have heard of “The Hill” in Bemidji, but this was the Red Light District. The Hill was Block 21, bounded on the north by Second Street, and on the south by First Street. To the east was Minnesota Avenue, and on the west was America Avenue.

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The first truly destructive fire in the history of the city occurred early on the morning of February 5, 1904, and as a result the four “female boarding houses,” which were actually houses of prostitution, went up in smoke at an estimated loss of $20,000. Wm. Duncalf, Fred Tyson, Frank Gagnon and W. E. Rose were the proprietors. The fire started about 3:00 in the morning, and the fire department was immediately called out, but found the buildings a mass of flames on the inside, and nothing could be done to save them. They turned their attention to the adjoining buildings. Streams were turned onto the Ethyl Blake house in the rear (of course) and the Thurston & Love saloon building on the corner of Minnesota Avenue, and in that manner confined the fire to the buildings already in flames.

According to the Pioneer, the fire made a clean sweep, consuming the four two-story structures in the row, all of which were known as “places of evil repute.” On account of public agitation with reference to these resorts and then the mayor’s orders to close them up, nearly all of the inmates had departed from the city, and each of the four structures was sheltering only one or two individuals at the time the fire broke out.

There were rumors afloat that the fire was incendiary, but no evidence of this was found by the police. A strange twist on the story was that Fred Tyson, who was reported dead from the fire, bobbed up on Saturday night. He came in direct from Hot Springs, Arkansas, and only learned of the fire and his reported death upon his arrival.

A year following the fire, there was a rumor that the houses of ill fame located in the swamp west of the city were going to be moved back to their former location at the corner of America Avenue and Second Street. The Village Council led by Mayor Ludington declared emphatically that they would do all in their power to prevent that from happening. A large number of property owners who held property adjacent to the former location of the houses promised to vehemently oppose any such attempt.

Once the Soo tracks went through Block 21, there was nothing left of the Hill, as the block was taken over by the Soo Line Freight Depot. On the northeast corner, the Park Hotel continued at 300-302 Second Street, but that place carried on the legacy of the earlier “businesses” and had many run-ins with the authorities. The Park Hotel was finally closed in 1920 after the manager was convicted of operating a house of ill fame, gambling, and selling intoxicating liquor.

![Park Hotel & Saloon, Bemidji, early 1900s [BCHS-12114].](image-url)
Sidetracked by Darla Sathe (Continued from Page 1)

D.C. cost $73.80, while today a roundtrip on Delta Airlines from Bemidji Regional Airport would be over $500.00. Dibble Chevrolet-Buick at the corner of Third Street & Irvine Avenue charged $8.82 (including $2.75 labor) for an oil change, which today runs between $20.00 and $30.00. Coast to Coast Hardware Store, located at 405 Beltrami Avenue, sold a Honda 50cc motorcycle for $331.70. I have no idea what that would cost today.

Clothing prices certainly have changed. Here are some 1966 prices. Gill Brothers, at 221 Third Street, was an official Boy Scout supplier. A Boy Scout uniform there cost $19.95. The variety store, S & L, located at 316 Beltrami Avenue, sold a hat for $1.95. At O’Meara’s Department Store, 317 Beltrami Avenue, a blouse cost $4.00. The receipts I found list several items purchased at J. C. Penney, located at 413-415 Beltrami Avenue. Two pair of jeans, each $2.98, totaled $5.96. Pajamas cost $2.59. Two shirts, each 99 cents, totaled $1.98, while another shirt cost $2.66. You can compare those figures to what you pay for clothing. An album was also bought at Penny’s. It does not specify if it is a photo album or a record album, but it cost 77 cents. I was just sidetracked by a memory that I think of when I saw his obituary I felt a little safer in Beltrami County.

Bill was an older fellow who lived east of Waskish. He enjoyed eating venison in April and May. When Sheriff’s deputies went to his home to talk to him he started shooting at them when they were in the driveway. I do not think he meant to hit them, but just scare them. Bill became a resident of the Beltrami County Jail in the spring of 1962. He was brought to court and charged with assault. His lawyer, Whitney Tarutis, got him acquitted on the basis of insanity. Mr. Tarutis was his usual dramatic, flamboyant self. He made the other lawyer look like a statue.

Bill’s next court date several weeks later was for his commitment to St. Peter State Hospital, a facility for the criminally insane. I was in family practice at the Bemidji Clinic at that time. The medical panel for the commitment consisted of myself and Dr. Einer Johnson, who was in his nineties. He slept through the whole process, morning and afternoon, so the commitment was up to Judge Reed and myself. Mr. Tarutis was now defending Bill against the charge of insanity. This seemed strange to me.

Witnesses were called. Many neighbors stated that Bill was sane. The Sheriff’s deputies were called to describe the situation at Bill’s house. Sheriff John Cahill of Beltrami County was called to testify. He said “I don’t have a degree in psychology, but in being Sheriff of Beltrami County for quite a few years I think I have learned quite a bit about human behavior. It is my opinion that Mr. TARUTIS is insane.” Chaos then erupted in the courtroom. The hard of hearing Mr. Tarutis was back a ways in the courtroom hollering “WHAT—WHAT—WHAT?” with hands cupped behind his ears. The prosecuting attorney, Herb Olson, was on the floor laughing hysterically. Judge Reed disappeared behind the bench. When everything calmed down, in chambers Judge Reed and I decided he should be committed. Dr. John was still sleeping. After the decision was announced, Bill came over to me and said “When I get out I will shoot you!” When I saw his obituary I felt a little safer in Beltrami County.

Have a story to share? Let us know! We welcome different perspectives!
Thank you for the New and Renewed Memberships!

Jim Aakhus
Pam Aakhus
Gloria Bannor
Thomas Benson
Tom & Sue Burlingame
Ron & Carol Carpenter
Sue Cutler
Philip Dahl
Donna S. Dickinson
Rebecca Diffley
Joan Ditty
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Harold & Jayne Fenske
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Thank you for the Recent Collections Donations!

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Debbie Tuck
Richard Allen Watts
Cynthia Bender White

From the Collections

Deerwood Bank
VFW Post #1260

Go to:
beltamihistory.org/support
for more information on
how to Give 150!

As the story goes, in 1903 Dr. William A. Brand witnessed a fire outside of Blackduck while working in the area. In 1914, while working in Redwood Falls, one of his patients, Margaret Martin, painted the 1903 fire for him based on his descriptions. The Hinckley Fire Museum acquired the painting as a donation in 2001 from friends of the Brand Family. Then in 2016, a visitor came to them with a unidentified sketch of a fire. It turned out that the sketch matched the painting. Hinckley Fire Museum staff determined that the items did not belong in their facility and donated both the sketch and the painting (above) to BCHS in July.

Thank you for the New and Renewed Business Sponsorships!

Alan Afton
Cass County Historical Society
Donna Dickinson
Mike Ettesvold
Hinckley Fire Museum
Itasca County Historical Society
Robert L. Jessen
George G. Jones
Dave & Maria Kne
Janet Miller
Wanda Reise Odegard
Darla Sathe
Debbie Tuck
Richard Allen Watts
Cynthia Bender White

Thank you for taking the Give 150 Challenge!

Cathy Marchand & Lewis Crenshaw
Ardell Nadesan

Now find BCHS on Instagram!

instagram.com/beltamihistory

BCHS Fall Photograph

Minnesota & International Railroad & bridge over Mississippi River, east side of Lake Bemidji. 1913 [BCHS-8162].

Find more photos via our Research Room in the History Center.
Beltrami County Historical Society
PO Box 1190
Bemidji, MN 56619

Return Service Requested

Beltrami County Historical Society

Annual Membership Benefits:

♦ Free museum admission
♦ 3 hours of free assisted research
♦ 10% gift shop discount
♦ Voting privileges
♦ One-year subscription to the BCHS quarterly newsletter *The Depot Express*
♦ Perks at 300+ historic sites in the United States through the Time Travelers Network (timetravelers.mohistory.org).

Annual Beltrami County Historical Society Membership

Membership Levels
- Individual $25
- Family $45
- Sponsor $75
- Benefactor $100
- Patron $200
- Supporter $500

130 Minnesota Ave SW
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 memberships and tax-deductible donations preserve collections of manuscripts, textiles, maps, photographs, and artifacts.

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