Kandi Express

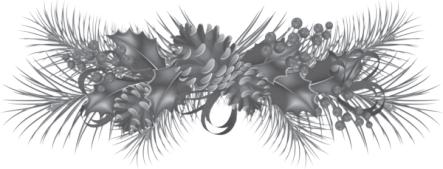
Newsletter of the Kandiyohi County Historical Society
-Keeping Your Heritage Alive-

Volume 51, Issue 4 **December 2014**

Serving the Communities:

Atwater
Blomkest
Hawick
Kandiyohi
Lake Lillian
New London
Pennock
Prinsburg
Raymond
Regal
Roseland
Spicer
Sunburg
Svea
Willmar

Holiday Time at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society



Christmas at the Sperry House

November 30,
December 7,14,21,29
Sundays: 2-4 pm.

The Sperry House is decorated for Christmas and the Christmas Tree displays a variety of late 1800s (Victorian) ornaments. Cider and cookies will be available.

Festive Forest

November 30-December 31
M-F: 9am-4pm & Sundays: 2-4 pm.

The Festive Forest is clubs and organizations creating unique trees and exhibits, promoting their groups while sharing the spirit of the holidays with the public. We would like to thank:

American Association of University Women
The Compassionate Friends
Daughters of American Revolution
Lake Elizabeth Garden Club
Humane Society of Kandiyohi/Meeker County
Minne Sunbonnet Dollers
Raymond Legion Auxiliary Unit 420
Sons of Norway
Willmar Car Club
Willmar Kiwanis
Willmar Noon Lions
Willmar Public Library
VFW Auxiliary

Engine #2523

Lit each evening until 11pm

The "Thursday Crew," continues the tradition of lighting Engine #2523 and the depot.

Kandiyohi County Historical Society

610 NE Hwy 71
Willmar, MN 56201
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Fax: 320/235-1881
E-Mail: kandhist@msn.com
Website:
www.kandiyohicountyhistory.com

Board of Directors

2014-2015

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Vice President – Diane Shuck
Secretary – Marilyn Johnson
Treasurer – Sam Modderman
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Kandi Express

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Kandiyohi County Historical Society. December 2014, Vol. 51, Issue 4. Non-profit postage paid at Willmar, MN. Reprints with permission, please. Membership in the Kandiyohi County Historical Society carries with it a subscription to the *Kandi Express*. Stories about local history can be submitted to Jill Wohnoutka-editor, KCHS.

Discovering, Preserving, and Sharing the Story of Kandiyohi County and Its People.

Volunteers

Archives/Office: Molly Larson, Dorothy Olson, Terry Stein, Marilyn Johnson, Linda Maurer, Julie Neubauer, Bonnie Hoogeveen.

Building/Painting/Thursday Crew: Elmond Ekblad, Elroy Gast, Dale Johnson, Jerry Johnson, Don Niece, Loren Luschen, Rollie Boll, Gayle Larson, Harley Aalfs, Larry Scholla John Davis, and Loretta Fenske.

Christmas Volunteers: Hilsida Tersteeg. Dick & Delores Hoglund, Harold & Mary Jo Larson, Allan & Carol Rambow, Marilyn Johnson, Dennis & Karen Peterson, Marlene Brown, Wanda & Allen Zaske, Ken & Dorothy Peterson, Bob, Mary & Molly Larson, Don & Phyllis Shaw.

In-Kind Donations

Kandiyohi Co. Community Service – Grounds Work/Snow Removal

Engan Associates P.A. — Architectural Services

Kandiyohi County Historical Society's Wish List

- 8 1/2" x 11" white office copy paper
- Stamps –regular and post card
- Archival Supplies-for details contact us at 235-1881.

Newsletter Email List

Please let us know if you would like to receive your newsletter over email by sending your request to kandhist@msn.com. Remember if you want to be included on our email list for upcoming news and programs, please let us know.

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Volunteers Needed

The Kandiyohi County Historical Society is looking for volunteers! We have a few staff changes in the last months and we need your help!

- **Obituary/Local History Recorder**: A person who enjoys reading through the newspaper for obituaries and local history stories to archive and index.
- **Landscaping/Grounds:** A person or persons who enjoy gardening and would like to help maintain the existing landscaping and help plan additional projects.
- **Archives/Collections Organization:** A person who is interested in helping with the cataloging and organization of the incoming donations to the KCHS collection.

Thank you ~ *Your gifts help preserve our heritage for future generations!*

New and Renewal Members:

Benefactor:
Louise Thoma

Supporter:
Gerri Ekblad
Edward Green
Duaine & Ann Amundson
Ardell & Marilyn Johnson
Dick & Delores Olson
Ron & Betty Schneider
Pete & Carla Fostervold

Friend:
Don & Joan Franklin
Mildred Robbins
Susan Mattson
Jennifer Klett
Kenneth & Joyce Johson
Mary Schnell
Don McGrath
Mark Peterson

Family:
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Myron & Carolie Carlson
Myron & Joanne Mayer
Neil & Barb Anderson
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Joel Ruter
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Mary Ann Tait Smith
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Doug & Rachel Loven
Joe & Dorothy Freese
Jerry & Dixie Tilden
Karole De Jong
Lyle & Gerry Nyberg
Diane & Larry Macht
John & Karin Gilbertson
Orial Vern Buer
Dale & Judy Johnson
Earl & Betty Knutson
Don & Judy Weeks
Jerry & Elaine Schliep
Albert & Doug Braithwaite
Jerry Gesch

Individual:
Gary Johnson
Carol Brown
Dale Hedlund
Marie Schroeder
Violet Ceske
Gary Nielsen
Neil Gustafson
Marvin Olson
Betty Kyker
Shirl Jensen
Gerri Dale
Linda Swalin
Sandy Anderson
Alton Carlson
Helen Berg
Alan Moll
Beverly Webster
Dan Leite
Phil Hahn
Nona Torbert
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Deb Brogren
Barb Miller
Jean Shogren
Rev. Roderic Frohman
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Mary McClure Bibby
Glenn Arfstrom
Cheryl Johnson
Kent Skoglund
Norma Holmgren
Larry Lohn
Claire Derr

Special Donations:

Member Contributions:
For Operating Support
David Anderson
Steve Lehman
Dale & Judith Johnson
Jerry & Elaine Schliep

Mona Nelson Fund
Ron & Dee Erpelding
Don & Judy Week

Memorials
In Memory of Mary Lou Olson
Loren Luschen
Marvin D. Olson
In Memory of Opal Fostervold Leif
Gordon & Betty Behm
In Memory of Richard Larson
Ardell & Marilyn Johnson
Dennis & Karole De Jong
Daniel Fostervold
Marie Clough
Robert & Mary Larson
Jennifer Slinden
Karen Lieberg
Darlene Bratberg
Dale & Judith Johnson
Norma R. Holmgren
Doris Meyer
In Memory of Richard Swenson
Dale & Judith Johnson
Loren Luschen

Building Fund
Larry Lohn
Mark Peterson
In Memory of Richard Larson
Diane & Larry Macht

Sperry House
Linda Swalin

The West Central Minnesota Baseball Hall of Fame announces the Class of 2015 Inductees

The Kandiyohi County Historical Society is proud to announce the Class of 2015 inductees into the West Central Minnesota Baseball Hall of Fame. This year's inductees include:

Willard Reigstad (1919-2001) Born in Arctander Township, MN and lifetime resident of Kandiyohi County. Reigstad played for New London High School where he graduated in 1939. Reigstad played and managed the Norway Lake Lakers for many years. The ballpark in Sunburg is named in his honor, Reigstad Field. Reigstad also played for Belgrade and Clara City. In the early 1940's, Reigstad played for the St. Cloud Rox. In 1971, Reigstad was inducted into the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame.

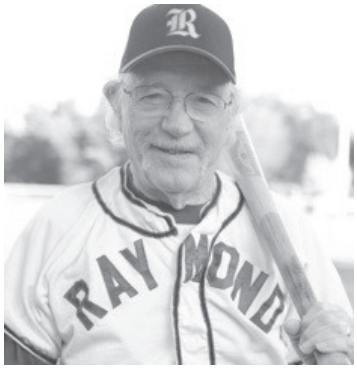
Norman "Red" Jones (Litchfield) Born in Raymond, MN and got his start playing pee wee and midget games. From 1954-1957, Jones played for the Raymond High School and the American Legion. He played for the Raymond Rockets for 14 years, 1956-1969. After moving to Litchfield, Jones managed the Litchfield Blues 1977-1978. Jones coached the Litchfield's Babe Ruth team for 10 years. Jones organized Litchfield's Cal Ripken youth baseball program. He is a founding member of the Litchfield Baseball Association and was instrumental in the construction of the Optimist Park. In 2013, Jones was inducted into the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame.

William "Porky" Wegner, Jr. (1896-1970) born in Raymond, MN. He managed the Raymond Legion Baseball team for 20 plus years. Wegner was manager when the first Raymond team went to the State Amateur Tournament in 1937. Wegner managed the Raymond Legion team in the State Tournament in 1951. Wegner was selected as a Minnesota Sport Champion in 1958 for the Minnesota State Centennial. Wegner served on the Region Amateur Baseball Commission and as an officer in the Corn Belt League.

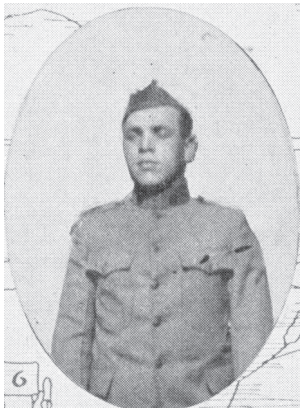
The West Central Minnesota Hall of Fame Class of 2015 induction will be held in conjunction with the Stingers Winter BBQ on January 16, 2015. More details on the BBQ/Induction will be coming in the next couple weeks.

For more information, call Jill Wohnoutka at (320) 235-1881 or kandhist@msn.com

Willard Reigstad



Norman "Red" Jones



William "Porky" Wegner, Jr.

Historical Society holds Annual Meeting

The Kandiyohi County Historical Society held its annual meeting on October 16, 2014 at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society in Willmar, MN with 40 people in attendance. A meal catered by Heglund Catering and program by T.J. Malaskee of the Minnesota Historical Society were held in conjunction with the annual business meeting.

Audrey Thompson of Atwater, MN was elected to her first term on the KCHS Board of Directors. The re-elected board members are Marilyn Johnson of Lake Lillian, MN, Connie Wanner of Willmar, MN and Darlene Schroeder of Pennock, MN. Retiring from the board was Carol Rambow of Willmar, MN. Elected Officers include: Dennis Peterson, President; Diane Shuck, Vice President; Sam Modderman, Treasurer, and Marilyn Johnson, Secretary.

After the business meeting, winners of "Dinner at the Sperry House" were drawn. Winners were Ken Peterson of Spicer, MN, Lon Nielsen of Willmar, MN, Sam Modderman of Willmar, MN, and Rick Molenaar of Sunburg, MN.

Our Sympathy To Family and Friends-

- **John F. Holm**, 84, KCHS member since 1992, passed away on August 31, 2014. He is survived by wife, Sharon, four children, ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.
- **John Edward Bosch**, 88, KCHS member since 2004, passed away on August 20, 2014. He is survived by three children, and five grandchildren.
- **Doris Jenson Myhre,** 96, KCHS lifetime member since 1979, passed away on September 13, 2014. She is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandson.
- **Gordon "Gordy" A. Wallert**, 91, KCHS member since 2003, passed away on September 14, 2014. He is survived by many nieces and nephews.
- **Helen Leintz Cullen**, 91, KCHS lifetime member since 1981, passed away on September 15, 2014. She is survived by husband, Michael, four children, eight grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.
- **Thelma Martin Bosch**, 98, KCHS lifetime member since 1982, passed away on September 25, 2014. She is survived by three children, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.
- **Michael J. Stoffel**, 92, KCHS member since 2004, passed away on September 28, 2014. He is survived by wife, Frances, seven children, thirteen grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.
- **Carol Tangen Monson,** 60, KCHS member since 2003, passed away on October 4, 2014. She is survived by husband, Bob, three children, three grandchildren and mother, Norma.

Chappell Central, Inc.
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PO Box 916
Willmar, MN 56201
(320) 235-2151

www.chappellcentral.com

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The Story of How the Museum Happened
By Don Miller

*This article was first printed in the **Kandi Express** in June 1984. This past Memorial Day was the 45th Anniversary of the grand opening of the Museum.*

For years the Old Settlers Cabin, at the County Fairgrounds, had been a quasi-museum until it was remodeled into the County's first true museum in 1963. Space was short. Artifacts were being received in record amounts. It soon became obvious to the Society's Directors that something would have to be done. It is exceedingly difficult to build a museum on a budget of $1000.00 a year.

The Board of Directors was apprised of a new program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, called Resources Conservation and Development (RC&D). This program was designed to help small organizations, small communities, even individuals develop facilities which would benefit the community or area. Unfortunately, the Board was informed the evening before applications were due. Our application was filed on time!

Now the Society was involved is a multifaceted project involving financing, building plans, site location and acquisitions plus the question of where to place the locomotive. While each of these was a project in itself, they were all so closely intermingled that it was impossible to keep committees functioning in only their assigned areas. Locomotive acquisition became a problem for the site selection committee; site acquisition became a problem of the finance committee, and so the program grew as the problems multiplied.

The foremost question always was, "Where will the money come from?" RC&D was anxious to make a loan for this type of project, through FHA, its lending agency. The Society was anxious to make the loan, and had the complete cooperation of the Board of Commissioners of Kandiyohi County. The question was: How can the Society guarantee repayment of the loan. We had requested a $45,000 loan with a 30 year mortgage. Now, one Board of County Commissioners may not commit future Boards, except under certain circumstances which are spelled out in the law. Finding our way through the labyrinth of the law and governmental regulations became almost a game, and dozens of strategies were tried. These led to an endless series of meetings with representatives of the Department of Agriculture; some lasted far, far into the night and others were as short as three minutes! At one meeting, the federal representative skidded over icy highways from St. Paul to Willmar. The Society proposed a course of action; he said it couldn't be done. End of meeting! It took four years to find our way through the labyrinth. We received the check four years today from the date we filed our initial application.

Meanwhile the locomotive acquisition committee was moving fast. Great Northern would give the Society a locomotive. All we had to do was to find a place to put it. The site acquisition committee had its heart set on a spot on Highway 71 & 23 across from Robbins Island, which it felt would be ideal. The only trouble was that the land was owned by the school district and was under a 90 year lease as part of a complicated arrangement through which the school district acquired the old radar base and military housing area as a site for what became the Willmar Junior College and Vocational Institute, in exchange for land for an armory. The Society contacted the National Guard and Army Reserve authorities, who were in charge of leases, and asked if they would rescind the lease for a portion of the land which they had leased from the district. They agreed, provided the Society owned the land. One sharp-eyed official, a former Willmarite, told the Society's people that they weren't asking for enough land, and to expand the request. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the Society's officers approached the school board regarding purchase of the land, subject to the lease. The school district sold us the land for $1.00, since it regarded the Society as an education institution.

We had no sooner acquired the land as an educational institution than we approached the RC&D people, requesting a loan as a tourist attraction. This may seem to be an inconsistency, but in actuality, the Society was both, so

our approach to each of these entities was an honest one. About that time, the County Commissioners and the Little Crow Resort Association were looking for a place for a tourist information center. The society offered the use of part of its land for this purpose; an offer which was gratefully accepted by all parties concerned. The next day we were informed the military authorities would not rescind the lease of the land.

Perhaps it wasn't quite honest, by the Society's officers were so sure they could get the military authorities to change their minds, that they never told anyone about losing the lease agreement. That was cleared up and we were in possession of land before construction would begin on the Information Center teepee. That was the first structure on the property, and was dedicated with suitable ceremonies during part of a WCCO Fishing Opener, which featured Carmel Quinn.

Not long afterward, the locomotive was moved into place. Somewhere the Society found the money to purchase and install a cyclone fence as the engine's enclosure. We called for bids and two were submitted by local firms. One was 5 cents less than the other for the complete job! The locomotive was dedicated with suitable fanfare at appropriate ceremonies, in which several Great Northern officials including John Budd, then president of the line, participated.

While all of this was going on, the finance seekers were still hard at work. It seemed that the Society lost every battle in a four-year war, only to emerge victorious. Eventually, the way was found by which the loan could be made. It had been a very interesting situation. Everyone wanted to make the loan, but no one could find a way to legally do it.

We were told to have the plans drawn, and an architect was retained. He caught the idea, and began work immediately. However, his first plan was rejected because of the site. It just wouldn't work the way he had planned it. While he was revising his plans, the Society learned that the Great Northern Railway was closing the depot in Kandiyohi and wanted to dispose of the building. In spite of several offers to purchase it, the Great Northern gave the depot to the Society. The architect made a hurried trip out from Minneapolis one Saturday morning, looked over the depot and revised his plans on the spot! When the plans had been approved, the RC&D turned all its powerful agency assets loose to work for us. Extensive soil tests were made, ground plats were drawn, and other services were provided, which helped the budget considerably.

Now the government told us to call for bids, then to award contracts. Several days after this was done, we were informed that our application had been turned down again. This resulted in a barrage of material being shipped to everyone in Washington, DC, who had any part in the loan process. Entire booklets containing, among other things, copies of the agency's letters to the Society, instructing us to retain an architect, draw the plans, call for bids and award the contracts, were sent so they would be on the proper desks when the people involved came to work on Monday morning.

While all this was going on, the Museum Committee had been very active, planning displays, storage areas, traffic patterns and a complete display system. The basic floor plan and original displays had been designed and were ready to go two years before construction started on the building.

First, the Kandiyohi depot was moved to the site and placed on its foundation. Then work began in earnest on the museum section itself, and the connecting corridor. While that work was going on, a large number of alterations were being made in the depot building. The old telegraph office was turned into an office for the Society; the old baggage room became a library. About the time the Library was completed, Northern Natural Gas Company of Omaha offered to bring a collection of original artworks for the Society to display. The display was set up and opened on schedule. Then we realized that we had a $2,000,000 art collection display in a building with

only three walls and a canvas! It was a very nervous time for the members of the Board, but nothing untoward happened all during the several week showing.

Our campaign to the people in Washington must have paid off, because we received a call a few days later, from the FHA director at the local office, asking if we had received the check. When he was told we hadn't heard a word, he simply said, "Just wait. I received a revision to the handbook this morning, which qualifies the Society for the loan." Sure enough, a couple days later the check for $45,000 arrived. It had been a long wait, a tough battle, but we had won-except, we couldn't cash the check for two weeks!

Construction was completed in December. The formal inspection was done in January. The Society paid the contractors, and we were ready to start setting up displays. The museum committee had devised a unitized display system, which has since been copied by many other museums, and was built on a cost of materials only basis by a local blacksmith/welder. The committee was ready to move the display materials in when the snows came. It snowed just about every day. The only way to get near the new building was on skis!

Somehow, late in March, the display frames were moved in. The museum committee began holding meetings with volunteers who were going to build the displays, and each displayer submitted basic designs for his display. These were reviewed and approved or revised by the committee, and an elaborate supply system was organized. There were people who did the woodworking, others painted backgrounds, others provided legends, and the old museum was opened one night for each displayer to check out the artifacts which would be used in each display. The County Highway Department ran a special snowplow into the area so people could at least get close to the place, but still many came on skis. With the display frames and facing boards in place, volunteers moved in and installed the display lighting systems. Finally everything was ready; the weather moderated, and two evenings a week were set aside so the volunteer display builders could come in and complete their displays.

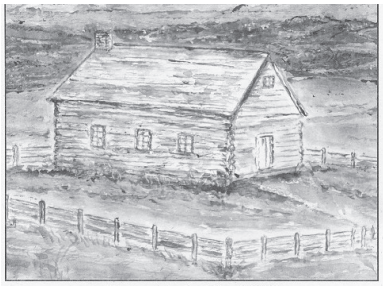
By late May the Museum was ready. Blacktop was installed in the parking lot, and the museum was opened, again with appropriate ceremonies, on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, 1969. The rest of the story is still another chapter in the Society's history.

One footnote to the story should be included. The Society, with the cooperation of the County Commissioners, paid off the 30 year mortgage in seven years. By so doing, we saved the taxpayers of the county more than $18,000 in interest. The repayment was actually planned for six years, but another deal was struck by which the Commissioners would extend the Society's higher annual construction budget by one more year, so a warehouse could be attached to the museum. In return, the Society gave the log cabin on the fairgrounds, which had been built as a memorial to the pioneers, to the people of Kandiyohi County.

That's the story of how the museum happened. It's the story of MANY UNSUNG VOLUNTEERS, and their dedicated efforts to provide the people of this county with a museum of which they could be proud, and one which could be used to best advantage as the Society's museum committee continued to interpret the history and background of the county and its people. You may have noticed that no names have been mentioned in this story. That's because so many people were involved in the many aspects of the project that it is literally impossible to name them all. They know how they have contributed, and the thanks which is due them has come, over the years, by the continued growth of activity for which the museum is the base.

Norway Lake Lutheran
Historical Association
6338 County Road 40 NW
New London, MN 56273

Earl O. Knutson, President
Ed Huseby, Vice President
Eloise Nelson, Treasurer



Norway Lake Log Church - 1868

Earl O. Knutson
722 Second Street SW
Willmar, MN 56201

320-222-1613
eoknutsn@en-tel.net

I apologize for forgetting the NLLHA update for September in the last newsletter. I hope you enjoy both the September and December NLLHA updates. Again, I am sorry for this oversight. Jill Wohnoutka

September 2014

A Word from the Board - THE NLLHA HAS SETTLED ON A LONG RANGE PLAN.

The process we started in 2010 has finally come to a conclusion. At that time we set out to chart the course of NLLHA for the next ten years. A Long Range Planning task force was formed and charged with uncovering projects that would

- be inspiring,
- require much dedicated work and multiple years to complete, and lead to a valuable, lasting product.

The Task Force submitted its report in June 2011. The Board has studied this report off and on for three years. At the May, 2014 Board meeting, the Board voted to focus on two projects, as follows:

1. Investigate the burials at the OLC cemetery. There would have to be trips to the Lutheran Church archives to see if there are log books kept by the early itinerant preachers. Joel Njus' translated minutes might also be a source of information. Produce a book of the results of the investigation. This would have to be a combination of a few hard facts and much informed speculation.

2. Prepare biographies of the charter members of each of the 6 daughter congregations. Do this thoroughly, find obituaries, birth records, emigration records, citizenship records, census records, homestead records, pertinent newspaper articles, surviving folk tales. Write the biographies and publish in book form.

(These projects are not expected to take ten years, but they might take three to five years. It is planned that our normal yearly programs would continue alongside these projects.)

These projects both start with gathering names. We hope that we can get help in this, especially from current members of the six congregations that we consider to be "daughters" of the Old Log Church. Although it has recently come to our attention that two other congregations might qualify as "daughters," the current six are:

- East Norway Lake Lutheran Church
- Monson Lake Lutheran Church
- West Lake Lutheran Church
- South Lake Johanna Lutheran Church
- First Lutheran Church of Norway Lake
- Hope Lutheran Church in Sunburg.

Our Board member Kurt Mankell has agreed to be the contact person, or clearing house, for gathering this information. His email address is kmankell@comcast.net.

Next NLLHA Events:

October 11, 2014 - Lefse Making and Tasting, 1 – 3 PM at the restored Ole and Aase Knudson cabin; learn how to make lefse; sample the product; also learn the history of the building.

November 30, 2014 – Advent worship service, 2 PM at the Old Log Church.

For driving directions, see www.nllha.org.

December 2014

News from the Norway Lake Lutheran Historical Association

Anniversary Celebration. Our annual celebration, held on August 17, 2014, was a satisfying event for our association. This year we featured the Halvorson and Peterson pioneer families. The morning worship service, attended by about 80 persons, was led by Rev. Lyle Peterson, a Peterson descendant. In the afternoon program brief biographies of the two families were presented. About 100 persons attended under the tent. A video of the afternoon program can be seen on our website, www.nllha.org –click on "Media," then "Video."

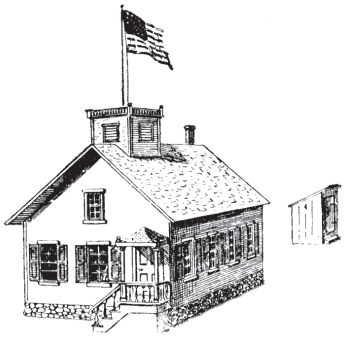
Lefse Day. The second annual NLLHA Lefse Day was held on October 11th at the Knudson Cabin, which is located ¼ mile NE of the Old Log Church. About 50 persons took part, including a number of youngsters. Participants were invited to try their hand at rolling out lefse dough and transferring the dough to the lefse griddle. Ed and Becky Huseby were the Lefse Masters. Informational tours of the Knudson Cabin were part of the afternoon.

Advent Worship Service. The annual Advent Service will be held at 2 PM on November 30, 2014, led by Pastor Amy Juel-Palmer. As in past years, there will be a hymn & carol sing mixing Norwegian and English songs. The afternoon will conclude with coffee, hot chocolate, baked treats, apples and peanuts.

The long, incredible walk of Ole Knudson. Acting on a suggestion by our board member Jeff Johnson, the New London Arts Alliance selected a Norway Lake story to feature in their next mural to decorate the south-facing wall of Mord's Hardware in New London. The story is that of Ole Knudson's mission to procure a grindstone for use in the Norway Lake settlement. In September the NLLHA board voted to support the project up to $1500. The mural will feature a picture of a man walking with a heavy grindstone on his back, as well as a number of text panels that describe the event and other happenings in the Norway Lake Settlement.

The First church congregation at Norway Lake. Searching online and at the Norwegian-American Historical Association for records of the early church, our board member Kurt Mankell has found written evidence that a Norway Lake congregation was formed in 1859! This was a surprise to all of us, who were sure that the first congregation was formed after the US-Dakota war. Stay tuned for the complete story.

The Norway Lake Lutheran Historical Association welcomes new members at all times. For a one time fee of 10.00 you can become a member of this organization and can help support learning and telling the stories of the history of the Norway Lake area. In addition, if you so desire you can also help us defray the expenses of our programs such as the Mord Wall by contributing to our organization. Please remember that all donations are deductible as the NLLHA is a 501(c)3 organization.

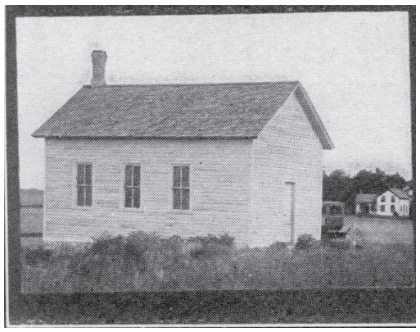


RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF KANDIYOHI COUNTY

IRVING TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Written by Marilyn Johnson

DISTRICT 2



District 2

Early records of this district were lost but it is believed to have been established in 1866 since records of other early districts indicate that at least the first nine districts were begun that year. At that time the entire Irving Township was included in this district. The north half of the district was set off in 1867 to form District 24. In 1872, and again in 1873, most of the township was assigned to District 53. This left only Sections 23, 24, 25, and 36 in District 2.

The first school in the district was taught in 1867 or 1868 by Mrs. Burrel Adams at the Adams residence in Section 27. Among those attending were George and Squire Clark; Charles, Frank, Sarah, and Minnie Ham; Allie George; and two of Amos King's children.

In 1869 a three month term was taught by Harvey Scott at the Norman Clark residence. Lydia Pullen taught in 1870 and C. P. Moore taught in 1871 and 1872. In 1873 the following pupils were enrolled for five months of school: Everett, Elveston, Lewellyn, and James King; Joseph, James and Malissa Burgess; Daniel, Fred, Ida May, and Alzina Cole; Emery Houghton; Mary, Lena, and Nellie Nelson. The age range was 6 years to 17 years.

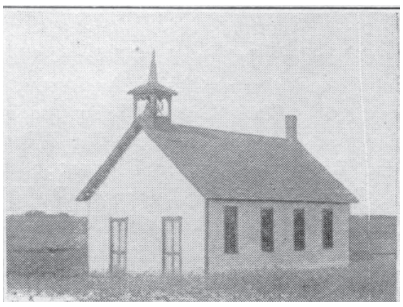
Various people taught for varying lengths of time at various homes, and one year in a granary, for several years. At the annual school meeting in 1881 it was voted that the board issue bonds for $425 to build a schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was not built until 1882 because of disagreement on the site. The 18x26 foot structure cost $350 and was built on the northeast corner of the NE¼ of SW¼ of Section 25. District 2 was the first district to be organized but the fourth district to build a schoolhouse of its own.

The following were teachers during the years 1905 to 1944, when the school closed: Mabel Jordan, Laura Pederson, Josephine Sanborn, Thora Narverud, Nettie Hanson, Laura Pederson, Hannah Halvorson, Phebe P. Flanders, Ellen Olander, Grace Vick, Nellie Hoftoe, Hilda Gynild, Pearl Pallin, Viola Anderson, Mrs. Conrad Hoganson, Evelyn H. Johnson, Laurenza Johnson, Gratia Marshall, Mrs. Eleanor Johnson, Grace Ferrier, Leona Thorpe, Kenneth Elling, Edward Moore, Mrs. Selma Pederson, Genevieve Nielson, Mrs. Edith Westre.

District 2 was located in the SW¼ of Section 25 on the south side of 142 Ave NE, near the corner where it meets 197 St NE. This schoolhouse is now situated on the Kandiyohi County Fairgrounds.

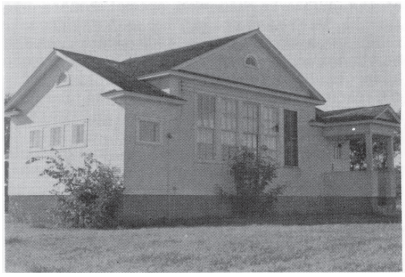
DISTRICT 24 (769)

Sometime before Feb 20, 1868 a petition with 14 signatures requested the north half of Irving Township be taken from District 2 in order to form District 24. Out of the original 18 sections designated to District 24, as other school districts were formed and various pieces of land taken, only 7 sections remained in District 24.



District 24

The first schoolhouse was built in 1870, a 16x30 foot log structure, situated on the west half of the NE¼ of Section 14. Miss Annie E. Pool was the first teacher. She received a salary of $22 a month and board. Fifty pupils were in attendance, 22 boys and 28 girls. Miss Ellen Blakely taught three months in the spring of 1872, with 24 boys and 26 girls enrolled. In the spring of 1873 Miss Mary A. Turner was the teacher, with 14 boys and 16 girls. Through the following years 33 to 52 pupils were enrolled each year. By 1888 teachers were receiving $40 per month.



District 769

On March 19, 1892, at a special meeting, it was decided to build a new schoolhouse. The building was to be 20x36 feet, with 10 foot high arched ceiling, and schoolroom to be 28 feet long. The entrance would be 6 feet, divided in middle, and with two doors on outside and into main room. There would be eight windows, four on each side, with 8x12x14 inch panes in each. Only the best grade of lumber was to be used. The free text book system was adopted at a special meeting on Nov 22, 1894. At a meeting on Jan 11, 1902 it was decided to build an addition of sixteen feet to the schoolroom, making it one of the largest school buildings in the county.

In 1935 a new school was built by the WPA on acreage purchased from Paul Rud in 1925 for $175. In 1953 running water was installed for $1,000, and new lavatories were installed for $557 in 1955. A new floor, costing $600, was laid in the basement in 1958 and new desks were bought for $470 in 1965.

The following were teachers from 1905 through school year 1969/70: L. Eugene Lester, Lena Walen, G. O. Voss, Margarethe Nelson, Rowena Hoftoe, Mrs. Eva Pemble, Margaret P. Nelson, Millie Susag, Anna Fridlund, Jonette Shipstead, Etta Gabrielson, Pearl Thompson, Dora Ryff, Florence Kennedy, Olga Gaagenson, Delores Dean, Eunice Sconsing, Lena Nelson, Ruby Johnson, Esther Christianson, Laurenza Johnson, Eva Flanders, Clara Jjenson, Lillie Jenson, May Hakel, Frances Larson, Della Tjernagel, Evelyn H. Nelson, Evelyn Hanson, Bessie Hatch, Pearl O. Pederson, Luella Borgstrom, Mrs. Mary Berglund, Genevieve Nielson, Mrs. Olga Nilsen, Mrs. George Pederson, Mrs. GlennMyers, Judith Gerrels, Mrs. Derwin Porter, Mrs. Marjorie Dollerschell, Mrs. Judy Brown, Mrs. Luella Olson, Mrs. Melvin Olson, Mrs. Luella Rupp, Mrs. Helen Stein.

This school building was located in the southeast corner of NE¼ of Section 11, along 190 St NE.

DISTRICT 53 (783)

The board of county commissioners granted a petition to establish District 53 on March 7, 1872. This new district in Irving Township would cover Sections 19, 20, 21; NW¼, W½, NE¼, and Lots 1 and 2, Section 22; SW¼, S½, NW¼, and Lot 1, Section 27; all of Sections 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33; and W½ of Section 34. On April 30, 1873 a petition was filed with the county commissioners asking that the following land be set off from

District 2 and added to District 53: The E½ of the NE and SE quarters of Section 22, all of Sections 26 and 35, and the parts of Sections 27 and 34 not previously included in the district. In the following years more land was added to District 53 from District 2 but there was also land set off from District 53 to District 4.

District 53

In the summer of 1872 a three month term was taught by Miss Mary Knowles in the Brown house, located in a grove on the shores of Lake Calhoun. Twenty-two pupils were enrolled. The first schoolhouse was built in 1873 on a site near the old bridge across Crow River. In 1881 the schoolhouse was moved to the claim of M. I. Grover in NW corner Section 26. There was controversy as to whether the District 53 schoolhouse should be moved to a site in the center of the district, and whether a new building should be built. In 1894 the decision was made to move the school building in the fall. The schoolhouse was pulled to its new location with an engine operated by Mr. Williamson.

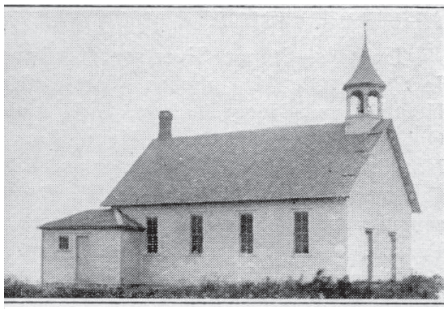
District 783

In 1902 it was decided to build a new schoolhouse. A one acre square plot in the southeast corner of NE¼ of SE1/4 of Section 28 was purchased for $25 from Nils Johnson. Later an additional quarter acre was purchased for $10. The new 24x40 foot schoolhouse, with cupola and bell, was built by H. M. Haagenson, C. P. Svedberg and M. P. B. Johnson at a cost of $1,300. It was decided to have eight months of school and to include a first-grade teacher so the district could get special state aid. Special improvements totaling $1500 were made to the schoolhouse in 1955-56.

Teachers from 1905 through the school year 1969-70 were: Nannie Anderson, Bee Allen, Ida Schwartz, Mabel E. Johnson, Cecil Hodgkin, Ida Clark, Ada F. Jorris, Theresa Nolan, Minnie O. Berg, Jettie Lukason, Nime Johnson, Mabel Simonson, Lillian Pallin, Edith Anderson, Amy Yager, Walter Anderberg, Margaret Dahlgren, Clare Hallbom, Mrs. Eva Norris, Mary Blakely, Melburn Severeid, Laurene Flygare, Florence Erickson, Ida Anderson, Doris Johnson, Lillie Jensen, Mrs. Marius Paulson, Mrs. George Pederson. This school was not in session during the school years 1940-41 through 1949-50, and 1951-52.

The location of the new schoolhouse was in the southeast corner of NE¼ of SE¼ of Section 28, on west side of 160 St NE.

DISTRICT 66 (792)



District 66

A petition dated March 26, 1872 asked that a new school district be formed from Sections 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, and 18 of Irving Township. On Jan 4, 1881 a petition requesting Sections 19, 20, and Lots 3 and 4 of Section 21 be set off from District 53 to District 66 was granted by the county commissioners.

Various special meetings were held during 1873 through 1876 but no definite decision was made for the site of a schoolhouse. The first school was taught by Clara Dobson in 1874 at the residence of John Hagen. The following pupils were enrolled: Israel, Peter, Jacob and Julia Nelson; Ole Holgerson; Martin, Christianna, Charlotte and Anna Simonson; Fred, Christina, Paulina, Amelia and Julia Larson; Peter Byron; Adolph, Cornelia, Anna and Martha Hagen; Betsey and Christianna Gootormson; Jennie Jacobson. In 1875 Mattie Steelman taught at the Granville

Abbott home.

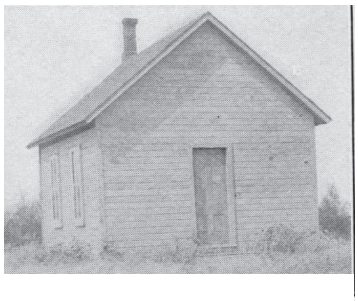
At a special meeting held on Oct 12, 1876 it was decided to build on the southeast corner of NE¼ of NE1/4 of Section 17, where the building was finally erected in 1877. In 1884 an 8x16 foot addition was added.

A new frame structure 24x40 foot schoolhouse was built in 1889. The schoolroom was 23x31 feet, with seats for 55 pupils. The room was equipped with slate blackboards, maps, charts, dictionaries, free text books, and a library. A number of trees were planted on the grounds in 1900.

Teachers at this district between 1905 to 1960 were Mary F. Peterson, Herbert C. Feig, Agnes Kulset, Lara Pederson, Bertha Pemble, Bertha Kerneghan, Evangeline Lawson, Ingeborg Hedeen, Alma Wangsness, Florence Boom, Aurelia Disselkamp, Lura McLouth, Laura Fossum, Elvera Skavdahl, Margaret Olander, Pearl Poortintga, Lillie Jensen, Clara Jensen, Mrs. Harold Carlson, Clara Christenson, Betsine Vegdahl, Margaret Bredberg, Florence Englund, Mrs. Derwin Porter, Mrs. Marius Paulson, Mrs. Ray Powers.

This schoolhouse was located on 176 Ave NE, along 160th St NE. This district consolidated with New London Ind. District 345 in 1959.

DISTRICT 92 (807)



District 92

Despite opposition to forming this district, on Feb 16, 1893 the county commissioners gave their approval to establishing District 92. It included Sections 4, 5, 7, 9, Section 8 except SW¼, E1/2 of Section 6, W½ of Sections 3 and 10, Irving Township; and S1/2 of Section 33 and Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4, Section 32, Township of Roseville.

An 18x16 foot, 10 foot high, school building was completed in time to begin a one month term of school on July 3, 1893. Miss Florence Swihart was the first teacher.

Teachers this district between the years 1905 – 1960 were: Belle Solseth, May Morgan, Minnie Hendrickson, Lucretia Martin, Lulu E. Hill, Olga Haroldson, Jettie Lukason, Mabel Jebb, Alma Johns, Elvera Skavdahl, Hilda Lindeberg, Gladys Norris, Mildred Carpenter, Teresa Toemmers, Ella S. Anderson, Clara Jensen, Elaine Riley, Mrs. Elaine Riley McLouth, Mildred Gustafson, Ella Hanson, Lavera Knebel, Mrs. Ena Evanson, Mrs. Otto Berkeland, Mrs. William Strand, Mrs. Eleanor Johnson, Mrs. Ray Powers, Mrs. Robert Buche, Mrs. Melvin Olson, Mrs. Marius Paulson.

This schoolhouse was located in the southwest corner of SE¼, Section 4, along 195th Ave NE. The school apparently was closed for school year 1958-59. In 1959 this district consolidated with New London Ind. District 345. The schoolhouse was later used by the Clever Clovers 4-H Club and as a town hall.

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