



The Window

Official Newsletter of the Brookings County Historical Society



It's going to be gigantic!

Museum yard sale is May 15

A gigantic, never before imagined museum yard sale will be held in Volga's City Park, home of the Brookings County Museum complex, on Saturday, May 15 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For the past year during the Covid pandemic, masked volunteers have been clearing out and vetting hundreds of museum items that for years have been stored away, with only the very best of inventory kept for public display.

So much had accumulated during the museum's 80 years that the remaining plethora was gathering dust with slim odds of ever seeing the light of day again.

The need for more storage space has for years been a major concern of museum leadership. The storage needs were so great that funds had to be invested in creating more space to prevent the square footage for museum displays from being reduced.

The museum was even paying for off-site storage.

So after 80 years of finding where to put "stuff," the decision was made that something had to be done. The Covid-19 disruption and museum closing offered the perfect time frame for such a major undertaking.

Some museums call the process "deaccessioning." At the Brookings County Museum it's called "housecleaning." The serious considerations on what to keep and what to remove from storage took months. An initial committee of four board members made preliminary decisions. The museum's full board of directors then made the final cuts.

The best of duplications were kept with undamaged artifacts being the more desirable. Historic items with no relationship to Brookings County were easy to identify, as were decisions on various flotsam and jetsam that had accumulated over decades.

All of that, the big and the small, the duplicates, the damaged, the unrelated to local history, and the inconsequential, will be offered for sale at unbelievably low prices during the May 15 Yard Sale. Proceeds from the sale will be reinvested in further improvements in the museum.

Look for more sale details on pages 4, 8 and 9. ❁

Masks and social distancing are encouraged

Grand reopening planned

The Brookings County Museum complex in Volga's City Park will be open to visitors beginning Sunday, May 30.

As usual, the museum hours will be daily from 1 to 4 p.m.

The grand re-opening comes after a year of covid-inspired closure during the summer of 2020.

Visitors this year will discover a new museum experience, as volunteers have worked tirelessly during the down time to improve the museum in many ways.

These include new displays, and with the refurbishing of the historic 1884 James Hauxhurst house now complete, one new building has been added to what has been a five-building museum complex.

The Hauxhurst house includes furnishings and embellishments similar to what might be found in a Brookings County home in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In addition to the Hauxhurst house, there is a traditional 1930s furnished farm home display in the Main Museum building.

That building's interior has been repainted and reconfigured.

Also in the museum complex is the Trygve Trooien Horse-Drawn Museum, which is dedicated to the farm families and their beloved teams of horses. It also houses the South Dakota Horse Council's Horseperson of the Year Hall of Fame, and is the only museum of its kind in South Dakota.

The other museum buildings are the Vintage Farm Equipment building, featuring a mint condition threshing machine, the 1880 one-room rural school house and its teaching aids, plus an original 1871 log cabin with crude furnishings of that day.

Admission to the museum is free. ❁

Museum volunteers needed

If you would like help a few hours each month during the three-month summer museum season, the Brookings County Museum has a place for you.

Volunteers are needed to greet museum visitors and to show them around the museum's six-building complex in Volga's beautiful City Park during June, July and August.

The museum is open daily from 1 to 4 p.m. Perhaps there's a day each week or each month you would like to spend time helping at the museum. If so, please call volunteer coordinator Darla Strande in Brookings at 692-8179. ❁

For a young August Albert Mann, time in Volga

For a man named Mann, time stopped at 8:18 at the Brookings County Museum.

Twice.

The museum has two interesting, rare artifacts from August Albert Mann's early 1900 jewelry store in Volga.

He was probably Volga's first jeweler, but not the last.

The hands on his two clocks have both been set at the traditional 8:18, the accepted angle that places the hands best to allow a message to also appear on the clock dial face.

The most unusual of Mann's two clocks was once swinging in the Dakota winds from its heavy duty mooring that reached out over the sidewalk in front of his shop on Volga's Main Street.

That huge replica of a pocket watch was and still is a sight to see, with its two-sided, two-feet in diameter watch faces that are topped off with its own overgrown stem winder.

Passersby on Volga's wooden sidewalks that were headed either north or south could easily see the boldfaced "A. A. Mann" printed on both watch dial faces.

The sign's seven-inch-long little hand points to the roman number VIII and big hand is always settled close to the IIII.

That old sign has for decades been hidden in a dark corner of the museum's storage room, but was uncovered during the covid-19 closure-inspired housekeeping museum volunteers have been doing for the past year.

Mann's other clock is a large pendulum-powered wall clock that adorns a wall near the museum's front entry. Indications are Mann either gave or sold that clock to the Volga Tribune, where it helped in a small way in the production of Volga's paper—often called the Volga shotgun because the gas-powered motor out back of the shop that drove the press had a tendency to backfire, thus alerting the entire Volga population that their weekly newspaper was on its way.

In fact, one of those Tribune issues in 1906 carried the news that Mann was one of seven Volgans who purchased a new automobile that year. The others were C. W. Smith, Robert Henry, O.A. Britson, Herb Hymes, Frank Storms and A.E. Whitney.

Added the writer of that story: "One of the biggest problems for automobile owners wasn't mechanical, but the danger of scaring horses and causing runaways."



August A. Mann and Mary Emiline Dickerson Truman Mann.

Mann no doubt often drove his new car to work and parked it in front of his business that displayed the big pocket watch sign that is now the rarest of the museum's two clocks. It's a keeper. Clones of that sign now sell for several thousand dollars. Although the museum has no intention of selling its clock, it comes with display challenges because of its weight, size and two-faced configuration.

A feed sack tag wired to that clock sign indicated it had been donated to the museum by a Mary and Reid Walker, but no other information.

To learn more about it and the man Mann, museum officials contacted former board member Jerry Leslie of Volga. The former newspaper editor and amateur genealogist agreed to try to search out more about Mann.

Leslie's search found out that A. A. Mann was August Albert Mann. He shows up in the 1905 South Dakota census as a 26-year-old jeweler living in Volga, S.D. The census further shows that Mann had been living in South Dakota since 1903.

Leslie found more.

Mann was born in 1879 in Iowa to German immigrants. At about age 24, he found his way to South Dakota and eventually to Volga. In 1909 he married a local widow,



Mann's Outdoor Sign

Mary Dickerson Truman, in Volga. Mary was born in 1867 and accompanied her parents when they moved from Jordan, Minn., to a farm near Volga probably in the 1880s. In 1892, Mary married Judge Philetus Clark Truman, who died in 1901 at the age of 51. In 1909 she married A.A. Mann.

Mary's obituary stated the couple left Volga and moved to Centralia, Washington, then to Twin Falls, Idaho, and finally to San Diego in 1912, where Mary Dickerson Truman died in 1918.

She is buried in Hillside Cemetery northwest of Volga near her first husband, Judge Truman's grave marker.

Scant records suggest Mann remained in San Diego after his wife's death. Military records show he registered for the draft

Continued on next page

stopped at 8:18

for WW II in San Diego in 1942 at the age of 62. This would have been Uncle Sam's "old man's draft," not intended to conscript but to do an inventory of skills and resources in a country going into war.

Mann also shows up as second husband in the family tree of Minne A. Johnson, widow of Frederick J. Walton. The family tree also shows a daughter, married name, Mary Walker. She would have become a step-daughter of August Albert Mann.



Mann's Store Clock

This could account for the names Reid and Mary Walker scribbled on a seed sack wrapped around the clocks when donated to the museum.

Mary Johnson Walker was born in 1918 in Tucson, AZ. She died in 1955 in Tucson.

Albert August Mann, died July 31, 1955 in Tucson, with his remains interred at Cypress View Mausoleum and Crematory in San Diego.

Albert's jewelry store in Volga may have been the first, but not the last. The last jewelry shop was that of Norman Lund, 1892-1976. Lund, now at rest in Oslo Lutheran Cemetery south of Volga is remembered for his jewelry and watch repair store in the 200 block of Kasan Avenue. His shop was in the front and living quarters in the back of a building between Dahl Hardware and the Volga Pool Hall. He grew up on a farm just across the county border in Lake County.

Before Norman Lund, Albert Christianson had a jewelry store in the teens and 20s, according to his son, Harold Christianson of Volga, now 91. Albert went on to be postmaster. Harold believes he sold the store to Watts Elgie, another Volga resident. Son Harold went on to a career in the postal service and after retirement became emeritus president of the museum board.

Harold, incidentally, had an uncle, B.C. Christianson, who purchased DeLange Red Cross Drug Store in 1906. A year earlier, our first jeweler, A.A. Mann, partnered with P.A. DeLange, moving his jewelry business into the Drug Store.

For some months, they advertised together. But when the sale of DeLange Drug was announced to B.C. Christianson in 1906, there was no mention of Mann and his jewelry. Was that the end of Mann's jewelry in Volga?

A.A. Mann's clocks give us a glimpse into history from a century ago.

They also raise questions. Did the clocks go with him west to Washington, Idaho, California and Arizona? Did he hang them in other jewelry stores? Did Mann remain a watchmaker or did he change professions? Regardless, the Brookings County Museum is grateful to have his clocks as a reminder of a bygone era. ❁❁

Wigs are needed for museum models

In 1967 Marlin Hinzel bravely volunteered to escort five lady mannequins from a Colorado donor back to the Brookings County Museum.

He packed the girls, arms and legs akimbo, in his car's back seat. Passersby stared. As soon as they could pull themselves back together, the mannequins became museum models.

The five, limbs back in place, are now being recalled back to museum duty, joining others to model period clothing in a new display of women's and girl's clothing. However, several of the ladies are now bald.

If you have a wig to donate, please call Darla Strande at 692-8179.

Dick Walder joins Hall of Fame

Dick Waldner of Brookings has been added to the South Dakota Horseperson of the Year Hall of Fame in the Horse-Drawn Museum that is part of the county museum complex.

The South Dakota Horse Council voted to establish its Hall of Fame in the museum building dedicated to the state's horse-drawn era.

Waldner's wife, Jo, is also listed in the museum's Horsepersons Hall of Fame.

History Facts

They didn't teach at school

There were times in the 1930s when almost everyone used cream in their coffee. They used it when pastures got dry and cows had to be content feasting on what was called "pepperweed". It flourished during the drought.

The pepperweed and also wild onions, gave milk an unusual taste. Nothing could filter out the taste of pepperweed and wild onions.

The way to get rid of the taste was to use cream from controlled dry-lot cattle-feeding operations. Many dairies found that milk to be palatable and saleable.

But where not available, coffee drinkers switched to black coffee, hold the cream.

George Mathews recalls early days

Mayor of the city of Brookings during 10 different years, a member of the first city council and instrumental in securing State College, the early life of George A. Mathews, an 86-year old Los Angeles man visiting here so parallels the growth of Brookings that he could literally walk off with the mythical title of "community daddy" if he desired.

A brother-in-law of Mrs. Horace Fishback, Sr., Mathews arrived in the city last week for a visit with old friends. He is staying at the Fishback home.

One of the oldest living early settlers in Brookings, if not the oldest, Mathews has historic incident after incident at his fingertips.

"There's no reason to believe that Brookings will not continue to grow larger, bigger and better than ever," the pioneer said, concluding an interview wherein he had mentioned numerous anecdotes and experiences during his early life here.

A young man of 27, Mathews came to Brookings in 1879 from Corning, Iowa, with his law partner John O'Brien Scobey. They drove a span of mules across the bleak prairie with their law books and belongings right behind them in the covered wagon.

Brookings was not yet then a reality, inhabited only by two individuals when he and his partner arrived at the original site.

Ever Peterson owned a blacksmith shop located in a sod dugout at what is now Medary and Sixth Street, and Halvor

Robey lived in a sod house where the (railroad) viaduct is on Sixth Avenue.

The original plat of the city was made during that year—three 40-acre tracts. Fountain was already a thriving community—with two stores, two blacksmith shops and several homesteads.

Medary, started in 1857, was also making a bid for the largest town, but lost out. The settlers annexed the county seat—comprised of James Hawkhurst (Hauxhurst), register of deeds, who possessed one book for record keeping.

"Brookings got its first real start that first year," the pioneer said. "Settlers here wanted this town built where it now stands and the railroad wanted it where Aurora now stands."

The settlers here were not to be denied, however, and agreed to relinquish their rights to certain land so that the railroad might build and thus assure the town being started here.

A vote on which settlement should have the county seat was decided in favor of Brookings, with Volga and Aurora losing out. James Hawkhurst (sic) picked up his record book and came here, according to Mathews.

He was a member of the territorial legislature at Bismarck in 1879, ten years before statehood. He served as president of the council, a body corresponding to the present senate. Representing the district of Brookings, Hamlin, Kingsbury and Deuel counties, he took an unusually active interest in territorial affairs.



A young George Mathews at 27, and at 86.

Mathews was the last delegate to the national Congress from D.T. under Cleveland in 1888. At one time he was prosecuting attorney for 23 counties in the state and participated in the first court ever held in several counties.

As a member of the Capital Commission of nine men appointed by the Territorial Legislature, Mathews was partly responsible for moving the capital from Yankton to Bismarck. The last session was held in Yankton in 1883. Scobey, his partner, was a member of the legislature, and appointed him to the commission.

Scobey was one of the main reasons for State College being located here, according to Mathews.

Contained in the final bill was a provision that the college would be located here if the people would donate 80 acres of land on which it should stand. Mathews in turn was instrumental in seeing this was done, and the land turned over on the site next door south of the Security National Bank.

Mathews left Brookings in 1910 because of the ill health of a daughter and has not been back since 1913. He is still in good health and drives his own car without the aid of glasses. ❀

You're Invited to The Brookings County Museum's

GIGANTIC YARD SALE

Saturday, May 15 ★ 8 am to 5 pm ★ Volga's beautiful City Park

You'll see everything from school desks to old lighting fixtures, antique furniture, shelving, cabinets, books, pictures, kitchenware, tools, knick-a-knacks and oodles of "you-name-its"!

Donor baptized there 76 years ago

Century-old Oslo baptismal font donated

A beautiful baptismal font that once graced the thriving Oslo Lutheran Church has been given to the Brookings County Museum.

For nearly a decade Oslo Lutheran was a quintessential rural church serving Scandinavian pioneer farmers who in the 1880s settled in Oslo Township south of Volga and east of Sinai.

It was founded in 1888 by eleven families, including Tollef Hammerness, John Hjelle, Ole Westrum, Carl Dahle, Pete Pederson, Ole Stumley, Martin Sterud, John Magistad, Isak Tvedt, J.E. Lerum and John Larson.

N. Brandt served the congregation as its first pastor, meeting with the members just once each month until June of 1889. The church then hired Markus Svaren, who would travel the area serving Oslo and six other area congregations.

For several years the founding families and others who later joined took turns holding services in their homes. They then met in a schoolhouse converted into a small church on land near the H.C. Hellekson farm.

In 1891 Ole Westrum donated land for a church and the converted schoolhouse was taken down and moved to the Westrum land where it was rebuilt into a church.

About 20 years later, the Westrum brothers sold a plot adjoining the church that became a cemetery.

Services were first held in the new building in 1893. Cost paid to contractor John Swenson of Lake County for re-building it was \$1,200.

By 1907 the carpentry talents of farmers/parishioners John Lund and Carl Pederson were called to service. They built an altar and the baptismal font that will now be displayed for the first time in the museum when it opens on May 30.

The font stands 53 inches high. It's hexagonal in shape, and its six sides fit together almost seamlessly, indicating the



Built by Oslo Township farmers.

talent and attention to detail Lund and Pederson had for woodworking. Their beautiful work was long before power tools came along.

The font's basin, in which consecrated water was placed, is a simple, unadorned, white enameled pan that in

the early 1900s when the font was fabricated could have been purchased as a wash basin at any hardware store in Volga or Sinai for less than a dollar.

The church and the farms surrounding the Oslo church thrived for a nearly a century, thanks to the hard work and farming knowledge of those who worked the fertile fields. The remarkable and dramatic advancement in farm equipment that began in the 1930s gradually replaced horse drawn equipment.

Ironically, as it was with so many rural churches, these technological advances in agriculture meant farm families could operate larger farms. Church membership started to decline.

With membership ebbing, the Oslo Lutheran Church was disbanded in 1982 with most of the members seeking solace at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Brookings. During its active use, the baptismal font was the focal point for more than 250 ceremonies.

One of those baptized at the Oslo Church was Blain Hoff, a retired Volga banker who is now the volunteer Oslo Cemetery caretaker. Hoff recently gave the font to the museum on behalf of all former Oslo Lutheran parishioners.

He had been baptized at the font on a cold Christmas Eve in 1944.

That historic Oslo font, now in its 115th year, is a simple but beautiful example of one the most important sacred icons in the Christian Church, and now becomes a permanent reminder of Brookings County's rural church history. ❀

Sturdy structure survived tornado

Twenty years after the Oslo Church was closed in 1982, a tornado roared through the area. Swooping over the church building caused only slight damage by nudging the old building slightly off its cement foundation.

However, the July 2002 storm did down many old trees on the church property, and several grave markers in the adjacent cemetery were damaged.

Brookingscountymuseum.org

Where history comes alive online.

Earned with blood, sweat, tears and \$18 bucks

Aaby–Zoll, 48 Andersons, 56 Johnsons and 3,500 county homesteaders

The Brookings County Museum now has a listing on its recently launched website of Brookings County's homesteaders.

Names from Carry Aaby of Brookings Township to John Zoll of Oslo Township and about 3,500 other homesteaders are listed at brookingscountymuseum.org.

The addition of this research service is part of the museum's expansion of its Archive Section. It has been vastly improved by volunteers working during the museum's pandemic closure.

Nestled on the list in between homesteaders Aaby and Zoll are 48 Andersons and 56 Johnsons and others who, between the 1870s up to the 1920s, joined the settlement parade, paid an \$18 fee, and pledged to improve in five years their 160 acres of the 805 square miles comprising Brookings County.

The alphabetized homesteader list also includes the legal location, indicating range, township and section where the homesteader settled.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act in 1862 granting free land to citizens willing to improve the land and pay a fee. Later, to encourage the growth of trees on the sparse prairie land, the Timber Culture Act of 1873 provided another 160 acres of which 40 acres had to be planted with trees.

The purpose was to provide the lumber that settlers would need to improve their homesteads, but also as a source of fuel and as a conservation measure and for ambiance. Later the act was amended requiring just ten acres of land be planted with trees.

Of the thousands that settled in Brookings County and elsewhere in South Dakota, about 40 percent stayed on and proved up on their land. Many of the homesteads on the Brookings County list reveal that generations of the original family have remained on the homestead.

An interesting aspect of the Brookings County homestead list is that about 32 square miles of land in Lake Hendricks and Oak Lake Townships was assigned to the Winona and St. Paul Railroad.

That railroad was one of the first to enter Dakota Territory, responding to the federal government's inducement of providing vast strips of land to those rail lines taking the chance and making the investment of laying down tracks and establishing depots along the route.

Organized in 1861, the Winona and St. Paul Railroad laid tracks from Tracy, MN., to Gary, DT., and then on to Watertown in what would become South Dakota in 1889. The rail line was later purchased by the Chicago and North Western Railroad, which came along too late to take advantage of the free land offer, and had to speculate.

Railroads became secretive as to their route plans so that right-of-way land could be bought up at the most favorable price, or donated on promise of future gain to landowners.

In addition to the list available on the museum website, a hard copy is available for viewing in the Brookings County Museum's redesigned and refurbished Archives Section. 🏠

What are they up to? Find out on page 11.



**From
the
vault**

Brookings Register April 18, 1964

Spring farm work delayed

Spring farm work in Brookings County is about a week behind normal due to cold weather, County Agent Al Aho, reports.

Brenda Ronning estate gift brings glitter to James Hauxhurst house

A special room in the James Hauxhurst house has been completed and decorated with selected wallpaper thanks to the late Brenda Bowena Ronning, whose estate provided funds helpful in completing the decade-long project.

Ronning died Dec. 2, 2017. Some of her jewelry was assigned to the museum at the suggestion of those involved in handling her estate. Proceeds from the sale of the jewelry was then used in helping fund the completion of the room's remodeling.

The historic house was built in 1884 by Hauxhurst adjacent to what is now the Brookings Public Library. It was moved to the museum in Volga's City Park in 2011 when the property it was on, plus others, was to be used for construction of the new Brookings County-Brookings and City government building on that portion along Third Street.

James Hauxhurst, often misspelled in the early days as Hawkhurst, was the first clerk of the then three-member Brookings County Commission when the county seat was located in Medary a few miles south of Brookings.

During his tenure with the commission, county citizens voted to move local government from Medary to Brookings. Hauxhurst was in charge of the canvassing board that verified the controversial vote awarding the county seat to Brookings rather than to Volga.

Ronning's gift helped refurbish one of the rooms that will be a bedroom complete with late 1800s

and early 1900s furnishings and embellishments. It is hoped the Hauxhurst house will be open along with the museum's five other buildings when the museum kicks off the summer season on Memorial Day weekend.



Brenda Ronning 1950 – 2017

Ronning was born in Hendricks, MN., in 1950, the daughter of Eddie and Rowena (Prevo) Ronning. She graduated from Hendricks High School in 1968 and from the University of South Dakota in 1972.

She joined the Army in 1973 and served overseas in Germany and South Korea. After her honorable discharge she returned to South Dakota and worked in Sioux Falls and Brookings with the Department of Social Services. She managed the Brookings office from 1983 to 2014.

The six-building Brookings County Museum complex is located in Volga's City Park. ❁

Brookings Register 1961

Lee and Company closed

Conrad, 82, and William, 66, appeared in court Monday to have the corporation, Lee and Company, dissolved. Their father started the business in Volga in 1892. The company's building, constructed in 1890, still stands on Volga's Main Street.

Brookings Register Dec. 1, 1972

Ray Schultz's Corner sold

Ray Schultz has sold Ray's Corner in Brookings to Donald Iverson. Schultz began working at Taylor's Corner while in high school in 1926. He bought the store in 1958.

Welcome newly elected board of director members



Dr. Janet Gritzner



Lynette Nelson

Newly elected to the Brookings County Museum Complex/Historical Society are Dr. Janet Gritzner of Brookings and Lynette Nelson of Volga.

Gritzner is retired as a professor emeritus of Geography after a 34-year career at South Dakota State University. She has also been a member of the Brookings History Preservation committee for several years.

Nelson, a native of the Beresford area, has been a resident of Volga for 47 years. She recently retired after a career of 37 years in banking. She was a teller at the First National Bank in Volga before being promoted to assistant cashier at the local bank that is now Bank Star Financial, Volga.

Nelson and Gritzner were elected to three-year terms on the museum's governing board; their terms will expire in December, 2023.

Maybe it is the Noble Trail

In the last Window issue, we reported that these old wagon wheel ruts in an Oslo Township field east of Sinai were most probably not a section of what is known as the historic 1850s Noble Trail. But some amateur historians in the area took issue. They contend that the ruts are undoubtedly remnants of the old federally funded wagon road headed west, and they could very well be correct. The road stopped at the Missouri River as railroads finished laying tracks to the west coast, and cancelled the need for a wagon road. For years pioneers probably used the Noble's road, and this photo may illustrate all that's left of it.



He's self-taught, making and playing them...

Volga man often just fiddles around the house

Editor's Note: The Brookings County Museum has had in its collection an old, beat-up and age-maligned violin marred by more than a century of dings and dents. The decision was made to ask Jerry Anderson of rural Volga if he could repair the instrument. Anderson agreed, donated his work, and the museum appreciates his efforts.

Jerry Anderson spends much of his well-earned retirement time at his rural Volga home just fiddling around.

After leaving behind the exacting maintenance work on complicated equipment at Twin City Fan and Blower Company and then at the South Dakota Disease and Animal Diagnostic Laboratory, the 1969 Volga High School graduate decided to try the violin, which in most quarters is also known as a fiddle.

He wasn't much of a fiddle fan before attending the state fiddle contest in Yankton, SD at the urging of Mick and Brenda Warbog. In fact, about all he knew about fiddles was that they were popular among area pioneers in the early days.

"They were small, easy to carry around, and provided a respite from the hard work of that era," Anderson said.

He was nudged along on his eventual quest to understand and appreciate fiddle music by the South Dakota Old Time Fiddlers group and the beautiful violin music that was part of the performances that he and his wife Nancy attended.

"I was never into music or belonged to the band or orchestra in high school so I didn't know what to expect," he said.

"We attended the State Fiddle Contest and I especially enjoyed listening to someone playing the fiddle," he said. "I was fascinated. It was incredible." He said he will never forget the lyrical, rich, vibrant and powerful fiddle tones he heard.

"My Friend Mick lent me a fiddle and showed me the basics for playing. My wife banished me to fourth floor of our two-story house during this time. I was told a violin and fiddle are the same instrument

but are set up differently and played differently."

He loved to fix things and it was a natural for him to read up on how to repair fiddles and start tinkering with them.

That sparked what has become Anderson's unusual and unique retirement hobby, plus providing a ripple of violin repair business thrown in.

He set out to learn as much as he could about violins. That included how to play one. He doesn't read music so it provided part of the challenge he wanted. He practiced and practiced and slowly learned



Jerry Anderson at work in his rural Volga home making or fixing his beloved fiddles.

how to play what is considered the most difficult musical instrument to master.

Today, he's one of the best and from time to time performs before appreciative audiences.

Anderson also reads all that he can about the fiddle. He's learned that every fiddle has small, sometimes undiscernible differences in tones. That's what Anderson said he finds so fascinating about playing, fabricating and repairing the instrument.

He gained much needed confidence in his ability to play the instrument and to talk the "fiddlers" language several years

ago when he and Nancy visited Branson, Mo., a popular vacation spot for country music enthusiasts. There, he heard about Mountain View, Ark., which describes itself as the folk music capital of the world.

They decided to visit the place, and Anderson found that it far exceeded what he expected. It was a remarkable place, he said. Fiddlers from far and wide seek out Mountain View. Anderson attended an outdoor fiddling event at which only the best fiddlers are invited to perform, and he loved it. Most of the fiddlers are local musicians, but others come from all over the world to listen and, hopefully, to practice their art.

Anderson took along the fiddle he had meticulously crafted in the unlikely event he'd ever be invited to play.

Being from South Dakota, the southerners enjoyed meeting him, and Anderson makes friends easily. Much to his surprise, he was invited to take part in a fiddle round, in which musicians sit in a circle in the park, and in turn, play a fiddle piece.

When it was Anderson's turn, he played one of his musical favorites, an old Canadian piece entitled "Maple Sugar." The fiddlers in the "round," and others listening in the park, loved it.

In fact, many in the "round" joined in with their instruments as they caught on to Maple Sugar's refrain. Anderson became better acquainted with an older fiddle player at the event who later shared with him a package of notes the elder had kept through the years, relating to the making and repairing of fiddles, along with other fiddle-related memorabilia.

Anderson says he is never satisfied, and will continue to work hard to become an even better fiddle player, to gain more knowledge and experience in the crafting of new fiddles, and in breathing new life into old fiddles, like the one he repaired for the Brookings County Museum. ❁

GIGANTIC YARD SALE

Saturday, May 15 ★ 8 am to 5 pm ★ Volga's beautiful City Park

If inclement weather, sales will be in museum buildings

From the vault

Brookings Register 1937

Amateurs dance and fiddle for awards

Bruce—The amateur dance and fiddling contest held on Wednesday evening sponsored by the Legion Auxiliary drew a large crowd. The judges for the contest were Hereman Halverson of Brookings, Ted Odegaard of Bruce and Nels Terkelsen of Volga.

The first prize of \$5 for square dance went to Elmer Sedig and family, including Mr. and Mrs. Sedig, their three daughters, Mrs. Vern Johnson, Mrs. Bruce Ribstein and Florence Sedig, and their three sons, Albin, Norman and Stanley.

Second prize of \$3 went to Mr. and Mrs. Ray Klein, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Perso, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Benz, and Mr. and Mrs. DeLong.

The grand prize of \$3 for all around dances went to Mrs. Cecil Halseth and Oscar Fystrom. Polka, first, Mrs. Frank Perso and Victor Benz. Schottische, first, Nadine Tollefson and Kenneth Loomis. Old-time waltz, first, Mrs. Clyde Ford and Oscar Tollfson.

Fiddlers contest, first, Clarence Anderson of Estelline. Second, tie, between Graham Coleman and Carl Anderson.

A special prize was given to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lilja who so delightfully danced the Swedish schottische.

The callers for the square dances were Ed Schultz and C. J. Borstad.

Coming Saturday, May 15

Bargains galore at gigantic yard sale



Old school desks ready to refurbish.



Hodge-podge and "what's this?" artifacts.



Unique kitchen table with tin flour bins.



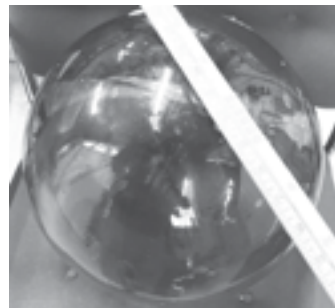
Wooden ice cream bucket



A little something of everything.



Dishes and chandeliers.
Glass Japanese fishnet float.



Museum editor finds scrapbook telephone surprise

Editor's Note: When I was a sophomore at State College trying to make it through on the GI Bill's \$110 a month, I made a little extra "eating money" working part time for then editor Dan Johnson at the Brookings Register. One day he assigned me to interview Perry Sutton about the fancy new dial telephones that were being distributed that year.

I had no idea at the time that 64 years later the story I wrote for the Register in 1957 would be reprinted in the Brookings County Museum's Window newsletter.

Tempted though I was as editor of the Window to edit the bad writing in the story below, I left all of it as it appeared in the Register in 1957.

Incidentally, one of those old dial phones, and several of old wall-mounted "stand-up-and-talk" party line telephones, plus other models, including cell phones, comprise the museum's new telephone display that you'll see at the museum after it opens at 1 p.m. on Memorial Day.

Also, I checked the museum's collection of old telephone books a few days ago and found that Perry's phone number before the new

1957 dial phones was installed was 12F52. The first two numbers are the party line's number. I don't know what the "F" stands for. But the last two digits were Sutton's "52" designation. According to a "code" assigned by the telephone company, the number five was signaled by two short turns of the phone's bell crank, and the two is signaled by two long cranks. So two shorts and two long rings alerted the Suttons that someone was calling them. If it was a neighbor on the same party line, the call could be made direct from one party line subscriber to another using the short and long cranks of the phone.

Only when calling someone on another line or when calling long distance, was it necessary to call the switchboard operator.

After the new dial phones were hooked up the cost was raised to \$2 per call. Sutton's phone number after the 1957 switch-over became Oxford 3-3363.

Now you can read the accompanying story.

Sutton the first to talk on Bruce phone to Brookings

When Perry Sutton, who lives on a farm northwest of Brookings, lifts the telephone receiver from the shiny dial faced cradle and calls the rural operator in Brookings this week, his voice will be the first to be carried over the new Brookings County Telephone Cooperative line.

However, it isn't the first time Sutton's words have been the first to disturb the atoms of new telephone wires leading from Brookings.

In 1905 when Sutton was nine years old he made another such call—over the first telephone line to stretch between Bruce and Brookings.

Sutton made that call from his father's home a mile north of the Sioux River

bridge on Highway 14. LeRoy Steuerwold lives there now.

Sutton still recalls his brief 11-word conversation with the Brookings operator 65 years ago.

He said he was more excited over that call because it was his first experience with a telephone. None the less, young Sutton stepped up to the odd-looking contraption hanging on the wall and uttered those historic first words.

The operator on the other end probably wasn't too surprised when she heard a boy's voice address her, saying the natural thing one says when beginning a telephone conversation—a simple "hello."

Sutton said he could hear her fine. "Just like talking face-to-face," he recalled.

Although coaxed by his parents and telephone company men present to say more, young Sutton signed off immediately after his short greeting.

It wasn't goodbye however. He said: "There's someone here who wants to talk to you." He then relinquished the receiver to a lineman for further testing.

The telephone line that Sutton inaugurated was built during the winter of 1904-05.

Bruce residents were then isolated from other communities except for telegram messages.

Because of this, Bruce officials asked the Brookings Telephone Company to install lines between the two communities.

The Brookings company agreed, but it

Continued on next page



A Brookings telephone company line crew and two tired horses head out to the poles in the early teens with a full load of phone wire which once strung up became the well-remembered party lines. (Brookings Municipal Utilities photo)

was decided the venture would be on a cooperative basis, with each town putting up half the line.

After hasty planning, workmen from the two towns began the project. Each crew started in its town and worked toward the other.

Although not intended as such, the situation presented an excellent opportunity for a friendly race between the crews. Sutton remembered residents placing small bets on their favorite group of workers.

Though urged on by the competition, the work proceeded slowly.

Putting up a phone line in those days wasn't as easy as it is today, Sutton said. "The telephone poles were hauled out by wagon and the holes were dug and the poles placed, all by hand."

A few weeks after the race started, it was all over. The Brookings crew reached the Sutton farm, the halfway point, well ahead of the Bruce workmen.

While the Brookings linemen waited for the Bruce crew, they hooked up the Sutton phone. When the losing crew arrived days later, the one-wire main line was spliced and all that remained was the testing—which was Sutton's job.

"There wasn't much advantage in having a phone during the rest of that winter," he remembered. The lines were strung in such haste that there weren't any patrons except a few of us connected to the line, consequently we didn't have anyone to call anyway, he said.

In the spring, however, the Sutton family was kept busy acting as "central." After other farms had been connected, it was found that there wasn't sufficient power to carry a voice the entire distance between the two towns.

Each time someone in Bruce wanted to call Brookings, or vice versa, the Sutton family acted as a relay station. "That kept us pretty busy," he said.

Now, 52 years after the first line was erected between the towns, the old phones are being pulled off the walls to make room for the new dial type phones.

But in Sutton's home, and in homes throughout the area, the old "stand-up-and-talk" will not be completely forgotten. Until it is covered, a clear imprint of its bulky presence will remain on the wallpaper where it once hung—reminding phone owners of what used to be. ❀

Sinai's 1929 switchboard on display

An interesting old piece of electronic wizardry that was necessary to keep the early-day telephones running has been donated to the Brookings County Museum by Mark and Sharon Stime of Brookings.

A 1929 telephone switchboard used by the Farmers Mutual Telephone Company of Sinai will become a part of the museum's still developing display of telephone history in Brookings County.

Stime's great grandfather Ole O. Stime was a founding member of the Sinai company in 1903, and the switchboard was acquired after the original board, located in the Borsvold store in old Sinai, had to be replaced due to growth of telephone use.

The new switchboard was moved into "new" Sinai to an upstairs apartment of the store building built by Hans Erickson and occupied by Alfred Mathison.

Mark Stime acquired the switchboard from the late Bob Gaard of Brookings. In 1957, Gaard was instrumental in merger negotiations with the Farmers Mutual of Sinai and the Brookings phone company at the onset of the technological improvement and conversion to dial phones.

The Kellogg Switchboard Company of Chicago made the board. It was said to have the very latest in magneto equipment. It was needed because by then the Sinai system had 140 telephones to serve. In 1929, incidentally, most of those 140 phones were on party lines, with some having up to 16 telephone customers.

With that many party line phones, a coded ringing system was necessary to signal which patron was being called. This code consisted of combinations of short rings and long rings.

Since all phones on the party line would ring, parties on that line could signal one another by ringing the proper code by turning the crank operating the magneto generator in the phone.



Telephone numbers included four numbers, the first two numbers indicating which line the phone was on, and the last two the individual family on that line.

Only when calling to a different line or when a long-distance call was made was it necessary to seek the assistance of the operator at the central switchboard.

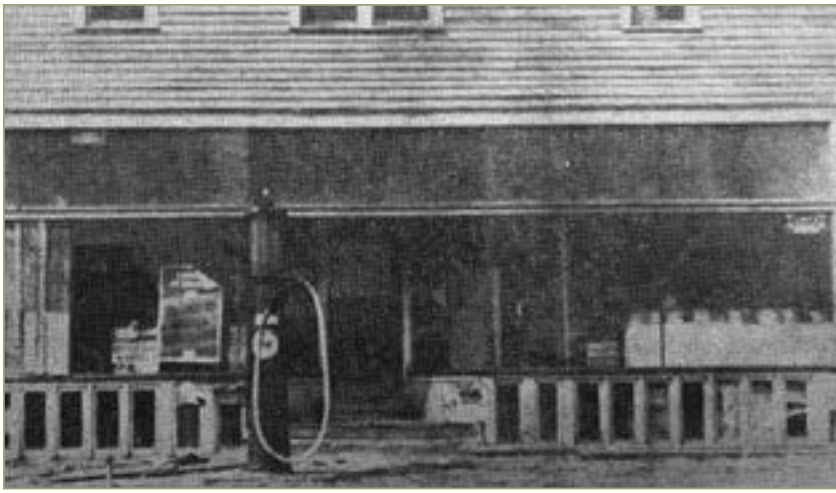
When assistance was needed to talk to others on other lines, or make a long-distance call, the user cranked out two long rings for the switchboard operator.

After the merger, the Farmers Mutual became the Brookings-Lake Telephone Company. ❀



Here's what they were working on

The museum construction crew members were assisting chief engineer and museum board member Dick Berreth of rural White in building a back porch for the museum's newest structure, the refurbished James Hauxhurst house. In the photo on page six, board members assisting Berreth were, from left, Darla Strande, Phil Wagner and Shirley Deethardt. Berreth, who is retired professional engineer, is far right.



Como became Ahnberg, then just Raad's Store

By 1938 when this photo was taken, all that was left in the now defunct town of Ahnberg (A.K.A. Como) five miles north of Sinai, was the famous Raad Store, operated by Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Raad. He was the town's postmaster when the town was established in 1920. Despite the loss of citizens through the years, the Raad Store kept right on trucking until the 1950s. It was the place to go because of its plethora of goods. When the town was Como, before the Post Office asked that its name be changed to avoid confusion with another South Dakota town with a similar name, it was thriving, with a bank, lumber yard, garage, machine shop, a dance hall, an elevator and two stores. When all else failed, the Raad Store remained, with its exceptionally well stocked shelves holding everything from soup to nuts, buggy whips, gasoline in the gravity-fed pump, ice cream in the summer, castor oil, gizmos and wing nuts, on up to \$400 kerosene burning refrigerators. The Brookings County Museum now displays a scale model of the town made by Roger Seas.



Answering the call

Deb Waltman, Brookings, answered our "wanted" call, giving two telephones that belonged to her mother, Mrs. Christine Koegler. One phone was used on the Koegler's rural Brookings farm home and the other served the family in Brookings. Thank you, Deb.

Join us and become a member today!
 History Comes Alive at the Brookings County Museum

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