



# The Window

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BROOKINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Volunteers rank high on Museum's 2023 needs list

*Greeters and leaders,  
painters and stainers,  
editors and guides*

Brookings County Museum President Shirley Deethardt of Aurora reviewed past accomplishments and set current year goals in her report at the museum's 55th annual meeting held at the museum January 7, 2023.

Included in accomplishments during the preceding year were the naming and improvements of the Howard and Gladys Lee Music Room and preliminary work on the Main Museum's new Woman's Vintage clothing display case, made possible with a \$1,000 start-up grant from the Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round-Up grant. Additional funding in excess of \$4,000 for the building of the display case was also received last year from the estate of the late Clair Husby.

Deethardt also singled out the successful design and completion of custom-manufactured storm doors for the James Hauxhurst House front and back doors.

Remaining to be done with the front entry this year, she said, was finding volunteer help to take on the job of stripping old coats of paint from the 1884 home's original large wooden front door, staining and re-finishing it.

Deethardt said the slight damages to the museum received during the 2022 Derecho have been repaired. Because of the storm, the board worked with Volga City employees to trim additional trees near the museum to reduce possible wind damage to buildings.



**Re-elected officers of the Brookings County Museum at its January annual meeting were, front row from left, Phil Wagner of Brookings, vice-president; Shirley Deethardt, rural Aurora, president; Darla Strande, Brookings, treasurer; and standing, Bob Buchheim, Volga, secretary.**

Deethardt thanked the museum board of directors who helped stage a very successful event honoring the many volunteers who helped the museum for the year and especially during the museum season.

Museum goals for the current year include completion of the Woman's Vintage Clothing display case in the main museum, completion of the Hauxhurst House kitchen and front door refurbishing projects as well as repainting the front porch. Volunteers are welcome to help in any capacity.

Other goals of the board for the current year include recruiting a new editor

for the museum's quarterly Window newsletter. Chuck Cecil initiated the museum newsletter in 1998 and plans to retire this year.

The museum president also stressed the hope of finding volunteer board of director members as well as individual museum volunteer greeters and guides for the approaching museum summer season.

If you are interested in volunteering at the museum, please call museum volunteer coordinator Darla Strande of Brookings at 605-691-1007. ❁

# A Fountain, a baritone and a 1920s band

Except for a few years following its establishment as a city in 1879, Fountain was mostly abandoned by about 1883, when its handful of businesses moved its products or services lock, stock and barrel eight miles southwest. There, they became a part of the sprouting, chest-thumping City of Brookings after it was selected as a depot town on the newly-laid railway track west of Aurora.

Until then, Fountain folks had hoped to be on that goldmine of a rail line.

But the hopes of Fountain, so named because of an unusually large number of clear water wells that bubbled out of the land in that vicinity, came up dry and its future rather quickly faded into being just another of the more than 100 Brookings County school districts.

But in spirit, the little town never really faded or died away.

Only its character changed.

It was no longer a bustling community of homes and businesses, but instead it grew into a strong, proud, close-knit rural neighborhood made up of the surrounding farm families held together by the old, wood-framed well-funded rural school. By the early 1920s, as the wooden-walled school structure began to show its age, the rural families of Fountain came together and built what became arguably the finest, most impressive rural school building around.

That two-story brick structure is still standing, having been converted to an apartment building in the 1960s.

One of the reminders of Fountain's early days was recently donated to the Brookings County Museum.

It's an old brass baritone horn and packet of music that belonged to Floyd Engel and was recently donated by his daughter Karel Williams of Sioux Falls. The Fountain Community Band played in parades, at baseball games during the summer, at school dances, as well as concerts featuring marches, fox trots, quick steps, waltzes and two steps.

The Engel baritone instrument and the music are probably the last reminders of the Fountain Community Band that was comprised of area farmers as well as a few Fountain school students who represented Fountain well during the days when nearly every community in the county had a brass band.

Also donated by Mrs. Williams are the minutes of the Fountain Community Band's meetings, including its organizational meeting, recorded Dec.



This impressive two-story brick school house was built in Fountain eight miles northeast of Brookings in 1921 at a cost of \$18,000. It building still stands, as an apartment building.

20, 1922 by newly-elected secretary, baritone player Floyd Engel. That meeting was held in the home of the Fountain Community Band President Albert Jessen. The minutes indicate that Louis Eberlein, Jr., was elected vice-president. The band had about 18 members who paid dues of \$2 a month to pay its director, R.L. Rhodes of nearby White, and for incidentals such as sheet music.

The minutes of that first meeting of the Fountain Community Band also report that "it was agreed the band buy and own the bass horn and the bass drum only." Other instruments were the property of various band members.

President Jessen was given the authority to buy the two instruments with anticipated proceeds from a planned band-sponsored dance featuring not one, but two dinners, to be held at the Aurora Hall. Admission

for the dance and the two dinners was set at one dollar, the minutes report.

At the next band meeting on Jan. 3, 1923, also held at the Jessen home, band members decided its meetings and practices on Monday and Tuesday nights starting at 7 p.m. would be held in the newly-built Fountain brick school house.

Meeting nights were later changed to Monday and Saturday nights so as to avoid two nights of practice because of study hardships for some of the members in the

band who were Fountain school students.

Some of the practices of the band were held in conjunction with the Bushnell band, the minutes indicate. These joint practices were in preparation for Bushnell's participation in the Gala Celebration in nearby White on June 15, 1923. For that celebration, the joint band marched in the parade, followed by a concert at 10 a.m. Instruments were taken up again later that day to provide music for two baseball games.

There is no record of when the band ceased to exist. Its minutes record only band business for 1922 and 1923, but it's possible the band held on for a few more years after that.

The Engel baritone instrument and music packet are now on display in the museum's music room. ❀



The wood-frame schoolhouse was the first in Fountain, built in the summer of 1879 by Ledger and Farwell of Sioux Falls. Ed Spurling taught the first school there in the winter of 1879-1880. Pictured with his students in about 1915 is John Bulger, teacher. Seven years later the bigger brick building shown on page 2 was constructed.

## The 1922 Fountain Community Band

**Director:** R. L. Rhodes

**Officers:** A.C. Jessen, president, L.A. Eberlein, treasurer, and Floyd C. Engel, secretary

**Members:**

**Cornet:** Albert Jessen, Louise Eberlein, Jr., John Vasslaar, Jr., Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Harms, Harold Rossman and LeRoy Rusch. **Clarinet:** Ralph Lang and Raymond Rossman. **Trombone:** Jay Sanders, Vincent Bane, Akey Arends, Ralph Harms and Jacob Tresler. **Baritone:** Floyd Engel and Murray Lievan. **Alto:** Fred Rusch and Wayne Garrison. **Bass Horn:** Claus Arends **Bass Drum:** A.J. Engel. **Snare Drum:** Clyde Engel. **Saxophone:** Lonis Eberlein, Jr.



Members of the Fountain School/Community Band are, front row from left, LeRoy Rusch, Raymond Rossman, A. J. Engel (bass drum), Clyde Engel (snare drum), and Henry Steffen. Second row, Okey Arends and Vincent "Spud" Bane, (both with trombones). Third row, Harold Rossman, Ralph Harms and Jonnie Vaselaar. Back row, Floyd Engel (with baritone now on display at museum), Claus Arends, Lonis Eberlein and Murray Lievan. Not pictured, Lloyd Garrison, Wayne Garrison and Ruth Engel.



This baritone, played by the late Floyd Engels, was donated to the museum by Karel Engels Williams of Sioux Falls on behalf of her father and the other members of the famed Fountain Community/School band.

## Thank you Volunteers

At the Brookings Museum, volunteers make the world go around. Below are most of those who donate their time and effort to helping greet and guide the museum's guests during the museum summer season.

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Anderson, Jerry    | King, Rod             |
| Anderson, LeRoy    | Kleinjan, Don         |
| Anderson, Nancy    | Kratochvil, Patty     |
| Anderson, Ruth     | Meyer, Barb           |
| Anderson, Sonja    | Molengraaf, Henrietta |
| Berry, Chuck       | Melquist, Alvina      |
| Berry, Mary Lou    | Moss, Deb             |
| Beukelman, Harold  | Moss, Laura           |
| Beukelman, Betty   | Nelson, Lynette       |
| Buchheim, Bob      | Nelson, Lynnal        |
| Bjerke, Mary       | Oines, Duane          |
| Cecil, Chuck       | Oines, Irene          |
| Crosser, Barb      | Pirlet, Janel         |
| Deethardt, Shirley | Sandness, Roger       |
| Derdall, Don       | Sapp, Andrea          |
| Dusharm, Gary      | Sapp, Charles         |
| Eggebraaten, Ted   | Siegel, Shana         |
| Eggebraaten, Lou   | Stensgaard, Arden     |
| Gritzner, Janet    | Stensgaard, Darla     |
| Hampton, Karen     | Strande, Darla        |
| Havrevold, Floyd   | Strande, Russ         |
| Havrevold, Cheryl  | Strande, Lloyd        |
| Higgins, Cal       | VanderWal, Susan      |
| Hillestad, Barb    | Ulvestad, Cindy       |
| Hanson, Dennis     | Ulvestad, Clyde       |
| Hanson, Kathy      | Ust, Doris            |
| Holm, Carol        | Ust, Larry            |
| Hope, Marvin       | Volga City Employees  |
| Husher, Al         | Wagner, Roberta       |
| Husher, Dorothy    | Wagner, Phil          |
| Jacobson, Cindy    |                       |
| Johnson, Patsy     |                       |

# The 1884 Farrington Hotel guest book: Did a president really stay there?

Old hotel's record book is back home; filled with mysteries.

A 16-pound, three-inch thick guest registration book with about 320 pages filled with hundreds of names of the guests who stayed at the Farrington Hotel in Volga in 1883-84 has been donated to the Brookings County Museum.

The Farrington was one of four hotels in Volga in the early 1880s. It was built in the winter of 1879-80 when Volga was the Chicago North Western Railroad's track terminus for that long, hard winter of halted rail laying work. The Farrington, a two-story, nearly half-block long wood-frame building located about where the old creamery building is now located near the railroad tracks on Main Street, was much in demand in the 1880s and 1890s.

It was the premier hotel in Volga. In addition to room rentals and a restaurant, the Farrington enjoyed a thriving liquor business.

The four hotels provided temporary housing for hundreds of off-work railroad employees waiting for the next construction season, settlers arriving to take up nearby homestead land, and for the influx of salesmen (then known as drummers) who were constantly locating in or passing through town. Hundreds of travelers elected to stay overnight after a jarring ride on the newly-built Chicago and North Western rail line which passed through Volga headed east or west four times daily.

Volga was a busy, thriving place.

The Farrington's old registration book is something like a twice given gift to the curious and to historians. It was first a book of arrivals to Volga, but after its pages were filled with guests checking into the historic hotel it was no longer useful. The book was somehow acquired by the Leeds Importing Company and about half of those huge pages with hotel guest names were used to file away the company's invoices and salesmen's expense account reports.



The camera was pointed to the southwest in about 1915 and the Farrington Hotel can be seen in the center of this photograph. Note Volga's Hospital, built in 1910, at the upper far right corner of the photo. The building at lower far right is Volga's Depot, which burned in 1936. This photo was believed to be taken from one of the town's several grain elevators. (Museum Photo)



The guest book shows the names and hometowns of Farrington Hotel guests on Friday, Sept. 12, 1884. The page opposite the name-filled page is an ink blotter. Quill-tipped pens were used at the hotel then. Museum Photo

Leeds Importing bought and sold horses and had an army of salesmen who covered the mid-west, "drumming up" sales and providing related services for its world-wide horse business. Among the many invoices in the book are salesmen's expense reports that include costs of everything from railway fares throughout the Midwest to hotel prices, including meals and the cost of hay, oats and blacksmith charges, travel and horse-related costs during the late 1880s and early 1900s.

One expense account report includes "bedding car, hay, etc. 75 cents; rope, 25cents; supper @ Grand Island, 40 cents;

Railroad fare, \$2.20; horse feed, 25cents, and meal at Omaha, 50 cents."

Often the drummers set up offices for doing business in hotels around the sales territory, then advertised in the local newspaper and invited interested buyers to see them at the make-shift hotel "office," so there is a relationship between the big book of Farrington Hotel guest registrants and its later use as a unique filing system for the Leeds Company and its "Olive Branch Stock Farm" at Adrian, Mn.

The invoices and other paper records were "filed" by pasting them over the hotel guest

names on about a hundred of the pages, so many hotel guest names are lost forever. But other pages are packed with names of Volga's "stopper's by," during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The most unusual "stopper by" listed in the 1883-84 registry section of the book is the guest who appears to have checked in to the Farrington after arriving in Volga aboard one of the four Chicago and North Western trains that stopped in town daily.

The name "Stephen Grover Cleveland, Albany, N.Y.," and one other unreadable name are the only listings in the record book indicating who stayed at the Farrington on December 30, 1883.

Interestingly, future president Stephen Grover Cleveland was then serving as Governor in the state's capitol, Albany, N. Y. He served as New York's governor from Jan. 1, 1883 to Jan. 6, 1885, when he resigned to seek the presidency.

Is the listing of a future president the real thing?

It could be, but that will take further and very detailed research.

Possibly the listing is merely a joke dreamed up by some bored post-New Year's Day clerk at the Farrington Hotel in Volga, Dakota Territory.

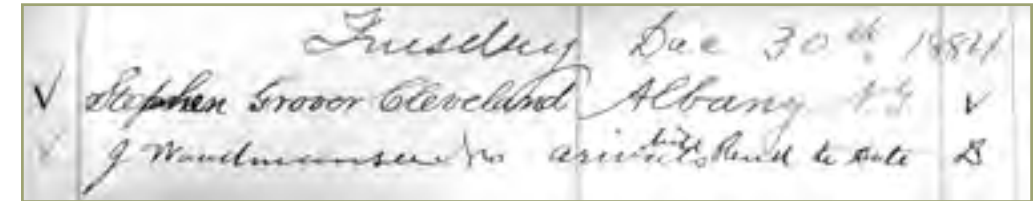
Perhaps not.

But since business at the hotel on any day of the year usually amounted to from 10 to 20 guests checking in and registering, the fact that only two listings are mentioned on Dec. 30 adds to the mystery.

And common sense would ask why the governor of New York would be traveling with just one aide out in far-off Dakota Territory in the first place? Surely the Farrington Hotel clerk would have indicated the number of all of the governor's traveling entourage if the listing was legitimate.

Years later, President Cleveland was instrumental in the preliminary work of forming and signing into law the framework of creating a North and South Dakota. President Benjamin Harrison later did the actual signing in 1889.

Another Grover Cleveland listing mystery is that after his name in the registration



The only guests at the Farrington Hotel on Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1884, was possibly Stephen Grover Cleveland of Albany, N.Y. and one other whose name is unreadable. Was New York governor and future White House resident actually a guest at the Farrington in Volga? Or was it a bored hotel clerk's joke? More research is needed. (Museum Photo)

book is the letter "V" printed in the column used to indicate the meal needs of each registrant, with the clerk writing in either a "B" (breakfast), a "D" (dinner) or an "S" (supper). None of those letters are written in the column after Cleveland's name, but the column mysteriously includes the letter "V".

What does that stand for?

No one knows. So for now, the Brookings County Museum board is skeptical of the Cleveland signing being the actual signature or an indication that future president Cleveland actually stopped in Volga. More research will be done to try to find answers to the mystery.

Another book mystery is how the tome found its way back to Volga after more than a century.

Well, a message about the book was recently left on the museum answering

machine from a man named Henry Exoo of New Ulm, MN. Museum board officers Darla Strande and Phil Wagner followed up and learned that now retired Exoo had once worked as a hotel clerk in New Ulm.

A stranger, then the book's owner, had heard of Exoo's hotel work and of his brief knowledge of Volga, S.D., and one day just dropped the book off at Exoo's home, giving no explanation of where the book had been, how he had acquired it, or anything else about the book.

During discussions with Strande and Wagner, Exoo offered to donate the book to the Brookings County Museum.

Phil Wagner sent Exoo a check for \$23 to cover the cost of mailing it to the museum, where after more than 14 mysterious decades, it is finally "back home."



In its second life, the Farrington Hotel registration book held invoices and other important paper work (right hand pages) for the Leeds Import Company. Museum Photo

802 pounds of lard = 400 rounds of ammunition

# Kitchen fat a hot commodity during WW II

by Chuck Cecil, Window Editor

You'll probably just throw away those bacon residuals simmering in your frying pan come morning.

Bacon grease was once a hot item worth cold cash.

And it surely saved some lives.

During World War II, Brookings County housewives were saving and then selling bacon and other kitchen fats. They didn't do it for the money, however. They did it out of patriotism.

In 1942, more than a ton of the grease was brought in to Brookings butchers who ladled out four cents a pound for it, then sold it to the government for a nickel a pound. They also received special points for the purchase of rationed products.

The kitchen lard was used to make glycerin, which was handy in making ammunition, gun recoil mechanisms, propellants and other articles of war. It was also useful in the production of the Plexiglass in aircraft gun turrets and cockpits.

During a one-month period when most every home in the county had a grease tin can near the stove to hold the lard until there was enough for the butcher, meticulous records were kept. During one week of July of 1942 Brookings County housewives turned in 802 pounds of the

stuff, all properly strained to remove meat particles and other foreign objects.

Housewives in Bruce area set out to be the best lard hoarders in the county. They succeeded.

The girls of Bruce were the per-housewife Brooking County Champion Fat Savers, where a handful of cooks turned in 111 pounds of grease. That was sufficient, county fat collector organizers said, to make enough glycerin to fire 260 anti-tank shells.

First week records also showed that Brookings, with far more bacon and beef eaters than Bruce, turned in 674 pounds of grease; Volga housewives were far behind with just 12 pounds; and White gathered just five pounds.

Together, that 802 pounds provided glycerin enough to fire off more than 400 rounds of anti-tank shells. Surely one or two of those Brookings County fat pounds provided the power to drive a missile into the thick sides of a German Tiger or a rumbling Japanese Shi-Ki somewhere in the world.

As the drive continued through the summer, farm wife Mrs. T. V. Gudehus of northern Brookings County became the county's fat collecting champ. She turned in 104 pounds of it, crediting her victory to the fact that the drive coincided with butchering at the Gudehus farm.

For the entire state, the War Production Board set a kitchen fat goal of 85 tons for each month during 1942.

As the quest for kitchen fats continued through the year, an unexpected problem arose with the shortage of tin cans in which to put the grease. Local groups, including the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Brookings Jaycees and church groups sponsored tin can drives. And local movie theaters often offered free Saturday afternoon admission to kids who brought along empty, clean and clanging tin cans.

Brookings cans were bought by local scrap dealers and sent east to be melted down. It took 500 pounds of tin cans to make one .50 caliber machine gun.

So along with everything else in Brookings County, even empty tin cans to hold the grease were becoming scarce.

Some housewives just turned the can and its grease content over to the butcher. Others borrowed a knife from the butcher, scraped out their coagulation, and took the can back home for another go-round.

Eventually, even the county's butchers were hard pressed for cans. But in the end it all worked out for the good, and Brookings County's four-cent a pound grease surely helped win the war. 🌿

# Grateful for our 2021–2022 donors

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Erik & Kay	Dahl	Cal	Higgins	Howard & Loretta	Lindberg	Duane	Sander	Bruce & Beverly	Wosje
Bill & Tracy	Dahl-Webb	Ken	Higgins	Grace	Linn	Roger & Linda	Sandness	Chad & Rhonda	Wosje
Richard & Jane Mershon	Daly	Robert Kil Suk	Hill	Norma	Linn	Rod & Deb	Schaefer	Mary Jo & James	Sundet-Wyrick
Nancy	DeBlonk	Ron & Barb	Hillestad	Kathy	Loban	Virginia	Schlimmer	Tom & Gwen	Yseth
Shirley	Deethardt							Wm & Bonnie	Zink

## Memorial Gifts

October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2022

Jerome & Maxine Leslie	In Memory of Harold Christiansen
Gary & Judy Duffy	In Memory of Sheldon Cotton
Donald & Judi DeZeeuw	In Honor of Rufus & Gertrude DeZeeuw
Thomas Hammer	In Memory of Stan & Harriette Hammer
Thomas Hammer	In Memory of Stan & Harriette Hammer
Thomas Hammer	In Memory of Howard Lee
Robert Hansen	In Memory of Howard Lee
Blaine & Margie Hoff	In Memory of Howard Lee
Gladys Lee	In Memory of Howard Lee
Grace Linn & Family	In Memory of Howard Lee
Jerome & Maxine Leslie	In Memory of Howard Lee

Kathy Lee, Gary & Susan Lee	In Memory of Howard Lee
Dave & Terry Lee, Ken and Anita Ezuck	In Memory of Howard Lee
Darla Strande	In Memory of Howard Lee
Jim & Terri Strande	In Memory of Howard Lee
Dave & Dixie Strande	In Memory of Howard Lee
Larry Ust	In Memory of Howard Lee
David Strande	In Memory of Pete Lee
Darla Strande	In Memory of Pete Lee
Joel Osbeck	In Memory of Lyle Osbeck
Linda Vogl	In Memory of Lyle Osbeck

[Brookingscountymuseum.org](http://Brookingscountymuseum.org)

where history comes alive

## Editor wanted

The Brookings County Museum has an urgent need for someone to serve as volunteer editor for its quarterly newsletter, The Window. If you have a bent for writing, like a challenge and have a love of Brookings County history, you qualify. Training is available along the way. For more information, call Chuck Cecil at 605-691-1882 or Darla Strande at 605-691-1007.

## Directors named

Five members of the Brookings County Museum Board of Directors agreed to serve another three-year term at the museum's annual meeting. The term extends through December, 2024.

Board members include Marv Hope of Volga; Darla Strande of Brookings; Dorothy Husher of Sinai; Phil Wagner of Brookings; and Cindy Jacobson of Volga.

## Allegra FootPRINT fund

The Brookings County Museum has again been awarded a grant earmarked to help fund the printing and mailing of the museum's quarterly newsletter, The Window.

The award comes from the Brookings Allegra's FootPRINT Fund and is of great help in producing the museum's publication. Thank you Allegra.

# Pie Day honors volunteers for their special service

In appreciation for their service as greeters and guides, museum volunteers stopped by the Volga Community Center October 14 for Volunteer Pie Day.

Joining the celebration were Alvina Molquist, Henrietta Molengraaf, Lynnal Nelson, Lynette Nelson, Darla and Arden Stensgaard, Cheryl and Floyd Havrevold, Dennis Hanson, Susan VanderWal, Lou and Ted Eggebraaten, Janel Pirllet, Doris and Larry Ust, Cindy and Clyde Ulvestad, Dorothy and Al Husher, Gary Dusharm, Barb Meyer, Patsy Johnson, Barb Crosser, Roger Sandness, Marv Hope, Bob Buchheim Harold Beukelman, Don Derdell, Rod King, Barb Hillestad, Shana Siegel, Karen Hampton, Phil Wagner, Roberta Wagner, Chuck Cecil, Shirley Deethardt and Darla Strande.



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

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**Museum Phone: 605-827-2303**  
**Website: brookingscountymuseum.org**  
**Memorial Day through Labor Day**  
 1:00 – 4:00 pm daily  
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Brookings County Historical Society

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