

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News Release

March 26th WCHS Annual Meeting to Mark 75th Year of Service

Rare John Runk Film Footage to be Shown

Open to the public, RSVP by March 18

The Washington County Historical Society, the primary resource for the collection, preservation and sharing of historical objects, will hold the 2009 annual meeting March 26, 2009, commemorating its 75th anniversary. The event is open to members and non-members.

A highlight of the evening will be the special, premiere viewing of rare film footage shot by prolific Washington County photographer John Runk during the mid-20th century. The films were donated to the WCHS in 2008 and the footage has not yet been widely viewed.

Event Details

When/Where: Thursday, March 26, 2009 at the Water Street Inn,
101 South Water Street in Stillwater

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.: Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.: Dinner

7:30 - 8:00 p.m.: Meeting

8:00 - 9:00 p.m.: "History of the Washington County Historical Society"
including an exclusive sneak preview of the newly acquired John Runk Films,
presented by Brent Peterson, Executive Director.

\$27 for Members, \$30 for Non-Members

To make your reservations, call the WCHS at 651-439-5956 no later than
March 18.

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WCHS Executive Director Brent Peterson will read a letter from Nina Archibal, the Executive Director of the Minnesota Historical Society. In the congratulatory letter she writes:

"From the start WCHS upheld the tradition that Minnesota historical organizations exist in the present and look toward the future. At the first meeting of your society, Rev. Albert Ernst presented "Objectives for the Immediate Future." Now, 75 years later, the society is still forward-looking as it carefully plans how to carry out its mission. Our historical organizations are all about the future."

Archibal also writes: "Theodore Blegen, one of my predecessors, had the honor of addressing 75 citizens who defied the economic realities of the Great Depression to found a historical society on April 11, 1934. WCHS documented those trying days and now provides a basis for understanding the nation's current economic crisis."

Historic, Humble Beginnings

Founded April 11, 1934, the Washington County Historical Society is a private, non-profit educational institution with more than 700 members.

In the early years of the society, the membership meetings were held at the Stillwater Public Library. The Society's first president was Edward E. Bloomquist, who was Washington County School Superintendent. The first donation to the new society was the book *History of Washington County and the St. Croix Valley* by Warner and Foote published in 1881 which was donated by Miss Hermie Johnson and the book was from the collection of Mrs. McGregor. [The records do not give McGregor's first name.]

In 1941, the Society purchased the Warden's House Museum in Stillwater from the state. It is one of the state's oldest buildings as well as its second oldest continuously operating house museum. The Society leased the Hay Lake School for a museum in 1974 and purchased it from the Forest Lake school district in 1978. The school's neighbor, the Johannes Erickson Log House, was donated to the Society in the early 1980s, moved to the site and restored.

All three buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic family-owned Boutwell Cemetery west of Stillwater was purchased in 1978.

In 1996, the Society reconstructed the Carriage House located behind the Warden's House. In 2001, climate control enhancements were added and the textile collection and archives were moved into the new facility.

The Society's research library has been growing since that first meeting back in 1934. It is housed in the reconstructed carriage house behind the Warden's House Museum in Stillwater. The WCHS endowment fund was established in 1984 to provide a source of funding for everyday administrative and operating expenses.

Founded in 1934, the Washington County Historical Society is a private, donor-supported, nonprofit organization with more than 700 individual, family, and business members. WCHS is supported by individual gifts, memberships, earned income, and foundation grants. For more information, please visit www.wchsmn.org.