200 N. Poplar · P.O. Box 231 · Goessel, KS 67053 · (620) 367 - 8200 · e-mail: goesselmuseum@gmail.com

The Heritage

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum

www.goesselmuseum.com

Fall 2026

Voices of the Past

The Voices of the Past oral history project continues to collect the memories and experiences of community members. Several recordings were made during the recent anniversary celebration of the Goessel Fire Department and its historic fire truck.

During the Goessel High School 100th Anniversary celebration, additional recordings were made. Three former teachers shared memories of their years at GHS and reflected on their contributions to the school. Those attending were also encouraged to share their own memories and stories.

Capturing these firsthand accounts is an important part of preserving Goessel's history. While it has sometimes been challenging to find individuals willing to be recorded, each story adds a valuable personal perspective to the historical record.

Plautdietsch Revival

Efforts to preserve and revitalize Goessel Molotschna Plautdietsch are also continuing. Museum board member Gregg Schroeder is currently reviewing and providing feedback on a soon-to-be-available online Plautdietsch learning program. The review focuses on its ease of use and its potential to help Goessel and area residents who would like to learn, practice, or reconnect with the language.

Plans are underway to record conversations with several fluent Goessel-area Plautdietsch speakers during the winter months when the museum is closed. Participants will be asked a series of questions in order to capture the natural accent, rhythm, and cadence of the language.

These recordings will provide future learners with an opportunity not only to hear the words of Plautdietsch, but also to experience how the language sounds when spoken naturally. Together, these efforts help preserve an important part of our community's cultural heritage for future generations.

Both the oral history and the Plautdietsch projects are being funded this year thanks to a generous grant from the Goessel Community Foundation.

Upcoming Events:

Museum Hours
See page 4.

Christmas Shopping
in the Museum Store
November: normal hours
December: noon to 4 pm, Tuesday-Friday, through December 18.

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group
Next meeting:
January 25, 7 pm,
at Goessel Church
(note change of place).

Annual Meeting
Details to be determined.
Watch Facebook for information.

2026 Art Show
on display until December in the Immigrant House.

Low German Saying

Dee likjne sikj aus en poa Eia.
They look alike as a couple of eggs.

Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum Board Members:
Pat Penner, President; Gregg Schroeder, Vice-President; Sandy Duerksen, Secretary; Aileen Esau, Treasurer;* Fern Bartel, Museum Director;* Roger Bartel, Lenora Duerksen, Kris Schmucker, Dennis Unruh, Nelson Voth.
*non-voting members

Ditt unt Daut (this and that) by Fern Bartel, Museum Director

Shop local for Christmas! The museum store will be open through December 18 for Christmas shopping. See Upcoming Events on the front page for specific hours. New in the store are charcuterie boards and other unique wood items made by Rod Abrahams and miniature barn quilts crafted by Keith Banman. Think about books, cookbooks, or a peppernut press for your Christmas baking. We also have gift certificates and, for those who have everything, a museum membership offers the gift of experience.

The museum absolutely could not operate without our volunteers! From Saturday docents, grounds maintenance, building cleaning, artifact data entry, helping with fundraising events, and many more tasks, volunteers enable the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum to thrive and continue telling the story to the next generation. Thank you to all our volunteers!

The LEGO art show in the Immigrant House will be up until December.

Fourth Monday Genealogy Group

One of the goals of the Genealogy Group is to encourage people to research and create presentations about their own families, sharing what is known about family stories, photographs, documents, and artifacts. These presentations provide an opportunity to preserve individual family histories while adding to the larger story of our community.

The group met in October and will take a holiday break until January 25. Winter meetings will be held at Goessel Church at 7 pm; otherwise, the group will meet in the Prep School on the museum grounds.

Built to Last: A Successful Weekend of Remembering



Desk made by Archie Schmidt

The *Built to Last: Woodworking at the Prep School* exhibit was a wonderful success during the Goessel High School 100th Anniversary celebration on October 16–17! More than 120 visitors came through the doors of the historic 1906 Preparatory School to view 26 woodworking projects created by Goessel High School students over the years.

The exhibit brought together a special collection of furniture and wooden items made in the manual training/ woodworking classes from 1929 to 1969. From footstools and desks to coat racks and small end tables, each piece offered a glimpse into the skills students learned and the craftsmanship they developed. For many visitors, the projects brought back memories of school days, familiar teachers, and the satisfaction of creating something useful with their own hands.

The Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum extends a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who loaned a project for the exhibit. We are also grateful to the volunteer greeters who welcomed visitors, encouraged them to sign the guest book, and helped keep the treasured pieces safe throughout the weekend.

The exhibit was one of many highlights of a great weekend celebrating 100 years of Goessel High School. It was a special opportunity to reconnect with the past, share memories, and recognize the important place the Prep School holds in Goessel's educational history.

Harvest Festival Quilt Show

Over 60 visitors enjoyed a quilt show at The Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum during the Goessel Harvest Festival on October 3. Guests viewed 18 beautiful quilts celebrating the creativity of quilters past and present. A special textile artifact display highlighted the rich history of Mennonite textiles and the important role these treasured pieces play in preserving our heritage.



Blocks embroidered by Martha Boese, pieced by Lois Janzen, hand-quilted by Alice Funk.

Boarding House is Weekday Home

When the Goessel Preparatory School opened in 1906, out-of-town students needed a place to stay. Beginning in 1907, students who lived outside of town could stay at a dormitory in Goessel.

Sophia Unruh lived in the Boarding Hall as a young child with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rev. P.P. Buller, when they were the Boarding Hall parents. The following is from her memories.



The Boarding House is the big building to the right of the Prep School.

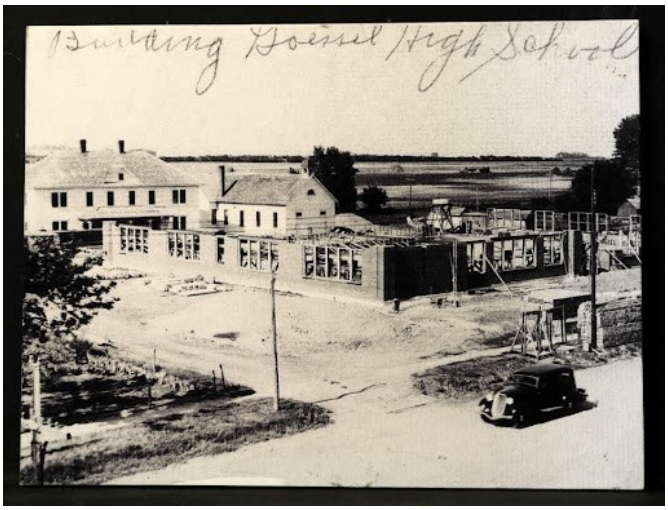
"The April 27, 1907, meeting of the school board authorized the building of a boarding house. This not only gave the students living at a distance a place to stay but placed them under the direct supervision of the teacher.

"The Boarding House consisted of seven large students' rooms—20'x20'—four in the east wing and three in the west wing. The middle rooms upstairs and downstairs were to be used for the house parents. Each of these student rooms housed four students so there was room for about 28 students. These rooms were all alike, just walls, no closets for clothes, just hooks on the wall to hang them. Double windows were placed on one side and single windows on the other outer wall. Furniture consisted of two double beds and springs. Mattresses and bedding were to be furnished by the student. Each room had a round heating stove, coal also brought by the student. There were two wash stands each with a granite water pitcher and a wash basin and a towel rack at the back. Two study tables were usually pushed together which had the usual red checked table cloth, or white one, the usual glass or container with pens and pencils, alarm clock, lamp and pads for writing and books. Four chairs went around the table.

"Thursday after school was clean up time, because Friday after school everyone went home...Thursdays the students were already busy getting their water pitchers filled by the pump on the north side of the house. This cleaning involved giving the floors and windows a good scrubbing as well as the halls. The kerosene lamps would be filled with oil and the glass chimneys cleaned. One could hear the coal buckets filled with the scoop as the chunks came tumbling down in the coal bin, this for the next morning's fire in the stove. What a clean soapy smell of wet unpainted floor boards met us if, whenever we were allowed in the girls' student rooms.

"The front room between the two doors was used for many things—a study room for the teacher, a business office when parents came to pay the board and room rent for their children, a counsel room for the students and a family living room. The dining room was situated next to the living room. It could hold two long tables of 20 to a table or 40 students. This many came only for the noon meals in some years, so that one could say Goessel already had a hot lunch program in those days.

"The Boarding Hall had been established in 1907 and continually functioned as such until the end of 1925-'26 school year…Without adding any new facilities, the only alternative to accommodate expected increased enrollment and expanded curriculum of the Goessel Rural High School, the boarding hall was renovated during the summer months of 1926."



The Prep School was moved back to the north and the Boarding House was moved to the west and used as school rooms until the new high school building was completed. The Boarding House was then moved to Bethel College, N. Newton, and used as a boys' dorm.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Museum Hours:
March, April, October,
& November:
Tues - Sat: 12 pm - 4 pm
Closed Sundays & Mondays

Open by appointment
December through February

May - September:
Tues - Sat: 10 am - 5 pm

The Heritage
Written & edited by:
Fern Bartel, Director
Aileen Esau, Treasurer
Museum Board Members
Anne Harvey

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"Expendable Fund" Established for Museum Maintenance and Improvement

The museum is again blessed to be able to participate in a Patterson Family Foundation (PFF) Matching Funds Campaign through the Goessel Community Foundation (GCF). The campaign runs November 5 through December 5. If the GCF and the charitable funds under its umbrella, which includes the museum, can raise $200,000, the PFF will add another $100,000, a 50% match. The matching amount will be split equally between the GCF Impact Fund and the designated charitable fund. This means every $1 donation designated for the museum will generate $1.25 for the museum, and $.25 for the GCF Impact Fund; a win-win for both the museum and the Goessel community!

This year the museum will channel gifts intended for the matching funds campaign to our recently established expendable fund, whose purpose is to accumulate dollars for maintenance and improvement projects. Priority projects for 2027 include implementing a plan for effective water drainage on the campus, and improving accessibility to buildings, including rebuilding ramps.

Donations may be given directly to the museum and must be received by December 5 to be eligible for the match. Please make checks payable to MHAM with "MHAM Exp Fd" in the memo line. Mail to P.O. Box 231, Goessel, KS 67053, or drop off your check at the museum. Another option is to give your donation directly to the GCF and designate it for the museum's expendable fund. Thank you for considering this exciting opportunity to boost our expendable fund for critical improvements! The accompanying appeal letter shares other giving opportunities to consider.