



**CHEYENNE COUNTY MUSEUM** volunteers entertained people on June 1 with live stories about the history of the county. Top right, Helene Landenberger portrayed a cattle driver. Listening are Marge Lampe and Gertie Loyd; clockwise, Marie Holzwarth told about the early days of washing and ironing clothes; Bonnie Cram told stories about the prices of food in the 1940s; Barb Ewing was a teacher. Herald staff photos by Doug Sloper

# 'Night at the Museum' draws about 50 people

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Fueled by imagination and great storytelling, the Cheyenne County Museum came "alive" on Saturday, June 1. More than 50 people shared in the experience made possible by local volunteers.

When guests first arrived at the museum, they were greeted by Lea Brooks (portrayed by Helene Landenberger), a cattle driver from 1860s. She told adventures from the trail via poetry of a cattle drive from Texas up through Kansas: "I hit olde Dodge in '69, 6,000 beef, fat and fine, I helped to push upon the line and find a northern sale. We started from the Laurel Leaf down next near the coast where Texas beef is breed in its own brand."

She also described the rigs that were used during her time to deliver mail when the Pony Ex-

press first started.

When the town crier, Glenn Isernhagen, rang his bell, next to come alive was Mrs. Brown donning a flour-sack dress (performed by Kay Shay) cooking in her farm kitchen at the turn of the century. She explained how she cooked food that was raised on the farm on a corn-cob-coal stove. Guest Gerlie Loyd chimed in with a memory of her own stating, "When Daddy would go in to town to buy feed, Mommy would remind him that it takes two sacks for one dress."

As the bell chimed again, Barbara Ewing told her own story of teaching in a one-room country schoolhouse.

"All children came to school at the same time in one room. There was a recitation bench in the front of the room," Barbara explained. "The teacher would call each grade to the recitation

bench for their daily lessons. The rest of the class would work on assignments at their desk until there time for lessons up front was called."

She said the teachers had to be very flexible, and they relied on older students to help with younger students.

The adventure continued in the hot and steamy laundry room as portrayed by Marie (Weeden) Holzwarth. She demonstrated how she washed laundry on a glass laundry board before they had electricity.

"Ladies in that time made their own lye soap," Marie said.

She went on to say that they had to carry their water to the stove to heat and then carry the hot water to the wash tub.

"I'm not sure why but laundry day was always on Monday and ironing was on Tuesday," she said.

Marie showed the group the different types of irons that were used including a "modern" gas iron. "We'd pour the special gasoline and carefully light it. You hoped you didn't blow up!"

Greeting visitors next was Elizabeth Zwegardt Isernhagen (represented by Louanne Isernhagen), one of the many German/Russian settlers that homesteaded in Cheyenne County in the late 1800s. She was 7 years old when her parents brought her and her siblings over from Russia.

"Uncle Mike Raile is the one that wrote my parents to encourage them to come to Saint Francis," she said. "We came out from New York with the John Knorr family, and 11 of us lived in a two-room shack while our families got started."

She explained that the immigrants started a church, and it was in that church that she met

her future husband, George Isernhagen.

"George was living in a cave that he had dug out, and he was living on crackers and coffee," she said. "He came to church each week in hopes to get invited to someone's home for a meal."

She encouraged visitors to visit the country church next to the museum which was similar to the church her family founded.

The final bell gave rise to Bonnie Cram with stories of the price of war in the 1940s. She shared stories of food and merchandise rationing during war-time.

"The United States wasn't planning to go to war, but when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the U.S. began making weapons and men began to get drafted," Bonnie said. "The administration put a freeze on merchandise to avoid inflation, which, in turn, caused the need

for rationing." She spoke of her job at the supply administration office at the courthouse which handled the applications for rationed items. She showed the group the ration booklets that were given out to families.

After the final presentation, the museum was open for general viewing of the many historical items that have been donated over the years.

"We take great pride that every item in the museum has roots in Cheyenne County," Mrs. Ewing said.

The Cheyenne County Museum will be open during the St. Francis 125th anniversary celebration the weekend of June 14 to 16. On Saturday, June 15, it will host a brat feed from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Church services will be held on Sunday, June 16, at the Old Country Church west of the museum.