

Happy Birthday Vernon County Museum Building!

The Vernon County Historical Society is celebrating the 100th birthday of its museum building. The former Vernon County Normal School building was completed and first opened to students in 1919. You are invited to attend a 100th birthday party at the museum on Saturday, July 27, from 1 to 4PM. The museum is located at 410 South Center Street in Viroqua, at the corner of South and Main Streets.

La Crosse architects Albert E. Parkinson and Bernard J. Dockendorff designed the red brick Normal School (teachers college) building, just one of approximately 150 schools that their architectural firm worked on. The first class graduated from the new school in 1920, and the last class in 1971. The building was purchased by the Vernon County Historical Society in 1989 to house its museum.

The birthday party on July 27 will feature cake and ice cream, puzzles and games, and special exhibits about the Normal School building and its students. Normal School alumni will be available at various spots around the museum to tell their stories of life at the old Normal School.

Because most alumni went on to teach in Vernon County's rural schools, the Historical Society's Foreaker one-room school museum will also be open that day, from 1 to 4PM. The Foreaker School is located at 606 W. Broadway in Viroqua. Volunteer teacher Jill Miller will be on hand to greet visitors. Together with Karin Iverson, she runs the Foreaker School program for local schoolchildren, offering a day-long immersion experience of what school life was like many years ago.

Everyone is welcome to attend this centennial celebration – from those with ties to the school, to those who have never heard of a Normal School. Parents and children who are curious about the past are especially welcome. We will provide refreshments, activities, and fun for everyone!