



Anoka County  
Historical Society



# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.6 November-December 2017

One more than 20 since math began

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

*History 21 (in honor of the 21 cities in Anoka County) is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit. The ACHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.*

### **Board of Directors**

District 1: Al Pearson

District 2: Bill Nelson

District 3: Orville Lindquist (President)

District 4: Lotus Hubbard

District 5: Kate Morphew

District 6: Mary Capra

District 7: Bart Ward

At-Large A: Steve Florman

At-Large B: Dennis Berg (Vice-President)

At-Large C: Mike Scott

At-Large D: Dick Lang

At-Large E: Buzz Netkow

At-Large F: Paul Pierce (Secretary)

At-Large G: Shelly Peterson (Treasurer)

At-Large H: Harvey Greenberg

Ex-Officio: Bill Erhart

County Commissioner Liaison:

Jim Kordiak

### **Staff**

Rebecca Ebnert-Mavencamp

(Executive Director)

Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Audra Hilse (Archivist & Administrator)

Gail Dahl (Office Staff)

Carol Dordan (Office Staff)

Don Johnson (Office Staff)

## **Table of Contents:**

- 3 - Letters from the ACHS President and Director
- 4 - Archeological Alpha Sites
- 7 - Finding Their Voice
- 8 - Collections Corner: Islands of Peace
- 9 - Who Murdered Mary Fridley? New Mock Trial
- 11 - You're Invited: Members Only Party!
- 12 - Volunteer World: Ghost Tour Mania
- 14 - Thank You to Our Supporters
- 15 - Upcoming Events

*Front Cover: The family captured Marion Schulz's surprise at opening a much-wanted present of tap shoes at Christmas, ca 1955.*

*Object ID#: 2425.A*



## From the President

Holiday time is fast-approaching...so are snow and ice. I am thankful for holidays (if not for winter) and especially look forward to Thanksgiving. While I am a big fan of turkey, dressing, and cranberries, I am a bigger fan of all the non-food opportunities in store.

I love that we collectively get to STOP at Thanksgiving and really celebrate – more deeply than at any other time of year. Many other holidays have religious roots, meaning that they are not universally celebrated. Secular holidays – Labor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day – usually focus on activity, as we move in hundreds of different directions for our specific observances.

Not so with Thanksgiving. We flock to hearth and home – some even still go over the river and through the woods to Grandmother’s house. We turn to the embrace of family and friends. For a short time, normal business grinds to a halt. We cook, eat, spend time with those we love and we focus on what is most important to us.

That said, it is good to remember that not everyone has as much to be thankful for. In the midst of celebrating our own bounty, the very nature of Thanksgiving gives us a time to reflect on our lives, on how we can be a beacon to others, and on our proper places in the universe. I just love that.

Wishing you blessings during this most wonderful of holidays.

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



## From the Director

Non-profit organizations in general, historical societies in particular, have the gift of working with volunteers. By the nature of our place of business being your chosen place of recreation, we develop deep and meaningful relationships with you through shared stories that we treasure. Often these spill over into social media channels, a walk in the woods, or a shared meal, truly blurring the lines between our professional and personal selves.

The friendly atmosphere and camaraderie at the museum create an environment conducive to trading memories of childhood and school, or simply unloading the life drama of yesterday on friendly ears. These stories become part of the fabric of Anoka County as the years pass by, growing legends and expanding the historic record. We (as corny as it sounds) become a family working toward the same goal of preservation. Yet we’re a place of business with a job to do.

This year brought an onslaught of daily challenges, surgeries, chronic illnesses, and death to our volunteer pool. Having these events take friends from our routine has reinforced the depth of the relationships and just how very much every face is cherished at the History Center.

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



*Archaeological collection objects beside a sizing guide*

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL ALPHA SITES

The Alpha Sites Project began as a multiphase project in 2015 with four partners (Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey, and Scott County Historical Societies) joining together to explore the ground beneath our feet and the objects in these collections.

The main goal of Phase I focused on creating an understanding of archaeological resources within each county. During this Legacy grant project, the partners considered three questions:

1. What do we know about archaeological sites in the county?
2. What do we have in our current collections
3. Where would we look for archaeological sites?

The answers appeared in a prepared project report and various public presentations. Since more than 200 recorded and reported sites exist in Anoka County alone, as well as the items held in the Historical Society collections, developing archaeological context became critical to understanding these subsurface resources better. This background research and documentation paved the way for the current Phase II of the Alpha Sites Project the partners have embarked upon.

During 2017 and 2018, the Alpha Sites Project is looking at reported archaeological sites in Anoka, Dakota, and Scott Counties with the goal of recording these locations as confirmed archaeological areas. The term “Alpha Site” is a designation for a reported, though not recorded or confirmed archaeological site. Many times, Alpha Sites are location leads based on historical narratives or accounts, or avocational collections. Often Alpha Sites have not been visited by a professional archaeologist and accessible site information is limited.

The work of myself and my team for the duration of this grant has begun by diving deeper into the exploration of these reported sites to determine if they still exist and are recognizable. Since this data is many years old, it's possible that construction has obliterated a location and made the site impractical for digging. Next, my team and I will conduct field visits to document and photograph these sites to update the historic record of their existence. Completion of Minnesota State Site Forms will occur for any and all sites identified.

The 25 Alpha Sites reported in Anoka County are both prehistoric and historic sites. An example of a prehistoric Alpha Site would be

21ANb. The number “21” refers to the state of Minnesota, “AN” to Anoka County, and “b” the second reported alpha site in the county. Site 21ANb is a mound site first recorded in 1911 in Newton Winchell’s *Aborigines of Minnesota*. The description given merely says that “Mr. P. F. Pratt reported the occurrence of a mound near the right bank of Coon Creek”. As you can see, the information provided in the current site form is quite



limited. It is our hope that through aerial photo analysis and a field visit, we might truly identify this site. We intend to also use Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.



Other examples of Alpha Sites can be found in the numerous historic sites, such as 21ANj, the Anoka Lumber Company. This site was identified in Andreas' 1874 plat map. It is recorded as a mill with few details in the archaeological site form. In the 1970's and 1980's, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) inventoried old buildings across the state. These historic structures sometimes overlap with the archaeological Alpha Sites. Site

21ANj is one such site. Recorded as a standing structure, the mill may still exist and warrants a site visit to see if archaeological features such as foundations or privies may be present at the site.

A big component of Phase II is public involvement. There will be opportunities for interested individuals to be involved as much as possible by assisting in the identification and recording of these sites. Presentations such as the one we conducted in September for Minnesota State Archaeology Month, are a great way to learn about the project and get updates on where we are at. This winter, we will be asking for more assistance in researching, recording, and documenting the historic Alpha Sites, beginning with an event scheduled for November 28 and another on January 13. Watch for more information on these exciting opportunities to explore Anoka County history from a completely different perspective! In the spring of 2018, we will host more public archaeology events where volunteers can get their hands (or at least their shoes!) dirty doing real archaeology work as we visit more sites and record what still exists.

How can you help now? Watch your inbox for project opportunities or contact the Historical Society and ask to be placed on our volunteer list. There is something for everyone's skill level, from research to site visits to digging in the dirt. We hope to see you soon!

*Blondo Consulting, established in 2009, assists clients in the region and beyond to successfully complete compliance archaeology and cultural resources studies prior to project completion. Our staff has expertise in prehistoric and historic archaeology, tribal history, historic buildings, and legal requirements for projects.*

# Finding Their VOICE

*A preservation project of our  
most recent veterans*



*Our collection needs your photos,  
letters, and memorabilia depicting the  
last 30 years of military conflicts.*

We maintain a dedicated space in the exhibit hall to share the experiences of our veterans. Since its inception, ACHS has worked to interpret Anoka County's involvement in major conflicts.

Our next project will focus on gathering the stories from our most recent veterans who fought in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, as well as any number of missions in Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan over the last 30 years. Our goal is to record 50 oral histories, gather artifacts to preserve this modern story in our collection, and create an experience both online and in the exhibit hall to better help the public understand the complexities of citizen-soldiers, robotic warfare, and the effects on families of heavy media coverage of these deployments.

***In order to accomplish our goal with this project, we will need:***

- Veterans willing to have a candid conversation about their deployment, subsequent lives, and future aspirations.
- Families willing to share the story of the home front challenges, artifacts for preservation, and photos.
- Funding for staff to take the time to get to know these local families, earn their trust, and respectfully listen to what they have to say; for online exhibits, digitization, and gallery fabrication.

Join us **January 27** for a fundraising brunch at the  
**Federal Cartridge Clubhouse** in Anoka  
to kick-start this project and help us tell this story. **Tickets, \$50**

## Islands of Peace

In June of 1971, Ed Wilmes of Fridley described a serious lack he identified in the Twin Cities community: a place for the disabled, physically handicapped, or the blind to go to enjoy nature.

“I watched the cars with their boats and campers going up north to get away for a while and find some cool spot to enjoy,” said Wilmes. “This is fine for those people, but then I would come back to the cities and go [to] the Vets hospital, soldier’s home and the nursing homes. These people had no place to go and if they did, there is nobody to take them even for an hour or a day.”

He saw an opportunity to address that lack of accessible outdoor space in the form of three islands in the Mississippi River, located between Fridley, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center. Wilmes received support and encouragement from everyone he spoke to about his vision, including local volunteers, the three cities, the Governor of Minnesota, and even the United States Navy. In April of 1973, the Foundation for the Islands of Peace formed as a private, non-profit organization. From there work began to turn the islands into the park that Wilmes envisioned. By July, the U.S. Navy Seabees and the U.S. Air Force had laid down basic paved trails to start providing access.

By 1977, a Program Committee was established to expand the outdoor opportunities available at the park, with an emphasis on making sure that any such facility or programming would be accessible to the handicapped. All walkways were paved, eight feet wide, had less than a five percent grade, and broad white stripes painted at the edges to facilitate use by those in wheelchairs and those hard of sight. Special picnic tables boasted an extra three inches of height and shorter benches, which allowed for access by anyone using a wheelchair, and a 28’ pontoon boat acted as a ferry to the islands. All trail signs included Braille, so that blind or hard-of-sight individuals could still learn about the nature of the park.

The three islands served different purposes. Chase’s Island, a seven-acre peninsula on the Fridley side, was fully developed with trails, camping and picnic areas, as well as piers for fishing. Durnam Island, a 66-acre location in Brooklyn Center, was developed with a minimal trail system, boat dock, and a small shelter, but otherwise remained untouched as a flood plain forest. The smallest island, Gil Hodges Island, was only five and a half acres and left completely undeveloped as a wildlife refuge.

We are fortunate to have the early records and a few photographs from the Islands of Peace foundation in the collections of ACHS, including Wilmes’ vision.

“I thought of the times that the word peace was used in demonstrations and meetings but they always seemed to be surrounded by evidence of violence,” he said. “Because there is an area here that is peaceful and can offer peace to all, I decided on the name ‘Islands of Peace.’”



*Officials headed out to one of the islands.*



Shocking death of founding family daughter

# Mary Fridley Murdered?

FAMILY HIRES P.I. TO INVESTIGATE

Husband denies any wrong-doing

Join the Trial of the Century at the  
Anoka County History Center on  
December 14, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.

LOCAL FRIENDS OF  
HISTORY TO ATTEND

Put Fred Price on trial again for the murder of his wife Mary Fridley Price. Was it **MURDER**, or a tragic **ACCIDENT**? You decide, with the help of **COUNTY ATTORNEY TONY PALUMBO** and our amazing volunteers cast as witnesses, the accused, and a stellar legal team.

**Tickets on  
Sale Now!**



TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets: \$50/each for purchase at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or the History Center.

Court is called to order at 5:30 p.m., seating is limited, dinner served.

### Least Competent County Criminals from the 1800s

The following is an excerpt from a transcription of a ledger containing cases heard by a Justice of the Peace in the Centerville area in the late 1800s. Oliver Dupree was a farmer in Centerville; members of the Dupree family still live in the area today. This case was written on pages 7 and 9 of the ledger. All spelling, punctuation, and grammar has been kept intact and as it was originally written; summaries or additions by ACHS are marked with brackets.



*State of Minisota Plaintiff* and [name uncertain, something like Eseba Vassaer]  
*Defendant* [...]

*On complaint being Entered by Oliver Dupree on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December AD 1870*  
*[name uncertain] was arraigned for Petit Larceny*

*The Complainant Sworn and testified as as follows[:] I had traps set on Rondeau Lake and saw defendant take two of my traps and run away. I followed him and caught up to him and told him he had better stop and settle with him (Dupree) but defendant ran again and would not listen to him*

*The above occurrence took place on the Fourteenth day of December.*

*Cross Examined and swears as follows*

[Justice of the Peace questioned Oliver Dupree about what he witnessed and whether he could see the defendant clearly from three acres away; to which Dupree said he could.]

*What course did the defendant take from Rondo Lake when you followed him[?] Answer he came to the mouth of hardwood creek and I came on defendant's track all the way [way] came within ten feet of him of him and asked him to stop and settle with him (Dupree) but he ran in the tamarack like a deer. Here Defendant convicted himself by saying complainant was as much as 30 feet off.*

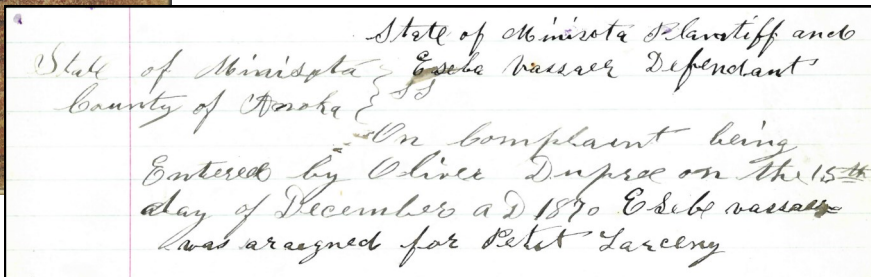
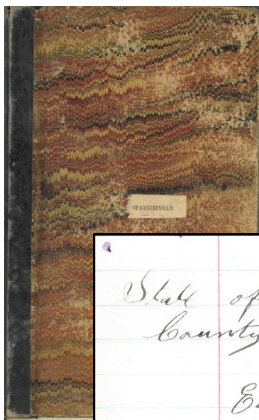
[Two other men, including Paul Peltier, were sworn in and asked if it was possible to recognize a person from three acres away; both agreed that it was possible.]

*Defendant found guilty and fined Five dollars and costs of Court also said defendant is Required to return two traps to the Complainant or the value of the same.*

*Fine \$5.00*

*Costs 3.00*

*[Total] 8.00*



**MEMBERS  
ONLY**

# Holiday Party!

We want to say THANK YOU for being a part of the ACHS family for another year, so we are throwing an end of year party just for you. Join us on December 5 for an exclusive members only celebration. There will be treats, music, games, laughter, trimming of the tree, and a special gift from the staff and board.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, December 5

**TIME:** Open house, 5:30p.m.-8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Anoka County History Center

*Please RSVP by December 3*



## ACHS Remembers



To those members, volunteers, friends, and neighbors who are no longer with us —you will be missed.

Bruce Bacon

1940-2017

Organic farm pioneer

Stan Kowalski

1926-2017

Professional Wrestler  
ACHS Oral History Interviewee

Maxine Larson

1933-2017

ACHS Treasurer 1975-1979  
ACHS President 1979-1994



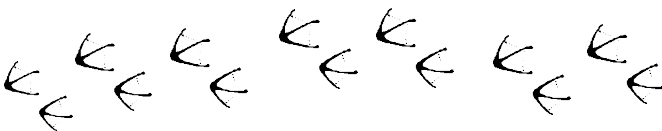
## Our Ghosts are Teenagers!

This month marks the end of the Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour's 14th season. A crew of 12 guides shared the history and mystery of Anoka to over 1,500 people in September and October. I can't say thank you enough to the dedicated volunteer guides. They stepped up tour after tour, made the participants feel welcome, and helped them have a memorable evening. While these tours are a chance for us to meet new people and introduce them to the fun and resources available at the ACHS, they are also a significant fundraiser helping us to keep the lights on and history accessible throughout the year.

If you want to join the ranks of these elite volunteers, it's never too early! Let me know and you can start working on learning about how to lead these fun-filled tours now.

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)

Follow me  
to the  
New Year!



October isn't all about Ghost Tours (what?!)—we hosted a number of other fun events this past month both in and out of the History Center. Check them out!



**Boos & Brews** with the MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce. Sixty chamber members met at Lyric Arts for a drink and conversation before splitting into three groups to enjoy a mini-ghost tour to the History Center. Here they played in the museum on a scavenger hunt and shared a delicious taco bar from Casa Rio. What a fun way to introduce ACHS to MetroNorth members from across the county!

At **Halloween Unlocked** we featured artifacts and collectibles from the Halloween Capital of the World at a formal dinner at the History Center. Those who attended browsed the full collection of buttons and medallions brought together and unveiled just for this event. The collection pieces on display that drew the most attention, however were the crown of Anoka's 1961 Queen and original artwork from Alyce Vick, who designed the Halloween medallion by Anoka City Hall.



The Columbia Heights-Fridley Kiwanis got all dolled up for a **private Murder Mystery** party at the History Center. The members had the whole museum to themselves, enjoyed a catered buffet meal, and then dove right into playing characters in "Hollywood Lies." Over the course of the evening, they attempted to apprehend the murderer and successfully created and performed two amazing movie preview skits. Think this would be fun? Book the museum for your own Murder Mystery with a group of 20 or more.

**Murder at Sea Murder Mystery** at the Mad Hatter Restaurant and Tea Room. Passengers went all out as they searched for a murderer on board the U.S.S. Libertania. In a surprising twist, the murderer almost got away with the dastardly deed as the passengers dealt with the unexpected presence of the Italian Mob on board. Special thank you to the Weaver Family for sponsoring this event. Miss out? No worries we'll be hosting this event again next year.



**General Donations**

Mel & Kathy Aanerud  
 Michelle Baker  
 Phillip & Harriett Beach  
 Sherry Boyce  
 Sandra Connor  
 Danna & Waldeane Felix  
 Friends of Fridley Senior Program  
 Donald Johnson  
 Patrick & Linda McBride  
 Alfred Oftedahl  
 Stephen & Marilyn Perry  
 Ronald Peterson  
 Arthur Reese  
 Rum River Writers Group  
 Zilla Way

Peterson Shoes  
 Pierce Refrigeration

**Artifact Adopters**

John & Shaaron Freeburg  
 Liz Mcfarland  
 Sue Mickelson

**Artifact Donors**

Anoka Lioness Club  
 Phillip Beach  
 Coon Rapids Federated Women’s Club  
 Rolf Gruber  
 Marvin Hathaway  
 Don Johnson  
 Cheryl Olesen  
 Jim & Connie Siirila  
 Bart & Ellen Ward

**New Members**

Sue Mickelson  
 Stephen & Marilyn Perry  
 Darrell Pierson  
 Leslie & Denise Pierson

**ACHS Sustaining Members**

Terry Overacker Plumbing

**ACHS Business Members**

The BIG White House  
 Coon Rapids Historical Commission  
 Forest Lake Contracting  
 Northeast Bank  
 Nowthen Historical Power Association



**Become a Business or Sustaining Member!**

As a Business Member you receive membership benefits, a listing in our newsletter and website, an ACHS window cling to display— \$75



**NEW!** (For Individuals or Businesses) A Sustaining Membership includes the benefits of a regular membership, a shout-out in our newsletter, and recognition on our web site. You also receive an annual free personalized Group Tour for you and 14 friends (must be scheduled in advance). Will come with complimentary refreshments.— \$150

If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email [Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org) or visit our website [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

**M** **Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, NOW FOR FREE:**

Tuesdays 10 a.m.—8 p.m.

Wednesdays-Fridays 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Saturdays 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

**O** **ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center

Open to membership and the public.

**N** **Journeys in Anoka County***December 2, 2 p.m. at the Johnsville Library*

Anoka County has its fair share of citizens who have undertaken long journeys. We will share stories of three individuals: a French Catholic priest who came to a new land; a Civil War soldier who roamed far afield, and a young man determined to see how far he could get in a home-made kayak.

**T** **Member Appreciation Holiday Party***December 5, 5:30 p.m.– 8 p.m. Open House*

For members only—For more information see page 11.

**H** **World War I in Anoka County***December 9, 2 p.m. at Rum River Library*

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the US entry into WWI. Learn about an Anoka High School nurse, Theresa Ericksen, who went overseas to help injured soldiers, and the Sammie Backers Club started by high school students, who made sure soldiers received mail from home.

**L** **Mary Fridley *Murdered?* Mock-Trial***December 14, 5:30 p.m. at the Anoka History Center*

Tickets \$50. See page 9 for more details.

**S** **SAVE THE DATE!****January Fundraising Brunch: Finding Their Voice***January 27, 10 a.m. at the Federal Cartridge Clubhouse, Anoka*

Tickets \$50. See page 11 for more details

**Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!**

Don't wait another two months to discover what the ACHS is up to. Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We share photographs and artifacts from the collections, updates about upcoming programs, and a behind the scenes look at antics around the History Center.

Anoka County  
Historical Society

AnokaCoHistory



AnokaCoHistory



Anoka County  
Historical Society  
2135 Third Avenue North  
Anoka, MN 55303  
(763) 421-0600

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE**

**PAID**

**ANOKA, MINN.  
PERMIT No. 198**