



Anoka County  
Historical Society



# HISTORY 21

Volume 48 No.5 September-October 2018

One, two, skip a few, twenty, **Twenty-One**

[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.*

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*Front Cover: Extension Service Annual Report, 1942*

*Caption: "Frank Gilligan, St. Francis Township, was one of the several Farmers hit in the severe wind storm which swept central Minnesota in mid-September. The Extension Service sponsored a meeting at St. Francis following the storm to assist farmers with wind resistant construction."*

*Object ID#: AG100.1942.31*

## From the President


To achieve the quality we want for our veterans during the Veterans Voice documentation project, we are gearing up for a major fundraising event. As we get organized and word begins to spread, we have already received positive feedback from early donors and military families.

The Anoka County Historical Society has maintained a military gallery as part of the museum exhibit hall since 2001. During this time, we have documented major conflicts including WWI, Vietnam, the Civil War, and WWII in detail so our community can better understand the relationship between veterans and civilians. These projects have typically included gathering oral history stories, conducting research, producing publications and small-scale videos, while also fabricating the gallery exhibit.

The Veterans Voice project takes the ACHS commitment to military history into the modern era by focusing on those who served since the Gulf War. Together donors, staff, volunteers, and veterans will recount the many facets of this 30-year story involving dramatic changes in communication, home front life, children, and the community of Anoka County.

By engaging veteran families to bring their story public using physical, virtual, and digital means, the Veterans Voice project will amplify their influence with the public. Too often historians wait for memories to grow old and cold before collecting them, thus risking the integrity of the content. Veterans Voice will allow for the education of Anoka County residents and the preservation of ideas while the content remains relatable.

The largest, and most innovative, portion of this endeavor lies in producing a half-hour documentary in partnership with Twin Cities Public Television (TPT), discussing the deployment of the 34<sup>th</sup> Red Bull Infantry Division as it occurs.

  
Dennis Berg, ACHS President



## From the Director

It's the time of year where we look at the calendar and think, "Wow...we'll do that in December!" We had a whirlwind July with programming and outreach opportunities, paused for a breath, and are now falling headlong into the Ghost Tour season. This side of public history, the one where we see the faces light up with wonder or excitement mirrored back to us in shining eyes and enthusiastic stories, reminds us why we "do history" in the first place. Whether it was a child looking through a stereoscope at the County Fair or an adult recounting their youth during a Home and Garden Tour, we facilitate connections. And those connections ensure history stays relevant and active to our community and members.



Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



## *In Memory* **Harvey Greenberg**

Harvey Greenberg joined the Anoka County Board of Directors in 2009 and served until his term ended this year. A resident of Nowthen, Harvey passed away on August 5, only three weeks after making one final visit to the museum. Known for his love of history, storytelling abilities, and warm heart, Harvey impacted many lives at ACHS and throughout his community. We would like to extend our condolences to the Greenberg family, as well as our gratitude, for sharing Harvey with us.

**The following are recollections of Harvey Greenberg ACHS collected in an oral interview on January 16, 2004 by Linda Cameron at Greenberg Implement Company, Nowthen, MN.**

Well, I just kind of fell into it [becoming a farm implement dealer]. We – my folks -- started the business, and I was six years old when we came here, and I always wanted my dad to sell tractors. And after World War II, that became a reality in 1946, when we started selling farm equipment. I guess I've been here ever since, other than my military time.

This garage, which is 40 X 60, was built by my dad... with the help of his capable

wife, Edith, my mother, and they built it in 1938, when I was seven years old. They moved in and the building was poured cement walls... they used cement forms before they had cement blocks, and I still have the forms that



*Greenberg's first garage, dated 1938 (Object ID: 2056.1.9)*

was used to make the building back here. I just kind of was in grade school. Used to be in here every night working with my dad, and just kind of grew into it.

We originally didn't sell cars until 1953 when we started selling Hudson cars, which, when Hudson and Nash merged, it became American Motors, and we sold Ramblers and we sold them quite well, here.

First of all, we were [located] on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South [in Anoka]– the building where Ray Chase had been. He had purchased it from Don Odegaard, and then we left that spot, and built a new place west of Anoka on Highway 10 in about '64, I believe it was.

Basically, my dad did so much repairs that that's, at the end, he cared more about the shop mostly. My brother, Donald, who was seven years older than me, is really the one that got the farm machinery started back in '46, after he got through with World War II. He was a pilot in the Navy. And that's when we started selling Olivers, in 1946-47.

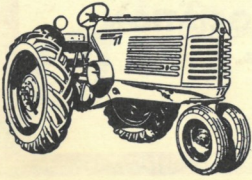
In 1948, we sold Gale. And then in '53, we got the Hudsons. About 1960, we sold New Idea. And 1971, we took on International Harvester. [Over the years] costs have really risen. When my dad started this place in 1938, in the building and the five acres and the home, which had no plumbing or anything, he had \$5,000 invested. But they didn't count their labor. He took the summer off to build along with his contractors. And now, we can't hardly look at any tractor that's on the farm; he's gotta start out by \$60,000, but to average that we sell most of them is right around \$100,000 apiece.

Now there's leasing. Leasing has really gotten going the last five or 10 years. Leasing is really popular. However, with the tax incentives there are out right now for accelerated depreciation, etc., purchasing is seemingly back on track again.

**L.C. What changes have you seen in farming in Anoka County during your years in business and how have those changes affected your business?**

It seems as though when I was young, when the school buses would go down the road and stop at every farm and pick up 3-4 kids – it might be 80 acres, it might be 120.

# GREENBERG'S GARAGE



OLIVER FARM EQUIPMENT  
"Finest in Farm Machinery"



NOWTHEN

PHONE: Elk River 9-R-11

*Cook's 1958 Anoka County Minnesota Directory and Buyers Guide.*

And it seems like there's been a constant pressure for everyone had to get big and get more efficient; it was the push, the pressure. And it seems like that push is still on. If it keeps on like it is, there'll be one farm left in the United States.

I don't know why we have to keep pressuring this way. Why we can't just, say, level off and everybody have a better handle on it. It's just getting so big. And so much pressure upon the farmers. It's taken it's toll. It fluctuates, though. ... And we've been doing business for over 50 years.

## **L.C. Did your grandparents farm in Anoka County, also?**

My Grandpa Greenberg was two miles north of Nowthen, and that's where my dad had his first shop from the 20's up till '38. And my Grandpa Skogquist, who is – would be great grandpa to the mayor of Anoka [Bjorn Skogquist], is just northeast of Nowthen about three miles.

[I grew up on a farm for] the first six years, but I grew up in this house right along the building, here ... My dad never farmed. But he helped my grandpa farm, but they – my grandpa, had horses, because they kept them longer than normal because that was something for them. Otherwise, my cousins and other people didn't really think we needed horses, [be]cause we had the tractors.

But, basically, the farmer has always wanted to farm, and that's what they do ... I mean if somebody took me and told me to go start working in a drug store, and hand out prescriptions, I mean, I just absolutely would be devastated.

There's a lot of knowledge to it. I had an old farmer neighbor, once, who told me "you gotta know your business, even if you're running a peanut roaster," and I used to let that go in one ear and out the other. The older I get, the more meaning that has.

And there are really a lot of sharp



*Accession #: 2014.1418*

young farmers out here, who hang onto what their dad told them. And they're catching on with this technology.

**L.C. Can you share any good stories about your experiences in business? What has been the most rewarding thing for you as an implement dealer?**

Well, I guess the satisfaction that we've had a handle on providing food and fiber for the community and for the nation. There's satisfaction in that. I guess the most rewarding thing is, over the years, and I'm 72 now, and we've had some people that have been, as I mentioned earlier, loyal to us. I've had some – I think I have a neighbor down the road that's 20 years older than me, and when I used to be with my dad at age 7, my dad told me, "That man is the most honest man you're gonna ever know." And I'll have to say, after these 60 years, my neighbor had been a real mentor to me, in his honesty, and I've never seen him ever come in here and trying to chisel us out of anything. He just always did and he was very loyal to us. Everything he had on wheels on the farm, the cars, the tractors, everything came from here. Now he's 92, and he was a real mentor of my life, actually. A neighbor. And just doing business over the phone, a handshake – which you can't shake hands over the phone, but you just understand each other. And basically, the trust back and forth with people and just having done business with decent people over the years has been rewarding in itself.

*I'll never forget my uncle. He was never for anything new until it was well-proven. And I used to go visit him, and I'd tell him that we'd got all this stuff that saves so much time, and if he had it, he could save so much time. Later in his life, he told me, he says, "You know all that time that you're saving? What are you doing with it?" I said, "I don't know." And he says, "Every time I see you, you're in more of a hurry than were the last time I saw you. So I don't think all those ideas are working," he says. "I think you'd better find another plan."*

*I thought about it, [be]cause we find ourselves getting something going, and that requires more pressure, and we just keep on getting – it gets more and more requirements all the time, so I think maybe from back when everything was real hard to do, and now when it's real easy, maybe halfway in between was about right.*



If you live in the city of Nowthen or the surrounding parts of the county, you are probably familiar with the name of Lou Paulson. A life-long resident of that city, Lou wanted to make sure that Nowthen (or Burns Township) history was preserved and recorded. Even though she passed

away in 2011, the legacy she created for Nowthen continues. Her book on the area, *Nowthen Then and Now*, published first by DeForest Press in 1997 and republished in 2007, remains an excellent resource for many, including those of us at ACHS.

History books do not write themselves overnight, however, and not all information and stories can fit into a single volume. As all good historians do, Lou spent many years collecting stories, photographs, and information about her hometown. Her children preserved these documents and photographs and in 2016, the family chose to donate them to the Historical Society. The collection is now processed, which ensures its accessibility to anyone else interested in doing research on Nowthen history.

## CA COLLECTIVE ACCESS

### New Museum Software

Over the past several months, ACHS has worked to transfer all the information about our museum collections into a new software,

called CollectiveAccess. Our previous software, PastPerfect, had become outdated and the new CollectiveAccess has many upgraded features and options. With the transition complete, we continue to learning the new system, but have already seen its benefits. Before the end of the year, a public-facing website ought to go live, making the ACHS collections fully available online.

The whole project was spearheaded by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM), using Legacy grant money from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The goal of the project was to create a useful museum software, including a public-facing collections website, available to all Minnesota history organizations. We feel privileged to have helped with this effort by being a pilot site for the project.



Lou collected photographs ranging from images of the Hare family (Jim Hare is credited with being the reason the post office in Burns Township was named the Nowthen Post Office), to modern photographs of Nowthen businesses and the Nowthen Threshing Show. While we have identified some duplicates within the ACHS collections, many proved unique additions to the archives. Lou also collected many different kinds of documents related to the city of Nowthen, including newspaper articles, items created by local churches, businesses, and schools, and some records of nearby areas, such as St. Francis. In addition to the things she collected, Lou also kept copious notes in the course of writing her book. These thoughts, collected stories, and reminders are preserved with the other papers, making it not a “Nowthen Collection,” but “*Lou Paulson’s* Nowthen Collection.”

*A transcript of our Century Farm interview with Lou Paulson is available on our website, while the full entries for this collection will hopefully be available online before the end of the year.*



**Call for Cotton Sheets**

We once again need clean, white

cotton sheets to cover larger items in our Collections Storage area.

If you have used sheets you no longer need, we will gladly take them!

There are more new faces at the History Center! Karen is our new staff member with bookkeeping skills and Cindy comes to ACHS through a partnership with Anoka County. Both are amazing additions to the ACHS team. Meet them here, or drop by to say hello!



**Welcome Karen!**

I have been an ACHS volunteer for years. As an avid antique collector, I

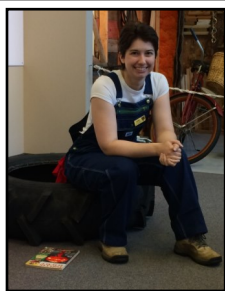
appreciate the efforts of what the ACHS does in our community to preserve and share that history. I am thrilled to now be a small part of the team.

**Welcome Cindy!**

Hi! I am excited to be working here and have the opportunity to learn of and explore the



history of Anoka County. Libraries and museums have always been of special interest to me. I look forward to all the exciting activities at ACHS!



## Anoka Riverfest

July 14

In keeping with our recent Riverfest tradition, we opened new exhibits—the Kline Sanitarium

and the Suburban Garage! Over 300 people visited the museum to view prescription bottles and wrenches while reminiscing about memories the artifacts evoked. ACHS staff and volunteers mingled with visitors, served root beer floats, answered questions about Anoka County history, and staffed our usual Riverfest booth on Jackson Street.



## DA Sidewalk Sale

July 19-21

We had the privilege of partnering with Discover Anoka and Chema Malu to enjoy the passers-by during this special event. We chatted about the Veterans

Voice project, ghost tours, and the new additions to our exhibit hall. The curious stopped to peer into a stereoscope and the enthusiastic regaled us with legacy stories from their families. We'll admit, we wandered over to the food trucks on Saturday after our shift, however...!

## Anoka Home and Garden Tour

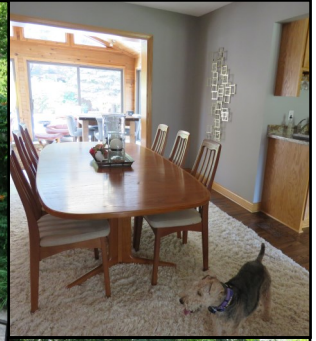
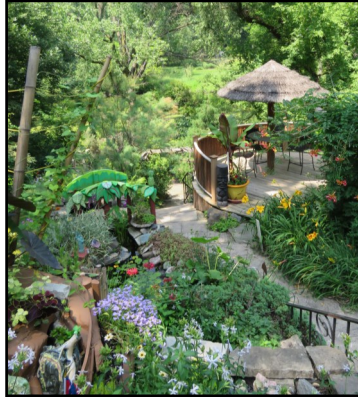


On July 15, over 250 people explored the beauty and history of Anoka on our 15th Home & Garden Tour. The day's sunshine illuminated beautiful gardens, ingenious interior decorating schemes, and many smiles from tour-goers throughout the day.

# Fridley Home and Garden Tour

July 22

In our first (and now hopefully, annual) home tour through the ramblers of Fridley, we met some fantastic new friends and volunteers. The *Star Tribune* featured the event on the front page in a discussion about the historic significance of these special homes. We would like to thank our partners: the City of Fridley, the Fridley Historical Society, and the Anoka County Library system for their work and welcome!



## Anoka County Fair

July 24-29

Volunteers and staff welcomed old and new friends at the Farmhouse. Visitors chatted about history, enjoyed playing old games, and learned about the many facets of ACHS and the local history that lives all around us.



## Nowthen Threshing Show

August 17-19

Candy, pickles and tractors, oh my! Volunteers traveled back to the 1920s in our General Store. A steady stream of kids popped in with their crumpled dollar bills and made difficult candy decisions as they tried to purchase the perfect combination of sweets.



I wanted to take time in this issue to give a big THANK YOU!!!! to all the volunteers who helped out at the history center and/or the various events we organized this summer. We logged our busiest summer yet. With Riverfest, the Anoka Home and Garden Tour, Fridley Home and Garden Tour, six days of the Anoka County Fair, three days of Anoka sidewalk sale, and three days of the Nowthen Threshing Show on top of all the time given by volunteers on a regular basis at the History Center, ***volunteers gave a record 1,784 hours of help*** from July 1 to August 19. That is the equivalent of six full time people working steadily for seven weeks. My mind is BLOWN AWAY by that amazing fact. There is no way we could have done it without your help. You help prove, with each of the 107,040 minutes you gave, that history is about more than dates, musty papers, and old stuff--it is about the people who lived here and those who are ambassadors for preserving our stories while creating history right now. (And that's you!) It may only seem like a second to you, but when we add all our seconds together, we suddenly have 6,422,400 seconds--and by golly, that *is something*. 😊

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

### 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.





## HENNEPIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE INTERNS ROCK THE SUMMER!

Our three interns from Hennepin Technical College put in long hours as part of their summer class. With the direction and mentorship of their professor Rich Oxley, also an ACHS board member, the students spent seven weeks, three days a week, at the History Center creating videos showcasing the history and events here.

We will miss their focus and creativity as they set up cameras and lights, or searched out a quiet nook (harder on some days than others) to record voice-overs for the next episode.

Their videos reached thousands through the ACHS Facebook page. If you missed any episodes, the full library can be reached from our website: [AnokaCountyHistory.org/2-minute-history/](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org/2-minute-history/)



### 2 Minute History Episodes

- World War II
- Garage of the Past
- Kline Sanitarium
- Anoka County Schools
- Jon Arfstrom
- Anoka County Housing Boom
- Anoka Riverfest, 2018
- Anoka Home and Garden Tour, 2018

## GHOST TOURS ARE HERE!

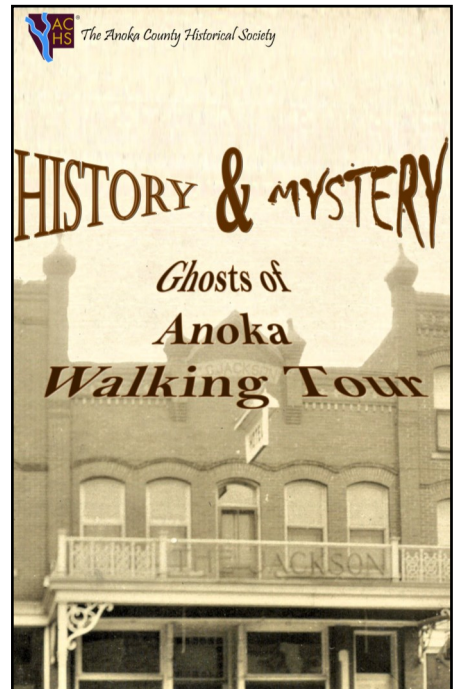
It's that time of year again! Head on out with a friend (or two or three) on a Ghost Tour this September or October.

Stories abound in Anoka of odd happenings and eerie encounters. Our costumed tour guides will take you on a walk through historic neighborhoods of Anoka, sharing stories of the past along the way.

Sixty percent history, 40 percent folklore; these stories are just part of the fun you will experience on your Ghosts of Anoka tour!

Tickets: \$9

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



**General Donations**

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Jody Anderson  
Artists Del Norte, Inc.  
Gregory & Jackie Bortnem  
Dave Burns  
Mary Dawson  
Janet Galvin  
Bruce & Karen Gengnagel  
Megan Y. Hedberg  
Ardys Hoogestraat  
DeeDee Lieder  
Judith O'Connor  
Shelly Peterson  
Lynne & Terry Rickert  
Vickie Ryan  
Laura Schnoor  
Twin Cities Chapter of  
Sisters in Crime, LLC  
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Sharon Steinwall  
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**Veterans Voice Donations**

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Chanel Hayford  
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Ramona Carlson  
Peter & Angela DeLong  
Susan Fair

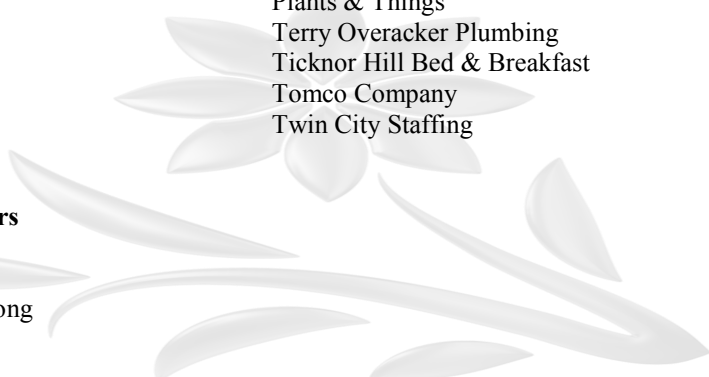
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Rita Warpeha

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Anoka Dental  
Anoka Knights of Columbus  
Council 2018  
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The BIG White House  
City of Columbia Heights  
Coon Rapids Historical Commission  
Fifth Avenue Dental  
Hawaii Nail Spa  
Nowthen Historical Power  
Association  
Pierce Motel  
Pierce Refrigeration  
Peterson Shoes  
Plants & Things  
Terry Overacker Plumbing  
Ticknor Hill Bed & Breakfast  
Tomco Company  
Twin City Staffing



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

Tuesday 10 a.m.—8 p.m.  
 Wednesday-Friday 10 a.m.—5 p.m.  
 Saturday 10 a.m.— 4 p.m.

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center  
 Open to membership and the public.

**Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting**

Meetings held at the Anoka County History Center.  
 Email questions or suggestions to [acgsmn@yahoo.com](mailto:acgsmn@yahoo.com)

**Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours**

Various dates and times in September and October  
 Tickets: \$9—available at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

**Creating History from Facts**

Sept 22, 10 a.m.—Lino Lakes City Hall

**Parlor Games**

October 6, 10:30 a.m.—Rum River North Park Shelter

**Virtual Ghost Tour**

October 10, 6 p.m.—Ramsey City Hall  
 Registration: [cityoframsey.com/ParkEvents](http://cityoframsey.com/ParkEvents)

**History of Columbia Heights & Hilltop**

October 13, 1 p.m.—Columbia Heights Library

**Museum in a Box: WWI**

November 8, 2 p.m.—Ramsey City Hall  
 Registration: [cityoframsey.com/ParkEvents](http://cityoframsey.com/ParkEvents)

For more information on our programs, check out the Events section on the ACHS Facebook page.



**ACHS Remembers**

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

Harvey Greenberg  
 1932-2018

Cindy Jorgenrud  
 1950-2018

Kenneth Berghorst  
 1927-2018



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