



History Center News

A Member Benefit

Vol. 33, No. 1

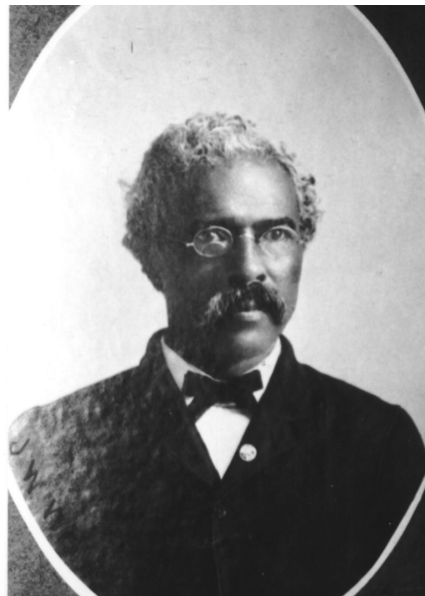
Anoka County Historical Society

February 2003

February is Black History Month

For Black History Month, 2003, we are honoring one of our early Anoka County residents, James W. Wells.

James Wesley Wells was born in Shelbyville, Kentucky, on August 15, 1847. At the age of 12, he moved with his family to St. Joseph, Missouri. Though one result of the Civil War was a constitutional amendment against discrimination based on race, Black men were not permitted to enlist in the Union Army until August of 1863. Wells enlisted one month later at the age of 15 years and served in the First Kansas Colored Infantry, which later became the 79th U.S. Infantry. Wells' muster sheets show him as a "slave" and that he enlisted under a false name, that of Silas Hughes. While it is unknown why he used a false name, it is known that the First



J. W. Wells, 1906

Kansas Infantry was made up of slaves "liberated" from their masters in Missouri, which leads to speculation.

Wells served through the entire war, holding the rank of private. For his services, he was paid \$10.00 per month, \$3.00 less than Caucasian soldiers of the same rank.

After the war, Wells married Miss Nora Rachel Sanders and they moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1871. A few years later, they moved to Anoka where Wells opened a barber shop on Anoka's Main Street near Second Avenue North. The August 27, 1874, *Anoka Republican* newspaper ran his advertisement that read: "J.W. Wells, Fashionable Barber and Hair Dresser. Special attention given to cutting Ladies' hair. Gentlemen's clothing renovated at reasonable prices." Wells had bought the

business from W.B. Chapman, another Black resident who had decided to move to Colorado.

Wells was consistently listed as a barber in existing records. His advertising continued in the Anoka papers and in 1887, an article appeared describing the new wall paper and other improvements made at the "J.W. Wells & Co." barbershop which made everything "neat as a pin". Wells and his wife had four children: Fred, Daisy, Maude, and Walter. Sadly, none of the children outlived their parents. Fred died in 1887 from typhoid fever; Daisy died of tuberculosis in 1893 and Walter from the same disease in 1901. In 1906, Maud was also laid to rest. All four children were buried in Anoka's Oakwood Cemetery. None have a marker on their grave and neither Wells nor his wife left letters, diaries or notes to tell why. Whether the graves were unmarked by choice or by circumstances is not known.

The 1910 census shows Wells still working as a barber. He and Nora owned their house on J Street (today known as Cross Street). Both Wells and Nora could read and write, something rather extraordinary considering their time. Prior to the Civil War, it was illegal in some places in the United States to teach Blacks to read and write. It is not known when or where this couple became literate, but were by 1910.

Mrs. Wells was active with the Mary A. Livermore Circle, a ladies' organization associated with the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). J. W. Wells was a charter member of the GAR post in Anoka and was one of its first officers. He signed the "Board of Trade" articles in 1886

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

and the family were all members of the Anoka Methodist Church. Wells was an accomplished vocalist and was often requested to sing at funerals and other church functions.

At the time of his death, Wells was tending Nora, who was in failing health. Wells was on the way to the water pump to get a second pail of water when he collapsed. Doctors were called, but Wells was already gone. He died on December 9, 1919, and was laid to rest with his children in Oakwood Cemetery.

Mrs. Wells, frail in health, went to live with her sister in Leavenworth, Kansas. She lived there until her death in October of 1925. Her remains were not brought back to Minnesota to be buried beside her family, though her obituary appeared in the Anoka papers, noting, "She was a fine woman with many friends".

J. W. Wells rested in an unmarked grave marked until 1993 when a stone was obtained from the Veterans Administration. The ordering and placement of the stone was a joint effort between the Anoka County Historical Society, the Vietnam Veterans of Anoka County Chapter, and the Anoka County Veteran's Service Office.

From the President... By John Weaver

Tucked away among the massive collection of documents that are reflective of Anoka County's history since its chartering on May 23, 1857, are an assortment of verbal treasures. For the past several weeks, volunteer historian Charlie Sell has worked with a spirited group of students and staff at Fred Moore Middle School to permit these precious "diamonds of the past" to sparkle in a local 2003 calendar.

Permit me to share with you just a random sampling of these gems of yesteryear from the calendar.

January 22, 1942: 38 Anoka County Air Raid Senior Wardens were registered and fingerprinted.

February 11, 1942: Sugar is rationed—each person is permitted 12 ounces per week.

February 21, 1902: Fred Zopfi of Osseo is treed for four hours by a pack of timber wolves and almost freezes.

March 16, 1900: 100 patients from St. Peter are brought to the newly opened Anoka Asylum.

March: Witte Drug's (southwest corner of Main & Second in Anoka): "In the early 1900's, paint was sold in drug stores because pharmacists had a sound knowledge of chemicals. The paint dealers carried different chemicals in barrels to mix a color on the spot. Witte Drug had a unique way of mixing their paints. The owners had a prize winning St. Bernard that they hooked up to a gerbil-type power wheel. When all the resistance from the paint being mixed was gone, the dog knew it was time to stop."

April: The first Anoka County Court Room was situated in the Schuler Building at the northwest corner of Main and Ferry Streets in Anoka. It was in that hotel/settlement/gathering place that Aaron Greenwald responded, in 1861, to a plea from President Lincoln and became Minnesota's first volunteer for Civil War service.

July, 1900: Ice cream, with or without soda, sold for 5 cents.

September, 1900: An Anoka County couple was paid \$50 for being married in the September 14, 1900, Anoka Street Fair.

October 9, 1923: Sheriff Pratt arrested a woman for making moonshine.

December 16, 1904: Local starch factory has northwest's greatest starch output due to bumper potato crop in the county's sandy plains.

1900: Dr. Nevin will extract an aching tooth without pain for 25 cents.

Though these excerpts from our county's documented history may seem inconsequential and trivial, they are reflective of our fleeting past that only our Anoka County Historical Society has the commitment to preserve.

Anoka's 2003 historical calendar is available at the Anoka City Hall. The Columbia Heights Historical Society has also produced a similar historical calendar for 2003, available at the Anoka County History Center.

Minnesota Grants-in-Aid

The grant from the Minnesota Historical Society through the Minnesota Grants-in-Aid program provided ACHS with matching money to add significantly to our library's resources. Most of the 260 rolls of microfilmed newspapers from all around Anoka County have arrived and are available for use in the research library. The value of this grant, including the ACHS match, is \$7,045. We now have in our library, newspapers from all parts of the county dating from 1860 to present. We have replaced some of our hard to read rolls of both the *Union* and *Herald*. In addition to the local papers, we also have the very earliest St. Paul papers, dated as early as 1849, which tell of the developments in Anoka County before we had a newspaper of our own. Come explore these incredible windows into our past!

Please let your local legislators know how much we value this grant and what it has done for our resource library by giving them a thank you call. Without legislative support, this grant would not be available.

Veterans!

Did you or someone you know serve during the Korea War? We are looking for you! We are also looking for those who stayed in the States or supported the war through other means (working at the Twin Cities Arsenal, Federal Cartridge, writing letters to a loved one, serving with the USO, Red Cross, etc.) We are including the homefront in our exhibit plan and need to know how those left behind in Anoka County dealt with the issues of the Korean War (1951-53).

If you are interested in participating in the interviews or have something that might be included with this exhibit, please call Vickie or Bonnie at 763-421-0600. We'd love to preserve your stories!

We're in Stitches!

What fun hobby draws people together, uses remnant materials, creates beautiful art, and records the history of a community? Quilting!

In 1998, inspired by the signature quilts in the ACHS collection, staff members Crystal Batters and Jean Smith gathered local artists into a committee to design the "Around the County Quilt". Each community was to design a square for the quilt depicting some landmark building, place, or symbol they felt was representative of their community. The committee selected appropriate fabrics, and searched for skilled artist to appliqué the motif onto a neutral background. The squares were to be gathered around a central map of the county on which Colonial Hall, home of the Anoka County Historical Society for over 20 years, would appear.

But, "the best laid plans sometimes go awry". Changes in staff and the pressures of moving to the new facility caused the quilt project to be pushed to the far back burner. Some of our people moved on, notes were misplaced, and contacts lost.

We are again moving forward on this project. The blocks we have finished are beautifully crafted and have become the standard for the others. Experienced quilters in each community are stitching, sites or logos are selected, and work is underway. Volunteers Wanda Mau and Dawn Paplow are compiling biographical information about the contributing artists and are researching the sites they have selected. Barb Sauer and Julie Anderson from Quilt Essentials, a quilting shop in Anoka, are providing valuable support and advice.

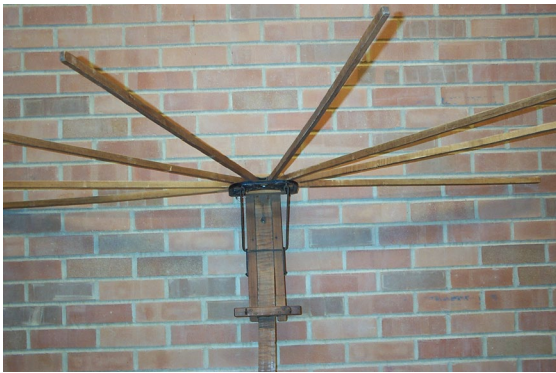
But we need your help. Do you know who did the Coon Rapids or the Ramsey block? Andover, Circle Pines, Oak Grove and Ham Lake are also done, but by whom?

We are planning to have the quilt squares finished by the end of February. The Helping Hands Club of Linwood has volunteered to put the top together and to do the actual quilting. We look forward to the finished work being on display in our Exhibit Hall this summer. Look for it at the county fair, too! Like the quilts of centuries past, the Around the County Quilt will bring citizens together, create beautiful art, and record our history.

The Story of an Artifact: Perfection Clothes Dryer

Close your eyes and remember how good fresh laundry smells after it has been dried in the clean breezes and sunshine! Our modern day TV commercials tell us we can get that same clean smell by using this soap or that fabric softener. They don't even try to get us to buy this artifact of the month anymore!

This artifact is the "Perfection Clothes Dryer", patented on August 30, 1887. It was made by the L. Hopkins Company in Miles Grove, Pennsylvania.



The dryer hung on the wall, either in a kitchen or on the outside of the house.

The section where the clothes hung was on a hinge that pushed the wooden arms out to a 90 degree angle from the wall. Each arm, there are eight of them, then fanned out to allow wet clothing to be hung with room for air to circulate. The arms are 30 inches long, so the dryer could provide up to 20 feet of clothes hanging space. When not in use, the arms folded back down to hang flat on the wall. It was ideal for small spaces or places where traditional long rope lines couldn't be used.

ACHS received this donation early in our history of artifact gathering, the spring of 1978.

The dryer came from Columbia Heights and the estate of Maude Lockwood. Maude was born September 28, 1886, and lived 91 years, many of them in Columbia Heights. After her death in 1978, a few of her belongings were brought to ACHS and added to our collection. Ms. Lockwood's memory lives on through the legacy she provided ACHS and the stories her possessions can tell about life in the early 20th century.

Volunteer Opportunities

There's always lots to do at the History Center and the determined efforts of our volunteers will get several important projects underway.

A comprehensive space inventory of all the items in our collection is needed. This involves counting by size all the boxes and measuring furniture.

Charlie Sell continues to work diligently at the mountain of photographs that have yet to be documented. He could use a good volunteer to photocopy the pictures for indexing by our staff.

The manuscript files involve data input and we help to complete this enormous task. It will make our catalog available to patrons.

Articles from the newspapers need to be copied, classified, indexed and filed. It's not a hard job and often is a lot of fun.

New opportunities come up all the time. We currently have an invitation out to high school students who need community service hours to complete requirements.

Please call the museum at 763-421-0600 and ask about what projects are underway or upcoming. We can accommodate your schedule and still provide you with a pleasant and rewarding volunteer experience.

Helen Potter's Paintings on Display

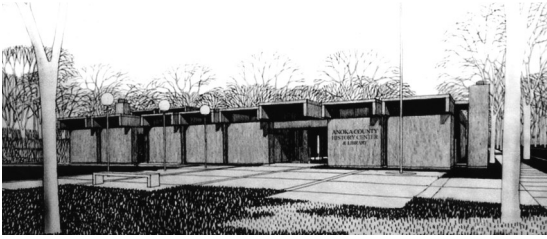
A collection of paintings by Helen Toole Potter will be on display until March 1, 2003, in the Coon Rapids City Hall. Ms. Potter, a resident of Coon Rapids since 1959, was the Artist-in-Residence for the City of Coon Rapids and Anoka County in the 1970's and 1980's. She captured the history of Anoka County in three large paintings currently on display in the Coon Rapids City Hall. The paintings include pictorials of life in Anoka County from the 1800's through 1940.

Five of the paintings were donated to the Anoka County Historical Society by the County of Anoka and are on loan to the Coon Rapids Historical Commission for this display. The Coon Rapids City Hall is located at 11155 Robinson Drive in Coon Rapids.



Around the County

The City of Centerville presented the 2002 County Tree Ornament to ACHS on December 7, 2002. The ornament is a "Voyageur Santa" to honor the French Canadian heritage of Centerville. Santa is sitting in a canoe to recognize the Native American history and the lakes that border Centerville. City officials, County commissioners, ACHS members, our Board and staff all gathered to share this special event. Our thanks to Mary Capra, the ACHS Around the County representative in Centerville, for helping us coordinate this special event.



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 33 No. 2

March/April 2003

SERVING:

- Andover
- Anoka
- Bethel
- Blaine
- Burns
- Centerville
- Circle Pines
- Columbia Heights
- Columbus
- Coon Rapids
- East Bethel
- Fridley
- Ham Lake
- Hilltop
- Lexington
- Lino Lakes
- Linwood
- Oak Grove
- Ramsey
- St. Francis
- Spring Lake Park

Celebrating Women’s History Month: Anna Gorham of Burns

Anna Gorham may never have her name written in the annals of world history, but in Anoka County, she made a world of difference.

She was born into a farming family in Burns Township in 1903, went to school at District #36 in Burns, and planned to become a nurse after graduating from Anoka High School in 1922. Instead, she was encouraged by friends in North Dakota to think about taking a teaching job. So, Anna attended the summer session at the St. Cloud Teacher’s College and moved to North Dakota. The plan in Anna’s mind was to teach for a year to save up enough money to go to nursing school.

That year of teaching turned into 18 years in various schools in North Dakota. Not content to rest, Anna attended the Valley City Teacher’s College during the summers and polished her teaching skills. She graduated from the Standard Curriculum in 1933 and soon was well known for her abilities. It was said that she was quite a disciplinarian and was once hired specifically to tame an unruly school. She must have had a way with children, as her reputation continued and she was recognized by school leaders for her skills.

A tragedy brought Anna back to Anoka County. Her

brother died suddenly in 1941 and she resigned her teaching position at the end of the school term to return home to Burns Township. Anna took a teaching job in Spring Lake Park and later moved to another teaching position in Anoka. Still not content to rest on the career she already had, Anna decided to further her own education. She graduated from the St. Cloud Teaching College with her bachelor’s degree in 1958, this done in summer courses when she was not teaching. Anna continued to push herself to better goals, taking graduate courses at the University of Minnesota and the University of Alaska.

After nearly 50 years of teaching, the last 26 at Franklin Elementary in Anoka, Anna retired and got down to her real work – volunteering and continuing to learn. Her education took a more creative path after retirement, with classes in ceramics, oil painting, sewing, and genealogy. These and other activities



Anna’s senior class picture, 1922

made Anna a valuable volunteer in many organizations around the county including 4-H leader, adult foster programs, and volunteer library aid at St. Stephen’s School. Anna’s long unfulfilled dream of being a nurse may not have been met, but she gave countless hours to the Mercy Hospital Auxiliary, volunteering at the hospital and with the Red Cross.

(Con’t on page 2)

History Center News is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit.

Anoka County History Center & Library

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History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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Office Staff – Carol Dordan
Special Projects – Marilyn Anderson
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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director's Desk...

By Bonnie McDonald

I was looking out my kitchen window the other day and something caught my attention. The trees have the beginnings of buds – in February! It seems that my backyard in Blaine has suddenly decided to ignore the rest of winter and just skip ahead to spring.

We at ACHS are also looking ahead to spring and the many wonderful changes that it brings. In this, the March/April newsletter, we've initiated some changes of our own to improve this member benefit. You will now see a consistent newsletter format so that in each issue you can find your favorite section in the same place. We will have a "Featured History" cover story in each issue, as well as focusing on an "Artifact of the Month" to highlight the unique artifacts we have in the collection. Find the latest news in the "Up To Date" page or look to see if a friend has become a member in the "Contributions" section. Check the last page of the newsletter for our "Coming Events." In addition, you'll find better-quality photographs and heavier paper for easy handling. Finally, you can look forward to seeing *History Center News* in your mailbox bimonthly, rather than only five times per year.

Like the reappearance of your favorite tulips or crocuses, ACHS will host two of our favorite recurring spring events. On Saturday, March 22nd, please join us for ACHS' Annual Meeting being held at the Heights Theater in Columbia Heights. Event information is included in this newsletter; please R.S.V.P. utilizing the attached form. The second event we look forward to is our fourth annual Volunteer Recognition brunch (actually, it will be a light luncheon this year.) Past, current, and future volunteers – please join us at the Anoka County History Center and Library on Saturday, April 12th, so that we may recognize and thank you. Please see the "Coming Events" page in this newsletter for more information about the Volunteer Recognition event. We hope to see you at one or both of these upcoming events!

Anna Gorham

(continued from page 1)

She was active in church groups, womens' clubs, and professional teaching organizations. In 1977, she was named the Outstanding Minnesota Senior Woman by the Governor's Council on Aging. She was also given the WCCO Good Neighbor Award that year, two of many awards and recognitions Anna received during her lifetime.

With all of these accomplishments, Anna is best remembered at ACHS for her hundreds of hours of volunteering at Colonial Hall Museum. She was a tradition in the dining room at Christmas time and many visitors were treated to Anna's special kind of hospitality. Anna loved people and chatting with them as they came through the farmhouse at the Anoka County Fair and she especially enjoyed children. She could hold spellbound a group while she told them stories of life in Anoka County, something she continued to do until she was, quite proudly, the "oldest volunteer" at ACHS. Anna was still actively volunteering when she was 90 years old!

Anna passed away in 2002, survived by many nieces, nephews, and countless friends. Her legacy will live on in the lives she touched and the example she set in Anoka County.



Anna at Colonial Hall, December, 1988.

The Story of an Artifact

Diorama of Anoka – in 1879

The city of Anoka was growing in 1879 and a traveling artist appeared on the scene to record the community's activity. This artist drew a "bird's eye view" of Anoka. In 1879, a bird's eye view was only possible with a hot air balloon or a good imagination. While we don't know which method this artist used, we do know he excelled at his craft.

His drawing depicts over 600 buildings including four saw mills, two flour mills, schools, churches, three boats on the rivers, a log boom, neighborhood names, street names, and the downtown business district. Trees, rivers, and the ponds that existed in Anoka are all included in his drawing. When it was finished, an ad appeared in the 1879 *Anoka Union* newspaper letting readers know a copy could be purchased for "two bits" at the *Union* office. The drawing was 24 x 20 inches in size, making most buildings less than a quarter of an inch.

In the spring of 1971, then Anoka County Historical Society President, George Atwood, began building a diorama based on the 1879 drawing. He followed the drawing carefully and labeled his "relief map," as he called it, just as the original drawing was labeled. Mr. Atwood built his diorama in the basement of Colonial Hall Museum and thousands of people

viewed it through the years. The bird's eye view it presented was a great teaching tool to give visitors an overview of Anoka's development.

The accuracy of the drawing had been often documented by visitors who looked for their homes on it, but never was it documented as closely as in 1998. That year, the city of Anoka was celebrating its 120th birthday and a committee was formed to do historical research. Their task was to identify homes and buildings in Anoka that were at least 120 years old. As a starting point, the drawing made in 1879 was enlarged many times its original size and details never seen before became visible. Porches on homes were shown, as were additions and some out-buildings. The houses had windows and doors that faced the proper directions. A comparison of the Washburn Saw Mill in

photographs to the drawing showed remarkable similarity – even on such a tiny scale. Even some architectural details appeared and helped greatly in the task of identifying Anoka's older buildings. The drawing, as well as the diorama, were continuing to teach

visitors and researchers at Colonial Hall.

When the time came to move to a larger facility, the drawing moved easily in its frame to the new facility. The diorama was another matter.

Measuring five by ten FEET, and eight inches deep, the diorama presented a challenge when ACHS moved its operations to the former city library building in November 2001. The diorama stayed in Colonial Hall's basement until January 2003, when several volunteers cut it in two, moved it up the winding staircase, and reassembled it at the History Center.

The diorama has now been restored and will soon be on view in our circulating library.

Stop by the History Center Tuesday through Saturday to see the restored diorama. It's an artifact with many stories to tell.



John Weaver interpreting the diorama at Colonial Hall during a Christmas Open House.

Elections for the Board of Directors of the Anoka County Historical Society

As prescribed in the Anoka County Historical Society by-laws, the Annual Meeting is the time to elect the leadership of the organization. We will hold the election on March 22, 2003, during the meeting held at the Heights Theater in Columbia Heights. All members who are current in their dues are encouraged to attend the meeting and cast their ballots for the leadership of ACHS in the next years.

The by-laws of ACHS state that the Board of Directors shall be elected by the membership at the annual meeting. To qualify, a candidate must be a member in good standing for one month prior to assuming office. These qualified candidates have come forward as willing to serve the organization on the Board of Directors.

Candidate for ACHS President Glen Hardin, Ramsey

Glen Hardin has served on the Board of the Anoka County Historical Society since 1997, and is currently the Treasurer for the Historical Society. Glen has been a banker in Anoka County for over 20 years. Glen and his wife Eileen have two children and currently reside in Ramsey.

Glen was elected to the Ramsey city council in 1991, and was elected Mayor of Ramsey in 1995. Glen has served on a number of boards and committees in and around Anoka County. Some of these include the Andover, Anoka, Ramsey Youth First Committee, the Community Home Ownership, Inc. Board, the Three Rivers Community Foundation Board, and the Anoka Hennepin Technical College Foundation Board.

Early American history, family genealogy and local history are of special interest to Glen. Glen can trace his Hardin line back to the 1650's in the U.S. In fact, Abraham Lincoln was born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

Glen is an integral part of the Historical Society Finance Committee, which meets annually with Anoka County to discuss finding allocations for the Society. "It is extremely important that we maintain a high level of trust and open communications with county government, and that we continue to show that we are wise stewards of the funding we receive from them," said Hardin.



Candidate for ACHS President Paul Pierce, III, Anoka

The Pierce family came to Anoka County when the Federal Government awarded 200 acres of farmland in Oak Grove to my Great-great-grandfather Calvin Pierce. It was awarded for his service in the 1st Michigan Cavalry in the Civil War. Our family cemetery sits on a corner of the old farmstead. I grew up in the former Kline Sanitarium (a National Registry property) overlooking the Mississippi River in Anoka. My grandfather Paul Pierce Sr. bought the property from the Kline family for \$50.00 down during the Great Depression in 1939. My 10 year old son is the 3rd Paul Pierce to be raised in the old Sanitarium. I run our motel and apartments from there. I love the style, the care, the attention to detail, the character and the stories that old things have to tell about the people that came before us.

My wife Mary and I first got involved at ACHS when we became life members in 1980. I was elected to the Board of Directors of ACHS in 1997. Near the top of volunteer hours each year since then, I have enjoyed the many experiences and varied projects that helping at ACHS involves. I have built displays, written stories, fixed the plumbing, conducted walking tours, designed and built memorial markers, been on membership committees, prepared for countless events, and chaired the promotions committee to mention a few. As President of ACHS I will work to make our new facility more effective. I will emphasize outreach to all parts of the county and coalitions with groups and municipalities to serve their needs of preservation and collection of their history. In St. Francis I helped support a cooperative coalition of people, purchased land and financed moving one of the last remaining WPA-era one room schoolhouses in Anoka County, thus saving the historic structure from demolition. We need to do effective and creative outreach to show all parts of the county that we are *their* Historical Society. I look forward to the challenges and projects ahead.



(Elections, con't)

Candidate for ACHS Board Director B Bart Ward, Anoka

Bart was born and grew up in Anoka, Minnesota, where he currently resides. He attended St. Stephen's School in Anoka, then Grace High School in Fridley. He then went on to Anoka Ramsey Community College in Coon Rapids, the University of Minnesota, Los Angeles Valley College and UCLA. His degrees are in history, political science, and a Master's degree in business administration. Bart interned at the Securities & Exchange Commission for three years and since 1982, worked in the investment business. He is currently the CEO of Ward & Company, Ltd., a Registered Investment Advisor. He is on the Board of Directors of Starcom, Inc.; a Minnesota based regional radio and television holding company. He is also a member of the Anoka County Historical Society's Capital Campaign Committee, and serves on the Anoka Anti-Crime and Heritage Preservation commissions.

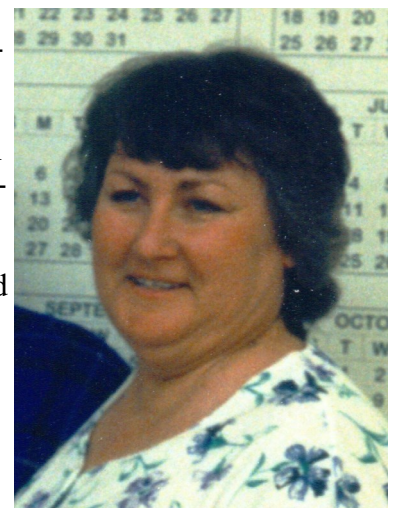


The vision Bart sees for the Anoka County Historical Society is one that expands its activities in the county. He believes that for many years, ACHS has been stifled by two major shortcomings that have prevented it from aggressively collecting, exhibiting and interpreting county history. Together with its new site and a continued increase in capital, these shortcomings should be put to rest. Most important, we need to "finish off" this new site with capital improvements and provide for an ongoing endowment. Another major portion of his vision is that of increased membership and volunteer activities. He believes the membership of ACHS can double or triple in the next five years, but there is no question that it will take real work and dedication to achieve greater awareness of the Society in order to bring in new members and volunteers. Nevertheless, we have already undertaken a great mission that has ended in a wonderful success and that is our new History Center. Bart believes now is the time to move forward by reaching out to all ends of the county to fulfill our mission.

Nomination of qualified candidates from the floor for this Board seat will be accepted at the Annual Meeting.

Candidate for ACHS Board Director C Judy Hanna, Linwood Township

I have been a resident of Anoka County for 37 years and have lived in Linwood Township for 33 years. I have served as Director C on the ACHS Board since 2001 and am running for another term on the ACHS Board. I have been employed by Linwood Township as the Senior Center Coordinator Transit Director since 1987, and was elected and reelected as Township Clerk since 1998. For many years, I was a member of the Around the County group. I worked with Columbus Township and Linwood Township putting up displays in the Colonial Hall. The Linwood Helping Hand Club has worked on the County quilt, and we hope to continue working with the Historical Society to finish it up this year. I have always been interested in preserving history. I have enjoyed being on the Board and representing the Township and the County wherever I have been. I am looking forward to being elected and continuing on with preserving our Township and County history. Thank you for your support, and please plan on attending the Annual Meeting on March 22, and voting.



Nomination of qualified candidates from the floor for this Board seat will be accepted at the Annual Meeting.

Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆ Does your community have an annual event? (Pioneer Days, Threshing Show, etc.) Please let us know when the event is held each year and who we can contact. ACHS would like to participate!

◆ Interested in your family's history? Join the Anoka County Genealogical Society! Contact Marilyn Anderson at the History Center to learn more – (763) 421-0600 x103.

Volunteer Opportunities... By Maria King

Welcome to Kay Skubitz and Pat McElhany, the newest in our family of volunteers. Thank you for your time and support!

We have several new volunteer opportunities that are sure to provide fun and camaraderie:

● **COUNTING:** A volunteer is needed to measure boxes in preparation for a storage space assessment. Anyone who can count and read a tape measure qualifies. The project will only take about 4 hours and can be done at your convenience.

● **NEEDLEWORK:** The Around the County Quilt project is proceeding nicely, but a few needle crafters are needed to do a bit of embroidery and appliqué.

● **ANNUAL MEETING:** The upcoming annual meeting will require volunteer assistance at the welcome desk, membership table, and the food booth. If you're planning to attend anyway, why not give me a call about volunteering?

● **VOLUNTEER EVENT:** If you like irony, try this. We need a few volunteers to help with the setup of the Volunteer Appreciation Celebration on Saturday, April 12th. It'll be fun!

New things pop up from time to time, so consider volunteering if you have an hour or two to fill. You'll find it fulfilling and you'll meet interesting people and have fun conversations. I always appreciate a call ahead of time so that I can have something ready for you, but drop in even at the last minute and you'd be surprised how readily we can put you to work! **VOLUNTEERS LIFT US TO NEW HEIGHTS.**

Featured Volunteer

Our featured volunteer is local historian, Charlie Sell. Charlie's love for his town is apparent as soon as you meet him. "I was in the service for a few years, but the rest of my time has been spent in Anoka. I'm what you call a 'homer,'" he said. He has always found ways to serve his community – as Commander of the Anoka American Legion, Mayor of the city from 1977 to 1979, and member of Anoka's Heritage Preservation Commission.

Charlie volunteers at least one day a week, often more, at the History Center where he works primarily with the photographs. Several large boxes of uncataloged photos have accumu-



lated and are in need of someone's loving care. Charlie scans these pictures, numbers and cross references them, and carefully identifies and

labels each. He is an incredible asset because he remembers so many faces and places, enabling him to record valuable information that would otherwise be lost. He is also a tireless researcher and refuses to give up on documenting the correct history until he knows it is as correct as is possible to get. When Charlie tells you a fact from history, you can count on it being *right!*

Recently, Charlie worked with the students of Fred Moore Middle School on their calendar project. Each year the students focus on a decade from Anoka's history and Charlie helps them find what was going on then and why it was important. Together, they choose photos and develop accompanying interpretive text. The students learn that history is the ongoing flow of human lives and not merely a timeline of events. More importantly, they meet an excellent role model, a true citizen, and a man of integrity and compassion who is committed to the community he loves.

Contributions – ACHS Thanks You!

Artifact Donors

FEBRUARY DONATIONS

Tom and Sharon Giddings
Chris Hovaldt
Jerry Jacob
Cliff Johnson
Maria King
LeRoy Moon
Beverly B. Olson
Ronald Pearson
Bill Prugh
Millie Roberg
Sandburg Middle School
Steve Thurston
Curt Vevea
Wayne Wallace

New Members – Welcome!

JANUARY

Myron Burquest
Dan Frank
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Jan Anderson Mark & Susan Freeburg
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Veterans' and Service

Organizations' Fellowship

The Anoka County Historical Society began the large task of computerizing all of our artifact records in February, 2001, calling this our "Cataloging Project." As a repository for Anoka County's history, it is our mission to preserve our artifacts and the information that tells each object's story.

This requires our project staff person, Marilyn Anderson, to go through every box in our storage area, document and photograph each item in the box, and repack it to prevent any future damage. The process is tedious, but absolutely necessary for the fulfillment of ACHS' mission to preserve, protect, and promote Anoka County's history.

To date, Marilyn has cataloged over 12,000 artifacts, representing approximately 30-40% of the collection. However, last year alone, we received 1,200 new artifacts relating to Anoka County's history from around the nation, which required cataloging and packing for storage.

ACHS has received incredible support for this project from our local veterans' and service organizations. To show our appreciation for their generosity, we have renamed the project the *Veterans' and Service Organizations' Fellowship*. Support has been provided by the:

ACHS proceeds from Northtown Mall's
Magical Night of Giving ticket sales
Anoka Kiwanis
American Legion Post #102 (Anoka)
Amer. Legion Post #102 Aux. (Anoka)
Amer. Leg. Post #334 Aux. (Coon Rapids)
VFW Post #230 (Columbia Heights)

The *Fellowship* project is dependent upon donations to continue. If you know of any organizations or businesses that may like to contribute to the preservation of Anoka County's history, please contact Bonnie McDonald at (763) 421-0600.

Coming Events

March 22, 2003

ACHS Annual Meeting

11:30—2:30

Get your reservations in today! This year's annual meeting features a silent movie with organ accompaniment, movie treats, history, and more in the very special setting of the historic Heights Theater on Central Avenue in Columbia Heights. This is a movie you won't see on the cable channels! Please look for the reservation form inside this newsletter and reserve your seat today!

April 12, 2003

ACHS Volunteer Recognition Day

1:00—3:00

It's time to recognize and thank our devoted volunteers, the people who are the very backbone of our operation here at the History Center! We have compiled the hours the volunteers have contributed in 2003 and found they equal *two full time staff positions*. That means two, 40 hour a week jobs are filled by *volunteers*! Volunteers constitute a huge percentage of our history gathering staff. Like staff, they answer questions, research information, assist patrons, organize, index, catalog, file, and copy. They help with newsletters, events, mailings, and a thousand other things each week. We'd like to thank you!

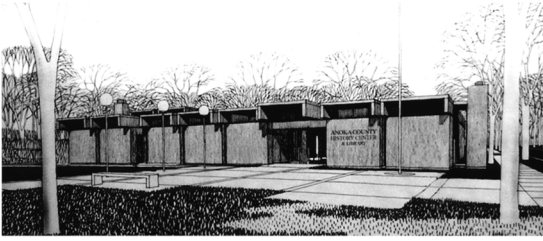
The annual Volunteer Recognition Day will be held at the History Center on Saturday, April 12, 2003. We'll start at 1:00 with punch and a social time, followed by a light lunch.

If you have volunteered for even an hour, you are invited. Or come if you'd like to volunteer in the future. ACHS needs everyone's talents!

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

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History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 33 No. 3

May/June 2003

SERVING:

- Andover
- Anoka
- Bethel
- Blaine
- Burns
- Centerville
- Circle Pines
- Columbia Heights
- Columbus
- Coon Rapids
- East Bethel
- Fridley
- Ham Lake
- Hilltop
- Lexington
- Lino Lakes
- Linwood
- Oak Grove
- Ramsey
- St. Francis
- Spring Lake Park

38th Parallel: Stories of the Forgotten War

“Well, I was out celebrating with some friends,” he said with a smile. “And we got the bright idea to enlist in the Navy.”

It was the start of a story that came to ACHS with a donation. It seems donations always lead to stories and that is the best part. This donation was the complete uniform of Louis Le Tendre from Lino Lakes—right down to his undershirt and gloves! It is rare in our collections to have such a complete set because objects—especially clothing—often get separated or worn out before they come to ACHS.

Early last winter, Louis and Mara Lou Le Tendre offered a set of artifacts which the Acquisitions Committee believed would be a valuable addition to our military collection. Vickie Wendel went out to pick up the donation and talk with them, but she was puzzled. The donation was *Army* uniforms and Louis had just said he and some friends enlisted in the *Navy*.

Another big smile from Louis. He had enlisted in the Navy with his buddies, however after they thought it over, they wondered if that was such a good idea. Before Louis had time to do much about it, he got a draft notice from the Army. Louis obeyed the draft notice and reported for duty with the Army. Not long after he left Lino Lakes for the Army, the Shore Patrol (Navy police) arrived at his parents’ home expecting him to fulfill his obligation to the Navy! The whole matter was eventually straightened out and Louis remained with the Army, serving during the Korean War (1950-1953).

As Louis and Mara Lou talked, more of their story began to emerge. They were engaged when Louis went off to the Army in May of 1951. The wedding was planned for June, but instead, when Louis finished his basic training, Mara Lou joined him at Camp Gordon, Georgia. They were married in the base chapel on July 7, 1951. Mara Lou brought out a picture of them taken on the steps of the Chapel just after the ceremony. A copy is now in the ACHS photo collection.

Louis and Mara Lou rented a small house in Augusta, Georgia, for \$135 a month. Mara Lou tried to find a job, as she wanted to stay near Louis until he went overseas. There were no jobs to be had, so after that first month, Mara Lou came back to Minnesota.

Louis went to Korea in November and served there one year. While there, he sent Mara Lou a white silk pajama and robe set, embroidered with a beautiful red dragon. Mara Lou donated the pajamas and robe Louis sent her to ACHS to help tell their story. She even provided a photo of herself wearing them.

Louis’ story had another twist. He was trained as part of the signal corps for the Army, meaning he worked with communications—telephone lines and such. Part of his job was to string wire and the wear on the gloves he donated to ACHS show his effort. But, Louis explained, the Army didn’t need him at the time, the Air Force did. So, the Army sent Louis on detached duty to serve with the Air Force.

The punch line to Louis’ story was that he “enlisted in the Navy, got drafted by the Army, and served with the Air Force”.

Louis’ story, as well as many others from the Korean War era, is part of a project to gather the stories of life in Anoka County and those from Anoka County who served in Korea through a series of oral history interviews. Selected portions from these oral histories are included in the new “38th Parallel: Stories of the Forgotten War” exhibit opening on Memorial Day, May 26, 2003.



Wedding photo of Louis & Mara Lou Le Tendre, July 7, 1951, Camp Gordon, Georgia.



Louis’ gloves worn in Korea.

History Center News is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit.

Anoka County History Center & Library

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Anoka, MN 55303

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www.ac-hs.org

History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director's Desk...

By Bonnie McDonald

Every day here at the History Center, we are reminded about the power of memories. Memories connect us to our history. The stories we share with one-another interconnect our personal histories and make us a community. May is a month to celebrate our communities' history and our shared memories. May 3-10 is Minnesota Archaeology Week and May 5-11 is National Preservation Week. ACHS will be celebrating these events with lobby displays through the month.

The most important day of memory and commemoration, however, is Memorial Day. This year, on May 26, ACHS would like to honor the people who have protected our community and our ability to preserve this nation's history—our veterans. Please join us on Memorial Day for the opening of our Korean War exhibit, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the war's end.

Thanks to a generous donation by Federal Cartridge Company/ Alliant Techsystems, we will be bringing you several events to honor our soldiers from the past and the present. Look for more information in this newsletter on the exhibit opening events, or call us at the History Center at (763) 421-0600.

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

Our 2003 annual meeting was the most well attended meeting in the history of the society. The Heights Theater was a perfect setting for people who enjoy old-fashioned luxury and style. The magic of moving pictures and a talented live organist made it an unforgettable annual meeting.

"Bacon Grabbers" with the still forming genius of the world's best comedians (you can never go wrong with a Laurel & Hardy film) was a film most had never seen—or at least couldn't remember. It was fresh and new for everyone, yet so old and nostalgic. The theater generously waived the normal rental fee and many others also donated funds and labor to offset costs. With all their help, the event provided a very nice meal and entertainment, and raised \$586 for the important work of the society.

The meeting had a record breaking 151 people attend. The previous record was just over 100 members in September of 1994, the end of Maxine Larson's term as president and Pat Schwappach's time as executive director.

Members attending came from sixteen of Anoka County's twenty-one communities. We also had several members attend from communities outside the county with connections to Anoka County history. It will be difficult to match this success at next year's annual meeting, but I promise the board and staff will try hard to do even better next year.



Members gathering at the Historic Heights Theatre in Columbia Heights for the Annual Meeting, March 22, 2003.

The Story of an Artifact

Bethel's Banner

The hand painted canvas banner that hung behind the stage in the Bethel City Hall is one of the largest artifacts in the ACHS collection, measuring some 10 x 20 feet in size. The fabric is in relatively good condition, considering it has had a little water damage and has seen nearly 100 years of activities go by. Concerned about its safe storage and conservation, the City of Bethel donated the huge fabric curtain to ACHS.

The painted canvas curtain was probably done in the earliest years of the 1900's, but no amount of research has been able to verify just when. Everyone who remembers the massive banner simply knows, "It has always been there".

The Bethel City Hall was built as the M.W.A. Hall (Modern Woodmen of America??) in 1910. Edward Behrendt of Cambridge showed silent movies in the hall once a week for seven years. He sold out to Ethel Nestor who continued showing movies until early in 1926 when she sold the machine to the Commercial Club. The Commercial Club of Bethel was an organization in the community that worked to bring business to the area and promote growth, much like a Chamber of Commerce today. They may have been responsible for the banner as it contains advertising for Bethel businesses.

The Commercial Club kept up the movies, but since the movies were silent, there was a need for an organ or piano accompaniment. Mrs. Behrendt, Mrs. Bert Settle, Majorie Odenwald and Mrs. Tom Wyatt all at various times provided the "sound track" for silent movies.

This attraction continued until "talkies" became popular and silent movies disappeared. The Village of Bethel bought the hall in 1934 and the hall was the scene for many kinds of activities including dances, shows, meetings, and community events. The banner remained at the back of the stage, displaying the history of the businesses who had placed their ads on it at the very beginning. At the time the banner was painted, Bethel was the commercial hub for what today is East Bethel, portions of Oak Grove, and southern Isanti County. Bethel itself was organized in 1858 as a township. The seeds of the village began in 1899 when the Post Office moved to Bethel Station, but it took until 1913 to officially become a village. An act of the State Legislature made Bethel a city in 1974. East Bethel was separated from Bethel in 1899 and incorporated as a village in 1952. Seven years later, East Bethel became a city. With the growth all around it, the banner in Bethel would have been a great place to advertise. The following are few of these ads on Bethel's banner.

The Tonsorial Parlor where "first class work" could be expected. Its proprietor was W.F. Fleisch and he specialized in children's hair cutting.

The Soderberg Hotel, run by Martin Soderberg, simply stated that it was in Bethel, Minnesota. That was all that needed to be said. He had competition though, the Hughes Hotel run by Henry Hughes offered lodging by the day or week. His motto was, "A home for the boys on the road".

Two owners, H.L. Lucht and W.J. Wyatt, had the "Bethel Hardware and Auto Co." They noted Ford cars, auto supplies, farm implements, plumbing and repairing as their offerings.

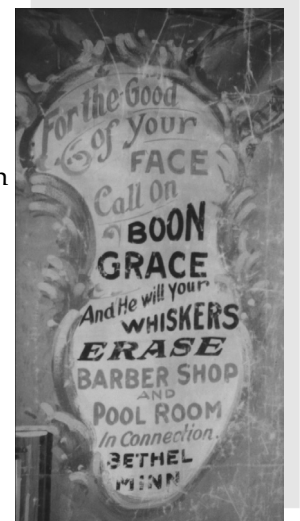
The Bethel Lunch Room listed "Ice Cream, Fancy Fruits, Confectionary, Cigars and Tobacco" among their goods. William Taplin was the proprietor. This, too, had competition. Blanchett and Briere offered candy, cigars and a "good refreshing drink" at their confectionary.

One ad is quite lyrical in its plea for customers. "For the good of your face, call on Boon Grace, and he will your whiskers erase." It was the "Barber Shop and Pool Room in connection".

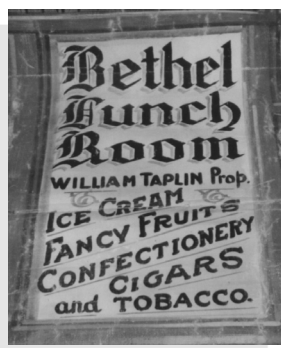
In all, nearly 20 ads for businesses, many only a memory now, ring the center painting of a mystical-looking castle. The ads date to businesses active in Bethel in the early 1910's and 1920's, but no definitive date can be assigned to the banner. Research and conservation is ongoing with this wonderful artifact. While not planned to be on exhibit in the near future, members and friends can be assured that it will someday be the focus of an exhibit at the History Center. Preserving an artifact can often mean protecting it from light for a time to let it "rest". Since this banner has been "on display" for longer than any one can remember, we'll let it rest while we research. Until it is on exhibit,



Bethel's canvas curtain as it hung in the City Hall, 2001.



Detail of the canvas curtain.



Detail of the canvas curtain.

We appreciate our volunteers!

The “Volunteer Appreciation” luncheon on Saturday, April 13th was a great time to say THANK YOU! Those contributed 100+ hours in 2002 were recognized. During 2002, we recorded 146 people donating 4,486 hours to the History Center. That’s just what was *recorded!* The hours equate to two full-time staff positions filled by volunteers—an incredible testament to our loyal volunteers. We couldn’t do it without you!

385.5	Elrite, Lucille	21	Berg, Dennis	4	Bronson, Jon
350	Mundel, Linda	20.5	Steen, Ann	4	Coolridge, Ryan
187.8	Sell, Charlie	20	Mundinger, Scott	4	Dahl, Gail
140	Mau, Wanda	19	Ewings, Bobby	4	Ervis, Kyle
140	Paplow, Dawn	17	Loader,Becky	4	Essling, Ann
137.5	Hardin, Glen	16	Prugh, Bill	4	Hart, Ben
128	Novak, June	15	Smith, Vi	4	Hostetler, Lorraine
122	Scottston, Barb	13	Thorp, Diane	4	Johnson, Sandy
115.3	Christianson, Shirley	12.5	Coble, Wayne	4	Koehler, Beth
106	Kent, Rachael	12	Courteau, Fran	4	Mitchell, Jason
99.5	Anderson, Jan	12	Courteau, Clara	4	Njaa, Rebekah
92	Wendel, Vickie	12	Gjertvig, Ron	4	Osterberg, Tom
85.5	Legrid, David	12	Jenson, Deanna	4	Pratt, Orrin
85	Ward, Bart	12	Lambert, Buzz	4	Ross, Ryan
84	Jenson, Steve	12	Skogquist, Eric	4	Saubny, Ashley
79	Auchter, Marion	12	Throne, Jackie	4	Thompson, Charlie
79	Pierce, Paul	11.5	McElhaney, Pat	4	Wilberg, Evan
78	Reilly, Bern	11	Hardin, Eileen	3	Blake, Phil
75	Spadgenske, Wes	10	Lundberg, Brianna	3	Buganski, Shirley
70.25	Wallin, Evonne	10	Wilson, Ruby	3	Drury, Mary
68	Cole, Robert	9	Hanson, Jessica	3	Flanders, Becky
68	Ziegler, Shirley	9	Hanson, Laurie	3	Pierce, Mary
67.5	Talbot, Marlys	9	McLean, Mary	2.5	Chutich, Marlys
66	Larson, Maxine	9	Rickert, Lynne	2.5	Jeanee Pratt
63	Hendricks, Jean	8	Ludens, Michele	2.5	Thorsen, Dave
58	Ziegler, Lester	8	Marsolais, Jim	2.5	Thorsen, Sandy
56.5	Schulz, Marion	8	Spadgenske, Lois	2.5	Waite, Cory
54	Bator, Fran	8	Steinhorst, Dani	2.5	Wussow,Audrey
53	Wendel, Mandy	8	Thorne, Jackie	2	Butler, Dorothy
52	Stockhausen, Sharron	7.5	Skogquist, Bjorn	2	Churchieg, Joe
51	Hanna, Judy	7.5	Szmanda, Justin	2	Clark, Mike
48.5	Kramer, Helen	7.25	Woizeschke, Ernie	2	Hardin, Ryan
47	Bloch, Ivy	6	Kruse, Tim	2	King, Jared
45	Hanson, Myrtice	5.75	Bator, Jessica	2	Lundberg, Kris
45	Weaver, John	5.5	Thurston, Barb	2	Marsolais, Sharron
39	Wren, Charlotte	5	Batters, Joe	2	Steinke, Ray
38.5	Batters, Dan	5	Gantor, Alice	2	Tomashek, Brian
36	Gurneau, Evelyn	5	Kluge	2	Wallace, Debbie
36	Johnson, Nykol	5	Niles, David	2	Wilcox, Janet
36	Paulson, Lou	5	Olson, Lil	1.5	Batters, Crystal
35.25	Riley, Jessica	5	Overby, Jay	1	Capra, Mary
35	Kolb, Marilyn	5	Throne, Shea	1	Erickson,Galiena
29.5	Elliott, Linda	4.5	Barrett, Dan		
29.5	Overby, Stacy	4.5	Coble, Shauna		
29	Canny, Megan	4.5	Dordan, Carol		
29	Ward, Ellen	4.5	Murphy, Jason		
28	Anderson, Marilyn Craine	4.5	Runyon, Duane		
28	Ten Eyck, Margaret	4.5	Runyon, Mark		
26.5	Randall, Stephanie	4.5	Talle, Ann K.		
24	Mattson, Jim	4	Belethon, Jeff		
22	Wickburg, Joanne	4	Belethon, David		
21.5	Wendel, Ron	4	Bronson, Jared		

Honor with us memories of the Korean War and those who lived it.

Panel Discussion

Military and civilian participants will share their experiences from the years 1950-1953. Reception following.

Wednesday, May 21, 2003, 7:00 p.m.

Bunker Hills Activity Center

550 Bunker Lake Blvd., Andover

"38th Parallel: Stories of the Forgotten War" Exhibit Opening

Memorial Day, May 26, 2003

Opening ceremony at Anoka City Hall, 1:00 p.m.

"38th Parallel" Exhibit Opens at 2:30 p.m.

Anoka County History Center

2135 Third Avenue North, Anoka

Exhibit Hall will be open from 2:30 - 5:00, May 26th.

These events presented by the Anoka County Historical Society & Federal Cartridge Company/Alliant Techsystems to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the end of the War in Korea.

ACHS Heirloom Preservation Workshop for Formal Wear

May and June are months for celebrations. They're months for high school proms, college formals, graduations, and weddings. After the celebrations are over, we are left with wonderful memories, rolls of pictures—and garments we'll never wear again. Many of us have closets full of great memories—our father's tuxedo, our grandmother's wedding gown, a rainbow of brides maid dresses. Come to the Anoka County History Center to learn how to care for these important heirlooms!

Tuesday, June 10th, 2003, 6:00 p.m.

Anoka County History Center

2135 Third Avenue North, Anoka

Cost: \$2.00 for ACHS members/ \$5.00 for non-members.

The workshop will be presented by textile conservator Rebekah Njaa. Njaa received training in art history at the University of Minnesota and textile conservation in Florence, Italy. She has worked as a conservator for almost 15 years with such institutions as the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

Please call ACHS to reserve a seat at (763) 421-0600. Bring your family heirloom to the workshop to learn how to best preserve and care for it! You will have the option of ordering preservation materials from ACHS. If you let us know when you make your reservation, you will leave the workshop with archival quality storage materials and packing techniques—just be sure to let us know when you call. Space is limited, so reserve your place soon.

Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆ Do you know someone with an interesting story? A veteran or spouse of a veteran? Someone who worked many years in the same field? ACHS is gathering oral history stories and we'd like to hear from you!

◆ Interested in your family's history? Join the Anoka County Genealogical Society! Contact Marilyn Anderson at the History Center to learn more — (763) 421-0600 x103.

Featured Volunteer

By Maria King

What do you do if you want to find your family's roots here in Anoka County? You know that Great-Great Grandmother's second husband owned a farm in a place called Cedar, but you cannot even find it on the map? Someone suggests the Anoka County History Center, and you're on your way. When you arrive, you are overwhelmed with the sheer volume of resources. Should you try the obituaries? Would a tax record give you any info? How about the records of the church they probably attended? How do you operate a microfilm reader anyway?

These are the questions Linda Mundle deals with every Tuesday. After three years of faithful volunteering, and the capable tutelage of Lucille Elrite, Linda is extremely knowledgeable about our collection. When people write or e-mail questions, the staff refers the questions to her. And Linda doesn't give up easily. She works until she finds what she's looking for.

"I started working here on Tuesdays because that's when Lucille came in and I wanted to learn the ropes from the pro! I'd been doing my own family genealogy for 30 years, so I knew there was a lot to learn," Linda said.

Linda and her husband own a construction company, so they work long hours. When Linda's children were grown, she decided to make time for herself, and volunteering is the way she chooses to spend her day off.

Perhaps her enjoyment of Anoka genealogy stems from the fact that her own history is here. Raised in Blaine, she is a descendent of the Cooper family that established Cooper's Corners in 1856, and the Gardners, who were instrumental in determining the boundaries for the towns of Bethel and East Bethel. Grandpa Ralph Gardner bequeathed to Linda her respect for accurate record-keeping, and her appreciation for old cemeteries.

Linda shares his commitment to community as well, because every Tuesday, Linda can be found at the History Center, sharing her skill and experience with those who need her help.



Volunteer Opportunities...By Maria King

April has seen the final completion of some very important projects around the History Center. But most of the volunteer projects are ongoing. The manuscript project requires volunteers to cut, copy and file newspaper articles that will be stored in our files. The photo project is proceeding nicely, but an opportunity exists for another worker to help Charlie Sell and Pat Mc Elhaney document photos and record them in the computer. The obituary project is an ongoing project and Marian Auchter could use help keeping these up to date. The indexing of the 1900 census has come to a standstill until another volunteer can be found to type the handwritten records into the computer. A volunteer transcriptionist is needed to record oral traditions as Dave Niles finishes each interview.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities include staffing the Anoka County Historical Society's table at the Northtown Mall's Community Day to be held on May 3, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00pm. We'll have teams working in shifts from 9:30-5:00. Period clothing, while optional, might be an effective way to snag attention as passersby cruise the displays. Call Maria to sign up for a shift.

The opening of the Korean War exhibit, school tours, and the unveiling of the Around the County Quilt are all chances to volunteer. Drums, Dreams and History is always a great day for volunteers and is coming fast!

There's always a place for you at the History Center. Volunteering gives you an opportunity to meet great people and learn new things. Why not give it a try? You'll find it very rewarding, and you'll be a part of important accomplishments.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

We have a new volunteer policy that will help us serve our volunteers better. On your next volunteer visit to the History Center, you may be asked to fill out some paperwork, insuring that we have a current phone number and address, and an emergency contact person in case a crisis develops while you are on duty here at the History Center. Staff is also working to describe the volunteer assignments and have written directions available in order to minimize training time. We may ask you to join a "training session" for a job you already do. You will be the measure by which we know we are doing a complete training and not leaving out anything. We want you to have the best assignment for your interests and the History Center to have the best volunteer for the job!

Contributions – ACHS Thanks You!

FEBRUARY DONATIONS

Anoka American Legion, #102
David and Winnifred Conger
Ronald Pearson

MARCH DONATIONS

Alliant Tech/Federal Cartridge
Elmer Andersen Foundation
LaVerne Anderson
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Ann Essling
Brian Evans
August and Gladys Farb
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Beth Mullinax
Karna Otten
Joyce Paul
Gary and Ann Steen
Deborah Sundeen
Catherine Vesley
Mary Ward and Jon Ekerholm
John Weaver
APRIL 1-15 DONATIONS
David Dietz
Dan Frank
NSDAR-Anoka

Thank you to the Anoka Chapter of the Sons of the American Legion for the History Center's new American flag.

New Members-Welcome!

FEBRUARY 15-28

David and Winnifred Conger (Oak Grove)
Helen Dawson (Bethel)

MARCH

Jon Akre (Minneapolis)
Melanie Anton (Columbia Heights)
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Lois Witte

Coming Events

Now Open!

See Anoka County's agricultural roots including the barn, kitchen, and even the out house!

Home on the Farm Exhibit

May 3-10, 2003

Minnesota Archeology Week

May 5-11, 2003

National Historic Preservation Week

May 21, 2003, 7:00 pm Korean War Discussion Panel

Military and civilian participants of this conflict will share their experiences in an panel setting. A question and answer period will be included. Reception following. Event held at the Bunker Hills Activity Center in Andover.

May 26, 2003, 1:00 pm 38th Parallel: Stories of the Forgotten War Exhibit Opening

Opening Ceremony at Anoka City Hall with special speakers and recognition of veterans. We will then proceed to the History Center to open the "38th Parallel" exhibit to the public at 2:30 pm. The History Center will remain open until 5:00 pm on Memorial Day.

June 10, 2003

Preservation Workshop

Learn the techniques to properly store and preserve your heirloom textiles from professional conservator Rebecca Njaa at the Anoka County History Center. This is your opportunity to learn from the best! Ms. Njaa will share information on how to insure your textile treasures are being stored in the safest possible way. Space is limited and reservations are a must.

July 12, 2003

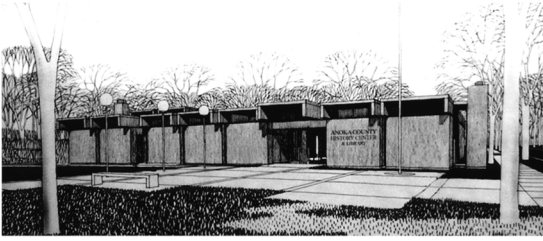
Drums, Dreams and History/Anoka Riverfest

Mark your calendars for this gala event! Many things are planned and details will be in the next newsletter. Save this day for history!

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

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History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 33 No. 4

July-August 2003

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A Tribute to John Weaver

The impact of one person on a community can be far reaching and leave lasting results. John Weaver has made such an impact not only on his own community, but the entire county and state. His list of accomplishments and dedication to history were recognized at a special Tribute in his honor on May 29th, 2003.

The evening was filled with laughter and special memories of the many organizations and people John has touched in his career of service in the community. Over 500 people from across the county and state gathered to honor and pay tribute to John's accomplishments. Greetings came from current and former legislators from all levels of government, businesses, and community leaders, a testimonial to the impact John has had and continues to have in our community. The evening was beautifully hosted by the Courtyards of Andover and Jade Catering who made a substantial donation to help make the event such a success.

Each person who attended the event was given a complimentary membership to ACHS if they were not already a member. This brings 414 new members to ACHS. Their names are listed on pages 4 and 5.

Influential community members came together to organize this first-class event, which had been planned since last October. Donations came in from the business community to subsidize administrative costs. With John's consent, the group decided to make this a fundraiser to benefit the ACHS Endowment Fund.

Those who attended the event were very generous in their donations on John's behalf. To date, the Endowment Fund has been nearly doubled with \$13,000 pledged. Pledges continue to arrive every day. For a list of donors to date, please see page 6.

John's formal service with the Anoka County Historical Society began when he was elected to the Board of Directors in 1997. Prior to his election, John was an active member and volunteer. He served as a director until 1997 when he was elected to the position of President. After fulfilling his second term of president in 2003, John moved back to the Board of Directors where he continues to work in the best interests of history.

Born in Anoka, John grew up on Rice Street and graduated from Anoka High School. He majored in Civil Engineering at the University of Minnesota and served in the NROTC aboard the USS Iowa and USS Boxer on tours in the Pacific. After serving his country, John chose to remain in Anoka. He married, and together he and his wife Jill have three children, Jeff, Sarah, and Martha. He's also called Grandpa by six grandchildren and the Weaver family is very close knit.

Formal public service in the Anoka County area began with the Anoka-Hennepin School Board where John served several terms. He was then elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1978. In 1983, his public service brought him to the Anoka City Council where he has served ever since.

The list of organizations John has played a vital role in is long and distinguished. His current involvement includes Kiwanis Club of Anoka, Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce, Zion Lutheran Church, the Anoka Community Concert Association, Viking Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Anoka Ramsey Community College Foundation, Minnesota National Guard Committee and the Anoka Technical College Foundation.

Nina Archibal, Director of the Minnesota Historical Society was on hand at the Tribute to add her congratulations and remind everyone how much of a friend John has been to history. "The Anoka County Historical Society would not be where it is today without John Weaver," she said. "If only every historical organization could have one like him."

It is with a great deal of pleasure that the Anoka County Historical Society can say that John Weaver is one of *our* best volunteers! Thank you, John!



History Center News is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit.

Anoka County History Center & Library

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303

(763) 421-0600

Fax (763) 323-0218

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

www.ac-hs.org

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Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director's Desk...

By Bonnie McDonald

We would like to thank the members and guests who helped make our most recent events such a success. Almost 200 people attended the opening events for the "38th Parallel" exhibit. Thank you to our panelists, guest speakers, and event sponsor for helping us ensure that the Korean War will never be forgotten. People from around Anoka County also came together on May 29th to honor a very special friend of ACHS, John Weaver. The event not only paid tribute to John and his accomplishments, but was also a fundraiser for the ACHS Endowment Fund. We deeply appreciate the generosity of all those involved, especially John Weaver.

Throughout the summer, ACHS will continue to bring you other fun and informative events around Anoka County. ACHS is once again hosting our *Drums, Dreams, and History* celebration during Anoka's Riverfest on July 12th. Look for us at the Anoka County Fair, July 22nd-27th, in the Old Farm Place. Our staff will also be at the Nowthen Threshing Show in Burns, August 15th-17th, and at Linwood Township's Family Fun Day on September 6th. Please see our "Volunteer Opportunities" section in this newsletter if you'd like to participate, or, check out the "Coming Events" section on the back page for more information.

ACHS will be honoring two Anoka County Century Farms at the Anoka County Fair on Wednesday, July 23rd. Please join us in celebrating our county's agricultural history and two families who have maintained their family farms for a century or more. The Allquist farm in Linwood and the Anderson farm in East Bethel will be added to the list of 30 other designated Anoka County Century Farms who have maintained at least 40 acres of the original farm for 100 years or more. We look forward to recognizing these families on their great achievement.

Century Farms are becoming more difficult to find in Anoka County as our communities develop. In order to preserve our agricultural history in lieu of rapidly changing land use, ACHS has created the Legacy Farm program. Much like the Century Farm program, the Legacy Farm program will allow us to proactively document and celebrate our county's agricultural history. Please read more about this innovative program in our "Up to Date" section on page 6 of this newsletter.

We at the Historical Society wish you a long, safe, and happy summer and we hope to see you here at the History Center!

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

Many of our members may not be aware of the long time support the Society has received from Anoka County. Talk about history! Our county government has a long history of support of the ACHS mission. They have been a major supporter of the Society since the early 1970's. At Colonial Hall, the yard was kept mowed and the sidewalks shoveled by county workers. Needed repairs were made and a lot of long term maintenance was performed. A good example of the extent of their support was in 1998 when the entire building was painted. All of these projects, large and small, add up to a serious commitment. Always cheerful and interested in what ACHS' latest project may be, the county board has always demonstrated how much they understand the need to collect and preserve the rich history our county enjoys. Be sure to thank your county commissioner for the long time support and interests they have given the Historical Society and let them know how much that support means to you. On behalf of ACHS, I want to say thank you to the Anoka County Commissioners and what a pleasure it is to work with them to preserve history.

Anoka County Commissioners 2003

Dennis Berg—District #1

Dick Lang—District #2

Margaret Langfeld—District #3

Jim Kordiak—District #4

David McCauley—District #5

Rhonda Sivarajah—District #6

Dan Erhart—District #7

You can speak to your county commissioner by calling 763-323-5700 or by addressing a letter to them:

c/o Anoka County Government Center
2100 Third Avenue
Anoka, MN 55303

The Story of an Artifact

Colonial Hall Update

As you stroll down Third Avenue in Anoka, just one block off of Main Street, you will find one of the stateliest residences ever built in our county – and the Anoka County Historical Society’s largest artifact. Colonial Hall, as it was named by its owners, references the structure’s architectural features in the Colonial Revival style. Designed by Champlin architect Frederick L. Marsh in 1904, Colonial Hall was commissioned by Drs. Alanson and Flora Aldrich for their home and medical offices.

Upon Flora’s death in 1921, the property was sold to the Anoka Masonic Lodge #30, where Alanson had been a member. The Masons built their Lodge behind Colonial Hall in 1922 and continued to use the house for functions. For almost 50 years, the Masons cared for Colonial Hall and the history of the Drs. Aldrich.

In 1971, the Masons agreed to lease Colonial Hall to the Anoka County Historical Society, which had been operating out of the Banfill-Locke House in Fridley for the previous five years. The arrangement worked well for both parties for 30 years, until the Historical Society’s collections outgrew the available space. After locating a larger facility – the old Anoka Library – ACHS moved its operations and collections out of Colonial Hall in the winter of 2001.

Since that time, Colonial Hall has remained in the control of the Anoka County Historical Society, but all the while awaiting a new use. Consequently, the ACHS Board of Directors deemed it the number one priority for 2003. ACHS continues

to lease the property from the Masons and their approval is needed before the Historical Society can reuse the property. A committee was formed in March to bring together community residents, the Masons, and the Historical Society to work together in finding a use for Colonial Hall.

The Colonial Hall Committee has worked diligently to answer the numerous questions raised when considering reuse of such a unique historic property. Throughout the spring, committee members have spoken with the city building inspector, the state historic preservation architect, an attorney, several realtors, and most importantly, each other, to discuss Colonial Hall’s future.

With the committee’s approval, ACHS has recently taken the initiative to protect the future of Colonial Hall by hiring a commercial realtor to market the property for sublease. Soon, you will see a “FOR LEASE” sign gracing

Colonial Hall’s lawn. The Historical Society’s hope is to find a tenant who will protect the historic integrity of Colonial Hall while making the necessary improvements it needs. Fortunately, its designation in the National Register of Historic Places will allow the new tenants to use the federal 20% rehabilitation tax credit, thus making these improvements economically feasible.

An article in a 1904 *Anoka County Union* stated that Colonial Hall “should be the pride of the owners.” It certainly is the pride of its current owners, the Masonic Lodge, and its long-time tenant, the Anoka County Historical Society. We are certain it will continue to be the pride of its new tenant. If you have any questions about Colonial Hall, please call Bonnie McDonald at (763) 421-0600, or, if you are interested in subleasing the property, please call Jim Nodaker at Premier Commercial Properties, (763) 862-2005.



New Members and Contributions

New Members-Welcome!

Barb Abeler (Anoka)
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(Coon Rapids)
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Gary & Cheryl Alberts (Coon Rapids)
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Mark Anderson (Brooklyn Park)
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Paul & Jan Anderson
Susan Anderson (Ramsey)
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(Golden Valley)
Shirley Andreason (Brooklyn Park)
John Applequist (Champlin)
Nina Archabal (St. Paul)
Duane Arens (St. Anthony)
Jeff Athmann (Coon Rapids)
Edmund & Madolyn Babcock
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Mary Bakken (Coon Rapids)
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Tom & Marsha Lehn (Shoreview)
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Jan Pomeroy (Anoka)
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Al & Tammy Roehlke (Ramsey)
Karen Rolstad (Andover)
Judy Rolow (Anoka)
Lyle Root (Anoka)
Howard & Dorothy Rosenwinkel
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Matt Rowan (Golden Valley)
Jack Saccoman (Brooklyn Park)
Richard & Dr. Laura Saliterman
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John & Barb Sander (Shoreview)
Evelyn Sandstrom (Ham Lake)
Bill & Lona Schreiber (Brooklyn Park)
William Schulz (Elk River)
Jon Schwartzman (Anoka)
Michael Scott (Anoka)
Steve & Linda Sexton (Anoka)
Ted Shev (St. Paul)
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Dr. Christina Siefferman (Eden Prairie)
Floyd & Jane Day Siefferman
(Eden Prairie)
Will & Christy Siegal

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Ben Skurdal (St. Francis)
Jim Smith (St. Francis)
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Don & Norma Stein (Sun Lakes, Ariz.)
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Curt Stoltz (Andover)
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Donna Stuart (Ramsey)
Donna Studer
Barry Sullivan (Anoka)
Mike Sullivan (Coon Rapids)
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Ralph & Kathryn Talbot (Anoka)
Timothy & Rose Talbot (Anoka)
Dodie Talle (Anoka)
Joan Taubert (Andover)
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Sandy Thorsen (Coon Rapids)
Jennifer Thulien-Smith (Blaine)
Ed & Jean Thurston (Anoka)
Gladys Thurston (Anoka)
Kathy Tingelstad (Andover)
Elwyn & Terri Neely Tinklenberg
Ted Toso (Shoreview)
Tri County Old Tyme Thresher
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Peter Turok (Anoka)
Scott Varner (Buffalo)
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Dan Voss (Anoka)
Elaine Voss (Blaine)
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Anne Weyandt
Barb Winfield
Carla Wirth
Anonymous

Living Trust Benefits History

Anna Gorham loved history. She volunteered at the Anoka County Historical Society until long past her 90th birthday. Her favorite place was the dining room at Colonial Hall where she loved to talk to children about history. Anna continued to volunteer at ACHS until she could say, with a great deal of pride, that she was the “oldest volunteer at the Historical Society”.

Anna passed away last year, but her love of history will continue. Completely unknown to ACHS, Anna had a Living Trust. Anna never told anyone she wanted the support of history to be a part of the legacy she would leave behind, so it was with a great deal of surprise that ACHS Executive Director, Bonnie McDonald, received a check for nearly \$5,000 from Anna’s estate.

“I did not have the pleasure of knowing Anna,” McDonald said. “But my staff has told me a great deal about her.” In fact, the staff put Anna Gorham’s name forward as the woman to be recognized last March for Women’s History Month. Anna’s story was featured in the Historical Society’s newsletter, all without knowing she had made a provision for helping keep history in her will.

“She was incredibly kind to include us in her estate planning,” said McDonald. “Anna’s donation will be included in our Endowment Fund, so that her gift and her memory will help to support the future of the Anoka County Historical Society.”

The Historical Society’s Endowment Fund was started by Marion Schulz with a \$5,000 seed donation in memory of her husband, Lyle. Others who have made early significantly contributions to the Endowment Fund are Natalie Haas Steffen, R.W. and Charlotte Johnson, and the Anoka Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans.

Anna Gorham’s Living Trust assures that even though she is gone, her love of history will continue for many years to come. Those who knew Anna can imagine what she’d say about that, something like—“It’s what I intended, you know!”

Up To Date

Announcements and News

- ◆ Interested in collecting the history of your community? Join our **Around the County committee** and represent your home town. For more information, call Maria at (763) 421-0600.
- ◆ The History Center's **Philolectian Room** is available for rent to the public. It seats up to 40 people and is available during the facility's hours of operation. For rental information, call Bonnie at (763) 421-0600.
- ◆ Want to become more involved in your Historical Society? We're looking for **enthusiastic members** who want to serve on our committees. Call Bonnie at (763) 421-0600 for more information.

Featured Volunteer—Dave Niles

By Maria King

"I like to tell stories, because stories are the way that we define ourselves to others." Dave Niles knows about stories. He started collecting Anoka County stories about a year ago, when he first contacted the History Center looking for a meaningful volunteer opportunity. To date, Dave has completed many oral histories of Korean War veterans and other people with roots in Anoka County.

Dave comes to us after a career with Medtronic. He first came to the Twin Cities in 1969 and although he repeatedly moved away, he kept coming home to Minnesota.

Dave believes it is important to capture the experiences of Anoka County residents, because times are always changing. "It's about much more than wartime experiences," he says. "Often the person's experiences after the war are far more profound. Recording experiences provides a learning opportunity for those who can't be there. It's much better than books."

Dave's mission is best described in his own words. "We often look for the dramatic in distant places and tend to forget that there are extraordinary people who live right down the street."

Dave, one of those extraordinary persons, is pictured here with his wife, Elynn, and son, Scott. As Dave says, "We are a set. My life is defined more by these two than anything else."



New ACHS Legacy Farms program

Anoka County is growing rapidly as a suburban area of the Twin Cities. Originally an agricultural county, the number of family farms is rapidly decreasing. ACHS recognized that a new program was needed to document and celebrate our agricultural history before it is lost.

The Legacy Farms program, the first we know of in Minnesota, is patterned on the Century Farms program. However, an Anoka County Legacy Farm must have been in bloodline ownership for only 50 years or more and have 10 or more acres of their original family farm. "We need to be proactive in keeping this history before it is lost," said ACHS Executive Director Bonnie McDonald, "This program will help us gather and preserve the agricultural roots of Anoka County in lieu of changing land use."

Special recognition will be given to Legacy Farm families during the Anoka County Fair, including a certificate and free admission to the Fair for a day. Most importantly, the information provided on the Legacy Farm application will be preserved in the archives of ACHS. Please contact ACHS at (763) 421-0600 to request an information packet and application. Applications are accepted year round, but we must receive applications by July 1st, 2003, to consider a farm for the 2003 Fair.

Volunteer Opportunities

By Maria King

Volunteer opportunities abound, now that summer has arrived. If you or your teenagers find yourselves at loose ends, consider volunteering. There are several summer festivals coming up around the county, starting with our own *Drums, Dreams, and History* held on July 12th. That's just a week before the County Fair, where lots of costumed volunteers and craft demonstrators are needed. After a brief break, the Nowthen Threshing Show in Burns runs August 15th through 17th.

If you prefer to work in the air conditioning, we need some folks to type. The job is simple data input, but requires a conscientious eye toward accuracy. Our Korean War research brought us oral histories and they need to be transcribed from tape to hard copy. The census project is at the point where names need to be entered; our researchers have also completed several years of birth, death, and marriage records, which need to be entered into our database. These projects can be completed at home, saved to a disc and then returned to the History Center.

Our volunteers have accomplished a great deal recently. Special thanks go out to Kay Skubitz, Ann Hubley and Mai Berg for their combined contribution of over 50 hours last month.

FHS's "August Fest"

By Robert Christenson, FHS President

Everyone is welcome at the Fridley Historical Society's 8th Annual August Fest on Monday, August 4, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 pm, at the Fridley Historical Museum, 611 Mississippi Street. The event is free.

Once again, "Ye Olde Tyme Base Ball Game" will be played with the Quicksteps facing off against Rum River Lumber. The Quicksteps, featured in a *Fortune Magazine* article last year, travel the U.S. competing with local ball teams playing according to rules of 1860. The game takes place in the ball field behind the Museum.

The Quicksteps appear in authentic reproduction uniforms from years ago. A hand-stitched base ball is used, which a seamstress keeps in repair during the game.

The August Fest includes music by the Fridley Band, Miss Fridley and her Princesses, a Fridley fire truck for the children to explore, and hot dogs, ice cream and soft drinks at a very modest price.

Coming Events

Continuing

38th Parallel: Stories of the Forgotten War—Korea

Anoka County History Center in Anoka. Experience the difficult days of war through the words and artifacts of those from Anoka County who lived it. Pictures, words and artifacts abound in this special exhibit.

July 12, 10:00-5:00 Drums, Dreams and History/Anoka Riverfest

Anoka County History Center in Anoka. Activities at the History Center will include a flag raising by the Korean War Veterans at 10 am, a Civil War encampment, a concert by singing ranger Charlie Maguire at 2:45 pm, and hands-on activities for the whole family.

July 22-27

Anoka County Fair

Anoka County Fairgrounds, County Road 47 in Anoka. Come out and experience fun in the Old Farm Place with ACHS and ACGS. Learn about life on the farm in centuries past, watch demonstrations of soap making and churning butter, test the kids' knowledge in our annual spelling bee, and learn more about Anoka County's interesting history.

August 4, 6:00-8:30 Fridley Historical Society's "August Fest"

Fridley Historical Museum, 611 Mississippi Street in Fridley. Join the Fridley Historical Society in welcoming the Quicksteps as they take on Rum River Lumber in a historic base ball game according to 1860's rules. Listen to music by the Fridley Band, meet Miss Fridley and her Princesses, and explore a Fridley fire truck with the kids. The event is free and food is available at a modest price.

August 8-9

Third Annual Anoka County Genealogical Society Garage Sale

23160 Butterfield Drive in St. Francis. Treasures donated from many families will provide a shopper's paradise. Call Hollie Ploof at 763-421-7815 to donate items for the sale.

August 15-17

Nowthen Threshing Show

7415 Old Viking Boulevard in Burns Township. Stop in to the General Store at the Threshing Show, where ACHS living history characters will tell tales about the history of Nowthen, have some hands-on activities, and interpret the importance of small town general stores. There's plenty of family activities, food, farm machinery, and fun.

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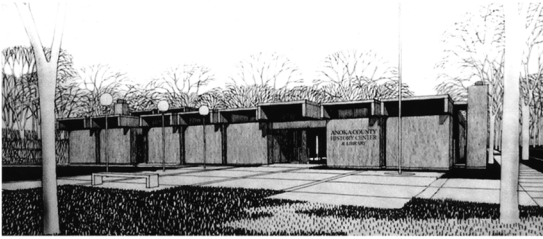
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Anoka County Historical Society



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 33 No. 5

September-October 2003

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St. Francis
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The Bethel Nike Missile Base

By Diane Buganski

Do you remember “duck and cover”? Many of us have vivid memories of hiding under our school desks and covering our heads to protect us from a nuclear attack. It was something we did as a result of what was known as the Cold War, which began on the heels of the first atomic bomb and the destructive power of that weapon.

By the mid-1950's, the rhetoric of national defense and McCarthyism was at a feverish pitch; it increased during the first decade of the Cold War as the Soviet Union began to develop a series of medium range bomber aircraft. They were capable of reaching targets within the continental United States while carrying a nuclear payload. These planes flew higher and faster, far beyond the range of ordinary anti-aircraft batteries. Policy makers in the United States believed it was necessary to develop a system of air defense suitable to fight this possible threat. A guided missile was needed to destroy enemy aircraft before it reached its objective. The Nike missile, named for the Greek goddess of victory, was the product of ten years of U.S. Army research first begun in 1945.

Land just north of St. Francis was chosen as the site for a defense missile base. It was called the “Bethel Base”, but the site itself was not in Bethel. The site lay just north of the Anoka-Isanti county border and it is not known why the name Bethel was chosen. Nike missile base sites were constructed in a defensive ring around heavily populated metropolitan areas. The Twin Cities were defended by four bases, all approximately 30-40 miles from the city center. The bases were located in strategic areas on the highest points of Bethel to the north, Farmington in the south, St. Bonafacius in the west, Roberts, Wisconsin, to the east and the Air Defense Command headquartered at Fort Snelling.

The Bethel Nike missile base opened January 26, 1960, to an open house of invited guests, military officials, and local politicians. Shortly after the dedication, a newspaper column began running in the *Anoka County Union*, titled *Nike News*. The column was designed to establish goodwill on the part of the Army to the communities surrounding the base and keep residents informed of the non-sensitive activities of the Army personnel.

Like most Nike air defense bases, the Bethel base was constructed on two sites, about a ½ mile apart. The distance between the two facilities was to confine any nuclear contamination to the men who lived there. One site, the Integrated Fire Control Area, contained the missile system's ground base radar and computer systems, administrative offices, mess hall, barracks and recreation hall. The radars were mounted on the highest point of the base to watch for Soviet bombers flying over the North Pole into Minnesota.

The missiles were housed in underground bunkers at the second site. There were three bunkers, each having their own entrance, missile launcher, missile bay doors, and emergency escape route. Two missiles were stored horizontally on each side of a launcher with one missile in the launcher ready to be elevated through the missile bay doors and fired. Each bunker was separated by concrete walls ten feet thick to prevent any radiation accident from contaminating a neighboring bunker. In the event of a nuclear accident inside a bunker, the airmen closed the contamination doors, entered a decontamination room to remove their clothes, shower, and escape through a vertical shaft.

(Continued on page 4)

Abandoned radar stands at the East Bethel Nike Site.



History Center News is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit.

Anoka County History Center & Library

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Anoka, MN 55303

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www.ac-hs.org

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Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director's Desk...

By Bonnie McDonald

What do you picture when you hear the words “history” or “historic”? Oil lamps, hand tools, and log cabins? Most frequently, “history” is synonymous with “old”. However, does something need to be old to be historic? Is there a date when “history” ends? For instance, are there events that happened 20 years ago, 5 years ago, or yesterday that could be considered historic? Our answer as historians is a resounding “yes”. Decisions we make today will be the history we remember and preserve tomorrow.

The Anoka County Historical Society documents and preserves Anoka County's recent history. For example, we compiled a record of Anoka County residents' reactions to the events of September 11th, 2001. An artifact was recently pursued by ACHS from a school in Andover—a pictorial and written document about friends and family serving in Gulf War II. This newsletter focuses on two additional projects headed by ACHS to tell the stories of our recent past.

On the cover, you will find an article about the Bethel Nike Missile Base during the Cold War-era. Many people are unaware that the Twin Cities had a group of missile bases ringing the metropolitan area to defend against a nuclear attack. You're sure to be intrigued and surprised by this article and the important, but often overlooked, role that base played in our recent past.

Our “Artifact of the Month” is also documents Anoka County today. The Anoka County Quilt, recently completed through the hard work of our dedicated volunteers and the tenacity of our Volunteer Coordinator, Maria King, is featured. Each of our twenty-one cities and townships chose a symbol for their community as it exists today, which was then embroidered on a square. The squares were quilted together to make a complete quilt, as all of our communities make up the diverse whole of Anoka County. Join us for the unveiling of this wonderful artifact on September 27 at 10:30 a.m. and see your community's quilt square.

You can help save recent history! Regularly take pictures of your family, your community, and important events in your life. Label them with the date and subject and identify the people in your photos. Then, consider making a donation of some of these photos to the Anoka County Historical Society. They will be the legacy that lives on in your personal history, your family, and your community.

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

The Historical Society's stepped-up outreach program has been going very well.

Thanks to the efforts of staff and many volunteers, we have attended and promoted the important mission of ACHS at many events this summer. From community fairs and expositions to the traditional week at the county fair, we have had booths and members in period costumes representing the organization and handing out history pamphlets. We also helped promote the Fridley Historical Society and their "August Fest" and hosted them at special “Fridley Day” in the farmhouse at the Fair.

ACHS ran the General Store at the Nowthen Threshing Show in mid-August. When visitors walked in the Store, the year became 1920 and ACHS did true living history, telling tales from Nowthen and Anoka County's past in first person while providing hands-on activities to emphasize the importance of a General Store in small towns.

I want to personally give a special thanks to the staff and all the volunteers who have worked so hard to make our presence possible at these events. I also wish to invite others to come to the next events and see how much fun it is to visit with the crowds to tell (and show) everyone why history is important to you and to them. Costumes are not always required, an ACHS "T" shirt of any vintage is fine. Just call Maria King at 421-0600 when you want to help. Check the calendar of Coming Events on the back page for a list of the next activities ACHS is involved in. We would appreciate your help and you will find it is a very fun job.

The Story of an Artifact

Stitches and Stories

Like most stories, this one started out as an idea, a conversation brought about by plans for a quilt exhibit in Colonial Hall in the spring of 1999. Quilts in the ACHS collections told such wonderful stories, like the young couple who courted while making a huge Bethlehem Star quilt that won first prize in the Minnesota Territorial Fair in 1857. A signature quilt in our collection holds signatures from the friends of the woman who received it as a gift before she moved away. Another elegant quilt in silks and satins, decorated with needlework, ribbon roses, and embroidery was a gift to a favorite pastor's wife in the 1880's. The stories are as rich as the quilts themselves.

The idea was to create something beautiful and emotionally evocative as the quilts in the ACHS collection. Jean Smith and Crystal Batters, both on staff of ACHS at the time, began working on the idea, refining it, forming a committee, exploring ideas for the quilt and looking to see what other "art" quilts might offer for suggestions.

The project committee designed a quilt, assigning a block to each of Anoka County's cities and townships. The individual blocks would be designed by the communities themselves. Each block was to depict something identifiable about that community in the year 2000, the turn of the millennium.

Staff changes and moving to the new History Center nearly brought about the demise of the then not quite half finished quilt. It stayed—in a pile of pieces, parts, and half-finished stories—in an archival box until the project was revived under the supervision of Maria King, current ACHS volunteer coordinator.

Working with the Around the

County Committee and a reactivated quilt committee, Maria coordinated the completion of the quilt blocks, all 21 of them. Once the blocks were finished, the quilt was taken to the northeastern corner of the county to be completed. "The Helping Hand Club" of Linwood took on the task of sewing the blocks together with the sashing (the strips of fabric that frame each block). They arranged to have the actual quilting done by machine in a pattern of leaves and vines and made sure the border was complete.

Maria gathered the fragmented pieces of the original story of the quilt and provided it to Dawn Paplow and Wanda Mau. These two women used the information as the basis for a history class paper, but it soon turned into much more.

The book they created will accompany the quilt as it tells the story of the quilt. It pictures each block, explains why the motif was chosen for that community, provides a brief history of the landmark, building or symbol, and gives a short biography of the block's creator.

In all, over 30 people have worked on the quilt, each adding their stitches and stories to the finished piece.

The quilt is now a prized artifact, documenting the history of each of Anoka County's communities and those who gave of themselves to see the quilt finished.

The County Quilt will be on special exhibit

with an unveiling on September 27th at the History Center. It will remain at the History Center for a time before it begins to travel around the County. As it travels, more chapters will be added to the story the quilt will tell.

Imagine the delight of those who come many years after us when they find this quilt, carefully preserved with all its stitches and stories to share of life in Anoka County at the turn of the millennium! Our descendants will admire us for coming together as a county community to create this living legacy of stories and stitches.

Yes, ACHS does collect and preserve history, but this time, we helped "make" it! Be here for the unveiling on September 27th at 10:30 a.m. and be a part of the story.



A close up of the block from Centerville featuring St. Genevieve's Catholic Church.

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

DRUMS, DREAMS, & HISTORY

Anonymous
Lucille Elrite
Myrtle Eveland
Netha Feist
Mildred Jorgenson
Lillian & John Meyer
James Miller
Eleanore Pemberton
Don Smith
Rick Sorenson
Betty Wilbur
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WEAVER TRIBUTE ENDOWMENT

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Mike & Wendy Lapham
Pete Raatikka
Rebecca Ridge

OTHER DONATIONS

Robert & Marilyn Douglass

Dan Frank
Dorothy Peterson
Jim Plowman
John & Kathryn Roberts

Welcome New Members!
JUNE 16 – AUGUST 15, 2003

Darlene Bearl (Anoka)
Robert Christenson (Columbia Heights)
John & Theresa Cox (Anoka)
Bruce Derscheid (Champlin)
John & Janet Galvin (Andover)
Thomas Grose (Oskaloosa, Kansas)
Steve & Laurie Herting (St. Francis)
Brian Marsh (Blaine)
Suzanne Miskowic (Fridley)
Janet Olson (Columbia Heights)
Linda Potopa (Anoka)
Robert & Kay Voss (Coon Rapids)
Diane Wilson (Anoka)
John & Mildred Wolfe (Coon Rapids)

ARTIFACT DONORS

Ruth LeNue
Bill Prugh
Andrew C. Revering

Vickie Wendel

Bethel Nike Base *(continued from page 1)*

A direct hit by a Nike missile was not needed to destroy a target. The explosion of a Nike's nuclear warhead within an area of the enemy aircraft would either disable or down it. The four bases ringing the metropolitan area had 15 missiles each, a total of 60 Nike missiles to defend the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. If all these missiles were expended, the Twin Cities would then be undefended.

The Bethel Base was closed in 1972 because these bases had become obsolete. A few years later, the administration site was remodeled as the northern branch of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Boys Ranch, still in operation today. The radar towers are still standing on that site, as well as the government style buildings. Down the road, the missile launch site and buildings are deteriorating and crumbling.

In 1995, the Army Corps of Engineers submitted for bids the demolition and clean up of the three concrete missile launch bays as part of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites, but the remaining buildings are in poor and deteriorating condition.

If you look carefully, you can still see the ghosts of the Cold War and feel the emotions of those harrowing times in this incredible piece of history in our own back yard.

Example of a Nike missile of the type housed at the Bethel Base.



Announcements and News

- ◆ Calling all college students! ACHS is looking for college students interested in history for volunteer **internships**. For more information, call Bonnie at (763) 421-0600 x104.
- ◆ Have an important document to sign and need a **notary public**? The History Center has a notary public on staff Tuesday evenings from 4-8 p.m. There is a \$1.00 fee for our notary service. Please call ahead for availability at (763) 421-0600.

Featured Volunteer—Bill Prugh

By Maria King

It was a lucky day when Shirley Christenson happened to remark to her friend, Margaret Prugh, that ACHS was working on the military display. Margaret knew her husband, Bill, could help.

Bill has an extensive collection of military memorabilia. It includes uniforms, field equipment, documents, books, military currency, unit histories and much more than can ever be listed! The items cover American history from the Civil War to Desert Storm, but Bill's favorite era is World War II.

Bill's reputation is respected among collectors. It's no surprise that his name came up when Steven Spielberg wanted to be sure they had accurate props for the movie, *Saving Private Ryan*. Besides advice, Bill provided the movie maker with 51 carbine pouches and several general purpose bags, called "grenade bags". In all, over 100 items were sent from Bill's collection in Ham Lake to England for Spielberg to use in the movie.

Bill's collection has grown so enormous that his basement could be a museum onto itself. It would be difficult to choose a favorite artifact.

"I have a jacket," Bill said, "that was worn by a front line war correspondent who wrote for the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper—the same paper that Andy Rooney and Bill Mauldin wrote for. I know the guy was wounded because he got a Purple Heart, but I don't know who he was. I'm working on that."

Bill says he likes to collect unique things—things that are rare, but authentic. Those words are an accurate self portrait of Bill. He is indeed authentic, and his knowledge of military history has been invaluable to our museum. He shares that knowledge unselfishly, and has loaned several artifacts to make the Korean War exhibit more accurate and complete. He is very critical of other museums if things are displayed incorrectly and wanted to be sure no one could find fault in the military exhibits at ACHS. It's nice to have Bill fighting on history's side!

Volunteer Update...By Maria King

July was a hot month, and I don't just mean the weather! The History Center has been hopping with events! Special thanks go out to all the dedicated volunteers who make our outreach efforts possible.

Thanks to Jim Marsolais for representing the Historical Society at the Coon Rapids Carpfest.

Drums, Dreams and History was very successful, due in large part to the efforts of volunteer docents and costumed characters who distributed coupons to the crowds. Dorothy Butler helped us by counting patrons at the door and Mary Handrick helped with the children's programming.

Then the County Fair! We staffed the summer kitchen as in other years, but the farmhouse was a little different, at the request of the Fair Board. Still, it required two docents at all times to offer hospitality and direct traffic through the facility. In all, three staff persons, and 31 different volunteers filled two shifts each day. They provided music, craft demonstrations, security, hospitality, and historical information to the public. This important outreach effort was successful because of our volunteers' willingness to help.

The changes in the farmhouse to a walk-through history board display provided an opportunity for other historical organizations in the county to bring their history to the Fair. The Fridley Historical Society staffed the house on Saturday and brought a display featuring historic photos of the 1965 tornado. The goal of the ACHS' Around the County committee is for other Anoka County community history organizations to join us in showcasing their areas.

Last, but not least, a big thank-you goes out to our regular volunteers for maintaining the high standard of service to the public by their work on ongoing projects. Lucille Elrite and Linda Mundle continue to help patrons with genealogy. Charlie Sell and Pat McElhaney are cataloging photographs every week. Shirley Christenson and Marlys Talbot are working on putting our books into the Dewey Decimal system. Mai Berg and Anne Hubley continue to update manuscripts, and Marion Auchter works on obituaries. Kay Skubitz and Evonne Wallin are chipping away at the index for the 1900 census. All of these projects are proceeding well, but there is always room for more volunteers on these—and other—project to record history! Call ACHS to get involved!

Coming Events

September 6, 2003, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Linwood Twp. Family Fun Day

Join the Anoka County Historical Society at the Linwood Town Hall as we celebrate Linwood Township's Family Fun Day on Saturday, September 6th. We'll have a booth with living history characters who will relate the history of Linwood Township and its surrounding communities. Come with your family to experience the fun!

September 27, 2003, 10:30 a.m. Unveiling of Anoka County Quilt

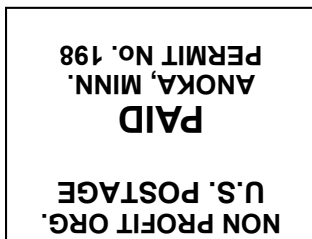
Anoka County History Center and Library. This is a history making quilt as each community in the county is represented on this very special quilt. All 21 cities and townships have a special square depicting a unique symbol of their community. The squares have been assembled and the quilt finished after several years of work on the project. Come for the special unveiling and get in on the first look at this historic quilt.

September 16, 2003, 5:00 tour, 6:00 dedication Dedication of Akin-Riverside Park, Anoka

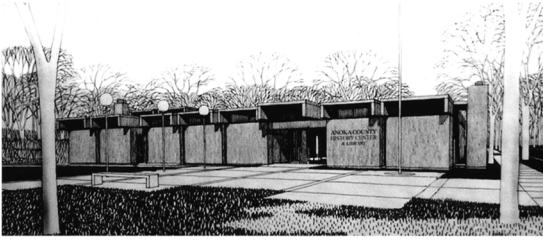
Akin-Riverside Park, Anoka. Celebrate the rededication of Anoka's Akin-Riverside Park with the Anoka Park Board, dignitaries, and the Anoka County Historical Society. Go on a tour with costumed interpreters as they guide you through the heritage trail to the Gathering Place, where you'll hear inspiring words and a live Dixieland band.

October 18, 21 and 23, 2003 Annual "Monuments to Life" Cemetery Tours

Once again, ACHS will be giving our 2nd annual Monuments to Life cemetery tour series. This year, join us as we enliven the history of Linwood Cemetery in Linwood Township and meet its interesting characters on Saturday, October 18th at 5:30. We'll visit Anoka's Forest Hill cemetery on the Tuesday the 21st at 6:30 with treats to follow at the lovely Ticknor Hill Bed and Breakfast. Our Savior's Lutheran Church Cemetery is on Thursday, October 23rd at 6:30 with a tour of the historic "old" church, in Ham Lake to round out the series. As always, warm refreshments are served after each tour. Buy a ticket package or just one! See the flyer inside for more details.



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



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 33 No. 6

November-December 2003

SERVING:

Andover
Anoka
Bethel
Blaine
Burns
Centerville
Circle Pines
Columbia Heights
Columbus
Coon Rapids
East Bethel
Fridley
Ham Lake
Hilltop
Lexington
Lino Lakes
Linwood
Oak Grove
Ramsey
St. Francis
Spring Lake Park

Santa's Summer Home

Have you ever wondered where Santa Claus used to spend his summers? Right here in Anoka County! The jolly old elf lived in Santa Claus Town in Ramsey along Highway #10.

It all started when the children of Bernard Swanson wanted to know if Santa stayed at the North Pole or if he left for the summer. Swanson's answer didn't seem to have the ring of sureness to it that he wanted, so he set out to fulfill a dream. A former industrial engineer from Brainerd, Swanson started building Santa Claus Town on an eight-acre site. He did most of the work himself, creating not only a summer home for Santa, but a miniature electric railroad, Mother Goose characters, Bible characters, rides, concession stands, a picnic ground, playground and more. Swanson may have gotten some of his ideas from Paul Bunyan Land which opened in Brainerd, his former home, in 1950.

Many people remember Santa Claus Town, even if they only drove by this classic 1953 roadside attraction. It was one to catch your attention with bright colors and fanciful oversized characters.

The main entrance to the site brought visitors under a banner held up by a giant snowman and Santa himself. At the time it was built, this towering figure was thought to be the largest such Santa in the state. A colossal blue, wood and concrete parrot with the tail of an airplane greeted visitors, often calling them by name. A speaker hidden in the parrot's mouth allowed an employee in another booth to talk as the parrot with visitors.

Willie the Whale kept his mouth open in the park, and it's a good thing he did! Jonah sat perched on the whale's tongue with a fishing pole. The Man in the Moon told fortunes when visitors stopped by to see him. Other characters in the park included the Old Woman in the Shoe, Mistress Mary Quite Contrary, Peter Pumpkin Eater, Mother Goose (complete with Goose), Winkin, Blinkin, and Nod with their wooden shoe, and the Mouse from Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

One of the highlights of the park was the electric train that was rebuilt from a mining locomotive used in an underground mine near Hibbing. It became the Story Book Train with the help of Russell Swearingen who operated the train in Santa Claus Town. It ran on two banks of batteries and could carry as many as 72 children all day on a single charge.

In May of 1954, the *Anoka Union* newspaper described a new attraction, the "Live Action Shooting Range," at Santa Claus Town. The enclosed range had a movie screen across which the bandits continually tried to escape. A .22 caliber rifle was used to "shoot" the bad guys and "hits" were marked with a blue flash behind the screen.

For all the excitement it generated when it opened, Santa Claus Town did not last long. The figures were sold to Cletus Dunn in 1960. He moved them to Cottage Grove where the parrot watched over his service station. Nothing remains in Ramsey of Santa's summer home today but memories.

If you have memories of Santa Claus Town, write them down and bring them to be included in the archival file about this unique bit of history. Perhaps you took photographs or bought something from the Treasure Chest Souvenir Shop and would like to donate it to help tell the story. Give the History Center a call! 763-421-0600.



ACHS photo collection image of Santa Claus Town in Ramsey, ca. late 1950's.

History Center News is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit.

Anoka County History Center & Library

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History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director's Desk...

By Bonnie McDonald

Many of us have vivid, grade school memories of creating construction paper hats, feathered headdresses, and lopsided cornucopia to decorate the refrigerator for Thanksgiving. Almost 400 years ago, in the year 1621, the first "Thanksgiving" occurred when the Wampanoag Indians and the Pilgrims sat down in Plymouth Colony to celebrate a successful harvest. However, Thanksgiving was not made an official national holiday until it was declared by President Lincoln in 1863.

As Thanksgiving approaches, we at ACHS have many things for which to give thanks in 2003. The Historical Society is thankful for the tireless work of our volunteers who have dedicated thousands of hours to make our organization a success. We are thankful for your membership and for all those who joined or re-

newed, which has doubled the number of

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

Two important volunteer events of the last two months stand out for me as memorable examples of how well our Society works. The first one was in September when we completed an idea brought forward by Crystal Batters to make an Around the County quilt to commemorate the turning of a new century.

The project was only partially complete when the importance and priority of the move from Colonial Hall halted the work. After our move, the quilt was continued by Maria King.

Quilts were often used as a way to mark and honor a particular event. Probably the most common event was a new child or grandchild that would need some special wrapping to keep warm.

Our county is very much like a quilt. A quilt is made up of many patches of different fabrics. Like our 21 cities and townships, they are all arranged together to create our county. From Bethel to Hilltop, Ramsey to Columbus, our terrain and styles are distinct and unique in each one.

Our county quilt is made up of many fabrics and held together by a multitude of threads, all working together to make the quilt a strong, useful, pleasing and beautiful thing. Like those threads, our municipalities are made up of and held together by a great multitude of people who are made of strong stuff. And though they are all very different, they work together to form a pleasing and beautiful end result.

Our county is ever changing as the people who make up the townships and cities of our county are ever changing. But the

members in the last year. ACHS is very grateful for the generosity of our individual, business, and institutional donors who have ensured our financial stability. We also extend our thanks to our numerous partners who assist our outreach efforts, including the Anoka County Library, Anoka County Genealogical Society, and the Anoka County Suburban Fair to name just a few.

Finally, ACHS is thankful for the donation of thousands of historic artifacts, the space we now have to display these artifacts, and the new shelving to store them safely. We appreciate our community's dedication to preserving the history of Anoka County and to the continued success of the Anoka County Historical Society. Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving!

Research compiled from

www.holidays.net and www.historychannel.com.

tected by the Anoka County Historical Society and will serve to represent our beautiful county at this time in our history. I wish to thank all those warm, helpful, thoughtful and beautiful people who did all the work necessary to make this heirloom for our society possible.

In October, a more gritty and less sophisticated volunteer effort was another wonderful example of why our society works so well. The Sunday project to move all the artifacts out of our storeroom and remove all the old inefficient shelving was well attended by 23 volunteers. A project that would have taken staff a week of heavy, hard labor was projected to last three days with a good volunteer showing. With the "power of people" and to everyone's surprise the work was all done by two o'clock. Probably much like a study of ants, the many people, without need for direction, formed into efficient work groups that moved through the museum, quickly devouring all the tasks that needed to be done. At times the regular clanking of metal parts hitting each other during the job would have sounded like a factory except for all the laughter and happy banter and joking that was going on. And then, a week later, another crew appeared to put it all back on the new shelving and again, finished much more than expected for the day. It was a wonder to witness and I extend on behalf of the Society a hearty thank you to all the members and staff who gave their time so generously to make it fun and easy for all of us.

quilt we unveiled will be preserved and pro-

Hilltop's Votomatic

It's November. The chill is in the air and candidate signs appear in the yards. But, on November 4th, consider your voting machine.

The first ballots on paper are thought to have been cast in early Rome some 2,300 years ago. The first paper ballots used on this continent were in 1629 when voters were choosing a pastor for the Salem Church. By the time voting laws and the 12th Amendment were established, most people expected a ballot to be paper. However, standardized ballots were still unheard of and people could write out their own ballots, use pre-printed political party ballots, or even a ballot with candidates' names on it torn from the newspaper.

Counting these votes meant reading each ballot and recording the vote for that candidate. It could take days for elections to be final and it was believed that the longer it took, the more room there was for mistakes or fraud.

The idea of a punched card to count something was invented by Herman Hollerith and was first used in the 1890 census. He got the idea for punch-card counting after seeing the cards used to direct a Jacquard loom to weave patterns. The move to using punched cards for voting came with Professor Joseph P. Harris at the University of California at Berkeley in the early 1960's. He took the basic punch-card idea, made some modifications, and adapted it to count votes. The first trial at the Oregon State Fair was successful, so it was given a further trial by several counties in the state of Georgia. The trials were positive and other counties began using the punch card system, named the Votomatic by Harris.

The idea looked promising

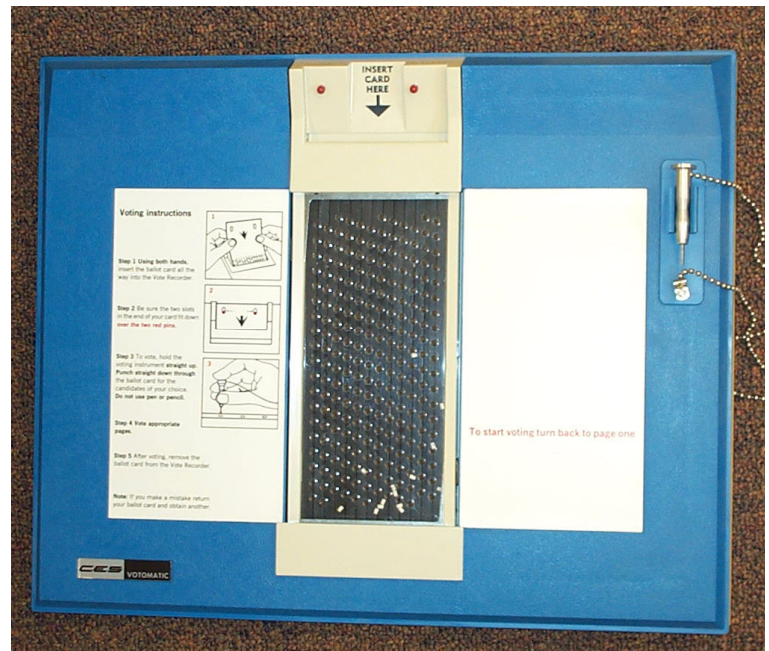
enough that in 1965, IBM bought the company Harris had started for the Votomatic. Punch-card voting machines soon became standard for elections at all levels of government in the United States.

The Votomatic works by placing a ballot with pre-punched holes over tabs to hold it in the proper position for accurate voting. Cards were perforated at each possible place for a vote so a light touch on the ballot would tear out a tiny rectangle to properly mark the ballot. A stylus, nothing more than a pointed object, was used to push through a hole beside the candidates' names. The pressure from the stylus ripped out the small bit of paper, called a chad. The origin of the word "chad" for these bits of paper is "unknown" according to the New American Dictionary.

Ballots using punch cards were fed through a card reader capable of counting thousands of ballots per minute. It was faster, easier, and supposedly left less room for error. That, however, was proven quite incorrect in the 2000 presidential election—especially in Florida. How many jokes did you hear about "hanging chads" and "pregnant chads"?!

Many polling places are now using optical mark readers where a black mark on the ballot is read by the machine rather than looking for a hole in a card. The CES Votomatic

featured here was retired from the City of Hilltop in 1990. It was donated by the City to ACHS to record history, instead of ballots, and is on display in the *V is for...* exhibit of *Anoka County A to Z*. Come see the Hilltop Votomatic! There are even chads still inside!



Hilltop's Votomatic, used from the late 1960's to 1990.

Background information in this article is from *Illustrated Voting Machine History* by Douglas W. Jones, University of Iowa, 2001.

If you haven't been into the Exhibit Hall lately, come see it again! Many letters of the *Anoka County A to Z* have changed to new artifacts—Valentine was replaced by Voting Machine, for example. Don't miss the new things!

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

MEMORIALS

In memory of **Steve Thurston**

by Barb Thurston and family

WEAVER TRIBUTE ENDOWMENT

DONATIONS

Amy Elvig Meyer

OTHER DONATIONS

John and Kay Goeser

Barbara Humphreys

Glen Lindstrom

David Morse

Steve and Pat Porak

Donald and Joyce Bonnell Sage

Virginia Stewart

Viet Nam Veterans

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Wayne Anderson

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Blaine High School

Charlie Blue

Samuel R. Hermanstorder

Clifford D. Johnson

William and Marlys Campbell

Larry Elfelt

Lucille Elrite

Jean Erlandson

Dennis Miller

Audrey Reid

Debra Schurer

Dote Werner

Welcome New Members!

AUGUST 16 – OCTOBER 15, 2003

Noranda Anderson (Columbia Heights)

Linda Busch (Coon Rapids)

Linda Cameron (Minneapolis)

John and Kay Goeser (Andover)

Leo Grant (Anoka)

Barbara Humphreys (Andover)

Glen Lindstrom (Andover)

Donald & Joyce Bonnell Sage (Roseville)

Virginia Stewart (Anoka)

Kathryn Vesely (Blaine)

*The Anoka County Historical Society wishes to impart our sincere condolences to the families of our members **Shirley Borrud, Gloria Hayes, and Steve Thurston**, who recently passed away. We will remember their deep commitment to preserving history.*

ARTIFACT DONORS

ACHS Receives \$20,000 Grant!

ACHS received a very generous grant from the Anoka County Agricultural Preserves Program this summer to record our county's agricultural history. The \$20,000 grant project, entitled "A History of Agriculture in Anoka County: 1945-present," will allow ACHS to compile a written history of our recent agricultural heritage. Information will be gathered from primary and secondary written sources, oral history interviews with past and current farm families, and a photographic survey of existing agricultural buildings.

Contract Historian Linda Cameron has been hired to complete the project for ACHS—welcome Linda! Linda's research experience with the Minnesota Historical Society and Washington County Historical Society are sure to provide ACHS with a great end product. Volunteer interns Jodi Anderson and John Hunt will be working with Linda to complete the photo documentation project, so you may see them driving our county roads snapping photos of farm buildings. Anticipate seeing the written history in May, 2004, and a corresponding exhibit scheduled to open in September 2004.

ACHS hopes to complete a comprehensive history of Anoka County's agricultural heritage with two additional, sequential grants focusing on the years 1900 to 1945 and pre-history to 1900, respectively. If you have any questions about the project, or know of a person we should interview, please call Bonnie McDonald at (763) 421-0600 x104.

Gift Memberships Available Now!

Give the gift that keeps on giving—an ACHS membership!

A membership to the Historical Society is the perfect holiday gift for a friend or family member. It's hard to think of a better way to remember someone than with a gift they can use for free admission to the Exhibit Hall, discounts on events and merchandise, and *History News* all year.

Or, consider giving an **ACHS membership as a housewarming gift to a new neighbor, use it as a birthday gift, or a thank you gift to a client or employee.**

Stop by the History Center to pick up a personalized gift certificate for any level of membership. An Historical Society membership really is a gift that keeps on giving all year long.

PROJECT BOOKSHELF

This holiday season, donate NEW unwrapped books for young people, ages infant through high school, and **share the magic of books!**

Books may be donated at the History Center, or at any Anoka County Library or Columbia Heights Public Library, through the month of November.

Share your own favorite childhood classic, or peruse the new books, and select a timeless treasure to share with a child. From *Winnie the Pooh* to *Wuthering Heights*, from Shakespeare to baseball, there's a book for every child!

Announcements and News

◆ Have you looked at our website lately? It's been redesigned, thanks to the skills of Marilyn Anderson. The URL is www.ac-hs.org. Click on the "Can you identify" icon and help us find the history of some unidentified photos.

◆ Desperately seeking yearbooks! Yearbooks are an invaluable resource to ACHS and our researchers. Please consider donating yearbooks from Anoka County schools, especially from the 1950's to today. In return, we'll even white-out your horn rimmed glasses if you want!

◆ Do you have any white, 100% cotton sheets you are willing to donate? We need many sheets to drape over the furniture in our storage area. Please be sure they are clean and drop them off at the History Center.

Featured Volunteers—By Maria King

The *Featured Volunteer* this time is an entire committee of volunteers! The newly revitalized "Around the County" Committee is gearing up for several county-wide initiatives. Under the leadership of Chairperson Marion Schulz, all 21 communities of Anoka County are currently served by one or more representatives; however we are still looking for more input from Circle Pines, Lexington, Hilltop and Spring Lake Park.

The mission of the "Around the County" Committee is to increase communication about our history, especially in the outer reaches of the county. "In the past, communication was like a little vein," said Marion. "It only channeled a little information and only in one direction. The Historical Society needs a huge gushing artery!" The "Around the County" Committee will be that artery bringing life's blood, in the form of information, back to the heart, which is ACHS. Representatives will carry news of events or issues from their city to ACHS, and will carry news of ACHS's special events and new exhibits back to their city.

In order to collect their history, each municipality has a designated community box at ACHS. The representatives from each community are responsible for collecting things such as the local newsletter, any notices of hearings on issues, any changes in the schools, examples of advertising for local festivals, or anything else they feel is important or characterizes their community.

A photo project was undertaken in order to provide a visual record of the county at the turn of the millennium. Each representative was given a roll of 35mm film and a sheet of instructions. They were to take pictures of the community streets, government buildings, churches and schools, picnics, festivals, parades, etc. and document each in terms of where the subject of the photo was located, when it was taken, and any other information that would help a researcher in the future to identify it. Several representatives have already completed their assignment and their enthusiasm is contagious! The goal is to have a pictorial collection that is a complete and comprehensive image of daily life in Anoka County—a sort of county-wide scrapbook!

Future projects will include more outreach efforts and more volunteer recruitment. "We want people in every part of the county to know that ACHS is their own historical organization. We need to be inclusive, proactive, visible and enthusiastic," said Marion, "because there is still so much to do."

Volunteer Update...By Maria King

The fall is my favorite time of year. After the lethargy of summer heat, the invigorating temperatures restore ambition and I feel as if I can achieve anything. Apparently the volunteers feel that way, too, because they've accomplished a great deal recently.

ARTIFACT MOVE: Particularly noteworthy is the group that met here at the History Center on Sunday, October 12, arriving early in the morning to move all the artifacts out of the storage area and into the exhibit hall, so that the new shelving could be installed. Rarely does one get the opportunity to be part of such a focused and dedicated team. There were 23 volunteers and staff, and they really came to work!! We had estimated a 6:00 p.m. completion time, but by 1:30 p.m., we were done! Many of those same volunteers came back on the 19th to help get everything back into the storage area and again, their hard work finished the job much quicker than we anticipated.

OTHER PROJECTS: Work has advanced nicely on the census project, and now awaits a typist to input the data. The books are being processed and given a call number, and the obituary project is ongoing. The cemetery tours went well, with a total of nine volunteers participating as historic characters. The Anoka Halloween Parade found volunteers on a hayrack with the banner of the Historical Society.

PHOTO PROJECT: Top priority in the next few months will be given to the photo project. The photos must be scanned and the identifying data entered into the computer. Because of the way our computer system is configured, this entire project must be accomplished on one specific computer. My goal is to find a volunteer to work on that machine each day. Wednesday and Thursday are covered, but opportunities are available for Tuesday evenings, Fridays and Saturdays. Interested volunteers should call Maria at 763-421-0600.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: Volunteers who find it difficult to come to the History Center, but still want to help, might find the oral history project a good fit. Interviews have already been conducted, but a transcriber is needed to type a paper copy from the audio tape. We have one transcribing machine available, but if you're patient, you can make do with a regular tape recorder. It's a great opportunity for young people to practice their keyboarding skills or for homebound folks to have an interesting project.

As fall turns to winter, think about volunteering to fill those long, lonely evenings! You'll meet new people, learn new skills, have some fun, and know you are giving back to your community!

Coming Events

November 15, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Photo History Mystery Day

Anoka County History Center and Library. We need your help to identify County history that has gone unrecorded! Take a look at some of the photographs that need identification to see if you know any of these people or events. We'll have volunteers on hand to help record the information and provide light refreshments. This has proven to be a lot of fun, so join us to help record history.

November 19, 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. HiSTORY Breakfast Round Table

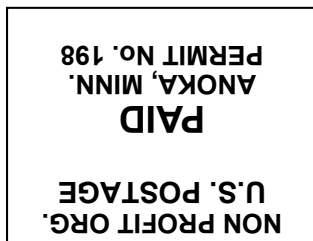
Anoka County History Center and Library. Come share your personal stories or things you've learned researching history. This informal round table discussion will range in topics on a monthly basis. November's topic will be *THANKSGIVING DINNER—or—Did the Pilgrims eat cranberry sauce?* Bring your breakfast and your own stories to share. We'll provide the beverages—but you are responsible for your own cranberry sauce!

December 2, 2003, 7:00 p.m. Holiday Ornament Presentation

Anoka County History Center and Library. Join in the fun of the holiday season and see what the City of Blaine will present for their ornament! Each year, an Anoka County municipality presents an ornament for the County Holiday Tree symbolic of their community. Join officials from Blaine and Anoka County, as well as ACHS Board members and staff, to mark this special holiday tradition in Anoka County.

December 7, 2003, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Historic Holiday Splendor at the Woodbury House

Celebrate the season by traveling through time at the historic Woodbury House on Ferry Street in Anoka. The tour of this 1858 house will take visitors on a 100-year journey through time starting at the beginning of Minnesota's statehood. Meet "past residents" in rooms throughout the house. Reserve your visit soon as only a limited number of reservations are available. Don't miss your chance to see this elegant historic home during the holiday season!



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