

History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 36 No. 1

January-February 2006

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

Black History and Anoka's Anna Arnold Hedgeman

"I grew up in Anoka, Minnesota in a small, comfortable Midwestern town with the traditional main street. The shopowners, bank presidents, lawyers, teachers, ministers, doctors and farmers of Anoka were well known to each other. Most of the people in the surrounding country were small farmers...I had not realized that a man could need bread and not be able to get it."

These words were written in the autobiography of Anna Arnold Hedgeman, the first Black student to graduate from Hamline University.

Anna began her professional career as an instructor at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She became the executive director for the National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Commission and assistant to the Administrator of the Federal Security Agency, now a part of the Department of Health and Human Services. Anna went on to become the first Black member of the mayoral cabinet in New York City; she served as assistant to the mayor from 1954-1958. She was an advocate for racial justice, working with groups such as the YWCA, the Commission of Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches, and the American Missionary Association of the United Church of Christ.

She ran, though unsuccessfully, for a congressional seat and for New York City Council President, but they were noted efforts. Anna served as an exchange leader to India for the State Department and was the key note speaker for the first conference for Women of Africa and African Descent.

Many groups honored her work including the National Urban League, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, and the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

Anna was born in Iowa, but her growing up years were in a house on Cross Street in Anoka. Of her home, she wrote, "Our house was large and there was space where children could run and play. There were trees to climb and a small garden plot to tend. It was no accident that we had space in which to grow and were surrounded by growing things. My father planned it that way."

"Father" was William James Arnold. He wanted the best for his children. He chose where they would live and grow up and he chose Anoka. He valued education, religion, pride in oneself, and determination. Anna noted in her autobiography that in his house, W.J. Arnold was the head and his word was law. The 1910 census indicated William was a lecturer. By 1920, he was editing a newspaper. A long time Anoka resident, Herb Lee, remembered Mr. Arnold as a very well educated man who sold books.

Anna's mother, Ellen Parker Arnold, taught her children at home before they attended school. There were six children. Anna was the oldest, born in 1899. Blanche was born two years later, then Grayce, William, Clinton and Olive. There were thirteen years between Anna and Olive.



This photo of Anna appears on dust jacket of her book, **The Trumpet Sounds**. 1964.

(Continued on page 3)

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

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Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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From the Director's Desk...

By Todd Mahon

Hi, I'm new here...

I've never been very comfortable with great amounts of change. But history is all about change and there seems to be two basic schools of thoughts for history buffs and amateur historians: the "hell-in-a-hand basket" theory, which romanticizes the past and sees society on an ever sliding slope away from "the good ol' days." The second is the "today-is-the-first-day-of-the-rest-of-your-life" theory which sees history as a matter of progress and pats modern society on the back by for moving beyond outhouses to the convenience of indoor plumbing and e-mail.

Regardless of your view on these matters, we can probably agree that change isn't easy, but sometimes it's good. All of this is a long-winded way of saying that I'm happy to be here as the new Executive Director of the Anoka County Historical Society. I know I've got a lot of work ahead of me and shoes big shoes to fill.

I wrote this column on my first official day at ACHS. I've been fortunate to have sat in on a meeting for the 2007 Anoka County sesquicentennial events and another for this summer's RiverFest event (mark your calendars), but it's still a little early to claim I know my way around yet. (Note to self: where's my mailbox again?) But I do know what I want to get accomplished in the first few weeks and it has little to do with budgets, administration or even programming here at ACHS (that's not to diminish the importance of those!). The first thing I want to do is get to know all of you better. I'm new to Anoka County, and while I know some of the basics of its history, I feel the most relevant history comes from getting to know the people who live here. New residents, long-time residents, rural citizens, and suburban folks, you all have your own perceptions of the county's history and I want to learn it.

I want to encourage all of the Society's members and interested parties to contact me about their thoughts on our organization. I want to hear your thoughts on the county's heritage, what ACHS can do to preserve and interpret it, and just to introduce yourselves. I'm a member of ACHS, just like many of you are, and I'm here to see that our Historical Society does its best. I need your input for that. Please contact me with any questions at todd@ac-hs.org or at 763-421-0600 x104.

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

Ladies and gentlemen we have a new Executive Director! The personnel committee received 14 applications for the position. We interviewed 6 excellent candidates and chose the top two for second interviews before making our selection.

A small non-profit like ours requires our "E.D." to be an expert on an awful lot of subjects. When you are too small to afford separate people for every important job, the person in charge has to have the background and knowledge to do many jobs. We often don't realize how many different fields of expertise we really need to maintain our mission. Todd Mahon was the Museum Administrator at the Hennepin History Museum in Minneapolis. His education and career have been all about history, and he is currently completing a master's degree in non-profit administration. Our E.D. is the figurehead of the society and needs to be quick-witted and knowledgeable. Todd is all that plus very smart, a fast learner and comfortable speaking before people.

One of the things we were very impressed by was his creativity and new ideas. At Hennepin County, he was a part of many exhibits, but one that he personally researched, designed, installed and promoted was a history of the many notable local bands that never made the top 40 or signed with major record labels. The project was called *Unsatisfied: Minneapolis Rock in the 1980s*. For the fourteen months the exhibit ran, attendance doubled that of the previous fourteen months. With that effort he won a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History (you may remember ACHS won one with our collaboration with the city of Anoka on the Akin Park history walk).

Mr. Mahon grew up in Richfield and now lives in St. Paul with his wife in a 1929 Tudor style home that was in his wife's family. He has done some work on it, but was fortunate that it was in good and original shape and hasn't needed restoration. Besides sleeping and breathing history, Todd likes baseball, music, cooking and baking, and being outdoors. He wishes he could fish but hasn't found the time for it in years. It is great to have him with us. Please watch our "It's Your History" program on cable TV in January to learn more about our new E.D. or stop in, introduce yourself, and meet him in person at the History Center.

Anna Arnold Hedgeman, continued from page 1

There were not many Black families in Anoka County in the 1920's. and Anna's "different-ness" caused a deep hurt. Anna told a story about a young child she had befriended. The little friend came to Anna one day and repeated a vile word for Blacks—a word Anna had never heard before. Anna didn't know what the word meant, but she knew from the tone, it was not a good word. When she told her mother about the incident, her mother explained that people often say unpleasant things to each other, especially to those of different races. Anna now had firsthand knowledge of the cruel names for people of different races and learned how much those names could hurt.

At the end of their talk, Anna's mother admonished her. "I hope you will never use such un-Christian words yourself, for all races must be respected. If anyone calls you a name of this kind, you must realize he is not an intelligent person. Ask the Lord to forgive him and then forget about it."

Anna took the lesson to heart, but the little friend she had made did not come out to greet Anna ever again. It was Anna's first, but not last, taste of prejudice.

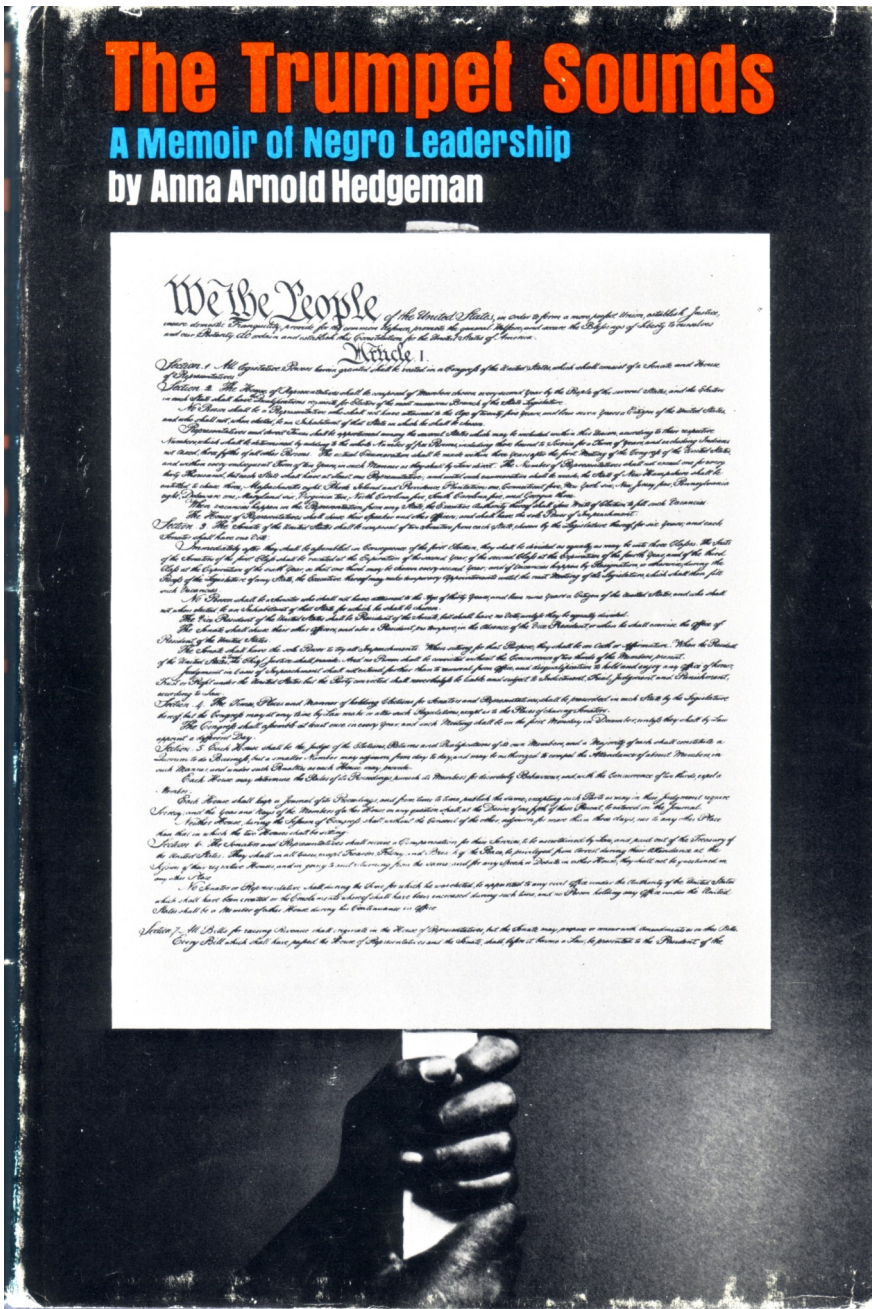
After completing her coursework for a teaching degree at Hamline University in St. Paul, Anna needed to student teach. She was given a freshman class at the college to do her student teaching. The rest of he classmates did their student teaching in public schools. Anna thought she had been given a special privilege, but she later learned the hard truth. No school wanted a Black woman as a student teacher.

After gradation, Anna requested school officials that she be allowed to begin her teaching career in the south. She didn't realize getting a teaching position anywhere else in the 1920's would have been nearly impossible for a Black woman.

These brushes with inequality may have been what spurred Anna's career as a champion of equal rights that would last her a lifetime. Her work as a civil rights advocate impacted the lives of countless people.

Anna wrote two and published two books. *The Trumpet Sounds: A Memoir of Negro Leadership* is an autobiography of Anna's life from her years in Anoka through her career as a civil rights advocate. She wrote it in 1964. The second book was written in 1977 and titled *Gift of Chaos: Decades of American Discontent*. This book follows the struggles through some 40 years working for equal rights. The dust jacket on this book noted Anna was the only woman on the Executive Committee for the 1963 March on Washington that eventually led to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Anna fought for women to be included as speakers in the rally that followed the march.

Anna married Merrett Hedgeman, an interpreter of Black folk music and opera. It is believed she did not have children as when she died, her obituary noted that there was no immediate family to survive her. She died in New York City in January of 1990.



A long out of print and hard-to-find copy of Anna's autobiography was recently donated to ACHS by Robert Akin. His grandfather, for whom he is named, was the mayor of Anoka during the years Anna would have been attending Anoka High School. It is possible—even likely—the two may have met at least in passing.

The Story of an Artifact

Buffalo, Beaver, and the Broadbents

The coat pictured here is a great example of how much the story of an artifact can add to its value..

The coat is made from buffalo hide and trimmed with beaver at the collar and cuffs. The hand stitching to make the coat is visible from the inside where the red and white threads form an overcast swirl pattern along the seams. The buttons are of wood, barrel shaped, and fasten with a corded loop. A small metal chain sewn in the back of the neckline provided a place to hang the heavy coat. The gloves that were worn with the coat are made from bear hide. Both the gloves and the coat date from the late 1800's.

While the coat is interesting, the real story lies with the man who wore it. He was Sanford Broadbent, the first Broadbent family member to come to Minnesota from "back east." He was a Civil War veteran, having enlisted in the 34th Massachusetts Infantry in 1862. He served as the company's pioneer and his job was cutting trees, digging ditches, building breastworks, or whatever needed doing. Sanford was wounded, captured, and sent to Andersonville Prison until Union forces entered Georgia. He was more fortunate than his brother, Julius. Julius was killed at the battle of Antietam.

When the war ended, Sanford went home to Massachusetts, then moved to New York where he worked for a while. In 1870, Sanford brought his wife and children to Anoka County where he bought a farm in Linwood Township.

Two years later, Sanford's father also came to Minnesota and bought a farm in Grow Township (today's Andover.)

Sanford was well known for walking to Anoka for supplies and, if offered a ride in a wagon by someone, he would refuse it on the grounds that riding in a horse drawn wagon would only slow him down. In the winter, he wore this buffalo coat with the bear skin gloves as he walked. The family said he often carried 100 pounds of supplies on the way back.

The coat remained in the family after Sanford's death and grandchildren eventually used it for a Halloween costume. In 2004, one of Sanford's descendants, Barb Ulvin, donated the coat to ACHS along with the story. The story—what we history people call provenance—makes the coat a wonderful addition to the collection. It helps us tell the story of Linwood and the Broadbent family.

Look around your own home and see which objects have special stories about how they were used, who used them, or other details. Winter is a good time to write those stories down so they will always be remembered and used to tell the stories of your family.



Contributions & New Members – Thank you

YEAR END PRESERVATION DONATIONS Through December 21

Jim and Jan Anderson
Roy and Beryl Anderson
James and Florence Andre
Gary and Barbara Bettcher
Evelyn Bonde
Lee and Karen Carlson
Joseph and Marlys Chutick
Warren and Eva Mae Cleator
Richard DeLong
Sue Dilcher
Roy and Lois Downs
Dan Frank
Roland and Carol Freeburg
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John and Alice Ganter
Randall and Alice Getchell
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Dick and Mary Lang
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David and Donna Legrid
James and Joyce Maass
Todd Mahon and Nicole Theis-Mahon
Zola Malamen
John and Yvonne Mann
Bonnie McDonald
George and Barbara Meyer
John and Lillian Meyer
Carol Moen
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Terrence and Beryl Mox
Ronald Nordin
Leon and Doris Pease
Dianne Pederson
Rachel Peterson
Robert and Alvina Powell
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Terry and Lynne Rickert

Will and Gina Ridge
Michael Ritchie and Becky Loader
Donald and Joyce Bonnell Sage
Jean Seaborg
Karen Sivanich
Lorraine Soderquist
Doug and Barbara Stein
Joseph and Aileen Sturdevant
Bertha Szyperski
Mel and Meredith Townsend
Scott Varner
Catherine Vesley
Wesley and Cheryl Volkenant
Barbara Walchessen
Jill Weaver
James Wennerlund
Betty Wilbur

Welcome New Members!

OCTOBER 19-DECEMBER 21, 2005

Anthony Collins (Anoka)
John and Christine Hall (St. Francis)
Ken Henderson (Anoka)
Patrick and Carrie Hennessey (Anoka)
Donald Johnson (Coon Rapids)
Todd Mahon and Nicole Theis-Mahon (St. Paul)
Zola Malamen (Elk River)
Donald Olson (Andover)
Brad and Mellissa Patterson (Coon Rapids)
Janet Paulson (Burns Twp.)
Gene and Anna Rafferty (Spring Lake Park)
Alan Santoro (St. Cloud)

GENERAL DONATIONS Through December 21

American Express
Julian Andersen
Marilyn Anderson
Joyce Brown Hollinder
Jane Doane
Robert and Marilyn Douglass
Betty Erickson
Dan Frank
Quinn and Terry Free
Karen Hand
Pat Hesli
Rudy Jensen
Tina Joens
Wally and Naomi Johnson
Rod and Maxine Larson
John and Lillian Meyer
Clarence Monegar
Beverly Perrin
Paul Pierce III
Leslie Ross
David and Rosalyn Schwartzman
Vi Smith
Ron and Vickie Wendel

CATALOGING PROJECT DONATION

Shirley Christenson

SPECIAL CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PROJECT

Anoka Kiwanis

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Anoka Halloween Committee
Dennis Berg
Benita Blomiley
Monica Carlson
Roy Downs
Netha Feist
Lindahl Gleason
Darlene Hinz
Alice Holland
Norma Holland
Don Johnson
Doris Korthof
Tim Layeux
City of Lino Lakes
Mary Muller
Janet Nelson
Paul Pierce, III
Eileen Rathbun
Marion Schulz
Pat Schwappach
Sandra Thorsen

*The Anoka County Historical Society wishes to impart
our sincere condolences to
the family and friends of Eugene Novak, husband of June, who passed
away on May 4, 2005;*

*the friends and family of Mildred Jorgensen, a long-time member of
ACHS, who passed away on November 30, 2005;*

*the friends and family of Bev Flaherty, former director of the Anoka
County Library, who lost her life to cancer on December 16, 2005.*

We will remember their deep commitment to preserving history.

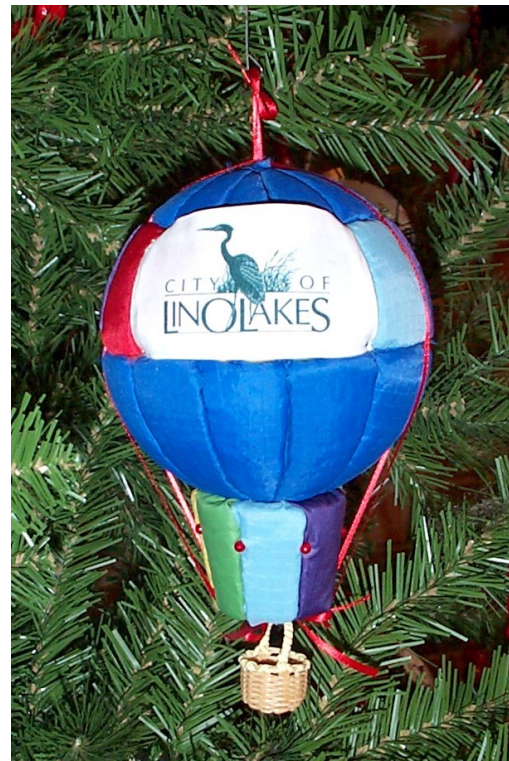
2005 Holiday Tree Ornament

Since the City of Lino Lakes celebrated their 50th anniversary last year, it was fitting that they be invited to present the 2005 ornament for the County Tree. The mayor and officials from the city of Lino Lakes joined county officials, ACHS board members, friends and visitors to present a miniature hot air balloon for the tree on December 6, 2005.

The hot air balloon has a special connection to Lino Lakes. The Economic Development Coordinator, Mary Alice Divine, flew hot air balloons and for about five years she carried the Lino Lakes City logo on her balloon. "I tried to fly it over the city as much as I could," she said. "It was fun." Hot air balloons are made from fabric and as a result, they do wear out. Mary's balloon was retired, but she kept the fabric. When Lino Lakes Mayor John Bergson asked Mary to create a balloon ornament for the tree, Mary cut fabric from her old balloon to make it.

It was with a great deal of pleasure that ACHS president Paul Pierce III accepted the balloon to represent Lino Lakes on the tree. In addition to the ornament, the City also donated a framed poster of the balloon in flight with the city logo on it that was used as a marketing tool for Lino Lakes between 1994 and 1998.

ACHS thanks the City of Lino Lakes and Mary Alice Divine for this very unique and wonderful donation.



Do you see anyone familiar in this photograph?



Please tell us if you do!

The photo shown here was found in our collection with no identification. We're hoping our members may be able to help.

Do you have photos with no identification on them? We have had boxes of old photographs brought to the History Center by people with tearful looks on their faces as they plead for help. They know the people in the photographs are family, but the photos are not identified. Which one is great aunt Myrtle and which is second cousin Harry?

While it is unlikely we can sort out who is who, we can sometimes use clues in the photograph to provide a date. That can help in identifying, but not always. Nothing beats having photographs identified with names, dates, and places, so get out these photos you took over the past holidays and get busy identifying them!

Tips for putting identification on your photographs:

- Do not write with ink on the photos, front or back. Ink can bleed through or rub off onto other photos. If possible, write in pencil along the edges on the back of the photo.
- Use names for people instead of titles such as grandma. Grandma won't mean anything if you don't know *which* (or even *whose*) grandma is in the photograph.
- Date the photo and note where it was taken. This will help tell its story and place it in time. Dates also accurately document just which year you received that needlepoint doorstep from Aunt Ethel.

Up To Date

Announcements and News

2006 ACHS Board Meeting Schedule

All ACHS board meetings are open to the public and are held at 6:00 p.m. in the Anoka County History Center and Library meeting room.

January	12	July	13
February	9	August	10
March	9	September	14
April	13	October	12
May	11	November	9
June	8	December	14

Good Tidings of Great Joy!...By Maria King

OK, so the headline is a little over the top, but you need to know about some of the good things happening at your History Center recently.

A California woman who had been adopted at her birth was able to find and contact siblings she had never known thanks to our library. Lucille Elrite and Linda Mundle followed evidence trails like genealogical bloodhounds until they found what she needed. Kudos, ladies for your outstanding work.

Volunteers have donated over 5900 hours of service to ACHS already this year, not counting December. Last year's total was 4549 hours, so you do the math! We are busier than ever before!

ACHS outreach efforts in December brought history into the lives of the 67 young girls and 54 adults who attended Molly's American Girl Tea Party. They created a patriotic Christmas tree garland of red, white and blue stars, and learned enough about WWII to define words like Allies, Axis, civilian, ration, air raid shelter, invasion, scrap drive and atomic bomb.

On November 19, Sandhill Center for the Arts was the scene of a Civil War Christmas, where over 100 people learned about the holidays in war camps of the 1860's. Twenty-five volunteers made this event happen.

The Bridge Square ladies are a fine group of women who have helped us in the past by making the padded hangers needed for the wedding dresses and military uniforms in the collections. This month they pitched in once again. They cut and pasted articles from newspapers into a format that can be stored in our files. They heard that the cloth napkins for the tea needed to be freshened and ironed and once again they came to our aid. Thank you ladies.

Darlene Bearl worked many hours sewing charming little doll outfits that were the much coveted door prizes at the American Girl Teas. Darlene, your craftsmanship is extraordinary!

Thank you to all of our volunteers You really do make it happen!

Volunteer? Why?...By Maria King

A recent Sunday sermon was about a servant who was given riches to invest, but hid the money away instead. Perhaps he was afraid of losing it altogether, or of appearing foolish if his investment strategy proved unwise. At any rate, his caution caused him to miss out on opportunities that would have enriched his life.

Volunteering is a lot like that! You might be afraid you will be unable to complete the task assigned to you as a volunteer. You might think you will appear foolish because you don't know how to use the computer, or even that you'll mess up the whole project. My job is to see to it that nothing like that ever happens. (And Maria is good at her job! VW) I always match the volunteer to the task, so volunteers are never overwhelmed. A little training goes a long way on the computer and most tasks are repetitive, so volunteers are able to input data even without understanding the complexities of the program software. As for messing up, well, it happens. But it's routine around here that someone checks everything that anyone does. You need to know that upfront and not be offended when someone looks over your work. We as staff check each other, too.

Choosing not to volunteer is a bad choice because, like the servant in the sermon, you are forfeiting opportunities to enrich your life. Volunteers have a pretty good time around here and they contribute vital services to keep ACHS going. They are at the forefront of efforts to conserve, protect and share the history of Anoka County.

Opportunities Abound...By Maria King

There are many jobs that need doing at the History Center and only a few are listed here. If you have a talent or skill you would like to exercise this winter to help the Historical Society, call me! I'd love to set you up with the project you are best suited for. Call 763-421-0600 and ask for Maria.

Sewing talent? Our costumes need some attention, and winter is a good time to get caught up. Additional doll clothes will be needed for the spring tea. Fabric and patterns will be provided. This is a good project for stay-at-home folks.

Census project-all you need is an ability to decipher old fashioned handwriting.

Cut and paste manuscripts- easy but time consuming and important to keeping history..

Transcriptions-one machine is available.

Obituaries-just read the papers and circle those from Anoka County.

Coming Events

January Lobby Exhibit

(Anoka County History Center Lobby.) We take for granted well insulated homes, Thinsulate, waterproof mittens and boots, even indoor plumbing, but our ancestors had no such luxuries. How did they keep warm and dry? Check out the lobby exhibit to see some examples.

Keeping Warm in Minnesota Winters

January 21, 1:00 p.m.

History and Hollywood

Anoka County History Center and Library. Come watch a movie with ACHS, then compare it to reality to see how good (or bad) the movie is! We're watching *National Treasure* with Nicolas Cage in 2004. This movie poses the idea of a treasure map on the back of the Declaration of Independence and it, with clues left by the founding fathers, will lead to the treasure. It's rated PG for some of the action/violence. The movie is a fun, but improbable, look at historic documents. Following the movie, we will talk about preservation techniques as the movie portrayed them and have some fun with Hollywood's idea of "archival." The movie is free and everyone is welcome to attend. Pop and popcorn will be available for a small charge.

February Lobby Exhibit

I Love to Read Month

(Anoka County History Center Lobby.) What is your favorite book? Bring it into the History Center during January, have your photo taken with it and tell us why you liked it. We'll put all the photos up by February 2nd so you can come see your picture and check out who you might know to find out what they read and why they read it!

February 7, 6:30 p.m.

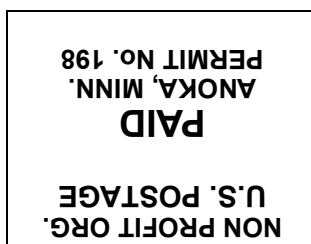
Charlotte's Web Story Time

(Anoka County History Center Lobby.) February is I Love to Read Month and we're celebrating it with a special night devoted to the story of Charlotte's Web. Kids of all ages are invited to get in on the fun of Wilbur and Charlotte. Cost is \$2.50 per child for the program and it includes a visit to the History Center's Exhibit Hall. Call for reservations as space is limited.

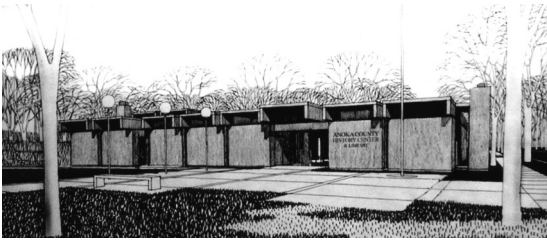
March ?, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

ACHS Annual Meeting

Watch for more details to come soon. The annual meeting is your opportunity to hear about the future of ACHS as envisioned by Todd Mahon, our new director, provide your input to the organization, hear the election results for the ACHS Board of Directors, and have a lot of fun. We're cooking up something very interesting and quite unique at a location to be announced soon. Be watching for your next newsletter with more information.



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History Center News

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Blaine's National Sports Center

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Ramsey

St. Francis

Spring Lake Park

Anoka County is home to the largest soccer complex in the world with the 52 fields at the National Sports Center in Blaine. It is the home of the Schwan's USA Cup soccer games, games which bring teams from more than 20 countries throughout the world. These games are the largest youth sporting event in the entire Western Hemisphere.

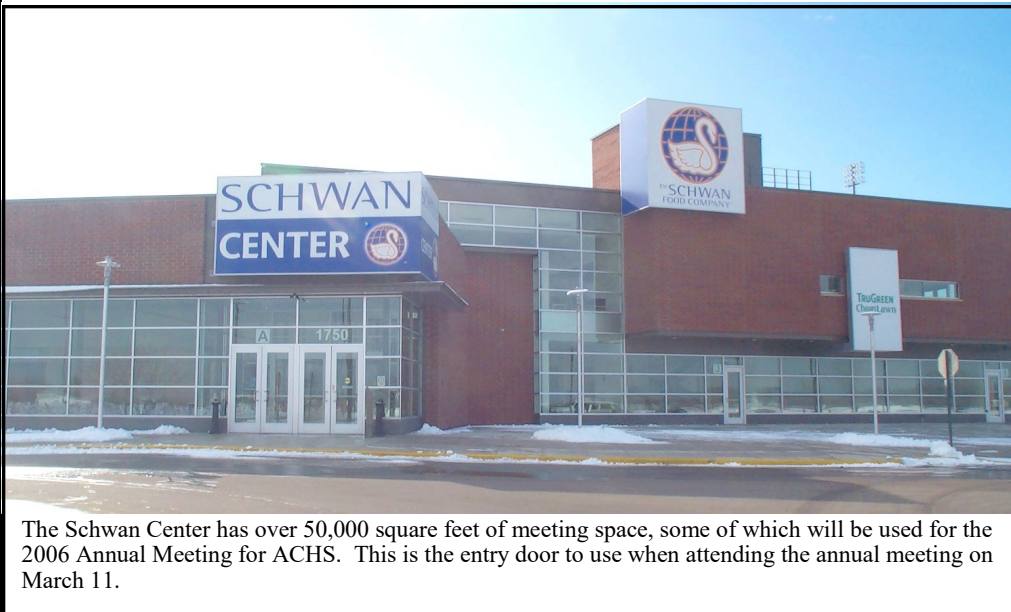
In addition to the soccer fields, the Sports Center has an 18 hole golf course, an outdoor stadium with 400-meter track, 250-meter cycling velodrome, 58,000 square feet of indoor sports hall space, and four Olympic sized ice rinks. Construction began in December of 2005 on four more sheets of ice that, when completed, will make the National Sport Center the largest indoor ice center in the world.

With such facilities, the site has hosted countless soccer events from the U.S. National team to local schools, the Women's World Hockey Championships, an Olympic Festival, the International Special Olympics, the U.S. Cycling Olympic trials, the World Championship Cycling trails, the North American Indigenous Games, the World Ultimate Disc Championships, celebrity games, and even a rally for President George Bush. Other sports have also come to the Center including speed skating, rugby, track and field, lacrosse, and figure skating have all hosted huge events in Blaine.

Since the complex opened in 1990, an estimated 19.1 million visitors have passed through the doors. It is Minnesota's most visited sports facility.

The National Sports Center is located at 1700 105th Avenue, the south west portion of section 21 in the city of Blaine. Today, section 21 is the center of incredible activity. But what was happening on that section of land before the Sport Center? A study of the plat maps of Blaine provides some clues.

In 1888, Albert Johnson owned section 21 with a partner, L.D. Parker. The men were probably land speculators since they owned at least nine other sections of land in Anoka County. Neither man lived in the county according to the census. Speculators sell



The Schwan Center has over 50,000 square feet of meeting space, some of which will be used for the 2006 Annual Meeting for ACHS. This is the entry door to use when attending the annual meeting on March 11.

land to make a profit, so by 1904, Charles J. Swanson owned section 21. He didn't live in the county, either. A woman named Mary Vanstrum next owned the land. Her name is on the plat in 1910. Is she the same Mary as the Mary and John Gabrelick in the 1930s through the early 1950s? The scant evidence available is not very clear.

The Heights Real Estate Company owned most of section 21 in the mid 1950s. Another part of the section was the Raddison Farms, Inc. The 1958 plat map called that portion the Raddison Game Refuge. The Airports Commission owned much of the southern half of the section from the late 1950s through the most recent plat map, 1987. Still another portion of the section again was listed as Mary Gabrelick—probably a misspelling of the name of the earlier owner.

Ray Jordon and Sons owned land on the north side of section 21 in 1975 and they were listed as landscape contractors. The Gabrelick's still owned part of the section, but this time the names were John and Joyce. John worked for Brighton Auto Sales in St. Paul and they lived near the corner of Raddison Road and 105th.

An interesting note is the location of the Blaine Town Hall on the south east quarter of section 21 in 1904. By 1910, the Town Hall had moved to the northeast quarter of the section. It remained there through 1914, but it was gone by the next plat map in the late 1940s.

Indeed, section 21 in Blaine has had many owners, but probably none of them had the ambitions that were held—and now met—by the National Sports Center.

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Anoka County History Center & Library

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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

Board of Directors

President – Paul Pierce, III
Vice President – Jan Anderson
Past President – Ray Steinke
District #1 – Glen Hardin
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From the Director's Desk...

By Todd Mahon

ACHS received a call from Mary Bauer of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* when she was looking to do an article on museums with strange objects in their collections. My first concern was the portrayal of ACHS's collections. I didn't want to depict our museum as little more than a glorified curiosity shop with strange oddities that didn't really tell the story of Anoka County's history. The article, which appeared on January 8th, did a great job and was very respectful about how and why ACHS collects what it has by highlighting some of our "odder" pieces.

We receive several calls a week from people offering to donate items. While we are always glad to be thought of in these situations, I want to explain just how ACHS takes new items into our collection and how we care for them.

The ACHS Collections Management Policy serves as guidance for every item in our collections. Any object that is considered must meet specific criteria. If accepted, we then determined whether it will become a part of our permanent collection, or if it will be used as a hands-on object. If the object becomes a part of our permanent collection (in the museum world, we refer to this as *accessioning*) it must meet further criteria. These criteria include having a direct connection to Anoka County, that the object is in reasonably good condition, and that we have the space and resources to care for it. A committee of board and staff members decide if an item is appropriate for the collection by determining if it meets these and other requirements in the policy.

After an object is accessioned, ACHS has a solemn commitment to care for it and preserve it. ACHS abides by strict and specific policies for the care and handling (which includes proper materials and supplies), maintenance of accession records (which requires software and staff time), and provisions for insurance and security. All of these require a financial commitment as well—a commitment that is made possible through your memberships and other forms of financial support.

So what does this mean for the person looking to donate items to our collection? It means they can feel confident that we will give their donations a safe home and that being selective in what we accept ensures that we are better able to take care of the entire selection. If you have something you think we would be interested in, please call us at 763-421-0600. We'd love to speak with you.

From the President...

By Paul Pierce, III

This is my last president's column. I have been very impressed by how hard Jan Anderson has worked on all the projects of ACHS this year. She will be a great representative for us and I am happy to hand over the reins to her. Probably a better analogy would be to put her behind the wheel of our Ford "Galaxy."

My three years have gone by fast. I promised to be a good steward to all the good things already in place and improve things in my term. I particularly enjoyed working on the creation of the Harvest Time Barn Dance as our annual fundraiser. When it's the first ever, you think anything is possible and you have to quickly judge what is doable and effective. On the other hand, a barn dance is a powerfully strong nostalgic ideal that gives people high expectations—can you deliver and will you provide enough to make a great event or will it be an embarrassment? It was fun and successful. It was even more satisfying to see the second annual event a far bigger success!

The mission of saving and sharing history was greatly improved with our reports on agriculture from its beginnings to today; the better availability of records and photos for the public due to our conversion to computer based records; and all the new oral (now video) histories with county residents. Another high point for me was the cable show, working with everyone to put on a good show was very fun. A special thanks to Terry O'Connell and Quad Cities Cable TV, who produces the show. The show is seen in Champlin, Andover, Anoka, and Ramsey and has been making its way out to the other cable territories in the county.

The cable show is an example of the number one promise I made about my term as president. I promised to increase our outreach to all parts of Anoka County, making sure they know we are their historical society. A perfect litmus test to the effect of our efforts came when I went to most of the city councils and town boards for the sesquicentennial committee and was greeted over and over again with praise for help they had received from ACHS. I believe 2003--2006 were our best years ever and I urge you all to help Jan Anderson to make 2006--2007 even better yet. Thanks to you all. It was an honor to serve as your president.

The Story of an Artifact

Whether you are a spectator, a competitor, or just a causal player, almost everyone is involved with sports in some way. This love affair with sports is not limited to only the recent centuries. There are reports of sporting events and competitions in some of the earliest history recorded. In light of the recent focus on the Olympics, we turn the spotlight on a few of the sports related artifacts in the ACHS collections. Do you have a sports something to add? Call us!



Shirley Christenson wore this bowling shirt when she bowled on a league at the Coon Rapids Lanes. The team was sponsored by the Coon Rapids Herald Newspaper and its owner, Arch Pease. Shirley bowled with the team from 1965 to 1971 and this shirt was the one worn during one of those years.

Her team members were Pinky Lindeke, son, Donna Saunders, and Barb LeCuger. The shirt is bright pink with white embroidery.

Ginnie Odell, Grace Fredrick-



In 1902, an exercise routine might include using these "Indian Clubs" as they were called. Health manuals and magazines showed the user how to hold the clubs and swing them around to exercise their arms and upper body. The Sears and Roebuck catalog sold them in pairs and in different weights. This pair of clubs belonged to Inez Kelsey Lowe of Andover.



The high school Homecoming football game was a grand time to rally school spirit, have a homecoming king and queen, a dance and much more. This button promoted festivities at the 1975 football game between the Fridley High School Tigers and the Spring Lake Park Panthers.



Yachting is probably not the first sport thought of in Anoka County, but this trophy was presented to L.J. Greenwald on May 6, 1906, at the Lake George Yacht Club.

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

YEAR END PRESERVATION DONATIONS

December 22 – February 10, 2006

Robert Akin
Dave and Winnie Con-
ger
Stephen Cowdery and
Kathryn Grafsgaard
Shirley Curbow
Shirley Lynch
Ruth Oliver
Dori Schumacher
Gary and Ann Steen
Virginia Stewart
Barb Thurston

GENERAL DONATIONS

December 22 – February 10, 2006

Alliant TechSystems/Dianne Pederson
American Legion Auxiliary Anoka/
Edward B. Cutter Unit 102
Anonymous
Florence Arnoldy
Marlys Burman
Robert Burtness
Roger Carlson
Gladys Christenson
Teresa Cleveland
Coon Rapids Historical Commission
Roy and Lois Downs
Merlin Hunt
Dan Frank
Melvin Larson, Jr.
Scott and Carol LeDoux
Beth Mullinax
Dave Niles
Donald Parrott
Elliott Perovich
Bill Prugh
Deborah Sundeen
Viet Nam Veterans #470
Kathleen Wagar
James Wennerlund
American

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Byron Bode
Mike Clark
Sam Hermanstorfer
Dave Klaasen
Tim Layeaux
Don Mowery
Philolectian Society
Steven Ruud
Glen Winger

SPECIAL DONATION IN HONOR OF VICKIE WENDEL

Janet Wilcox

Welcome New Members!

DECEMBER 22, 2005 — FEBRUARY 10, 2006

Jackie Ables (Coon Rapids)
Roger Anderson (Andover)
Tracy Bartholomew (Coon Rapids)
Ron and Kathie Bomsta (Andover)
Rod and Stacey Bustrom and family (St. Francis)
Teresa Cleveland (Ramsey)
Jackie Dingley (Coon Rapids)
Dennis Elliott (Anoka)
Tim Evans (Ramsey)
Ellyn Guerre (Blaine)
Tom Guerre (Anoka)
Scott and Carol LeDoux (Andover)
Randy and Sue Plaisance, Ryan, Lynnsey, and Kayla (East Bethel)
Frank Walmsley (North Oaks)
Mark and Martha Walmsley and family (Lino Lakes)

BALLOTS

Everyone with paid-up ACHS memberships was mailed a ballot to vote for the ACHS Board of Directors on February 10th. If your dues are paid up and you did not receive a ballot, please give us a call at 763-421-0600.

Those paying their dues before Friday, March 3, 2006 will also be mailed a ballot. All completed ballots must be received by ACHS by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2006. The name and address of each voter must be on the return envelope. To preserve anonymity, nothing should be written on the ballot envelope itself.

The results of the election will be announced at the Annual Meeting on March 11th, at the National Sports Center in Blaine.



Remember this photo from the last newsletter? We asked if anyone had information on it and one of our members came through with just what we needed. Joan Burque Landberg of Columbia Heights knew the photo well—she is the little girl in the photo! The photo was taken during the celebration honoring Martha Dupuis of Centerville when she was named the 1942 Queen of the Snows for the St. Paul Winter Carnival. Thanks, Joan!

Up To Date

New Deposit Collection at Anoka County History Center and Library

On February 16, the Anoka County Historical Society received over 300 new adult fiction books for its Anoka County Library deposit collection hosted in the reading room of the Anoka County History Center and Library.

This deposit collection, part of ACHS programming since 2002, is a wonderful resource for residents and people who work in downtown Anoka. Any person who holds an Anoka County Library card is able to check out materials from the collection of approximately 750 adult and children books. In addition to checking out books from the deposit collection, library card holders can return books and other materials checked out from any of the eight branches of the Anoka County Library and the affiliated Columbia Heights Library. Books and other media may be requested from the branch and affiliate libraries and sent to the Anoka County History Center and Library for pick up. Materials are held for seven days before they are sent back to their original locations.

The Anoka County Library offers e-mail notification for requested items. One can register for this service by sending an e-mail to register@anoka.library.mn.us. Patrons will receive confirmation within two or three business days. ACHS also provides free Internet access in the reading room on two computer terminals.

As many will recall, the Anoka County History Center and Library occupies the former home of the Anoka City Library, which merged with the county library system in 1995. The county library has financially supported the History Center's deposit collection in response to a desire to continue a presence in downtown Anoka.

Wanted—Yearbooks!

We need your yearbook from high school! Every year, ACHS sends a letter to all the schools in the county, asking for a copy of the yearbook. Unfortunately, yearbooks have become so expensive that very few schools are willing to donate one. No other resource chronicles everyday life in the community with the kind of detail found in a high school yearbook. They are an incredibly valuable resource and are used more frequently than you might think.

If you are looking for a meaningful gift to leave future generations, or if you want your class remembered, or if you want the community that you live in represented, then consider buying a yearbook for donation to ACHS. If you are downsizing, and need the storage space for more current items, consider donating your own old yearbook to ACHS. Although Anoka High School is pretty well represented in the collections, we have big gaps. Some schools (such as Centennial) are not represented at all or only with a few random years. Middle school yearbooks are welcomed, too. Even church directories are useful in our collections.

It's your history, folks! Let's all help collect it!

Volunteers in 2005 were busier than ever!...By Maria King

The final total number of hours, donated to ACHS during 2005, was 6698.25! Wow! That is a 32% increase over the 4548.75 hours donated the year before. The total number of volunteers rose to 175. However, our top volunteers still carry the burden, with 8% of the volunteer force doing 65% of the work! Let's all try to spread that out a little more in 2006. There are plenty of opportunities to go around.

The photo project is on-going, but it has taken on a new dimension with a grant from MHS to evaluate and upgrade storage facilities for our media collection. Volunteers are currently labeling an acid free folder for each photo, using prepared labels. At the same time, they do a sort of inventory, whereby they note any missing photos, and check the computer to determine where they are housed. Examples include the outsized photos, glass negative plates, and any slides. So far the first 7 topics have been finished, representing about 20% of the project.

Currently, there are two transcriptionists working on the oral histories from the Agriculture grant. Only five remain unsigned. When those are finished, there are the Korean War vets', and the Vietnam vets' oral histories to be transcribed.

A committee, headed by Jan Anderson, and composed of former teachers, is working on developing a curriculum for Anoka County schools, in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial celebration in 2007. This task is made more difficult because school district boundaries do not coincide with county borders. There are 9 different school districts servicing Anoka County students, and conversely, several Anoka Hennepin District 11 schools that service students beyond the county borders.

The greatest prank ever played!

In preparation for a special project, we are looking for stories of the best pranks you know of—either played on you, a prank you've seen, or one you played on someone else. Please write down the story of your prank and send it to Vickie at ACHS. Tell us the real names of people in the prank, but if you ask us to, we'll keep your identity a secret! All the stories will be added to the archives and used for a special, fun project in the future.

New Opportunities...By Maria King

I'm looking for a volunteer to take oral histories from nursing home residents. Training will be provided, and you can set your own hours. You will need a tape recorder, a camera and your own transportation. And good listening skills!

If data input is more your style, please give me a call. The census project simply requires a good eye for old fashioned handwriting, and the ability to type. The names from the census are entered into a database that can be alphabetized and will enable researchers to locate their ancestors without a painstaking search.

History Day competitions are coming up and the schools are always in need of judges. It takes only a few hours and training is provided. So are treats! Times and locations vary. Call Maria for an update.

There's always something goin' on at the History Center. Why not plan to drop by and see?

2006 ACHS Annual Meeting

Federal Cartridge bowling team, 1939. From ACHS collections.



Join the Anoka County Historical Society for our 2006 Annual Meeting at the National Sports Center in Blaine. Celebrate local sports history with a special presentation on the Schwan's USA Cup, one of the largest youth soccer tournaments in the world. The first USA Cup was played in 1984 with 1,500 players on 69 teams from across the nation and globe. The 2005 tournament featured 982 teams and hosted over 15,000 athletes—all right here in Anoka County.

Highlights

- ◆ Election results for the Board of Directors
- ◆ History of the Schwan's USA Cup
- ◆ A tour of the National Sports Center

Anoka County Historical Society

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Phone: 763-421-0600

Fax: 763-323-0218

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

Saturday, March 11. 12:30pm to 3:30pm

**The Schwan Center at National Sports Center in Blaine,
1750—105th Avenue NE, Blaine**

Cost: \$10 for members / \$12 for non-members

Reserve your tickets today
Free Bus Rides Available by Request



These men were the Faye Construction Trap Shooting team in 1966. They shot trap at the St. Anthony Gun Club which was located at what today is 16128 Varolite Street in Ramsey. They were showing off their new team vests in this photo. Left to right: Wally Schram, Elder Opem, Les Haroldson, Jim Vandee-an, George Winch.

A baton pass between runners on the Centennial High School Girls Track team, 1985.



A wrestling tournament at St. Francis High School, 1975.

2006 ACHS Annual Meeting Reservation Form

Attendee(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City/ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Tickets--\$10 members/ \$12 non-members

Member tickets: _____ Non-member tickets: _____

MasterCard and Visa Accepted!
 You may call in your reservations by using your credit card to (763) 421-0600 during ACHS business hours!

Ticket subtotal: \$ _____

Additional donation: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Reserve your seat by returning this form and your payment **by March 6, 2006** to:
 Anoka County Historical Society
 2135 Third Avenue North
 Anoka, MN 55303

Your reservation(s) will be waiting for you at the registration table the day of the event

Coming Events

March-April Lobby Exhibit

(Anoka County History Center Lobby.) ACHS has some treasures in the collections that relate to sports in our county. Come see some vintage photos of sports teams and sports equipment from years gone by in this special lobby exhibit.

Sports!

March 11, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

National Sports Center in Blaine. The annual meeting is your opportunity to hear about the future of ACHS as envisioned by Todd Mahon, our new director, provide your input to the organization, hear the election results for the ACHS Board of Directors, and have a lot of fun. Get your reservation in soon! See inside this newsletter for more details.

ACHS Annual Meeting

April 1, 1:00—3:00 p.m.

Northtown Library in Blaine. If you volunteered in 2005, watch for your invitation to this special day set aside just for you! It's an ice cream social for people who can't be "topped", so we'll settle for "topping" their ice cream! Look for your invitation to arrive in the mail during the last week of March. If you volunteered and do not receive an invitation, call Maria at the History Center, 763-421-0600.

Volunteer Recognition Day

April 22, 1:00 — 4:00 p.m.

(Anoka County History Center and Library) Local resident, Christy Sauro will be here to sign copies of his new book, *The Twins Platoon*. The book follows Sauro and his fellow Marines who were sworn into the Marine Corps at a Twins Baseball game in 1967. Before 1967 was over, many of these Marines were in some of the toughest fighting of the war in Vietnam. The book will be on bookstore shelves soon or you may purchase one at the History Center for Christy to sign while he is at ACHS for this special book signing day.

The Twins Platoon — A special Book Signing day

April 27, 28, 29 (Times assigned upon registration) American Girls Spring Tea Party

Read about life the Victorian era in the books featuring Samantha and then celebrate with a tea party!. Spring is a time to show off those fancy bonnets, so guests at this spring American Girls tea will become "milliners" for the day as they decorate their own hats. Many other activities are also planned. The teas will be Thursday and Friday evening, and twice on Saturday. \$10.00 for adults and \$7.00 for girls. Their dolls can come to the party for free! RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!!

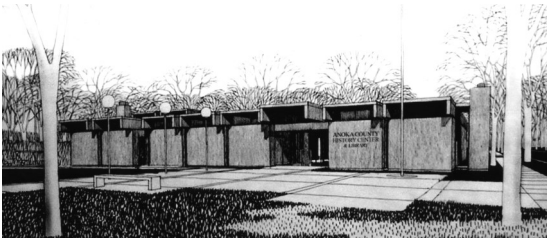
Ongoing in the Exhibit Hall

Vietnam: The Soldiers' Experience; A Time of Change: Anoka County Agriculture from 1900 to 1945; Anoka County A to Z. Many of the letters in A to Z have changed to show off new artifacts from the ACHS collections. Come see *Z is for Zippers*, *M is for Machine*, *Q is for Queen*, and much more that is new in this ever changing exhibit.

Vietnam: The Soldiers' Experience; A Time of Change:

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History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 36 No. 3

May-June 2006

Happy 50th Anniversary, Hilltop!

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

On May 4, 1956, the residents of a small section of Fridley Township gathered to vote on incorporating as their own community. The surrounding communities were annexing pieces of the township and these residents did not want to be annexed. They wanted their own community and this idea was brought to a vote that day in 1956. The vote passed and the Village of Hilltop began its existence. By June 4th, Ordinance No. 1 had been adopted to “establish the rules governing the functioning of the village council in the village of Hilltop, state of Minnesota.”

At the time, Hilltop consisted of two mobile home parks containing some 195 homes and about 45 traditional homes and businesses. The population was just under 700 people. The reasons given for their choice to incorporate as a village were spelled out in a newspaper article on April 19, 1956. Hilltop residents were worried taxes would go up if they became a part of Columbia Heights and that restrictions on the mobile homes would change and become stricter. One can sense by reading articles in the newspapers surrounding the date of the incorporation, that Hilltop residents wanted to determine their own future.

Predictions of a short life for the new village were plentiful, but one reporter said, after attending a village meeting, that the council was “slow, deliberate and extremely cautious” in how it approached its new responsibilities. The reporter went on to say, “We all know this is the only approach any new business should take” and concluded with the statement, “The village’s elected officials know what they’re doing and, of course, they’re willing to work. A group endowed with these two elements is bound to succeed.”

The doomsayers were proven wrong as Hilltop incorporated as a city in 1974 and continues to thrive as it reaches its 50th anniversary.

Hilltop is the smallest community in Anoka County, being just 16 blocks, about 80 acres. It is surrounded by the city of Columbia Heights and contracts with them for some services such as police and fire protection. The population has fluctuated slightly from one census to the next, but in recent surveys, the population stays around 800 citizens, give or take. About half, according to the 2000 census, are in the age range of 25 to 55 years of age.

Children in Hilltop even attend school within their city as Valley View Elementary and Central Middle School are both technically located in Hilltop, even though their street addresses are listed as Columbia Heights. The street the school faces is the dividing line between the two communities.

As with any community, Hilltop is looking to the future. The city applied for and received a grant to revitalize its neighborhoods. The goal is to find ways for people living in the oldest mobile homes, those built before 1977, to be able to replace their homes with newer models that will be safer and/or more efficient. Newer homes will also help to add polish to Hilltop neighborhoods. It is a first-of-its-kind program that has been so successful in Hilltop that it has been duplicated in other counties throughout Minnesota. In April of 2006, Hilltop adopted a redevelopment plan. This new plan puts the city in a better position to respond to development opportunities.

Hilltop will celebrate the city’s 50th anniversary in conjunction with National Night Out, Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm. There will be a pot luck picnic for residents in the parking lot of Hilltop City Hall, 4555 Jackson Street. Hot dogs, burgers, chips and lemonade will be provided. Residents are encouraged to bring a pot luck item to share with family, friends and neighbors.

Hilltop has a unique place in Anoka County’s history. The fact that it is celebrating 50 years this year should earn it more than a passing glance at the water tower as people drive down Central Avenue. After all, a past mayor of Hilltop was quoted as saying, “We like to say that Columbia Heights is a suburb of Hilltop.”



The Hilltop volunteers who built the city’s playground. 1996.

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From the Director's Desk...

By Todd Mahon

I can't tell you how proud I am to be leading an organization like the Anoka County Historical Society. It seems every volunteer, staff member, board member, and society member is committed to making this organization the best county historical society in the state.

One thing that separates us from other similar organizations is the number and variety of programs we offer on our own and how good we are at collaborating with other organizations. As we approach the summer months, the program schedule at ACHS really takes off. Over the next couple of months, ACHS will be bringing you some great programs and I encourage you to participate in as many of them as you can.

At the end of April and in early May, we offer our popular **American Girl Teas**. Volunteer Coordinator Maria King works to make these programs so much fun for parents and children. Sign up for the recently added teas on **May 12 & 13**.

On **Saturday, May 6**, we offer a **Ghosts of Anoka** tour during the **DIVA Days** celebration. For those of us that have ever thrilled to something in the shadows, or just love a good story about the area's history, these tours are a lot of fun. Call the Anoka County History Center to make a reservation as space is limited. In June, we begin offering ghost tours on a regular basis.

On **July 8**, Anoka celebrates Riverfest, the annual event that features music, boat rides, classic cars, vendors, and crafters. As usual, ACHS will participate in and sell tickets to our **Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour** on **Sunday, July 9**. This year's tour will focus on the Christian Hill neighborhood. The tour, organized through a partnership with the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission, features about a dozen historic homes and businesses. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the History Center.

I haven't even mentioned the Anoka County Fair, the Nowthen Threshing Show, or any of the other community summer festivals we plan to be a part of.

Make sure you come see us this summer as we promote history and give hints of what is to come next year as we gear up to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Anoka County in 2007!

From the President...

By Jan Anderson

Hats off to Paul Pierce for his commitment and service to ACHS and the board. Under his leadership, ACHS has expanded its membership and its visibility across the county. Luckily, we are not losing Paul, but moving him to past president so we can continue to draw on his expertise, ideas, and knowledge of local history.

My vision for the society is shaped by the two forces that have been most influential in my life--namely, agriculture and education. Coming from a century farm myself, (southern MN), I am particularly interested in the ag grant made possible through the Anoka County Ag Preserves Program. Thus far, we've had two reports written by Linda Cameron chronicling our agricultural history from 1900 to the present. Currently, Jeanine Pratt is working on the third phase from the earliest beginnings to 1900. Indeed, our ag grants have served as the theme for our annual barn dance events where last year we honored Anoka County's century farm owners. Vickie Wendel, our program manager, has developed excellent exhibits around our farm history at the History Center. If you haven't been in to it, I urge you to do so before it closes in mid-July.

My other life-shaping force has been education, since I've taught for 28 years in the Anoka-Hennepin District. One goal for ACHS, especially in light of the county's 150th celebration in 2007, is to work with school districts within the county by offering such services as community web links and information/stories specific to this particular region. Students should also realize they are living history every day. (Things do not have to be old to be history!)

Indeed, this year proves to be very busy in preparation for the Sesquicentennial. One of the events planned is commemorating 150 years through 150 photographs. Anoka County is developing so rapidly that even photos taken a year ago are important in reflecting the county's history. ACHS would like to include representative photos from all over the county, so please begin your picture search now. Send/bring your photos or stories to the History Center where copies will be made so you can retain the originals.

I look forward to working with Todd Mahon, our executive director, our wonderful staff, board, and volunteers to carry ACHS's mission of preserving the past far into the future.

The Story of an Artifact

Theodora Brown's Paintings

When she was a student at Anoka High School in the 1910s, Theodora painted. A lot. She studied art at least three hours a day. After high school, she began to paint commercially. She did the illustrations for several Minneapolis department stores and did the wedding illustrations for the front window in Daytons.

Theodora, who loved to see what was around the next corner that she might want to paint, bought a car. She did not yet have her driver's license, but that didn't matter. She got it and spent summers traveling to places like Maine, Montana, Canada, or the seaside to find inspiration. She lived out of her van during the summers, traveling wherever the view might take her.

Her favorite subject to paint was people, especially family. Her granddaughter said all the family members had paintings of themselves and there were family group portraits, too. Another

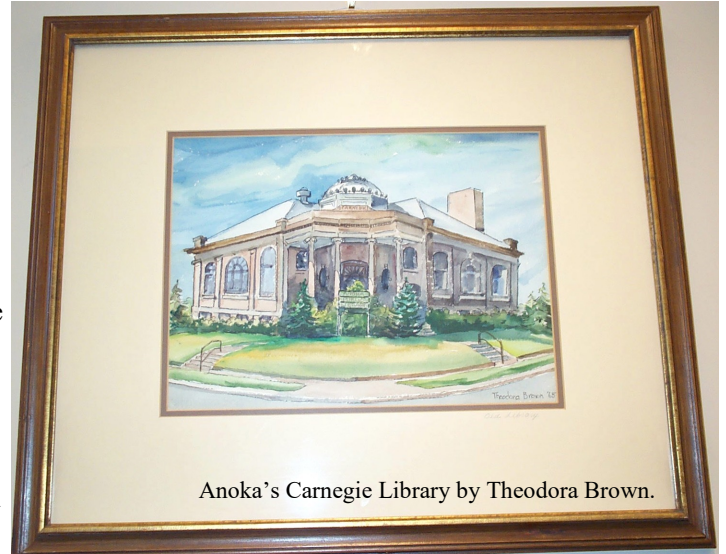
favorite subject was flowers, and she did a lot of them. The paintings that Theodora liked best were the ones she would never sell. She generously gave them away to friends and family. Her paintings were sold to art lovers all over the United States and abroad. However, paintings Theodora decided she didn't like, for whatever reason, she burned.

Theodora usually started with pencil and paper. She worked with watercolor paint as her favorite medium and stretched her canvases herself. When her health and age began to make it hard for her to stand long enough to complete a painting, she had to give up her brush. Theodora's last years were spent in the Maple Manor Care Center in Anoka, her death coming at age 91 years in 1992.

A few of Theodora's paintings have come to ACHS where her story and art are preserved. Recently, the Weaver family donated two of Theodora's paintings. One was of the National Register home where John and Jill lived on Ferry Street in Anoka. The other was a sunset painting of the old flour mill on the Rum River with the Main Street bridge in front.

Both hung in the living room of their home until the paintings were given to ACHS to tell the stories of the Weavers, the Woodburys, Anoka's flour mill, and Theodora Brown. It's a case where one object can tell many stories and we at ACHS are pleased to be entrusted with such wonderful history.

Stop by the History Center to see one of Theo's paintings in the A is for Anoka County Artists in the A to Z exhibit.



Anoka's Carnegie Library by Theodora Brown.



A watercolor of the old City Hall building in Anoka.



One of two Brown paintings recently donated to ACHS by Jill Weaver. This is the Woodbury/Weaver house on Ferry Street.

ACHS VOLUNTEERS ARE COOL!

The hours counted in 2005 add up to the highest amount ever donated to ACHS in a single year and we know there are many more hours not recorded! In 2005, there were 6,347.25 hours given to ACHS projects and we thank every volunteer for every one of those hours! Time is precious and no amount of money can buy time, but we are rich indeed with the time and efforts our volunteers give to history. THANK YOU to each and every one of you! It is interesting to see that fully one half of the hours were donated by the top eight people on this list—but there is always room for more people at the top! Call Maria at the History Center to get involved.

Niles, David	582	TenEyck, Margaret	18	Kerber, Travis	6	Maccario, Joe	4
Elrite, Lucille	517.5	Ness, Gregory	17.25	Powell, Bob	6	Martindale, Tyler	4
Pierce, Paul III	446.25	Rickert, Lynne	17	Chutich, Marlys	5.5	Prugh, Margaret	4
Skubitz, Kay	425.75	Mucklow, Debbie	16	Miller, Eloise	5.5	Sauter, Jen	4
Mundle, Linda	394	Redning, Samantha	16	Skogquist, Erik	5.25	Thompson, Kay	4
Levens, Darlene	384	Jersak, Michele	15	Scottston, Barb	5	Ulman, Steve	4
Sell, Charlie	262.25	Redning, Paul	15	Lerom, Kirsten	5	Ulman, Mickie	4
Anderson, Jan	250	Serryn, Pat	15	Lerom, Susan	5	Wagner, Alice	4
Stockhausen, Sharron	236	Pierce, Mary	14	Lindquist, Orville	5	Wallace, Debbie	4
Martin, Nancy	191.25	Overby, Stacy	13.75	Meyer, Lillian	5	Vang, Eugene	4
Ward, Bart	170	Haight, Joan	13.5	Miscovic, Suzanne	5	Bator, Fran	3
Meneley, Fran	150.75	Mostelle, Mary	13	Rehbein, Roger	5	Benson, Torrie	3
Wendel, Vickie	128	Keogh, Joanne	13	Thorp, Diane	5	Brown, Karen	3
Hanna, Judy	124	Moody, Joanne	13	Vetch, Mark	5	Brown, Troy	3
Christenson, Shirley	100	Nylund, Jake	13	Wendel, Sally	5	Coble, Wayne	3
Anderson, Marilyn	93	Widmer, Rita	12.5	Maki, Amanda	4.5	Gardas, Kathleen	3
Bearl, Darlene	88	Prugh, Bill	12.5	Skogquist, Bjorn	4.5	Meyer, Gen	3
Talbot, Marlys	84.5	Spadgenske, Wes	11	Gustafson, Rande	4	Reihman, Jennifer	3
Paulson, Lou	75.5	Clark, Mike	10	Anderson, Sarah	4	Stauffer, Donald	3
Auchter, Marian	65	Arellano, Tony	10	Barr, Donna	4	Callender, Chuck	2.5
Hardin, Glen	63	Bengtson, Sandra	10	Benson, Shaina	4	Hedstrom, Krystle	2.5
Vesley, Catherine	60	Godlewski, Susan	10	Berg, Dennis	4	Elliott, Linda	2.25
Larson, Maxine	60	Keil, Travis	10	Butler, Dorothy	4	Dordan, Carol	2
Pratt, Jeanine	56	Kolb, Marilyn	10	Comee, Jane	4	Blesvick, Tom	2
Wendel, Mandy	55.5	Redning, Amanda	10	Conger, Winnie	4	Estby, Paul	2
Jones-Kost, Bethany	55	Redning, Annabelle	10	Craine, Gail	4	Goeser, Kay	2
Berg, Mai	47	Woizeschke, Sharon	10	Flanders, Fran	4	Hegglund, Nikki	2
Legrid, David	47	Fritz, Brandon	10	Fritz, Eeris	4	Juetten, Autumn	2
Frank, Dan	41	Johnson, Lisa	10	Gelking, Amanda	4	Argon, Joe	1.5
Ziegler, Lester	41	McDonald, Barb	9.5	Hansen, Colleen	4	Ohman, Cindy	1.5
McArdle, Rod	40.5	Eye, Julie	9.5	Hansen, Chuck	4	Ohman, Leon	1.5
Second MN Battery	40	Weber, Cathi	9	Haugen, Alyssa	4	Wendel, Ron	1.5
Ward, Ellen	38	Zarling, Carolyn	9	Jersak, Robert	4	Johnson, Don	1
King, Michael	36	Zarling, Jonathan	9	Kelly, Enoch	4	Brown, Barbara	1
Hanson, Myrtice	36	Pierce, Paul IV	9	Leary, Jenni	4		
Ashwood, David	32.5	Bellows, Kevin	9				
Hall, Amber	32.5	Bellows, Patti	8				
Freeman, Rosemarie	30	Conger, Dave	8				
Ziegler, Shirley	29.5	Loader, Becky	8				
King, Maria	27.5	Morrow, Denise	8				
Steen, Ann	27	Renville, Ashley	8				
Steinke, Ray	26	Wren, Charlotte	8				
Estby, Laura	24.75	Pedley, Elaine	8				
Thurston, Barb	24.25	Brown, Tabitha	8				
Thorsen, Sandy	22	Walker, Ramona	7.5				
Block, Ivy	21.5	Wallin, Evonne	7.25				
Hedlund, Yvonne	21.5	Burkholder, Barb	7				
Troop 406	20.25	Ward, Tom	7				
Reilley, Bern	19.5	Agrella, William	6.5				
Murphy, Patrick	18.5	Berkholder	6				
Sakry, Tammy	18	Gurneau, Evelyn	6				



ACHS Volunteers enjoying and ice cream treat, April 1, 2006.

Up To Date

Ongoing in the Exhibit Hall

Vietnam: The Soldiers' Experience; Anoka County A to Z and A Time of Change: Anoka County Agriculture from 1900 to 1945. The current Agriculture exhibit will be closing in mid-July to make way for phase three of the farm story. Time is running out to see the grasshopper machine, the silo, 4-H, starch factory, and everything else in this exhibit. Make plans to see it before it's too late!

“What’s Cookin’ in the County?”

That’s exactly what the Anoka County Genealogical Society would like to know! Nothing brings a family together better than food. ACGS is putting together a family traditions cookbook in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Anoka County in 2007. ACGS is looking for family recipes with Anoka County ties that have become traditional favorites.

Whether it’s your great-grandmother’s apple pie, fruitcake or a new favorite, ACGS will publish not just the recipe, but your story of why the recipe is a special family favorite. ACGS will also include a photograph and a short biography of the person who started the tradition.

Contact us for a submission form or visit our website:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootweb.com/~relativememory> - email: acgsmn@yahoo.com

ACGS mailing address: 2135 – 3rd Ave., North, Anoka, MN 55303

Volunteer Appreciation Day

By Maria King

This year’s Volunteer Appreciation event was held at the Northtown Library on Saturday, April 1. Ice cream sundaes, root beer floats and banana splits helped to make it a successful party, but mostly, it was the great collection of dedicated people who turned an ordinary afternoon into a delight. These people are the heart of ACHS, the doers and the shakers who actually make things happen. Without our wonderful volunteers, all our good ideas would go nowhere! They are like worker bees, humming about and getting the work done, *so the entire community benefits.*

We are deeply indebted to these wonderful people. Volunteers help us in at least three distinctly different ways. First, they support us in ways that allow the staff to be used efficiently. **Mailings, filing, and phone calling** are examples. Secondly, volunteers team with professional staff to offer programs and events to the community. **Community festivals, the Home and Garden Tour, and the county fair** are volunteer-driven examples. Thirdly, our volunteers provide an important link to the communities we serve. The volunteers are frequently the source of **inspiration and ideas**, suggesting ways to move us ever closer to achieving our mission to preserve, protect and share the history of Anoka County.

In this issue, you will find all the volunteers and the hours they donated in 2005. Every effort is made to ensure that the hours count is accurate, but still mistakes can happen—especially if the volunteers forget to write down their hours on the calendar! Please let Maria know if you believe there is an error.

A warm and sincere thank you goes out to all of you who helped in so many ways and on so many different projects and programs in 2005. You are appreciated every day! Any volunteers who were unable to attend the recognition event, please come in to the History Center and pick up your gift. We have an insulated lunch bag for you. It will hold a six-pack of soda cans because, like a cold drink on a hot day, **“ACHS Volunteers are cool!”**

Their selfless efforts enable ACHS to reach out to offer the community a plethora of resources, programs and events that showcase our history.



Everyone who comes into the History Center is treated to some great local art on loan from Richard Eaton. Richard lives in Coon Rapids and has three paintings depicting scenes of life in the Anoka County area currently hanging in the History Center. The newest one, shown above, was researched in the ACHS library using photos and written accounts to allow him to paint a scene much as it might have looked on Jackson Street a century ago. It proves the resources of history are valuable for many reasons beyond history!

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

GENERAL DONATIONS

February 11 – April 14

Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation
Evelyn Bonde
Janice Campbell
Cary Cleveland
Edward Cutter American Legion Post
Jon Ekerholm
Dan Frank
Robert and Jean Guzy
Nellie Klein
Shirley Lynch
Clarence Monegar
Rachel Peterson
Allen and Elaine Sorteberg
Rodger Sundstrom
Brian Thompson
Mary Ward
Julienne Wyckoff
Ona Yrjanson

SPECIAL DONATIONS

ANNUAL MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Dan Frank

VIETNAM BOOK PRINTING

Anoka County Vietnam Veterans Chapter 470

HOME TOUR SPONSORS

Friends of the Kelley Farm

TECHNOLOGY FOR ACCESS TO

ACHS COLLECTION

George MacPhearson Trust

Welcome New Members!

February 11—April 14

Cary Cleveland (Ramsey)
John Gallovitch (Anoka)
Robert and Jean Guzy (Columbia Heights)
Joyce Runquist (Akeley, MN)
Allen and Elaine Sorteberg (Ramsey)
David Stenger (Anoka)

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Anoka Halloween, Inc.
Dennis R. Carlson
Marvin & JoAnn Christenson
Mike Clark
Ruth Schert Ferretti
Sam Hermanstorfer
Bran Holmbo
Tim Layeaux
Lino Lake Police Department
Jeanette Magnuson
Beverly L. Medvecky
Marlys Riddel
Lara Friedman-Shedlov
David J. Stenger
Tom Ward
Jill Weaver

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere condolences to the families and friends of:

Fran Courteau,

ACHS member and volunteer, who passed away suddenly on February 27th

Robert Burman,

former County Commissioner and ACHS member, who died on March 8th

Toini Savela,

mother of ACHS member Albin Savela. Mrs. Savela died on March 9th

Erling Johnson,

ACHS member and former Anoka-Hennepin School Superintendent, who passed away on March 31st

Anoka County Historical Society 2005 Annual Report

Executive Director's Report submitted by Todd S. Mahon

2005 was an exciting year for the Anoka County Historical Society. It was a record year for us in terms of our participation in community events, public programs, fundraising, and people we've reached with the county's history. The Board of Directors developed a strategic visioning plan that provides a pathway to continued success for our organization as we move forward to achieve our stated mission to discover, preserve and educate the public about the history of Anoka County and the State of Minnesota.

It was also a year of transition for ACHS. In November we said goodbye to Executive Director Bonnie McDonald. Under Bonnie's leadership, ACHS soared to new heights. We became more professional, more visible in the community, and more accountable to our mission.

In December, I joined the organization as the new executive director. We now look forward to the exciting years ahead as ACHS takes the lead in celebrating Anoka County's 150th anniversary in 2007. We can be proud of all that we have accomplished at ACHS. Much of that credit goes to our members and supporters. They have given us not only the financial means to preserve and interpret Anoka County's history—they have also given us their input and opinions; and most importantly they have shared their stories.

We take pride in the fact that we listen to those stories and feedback from our stakeholders. I can't help but be excited about the future of ACHS as we look forward. However, our future success is based on the past, so let me share some of ACHS's accomplishments from 2005.

Strategic Visioning Plan

In December of 2005, the ACHS Board of Directors approved a strategic visioning plan for 2005-2008. The plan is the result of a six-month process in which ACHS board, staff, and other stakeholders developed a vision for our future. ACHS's Executive Director consulted with Social Ventures Consulting to develop the process for the strategic visioning sessions with stakeholders.

Four meetings were held, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was performed, and strategies to fulfill prioritized organizational goals were developed. The result was a document intended to guide ACHS forward for the next three years.

The plan sets forward goals with strategies to achieve them in the following areas:

• **Acquisitions**

1. Finish the cataloging project by 2007
2. Continue efforts to put collections on the Web
3. Continue to build the collection appropriately
4. Create a full-time curator position

• **Administrative**

1. Increase the number of volunteers

2. Expand professional staff
3. Add to technology capabilities
4. Improve the aesthetics of the exterior and interior of the building

• **Development**

1. Have a plan to diversify funding streams
2. Broaden membership
3. Continue to attract board members

• **Outreach**

1. Increase our presence in each community
2. Focus our marketing efforts and increase marketing effectiveness
3. Broaden programming and exhibits; expand contact with youth
4. Advocate for saving historical structures

The achievement of these goals will strengthen ACHS's role in the community. The challenge to our organization, and any other organization, is to make the plan a living, breathing document. We look forward to the challenge and the positive results that will come from it.

ACHS 2005 Annual Report

Donations

In February of 2005 ACHS unveiled “Copper County” in the lobby of the Anoka County History Center and Library. Created by artist Bill Mowerson, this stunning piece of art commemorates individuals, organizations, and local governments who have contributed cash and in-kind donations to our capital campaign. The exciting red carpet affair was attended by over 100 people as we honored our generous donors.

In the fall we held our second annual Harvest Time Barn Dance fundraiser. Organized for the first time without a partner organization, the event exceeded

everyone’s expectations as over \$17,000 was raised through ticket sales and donations, auction sales, and sponsorships.

2005 cash donations, amounting to more than \$30,000, came from all sources and in all dollar amounts. We sincerely thank everyone who gave to ACHS in 2005. Your contributions not only help the bottom line, but they also prove that we have value in your lives and in the community.

Membership

368 memberships were renewed in 2005. There were 58 family memberships, 78 individual memberships, 227 senior memberships, and 3 student memberships. These members enjoyed free admission to our exhibition hall, a subscription to our newsletter, and free and discounted prices to our programs. They also elect the board of directors.

2005 was a great year for gaining new memberships. We gained an astounding 147 new members, many of them came to ACHS through our exhibit *Vietnam: The Veteran’s Experience* and more joined us after

learning about us through our documentation of the county’s agricultural history. Our mission, and how we carry it out, is validated and strengthened when people who work with us choose to enroll as members.

Our membership revenues are one of our most reliable sources of income. Many of our members contribute an additional financial sum on top of their membership dues.

Volunteers

We received an incredible amount of support from our volunteers in 2005. Volunteer hours amounted to 6,347.25 hours—that’s an increase of over 40% compared to the previous year! That’s the equivalent of three additional full-time staff members for our organization. 175 volunteers contributed to these

totals.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time to ACHS in 2005. We could not do what we do without you.

Facilities

2006 marked the completion of our fundraising campaign for capital improvements to our home in the Anoka County History Center and Library. Funds from this project have been and will be used to improve our facilities. The Anoka County History Center and Library resides in the former City of Anoka library in downtown Anoka. The occupation of the building has allowed ACHS to expand its collections, offer a quality research center, and provide interpretive exhibitions. The City of Anoka is the owner of the building and ACHS has made a

commitment to caring for the building’s long-term future.

In 2005 work began on tuck-pointing the exterior brick work. The project was halted unexpectedly late in the year and is scheduled to be resumed in 2006. The next major plan for the facility is a replacement of the building’s boiler system.

ACHS 2005 Annual Report

Circulating Library

Since 2002 ACHS has partnered with the Anoka County Library to host a deposit collection in the reading room of the Anoka County History Center and Library. It is a collaboration that we value as it allows us to work closely with ACL and is one more service we can provide for county residents.

Approximately 750 adult and children's books can be checked out by any person with an Anoka County Library card. This deposit collection rotates every three months, guaranteeing a fresh selection to choose from. ACHS also provides daily and weekly newspapers, and a selection of magazines for reading

room use. In addition, books and other library materials can be sent to the Anoka County History Center and Library for pick-up and any library materials can also be dropped off at our location.

A total of 1,298 books, tapes, and other library materials were reserved, charged, or renewed at our facility in 2005. This marks a seventeen percent increase from the previous year. Use of our public Internet terminals increased ten percent, with 2,207 users.

Events/Programming/Outreach

2005 was another busy year for public programs, as we remain committed to an active presence in the entire county as well as a full schedule of events at the Anoka County History Center and Library. Staff and volunteers were present throughout the county with programs such as *American Girl* teas, *HiSTORY to Go*, ghost tours, home tours, cemetery tours, and Tastes and Sounds of the Civil War. Our outreach services ranged from the traditional to the not-so-traditional. One of the funnest, and oddest, services we performed was for NBC News in New York. In January producers were in town to cover the rapid growth of the Twin Cities area. ACHS staff guided them to locations of housing developments. Among other things, they were astonished to see that Rum River actually froze! (It was eight below zero the day they were here.) Here's a few of our more notable accomplishments from 2005:

- ***American Girl Teas*** – In April and December ACHS put on *American Girl Teas*. Based on the popular children's book series, these events gained in popularity with each event. The books and the events are a great opportunity for kids and their parents to learn what life was like for children at different points in our history.
- ***Community Events and Festivals*** – We take pride in the fact that we represent all of Anoka County. Because of this we participate in as many of the local celebrations as we are able to. In 2005 we were present at Coon Rapids' Carp Fest, the Ham

Lake Senior Center Celebration, Anoka's Diva Days, River Fest, Blaine's Blazin' Fourth Celebration, Lino Lakes Celebrates 50 Years, the Anoka County Fair, Blue Herron Days, Linwood Family Fun Fest, the Nowthen Threshing Show, and many more.

- ***A Civil War Christmas*** – On November 19, with a grant from the Sandhill Center for the Arts, ACHS celebrated a Civil War Christmas program at the Sandhill Center in Bethel. Dozens of children and their families came and learned how the Christmas holiday was celebrated in the Civil War era.
- ***Monuments to Life Cemetery Tours*** – The always popular cemetery tours took ACHS audiences to the Lakeview Cemetery in Burns Township, St. Joseph's Cemetery in Lino Lakes, and Oakwood Cemetery in Anoka (the Oakwood tour required three tours alone to fulfill the demand).
- ***Research Projects*** – ACHS continued its mission to document the county's history with several ongoing projects. The Around the County committee worked to gather the history of local townships. ACHS was awarded a grant to document the earliest years of Anoka County's agricultural history, and volunteer Dave Niles put in hundreds of hours recording the history of the Anoka State Hospital.

ACHS 2005 Annual Report

ACHS Artifact Collection

Approximately 1,500 artifacts have been updated or added to our cataloging database. We now have nearly 15,000 artifacts catalogued in total. Over 2,200 photographs have been added to the database in 2005, meaning we now have over 6,900 photos that document Anoka County's history included in our electronic records. Over 4,000 archival items (documents, audio visual media, personal papers, etc.) were added last year to the 42,000 catalogued items, and 262 books were added, for a total of over

1,200.

The cataloging and recording of our collections is a vital part of what we do at ACHS. Without this information about these pieces, found in an easy-to-access format, the objects become separated from their stories.

Research Library

A total of 347 people registered to use the research facility in 2005, this represents a 6% decrease from the previous year. 50 of these patrons had not used our research library previously.

The ACHS library is a wonderful repository of historical photos, personal papers, microfilmed

newspapers, birth records, census records, and much more. The collection is used by genealogists, students, and others interested in local history.

Staff and volunteers are available to help all researchers.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions continue to be one of our greatest tools for interpreting Anoka County's history and reaching a large audience. We continued to use the *A to Z* exhibit to uncover hidden gems in the collection that might not fit into larger themed exhibits, and we opened an exhibit on the Vietnam veteran's experience, and installed a new phase of our history of Anoka County's agricultural history.

The opening of *Vietnam: The Veteran's Experience* proved to be an event that's impact is beyond measure. Over 100 people attended this opening event in which many tears were shed, hugs were given, and memories shared—some for the first time ever. It was also a time of healing. This exhibition was developed with the assistance of Anoka County's Vietnam veterans. Without their willingness to share their stories, memories, and personal belongings with a public audience, this exhibit would not have been the same. The exhibit continues to generate attention from local and national sources. We are rightly proud of it—we thank the public and the veterans for their support on this project.

In October we opened *Farms and Families: The*

Changing Face of Anoka County Agriculture, 1900-1945. This exhibit is the second in a three-exhibit project looking at the history and influence of agriculture in our county. These exhibits, as well as the extensive research used to create them, are made possible through a grant from the Anoka County Ag Preserves Program.

We continued to provide free exhibits in the lobby of the History Center. These exhibits, which change frequently, are a great opportunity to examine quirky and non-traditional subjects. It also allows us to produce short-term exhibits on timely subjects and entice visitors to explore the exhibition hall.

Looking ahead to 2006 and beyond, ACHS staff is gearing up to produce the third installment of *Farms and Families*, install an exhibition of the World War II experience in Anoka County, and close *A to Z* in anticipation of a major photograph exhibition for the 2007 sesquicentennial.

ACHS 2005 Annual Report Treasurer's Report

submitted by Glen Hardin

BALANCE SHEET	12/31/2005	12/31/2004	12/31/2003	12/31/2002	12/31/2001
ASSETS					
Total Current Assets	299,254.30	254,648.03	302,086.91	262,839.57	246,881.24
Total Fixed Assets	276,690.47	185,036.71	177,170.00	154,779.37	154,525.37
TOTAL ASSETS	588,510.89	461,046.28	479,256.91	417,618.94	403,257.25
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Total Liabilities	2,119.90	1,373.01	0	0	4,563.15
Total Equity	586,390.99	459,673.27	479,256.91	417,618.94	398,694.10
Total Liabilities & Equity	588,510.89	461,046.28	479,256.91	417,618.94	403,257.25
INCOME STATEMENT					
	12/31/2005	12/31/2004	12/31/2003	12/31/2002	12/31/2001
Total Support	294,872.66	284,204.06	281,663.66	247,670.19	389,630.30
Total Expense	251,818.91	336,199.78	230,608.90	230,645.13	137,751.25
Net	43,053.75	(51,995.72)	51,054.76	17,025.06	251,879.05
Revenue Sources (Gross Revenue)					
Anoka County General Support	103,000.00	100,000.00	112,529.00		
Anoka County Library Support	80,000.00	80,000.00	75,796.00		
Admissions	1,392.50	1,613.50	NA		
Weaver Recognition Event	735.00	In Endowment	21,743.25		
Capital Campaign	375.00	6,400.00	5,000.00		
Agricultural History Grant	19,976.20	20,000.00	20,000.00		
Catalogue Project Grant	3,450.00	6,930.00	5,500.00		
Lighting Grant	0	2,300.00	NA		
Endowment	855.00	1,853.00	5,078.26		
Programs & Events	25,975.69	16,274.85	8,622.25		
Interest	7,687.75	8,238.10	8,435.46		
Gen. Support, Donations, Barn Dance	34,476.68	14,958.50	8,961.82		
Membership Dues	6,055.00	4,420.00	3,429.00		
Sales	2,275.18	3,441.84	NA		
Rental Income	7200.00	1,310.00	NA		
Other	1,418.66	16,464.27	6,568.62		
TOTAL	294,872.66	284,204.06	281,663.66		

2005 Total Donations include revenue from the Barn Dance

2004 Expenses include the \$108,794.86 payment for a new roof.

This is why our expenses exceeded our total support.

Coming Events

May 4, 6:30 p.m.

Ghost Tour Guide Training
Meet at the Anoka County History Center and Library. This training session will help new tour guides begin to be familiar with the Anoka Ghost tours that have become so popular. Guides must be able to walk at least a mile, speak loudly and clearly, and enjoy a good time speaking in front of a group of about 30 people. We'll provide all the rest! Call Maria to let us know you are interested in becoming a tour guide. Guides are asked to commit to giving at least three tours in the summer/fall months. Tours are offered on most Thursday and Saturday evenings. Please plan accordingly.

May 6

DIVA Days in Anoka
DIVA stands for "Delightfully, Inspiring, Vacation In Anoka" and features wine tasting, shopping, trolley tours, dinner, a fashion show, and lots more in the historic county seat of Anoka. For more information or reservations, call the Convention and Visitor Bureau, Visit Minneapolis North, at 1-800-541-4364 or 763-566-7722. Their website is: http://www.visitminneapolisnorth.com/diva_days.aspx

May 12 and 13 (Times assigned on registration)

American Girls Spring Tea Party
Come learn about Samantha's world in 1904 and then celebrate with a tea party!. Spring is a time to show off those fancy bonnets, so guests at this spring American Girls tea will become "milliners" for the day as they decorate their own hats. Many other activities are also planned. The teas will be on Friday evening, and twice on Saturday. \$10.00 for adults and \$8.00 for girls. Their dolls can come to the party for free! RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!!

May 6, & June 1, 3, 15, & 17, 7:30 p.m.

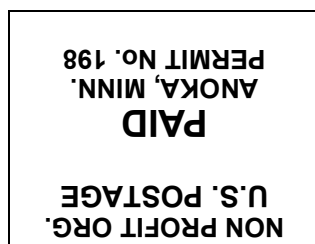
Ghosts of Anoka Tour
Meet at the History Center. Tickets required. This special Ghost Tour takes guests to places where something unexplained has happened and lets them decide what it might be! This tour is just over a mile long and is in the twilight and evening hours. Adult tickets are \$6 for non-members, \$5 for members and \$3 for children under 18 years. Get your tickets early as we sell out of these popular tickets *fast!* Remember, we can now accept VISA and Mastercard.

July 9, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

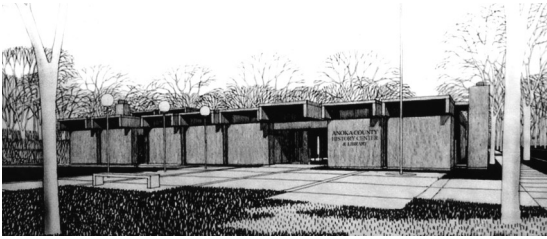
Anoka Heritage Home & Garden Tour
In conjunction with the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission, ACHS will host this tour of beautiful, historic homes and their gardens in Anoka. Tickets will be available at the History Center for \$12 to tour the homes! You can also purchase tickets at the Anoka Riverfest celebration on July 9th at our booth on Jackson Street and 2nd Avenue in Anoka.

September 30—SAVE THE DATE!

Harvest Time Barn Dance
Held at the Anoka County Fair Grounds. ACHS will be celebrating Anoka County's agricultural history and the opening of our third agricultural history exhibit with our THIRD ANNUAL harvest feast, barn dance, silent and live auctions. It just keeps getting better and better, so save the date! More information coming soon!



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. 36 No. 4

July-August 2006

Christian Hill Heritage Home & Garden Tour

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

Anyone who was ANYBODY in Anoka at the turn of the century (1900, that is!) wanted to live on the most prestigious street in Anoka, Third Avenue South. Doctors, judges, businessman and many others of Anoka's famous citizens called Third Avenue home through the years. This year, courtesy of the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour, you are invited to come in rather than just look from the sidewalk! The homes featured in this article are just a sample of the stories and fun guests will share on July 8th. While we know these snippets of history won't satisfy you entirely, they should be more than enough to entice you to get your tickets for the tour before they sell out. Tickets are limited, so don't wait too long!



1809 Third Avenue

James T. Rogers built this house on Third Avenue in about 1881 for his wife, Mary. From the outside, the house looks very much like it did when it was built, as there have been no major changes or additions. A minor change enclosed the porch to make the summer kitchen into a permanent kitchen. The Rogers' son, J. Walter, became a municipal court judge and inherited the house. His wife, Margaret, loved to garden and she was famous for wearing a huge bonnet when she tended her flowers. Some of Margaret's rock garden is still maintained in the back yard. The house next door (1815) shared the water pump that stood on the property line between the homes and supplied both homes with water. Margaret and the Judge took out a wall between the living room and front parlor and added a fireplace in the 1930s.

It could be argued that this house has had a charmed life! When it was first built in about 1867, it stood on Second Avenue near Main Street. Sam and Jennie Starrett opened a store next door. When he became postmaster in 1868, the post office was located in his store.

The Starretts had three daughters. They lived in the house on Second Avenue during the great 1884 fire that destroyed much of Anoka's downtown. Their house narrowly escaped the flames. The house was smaller at that time, consisting only of the east-end section. In 1887, it was moved to this location on Madison Street. The entire west portion, including the front door, was built onto the house.

In 1939, a tornado damaged the porch and back side, but the house escaped total destruction once again.

The current owners have a photograph of Sam, taken in the late 1890s, framed and hanging on their wall!



320 Madison Street

This house keeps its owners a long time as the current owners, the Bruins, are only the third family to own this house. They bought the house from Clement



1852 Fifth Avenue

Dahlheimer in 1999. It is known that Clement's daughter was married in the house and the Bruins' daughter was born in the house—on purpose! The earliest owners, William Ward and his wife, Catherine, are believed to have added the dormers and back porches. The second floor is thought to have originally been a single room. All of the floors are original, as are most of the woodwork and the windows. The original plaster walls remain. William and his brothers began the Ward Transfer Company. William was also the postmaster, a county commissioner, and fireman.

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

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 President...

By Jan Anderson

One of the Outreach Goals in our ACHS Strategic Visioning Plan is to expand contact with youth. Indeed, recent events show our commitment to this goal. On Friday, May 5, a group of 8th grade ILA (Integrated Language Arts) students from Fred Moore Middle School Center for the Arts visited the History Center as a culminating activity in association with the study of community memory and utopia as expressed in the novel *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Vickie Wendel, our programs manager, told the students about the utopian ideal upon which the city of Circle Pines was founded. The students also had an opportunity to visit with Bjorn Skogquist, Mayor of Anoka, regarding questions on city government. Following a lively discussion, the students toured the Vietnam exhibit which was led by two Vietnam veterans, Dick Bergling and Byron Bode.

I've also had opportunity to chair the Education Task Force committee, a subdivision of the Sesquicentennial Executive Board (SEB). Other committee members include Shirley Christenson, former media director of Anoka-Hennepin Dist. 11 and past secretary of ACHS, Marlene Colvin, former Anoka-Hennepin elementary curriculum coordinator, and Maria King, retired Anoka-Hennepin teacher and volunteer coordinator at the History Center. We are working closely with the elementary social studies leaders in the Anoka-Hennepin School District to develop a "Big Book" on Anoka County which will explore the concept of what a county is and what some of its functions are. Entitled *Anoka County and Its Neighbors*, it is intended as an instructional atlas featuring Anoka County and the seven adjacent counties to be used in grades three and beyond as a classroom tool in accordance with Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies. Upon completion, the book will be distributed to all elementary schools in the Anoka-Hennepin District and will also be available for the other eight school districts comprising Anoka County.

As part of our youth outreach, Vickie Wendel, ACHS staff, has also presented programs to 445 students in May and to 366 students thus far in June. Clad in her green dress and hoops, she indeed looks the part of a 19th century woman.

School programs are one of the many resources ACHS can provide. Please call 763 421-0600 for information or reservations.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

Even though there are many months left before Anoka County reaches the sesquicentennial year of 2007, the Anoka County His-

torical Society, through the work of the Sesquicentennial Executive Board, is out there promoting the 150th anniversary of Anoka County. Jon Olson has kindly offered the use of his covered grain wagon for several community parades this summer. Be on the lookout for the wagon in your local parade.

You can get a close look at the wagon at this year's Anoka County Fair, **July 25-30**. ACHS will again staff the old farmhouse and summer kitchen to entertain and educate fairgoers with history. This year the covered wagon will be placed on the site to promote the sesquicentennial. People will also have the opportunity to purchase an early run of sesquicentennial t-shirts, golf shirts, and mugs. Order forms for the *Picturing Anoka County* book will be available.

Picturing Anoka County, a book to be published later this year, features over 200 photographs from all aspects of Anoka County's history. Sharron Stockhausen, who writes about the county's history in her weekly columns in the *Anoka County Union*, is authoring the essay as well chapter introductions. The book will feature some of the great stories of Anoka County's history. Some of these stories include the construction of the Coon Rapids Dam; James Carroll, former mayor of Hilltop, who is honored as a hero in Peruwlez, Belgium, Ramsey's Santa Claus town; Anoka's Federal Cartridge; and Ham Lake's "Too Tall Petersons," six brothers, averaging 6'4" who toured the state performing feats of strength.

It's an exciting time here at ACHS and we see the sesquicentennial as an opportunity to share our mission on an even larger stage. We need your help with this. Invite your friends to some of this year's and next year's events. Ask them to become a member of the Society. There's a lot to be proud of in Anoka County's history and the 150th anniversary is the perfect opportunity to come together and celebrate it.



3rd Annual Anoka Heritage Home & Garden Tour

Hosted by the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission and the Anoka County Historical Society

Anoka County Historical Society



Sunday, July 9th, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.



Tour all sites for only \$12.00!

Tour ten beautiful historic homes and their gardens in Anoka's Christian Hill neighborhood, meet the homeowners, and hear about their restoration efforts. Homes on the tour date from as early as 1867 and as late as the 1910's and have a range of styles from Greek Revival to Arts & Crafts. Also included on the tour are several historic businesses in downtown Anoka where every ticket holder has a chance to win fabulous door prizes.

Tickets are available at the Anoka County History Center, (763) 421-0600, before July 8th. On July 9th you can purchase tickets at the ACHS/ HPC booth at Anoka's Riverfest celebration from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



1852 Fifth Avenue South



1815 Third Avenue South

Sites on the tour include:

*1815 Third Avenue — 1809 Third Avenue — 1803 Third Ave.,
1808 Third Avenue — 1625 Third Avenue — 1715 Third Avenue — 1821 Third Avenue
1823 Third Avenue — 1852 Fifth Avenue — Garden at 602 Oakwood Drive
The Artique, 1900 Third Avenue South — Kristia Artista, 2005 Second Avenue North
Teacher's Pet and Primitive Pineapple at 300 East Main Street
Something Different, 209 East Main Street*

The Story of an Artifact

A look at photographs

“Artifact” usually brings to mind a three-dimensional object, but that is not always the case. Photographs can be artifacts, too, especially when they help document a story or event. That distinction, however, was a long time in coming. When the first “photograph” was made in 1826, it was called a heliograph, meaning “sun writing” in Greek. It was the first step on the road to what we know today as photography.

By the 1850s, though still a complicated process requiring exact timing and many dangerous chemicals, photography was taking off in popularity. The American Civil War added even more weight to the sentimentality of the era with husbands and sons going away from home for months or years. Advances in photography made an image on paper possible and affordable. It also had the advantage of being easily mailed to loved ones and friends back home. Oliver Wendell Holmes called photography, “the mirror with a memory.” He also began advocating for libraries to begin the preservation of a catalogue of photographs. These first catalogues of photos were simply kept as a handy reference for patrons, but it didn’t take long to realize how valuable the photographs were becoming a research tools. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake wrote an essay she called “Photography” in 1857 providing her ideas on the value of photographs. She wrote, “Photography’s...business is to give evidence of the facts, as minutely and impartially as only an unreasoning machine can give. Photography...is sworn witness to everything presented to her view,...facts which are neither the province of art nor of description, but of that new form of communication between man and man.”

It took many years for photographs to be recognized as the incredible treasure for history that we know today. Even with sketchy identification, photos still provide a glimpse at a moment lost to time. When properly identified, they can document history in ways nothing else can. It goes with the old saying, “A picture is worth a 1000 words” and no where is that more true than in history.



A bubble gum blowing contest on “Hobo Day” 1962. Circle Pines.

ACHS, in putting together a photographic history book for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the county, has been searching for photos from all over the county. The Circle Pine City Hall turned up a box of photos and loaned them to ACHS with permission to copy them for our files. What treasures! Most of the photos are from Circle Pines and Lexington, though a few cover Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville. Some are not identified, others do not need much identification as they tell their own story. Knowing the context of the photos, all taken in the Circle Pines/Lexington area from the 50s to the 80s, allows many to be “figured out” but ACHS is planning to host a Mystery History Day in Circle Pines in the coming months. We’ll have copies of the photos spread out and ask for your help to identify people, places and events.

Once the photographs area identified, the information will be added to the copies in the ACHS archives as well as to the original photos the city has. This will make future historians much happier!

You, too, can make future historians—especially your descendants—very happy by making sure you put the names, dates, places, and events on the photos you take. Remember, use the person’s name, not their title. “Grandma” doesn’t tell much about which grandma she may have been or who called her that! In families where certain given names are common, add the date of birth to keep all those “Marys” sorted into their proper generations.

Now that you have identified your photos, keep these things in mind as you put them away to be sure they last for as many years as possible. Store your photos in a place where they won’t experience rapid temperature changes or humidity changes. Keep them away from light. If you want to display them, have a good copy made, display that and put the original away for safe keeping. If you put them in a book or album, make sure it is of archival quality appropriate for photographs. Archival photo storage systems are widely available and are worth the extra price.

Digital photos are very popular and these require some special thought for archiving purposes. Always make a back up copy of your photos! If your computer crashes, plan how you would get your photos out of your computer. If you store your photos on a CD, buy a good quality CD and store it away from heat, moisture, and electrical sources. Remember to update whatever storage media you have your photos on when you update your computer or software. Having your child’s first birthday on a CD isn’t much good if you don’t have the hardware or software to get the photo into a format you can see! If you print your photos, it is recommended that you use a name brand ink and same name brand paper on which to print them. Having the best compatibility between the paper and the ink is important to make the photo last, but it is always a good idea not to even think of a print from your home computer as anything beyond temporary.

Now that you have a few things to remember about preserving the photographs you take of the family reunion this summer, your cousin’s wedding, or the kids in the pool, remember ACHS, too. Your photographs will be the history from which the next generations will be learning about us! Bring in a copy of your photographs and let’s work together to leave them a good record!



“Coffee break” 1968. Circle Pines

Information for this article was drawn from the book, *Administration of Photographic Collections* by Mary Lynn Rizenthaler, Gerald J. Munoff, and Margery S. Long.

History FUN at Riverfest!



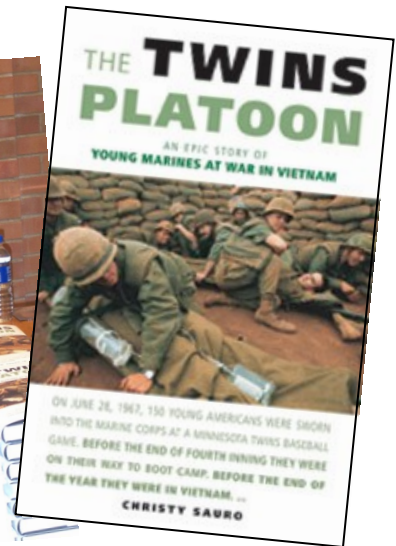
Displays of 1960s military equipment on the lawn!
Vietnam: The Veteran's Experience in
the Exhibition Hall in the History Center.
Discounted Admission for Riverfest!
Adults \$2.00 Students \$1.00



Make a card for a soldier!
Everything you need to send
greetings to a service man or
woman serving in Iraq will be
provided. **Free**

Book Signing!

Author Chris Sauro will be here all day
at Riverfest to sign copies of his book,
The Twins Platoon. This book follows
young men sworn into the Marine
Corps at a Twins game in 1967,
through Vietnam and home again.
Meet Chris on July 8th! Books will be
available for purchase or you can bring
your own! **Free**



Package Check!
Been shopping at Riverfest?
Check your packages
securely with ACHS and
save carrying them! A
donation is suggested for
bag check.

**Anoka County
History Center
Open 10 to 5
July 8
for Riverfest!**

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the July 13 ACHS Board of Directors meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. The August 10 meeting will also be at 6:00 p.m. All are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

◆Do you put up hay/straw? Or have access to bales of hay or straw? ACHS would like to borrow some bales to make “seating” at the Barn Dance on October 1st. We only need the bales that one day. If you can help by loaning out some bales of hay or straw, please call Todd at 763-421-0600.

◆Ghosts of Anoka Tours are back in full gear! Check the Upcoming events section on the back of the newsletter for dates. Order your tickets early as these sell out quickly! The tours are offered on the first and third Thursday and Saturday of each summer month. Tours for private groups are available—call 763-421-0600 to set up a special private tour for your group!

Vietnam: The Veterans' Experience

You've seen the exhibit, now read the book! Yes, it's a book, thanks to the Anoka County Vietnam Veterans Chapter #470. They provided up-front funding to pay the printing costs of a book that puts the quotes and photos of the exhibit into a format that you can own! The 90+ page books are printed in full color and faithfully follow the exhibit. The books cost \$25 each and are available at the History Center in a limited quantity.

Calling all volunteers!

 By Maria King

Summer is upon us and that means a flurry of activities. Lots of summer festivals are being held throughout the county and it is a terrific opportunity for ACHS to do some outreach. We are only limited by the availability of volunteers to represent us.

The annual Home and Garden Tour will take place on July 9th. ACHS has become rather famous for this fantastic tour and people come from great distances to walk through the historic homes. We need 50 volunteers, at the very least! Volunteers will welcome visitors, check their tickets and supervise their journey through the homes. A few additional volunteers will sell tickets, give the other volunteers a break, and generally help out where needed. This tour is an important outreach effort, as well as a successful fund raiser for ACHS. It's really fun to be a part of it!

Two weeks later, beginning on July 25, is the Anoka County Fair. No other outreach effort reaches as many people as the fair. There will again be three parts to the old farmstead: the front porch, the farmhouse and the summer kitchen. The summer kitchen will offer craft activities for children. The front porch will be a stage where demonstrations or performances will take place. The farmhouse itself will feature old furniture, and will be a walk through mini-museum depicting life on the farm, circa 1900. All of these great plans depend on volunteers! We need at least 15 people per day in half day shifts. We especially want to hear from you if you have a skill that could be demonstrated on the porch such as whittling, crocheting, toy making, or crafts of any kind. (We currently have soap making and butter churning). Young people are especially effective at working in the summer kitchen, and would be welcome indeed!

Our intern, Caroline Moellar, has completed her commitment, so I am looking for someone to pick up where she left off. If you know how to type and are available on Wednesdays, please consider volunteering. You would be working with local historian, Charlie Sell, to add photos to our collection.

ACHS has come into possession of some conversations from the 1960's that are recorded on reel to reel tapes. We need a volunteer to transfer the recordings to the computer, where it is digitized and stored on CD's. We would be happy to train an interested volunteer.

A volunteer with a computer background might enjoy linking photos with their corresponding record. This would need to be done at the History Center, and would take about 10 to 12 hours.

Ongoing projects require volunteers too! If you have an hour or two, and a willingness to help, I'd love to hear from you! Just call Maria at the History Center, and join the team. We're saving a spot for you!!

Last Chance to see Ag II! Ag III is coming soon!

The second exhibit in our Agriculture series will be closing on July 15, so this is your last chance to see the farm history of Anoka County from 1900 to 1945. While some elements of the exhibit will remain in a changed form, much of this exhibit will be taken down and replaced by the third phase exhibit which looks at our agricultural roots from the earliest days of Anoka County's settlement to 1900.

The exhibit will complete the three phases of the grant to record and preserve the agricultural roots of Anoka County. The third installment of the written report has been completed and will be available for research in the ACHS library soon.

The completion of this project will not end our search for farm related history! We have recently received word that the Agricultural Preserves Fund through the Anoka County Extension Office has approved our application for a second phased project to study the ancillary businesses of agriculture! This grant will provide funds to study the development of the implement dealerships, the creameries, the flour mills, the starch factories, and all of those businesses that would not exist without agriculture.

Don't miss your last chance to see *Farms and Families, 1900 to Present* before it is gone forever!



Contributions & New Members – Thank you

DONATIONS

Jan Anderson
June Bendix
Robert and Betty Comer
Phyllis Dargis
Bruce Derscheid
David Dietz
Dan Frank (Ameriprise)
Marilyn Glenn
John Harwood
Donald and Lorraine Hostetler
Guila Hunt
Donald and Marlys Hunter
Mary Jablonski
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Terry Johnson
Linwood Township
Clarence Monegar
Bertha Szyperski

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Anoka County
City of Ham Lake
Linwood Township

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Michael J. Larson
Minnesota Legionnaire
Clarence Monegar
Collene Neary
Paul Piece, III
Ralph Talbot
Mrs. Howard J. Theis
Chris Wilson

Welcome New Members!

April 15 — June 15, 2006

Betty Comer (New Brighton)
Paul and Carol Crowley (Anoka)
Thomas & Jennifer Dyr Dahl family (Coon Rapids)
Charles Hewitt (Pinon Hills, CA)
Guila Hunt (Oak Grove)
Janice Joyce (Elk River)
William and Janet Nelson (Ham Lake)
Kenneth Stoll (Andover)
Ellen Woody (Anoka)

HOME & GARDEN TOUR

SPONSORSHIP

Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce
The Artique
Cornerstone Catering
Counselor Realty-Richard Theisen
Ivy-N-Lace
Edward Jones Investments –
Thomas Conneran, Representative
Plants & Things
Primitive Pineapple, Inc.
St. Paul Plumbing and Heating
Something Different
Teacher's Pet

County Students Compete in History Day Contest

Anoka County students did a great job of representing their schools at this year's History Day competition, sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society, and the University of Minnesota.

The contest starts when students, grade 6 through 12, select a topic of their own choosing within the theme for 2006, which is "Taking a Stand in History". Then, either alone or in groups, they study and research for months, refining and composing an exhibit, a documentary film, a research paper, or a historical dramatization. Individual schools hold the first contests, sending the best presentations to the regional level, who in turn select the best for the state competition.

The state level competition was held at Northrop Auditorium on April 30, and winners got a chance to advance to Nationals in Washington D.C. on June 14-18.

Minnesota students participating in History Day have risen from 125 students in 1988 to nearly 30,000 students in 2005. Last year, Minnesota sent 55 students to Washington, 16 won national honors and 7 won national championships in their events. For additional information go to www.mnhs.org/historyday.

Participants in 2006 included: Christina Brand from St. Francis Intermediate; Alyse Luther from Cedar Creek Community, Chelsea Johnson; Stephanie Barrett; Jill Morrison from Anoka High School; Julianna Kolb from Blaine High School; Brianna Ladwig from Anoka High School; Karen Vadnais; Amanda Atkin-Johnson, from Anoka High School; Sophie Buchite; Brianna Duff from Anoka High School; Hannah Luedtke; Isaac Pulscher from Spring Lake Park; Kamran Ayub, Khrystyn Riley, Sara Van Steenbergen from Anoka High School; and Levi Ismail from Anoka High School. Their projects ran the gamut from the Los Angeles Lighthouse to Cesar Chaves, from the International Red Cross to Hibbing.

Congratulations to all of these budding historians!

Coming Events

July 1, 6, 8, 20, 22 **7:30 p.m.** **Ghosts of Anoka Tour**
August 3, 5, 17, 19 **7:30 p.m.**

Meet at the History Center. Tickets required. This special Ghost Tour takes guest to places where something unexplained has happened and lets them decide what it might be! This tour is just over a mile long and is in the twilight and evening hours. Adult tickets are \$6 for non members, \$5 for members and \$3 for children under 18 years. Get your tickets early as we sell out of these popular tickets *fast!* Remember, we can now accept VISA and Mastercard.

July 8, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **Anoka's Riverfest**

The Anoka County History Center and Library front lawn will be filled with military display from the Vietnam era, visitors can make a card to send greetings to service men and women serving in Iraq, author Chris Sauro will be signing copies of his book, *The Twins Platoon* inside the History Center and the exhibit hall admission is discounted for this one day. You can check you packages securely with ACHS. Stop by our booth on Jackson Street to get your Ghost Tour and Heritage Home tour tickets. See page 5 for more information.

July 9, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. **Anoka Heritage Home & Garden Tour**

In conjunction with the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission, ACHS will host this tour of beautiful historic homes and their gardens in Anoka. Tickets will be available at the History Center for \$12 to tour the homes! You can also purchase tickets at the Anoka Riverfest celebration on July 8th at our booth on Jackson Street and 2nd Avenue in Anoka. (See page 3 for more information)

July 25—July 30 **Anoka County Fair**

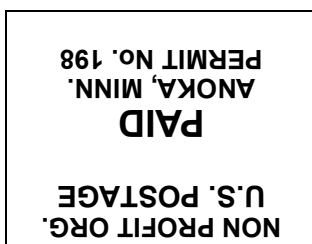
Anoka County Fairgrounds. The Anoka County Historical Society will continue our tradition of bringing life to the old Farmhouse and Summer Kitchen. Call us to volunteer and be sure to stop by to see what is happening when you are at the Fair!

August 18—20 **Nowthen Threshing Show**

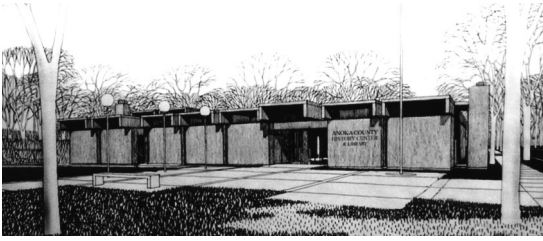
Burns Township. In partnership with the Nowthen Historical Power Association, ACHS will be staffing the General Store on the threshing grounds. Stop by the General Store to purchase candy and pickles, or just to catch up on the latest gossip!

September 30—SAVE THE DATE! **Harvest Time Barn Dance**

Anoka County Fair Grounds. ACHS will be celebrating Anoka County's agricultural history and the opening of our third agricultural history exhibit with our THIRD ANNUAL harvest feast, barn dance, silent and live auctions. More information coming soon!



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(763) 421-0600



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 36 No. 5

September-October 2006

SERVING:

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Bethel
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East Bethel
Fridley
Ham Lake
Hilltop
Lexington
Lino Lakes
Linwood
Oak Grove
Ramsey
St. Francis
Spring Lake Park

The Beginnings of Anoka County Schools

From the earliest days of Anoka County's settlement, people wanted schools for their children. The first records of a school within the county indicate classes were held in the "Old Company Boarding House" in Anoka during the winter of 1853-1854. It was said to be a one-story, wood framed building on Van Burnen Street east of Second Avenue. The teacher was Miss Julia Woodman. She left the position to marry a man named Hamm, so there was no school in Anoka the next winter. There was a private school in the home of Miss Sarah Bowden in Ramsey and some of the children attended there. The first actual school house built in the town of Anoka was known as the Third Avenue School and was ready for students in December of 1855. George Smiley was the teacher and he had 45 students.

About this same time, Centerville's first school sessions were organizing. The first term was held in the home of F. X. LaVallee in the winter of 1854-55. The term was six months long that year. The Centerville "schoolhouse" moved to a church for the next several years and finally to a real school building in 1865.

The first high school in the county, located in Anoka, began advertising for students in January of 1864. The ad said the teacher "had experience as a teacher in the State Normal School at Westfield, Massachusetts, as well as in other prominent positions in the same state" and thus he hoped to "merit the public patronage." The ad was signed W. B. Greene. He was successful in starting a high school and by June, a "roll of honor" appeared in the paper listing which students—there were ten—had done excellent work in their studies. The article concluded with the gentle admonishment: "Many others might have ranked equally in their studies but for a want of punctual attendance." When the winter term began that year, the tuition cost was \$5.00 and it was paid in advance.

County school districts were organized by township and grew with population and settlement. These were mostly the typical one-room schools with all the students, grades one through eight, learning together from one teacher. In 1914, the school at what today would be near the intersection of Crooked Lake Blvd. and Coon Rapids Blvd., was known as District #2 in Anoka Township. The area would eventually become Coon Rapids. Mrs. Clare Talbot, known as "Casey," taught in a one-room school 28 x 20 feet with a 12 foot ceiling. She was paid \$52.50 a month for a term of eight months. Records show that the total expense for running the school that year was \$490.67 and that 16 students attended the school. A breakdown of the costs included wages of \$420, another \$40.61 for the purchase of a Globe water jar and primary materials, \$10 for library books, \$6.25 for textbooks, and \$13.81 for supplementary readers.

Edith Patch was Anoka's County Superintendent of Schools for 36 years. She began as a teacher and was first elected as superintendent of the county's schools in 1922. Before she retired in 1958, she oversaw the consolidation of many of the country school districts into a single district known as the Anoka-Hennepin School District No. 220. Five years later, the state legislature asked the state commissioner of education to assign district numbers within the state so there would be no duplication of numbers and District 220 became District 11.

In 2007, Anoka County students attend classes in nine different school districts as well as PACT and Charter Schools, private schools, parochial schools, and home school cooperatives. The county is also home to Anoka-Ramsey Community College, the Anoka Technical College, and a variety of private learning facilities in many specialty areas.



Students in Andrew Grubb's class, ca. 1938, Columbus Township. This picture and many more are featured in our new book, *Picturing Anoka County*. See the special insert for more information.

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 President...

By Jan Anderson

Books galore! Francis Bacon once wrote, "Some books are to be tasted, some to be chewed, and some to be thoroughly digested." Indeed, ACHS is creating books to fit all these categories for the upcoming Sesquicentennial.

Picturing Anoka County: 150 Years of Anoka County History tells the story of Anoka County through 200+ photos with captions created by Todd Mahon and Vickie Wendel and text written by Sharron Stockhausen. This book provides a pictorial view of the county's history and will grace any coffee table as a conversation piece. Order forms are available at the History Center.

Stitches in Time, by Maria King and Vickie Wendel, is both a local history and a "how-to" book for heritage quilters. It includes assembly directions for 14 blocks, leaving two blocks to reflect an anniversary theme and your own history. Show off your quilt by entering it in the Anoka County Fair in July 2007. The Open Class Competition will include a special Sesquicentennial category. A quilt exhibit at the History Center in December 2007 will highlight these special heritage quilts and their makers. Pick up your copy of *Stitches in Time* at the History Center for \$10 and get sewing!

Anoka County and Its Neighbors is a big book instructional tool designed for use in elementary social studies classes with small or large groups. Compiled by the Education Committee (Jan Anderson, Shirley Christenson, Marlene Colvin, and Maria King) through consultation with Anoka-Hennepin Dist. 11 elementary curriculum leaders, it explores the concept of what a county is and what some of its functions are. Since it is based on the Minnesota Standards for History, Social Studies, and Language Arts (nonfiction reading), it fits in every school. However, there are nine school districts in the county plus alternative schools so funding becomes critical. Thus far, funds have been received from the Sesquicentennial Executive Board (SEB), the Anoka-Hennepin Education Foundation (AHEF), the Retired Educators Association of Minnesota (REAM), Kiwanis (Anoka chapter), and the Anoka-Hennepin Credit Union. All contributors will be listed in the acknowledgements upon publication. If you or your organization would like to donate, please send checks payable to ACHS 150 (memo Big Book) at the History Center. Help make wide distribution of this book possible!

What's Cooking in the County is a recipe book being compiled by the Anoka County Genealogical Society. They request not only recipes, but the story/photo behind the recipe—what makes it a family tradition? For more information, call Marilyn Anderson at the History Center. This book proves to be very fulfilling and tastefully done!

So much to read! So many events!

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

Anoka County's history is inextricable from the history of agriculture. The earliest settlers put down roots figuratively and literally when they planted crops. The first crop planted by European descended settlers came when Captain Simeon P. Folsom purchased a \$4.00 barrel of potatoes at Fort Snelling. Saving the eyes and parings before he ate the potatoes, he planted this first crop near King's Island on the Mississippi River. From there, potatoes quickly became a preferred crop among the county's growing population. The soil structure in the county made it particularly well suited for this crop.

On October 3, the Anoka County Historical Society opens the third in a series of exhibitions on the history of agriculture in the county. For three years, the Anoka County Agricultural Extension Service has generously sponsored this research with grants to hire researchers, interns, and to produce exhibits to document and share this rich history. When *Farms and Families: Winds of Change* opens, ACHS will have completed a monumental project to document the earliest years of the farming to the present.

To celebrate the opening of *Farms and Families: Winds of Change*, ACHS is holding its third annual Harvest Time Barn Dance on Saturday, September 30. This fun event serves as fundraiser for our general operating costs. The fun begins with a harvest feast from Anoka County Fair favorites, Those Pork Chops. After dinner, kick up your heels with a dance—music provided by Jack Norton and the Mullet River Boys. The evening closes with the silent and live auctions to raise much needed funds for ACHS. You'll get the chance to bid on artwork, sports memorabilia, Anoka County history books, gift certificates, and much more.

The Harvest Time Barn Dance wouldn't be possible without the support of its sponsors. We want to say a special thank you to Friendly Chevrolet in Fridley for being our presenting sponsor for the second year in a row. (See page 3 for a complete list of sponsors and more info.) The support of individuals and organizations such as these allows us to achieve our mission to preserve the history of Anoka County. I hope you'll take the opportunity to thank them and I hope to see you at this year's Harvest Time Barn Dance.

Grab your partner and come on down for the
Anoka County Historical Society's 3rd Annual

Harvest Time Barn Dance

Saturday, September 30, 2006
Anoka County Fairgrounds
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Advance
tickets only
\$20!

Sit down for a bountiful **harvest feast**, catered by Fair favorite "Those Pork Chops," and then put on your dancing shoes for the live sounds of **Jack Norton and the Mullet River Boys**. Waltz your way over to the auction table and walk away with a "barn good" **auction item**. From gift certificates to fine art — there's something for everyone. Proceeds from this event will provide operating support for the Anoka County Historical Society.

So, kick up your heels for a good cause!

Call (763) 421-0600 for tickets.

Event Proudly Sponsored By:



Dan Frank



763-421-3604

Monuments to Life Cemetery Tours

No matter how important, no matter how rich, everyone eventually will reside in one of these! Explore the stories of those who reside in our “silent cities” during the Anoka County Historical Society’s *Monuments to Life* cemetery tours. It’s an evening filled with stories, traditions, characters, history and symbolism.

All tours begin at 7:00 p.m. and go on rain or shine, so dress for the weather. Be prepared to do some walking and standing as we visit graves and hear the stories they have to tell. Tours last about an hour.

Saturday, October 14
Tuesday, October 17
Thursday, October 19

Victor Hill Cemetery, Linwood
Morningside Cemetery, Coon Rapids
Forest Hill Cemetery, Anoka

Come to one or come to all three!

Tickets for individual tours are \$6.00 (ACHS members)

\$8.00 (non-members)

Ticket Packages 3 Tours for \$15.00 (ACHS members)

\$21.00 (non-members)

Tickets are limited and must be purchased in advance!

You will receive maps and information with your ticket purchase.

Get your tickets at the Anoka County History Center, 2135 Third Avenue, Anoka,
or by calling 763-421-0600 with your VISA or Mastercard

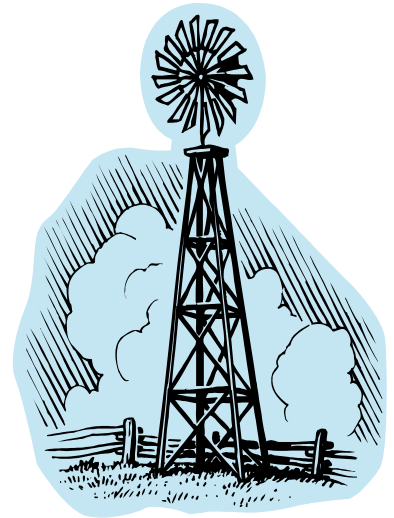
The Winds of Change Anoka County Agriculture from 1844-1900

In 1848, Simeon Folsom bought a barrel of potatoes at Fort Snelling for \$4.00 and took them up river with him to his newly acquired land not far from the junction of the Mississippi River and the Mille Lacs (today called Rum) River. He pared the potatoes carefully so he could eat the potatoes and keep enough eyes in the peelings to plant. He harvested 40 bushels of potatoes grown from those peelings. The land he planted that first potato crop ever raised in Anoka County was not far from Kings Island in what today is known as the western edge of the city of Anoka. William Noot was planting corn that same year, but neither man continued to farm. The first permanent cultivation of land in Anoka County was done by Cornelius Pitman when he planted six acres in Ramsey in the spring of 1859. It was the first hint at a breeze that would soon become the rushing winds of change as new settlers began to make Anoka County their home.

The story of these first farmers to work the soil in Anoka County completes the third phase of the study on the county’s agricultural history. An extensive written report by Jeanine Pratt is now available for research in the ACHS resource library and the **newest exhibit will open on October 3, at 7:00 p.m.**

Join in celebrating the third in our series on Anoka County’s agricultural history on Opening Night. This new exhibit looks at the struggles new settlers faced in the first years of county settlement. Visitors will learn about some of the experiments farmers tried with varying amounts of success—after all, with an average mean temperature of 44 degrees, many people thought crops could not be grown in Minnesota! Hardy homesteaders soon proved that wrong as they brought livestock, planted crops, and survived disasters.

This exhibit is the culmination of three years of grants provided by the Anoka County Agricultural Extension Services to record and share the history of agriculture in the county. Come celebrate the past and learn more about the winds of change that blew in many directions as Anoka County organized.



The Story of an Artifact

Buttons for Halloween



The first Halloween button?

“On every street corner girls sold caps, horns, badges and confetti for nominal prices” proclaimed the *Anoka Union* newspaper 1921. It was the second year of the Halloween celebration in Anoka. It is not known what the “badges” mentioned may have been. Were they the first Halloween buttons or something more temporary? Were they fun trinkets in the shape of a badge? None are known to exist today, so if those “badges” were indeed the first Halloween buttons, we may never know.

It is believed—with a little room for questions—that the first Anoka Halloween button was designed by Bernard Witte in 1941. The button is made from pressed wood and hand-painted with a safety pin glued to the back. There were 25 of these buttons made and they were sold for \$10 each. The proceeds were used to help finance the celebration. A report on the celebration suggested that since the buttons had sold so well, it showed true community support of the Halloween events and it was believed the button sale in 1942 would finance the entire celebration.

Little did those committee members know that Halloween of 1942 would find America deeply involved in World War Two. Wartime rationing was imposed and many of the people who were active members of the Halloween Committee were serving in the military or civilian support services. The entire celebration was “omitted” as the *Anoka Union* noted, because of a sense of patriotism. It did not seem right to use the resources needed for the war effort in a Halloween celebration. Principals in Anoka schools admonished the children not to start playing pranks simply because there was no celebration. To do so would amount to helping the enemy war effort and would be called “sabotage.”

Halloween of 1943 was no different and no mention of any sort of celebration can be found until 1944 when the organizers went back to their 1941 success with the Halloween buttons and offered them for sale at 50 cents each. Frisch’s Department Store ran an ad to entice people into their store as a place to buy the buttons. The tradition of a yearly button was established.

By 1949, the annual button rose in price to \$1, but the wearer of the button received free admission to the Anoka football game. For the first three days, the buttons were only sold by school children. There was a contest for students to sell Halloween buttons they were made available for general sale. The student who sold the most buttons that year won a radio. To boost sales, part of the celebration was a “kangaroo court” where the “wanted felons” were people not wearing Halloween buttons.



The 1949 button.

There is another early Halloween button that raises questions as to what it really was meant to be. It is a hand-painted, wooden button with a safety pin back. It shows a witch flying on a broom stick and proclaims Anoka to be the “Halloween Capitol.” The design is similar to a design drawn for Bernard Witte by art student Alyce Vick. Was this a proto type button and never used? Might it have been the 1940 button? The stories and information conflict, but examples of both buttons are preserved in the collections of ACHS.



The mystery button.

The 1954 button overcame the inconvenience of Halloween falling on the wrong day of the week. It declared an October 32nd that year.

The Halloween button continues to be a vital part of the annual celebration in 2006 and the buttons have become sought after collector’s items.



The 1954 button.

A “sneak peek” at the design for 2006. These buttons will be available soon!



Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the ACHS Board of Directors meets at 6:00 p.m. on September 14 and October 12. Meetings are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

◆Do you put up hay/straw? Or have access to bales of hay or straw? ACHS would like to borrow some bales to make “seating” at the Barn Dance on September 30th. We only need the bales that one day. If you can help by loaning out some bales of hay or straw, please call Todd at 763-421-0600.

◆Ghosts of Anoka Tours continue! Check the Upcoming events section on the back of the newsletter for dates. Order your tickets early as these sell out quickly! The tours are offered on the first and third Thursday and Saturday of each month. Tours for private groups are available—call 763-421-0600 to set up a special private tour for your group!

One Book, One County

The *One Book, One County* project encourages people to read, increases our sense of community by creating a common topic of conversation, and engages people in a discussion about our county’s past and future.

You can help choose the book for this project by picking up a ballot from any Anoka County library, the Columbia Heights Library, the Anoka County History Center, or J. O’Donahue Books on 2nd Avenue in Anoka. The books to choose from are:

Lake Wobegon Days by Garrison Keillor

Staggerford by Jon Hassler

The Children’s Blizzard by David Laskin

Be sure to vote for your choice! The winning book will be announced after September 22, 2006. Then, check out a copy, start reading and join your neighbors and friends in the fun next February as Anoka County reads and discusses *One Book!*

Stitches in Time

If you are a quilter—or want to become one—here is your chance to combine history and quilting with a special Heritage Quilt for Anoka County’s Sesquicentennial.

Stitches in Time is a book that combines the history of Anoka County with a “how to” book for quilters to make a heritage quilt. It contains traditional patterns, and uses them to introduce a topic in local history. A short history on each topic is followed by the cutting dimensions and sewing instructions for completing the block. The book is designed for beginners as well as seasoned quilters. The goal of the project is to complete a quilt that tells the story of Anoka County’s development and the quilter’s personal or family history. The book contains suggestions for using traditional patterns, various print fabrics, and original designs to convey one’s own history in a quilt square.

All completed Sesquicentennial quilts are welcomed for display at the Anoka County History Center and Library in November of 2007. There are also several heritage quilt categories at the County Fair in the summer of 2007.

Books are \$10 each and available at the History Center.

Volunteers are hot in more ways than one!

By Maria King

July is always a busy time of year, especially at the History Center. Over forty of our incredible volunteers staffed the Heritage Home and Garden Tour on July 9th. The hospitality of the homeowners and the volunteers’ willingness to help is what enables ACHS to reach out to hundreds of history hungry people. Events like the Home and Garden tour are effective, not only as fundraisers, but as outreach! People who are “hooked” at these events continue to pursue local history, and often become our most staunch supporters!

July is also the month of the Anoka County Fair! The fair requires 12 to 15 volunteers each day in two shifts for six days. It gets long, and it’s hot and dirty, but those who come have a great time and absolutely love it. Unfortunately, this year’s high heat and humidity severely reduced the number of fair attendees. The hearty souls who braved the tropical heat found fun activities in the summer kitchen including hat making, paper quilting, and lunch box decorating. The farmhouse was a hub of sewing, knitting, tatting, lace making, and Lynn Rickert making Ukrainian eggs called pysanky.

Ghost Tours continue to sell very nicely. Volunteer docents, Jan Anderson, Tanya Weisser, Darlene Bearl, Lynne Rickert, and Ann Steen, have been extremely valuable in enabling us to offer this popular tour on the first and third Thursday and Saturday of each month as well as private tours. These Ghost Tours are always a good time and very popular!

Meanwhile, the everyday work at the history center continues. Volunteer Kay Skubitz has redecorated the staff bathroom in a refreshing lavender color with gold accent trim. Lucille Elrite and Linda Mundle continue to offer their expertise to genealogists and research staff projects. Amy Hetland and Bethany Jones-Kost are pecking away at the mountain of indexing needed in the manuscript files. Charlie Sell and Rod McArdele are sorting through and labeling photos. Shirley Christenson continues cataloguing books in our library. Amber Hall and Chelly Chorn do whatever needs doing on any given day. Lester Ziegler built a new porch swing for the fair’s farmhouse and David Legrid built a wonderful special item for the new exhibit on Agriculture that you will have to wait to see when the exhibit opens. Ernie Woizechske spent a day painting in the exhibit hall and Randy Getchell completed a census survey to chart where the new residents of Anoka County were coming from using data from 1857 through 1895.

And that’s just what fits in this column! Even if your name isn’t specifically mentioned here, know that every hour volunteers contribute is appreciated and is important in advancing our mission to preserve history! Volunteers always make a difference and the ACHS volunteers are one hot group!! If you are not yet a volunteer for ACHS, call me and I’ll find a project that meets your interest. 763-421-0600.

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

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Anonymous
Gregory and Jackie Bortnem
Joanne Ferber
Dan Frank (Ameriprise)
Bill and Ardy Hoogestraat
Helen Kesinger
Rod and Lois McArdle
Elliott and Diana Perovich
Dorothy Peterson
Philip Pinewski
Bruce Robinson
Carl and Sharon Steinwall
Tom and Linda Sullivan

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City of Oak Grove
Kay Skubitz
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Jan Reiter
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Welcome New Members!

June 16 – August 18, 2006

Wayne and Milene Adams (Ramsey)
Mary Jo Davich (Andover)
Richard Eaton (Coon Rapids)
Jen Galvin (Anoka)
Robert and Tammy Jones (Anoka)
Danny Martin (Blaine)
Bruce Robinson (Ramsey)
Carl and Sharon Steinwall (Anoka)
Rick and Barb Winfield (Coon Rapids)

150 CLUB

Would you like to be a special part of the Sesquicentennial Celebration? You can!

Join the 150 Club by making a donation to the Sesquicentennial in the amount of \$150. These individual sponsors will receive a certificate of appreciation for their contribution and special recognition at the Anoka County Barn Dance held during the 150th Fair Grounds Festival in May of 2007.

As always with your donations to history, your donations are tax deductible as described by law.

For more information on becoming a 150 Club member, contact Todd Mahon at the History Center, 763-421-0600 or email todd@ac-hs.org.

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere condolences to the families and friends of:

Mary Jane Talbot Barbour,

Sister of ACHS members Ralph Talbot and Katie Clark. Mary Jane died on June 1st

Edna Pearson,

Mother and grandmother of ACHS members of the Walmsley family. Edna died on July 24th

Leon Pease,

ACHS member and husband of Doris Pease. Leon died on August 11th.

Coming Events

September 2, 7, 16, 23, 7:30 p.m. Ghosts of Anoka Tour

October 5, 7, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 7:30 p.m.

Meet at the History Center. Tickets required. This special Ghost Tour takes guest to places where something unexplained has happened and lets them decide what it might be! This tour is just over a mile long and is in the twilight and evening hours. Adult tickets are \$6 for non members, \$5 for members and \$3 for children under 18 years. Get your tickets early as we sell out of these popular tickets *fast!* Remember, we can now accept VISA and Mastercard.

September 11, 7:00 p.m. Ham Lake Remember and Reminisce

The Ham Lake Senior Center, 15544 Central Ave., Ham Lake. ACHS will be on hand to record memories of those who grew up in the Ham Lake and East Bethel areas during this night to remember and reminisce about days gone by. The event is open to the public and everyone is welcome.

September 16, 3:00 p.m. Ramsey's Happy Days Parade

Everybody loves a parade and the Sesquicentennial wagon will be appearing in the Ramsey Happy Days parade. Come join the fun and see this great wagon owned by Jon Olson.

September 30, 6:00 Harvest Time Fest and Barn Dance

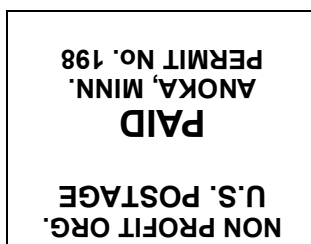
Anoka County Fairgrounds. ACHS will be celebrating Anoka County's agricultural history and the opening of our third agricultural history exhibit with our THIRD ANNUAL Harvest Feast, barn dance, silent and live auctions. Proceeds will help ACHS continue preserving, collecting, and sharing our history. See page 3 for more information.

October 3, 7:00 p.m. The Winds of Change 1844-1900 Exhibit Opening

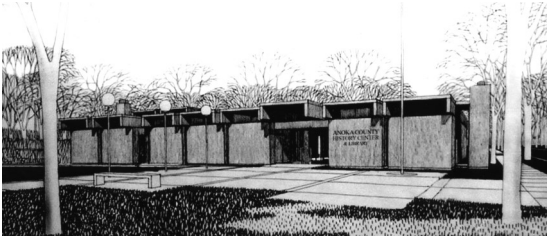
Anoka County Historical Society and Library. Join us in celebrating the third in our series on Anoka County's agricultural history. This new exhibit looks at the first breaking of ground for crops by new settlers coming to the county and the struggles they faced in the first years of county settlement. Visitors will explore the role logging played in Anoka County's farms, the experiments new farmers tried with varying degrees of success, homesteading, livestock, crops and disasters. The winds of change were blowing in many directions as Anoka County organized, grew, and became part of the cultural landscape. See page 4 for more information

October 14, 17, and 19, 7:00 p.m. Annual "Monuments to Life" Cemetery Tours

The 5th annual Monuments to Life cemetery tour series. **Victor Hill Cemetery in Linwood on Saturday, October 14th at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 17th, in Morningside Cemetery in Coon Rapids and begins at 7:00 p.m.** The final tour in the series will be in **Anoka's Forest Hill Cemetery on Thursday, October 19th, at 7:00 p.m.** Buy a single tour ticket or save money with a ticket package for all three! See page 4 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. 36 No. 6

November-December 2006

150 Years of Farming

SERVING:

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

With pun fully intended, Anoka County’s roots run deeply into agriculture. Making a living from the land was the most prevalent occupation in the county over most of the first 125 years. Only in the waning years of the 20th century has farming not been the top employer in the county.

In the earliest years, questions were raised as to whether or not Anoka County had a long enough growing season for crops, or would special considerations need to be made for what was planted. Trial and error helped prove what grew well, and by the time the county was organized, farmers were establishing themselves all over the county and, indeed, the state. In 1850, there were just 157 farms in the state. By 1870, there were 46,500.

Through the years, many crops have been tried in Anoka County’s soil. Sugar cane, wire grass, tobacco, honey, sorghum, llamas, ostriches, sod, and more, have all been tried with varying degrees of success. Sod was a success story beyond most expectations. Sod grew well in the peat soils found in many parts of the county and the booming housing market brought good prices for selling it. Over 30 farms in the county were selling sod in the 1990s.

Ginseng was a crop that was less successful. In 1858, Robert Blaine came to Anoka County from Virginia, where digging ginseng roots was a common practice. He taught local farmers how to find ginseng, bought their entire harvest that fall, and returned east. Each season, he came back to buy ginseng and paid local farmers six cents a pound in cash for the roots. It was good money. Some farmers made as much as \$5 per day digging “sang” as they called it, making better money at it than they did farming.

One season, Mr. Blaine failed to appear to buy the ginseng harvest. When the local people checked into selling the roots themselves, they found out Blaine had been cheating the farmers as ginseng root had always been selling for about 60 cents per pound—*ten times* what Blaine had been paying them! Ginseng harvesting continued to provide an income for Anoka County residents for only a few more years, as ginseng roots grow slowly and can take years to reach a mature size. By 1863, the roots were so scarce that digging it was no longer profitable here.

Pigs, chickens, turkeys, sheep, and vegetables all have been raised in the county with an eye toward the “big city” as a potential market.

Still, no matter what the crop, farmers depended on many things over which they had no control. Too much rain or not enough, wind or hail, insects—all could work against a farmer and often did. Even a bumper crop could work against a farmer by increasing supply to a point beyond demand and the prices paid for the products would drop dramatically. Government efforts to assist struggling farmers began with the formation of the Department of Agriculture in 1862. At first, this department was primarily interested in educating the farmer. In later years, it became involved with direct support and subsidies. Government farm programs and price subsidies were used in efforts to control the supply and regulate prices. These types of programs continue yet today.

The 20th century brought automobiles, electricity, and modernization to the county and farming began to decrease. The idea of “commuting” into the city to work, yet living in the “country” where life was filled with fresh air, clean water, and lots of room appealed to many, especially in the years following WWII. The rush to the suburbs began and the farms of Anoka County started growing a new crop—houses. In 1945, Anoka County had 1,199 farms. In 2002, there were only 552.

Learn more about Anoka County’s first farming efforts in the newest exhibit, *Farms and Families: Winds of Change*, now open at the Anoka County History Center & Library.



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

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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 President...

By Jan Anderson

The Sesquicentennial Events Are Rolling Along!

“Wagons, ho!” the grizzled wagonmaster would shout on the old 50’s TV program *Wagon Train*, and the creaky wheels would commence rolling. Likewise, the ACHS Sesquicentennial plans are rolling too, including the wagon train across the county and the 150th Festival of Events at the Anoka County Fairgrounds next May.

However, the kickoff for our 2007 celebration year actually will occur on Tuesday, December 5, of this year at the History Center beginning at 7:00 p.m. First, we will have our Christmas tree ornament presentation by representatives from the city of Hilltop which is celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. This will be followed by the premiere and book-signing for the book, *Picturing Anoka County: 150 Years of Anoka County History*, featuring over 200 photos and 144 pages of exciting text that will make it a treasured keepsake for years to come.

Some of the book’s pictures, plus many more, will comprise a photo exhibit entitled “150 Photos For 150 Years.” The exhibit will open at the History Center on Tuesday, January 16, 2007. In addition, a traveling component of the exhibit will visit throughout the county to all 21 cities and townships. If you have a special city or township event and would like the photo exhibit to be one of the features, please contact the History Center at 763-421-0600.

The Anoka County Library is also participating in the Sesquicentennial with a program called “One County, One Book.” Library patrons had opportunity to vote on various book titles, and the overwhelming selection was *The Children’s Blizzard* by David Laskin. It is a fascinating read depicting the terrible storm that swept over the Midwest prairies on January 12-13, 1888, catching many early immigrants unaware, many of them children on their way to/from school. Living in an area well-acquainted with not only winter storms, but tornadoes, floods, and fires, the book can serve as a springboard for spirited book club discussions, particularly during the Library’s “I Love To Read” month of February. Watch for associated events featuring this book’s topic.

As Sesquicentennial events roll along, consult the Town Planner calendar published by Tom and Anne Newhouse for a year-long list of upcoming attractions. “Events, ho!”

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

I’d like to thank each and every one of the individuals and organizations that helped make the third annual ACHS Harvest Time Barn Dance a great success. Many of you were among the over 220 people that joined us for tasty food, fun music, and great items to bid on. Many people came together to help ACHS raise nearly \$11,000 in operating funds to help us further our mission.

While it’s impossible to name everyone in this column, I’d like to single out a few individuals who were particularly helpful. I’ll start with the Barn Dance Committee. Jan Anderson logged some serious miles canvassing the county looking for sponsorships and securing auction items. In addition, she was invaluable in the set up and take down of the event. Terri Cleveland had great ideas and helped secure wonderful auction items. (She, like me, can now say she survived her first Barn Dance!) Judy Hanna, the chair of our Special Events Committee, was a great help in the planning, the set-up, and the take down for the event. Paul Pierce brought in several sponsors, sold the most tickets, and was incredibly helpful in decorating the building. Finally, Tom Ward secured our presenting sponsorship from Friendly Chevrolet. Everyone’s hard work and dedication made this year’s event possible.

Besides the committee, we had many friends and volunteers who helped. Dennis Berg of Burns donated and bound corn shocks for decoration; Al and Betty Pearson of Ramsey loaned 100 hay bales, and Anoka’s Berry Hill Farm donated dozens of pumpkins and additional bales. All this was complimented with beautiful table decorations from Lou Paulson. Glen and Eileen Hardin, Lynn and Pam Mahon, Mary Pierce, Nicole Theis-Mahon, Kay Skubit, and Carol Burkholder all helped to make the building look wonderful!

The silent auction couldn’t have been put together without the help of Barb Scottston and Rande “Gus” Gustafson. Their expertise in putting together silent auctions was invaluable and greatly appreciated. A special thanks to everyone who helped secure auction donations and to the businesses and organizations that generously provided such great items.

Finally, special thanks to all of our sponsors. Their financial support ensured that the event would be profitable for ACHS.

Don’t forget, next year the Barn Dance happens on May 19th in conjunction with a weekend full of events and activities to celebrate Anoka County’s 2007 sesquicentennial. It will be bigger and better than ever!

The Story of an Artifact

A picture is worth a thousand words or so the old saying goes. It is especially true when looking at an old photograph. If you look for details, far more than just the face of the person looking back at you can be seen. Notice the background, the furniture, perhaps jewelry or hair styles. All of these “other” things in a photograph can help date it, identify where it may have been taken, and place it in a context of history.

Longtime member and ACHS supporter Jeanette Magnuson recently decided to downsize her household. Prior to holding her sale, she invited ACHS staff to come over to see what might be valuable to include the ACHS collections. Among other things, Jeanette donated some wonderful photographs of her family. To our delight, most of the photographs were identified or Jeanette knew who they were. Each one tells a story and helps document our county history.

At the left is a portrait of John Johnson, Jeanette's uncle. He was engaged to marry a Skoogquist girl, but fate had other plans in 1913. While he was working at his job with the Anoka State Hospital, he was sent down into the utility tunnels that connect some of the buildings. There was a tunnel collapse and John was killed. His portrait is in an oval wood frame with beveled glass. The portrait is an enhanced photograph, meaning a layer of chalk-like color was added over the photographic image.



Right: Here is Jeanette sitting between her father and mother, probably taken in the early-to-mid-1930s. Look at the dresses, jewelry and hair styles for clues about the kind of family they were.



Jeanette's baby picture, left, is of the same enhanced style and framed in an elegant cast metal frame with a beveled glass front. Jeannette was born on June 21, 1920, so this photograph was probably taken some time in 1921.



Snapshots are great for preserving history. The shot to the right is of a homemade camper the Magnusons used for a camping trip to Lake Superior in 1954. On the back of the photo—that image is just below the photo on the

right, was written information saying the camper was built by someone in Anoka and the windows were from the old Ward Café.

In this day of digital photography, don't forget to print out those photos on quality paper and store them as carefully as you do other photos you own. Yes, the CDs of photographs are wonderful and will probably last many years, but will the equipment to see those photos still be available 25 years from now? Remember 8-track tapes and movies on Betamax? The tapes may still be around, but did you keep the tape player to play them on? Technology is great, but it is wise to store a “backup” copy of your photos that requires nothing more than your eyes to view them!



Contract Historian Position

The Anoka County Historical Society seeks applicants for a part-time, independent contract position to complete a history of ancillary agriculture businesses in Anoka County from 1840 to 1925. This position exists through a one-year grant from the Anoka County Agriculture Preservation program and is the first phase of a two-year project. The Contract Historian will compile a written history using primary and secondary sources, administer an oral history program, complete a photographic documentation project with the assistance of one intern, and consult on a corresponding exhibit. Funding for the grant provides for a total of 225 hours at an hourly rate of \$22.00. The successful candidate must have a Bachelors Degree in History or a related field and demonstrate skills commensurate with this type of project.

Applicant Instructions

Candidates for this position are required to deliver:

Letter of Application

Resume

Two Letters of Reference

Two writing samples (excerpts from larger works will be accepted)

Please provide copies as materials will not be returned.

To: Contract Historian Position
Anoka County Historical Society
2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303

Call Todd Mahon for more information—Phone # (763) 421-0600 x104

The application deadline is **November 3, 2006**.

The selection of applicants for interviews will be based on the above materials.

Picturing Anoka County: 150 years of Anoka County History



Book signing!

(Immediately following the 2006 Ornament presentation)

Tuesday, December 5, 7:30 pm.

This special evening will bring together author Sharron Stockhausen and photo editors, Todd Mahon and Vickie Wendel at the debut of the Sesqui-centennial pictorial history of Anoka County. This is the first event in a year-long celebration of Anoka County's 150 years of history.

Time is running out to preorder your copy and save \$5.00! See the enclosed flyer for ordering your book before the price increase.

A signed copy will make great a Christmas gift!



2006 Holiday Ornament from Hilltop!

City officials and community members from Hilltop will present the 2006 Holiday Ornament for the County Tree in honor of the 50th anniversary of the City on Tuesday evening, December 5, 2006, at 7:00 p.m., at the Anoka County History Center.

This holiday season is the eleventh annual "Anoka County Holiday Tree" celebration at the Anoka County Historical Society. Just as each state is invited in turn to provide the National Christmas Tree in Washington, each community in Anoka County is invited in turn to provide an ornament for the County Tree. Each ornament reflects a unique aspect of its community, along with the year of presentation. The Hilltop ornament will not be shown to anyone until the ornament is presented on December 5th, so come get in on the surprise!

Left: This is the ornament presented by the City of Lino Lakes in 2005. It was made from the fabric of the real balloon flown by Mary Alice Divine and it carried the city's logo. Commissioner Erhart quipped that when the balloon was flying, it made Lino Lakes the only Anoka County community with its own air force!

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the ACHS Board of Directors meetings are on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. The next meetings are November 9 and December 14. All are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.



American Girls Christmas Tea Party!

Bring your grandmother, your auntie, your daughter or your friend and share history together!

First, get one of *The American Girls Collection* series books. We'll be focusing on Kirsten for this tea. There are six Kirsten titles available through the Anoka County Library system. The novels are set in Minnesota during the 1850's and depict the life of a Swedish immigrant family. Their life was similar to that of many Anoka County residents at the same time, and you may be surprised to learn that some traditions, like the Santa Lucia crown mentioned in the books, took place here as well.

On Friday and Saturday, **December 15 & 16**, come to the History Center for a tea party, discuss the story, and learn more about daily life in the 1850's. Activities will highlight experiences that would be familiar to Kirsten, and there will be opportunities to try your hand at the skills she would have learned. We'll explore Christmas traditions through time and everyone will have a tea party! You'll be expected to stick out your pinky finger in much the same way as Kirsten would.

Wear your own 1850's costume or sun-bonnet, and bring your favorite doll along to share the fun! We'll have hats and gloves to share. Activities are geared to girls age six to ten. Everyone is invited, but **space is limited, so get your tickets fast** by calling the History Center at 763-421-0600. **Tickets are \$ 10.00 for adults and \$7.00 for girls**, but your doll can have tea for free!

These "Boos" were made for walking...

by Maria King

Fall brings the Halloween season, and the Ghosts of Anoka tours! Six talented and wonderfully reliable volunteer docents have allowed the tours to flourish. **Ann Steen** and **Lynne Rickert** were our first tour guides, followed by **Darlene Bearl** and **Tanya Weisser**. **Don Johnson** and **Gary Greb** are new this year, and doing a great job. They have given up family time, have struggled through cold, rain, and the summer heat, and put lots of miles on their walking shoes.

The Ghosts of Anoka tours are walking tours around the downtown part of the city of Anoka. Tour participants stand on the sidewalk outside places where something unexplained has happened, while the tour guide tells them the story. Of course, generous amounts of historical background is added to give the story context. In this way ACHS is bringing history, in an entertaining format, to over a thousand people a year!

The idea for the tour came from the Visit Minneapolis North Convention and Visitors bureau. They asked if ACHS staff members had ever been on a ghost tour and did we know of any such stories in Anoka? Former ACHS director Bonnie McDonald and ACHS program manager Vickie Wendel had been keeping a list of places people had researched trying to explain some strange occurrence, though attempts to either prove or disprove the hauntings were futile. It was decided to put together some of the stories located within an easy walking distance and take people to see the homes while telling participants of the unexplained things that had happened there. We hoped to sell enough tickets to merit the time it took to develop the tour.

We never dreamed the tour would be such a hit!! Word of mouth has made the tours extremely popular, and everyone that first summer sold out completely—sometimes within minutes! The next year, ACHS more than tripled the number of tours offered, and they still sold out!

In 2006, by the end of September, we had reached over 1,000 people on at least 21 Ghost tours. During October, we will more than double that number, with 23 tours currently planned. Red Hat groups, Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, employee groups and extended family groups have scheduled private tours in addition to the public tours offered during the summer and fall months.

If you can tell a story, if you can walk at least a mile, if you enjoy summer evenings and autumn's chill, if the thought of a costume entices you and you are not intimidated when people stare at you, then you would be a great candidate to become a Ghost Tour docent! To join this elite cadre, call Maria at 763-421-0600 and we'll set up a training session for next May. Let's make next year even more spectacularly successful!



ACHS 3rd Annual Harvest Time Barn Dance!



**How much fun
can you put in
just one event?!
These folks
know!!**



Hats off to everyone who made this annual fundraiser a success! Whether you sponsored, donated to the auction, danced, enjoyed dinner, shopped, watched, listened, or all the above—**THANK YOU!!**



Contributions & New Members – Thank you

Welcome New Members!

August 19-October 15

Mary Clark (Anoka)
Dennis and Marlene Colvin (Anoka)
Robert and Judy Flint (Champlin)
Bruce Graner (Coon Rapids)
Judith Hansen (Wyoming, MN)
Arleigh Nelson (Dayton)
Miguel Newman (Spring Lake Park)
Leanne Patchen (Cedar)
Del and Wilma Pechan (Ramsey)
Arthur Reese (Ramsey)
Steven and Lisa Rufsholm,
 Haeley, Stephanie, Laura, and
 Bethany (East Bethel)
Mark Welter (Ramsey)

GENERAL DONATIONS

Robert Akin
Dan Frank
John and Kay Goeser
Patti Kurak
Orval and JoAnne Leistico
Glen Lindstrom
Nancy Martin
Vietnam Veterans Chapter #470

BARN DANCE SPONSORS

August 19-October 15

The Bank of Elk River
First National Bank of Elk River
Dan Frank
Friendly Chevrolet
Pierce Refrigeration
Thomas Auto Mall

BARN DANCE DONATIONS

August 19-October 15

Dennis and Darlene Berg
Dan Frank
Judy Frank
Ray Jones
Sandra Karasch
Mike King
Orval Leistico
Anne Newhouse
Marion Schulz
Nikki Theis-Mahon
Catherine Vesley

SESQUICENTENNIAL SUPPORT

August 19-October 15

Anoka County
Anoka-Hennepin Credit Union
City of Andover
City of Bethel
City of Blaine
City of Centerville
City of Circle Pines
City of Columbus

HOME AND GARDEN TOUR SPONSORSHIP

Corriveau Properties, Inc.

ARTIFACT DONORS

June Anderson
Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts
Rosemarie Freeman
Theodora Green
Judith Hansen
Glen Hardin
Mary Jablonski
Red and Pat Johnson
Jean Kelley
Bob and Vernell Lea
Jeanette Magnuson
Pat Minor
Muriel Nelson
Diane Olson
Barbara Thurston

SESQUICENTENNIAL AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY DONATIONS

Abbey Carpet of Coon Rapids
Toby and Staci Ban
Coon Rapids Dairy Queen
Alan and Dawn Delage
Gary and Gail Fessler
Hage-Kobany Transmissions, Inc.
The Kordiak Company
Ritchie and Rosemary Krieger
Jake Lofgren
Midwest Mortgage Corporation
Northdale Dairy Queen
Northeast Bank
Pinewski's Ski Shop
Pizza Flame – Coon Rapids
Rick Austin's Muffler Shop, Inc.
Steven and Glenda Sims
Bo and Wanidda Vimomkhon Tann
William and Paula Wiehle
John and Patricia Zallaps

*The Anoka County Historical Society wishes to impart
our sincere condolences to our members who
have recently lost loved ones.*

Donald Grant,

*ACHS member, who died November 20th, 2005
He was the husband of ACHS member Ruth Grant*

Kenneth Wuest,

*long-time ACHS member,
who died August 30th in Oregon.*

Donna Bish,

*who died September 3rd.
She was the mother of ACHS member Patti Kurak*

Fern DeLong,

*who died September 5th.
She was the wife of Scott DeLong, and the mother of ACHS member
Barb Scottston.*

Coming Events

November 11, 10:00 am—1:00 pm

Re-Opening of Vietnam: The Veterans' Experience

Anoka County History Center and Library. Due to the continued popularity of *Vietnam: the Veterans' Experience*, this exhibit will celebrate Veterans Day with a grand RE-Opening! New artifacts have been added to the exhibit, and other items refreshed and changed around. This will be a special day to visit with veterans and hear first hand some of their unique stories. Entrance to the Exhibit Hall will be free during this Veterans Day event.

November 22, 12:00 noon to 1:00

HiSTORY Roundtable

Anoka County History Center and Library. Bring your favorite holiday pie for all to sample as we share stories and history about a holiday favorite—PIE! Being the day before Thanksgiving, pie is certainly a logical choice of topic to discuss. Many people will be baking pies for the big meal the next day, so bake one early, and come share some fun history about pies during this informal discussion. The format is an informal roundtable discussion where everyone is welcome to share their own stories about PIES they've made or eaten. We'll provide the beverages, and no one is allowed to count carbs at this special lunch time event!

December 5, 7:00 p.m.

County Holiday Ornament Presentation

Anoka County History Center and Library. Every year, we say the ornament presented can't be topped, but every year, we are proven wrong as our county communities continue to find incredible ways to celebrate the holiday with history! This year, the city of Hilltop celebrated its 50th anniversary and they will be adding their ornament to the County Holiday Tree for 2006. Page 4 has more details. The tree and its county ornaments will be on display in the lobby throughout December.

December 5, 7:30 p.m.

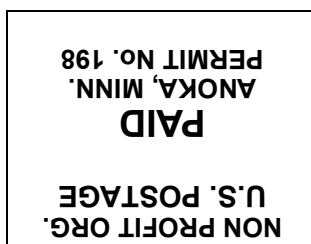
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December 15 & 16

American Girl Christmas Tea Party

Anoka County History Center and Library. Come to the History Center for a tea party to discuss the *American Girl* story, and to learn more about daily life in Anoka County during the early years of the county's settlement. Activities will highlight experiences that would be familiar to Kirsten, and will offer an opportunity to try your hand at the skills she would undoubtedly learn. Girls, their dolls, and the grown-ups will have a tea party to wrap up the event and be expected to stick out their pinky fingers in much the same way as Kirsten might have done! **Reservations required.** Friday evening, December 15th and several sessions on Saturday, December 16th. Ask for times when making your reservations.



Anoka County Historical Society
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Anoka, MN 55303
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