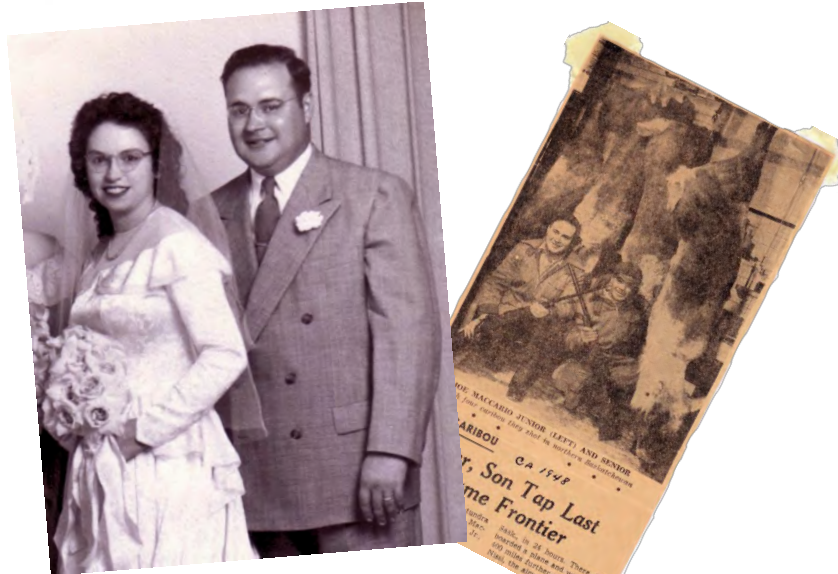




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- Andover
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- Circle Pines
- Columbia Heights
- Columbus
- Coon Rapids
- East Bethel
- Fridley
- Ham Lake
- Hilltop
- Lexington
- Lino Lakes
- Linwood
- Nowthen
- Oak Grove
- Ramsey
- St. Francis
-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



## Love at the Bottom of a Drawer

By Vickie Wendell, ACHS Program Manager

Physiologists tell us humans are social creatures and that we need the companionship of others to be healthy. Statistics say couples in committed relationships live longer and tend to be healthier than those who are not. February 14th is set aside as a day to celebrate romance and every mass media tactic imaginable plays up our romantic ideals.

Love, however, often has its own ideas and, just as often, thwarts all odds. If there was ever any doubt that love *will* find a way, Joe and Lorraine Maccario's story of how they met proves it!

Joe Maccario went on a big game hunting trip with his father in the late 1940s and the local paper covered their story, publishing a photo of Joe with his caribou in the newspaper.

Joe and Lorraine had never met, but when they attended the same picnic, Lorraine was just sure she knew that young man from *somewhere*. She asked him questions throughout the event, wondering where he banked, where he went to church, was he ever in the restaurant business, did he work at a grocery store. She thought she associated his face with food somehow, and she was determined to find out how.

Joe thought she was coming on to him, trying to get his attention, but while it was a bit uncomfortable, he really didn't mind it so much that the pretty young lady was so determined to figure out where she knew him from. If only he had known! Lorraine was so terribly prim and

proper that she probably would not have even spoken to him had she not thought she knew him.

Throughout the picnic, Lorraine puzzled over how she could have met Joe and couldn't figure it out.

The next morning she still had that young man on her mind when she pulled out the drawer for silverware to set breakfast table and there he was, staring back at her from the bottom of the silverware drawer! Lorraine just happened to use the newspaper with Joe's photo in it to line the silverware drawer in the kitchen of the home she shared with her mother.

From this odd meeting, Joe and Lorraine began dating, were married in 1949, raised eight children, and spent most of their lives in Coon Rapids.

What about your meetings? ACHS is once again collecting stories of love, romance, and how people have cemented their relationships in preparation for a new exhibit coming next summer. There are some great love stories gathered so far, like Joe and Lorraine's, but more stories are always welcome. Consider sharing your story of finding love. Please bring or send your story, along with a photo of you both, to the History Center at 22135 Third Avenue North, Anoka, MN, 55303, by January 26, 2015. If you would prefer to email your Anoka County love story, send it to [vickie@ac-hs.org](mailto:vickie@ac-hs.org)

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

## **Anoka County History Center & Library**

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Anoka, MN 55303

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Fax (763) 323-0218

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**AnokaCountyHistory.org**

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## **From the President...**

# **The Importance of Preserving and Studying History**

*By William Erhart*

In our morass of instant messaging, Facebook, etc., the importance of history can easily be forgotten. Both individually and as a society, we have to constantly remind ourselves that those who ignore the past are destined to repeat it. This simple concept plays out in our own daily lives. Learning from our own mistakes is history at its most fundamental level. From there, learning from other people's mistakes is crucial to avoid common pitfalls. In a broader sense, we are required in high school and college to study history. The emphasis is to understand where we have been so that we can make better decisions on where we are going.

The Anoka County Historical Society was established in 1934 to preserve the history of the county so it can be shared with present and future citizens. This preservation is invaluable in providing a context for future decision making. It is always important to be able to look at where you have been to determine where you want to go. We are constantly making those decisions, both individually and as a society.

In these days where valuable resources to preserve history are limited, we must strive all the more to be cognizant of the past. Part of the Anoka County Historical Society's mission is to demonstrate the critical importance of understanding decisions including what happened and why decisions were made. Succinctly stated, learning and preserving history is well worth the resources contributed to it.



## **From the Director...**

# **Museum in a Box**

*By Todd Mahon*

In recent years, the Anoka County Historical Society has seen resurgence in our school programs. Much of this is through our hard work, persistence, and excellent programming, but some of it is through the good fortune of some policy changes on the state level.

The new graduation standards for Minnesota have moved Minnesota history from fifth grade to sixth grade. On the surface, this may not seem like a reason for an increase in the use of our programs, after all, there's the same number of fifth grade teachers as there are sixth grade teachers, right? But suddenly, a whole bunch of sixth grade teachers, who had been teaching ancient history until this change, are tasked with getting up to speed and planning new lessons for Minnesota history. Many of them were looking for resources and ACHS has been there to answer the call.

In the past we have been able to bring staff (and sometimes volunteers) to classrooms to bring our living history programs and history presentations into classrooms. But starting this past year, ACHS staff and volunteers have worked closely with sixth grade teachers in the Anoka-Hennepin School District. The first step was inviting the District's sixth grade teachers to visit the Anoka County History Center on a workshop day so we could share what programs we already offered and surveyed them about what their needs were. We had an idea that they didn't have the resources to come to the Anoka County History Center for a visit and that was true. More importantly, we learned they wanted more curriculum that they could teach their students instead of ACHS bringing its people to them. With this information, Vickie Wendel (ACHS staff), Karen Davis (ACHS volunteer), and Lisa Sorenson (teacher) worked together to pilot some traveling boxes that ACHS created.

Each box is designed to actively engage students over a single class period and teach to a specific topic (World War I, the Great Depression, etc.). The feedback we have received has been terrific. 600 students tried out the program in December, and Sorenson reported that her "kids want to come to Social Studies!" I'm very proud of the work we have done on this and look forward to it increasing our capacity. If you would like to see the boxes we created, they are featured in what we offer on our website.

# Stories from Around the County



*Deputy James Sampson with a new squad, 1956.*

## The Anoka Alligators

By Vickie Wendel

Everyone has heard the clichés about history repeating itself, often with dire consequences to those not heeding the lessons of history, but sometimes, history does seem to repeat itself and leave us with nothing more than a laugh. Such is the story of the Anoka County’s alligators.

In September of 1956, the Anoka County Sheriff’s Office was dispatched to a call in Ramsey about an alligator in the road ditch along Highway 10. When the deputy arrived, he found the gator, about two feet long and “considerably toothy,” prowling the ditch. The deputy also found the owner of the reptile, the man in charge of the animals at the nearby tourist attraction of Santa Claus Town. The men found a long handled shovel (probably not long enough for the deputy since he reported that the alligator “jumps at you.”) After some wrangling, the animal keeper and the deputy were able to capture the feisty gator.

The men returned the jailbreak reptile to its empty pen at Santa Claus Town, but realized that the pen had originally held THREE alligators. Two more gators were still on the loose about Anoka and were considered dangerous. The public was urged to keep an eye out for the escaped gators and call the Sheriff’s Office immediately if one was spotted.

The authorities weren’t too concerned about being overrun by alligators as it was September in Minnesota and with winter not far away it was believed if the two missing alligators were not found, they would go into hibernation and then freeze. Despite watchful eyes, there were no further reports of alligator sightings until now.

Fifty-eight years later, in September 2014, in response to a call to 911, an Anoka County Community Service Officer (CSO) went to Nowthen on an “animal call.” A deputy heard the call and was in the area, so he decided to see if the CSO needed any assistance. At the scene, the deputy talked to the homeowner who said she was on her way to the mailbox when a “crocodile” hissed at her.

The deputy admitted that he was a bit skeptical since this is Minnesota and salt water habitats and warm weather

are in short supply. The homeowner indicated a patch of tilled up earth as where the animal was last seen. After a short search, the deputy and the CSO found the animal hiding in the grass—an alligator, fully three feet long. The gator was almost as startled as the officers and it beat a hasty retreat toward a nearby retaining pond, not stopping until it was only a few inches from the water.

By this time, the homeowner guessed that the alligator was an escapee from a local petting zoo, so the zoo owner was called. Nope, his alligator was only 14 inches long and still in his basement, but if the officers could catch the gator and wanted to get rid of it, he’d take it.

It was time to call in the animal experts. The officers placed a call to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and a conservation officer (CO). Alligators are definitely non-native to Minnesota and as such are considered an “invasive species.” The CO guessed someone had had the animal as a pet and when it got too big to care for, the owner just turned it loose in the wild. As was the usual procedure for the DNR in such situations, they suggested the animal be destroyed.

The deputy asked the CO if they could catch the gator, could it be given to the petting zoo owner. That was agreeable to the DNR, so the next trick was to catch the alligator. The officers got out the catch pole commonly used for dangerous dogs, but the gator was having none of that! It thrashed its massive tail at the officers and slid into the pond.

The standoff began. The gator refused to be lured out of the pond and the officers were worried that neighborhood kids, pets, and unsuspecting walkers or joggers might be targets if the alligator was confronted. When every attempt to capture the gator failed, the deputy had no choice but to put the animal down in the interest of public safety. The body was retrieved and given to a local taxidermist.

If history repeats itself again the alligator will show up in 58 years – the citizens of Anoka in 2072 should keep an eye out for any wandering reptiles about town.



# Other Ways to Contribute

## Would You Donate?



At its December board meeting, the Anoka County Historical Society board of directors agreed to pass a 2015 budget with an operating deficit that will be covered by the organization's cash reserves. In the face of an operating deficit, the board and staff are exploring new ways to bring in operating revenues.

One of the revenue sources we are exploring is an online auction. Throughout the year ACHS is offered items that are not appropriate for the museum's collection—not because of their condition or value, but because they don't have a good connection to Anoka County's history.

In these cases we tell the potential donor, "Thanks, but no thanks."

But now we might just be asking them to donate those items not to our museum collection, but to be auctioned off so the proceeds from the sales could financially support the Historical Society. We are still planning the specifics of the auction, including what kind of items we will be looking for, but please watch for an announcement in the coming weeks. We will likely be looking for antiques, art, and collectibles that people are willing to donate. Donors will receive a receipt of donation from the Historical Society that they can use for tax purposes. We are hoping to have enough items to schedule a spring auction. If you have reason to donate before December 31, please contact Todd Mahon at 763-421-0600.

## Needed: Manuscript Organizer

**Time Commitment:** Ongoing & flexible to fit your schedule

**Location:** ACHS

**Training & Requirements:** Training with staff, willingness to use copy machine and scissors.

Help us keep up with history by processing, and labeling new documents and articles for our Manuscript Collection. Learn about recent Anoka County events and how ACHS catalogs new items for the manuscript files. Contact Sara at [sara@ac-hs.org](mailto:sara@ac-hs.org) or call 763-421-0600 for more details on how to volunteer for this ongoing project.



## Wanted: Ugly Sweater

Ugly Christmas Sweaters and the parties that go along with them are becoming a part of the history of Anoka County. We want to be a part of the fun, but don't have a sweater in our collection.

Do you have an Ugly Christmas Sweater you wish to retire and donate to ACHS? Your sweater will become a part of our permanent collection and represent this part of Anoka County's history in the future. Contact us at ACHS if you are interested.



# Oral History Collection

## History in Their Own Words

By Audra Hulse, ACHS Administrator

In addition to a multitude of photographs and physical objects, the Anoka County Historical Society maintains a collection where history literally speaks for itself. With over 250 interviews in total, ACHS's Oral History Collection contains an unparalleled first-hand look at the lives of Anoka County residents. These oral histories give us a chance to hear the history of Anoka County and Anokans in their own words from their own experiences. Almost all of the interviews are available for listening in the History Center Reading Room, and a majority of them also have written transcriptions. In order to make this collection more accessible, we have made the transcripts for our World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Anoka County Agriculture Project interviews available to read directly on our website.



Glen Lindstrom in his tailor shop/room on the USS Alabama

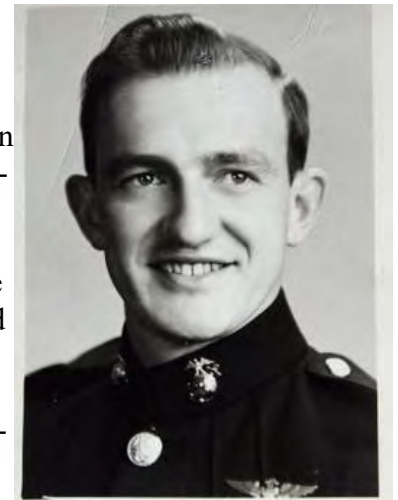
instead assigned him to put his sewing skills to use as assistant tailor. Lindstrom was able to prove his skills in that position almost immediately: with his sewing machine freshly welded to the floor in his compartment, he was able to quickly help out an officer whose pants had, as Lindstrom described, “ripped from Pacific all the way through to the Atlantic.” His skills as a tailor were then in constant demand aboard the *USS Alabama* throughout the remainder of World War II.

Orval Leistico's stories about his farm in Nowthen (formerly Burns Township) give another view of life in Anoka. The farm has been in his family since 1938. For many summers, the family welcomed hundreds of children (and even foreign visitors) to their home so that they could get an idea of what life on a farm was like. Some of the children liked the farm so much that they didn't want to leave – or wanted to take a piece of it home with them. One day, a young girl put a chick into her lunch sack before returning to her school bus. In

spite of the bird's peeping, the teacher was unable to discover the source of the noise until they had arrived back at school. All in a day's work at the Leistico Farm, but perhaps not for the school teacher suddenly finding a chick stowaway.

Lyle Bradley, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, gave ACHS an oral interview in 1991 in which he described a meeting he had on leave in Japan during the Korean War. Lyle (a Marine Corps pilot) was sitting in a train station one day and found himself approached by a Japanese man who had seen his uniform and wanted to ask what plane he flew. Bradley, who had flown against the Japanese several years earlier in World War II, explained that he flew a Corsair. The man, who had himself been a pilot for Japan in WWII and was now a medical doctor, invited Bradley back to his house.

Over *sake* and fish, they compared notes about the war, and Bradley realized that he had shot down one of the man's squadron mates over Kumamoto, Japan during a U.S. raid on an aircraft factory there. Uncertain of how the man would take that information, Bradley indicated that “a friend” had taken the shot, and they discussed the battle. The two met several more times, with Bradley getting tours of a Japanese school and a hospital. Finally, once again drinking *sake*, Bradley confessed to having been the pilot who shot down the Japanese man's friend. The man looked at Bradley, and then smiled, and said “We have to propose a toast.” And so together, they toasted the man's downed friend.



Lyle Bradley

Whether happy or sad, funny or somber, all the interviews are informative, giving us a deeper, more personal look at the history and people of our county. Take some time to explore them for yourself. The stories above are excerpted from those transcripts and are just a glimpse of what can be found in ACHS's Oral History Collection. But don't take my word for it, come in and listen or read online to learn about Anoka County from the people who lived it. The Oral Interview Transcripts available on the ACHS website [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

*All lists are current to December 12, 2014*

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LaVerne Anderson  
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Dick & Helen Bennett  
Robert Brock  
Marlys Burman  
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## Donations Made in Memory of

Nancy Warneke Olson  
Virginia “Gina” Ridge  
Joan Magnuson  
John Mann

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Dale & Irene Butler  
Audra Hilse  
Mark & Laura Hilse  
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Anoka Halloween Committee  
Shirley Christenson  
City of Circle Pines  
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Juanita Ree-Boniface  
Tom Ward  
Julia Warneke



## ACHS Remembers



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

Nancy Warneke Olson  
July 10, 1930 — August 1, 2014

John Mann  
April 21, 1930 — Nov. 4 2014

Virginia “Gina” Ridge  
Jan. 23, 1922 — Oct 23, 2014

Danny Martin  
Jan. 21, 1947 — Oct. 3 2014



# Programs & Events

## Anoka County Library Program

### A Logger's Life

2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10

Location: Northtown Library

711 County Rd 10 NE Blaine, MN 55434

Situated on the Rum and the Mississippi River, Anoka was a perfect place to power the saw mills needed to process the logs floated down the waterways from logging camps. Come and learn about the different aspects of the logging industry in Minnesota and the connection to Anoka. We will explore how a logging camp worked from first-hand accounts, what River Pigs were and the sawmills and manufacturers on the banks of the Rum River in Anoka. Program is open to all ages.

Cost: FREE



## Civil War Lecture Series

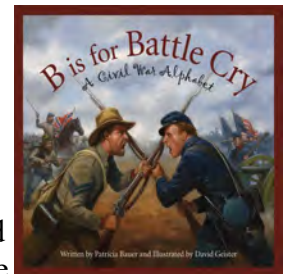
### Art and Music of the Civil War

7 p.m. Thursday Feb. 5

Location: Anoka County History Center

Unite art with history with David Geister and Patricia Bauer the illustrator and author of *B is for Battle Cry*. David is a Minnesota based artist who specializes in historical art. His art works have been featured in The History Channel Magazine and many historic sites and museums. Patricia is an author and musician and brings the visuals David creates about the Civil War to life. In this continuation of the Civil War Lecture Series, David and Patricia share the sights and sounds of the Civil War.

Cost: FREE



## Anoka County Library Program

### History of the Anoka County Sheriff's Office

2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7

Location: Rum River Library

4201 6th Ave. Anoka, MN 55303

Discover the history of the Anoka County Sheriff's Office. Hear stories about election recounts, car chases, shootouts, and escaped alligators—all in Anoka County! Enjoy photographs that portray 150 years of Anoka County law enforcement and learn how the Anoka County Sheriff's Office has been keeping the peace throughout its history.

Cost: FREE



## Civil War Lecture Series

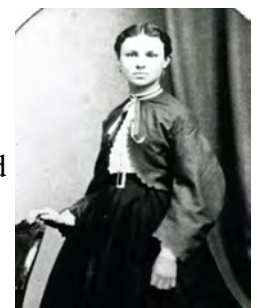
### Civil War Women

7 p.m. Thursday, March 5

Location: Anoka County History Center

The War Between the States may have been fought by great armies of men, but women filled many vital roles in society and even in the military. Women such as Clara Barton and Dorothea Dix immediately come to mind, but what about Minnesota's women? This program highlights the incredible stories of Minnesota women who protected their homes, supported their soldiers, served the army in many different ways, and kept the home fires burning throughout the four years of the Civil War. Some were dedicated enough to continue working for veterans even after the war. Their stories, long overlooked and forgotten, bring a new perspective to the history of America's most bloody war.

Cost: FREE



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ACHS ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION





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## The Fridley Tornadoes

*By Vickie Wendell, ACHS Program Manager*

Fifty years ago on May 6, 1965, Mother Nature made history in Anoka County and the Twin Cities metro area. The tornado outbreak that day was the worst in recorded history for the metro with six separate tornadoes—three were rated F4, one was an F3 and another produced F2 damage. There were 683 people injured and 13 killed.

The first tornado of the storm touched down at 6:08 pm in Carver County and traveled north into Hennepin County. It was on the ground for 13 miles, killing 3 people and injuring 175.

The second funnel was reported on the ground at 6:27 pm, again in Carver County. It moved north into Hennepin County and was rated an F4, but it did not take any lives or cause any human injuries.

Tornado #3 was outside of the metro area in Sibley County. It was on the ground for 16 miles and was rated an F3, but fortunately, it caused no injuries or deaths.

Tornado #4 was an F2 and again started in Sibley County, moved into Carver County and stayed on the ground for 11 miles. It killed one person and injured another 175.

It was tornadoes number 5 and 6 that ripped through Anoka County. The fifth touched down at 7:06 pm in the southernmost part of Fridley, then moved north until near Laddie Lake in Blaine before it dissipated. It was an F4, the second-most powerful rating for tornadoes, was on the ground for 7 miles and it killed three people with 175

more injured.

Then at 8:14 pm, tornado #6 touched down in Golden Valley, crossed north Minneapolis and hit Fridley a second time, then continued on through Spring Lake Park, Mounds View, and finally dissipated near Centerville. It was another F4 that stayed on the ground for 18 miles, killing six and injuring 158. Damages in Fridley alone were estimated \$23 million. One third of all the homes in Spring Lake Park suffered damage or were destroyed. One quarter of Fridley was said to be flattened. Additionally, schools in the two communities had more than \$10 million in damage. Two shopping centers were completely wiped out as were many other businesses and places of employment. Two of the largest employers in the area, FMC and Midland Cooperatives with a combined total of 2800 jobs, had severe damage. Utility lines were not only down, but gone, taking more than a week to restore service to the homes that still stood. The damages in 2014 dollars surpass the billion dollar mark, making this series of storms one of Minnesota's worst disasters ever.

Devastation hardly begins to describe the aftermath of the twisters.

Still, with typical Minnesota bravado, the people who climbed out of the rubble shared their stories and said, "It could have been worse."

Indeed, it could have if there had been no

*Continued on page 3*

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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... Change in Leadership**

*By William Erhart*

The last day for our Executor Director, Todd S. Mahon, was February 13, 2015. We were graced with nearly a decade of strong leadership that established the Anoka County Historical Society as a highly-respected organization not only in Anoka County, but also throughout the entire state. Some of the events and accomplishments that occurred during his tenure include the participation in the Anoka County Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2007, a project putting together a major documentation collection that resulted in ACHS receiving a Minnesota History Award in 2009, an award from the *American Association for State and Local History* for the exhibition *Vietnam: The Veterans' Experience* in 2007 (this exhibit was planned and opened while Bonnie McDonald was director, but continued and overseen by Todd), received the Minnesota History Award in 2014 for the publication of *Keepers of the County: Crime and the Anoka County Sheriff's Office*, and receipt of the Telly Award for the work done in conjunction with the QuadCities Television with the program *It's Your History*. Our organization also participated under Todd's direction in major research projects that included the suburban development of Anoka and Hennepin Counties, oral history project documenting the history of the Anoka State Hospital, documenting the history of Anoka County's agriculture and agri-business history; and a major report on Anoka County's history surrounding World War I.

We are fortunate that Todd will be working with the Minnesota Historical Society as a liaison between the city and county historical societies around the state.

If you have not had an opportunity to thank Todd, please send us an email and we will make sure he receives it. Todd, best of luck in the future!



# **From the Director... A Sad Farewell**

*By Todd Mahon*

It was with no small degree of sadness that I announced to the staff and board of directors that I was leaving the Anoka County Historical Society after accepting a new position with the Minnesota Historical Society. I knew it would be hard to leave, and the e-mails, phone calls, and visits in these last few weeks have reminded me what a great place this is.

In the more than nine years I have been here, it has been my great joy to work with a wonderful staff and all of the volunteers that make this place happen. There are too many to name here, but I hope that I have been able to speak with all of them to let them know how special they are to me.

I'm proud of the work that I've done here. I have seen growth in nearly all areas. I feel like I have supported the staff and volunteers in bringing the organization this success. While there are significant challenges ahead for the Historical Society, whoever is brought in to lead the organization will be coming to a great place with great people.

But there will be a lot to learn. Things I didn't know I was going to have to know. We're still a small place in many ways and all of us pitch in on things. With that in mind, here are some suggested job skills for the next director:

Be tall (until recently, I was the only tallish person around to get stuff off high shelves)

Know the basics of plumbing

Be knowledgeable in the production techniques of 1960s era bricks

Know who Aaron Greenwald is

I'm sorry for some of these inside jokes, but to be serious, please be welcoming and helpful to the next director and I know that the Historical Society's best days are still ahead of it. I know I'll be watching and supporting it.



# Stories from Around the County

*Continued from page 1*

warning, but residents in Anoka County had a new warning system. As a result of the Cold War, a Civil Defense system of sirens had been built around Anoka County and the rest of the metro in the 1950s. The sirens were supposed to warn residents of an impending aerial attack and give them time to get to a fallout shelter. By 1965, it was decided that the sirens could be used to warn residents of impending storms. The sirens sounded for a storm for the first time on that May 6<sup>th</sup> night. Weather forecasting was still a developing science and the warnings were short, but they were warnings and those precious seconds to take cover were credited with saving lives.

Another kind of warning came from WCCO Radio. The radio station had built their reputation of listener participation with call-ins, contests, local stories, etc., so the station had a ready-made network of observers across the metro. Those listeners began calling in reports of tornado sightings, providing direction and movement. The DJs, Dick Chapman and Charlie Boone, began following the reports of multiple funnel clouds in the metro. Armed only with only a map, a pencil and their multi-phone line in a windowless room, they stayed on the air accepting calls and disseminating information to keep everyone aware of what was happening. The broadcast was credited with saving hundreds of lives as the tornadoes ripped across the land. Chapman and Boone received the Peabody Award for their work; the station received the DuPont and Sigman Delta Chi awards for efforts in that tornado crisis.

It has been 50 years since those storms raged across the area and in commemoration, there will be a series of events at the Anoka County Historical Society. ACHS will feature some never before seen photos of the aftermath of the storms in a special lobby exhibit as well as stories from people who lived through the storms. A special edition of the *It's Your History* cable television show will focus on the 1965 tornados and author Al Taylor, will present a reading from his books about the storms on Thursday, April 16 at 7:00 pm.

More history about the May 1965 tornados will be happening at the Fridley Historical Society. Check their web page for more information:  
[www.FridleyHistory.org](http://www.FridleyHistory.org)



**THE FATEFUL NIGHT OF MAY 6, 1965**  
WCCO's Flood Service Center became the center for tornado coverage that night. The reporters were (left to right) Dick Chapman, Rob Brown, Bob Tibbitts and Charlie Boone.

## ACHS Annual Meeting

When : Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m.

Where: Circle Pines City Hall  
200 Civic Heights Circle

Cost: \$5/members, \$7/non-members

Join us for a screening of documentary *Girl from Birch Creek* which chronicles the life of Minnesota's first female state Supreme Court Justice, and Circle Pines resident, Rosalie Wahl. Brent Peterson, Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society will introduce the film and describe how it came to be. Light refreshments will be served and a brief membership meeting will follow the screening.

To reserve your tickets or more information call 763-421-0600 or visit [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

# Girl from Birch Creek

The Life and Legacy of Justice Rosalie Wahl  
Narrated by Nina Totenberg

Written and Directed by:  
Emily Haddad

**Saturday, March 28th 10 a.m.**  
Documentary Screening of Minnesota's first state Supreme Court Justice.



## Where's Morrill: An Anoka Cold Case

By Audra Hilse, ACHS Administrator

George Morrill was a well-known and long-time citizen of Anoka. He was a successful lawyer, had served two terms as County Attorney, and had a loving family consisting of his wife Olive and their three children.

Then, on May 16, 1890, he disappeared and was never seen again.

George Washington Morrill was born in New Hampshire in 1836. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1862, receiving his diploma in a leather-covered cylindrical metal case (the case now resides in the ACHS collections.) He continued to study law, and was admitted to the bar in New York City in 1864.

Deciding that he wanted to take advantage of opportunities available further west, Morrill moved to Anoka in 1873. His wife Olive (nee Caldwell) and daughter Eliza (Lida) Caldwell Morrill came with him.

He began a successful law practice, and the following year in 1874, he and Olive had a second daughter, Mary Pillsbury. Mary's birth got a mention in the *Anoka County Union*: "Lawyer Morrill is happy. It's a girl." Two years later a son, George Byron, joined the family.

Morrill continued to practice as an attorney. "Business card" style ads for his services appear in the *Union* as early as 1880, and continue to appear regularly right up until the year of his disappearance.

The lawyer was active in the Anoka community. The *Union* indicated that he was chosen as Secretary for the Anoka Library Association for 1879. More notably, Morrill was twice elected to serve as Anoka County Attorney, his first term being 1877-1881 and the second 1885-1887.

George Morrill was, to all appearances, a successful lawyer and a happy family man in 1890. Yet, he vanished never to be seen again. What happened to cause his sudden and mysterious disappearance?

The facts that we do know are these:

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, he returned from a short trip to Minneapolis and came home. He stayed the night, and departed the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup> carrying a "hand satchel with a night shirt and other necessary articles," as the *Union* reported on May 28, 1890 after his disappearance became known. "He bade his family good-bye, as was his custom, and remarked that he would be back in a short time," the paper goes on, and states that he took the 8 o'clock train to Minneapolis. It was later determined that he had been seen in Minneapolis

during the day of May 16<sup>th</sup>...and that was the last certain thing that was known about George Morrill. Both the Mayor and Sheriff of Anoka went down to the city to look for him, to no avail.

What actually happened to him was never discovered. Newspaper speculation, at the time and later, provides us with some possibilities.

The first possibility, suggested by the Anoka papers, is that Morrill may have been too heavily indebted and simply left town. Both the *Anoka County Union* and the *Anoka Herald*, in the May 1890 articles commenting on his disappearance, indicate that he was involved in a mortgage transfer, and instead of transferring money and a mortgage execution between parties as he had been entrusted to do, he may instead have made off with the money himself. Both papers also suggest that he might have met with foul play of some sort, and the *Herald* adds the possibility of suicide. This last seems unlikely, given his behavior on the day he left home, and a suicide seems less likely to have gone completely undiscovered afterwards.

The second possibility, as raised by both papers, is that Morrill had intended to complete his business with the mortgage transfer and return home, but met with foul play before he was able to do so. This possibility receives further support in an article from the *Princeton Union* that was printed several years later in 1896. This article speculates that on the evening of May 16, 1890, Morrill took advantage of being in Minneapolis to go gambling. He had a good night "sitting beside the green-

cloth," the story says, and was known to have had nearly \$2000 on his person.

Unfortunately for Morrill, this game was also attended by a man named Harry Hayward. A few years later in 1895, Hayward was tried and found guilty of the murder of a young woman and was hanged later that year, and speculation as to what other crimes he might have committed was high. On that May 1890 evening, supposedly "Morrill and Hayward left the place together" after heavy losses on Hayward's part. They may have been joined by a third man, named Allsop (or possibly Austin), who was later accused of murdering a Duluth woman in 1894. Allsop/Austin was apprehended all the way out in Seattle in 1896, and rumors of his prior association with Hayward abounded, but he committed suicide before he could be brought back to Minnesota for trial. The *Princeton Union* article concluded that Hayward and Allsop/Austin had likely accosted Morrill for the money he was carrying, killed him, and disposed of the body such that it was never found.

**WHERE'S MORRILL!!**  
**Attorney Geo. W. Morrill Leaves**  
**Home May 15th.**  
**Nothing Heard From Him Since.**  
**Has He Been Foully Dealt With?**  
**Or Has He Departed for Parts**  
**Unknown?**

*Continued on page 5*

# Volunteer World

## The Volunteers of ACHS

By Sara Given, ACHS Volunteer Coordinator

The new year has brought new changes to us here at ACHS. In the days leading up to our director Todd's last day, many members, and volunteers (all friends) called or visited to wish him well in his new endeavor. On his final day many more, over 60 of you, came to reminisce, mingle with good people, and eat cake at his official farewell.

While Todd's departure can seem like a big change, it also reminds us that a director is not the heart of any organization. Todd said himself that as director he only steered the ship. It is our amazing volunteers who make our historical society the wonderful place it is.

Our volunteers' dedication and talent constantly blows me away. Officially National Volunteer week is April 12-18, but one week is not nearly enough time for me to express how grateful we are for all you do. Many times we try to quantify what our volunteers do for us by translating your hours into the equivalent of more employees for the organization, or a financial equivalent. While recording volunteer hours is important (remember to keep filling out that hours calendar in the break room 😊) mere numbers cannot show the entire story. Whether it's braving the cold in January and February to help scan photographs, maintain our manuscript collection and research projects for us, to sweating through their shirts in July at the Home and Garden tour or at the Anoka County Fair our volunteers are there. ACHS volunteers help maintain, preserve and organize our collection as well as being ambassadors for us with the public.

To honor every chill, each bead of sweat, every break-through and historical fact learned, ACHS would like to celebrate YOU and the amazing things you do at our annual Volunteer Celebration Banquet. Join us for a lunch filled with fun, history and many heaps of thanks from us here at ACHS. So save the date, April 26, and look for your official invitations in the mail!



### VOLUNTEERS SAVE THE DATE!



Our annual Volunteer Celebration Banquet is around the corner. ACHS wants to celebrate you and your contributions preserving and sharing Anoka County history. Look for official invitations in the mail.

**When:** Sunday, April 26

**Time:** Noon

**Where:** Anoka City Hall Community Room  
2015 First Ave N, Anoka, MN 55303

RSVP by Friday April 17

Call: 763-421-0600

Email: Sara@ac-hs.org

## Don't Forget These Great Things

### ACHS Online Auction Donations

We are still gathering items for our online auction. Check out those closets, boxes and crawl spaces—what auction items might be hiding there? Call 763-421-0600 with any questions.

### Last Chance for a Quilt

The ACHS signature quilt is completed and has been beautifully quilted by Vickie Wendel. Raffle tickets are on sale and a winner will be drawn at the Annual Meeting on March 28. Get your ticket and snuggle up with history. \$1 each or 6 for \$5

*Continued from page 4*

Which of these possibilities is the truth, or is there some other, even stranger explanation for the mysterious vanishing of George Morrill? It seems likely that we will never know. The outcome for Morrill's wife and children was tragic whether he chose to run away from monetary troubles, or was murdered. The *Princeton Union* article claiming that he was abducted and killed seems to be largely speculation, making the possibility that Morrill left town and assumed a new identity somewhere else more likely. From the actual facts known about his departure from home and movements in Minneapolis, though, either outcome seems possible.

Whether Morrill was hiding himself, or whether his murderers hid his body, the responsible party was successful. As the *Princeton Union* article put it, "if Hennepin Avenue had opened to receive the unfortunate man his disappearance would not have been more complete."

# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to February 20, 2015

## General Donations

Rose Anderson  
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## Donations Made in

Memory of  
Merrywayne Elvig

## New Members

Douglas Anderson  
Veronica Cary  
Louie & Kay Job  
Cynthia Jorgenrud  
Tricia Libby

## ACHS Remembers

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

Merrywayne Elvig  
1931-2015

Bernerd Vevea  
1937-2015

## ACHS Business Members

Nowthen Historical Power Association

## ACHS Business Sponsors



James "Jake" Collins  
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651.457.4444 office  
888.494.9593 toll free

1349 South Robert Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55118  
jake.collins@complynet.com

## Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member with ACHS!

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

Business Sponsors receive membership benefits, a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, credit towards event sponsorships and an ACHS window cling to display.

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



# Programs & Events

## Civil War Lecture Series

### Civil War Women

7 p.m. Thursday, March 5

**Location: Anoka County History Center**

The Civil War may have been fought by great armies of men, but women filled many vital roles in society and even in the military. This program highlights the incredible stories of Minnesota women who protected their homes, supported their soldiers, served the army in many different ways, and kept the home fires burning throughout the four years of the Civil War.

**Cost: FREE**



## Anoka County Library Program

### Anoka State Hospital History

2 p.m. Saturday, March 14

**Location: Rum River Library**

**4201 6th Avenue, Anoka, MN 55303**

Mental hospitals bring lots of imagery to mind, much of which is based on pop culture and ignorance. What was life really like for patients and staff? Join us for this thought provoking and informative program. Learn about the history of the Anoka State Hospital and the ongoing debate about the care and treatment of mental illness. Seating is limited.

**Cost: FREE**



## Annual Meeting

### Documentary Screening *Girl from Birch Creek*

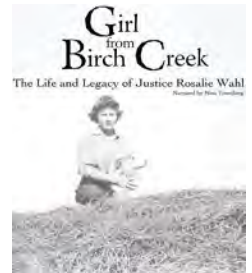
10 a.m. Saturday March 28

**Location: Circle Pines City Hall**

**200 Civic Heights Circle**

View a screening of *Girl from Birch Creek* about Rosalie Wahl. The film follows her life from Depression-era Kansas, and her fight in battle for women's equality during the 1970s, to eventually become a lawyer and the first female state supreme court judge in Minnesota. The event will include history of Wahl's time as a pioneer resident of Circle Pines, light refreshments and a brief membership meeting. Advance registration required - call 763-421-0600 or visit [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

**Cost: \$5/members, \$7/non-members**



## Book Reading

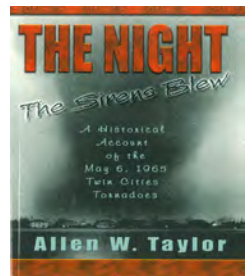
### *The Night the Sirens Blew* with Al Taylor.

7 p.m. Thursday April 16

**Location: Anoka History Center**

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Fridley tornadoes, which wreaked devastation across much of southern Anoka County. Author Allen W. Taylor has written two books about the tornado outbreak: *The Night The Sirens Blew* and *Hidden Revealed: A Sequel Account of the May 6, 1965 Tornado Outbreak*. Taylor will read from his books, and afterwards will answer questions. Copies of both books will be available for purchase.

**Cost: FREE**



## Anoka County Library Program

### History of Hilltop and Columbia Heights

2 p.m. Saturday, April 25

**Location: Columbia Heights Public Library**

**820 40th Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421**

Relive local history through stories that made these two unique cities what they are today. Follow their history from when they were part of the only secessionist county in Minnesota, Manomin, through the next 100 years as the area joined Anoka County and the cities of Columbia Heights and Hilltop formed and grew.

**Cost: FREE**



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

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### **Where's Morrill?!**

*The disappearance of an Anoka County Attorney*

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### **Celebrate Good Times!**

*Volunteers do Amazing things for ACHS*

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## SERVING:

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



## The City of Hilltop

By Sara Given, ACHS Volunteer Coordinator

The city of Hilltop in Anoka County has a connection no one could ever imagine. One day, former Hilltop Mayor James W. Carroll received a letter from Belgium with a photograph inside. The letter was simple: the sender was looking for the James Carroll in the picture, and was that him? Carroll didn't remember the photograph's event, but the face in the photo was his. What was the story?

James W. Carroll married and settled down in Hilltop after his time in the Army was completed in 1955. He went on to become Hilltop's mayor from 1974-1977. This long-time Hilltop resident had a link to Europe stronger than even he knew. As a soldier during WWII, Carroll was following his commander's orders on September 3, 1944 when he rode into a small Belgian town on his motorcycle. He was a forward observer for his unit and they were moving through the Belgium countryside in pursuit of German forces. As the Allied forces moved in the Belgian people found themselves free of Nazi domination and "liberated."

James was the first American the residents of the town of Peruwelz saw after the Nazis were forced back. As he rode into the city in his uniform, a dashing young American on a motorcycle they greeted him with flowers, wine, handshakes and kisses from all the young ladies.

He was the face of their liberation. It was a passing moment in the life of a soldier concerned with other duties, but the town of Peruwelz remembered him and his legend within the city grew. When Peruwelz began planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation they began searching for the man they remembered. They hunted through Allied cemeteries thinking that he had been killed in the fighting later in the war – but they found him alive and well in the United States. In 1995 the people of that city he once rode through, brought James to be their guest of honor for their yearly liberation celebration. The town welcomed him back with three weeks of celebrations and left their banner up in the church from Easter that read "He is Risen!" James met royalty in Belgium, and a chocolatier made a replica statue of James on his motorcycle out of chocolate. The mayor of Hilltop safeguarded the small community here in Minnesota, but also, years earlier, safeguarded the freedom of another small town. The little city with a big heart has ties greater than the physical 16 blocks it inhabits.

The City of Hilltop is Anoka County's smallest city and has been a number of things before it became a town in its own right.

The area four blocks west of

*Photo above: James Carroll in Peruwelz September 3, 1944*

*Continued on page 3*



*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](mailto:achs@ac-hs.org)  
**AnokaCountyHistory.org**

## **History Center Hours**

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

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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...**

### **Making History**

*By William Erhart*

In March, the Anoka County Historical Society had their annual meeting. We were blessed to be presented with a program put together by the Washington County Historical Society remembering the life of Justice Rosalie Wahl. Ms. Wahl went through numerous trials and tribulations growing up and raising a family. We also learned that she had lived in Anoka County for a brief period of time. In mid-life, she attended law school and due to her tenacity and common sense, broke one barrier for women. She was the first to sit as a justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, and honorably served until her retirement.

The presentation was so moving that number of the attendees expressed the commitment to honor a woman in Anoka County who has also led the way for women participating in top levels of government. From this spawned the idea to honor Natalie Haas Steffen who was the first female County Commissioner. She went on to serve in numerous other capacities including the Commissioner of Human Services for the State of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council to name a few.

Being the first woman that the Anoka County Historical Society has honored, Natalie Haas Steffen will be making history. This event is scheduled for September 17, 2015. Please mark you calendar and plan to attend this exciting event.



## **From the Director...**

### **An Official Hello**

*By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp*

I am honored to have the opportunity to introduce myself to you as the new Executive Director of the ACHS and excited to assume this position! The last three weeks have caught me in a whirlwind of activity, files, meetings, and ideas. I am overwhelmed by the welcome I've received from the staff, volunteers, and Board Members, who have taken valuable time from their schedules to share hopes and dreams for the ACHS.

I came from the Rockford Area Historical Society, where I managed the Ames-Florida-Stork House for the last seven years. During that time, I learned how to balance the many demands of leading an organization while still performing all the duties associated with programming, volunteer training, and grant writing. I loved the energy brought by visitors who asked questions, children who eagerly looked around, and the interest they all showed in the families who owned the home.

During most of my life I have also worked as a freelance writer, focusing on feature articles and nonfiction pieces, as well as collecting oral histories. This career has allowed me to don firefighter clothing and enter a burning building, rappel down the side of a bluff near Winona, or shadow a rodeo bull fighter for the evening. Most importantly, however, it taught me that every person has a story inside of them, if only someone would take the time to sit down and listen to it.

As a human outside of work, I am the mother of a 14-year-old second degree black belt, who is, of course, the most amazing child on the planet. I know you probably have one to rival her in your life, but I'll remain happily unconvinced! I also parent three cats with varying degrees of psychosis and a hamster the size of a golf ball who bears the name, "Gonzo." I enjoy rollerblading, kickboxing, reading, and pots of coffee followed closely by bars of dark chocolate.

So thank you once more for this opportunity to serve the public and membership of ACHS. I look forward to meeting you, hearing your story, and building on the amazing foundation of history already established in Anoka County!

*Continued from page 1*

Central Ave began as the Dooies dairy farm. In the 1930's, the farm was no longer running and the area became Hilltop Stables and Oak Grove Riding Academy. The riding academy repurposed the Dooies' cow barn into horse stables for their business. Having a large stable of horses in the middle of the city caused some conflict. In 1945 the Oak Hill Riding Academy was under district court order "not to maintain a barn, corral and stable for horses in present numbers which habitually produce odors, gases and noise offensive to the sense of neighbors." The young folk gathered to dance to a juke box at a large pavilion in the area. After the stable closed, the pavilion was used for auctions and flea markets.

The area's Riding Stable slowly transformed into a section of trailer park housing. The exact date and owner of the original park is unknown, but in 1947, a trailer park with over 50 sites in unincorporated Fridley Township appears on aerial photographs.

1956 became a turning point. A number of residents of the area joined Les Johnson, owner of Trailer City Park, approached Columbia Heights requesting annexation. Columbia Heights declined—trailer parks were against city ordinances.

After this rejection, Les Johnson led the way to incorporation. On May 1, 1956 the vote for incorporation, which needed at least 100 votes, passed 137 to 24. The *Anoka Union* reported on the decision and described the new village for its readers: "Most of the area contains homes with only one major business, a trailer park, located within its boundaries. The area lies east of Columbia Heights and between 45<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> avenues NE, Central Ave NE and Monroe St NE." Three days after the vote, all 668 residents of the area officially became the village of Hilltop. The city comprised 16 square blocks – or in a different measurement, 80 acres. For some perspective, the Mall of America covers about 94 acres of land. Hilltop was here to stay and in the next 10 years Hilltop's population nearly tripled from 461 to 1398 people.

When Hilltop incorporated in May, it was bordered by Columbia Heights, but also by Fridley Township to the north. Later that month, Columbia Heights annexed land directly north of the new city. Hilltop had perfect timing – because by law no piece of land completely surrounded by another city can incorporate as its own city. Just a few weeks later and Hilltop wouldn't have been able to exist.



*Photo Above: Hilltop Trailer Sales ca 1965. Wooden toy ca 1960's was used as part of the showroom display for the Hilltop Trailer Sales company.*

## Signature Quilt Raffle Winner!



ACHS's Signature Quilt began as a way to raise funds and connect with a fundraising tradition during the Civil War. Women during the Civil War made quilts, similar to ours, sold signature space on them and then sold raffle tickets to win the finished piece. Our quilt collected signatures from Governor Dayton, city officials, Garrison Keillor, long time Anoka County residents and folk just passing through. Each square told the story of a past tradition, but also the history of people in Anoka County today. The Quilt Raffle and signature sales brought over \$600 to ACHS preserve local history.

We drew a winner at our Annual Meeting on March 28. Congratulations to the winner, Lora Jensen! A resident of Anoka County since 1984, Lora currently resides in Nowthen, and purchased her raffle ticket at the Nowthen Threshing Show.

Enjoy the quilt, Lora! We're glad to know it will have a good home.

# Story from the Archives

## Casey's Infantry Tactics

By Audra Hilse, ACHS Administrator

Have you ever wondered what we do to find out the history of an artifact coming into the ACHS collection? Let's take a look at one that came to the Historical Society just back in March!

This little book is Volume III of "Casey's Infantry Tactics."

The book itself provides us with some information. Looking at the title page tells us that the author, Silas Casey, was a Brigadier-General for the Union Army. His three-volume series on infantry tactics was published as the official U. S. Army manual on the subject in 1862. It was published by D. Van Nostrand in New York.

It is a small book, about 3.5 inches by 5.5 inches – easily pocket-sized. While there is some staining inside the covers, the pages themselves are still in good condition and easily legible. The majority of the fold-out pages with diagrams of troop movements are also in good shape, still with their original folds and lying flat within the book.

Casey himself has no connection to Anoka history, so we do not have resources within the ACHS collection to learn about him, and must look elsewhere. Searching on the internet turns up information about him on more than one military history website.

These indicate that he was born in Rhode Island in 1807, attended the Military Academy from 1822 to 1826, and thereafter joined the Army as a Second Lieutenant. He saw action in several conflicts through the following years, including campaigns against various Native American tribes and as part of the war with Mexico in 1847. During the Civil War, he was a Colonel in the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry in the Army of the Potomac, and headed a group of volunteer soldiers as Brigadier-General. He "conducted himself and his men well" during the Battle of Fair Oaks in May 1862, but did not see any further duty in the field. He remained in the Army until 1868, when he retired from active duty after 40 years of service. He passed away in 1882, and was buried on his family farm in Rhode Island.

Since the book's author is not from Anoka, then how did the book come to ACHS? An inscription on the first page, right inside the cover, gave us the Anoka County connection that we needed to bring it into our collection. This particular copy of Casey's Infantry Tactics was owned by Sergeant James Hyatt. Hyatt was an Anoka County resident following the Civil War, so we turned to our own collections and resources to learn more about him.

A copy of his discharge papers provided a good starting place. James Hyatt served as a Sergeant in the 14th Regiment of the New York Heavy Artillery from his enrollment in November 1863, until his honorable discharge on August 26, 1865. The discharge certificate states that he was born in Buffalo, NY, and was nineteen years old at his time of discharge, making his year of birth around 1846. The papers also state that he was "five feet eight-inches high," had "light-complexion, blue eyes, brown hair," and was "by occupation, when enrolled, a Farmer."

We assume that Hyatt returned to his home in New York at this point, and obviously brought his book of infantry tactics with him.

ACHS also holds his original marriage certificate, indicating that he had married a woman named Anna Simpson on March 5, 1865, and it seems likely that he was anxious to get home to his wife.

We do not have any direct information on them for the next couple of decades, but do know that they moved to Anoka no later than 1882, and the Casey's Infantry Tactics book came with him. The family is listed in the 1885 Minnesota Census as being James, Anna, their daughter Myrtle (who was eighteen years old at that time), and two sons, Earl (three), and a one month old baby who had not been named yet at the time the census was taken (later censuses show that they named him George). The 1885 Census unfortunately does not list occupations, so we are not certain what work James Hyatt pursued at this time.

By the time of the 1900 Census, more information was recorded. Occupations were listed, and James Hyatt was stated to be the Superintendent of a cemetery. A 1905 article from the *Anoka Union* corroborates this, listing James Hyatt as the superintendent of the Forest Hill Cemetery. The article praised him for doing a good job developing the cemetery and keeping it a pleasant place. The 1900 Census also indicated that the older son, Earl, was nineteen and working as a Machine Operator at the Shoe Factory, while younger George was fifteen and still in school.

Death records indicate that James Hyatt passed away on June 19, 1916, aged about 70 years. His wife Anna had passed away three years earlier on April 13, 1913.

Several of his possessions, including his copy of Casey's Infantry Tactics Vol. III, and his and Anna's marriage certificate, were passed down to other family members, and have since been donated to the Anoka County Historical Society.

There are quite a few different elements to tracking down the background of items that come into our collection! We do not always find quite this much information about the original owners of items that are donated to us, of course, but we are usually able to learn at least a little something about them. In this case,

materials from our Archival Collections, our Manuscript Files, and our Photograph Collection were all important in learning about James Hyatt. Important additional information came from the various past censuses (with easy access kindly provided by the Anoka County Genealogical Society's ancestry.com subscription, which is available to researchers, volunteers and staff here at the History Center).

For anyone who is interested in Casey's Infantry Tactics, the text of all three volumes is available for free here:

[http://64thill.org/drillmanuals/caseys\\_infantrytactics/index.htm](http://64thill.org/drillmanuals/caseys_infantrytactics/index.htm)

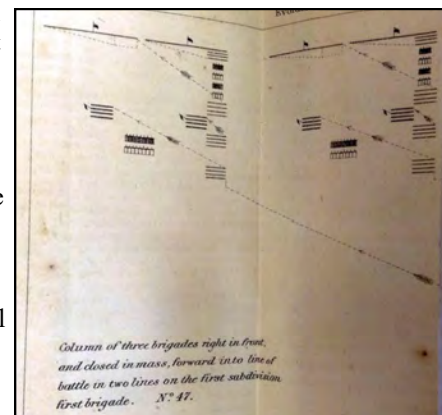
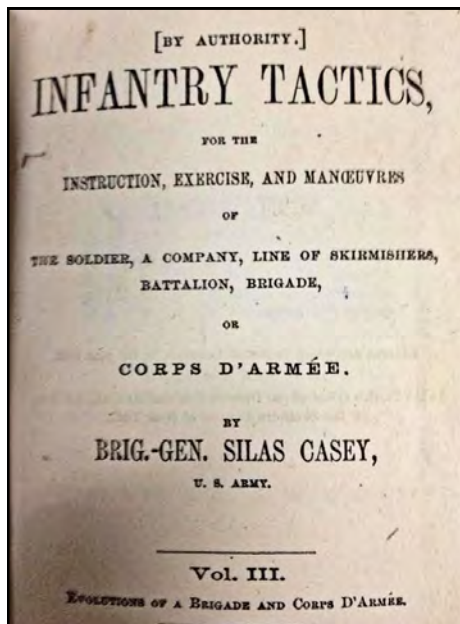


Diagram of troop movements



## Anoka County Quiz Bowl

Volunteers came out for fun on Sunday, April 26 for the annual ACHS volunteer celebration. After lunch and chatting, the four tables of volunteers faced off in the first ever Anoka County Quiz Bowl. Assured that no history knowledge was needed for this game show, the volunteers dove right in. The teams chose their own names (The Rum River Rats, the Searchers, the Super Six and the Warbirds), and each had a classic or musical toy for their buzzer. Throughout the program they learned about the history of game shows on TV and played Anoka County versions of Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, the Price is Right and Family Feud. During the game we learned that the city of Anoka spent \$338 on library books in 1942, that in 1931 Marie DeGraff earned \$105 a month as a teacher with 34 years experience and that the brown liquid necessary for our new director's sanity is coffee.

Volunteers give so much to the Anoka County Historical Society throughout the year. They serve on our board of directors, help install and take down exhibits, conduct tours, catalog objects and archives in our collections database, write columns about local history for publication, conduct research for ACHS and act as our ambassadors to the greater community. If we translated those moments and hours of help into paid staff time our budget increased by nearly \$50,000. With the volunteers giving so much, the staff at the Anoka County Historical Society wanted to take time to say Thank You with a smile and a laugh. We hope you had fun!

Many people laughed at the event trying to figure out the meaning behind a superstition that you should not "split a pole" and no one knew what it meant. Chris Drew figured it out: if two people are walking down the street, they shouldn't each walk around a different side of a lamppost, telephone pole, or mailbox. But if they do, there's a remedy: just say bread and butter!

## Volunteering at Summer Events

Summer will be here before we know it! There are a number of ACHS events throughout the summer months that we need our great volunteers to help with.

- \* **Anoka RiverFest**—July 12. The theme for RiverFest this year is Weddings, to coincide with the opening of a wedding themed exhibit at the history center. We need volunteers help to help during the event as well as volunteers to share their bridesmaid/groomsman/prom fashion in an interactive show.
- \* **Home & Garden Tour**—July 13. This year is the 12th annual Home & Garden Tour. Volunteers at this event are assigned to a specific stop/home on the tour. They help answer questions, and enjoy the day with the patrons going on the tour.
- \* **Anoka County Fair**—July 21-26. Volunteers help staff our history farmhouse at the county fair grounds. We will be featuring items and games from our school Museum Boxes during the week. Have fun, interact with the public, and satisfy your cheese curd craving.

If you would like to volunteer for one or more of these events, or want to know more about them. —**Contact Sara** at the History Center: drop by, call 763-421-0600 or email [Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)

## Anoka County Historical Society's

# QUIZ BOWL



# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to April 29, 2015

## General Donations

American Legion  
Edward B. Cutter Post 102  
Julian Andersen  
Daniel & Mary Capra  
City of Coon Rapids  
Benevity Community Impact Fund  
Tim & Yvonne Curran  
Dan & Waldeane Felix  
Roland & Carol Freeburg  
Grassroots Co-op  
Charlotte Johnson  
Jim Johnson  
Bob & Susan Kimball  
Luanne Koskinen  
Melvin Larson  
Cynthia Nelson  
Al & Betty Pearson  
Pamela Reeves  
Skip Rither  
Sharron Sandberg

Robert & Joyce Schmidt  
Robert & Phyllis Seath  
Ronald Spadafore  
Chester Tollefson  
Don & Catherine Vesley

## Donations Made in Memory of

Rose Deschene  
Ellamae Emmans  
Donna Youso

## New Members

Daniel & Mary Capra  
Peggy Chapman  
Mary Erickson  
Carol Larson  
Ronald Spadafore  
Tom Sullivan

## Artifact Donors

American Legion  
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Steve Lee  
Linda Muddle  
Lorraine Newburg  
Pat Schwappach  
Lorraine Soderquist  
Ray Steinke  
Washington County Historical Society  
Kyleen Zelenak

## ACHS Remembers

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

Rose Deschene  
1922-2015

Donald Greenburg  
1925-2015

Ellamae Emmans  
1925-2015

Donna Youso  
1931-2015

## ACHS Business Members

Nowthen Historical Power Association

## ACHS Business Sponsors



James "Jake" Collins  
Senior Risk Management Consultant  
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651.457.4444 office  
888.494.9593 toll free

1349 South Robert Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55118  
jake.collins@complynet.com

## Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member with ACHS!

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

Business Sponsors receive membership benefits, a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, credit towards event sponsorships and an ACHS window cling to display.

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

# Programs & Events

Summer is just around the corner. There are many great events coming up, so mark your calendars now so you don't miss out!



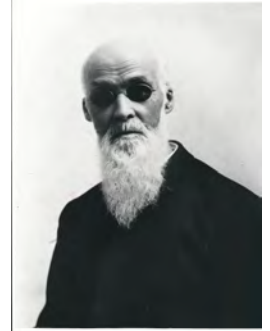
## Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours

**7:30p.m., select Thursdays & Saturdays May, June, July, August**

**Location: Anoka County History Center**

Join us for history and mystery at 7:30pm, every other Thursday and Saturday as you venture through downtown Anoka with a costumed tour guide. Anoka County Historical Society's Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours run throughout the summer. Enjoy an evening walk around the city and beat the fall crowds by signing up for a summer tour to hear the history and unexplained stories of homes and businesses in this historic city. **Advanced registration required. Tickets can be purchased at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)**

**Cost: \$9 Adults, \$7 Children (6-17), \$7 ACHS Members**



## RiverFest at the History Center

**Saturday, July 12**

**Location: Anoka History Center**

The History Center is joining the fun at Anoka's Riverfest by celebrating wedding season. Join us in the building for the grand opening of a new exhibit about the history of weddings in Anoka County. The exhibit hall will feature wedding gowns, groom's attire, and wedding attendants as well as the accessories needed for the big day. There will also be wedding themed activities and an interactive formal wear dress show. Come learn about the history of marriage in the county, and share your story!

**Cost: FREE**



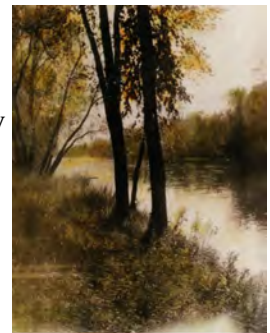
## Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

**1pm-5pm Sunday July 13**

**Location: The Dunham Oaks neighborhood and downtown area, city of Anoka**

It's a summer tradition that community members look forward to each year. This year's 12th Annual Home and Garden tour will be explore the beautiful Dunham Oaks Neighborhood. This lovely community is located just north of the Anoka Fair Grounds on the Rum River. The Home and Garden Tour is presented by the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission and the Anoka County Historical Society. Join the tour this year and view homes and gardens in the city as well as historic downtown Anoka businesses for raffle prizes. **Tickets go on sale in June! They can be purchased at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)**

**Cost: \$12/advanced ticket, \$15/day-of ticket**



## Anoka County Fair

**July 21-26**

**Location: Anoka County Fairgrounds,  
3200 St Francis Blvd NW, Anoka, MN 55303**

Visit the ACHS at the Old Farm Place's Farmhouse during the Anoka County Fair Step back in time and imagine life with an icebox or no running water. Each day the farmhouse changes: people making crafts, churning butter, swinging on our porch, telling stories or learning about Anoka County history through our new Museum Boxes. Drop on by and join the history fun!

**Cost: Admission to Anoka County Fair (\$9 adult admission price) See [AnokaCountyFair.com](http://AnokaCountyFair.com) for full admission and Fair details.**



## We've updated our email addresses!

All ACHS staff email addresses have been updated to match our website name. Each staff email is our name @AnokaCountyHistory.org. Example: Vickie@AnokaCountyHistory.org Our old email addresses that ended in @ac-hs will still work for the next year, but remember to update those contact lists.

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

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**SERVING:**

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



## Miss Marion Dunham

*By Sara Given, ACHS Volunteer Coordinator*

The twelfth annual Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour features the Dunham Oaks neighborhood next to the County Fair Grounds in Anoka. The neighborhood came together because of one teacher and principal at Washington Elementary: Marion Dunham.

Born in 1894, Marion Dunham lived her entire life in the city of Anoka. Marion's father, Dwight Clinton Dunham, was born in Ohio and received his medical degree from Cleveland Medical College in 1867. He moved to Anoka with his first wife Margaret and their three children where he had a medical practice as well as participated in the lumber business in town. After Margaret died in 1888, Dr. Dunham remarried in 1891 to Ruth Dunham and had a son, Dwight, and daughter, Marion.

Marion attended Anoka High School and studied in the "Normal Training Department." Normal Training was a preparatory program for those students who wanted to become teachers. Half of the school day was spent learning grade subjects from a teacher's view point that included music, drawing, American literature, civics, school law, hygiene, and agriculture. The other half was devoted to

practical application and practice teaching in the local city schools. The students also had the opportunity to stand in as substitute teachers when a grade teacher was absent.

As a member of this department, Marion graduated with a first grade teaching certificate in 1912 at the age of 18. It's not clear where her first teaching post was after graduation, but by 1927 she taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Washington Elementary in the city of Anoka. After many years as a teacher at the school, she became its Principal and remained in that position until she retired in 1963 at the age of 69.

Past students remembered Miss Dunham as "a force" in the halls of the school. One student had Miss Dunham as her 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and said; "She was a disciplinarian. She demanded and got respect and no one escaped homework." Another student, Barb Thurston, had Miss Dunham as her Principal at Washington and remembered her as a tiny woman, always dressed in black with sensible heels clicking down the hallways.

Marion's father died in 1908 before she graduated from

*Above: Marion Dunham and her 6th grade class, circa 1927*

*Continued on page 3*

*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](mailto:achs@ac-hs.org)  
**AnokaCountyHistory.org**

## **History Center Hours**

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

## **Board of Directors**

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District 2: Bill Nelson  
District 3: Orville Lindquist  
District 4: Lotus Hubbard  
District 5: Kate Morphew  
District 6: Mary Capra  
District 7: Bart Ward  
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At-Large H: Harvey Greenberg  
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Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)  
Audra Hilse (Administrator)  
Marilyn Anderson  
(Collections Manager)  
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Carol Dordan (Office Staff)  
Don Johnson (Office Staff)  
Christine Heuring (Janitorial)

*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 William Erhart*

The continuing changes in the weather patterns, the increased intensity of storms, occurrences of floods, etc., have received a lot of attention in the press of late. Upon reviewing the history of Anoka County, it has had its fair share of extreme weather events. Currently, the Historical Society has an exhibit on display of the 1965 tornadoes that went through Fridley and Spring Lake Park. Also, a recent documentary that was aired on local television received significant information from the Anoka County Historical Society.

Although each of these tornadic events brought up a host of memories to the residents of Anoka County, the remnants were also seen elsewhere. My father was a farmer in Pine County. He remembers shortly after the 1939 tornado picking up several bank notes from the First National Bank of Anoka while working in one of the farm fields that was more than 60 miles away. Tony Elfelt remembers his in-laws talking about retrieving letters from their property near Stanchfield, Minnesota addressed to local residents after the 1939 tornado.

Although tornadoes' effects can be devastating, the drought of the 1930s continued for years, causing Anoka residents to lose their homes and property. Most would agree that we need to remember the vast impact that weather can have on our lives and livelihood. We all need to respect the weather, and to keep an open mind on whether our activities are having an effect on it.



## **From the Director...**

*By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp*

The number of clichés I could use about now to explain month #2 as the Executive Director are more numerous than the stars in the sky. But I wouldn't want to spend time explaining how it's full steam ahead on the wedding dress exhibit (Wedding Belles and Beaus) that will open July 11, or how we've been busy as bees putting the polish on the Heritage Home and Garden Tour ready for July 12. That would be over the top and certainly boasting, as it's really all in a day's work.

I'm up to my eyeballs in new names, having had the privilege of meeting still more volunteers, community members, and business owners. This baptism by fire has produced a long list of ideas and projects the ACHS would like to hone and consider for the future. The first would simply document businesses where they are along their growth journey—a questionnaire marking five, 10, 15 and 20 years in business. The second would expand on this information to create a tool for business owners to connect with the history of their building and the heritage of their occupation—a booklet publication to be sold to customers. The third would take research to another level entirely with the intention of publishing a book on the business history, thus creating a legacy for the community and generations down the road. The fourth and on will come to you like grains of sand through an hourglass...

Thank you again for your continued support of the ACHS. I'm quickly coming to understand and appreciate how special the members and patrons of the museum and library are! It's a gift to serve you and I will strive to go the extra mile—no matter how cliché it may sound.



Continued from page 1



Marion Dunham  
"Peaceful, studious and silent"

Marion Dunham senior  
photograph and quote, 1912.

high school and Marion continued to live with her mother at their home on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave until her mother's death in 1966.

With such a long teaching career, how did that translate into owning and selling the land to create the Dunham Oaks Neighborhood? Miss Dunham could not purchase the land herself with her teacher's salary and census records do not indicate that she had any supplementary income. She must have inherited the land. In order to figure out the connection of how the land came to her, plat maps of Anoka County are a great resource. The land that encompasses Dunham Oaks is noted on the earliest plat map of Anoka County in 1888 as owned by James McCann. Following the ownership through these maps, that section of land was owned by W.S. Bailey before transferring to Ruth and Marion Dunham.

Wendell Bailey was Marion's uncle, having married her mother's sister Olive Thurston, and he is noted as a lodger in Ruth and Marion's home in the 1940 census. On November 24, 1940 Wendell passed away and the *Anoka Union* reported on the circumstances surrounding his death: "Mr. Bailey had been taking care of a wolf for someone at his place beyond the fair grounds and wanted to take a picture of the animal when the light was just right...he asked his niece, Miss Marian [sic] Dunham, to accompany him and take the picture." The photograph with the wolf went without incident, but after caging the animal again, Bailey suffered from a heart attack and died.

After his death, the land "north of the fairgrounds" was transferred to Ruth and Marion Dunham. It's unclear what the women did with their new land holdings, but it wasn't until after Ruth's death in 1966 that Marion set about to sell parcels for developing a new neighborhood.

Marion sold the sections of her land carefully. She screened potential homeowners, and favored teachers and educators in the area. She also approved any home designs and designated what trees could and could not be torn down during construction. A resident of the neighborhood remembers as a child that Miss Dunham would often drive the streets, her head barely clearing the steering wheel of her 1960's era Chrysler Imperial making sure all was in order. Her investment in the neighborhood has created a haven away from the busier downtown Anoka streets.

Marion Dunham died at the Twin Rivers Care Center in Anoka on June 2, 1981, and was buried at Oakwood Cemetery next to her mother. With no direct children of her own, she was survived by her niece and grandnieces, none of whom lived near Anoka, as well as the neighborhood she created and planned and which still bears her name: Dunham Oaks.

**Anoka Heritage Home & Garden Tour**  
Sunday, July 12 ♦ 1 pm—5 pm

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!  
\$12 ADVANCE  
TICKET PRICE

12th Annual  
Tour beautiful Dunham Oaks neighborhood  
Visit historic Downtown Anoka Businesses  
Chance to WIN Raffle Prizes — before and on the day!

Buy tickets at  
AnokaCountyHistory.org

Thank you to our local sponsors!

### Tour Dunham Oaks!

In the 12th Annual Anoka Heritage Home & Garden Tour  
July 12, 1–5 p.m.

Advanced tickets \$12  
Purchase tickets at AnokaCountyHistory.org or call 763-421-0600



# Story from the Archives

## Wedding Dress Connections

By Marilyn Anderson, Collections Manager

Sometimes the roundabout way donations come to ACHS can be a bit strange and at times downright spooky. As the Collections Manager for ACHS, I love to see when stories and artifacts come together, like the most recent donations that started with a very small, thin fountain pen. A man named Jerry stopped in to ask me if we might be interested in this pen along with a school bell used by his mother, Dorothy Richardson, who taught in the Lino Lakes school district from 1934-1936. The two items, and the story they told, fit perfectly with our mission to tell the history and stories of Anoka County.

He was interested in donating the items to us, but was worried they would be packed away forever in a box, never to be seen. We are currently in the process of putting together a large wedding exhibit and I pointed out how much we look forward to getting items out of the box and showcasing their wonderful stories.

Since I mentioned weddings, he asked if we might consider adding his mother & grandmother's wedding dresses to our collection. Already aware of his family's history in the county, we suggested he bring them in.

This is where it gets spooky. Jerry received a call from his cousins, one who lives in Anoka and one visiting from out of town, inviting him to lunch. He told them about his visit with us and what he will be donating.

Shortly after this, I received a visit from the cousins who brought not only their mother Betty's wedding dress from 1945, but photographs of the wedding party - where Jerry's mother Dorothy was featured as one of the bridesmaids.

It turns out Michelle & Linda's father, Clifford Richardson, was stationed in the South Pacific during WWII when he received notice his mother was very ill and he was granted emergency leave. While in transit home, his mother's health improved and his fiancé decided to take full advantage of this unexpected trip and planned the entire wedding. A service member coming home on leave had no idea he would be returning married.

With money and time short, each bridesmaid wore her own wedding dress for Clifford and Betty's ceremony. In Michelle and Linda's photograph of the wedding party was their mother Betty in the dress they were donating, but also Jerry's mother as bridesmaid wearing the wedding dress he had donated the previous week. What started with a pen, a school bell and a little conversation, added three wonderful dresses with great county

history and an opportunity to share a unique story.

The exhibit opens on Saturday July 11<sup>th</sup> during RiverFest. Be sure and stop by to see the Richardson family wedding dresses and the rest of this amazing collection!



*Dorothy Richardson (back row 2nd from left)  
Clifford and Betty Richardson (front row, middle)*



*Dorothy Richardson's pen she  
used as a school teacher in Lino  
Lakes circ 1934*

## You are Cordially Invited

The Anoka County Historical Society requests the honor of your presence at the opening reception for the exhibit

### Wedding Belles & Beaus

**When:** Saturday, July 11

**Time:** 10a.m.—4 p.m.

**What:** Exhibit opening for ACHS's newest addition to the exhibit hall. Day's events will include a special recognition to family members with wedding artifacts on display, a wedding dance on the front lawn, and special wedding themed photo opportunities. Come in your favorite "bad" (or good) formal or wedding attire to be eligible for a special prize drawing!

This opening event is held as part of Anoka's RiverFest City Celebration



*Bessie B. Over & Norman Jackson,  
married Oct. 21, 1903. See both  
garments on display*

## The History Center is Hopping

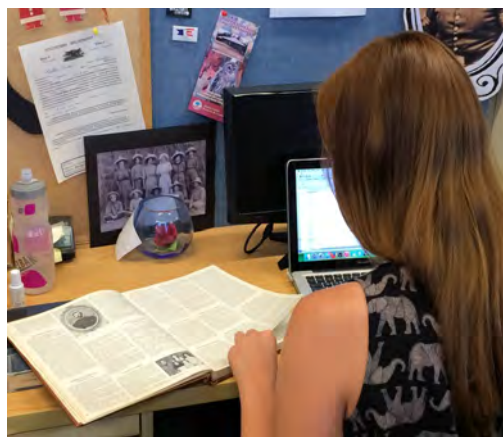
The history center is bustling with activity and volunteers coming in every day to work on projects for ACHS! If anyone ever told you that history was dull, do not believe them. It certainly hasn't been dull lately with so many great volunteers coming in each day. Let me give you a taste of what a day at the history center is like.

The day I am writing this is a typical Tuesday. This morning I came to work a little before we opened at 10 am and volunteers from our partners, the Anoka County Genealogical Society, were already here, hard at work. They come every Tuesday morning and help people who stop in with genealogical research and even helped me find family information for this newsletter's article on Marion Dunham. Molly, our summer intern, came in right after I did and began working in a cubical in our back office area. She is working on creating a traveling Museum Box about immigration to go to 6th grade classrooms in the county. Next, new volunteer Brian came in to work. He came bearing a box of donuts to share (thank you Brian!) and sat down to create a finding aid for our collection of Anoka County Agricultural Reports. A finding aid is a detailed list of the contents and background of a collection in order to help anyone working with that collection.

Take a deep breath because we've only made it to 11 am so far. Volunteer Alison came in next. She is our master Headline Hunter and makes sure articles relevant to Anoka County from various newspapers are recorded properly so they can be added to our Manuscript Collection. Then, Ghost Tour Docent Lynne came to bring her wedding photos to Vickie to accompany her wedding dress in the exhibit. After Lynne's visit, volunteer Sandy arrived in the early afternoon. Sandy is a master photo scanner. She helps digitize photographs for our internal database so they can be searchable by staff and the public who wish to conduct research here. Our dedicated photo-scanning volunteers have scanned over 14,000 photographs already.

Throughout the day other volunteers emailed, or called wanting to be a part of our great summer events at RiverFest, the Home & Garden Tour, and the Anoka County Fair. In addition to the volunteers coming in, patrons came in to pick-up library books they requested from the Anoka County Library system, a couple examined a quilt from our collection, a gentleman printed out his resume for a job interview, Vickie dressed mannequins for the new wedding exhibit, and a woman came in with a donation of a bridesmaid's dress for the collection.

On Tuesdays the History Center stays open until 8 p.m., but my part of the story ends at 4 p.m. I'm always amazed by the variety of things that go on during the day and the work that our volunteers accomplish. If you are interested in getting in on the bustling action, we are currently looking for great volunteers to organize our very messy work room, enter manuscripts into our database, and amateur photographers to document changes around the county. If you would like more information or would like to help, give me a call at 763-421-0600 or email me directly at Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org



Intern Molly hard at work

---

## An Evening Honoring

# Natalie Haas Steffen

## *Survivor of Life's Unexpected Curveballs*



Professionally, Natalie Haas Steffen is known in Anoka County as one of the first two female County Commissioners. Growing up and in her personal life, Ms. Haas Steffen is a force. She gained local notoriety as a child in her hometown of Hendrum as the town boxing champion and was a wiz on the baseball field. She notes with pride, "I was chosen for the teams before the boys because I was better than they were."

Join in an evening to celebrate a pioneer in local and state politics and culture. During the evening enjoy a plated dinner, listen to special guest speakers as they reminisce on Ms. Haas Steffen's wit, work and wisdom and enjoy some unexpected surprises.

Reserve your table of eight soon for the best seating options. Table reservations and individual seat sales available now by calling 763-421-0600 or go to AnokaCountyHistory.org to purchase your tickets.

**When:** September 17, 2015

**Time:** Social time begins at 5:30

**Where:** Courtyards of Andover

13545 Martin St NW, Andover

# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to June 25, 2015

## General Donations

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## ACHS Remembers



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

Wayne Coleman  
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Naomi Johnson  
1934-2015

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## Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member with ACHS!

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

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



# Programs & Events

## Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours

7:30p.m., select Thursdays & Saturdays May, June, July, August

Location: Anoka County History Center

Join us for history and mystery at 7:30p.m., every other Thursday and Saturday as you venture through downtown Anoka with a costumed tour guide. Anoka County Historical Society's Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours run throughout the summer. Enjoy an evening walk around the city and beat the fall crowds by signing up for a summer tour to hear the history and unexplained stories of homes and businesses in this historic city.

**Advanced registration required. Tickets can be purchased at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)**

**Cost: \$9 Adults, \$7 Children (6-17), \$7 ACHS Members**



## RiverFest at the History Center

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday, July 11

Location: Anoka History Center

The History Center is joining the fun at Anoka's RiverFest by celebrating wedding season. ACHS will hold an official opening for our new wedding exhibit, *Wedding Bells & Beaus*. There will be music, a reception and photo opportunities. Dress up in a wedding themed clothes to be eligible for a special prize. See page 4 or [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) for full details of the days wedding activities.

**Cost: FREE**



## Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

1p.m. - 5p.m. Sunday July 12

Location: The Dunham Oaks neighborhood and downtown area, city of Anoka

It's a summer tradition that community members look forward to each year. This year's 12th Annual Home and Garden tour will be explore the beautiful Dunham Oaks Neighborhood. This lovely community is located just north of the Anoka Fair Grounds on the Rum River. The Home and Garden Tour is presented by the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission and the Anoka County Historical Society. Join the tour this year and view homes and gardens in the city as well as historic downtown Anoka businesses for raffle prizes. **Tickets can be purchased in advance at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) and on the day at The Big White House, 1900 Third Ave S., Anoka.**

**Cost: \$12/advanced ticket, \$15/day-of ticket**



## Anoka County Fair

July 21-26

Location: Anoka County Fairgrounds,

3200 St Francis Blvd NW, Anoka, MN 55303

Visit the ACHS at the Old Farm Place's Farmhouse during the Anoka County Fair. Step back in time and imagine life with an icebox or no running water. Each day the farmhouse changes: people making crafts, churning butter, swinging on our porch, telling stories or learning about Anoka County history through our new Museum Boxes. Drop on by and join the history fun!

**Cost: Admission to Anoka County Fair (\$9 adult admission price) See [AnokaCountyFair.com](http://AnokaCountyFair.com) for full admission and Fair details.**



## Book Talk and Signing

Images of America: Ham Lake by Mel Aanerud

Tuesday August 4

5-7 p.m. book signing, 5:30 p.m. book talk

Location: Anoka History Center

Ham Lake is a perfect geographical township, six miles by six miles square as provided in the Northwest Territories Act of 1787. This book on the history of Ham Lake by Mel Aanerud follows the process of those lives as they farmed, built houses of worship, houses of learning and houses of commerce. It follows a few interesting characters, award winning businesses and some who had political prowess. Book signing held 5—7 p.m., book talk to be held at 5:30p.m. No registration required.

**Cost: FREE**



## We've updated our email addresses!

All ACHS staff email addresses have been updated to match our website name. Each staff email is our name @AnokaCountyHistory.org. Example: Vickie@AnokaCountyHistory.org Our old email addresses that ended in @ac-hs will still work for the next year, but remember to update those contact lists.

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

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Oak Grove

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Spring Lake Park

**NATALIE HAAS**

**FOR  
ANOKA COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER**

**VOTE**

**September 14**



Natalie Haas and Husband, Fred, with Daughter, Donnell and Son, Mike

## Natalie Haas Steffen

*By Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, ACHS Executive Director*

The quintessential rags to riches story of Americans tugging on their bootstraps lingers with members of the generation born during the Great Depression, who grew up during World War II, and raised a family of their own during the Vietnam War. The ACHS will honor one such story on September 17.

The fiery and assertive political figure known in Anoka County as Natalie Haas Steffen began her life simply as Natalie Johnson, born to Edward O. Johnson and Luella C. Johnson on December 12, 1936. Her father had roots in Cooperstown, North Dakota and her mother grew up just outside the town on a farm belonging to Ernest Nicolai Johnson. It was his wife from whom Natalie drew her name, though when pronounced by an old Norwegian, it sounded more like “Natalia.”

Born in the same bed and delivered by the same doctor as her mother and younger brother, Natalie spent the first five years of her life learning horseracing from her Grandfather, who also served as the sheriff of Griggs County.

“Racing was very popular at all of the county fairs and different events that took place in these smaller towns,” said Natalie. “He also used his horses for something called ice racing, which is something I don’t even know if they do anymore, but the horseshoe had a special point on it and they actually raced those horses on the different rivers in North Dakota.”

She also spent time in Minot, North Dakota at the Red Rooster, a venue her parents operated that burned down several years ago. Split into two different buildings to abide by the laws of the time, the Red Rooster served food and alcohol on one side and boasted dance floor and roller rink on the other.

“I learned to roller skate,” said Natalie. “My mother says I roller skated just before I was four years old, now mothers have a tendency to brag, but it had to be when I was very young, because we lived there until

that marriage came apart.”

The changes happened quickly, as her dangerously ill brother went to live with her aunt in the Red River Valley, followed closely by Natalie and her mother. The farm began to fill up as her Grandfather moved in to receive care and a parade of cousins and neighbor children began to roost as their families moved away to find work at the end of the Depression.

“It seemed like my aunt and uncle took in every kid,” said Natalie. “They [the families] might be leaving that particular area and the kids would end up staying with my aunt and uncle who didn’t have children of their own but were very good with kids.”

Surrounded by nearly 20 boys, Natalie learned to shoot BB guns, climb trees, tend barn animals, and cook for threshing crews.

“My story is, ‘I didn’t get this way without some help,’” said Natalie. “And ‘this way’ means most folks see me as a little aggressive and ‘in your face’ once in a while, but that’s the reason I’m giving for it.”

Natalie survived a number of pranks from the other children, though when she received a shock from a car battery, she drew the line and approached her Grandfather for help.

“He really didn’t like you to tattle, but he also understood that I was the youngest except for my brother, so getting even was not always something I could do so well,” said Natalie. “So he told me that I should get the boys to piddle on the electric fence and tell them that it would send up sparks like fireworks. So I suggested this to the guys, and they wouldn’t do it unless I turned my back, I mean we had rules in those days, so I did, and all I heard was screaming, because it seems like instead of fireworks, that spark travelled back and, anyway, that’s the way I got even with the guys who shocked me with whatever they did with the battery. I felt really good about it, because they were in kind of interesting shape when that was over with. I did get told not to make a habit out of it.”



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

## **Anoka County History Center & Library**

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(763) 421-0600  
Fax (763) 323-0218  
E-mail: [achs@ac-hs.org](mailto:achs@ac-hs.org)  
**AnokaCountyHistory.org**

## **History Center Hours**

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

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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 William Erhart*

A recent topic of discussion amongst the Anoka County Historical Society Board is the need for updating our repository of local newspapers. Currently, the History Center has the editions microfilmed of the *Anoka County Union* through 2002. For all of the issues after that date, the public would have to rely on hardcopies that are located at ECM Publications. These are made available to the public for viewing and research. One concern is that as time passes, the papers age, become more brittle and content could be lost. In addition, individuals who had nefarious intent could easily destroy or steal these copies and they would be forever lost. Due to these reasons, the Board thinks it is critically important to preserve this history of the County. There is discussion of either using microfilm or digital methods to preserve the editions starting where they left off. There is an issue that there are multiple newspapers distributed throughout the County published by ECM. In addition, there is discussion on whether or not the newest paper in the County, the *Anoka County Record*, should also be preserved.

I have learned during these discussions, the State's Historical Society ended microfilming the local newspapers in 2009. They did, however, continue to accept paper copies of each newspaper submitted to them for preservation. Just recently, they began discussing the need to begin digital preservation of these copies and how to make them more available to the public. However, this increased access and digitization become complicated due to the amount of syndicated material used, for example. The newspapers purchase content for a specific day or week that carries with it an embedded copyright prohibiting duplication or distribution in the future.

We would enjoy your thoughts on the preservation of our written record.

## **From the Director...**

*By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp*

It is truly a joy to head an organization when things go right. This can't be more true than the past two months when our wedding dress exhibit has soared in attendance well beyond our initial hopes. We opened the display on Riverfest with a reception of cake, lemonade, and energetic volunteers spelling YMCA outside to booming music, encouraging 300 passers-by to stop inside. It continued with a trickle of word of mouth drop ins and then surged in response to a beautiful story printed in the *Star Tribune* on August 4. Within two days of its publication, 50 people had visited the museum and another 30 had called. Within a week, the numbers had doubled.

History geeks are a rare breed. We will work our tails off for peanuts, or sometimes doughnuts, whichever appears on the breakroom table, just because it's fun. Just because it's exciting to discover pieces of information in dusty books and files. Just because we can imagine the sights and sounds of the past overlaid on our modern world and want to share that vision. Just because someone needs to keep and retell the stories. We write and research and talk constantly because it's interesting, work bleeds into personal life with book choices, vacations spent at other museums, and having a radar up for great conversations. We do it, although sometimes we feel like we work despite the public, or perhaps even in retaliation to popular culture.

Then once in awhile, the world suddenly agrees and gets the message and you realize you've reached outside of the group of fellow history geeks into *the others*. History becomes cool. Old becomes popular. People become connected to their heritage and the pride seeps out of their mouths and shines in their eyes. They bring photos and immigration documents written in native languages to share. They wander in groups through the exhibit waving their arms while telling animated stories or suddenly point to an artifact they find interesting, looking to their friends to share the moment. The enthusiasm is palpable.

So, from the depths of our hearts, thank you! The exhibit will be open for several more months to engage your friends and family. Stay excited! It's moments like these that remind us all how necessary local historical societies are in bringing people together over a common topic. PLEASE help us continue to facilitate the sharing of Anoka county heritage far into the future by becoming a member or considering a Legacy donation!

After a few years, her family moved to Hendrum, yet Natalie didn't lose the skills she had developed on the farm, and even added to them over time.

"I played baseball," she said. "I was usually chosen before a good many of the boys. I was fast. I could hit, and in later years, two of us gals in town played for the men's baseball team...so I pitched."

Natalie continued her participation in the sport for many years, playing for a women's fast pitch team in Fargo as well as the local teams.

"That was a big thing," she said. "Sunday afternoons were spent watching the farm boys play the city boys and the farm men play the city men. That was your entertainment. Everybody brought food and it was great."

Natalie had no desire to leave the town she affectionately calls "Humdrum" even when her friends were itching to move to the city and begin a new life in the post WWII years. Able to participate in a number of school activities, she fell in love with theater and history while also earning a trip to Girls State, which got her thinking about becoming the mayor of her small town.

"That's true!" said Natalie. "I didn't want to leave the farming area...I really thought I would marry a farmer and be on a farm, but farming changed a lot after World War II."

She joined her mother in Fargo and attended Interstate Business College, landing her first job at Prudential. During that time, she met a North Dakota farmer turned sailor, home on recruiting duty.

"Fred Haas," said Natalie. "The rest is history. We got married and I saw very little of North Dakota again because we went travelling."

The couple had three children, Frederick, now deceased, Michael, who is currently finishing 30 years in the Navy, and Donnelle, who lives in St. Anthony. The Navy took them to California, New Jersey, Florida, Tennessee, Washington, Hawaii, Bangkok, and finally Thailand. Natalie was hired by the United States Overseas Mission, now called US Aid, in 1965 and worked at various posts as the tensions escalated in Asia. The children attended Catholic school since the embassy school was full, and learned to speak French, English and Thai.

"He [Fred] brought me down here [Anoka] to visit and meet her [his sister] and he said, you know? When I retire, I think we're going to retire out here. It's close enough to the cities to get in and do the things that we like to do, but it's far enough away that it's kind of that small town feel, and that's exactly what we did," said Natalie.

Natalie applied as an Administrative Assistant to the Director of the Anoka County Department of Health and Social Services, though during her interview, the differences between employment in Thailand and America became evident.

"I suggested to the people interviewing me that the job was worth more than they were willing to pay," said Natalie. "I pointed to my experience, I had worked in California in doctors' offices and been overseas, done this, done that, I thought I was worth more. So in the nicest way I could, said that and the county commissioner, who I won't name, but many people may recognize, put his thumbs in his pants waist and said, 'haven't you got a husband?' I said, 'yes, but what difference does that make?' and it kind of went from there. The long and short of it is they agreed to give me \$50 more a month."

Her leadership in the county earned her the position of President of the County Employees Club, which ran a small break room and provided doughnuts on the honor system. The money made there went for a Christmas party held at Jack's on

University Avenue in an upstairs room.

"I found out that it was the custom to give free tickets to the county board and I thought that was ludicrous," said Natalie. "They're all making more money than we are! I didn't see giving free tickets. They should have had to buy, just like the rest of us, and I was pretty sure they didn't support our little coffee and doughnut group, so I said we're not going to do that."

Although the committee agreed with her, she soon found herself summoned to the County Administrator's office, face-to-face with Bernard Steffen, who asked if indeed the rumor were true and that it ought to be reversed.

"Suggested' I think was the word he used," said Natalie. "I gave him my reasons and he said, 'Well? That may make some sense to you, but it doesn't to me and you will invite the county board and give them tickets.' Well? He's the boss. So I walk out of that office thinking, 'I'm going to have to get even with this guy someday' and it took me awhile, but I married him in 1986, so I think I got even, right?"

As County departments combined, Natalie found herself moving up the ranks and taking on more responsibility in determining budgets, funding sources, rules and regulations, and writing grant applications. She began to understand how money flowed from federal to state and the purpose of having the county acted as an arm of the state to provide services.

"I also got interested in some of the programs we had," said Natalie. "One was for the aging, but one in particular was near and dear to my heart, was called DAC. It has to do with our mentally and physically challenged population. At that time, the county had them from birth to school age, that has later changed so that the school district has responsibility for programming and the county picks up when they're I think about 19 now. That program has remained near and dear to my heart and I serve on the board of Achieve Services still."

In the early 1980s, her husband, Fred, suffered two heart attacks, a stroke, and five surgeries in one year, which made him unable to return to work. He passed away in 1984.

"Prior to that we had been in Hendrum to see my folks, my aunt and uncle, and coming back we stopped and picked up the local ABC newspaper and the front page said that county commissioner Ed Fields was not going to run again," said Natalie. "I said to my husband, 'I think I'm going to run for the county board.' He said, 'are you sure you're qualified?' I said, 'I know about as much about county government as anyone of those guys do.'"

In a race of 10 candidates vying for two positions to expand the board from five members to seven, Natalie and Margaret Langfeld of Blaine won.

"I'm sure if you talked with Al Kordiak today, who was chairman of the county board, and he would roll his eyes...two women ...



what in the world is this going to be? It actually went pretty well,” said Natalie.

Three terms on the County Board brought Natalie plenty of education and multiple changes of life.

“[I] love the time on the county board,” she said. “[I] learned about county ditches, learned highway jargon, learned the numbers of the highways. I knew the welfare programs pretty well, the volunteer programs. Lot of things I had been working in, so it wasn’t just brand new falling on me. But by that time, Fred died during my first term and two years after Fred died Bernie Steffen and I got married. I think I was in the middle of my third term when Arne Carlson became a governor of Minnesota, and I liked him.”

Natalie’s career came to a simple end, when she lost the race to return to the County Board and left her desire to become Lieutenant Governor on Ventura’s doorstep.

“When Dennis Berg said he wasn’t going to run I said, ‘I still know a lot about county government and I still had Highway 10 in my craw,’ she said. “I ran. I lost. Now I’m just doing what I want to do and travelling as much as I can and am beginning to enjoy great grandchildren.”

As the passports continue to pile up near a museum-worthy collection, Natalie remembers why she continues to dust hundreds of elephant figures, glassware, and even a hot wheels Hummer.

“If you don’t know where you’ve been, how do you know where you’re going?” she asked. “You know, I’m from an era where when things went bad for my parents, we came to live on the farm, till my mother figured out what she was going to do. When my grandfather got sick, he came to live with us. When my great aunt got ill she came to live with us. As they left home to go someplace, something got left behind of them and it just always reminds me of that. So I have some stuff after great aunt Tina and aunt Tillie. There are dishes that come from them. All that’s part of the whole family story. My aunt Stella couldn’t take some stuff with her so I have them and that reminds me of Jake and Stella. It’s part of who you are. Just part of who you are. I don’t want to forget that sort of thing.”

The comfort Natalie finds surrounded by antiques and stories is readily shared with friends, family, and members of her church.

“A year ago I set a table, they were kidding me at church and I said, ‘aren’t you coming to this dinner?’ recalls Natalie. “They were widows or widowers. I said, ‘tell you what, you come and I’ll set a special table for you.’ So I used my sandwich glass and the centerpiece happened to be an old oil lamp from the farm and I had the last cow bell from the farm and I had my uncle’s spats and for them sitting at the table, they could remember that then. It was just fun.”

During a life spent overcoming obstacles, dodging curveballs, and recovering from a variety of personal tragedies, Natalie has rarely dwelt in the past. Preparing for this recognition dinner has provided a space for her to do just that.

“You know, when I was driving in today and thinking about, ‘what are we going to talk about?’ I all of a sudden realized how long I’ve lived,” said Natalie. “And what I’ve seen. And what’s happened, what’s developed, and...wow. Wow. The other thing, that you probably don’t know, is that one of the things you’re using to advertise this fundraiser for the historical society is a picture of my mother, my father and me. Until my mother died, I had never seen that picture. I found it in an old trunk that she had had and back in those days, divorce was spelled [not talked about] and they were separated for quite a while before the divorce.”

The story of her childhood struggles may tempt some to pity Natalie, but she sees it differently. Having not seen her father since the age of five, she reconnected with him and became friends with his new wife, helping her through her death three years ago. Through it all, she remains grateful to the aunt and uncle who raised her and her brother.

“We were taken care of by two people who loved us, who gave us as much as they could and we didn’t lack for anything because we weren’t living with our parents,” said Natalie. “And when I say ‘anything’ I mean what you need emotionally. We were poor. We didn’t know we were poor, but we were poor. So. Life is good, but it’s a great teacher.”



*Outside of her political career, Natalie has travelled overseas on several mission trips. Above, she rides a camel on one of three visits to Mongolia, where she taught Bible and English lessons to children. During her time in Israel, Natalie painted at the Christmas Lutheran Church of Bethlehem, cleaned Army camps, and comforted children receiving dialysis treatments.*



# Story from the Archives

## Do You Want my Mother's Wedding Dress?

By Vickie Wendel, Program Manager

The exhibit, *Wedding Belles and Beaus*, had a successful opening on July 11 with more than 300 people visiting that day. A couple weeks later, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* did a beautiful feature article about the exhibit in their *Variety* section. This publicity has gotten many people thinking about their own wedding apparel and how they might want to preserve it.

That was the case with a brother and sister who arrived at ACHS with their mother and grandmother's wedding dresses.

Grandmother's dress was in wonderful condition and very complete -- even the stockings she wore in the early 1900s! Unfortunately, Grandma never lived in Anoka County, so while beautiful, the dress did not belong in our collection. We suggested they talk to Kandiyohi County where Grandma spent most of her life.

Mom's wedding was also held in Kandiyohi County, so we started to give the same answer. Just then, Son mentioned Mom worked at the Anoka Junior High and we began to ask more questions. During the conversation, we learned the couple moved to Anoka by 1955, Dad served on the Halloween Committee several years, was involved with the Chamber of Commerce, as well as other business and civic activities in the area. Our interest in the wedding dress began to deepen.

Still, we had a number of wedding dresses already in the collection from the 1940s. Textiles, especially wedding dresses, require significant space to store and are expensive to care for due to their special preservation needs through the years. Accessioning one is not a decision made lightly.

During more conversation with the family, we learned Dad wore his military uniform for the wedding. The family had pictures, Dad's uniform, and agreed to donate these additional items also. The plot thickened! This is exactly what we want when ACHS accepts an artifact. The better the story that goes with an artifact, the more valuable the artifact is in our collection.

We encouraged the family to look for the uniform and other ties the couple had to Anoka County. The next day, Son and Daughter appeared, but Son was disappointed. He thought Dad had been married in his Navy dress whites, but the photos showed a dark dress uniform. Son brought the suit he thought was his Dad's wedding suit, willing to donate it so ACHS could have both bride and groom clothing. Upon closer examination, we discovered the dark suit Dad wore in the years after the wedding and war, WAS his uniform! Dad had changed the military buttons to plain black ones and carefully removed the gold braid from the sleeves. In the pockets, we found ticket stubs from a dance dated 1953 and a funeral card from Dad's father's funeral. Dad had reused his old

Navy dress uniform as his best suit in the years after the war. What a story about meeting the challenges of post-war shortages!

The family also brought in a number of photos, some Halloween memorabilia, Dad's two Purple Heart medals (one of them had the shrapnel removed from Dad in the box with the medal), and a "memory" style book Mom had completed about their lives. The family opted to keep the memory book, but agreed ACHS could make a copy of the pages we thought would best illustrate a more complete version of their story. We began flipping through the

book and stopped (with lots of excited chatter) on the page where Mom wrote about how she and Dad had gotten engaged.

*In August 1942, Clem brought me a diamond ring one evening. A little later I discovered his draft notice in his shirt pocket. We went for a long drive, & watched the river by the bridge in Anoka. (How surprised we'd have been to know that Anoka would be our home.)*

This acquisition is rich with detail relating to our county and stands as a perfect example of how important the story behind an artifact becomes when accepting it. Space, time, and cost are all taken into consideration when an object is offered to ACHS and we have to think carefully about the stories we can tell with it.

That, after all, is our mission: to gather, preserve and share this history of Anoka County. We do this through the artifacts in the collection and the stories those artifacts tell.

Our members and friends must also share that job, as it's too much for us to accomplish alone.

When you have an object you think should be preserved, consider the story it tells. That story gives the object value far beyond any antique value. Make sure people around you know that story and that it will be passed on with the object. That well-loved and worn quilt you got from your grandmother as a graduation gift? *It will be just an old, ratty quilt your grandchildren could consider putting on a garage sale unless you preserve the story as well as the quilt.*

Every object has a story about who owned it, how it was made, how much it cost, what it did, and more. Those are the kinds of questions we will ask you if you bring an object to ACHS for our collection. The richer the detail in the story behind the object, the more likely it will be accepted into the collection and the story told as a part of our greater Anoka County story.



*How did you become engaged? In August 1942, Clem brought me a diamond ring one evening. A little later I discovered his draft notice in his shirt pocket. We went for a long drive, & watched the river by the bridge in Anoka. (How surprised we'd have been to know that Anoka would be our home.)*

A portion of the memory book

# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to August 21, 2015

## General Donations

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## Become a Sponsor

An Evening Honoring

### Natalie Haas Steffen

*Survivor of Life's Unexpected Curveballs*

Guest speakers include Chief Executive Officer of the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority Ted Mondale.

September 17, 2015  
Courtyards of Andover

Gold Sponsor—\$3,000  
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## Sponsorship Levels

**Bronze Sponsor** - Will receive a listing in the program, a link on the ACHS website, and the option of a table at the Dinner. Please provide us with the names of your guests (up to 8) so that we may send out tickets.

**Silver Sponsor** - Will receive Bronze level benefits, and an on-air mention on Bob106 FM radio. The radio station will make a public announcement about the dinner and list all of the sponsors.

**Gold Sponsor** - Will receive all prior benefits, as well as the opportunity to attend a Golden Dinner provided by ACHS. Gold level sponsors will attend this separate event with ACHS Executives and speakers from the Recognition Dinner.

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## Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member with ACHS!

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

Business Sponsors receive membership benefits, a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, credit towards event sponsorships and an ACHS window cling to display.

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



# Programs & Events

## An Evening with Natalie Haas Steffen

September 17

**Location: Courtyards of Andover, 13545 Martin St NW, Andover**

Time to celebrate, honor, and roast the one and only Natalie Haas Steffen! Special guest Ted Mondale will join emcee Tom Weaver in what promises to be a fun-filled evening of verbal sparring. Enjoy time to mingle with those who know Natalie best while viewing personal artifacts from her childhood, political career, missionary work, and philanthropy efforts. Next, relish a formal plated dinner from the Courtyard's chefs, then finally lean back to experience stories of a dedicated woman who continues to thrive despite life's many curveballs and electric fences. Find more information and advance tickets sales online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org), on the phone at (763) 421-0600, or at the Anoka County History Center

**Cost: \$50 nonmembers, \$45 ACHS members**



## Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours

Various dates and times throughout September and October

**Location: Anoka County History Center**

Join us for history and mystery throughout September and October as you venture through downtown Anoka with a costumed tour guide. Anoka County Historical Society's Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours run throughout the summer. Enjoy an evening walk around the city and beat the fall crowds by signing up for a summer tour to hear the history and unexplained stories of homes and businesses in this historic city. **Advanced registration required.**

**Tickets can be purchased at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)**

**Cost: \$9 Adults, \$7 Children (6-17), \$7 ACHS Members**



## Ghosts of Anoka Virtual Tour

October 27, 6 p.m.

**Location: Anoka County History Center**

Want to enjoy the Ghosts of Anoka, but want to avoid the weather? Join our virtual tour in the meeting room at the Historical Society. This pictorial tour will contain the same history and mystery from the comfort of the History Center. **Advanced registration required.**

**Tickets can be purchased at the History Center, at 763-421-0600 or online at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)**

**Cost: \$9 Adults, \$7 Children (6-17), \$7 ACHS Members**

## Monuments to Life Cemetery Tours

October 1—Lakeview Cemetery, Nowthen

October 3—Forest Hill Cemetery, Anoka

October 6— West Oak Grove Cemetery, Oak Grove

All tours begin at 7 p.m. at the cemetery.

They say "dead men tell no tales," but there are plenty of stories buried in the cemeteries of Anoka County. Join us for an evening walk among the tombstones, as your guide relates the stories and discusses what the examples of tombstone art and symbolism mean. Advanced registration required.

**Cost: \$9 adults, \$8 ACHS members per cemetery or all three cemeteries \$25 adults, \$22 ACHS members**



## Book Talk and Signing

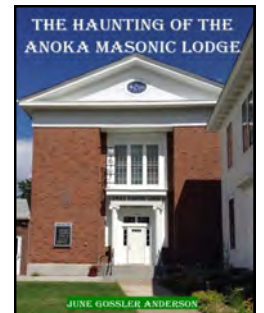
**The Haunting of the Anoka Masonic Lodge by June Anderson**

October 20, 7 p.m.

**Location: Anoka History Center**

Local author, June Anderson, delves into the history of the Masonic Lodge and Colonial Hall in the downtown city of Anoka in her new book, *The Haunting of the Anoka Masonic Lodge*. Anderson shares the findings of paranormal experts and has personally taken part in investigations at the Lodge to better help both the reader and herself appreciate and understand the realm of the unknown. Come hear about this new book, and learn about a new aspect of one of Anoka's National Register properties. Books will be available for purchase.

**Cost: FREE**



## We've updated our email addresses!

All ACHS staff email addresses have been updated to match our website name. Each staff email is our name @AnokaCountyHistory.org. Example: Vickie@AnokaCountyHistory.org Our old email addresses that ended in @ac-hs.org will still work for the next year, but remember to update those contact lists.



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

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**SERVING:**

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



## The Year in Review

As we publish this last newsletter of 2015, we'd like to peek behind us, highlight our current endeavors, and gaze into future possibilities. Bear with us; this will be a fun ride.

The year began with Executive Director Todd Mahon accepting a new position at the Minnesota Historical Society and the ACHS Board of Directors voting to hire Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp in his stead. Through these months, staff began planning the Heritage Home and Garden Tour, held programs at Anoka County libraries, and maintained business as usual for patrons using the library. Transitions in leadership bring a learning curve for all involved, but with a busy summer of events and deadlines, the ACHS adapted and moved on in short order.

Appearances at the County Fair, Nowthen Threshing Show, Linwood Family Fest, Anoka Car Show, Riverfest, and Rice Creek Arts Festival gave us the chance to meet new people, volunteers, and partners. One of these new partners, North Metro Mayors Association, provided many opportunities in networking, who notified us of events like the dedication of the Curling Club in Blaine as an Olympic training facility or various meet and greet nights. Faithful partner organizations including the Chamber of Commerce and Rotaries, the VFW and Legions, brought us in to provide programming and activity updates. A tour of City Councils and other public entities, as well as a unification of nonprofit groups in the County, furthered the ability of ACHS to connect with the stories we must tell.

And speaking of stories...were you in Fridley on October 30? Rebecca joined other speakers on the TED Talk carpet, a bright red circle you can find all over the

internet, that night to admit she would let her diaries burn. She said that as important as saving nitty gritty details can be, we can't save it all and what we do save should tell the story of us as clearly as possible. Couldn't make it? The recording will be available online soon.

So much of what ACHS does is related to storytelling. Whether it's helping authors like Johannes Allert, June Anderson, and Mel Aanerud research and promote their newest publications, or supporting the Genealogical Society's work on Tuesday mornings as they sift through records looking for requested information, we make the collection publicly accessible. Sometimes this comes in the form of a new book, like our recently published *Anoka Halloween Collectibles* that compiles pictures and dates all in one place. Sometimes it's digitization efforts through the Minnesota Digital Library (find our collection at [reflections.mndigital.org](http://reflections.mndigital.org)). Sometimes it's the creation of a program detailing a town's history or the expansion of a popular program like the State Hospital, or maybe just a fresh delivery of an old favorite like Rum Runners or Logging.

Of course, the time commitment for staff to create quality, new programming and events runs high and we have an obligation to get the most "bang for our buck" out of each minute. That's where some of the future talk comes into play—our exhibit plans for interpreting the suburbanization of Anoka County.

We're highly fortunate to have one of the early leading documents discussing this concept, prepared for us in *The Story of the Suburbs in Anoka and Hennepin Counties* by Jodi Larson, Kyle Engelking and Karen Majewicz. The information contained in this report, combined with general documentation and research on the likes of Orrin Thompson who built acres and acres of

*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](mailto:achs@ac-hs.org)  
**AnokaCountyHistory.org**

## **History Center Hours**

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

## **Board of Directors**

District 1: Al Pearson  
District 2: Bill Nelson  
District 3: Orville Lindquist  
District 4: Lotus Hubbard  
District 5: Kate Morphew  
District 6: Mary Capra  
District 7: Bart Ward  
At-Large A: Lori Yager (Treasurer)  
At-Large B: Dennis Berg  
At-Large C: Tom Ward  
At-Large D: Dick Lang  
At-Large E: Bill Erhart (President)  
At-Large F: Paul Pierce (Secretary)  
At-Large G: Catherine Vesley  
At-Large H: Harvey Greenberg  
(Vice President)  
County Commissioner Liaison:  
Jim Kordiak

## **Staff**

Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp  
(Executive Director)  
Vickie Wendel (Program Manager)  
Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)  
Audra Hilse (Archivist &  
Administrator)  
Gail Dahl (Office Staff)  
Carol Dordan (Office Staff)  
Don Johnson (Office Staff)

*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 William Erhart*

Another year is about to go into the history books, while 2016 is fast approaching. In looking back, the Anoka County Historical Society was faced with a number of challenges, most important was Todd Mahon, the Executive Director, accepting a position with the State Historical Society. Prompt action was required by the Board to fill his position. The organization was lucky, and able to select from a host of well-qualified candidates, Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp. Even with the change in the Executive Director, a smooth transition occurred, and the organization was successful in completing ambitious programs that the organization is known for. One of the events included honoring Natalie Haas Steffen, one of Anoka County's first female County Commissioners. Not only was this a great opportunity to honor a worthy individual, but also showed how one person can make a big difference. Hopefully this event, as well as the work of documenting her life, can be a guide and inspire others who want to follow.

Each new generation needs leaders who hopefully have an appreciation of looking back and using the wisdom learned to look forward and make the tough decisions. One of the organization's goals is to preserve history and provide useful information to put the past into a broad context to enhance those who use this information in making better decisions.

Looking forward, our organization is blessed with several opportunities that could enhance ACHS and its goals. In reviewing these possibilities, both the staff and directors have been carefully looking in the past for purposes of improving the outcome of any future endeavors.

## **From the Director...**

*By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp*

We speak often about telling your story—heck, I just did a whole TEDx talk on the subject. But what does that mean for your family this holiday season? Regardless of how you celebrate, when you celebrate, or with whom you celebrate, I'm sure the next few months will have a gathering or two on the calendar.

We have a favor to ask of you during this time.

The ACHS strives for inclusion, but the realization of that goal is only as good as the stories we receive. We know untold tales live along the edges of the county, or that our immigrant population doesn't have much real estate in our exhibit hall. We understand that the languages spoken at home aren't reflected in our library or archives. We can only preserve the stories that come to us, however.

During the next couple of months, as you and those you know gather together, jot down some notes of those traditions. Copy the special recipes and make an extra print of the group picture you mail out. Think about how you can contribute to the gaps in our database and collection, or who you know that could. Then bring them to ACHS for us to see!

There are thousands of voices in Anoka County with more experiences than we could ever tell. But with your help reaching out to residents who aren't members and new residents who don't know we exist, we can certainly try to make a dent in that void.

Thank you for being on our team and making the ACHS a top-notch organization!





new housing in the 1950s and 60s, will provide the basic structure on which to hang a number of additional conversations over the next several years.

It's from these additional topics we will develop an enormous amount of product. Consider how suburbanization impacted energy use, wildlife, immunizations, agriculture, work life, transportation, schools, and clubs like 4-H—if each of these topics received an intensive study by one staff member, that single body of research could not only create an exhibit in the museum, but also an education box for teachers to use in the classroom, a published booklet, an oral program, website content, digitized records to increase public access, oral histories, and youth activities. Over the course of time, the material could come together in an online encyclopedia or coffee table book, while exhibit pieces get downsized and made into a travelling display available for city halls, community centers, libraries, or other public places interested in hosting them.

And the interest is there. If we had any doubt regarding the enthusiasm of area students in history, they were laid to rest in one fell swoop on the first day of the new History Club. Boring title, lots of fun, trust us. The teachers in question volunteered their time to bring 10 students to the museum after school for an hour long program of something different each month--how to use the library, how to identify a photo, how to find your house on a map etc. The Amazing Lisa (cape included, I do believe) called rather sheepishly a week prior to the event saying her numbers had risen to 30. We said no sweat. We changed a few things. Lisa came back. This time in person, she looked a bit paler. Clearing her throat, she announced she had *capped the activity at 75*. Recovering from our shock, we revamped the program and introduced everyone to turnips, the back storage area, and how we do our jobs. This month, we tackled archeology.

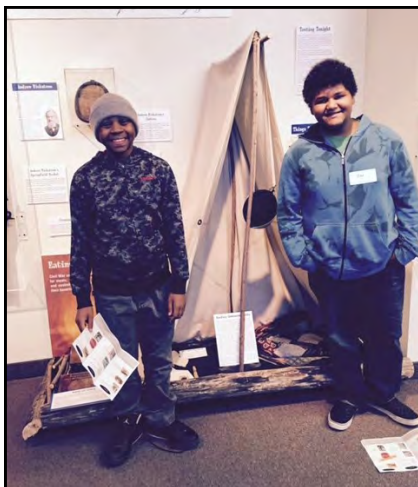
It's always neat to look at the bones and arrowheads we have in the collection, but even more so now. We had the opportunity this year to partner with Ramsey County, Scott County, and Dakota County on a Legacy grant that hired an archeologist to produce a number of reports, conduct scientific analysis, and outreach programming. Jeremy Nienow has proved a tremendous asset to the ACHS in these areas, as well as most recently helping produce our newest QCTV episode and procuring an appearance by State Archeologist Scott Anfinson. One portion of the science used XRF technology, a “non-destructive analytical technique used to

determine the elemental composition of materials” to essentially gather a profile of the Kelsey bricks, compare it to clay collected in the field, and match it to a database to see where other Kelsey bricks may have ended up. Other tests will analyze organic remains on potsherds and other artifacts to help tell a broader story about their origins and use.

Our grant opportunities don't stop there, however. Two other grants have carried us through this year as we investigated the feasibility of shared “back office” services and also plotted an interpretive audio tour along existing bike trails that mimic the Ox Cart Trail route. During this work, we have determined that some services may likely be cost shared while others are simply too cumbersome for multiple organizations to undertake, or provide no cost benefit to the participants. We have also learned about travel routes through the County, as the Ox Cart Trail shifted into military roads, railroads, and highways, as well as the Métis who traversed them so successfully during the fur trade years. Again, connections abound, as from that information sprung a series of articles for the *Quad Cities Press* featuring Father Goiffon, who travelled the same routes, often in the company of the Métis, stopping for a time to serve at St. Genevieve's church in Centerville.

Our public outreach and communication activities have also sprouted some new legs. Building on the success of this history column in the *Anoka County UnionHerald*, we have added a similar piece in the *Quad Cities Press*, and most recently the Citizen. We continue to produce episodes of *It's Your History* in conjunction with QCTV and smaller pieces with North Metro TV, but also appeared on a segment of Comcast Newsmakers and in several news articles in the *StarTribune*. We plan to add another newsletter to our mailing, helping to keep our supporters up-to-date on the status of current and future projects as 2016 begins to take shape.

Efforts to evaluate our role, innovate our methods, and ultimately better serve the Anoka County community are under way as you read this. The term “strategic planning” carries with it an ominous and cumbersome aura. While it's a process we must go through to better see the opportunities waiting for us, we'd much prefer to think of it simply as focusing our efforts intentionally, using our values, vision, and mission, to use each resource we have as effectively as we can. Thank you for being with us on the journey!



Left and middle: 6th graders at ACHS for History Club. Right: Intern Molly scanning a brick from the collection

# Collections Corner

By Audra Hilse, ACHS Archivist & Administrator

It goes without saying that people bring us interesting things as artifact donations. As often as possible, we try and get the story that goes with the interesting artifacts, in order to make them even more engaging. Sometimes, though, the full story of an object is not known to anyone still living, and the most that we can get is tantalizing hints.

The doll pictured, right, falls into the latter category. It was brought to us recently as part of a collection of things found inside the walls of a house in the city of Anoka. The family who owns the house had remodeled in 1980, and found a number of interesting items which they fortunately kept, and lately brought to the Historical Society. Among other interesting items (including a shoe, a corn-cob pipe, and envelopes postmarked from the 1890s and early 1900s), was this little doll.

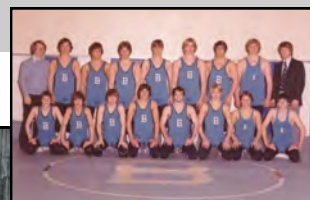
She is just 6 and ¾ inches high from the top of her head to the hem of her dress, and is obviously homemade. Her round head is stuffed, probably with rag pieces, and secured with string to form the neck. Her arms are made of fabric rolls that were stitched together. The dress is made of fabric that probably dates from the 1870 to 1880 – the combination of plain, plaid and stripes as the fabric pattern is unusual. Her apron has a little pocket on it. We estimate that the doll itself is probably c. 1900, but would have been made with fabric scraps leftover from other household projects, so it is not surprising to find that an older fabric was used to make it.

This is where the mystery begins, however, because we do not know anything else about her. Prior to the current family, the house was owned by someone in the Barstow family, but we do not know if that ownership goes back to the time period when these items would likely have been put into the walls. There is also the question of why the doll was put inside the wall in the first place – did the girl who owned (and likely made) it not want her anymore? We will keep digging, to see if we can find out who lived in the house at the time and what stories we can learn about them.

Even if we can't ever learn her full story, the doll is still an intriguing addition to the collections, giving us a glimpse into the life of a young girl in Anoka more than a hundred years ago.



## Preserve your Blaine History



What part of Blaine's history is hiding in your basement? Perhaps there are photographs of a long-gone Blaine Business, the family home or community events. Perhaps there are documents produced by a local club, or the brochures given when moving into an Orrin Thompson home.

Discover your history and bring it to the Northtown library to get scanned with equipment provided by Minitex and the Minnesota Digital Library. Community scanning is offered in partnership with Minitex and the Anoka County Library. All materials digitized will then be added to the collections of the Anoka County Historical Society, the Anoka County Library, and the Minnesota Digital Library in order to better preserve the history of our community.

This service is free and open to the public, but scanning will be limited based on the time constraints of the day.

**Where:** Northtown Library  
711 County Rd 10 NE,  
Blaine, MN 55434  
**When:** November 21  
**Time:** 11 a.m.—4 p.m.



# Volunteer World

By Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator

October found the volunteers at the Anoka County Historical Society bustling. Volunteers organized collections, created finding aids for researchers, scanned photographs, and gave of their time and talents.

This past month, we received a new piece in our collection: an entire wall from Dan Laws' BBQ complete with painted mural. This wall is six feet tall and seven feet wide, and while we are excited to have it in our collection, we do not have experience caring for such a large piece of art. Board member, volunteer and artist, Catherine came in to lend her expertise. She cleaned the wall, and suggested preservation measures for the edges of the sheet rock to prevent further deterioration. With her advice and care, we can save and tell this piece of Anoka County History. Come and see it for yourself on display in our Exhibit Hall.

The volunteers that live and breathe history in this month of Halloween celebrations are ACHS's core of Ghost Tour Docents. These guides show up rain or shine, warm or cold weather ready to lead groups of 25 people around city of Anoka in our Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours. While the tours begin in the summer months, the majority of tickets are sold for September and October with the final tour on Halloween night.

These volunteers are the face of ACHS and gave tours to over 1,400 people throughout the ghost tour season. They answered random questions about Anoka County History, listened to ghost stories, met people from all over the metro area and beyond who come to Anoka for the tour, and have fun.

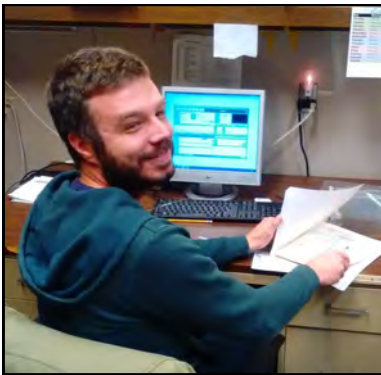
As the popularity of these tours continues to grow, we will work to update the tour with new stops and stories for next year. If you are interested in joining the ranks of Ghost Tour Guides we will host training days this spring, contact me at 763-421-0600 or email Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org for more information.

I don't get to say this often enough, but a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers who help ACHS preserve and tell the stories of local history—we are a better place because of you!



Board member and artist Catherine cleaning Dan Laws' BBQ mural.

## Meet the Amazing ACHS Interns!



**Zach:** Greetings! My name is Zach, and I am an intern at ACHS. I've been working here since the beginning of September, and my primary task has been analyzing boxes of documents donated throughout the years by surrounding communities. I am pursuing a degree in Library Technology, but I feel that the skills learned in such a program work well

with the needs of the patrons of a historical society, as our focus is on technical aspects like indexing and archiving.

That's enough about me. I want to tell you briefly about my expectations and opinions of your community and my internship. It's worth noting that I am from Minneapolis, and had never visited Anoka County prior to my internship. When I discovered this opportunity, I was thrilled. While I had never been to Anoka before, I had certainly heard about it being the Halloween capital of the world. Halloween is my favorite holiday, so I was really excited to be up to my neck in unsorted plastic pumpkin pails and Garrison Keillor costumes. I quickly found that this wasn't the case at all. Instead, I've discovered a vast collection of letters, government documents, yearbooks, report cards, and personal effects that have revealed the deep and rich history of Anoka County. I recently discovered a short story about the settlement of the area that was just tucked away in a stack of documents from the 1800s.

I'm looking forward to making more amazing discoveries, and continuing to piece together the story of Anoka County.



**Molly:** I am a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology, with a certificate in Archaeology. In June 2015, I joined ACHS as an intern and my first task was to create a "Museum in a Box" activity based on immigration to Anoka County, Minnesota. This

box is available for rent by teachers across Anoka County as a hands-on learning activity for students, which serves to tie the immigrant data of the past to the immigrant data of the present, highlighting how the past can teach and guide the future.

Using my background in archaeology, I am currently creating an exhibit on the archaeology of Minnesota that will be installed in January and will showcase actual prehistoric artifacts from collections at ACHS. These artifacts will also be used in my second "Museum in a Box" program that will show their relevance to Anoka County, past and present. Drawing from my skills in curation, I have also photographed the prehistoric collection at ACHS and have built appropriate storage mounts for those artifacts. Other projects I have been involved in through ACHS include a weekend of living history at a local threshing show, a public presentation on archaeology, and a beginner's grant writing conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.



# Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to October 21, 2015

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As a Business Member you receive membership benefits, a listing in our newsletter and website, an ACHS window cling to display, and free exhibit admission to all employees.

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

# Programs & Events

## Book Talk and Signing

**Images of America: Ham Lake by Mel Aanerud**

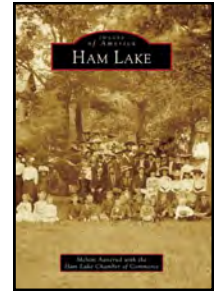
**Tuesday November 17**

**5-7 p.m. book signing, 5:30 p.m. book talk**

**Location: Anoka History Center**

Ham Lake is a perfect geographical township, six miles by six miles square as provided in the Northwest Territories Act of 1787. This book on the history of Ham Lake by Mel Aanerud follows the process of those lives as they farmed, built houses of worship, houses of learning and houses of commerce. It follows a few interesting characters, award winning businesses and some who had political prowess. Book signing held 5—7 p.m., book talk to be held at 5:30p.m. No registration required.

**Cost: FREE**



## Library Program

**The History of Blaine**

**November 21, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.**

**Location: Northtown Library**

**711 County Rd 10 NE, Blaine, 55434**

Join us for a program about the history of the city of Blaine. Many early pioneers in Anoka County settled in this area, and there are many fascinating stories about life in Blaine from the time before it was a city all the way up until the present. **This program will be presented twice: at 1pm and again at 3pm.** Programs are offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and are funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

We will also be pilot testing a new project, where community members are encouraged to bring materials important to them and their family history to be scanned with equipment provided by Minitex and the Minnesota Digital Library. Community scanning is offered in partnership with Minitex and the Anoka County Library. These programs are free but seating may be limited. See page 4 for more information.

**Cost: FREE**



## Library Program

**Quilt Facts, Folklore and FABRICation**

**December 12, 1 p.m.**

**Location: Northtown Library**

**711 County Rd 10 NE, Blaine, 55434**

So many stories have been handed down, but they don't always hold up under a close look at history. Find out the real stories behind what we all thought we knew about the history of quilting. Actual quilt squares, small quilts, books and period patterns are available for attendees to see and compliment the many color photos of antique quilts in the program. The "warmth" and variety of this program is sure to delight even non-quilters.

No registration is required for this free program but seating may be limited. For more information call 763-717-3267. This program is offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

**Cost: FREE**



## Library Program

**Rum Runners and Temperance Tantrums**

**January 23, 1 p.m.**

**Location: Rum River Library**

**4201 6th Ave, Anoka, 55303**

The 18th Amendment made it illegal to manufacture, sell, or transport intoxicating liquors and it took effect on January 17, 1920. However, the law did not eliminate the problem! The clash between those opposed to intoxicating beverages and those who wanted to imbibe was sometimes violent, sometimes comical or even just amazing. Bootleggers and rum runners thrived in Anoka County and Minnesota even before prohibition went nationwide in 1920. Why such a law was thought necessary, how was it enforced (or not) and the people it affected make for great stories.

No registration required for this free program but seating may be limited. For more information call 763-576-4695.

This program is offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

**Cost: FREE**



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Anoka, MN 55303  
(763) 421-0600

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