

H I S T O R Y 21



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*Front Cover: Photographic Christmas message with Baby Ruth sitting with her hands in the air with black background. Ruth is wearing white dress, tights and shoes. Message reads: "'So Big' Is our wish sincere For your Merry Christmas And Glad New Year. Frances and Orval Engen and Baby Ruth 1937."
Object ID: 2003.1108.016*

From the President

When I think of this year and ACHS, the words that come to mind are: resilience, persistence, adaptability, amazing.

When COVID-19 restrictions were implemented in March, the staff hunkered down safely at home, put together a strategy using digital tools and social media to do their work and to continue to bring history to all of us in Anoka County. Obstacles became opportunities. While so many Historical Societies have closed their doors, ACHS has remained in Business.



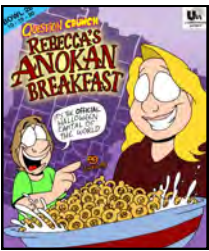
Despite the new way of doing business we connected with record numbers of people and can connect to anywhere in the world. We travelled virtually through all 21 communities of Anoka County by the Tour of Anoka County, we explored the collection highlighting interesting artifacts on social media, we created a who-done-it "The Un-Wise Murder Mystery", continued to work with Federal Cartridge to catalog their business history, gathered COVID-19 quarantine stories, virtually toured the graveyards, we are working to ensure that our organization is inclusive and diverse, and have, within the last week, entered into the world of podcasting.

It is due to the collective talents of many people: within the staff, the volunteers and interns, the community, and the Board of Directors that allowed us to thrive. We adapted in the face of adversity, uncertainty, and the unknown and found the strength and the resilience to not only succeed, but to exceed beyond expectations.

It was the right combination coming together at the right time that has allowed this to work.

I ask that you all be ambassadors for us – share our story – direct people to our Website – share our posts on Social Media – listen and learn from our Podcasts - and Be Active Be Engaged!!

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President



From the Director

If my days as an Army wife taught me anything, it was that month 10 of a one-year deployment felt like the homestretch. Month eight and nine were awful. Enough was just enough by then. The struggle felt old and I felt spent. But month 10? We got this.

My point? We're turning a corner on the COVID virus and we can soon rebuild from the stress of the past 10 months.

Don't get me wrong, reintegration after a deployment was no picnic either, but it provided a new adventure with new goals. So life will be post COVID. A time of rebuilding our communities, rethinking our values, and reimagining what we hold as priorities.

Please share your story with us as you live it.

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Arch's Folly

The following is an excerpt from "Memories of Life..." by Arch G. Pease, pg. 45-51. Ellipses indicate text removed by ACHS for narrative purposes. Read his full memoir in History 21: The Vault and tune into History 21: The Podcast to hear an oral interview with Mr. Pease conducted in 1989.

NEWSPAPERING WAS MY BUSINESS

It was a rather beautiful September day as I walked from my home at 8th avenue and Main street in Anoka to the printing office at the foot of Harrison Street. And as I walked, I couldn't help but second guess myself. I should have taken any one of the jobs that had been offered and I would be on easy street for some time. Had I made a mistake? It was too late to change. And so I entered into the building noting that it needed paint, that the front wall slanted, that the whole area was in more than a dilapidated condition. The front office, scarcely big enough to hold three people let alone my father, mother, bookkeeper and myself, had to be rearranged and there was no money to do so.

That first week was a nightmare. While my mother and I got along very beautifully at home, yet she was a demon when in the office. Nothing could be done to suit her and I was not one to accept the relentless criticism that poured out daily.

On October 1st I quit. I went home and was in a real state of despair. I knew it would not work because it just wasn't working. Every suggestion that I made was turned down. And that was that.

Shortly after 5 o'clock that evening, my father and mother drove into the yard and dad asked me, "What is it you really want?" I told him and I minced no words. I was to be in charge of the plant. He and I would work out the policies together. Mother would have to stay home. A five year plan would be worked out for the improvement of the plant.

NEWSPAPERING

... In 1948 things had improved a bit but the cash position of the plant was poor to non-existent. What was needed

Above: "The plant was in a rented building of questionable construction that was built back in 1907 out of bricks from a chimney of a large manufacturing plant. The plant had been dismantled and the chimney felled, the good bricks chipped and that made the walls of the building." [44]

was a new press to replace the three currently in use. It had to be a press that could handle at least eight 8 column pages or 16 tabloid and print from a roll. ...It was a usual Monday at the office when the phone rang ... the caller said that he knew where there was a used newspaper press for sale and suggested that he call a man named Fred Turner in New Ulm, Minnesota, as the press was located there. "I will call him right away," I said, "and many thanks for tipping me off."

After hanging up the phone I turned to my father and said, "There is a newspaper press for sale at New Ulm in the newspaper office there and I think that we should take a good hard look at it." My father answered, "We could surely use it but we cannot afford it. Do you know what the price would be?" I answered that I did not but that I would find out. Fred Turner was called and I learned that the press was a Model E Angle Bar Duplex, capable of printing from a roll and eight pages, eight columns wide at a time. The cutoff was 22 1/2 The asking price was \$10,000.

When my father was told of this he simply replied, "We cannot afford it." And that seemed to end the matter.

On Saturday morning, Arch, in company with his wife, Amy, and two children, Barb and Tom, left Anoka and drove south to New Ulm. He found the offices of the New Ulm Daily Journal and entered the building. ... he was shown into the basement where the paper had its pressroom and there, sure enough, was the press. ... It took some time but a price of \$6,500 was finally agreed upon....

But how was the press going to be paid for? That was a big question. The \$950 that had been put aside was hardly enough to do the job. That bothered. First of all we knew there was no chance of getting financing in our home town. That was for sure. ...

On Monday around noontime Arch drove to that neighboring bank and finally managed to get a loan of enough money to buy the press and at a good rate of interest—5%. And that 5% was to be on the unpaid balance.

Arch was happy. He was back at the shop— and told his father about the deal and his father threw his hands up in the air, said it was "stupid," walked out of the office and went home. At home Arch's father said to his wife, "That kid of ours is nuts. He has made a deal to buy a press and has managed a loan to finance it but he doesn't even realize that it has to be paid off." And so it went. ...

That same day, in the mail, came the drawings of the base for the press. My gosh, "I said when I looked at the drawings, "the press has to have a pit that is five feet deep, have 8" by 8" timbers on either side for the press to rest on, be all concrete and that is a cost I didn't expect. Well, to make a long story short, another \$600 was needed to build

the pit. "I will take this much out of my savings," I said but when he talked this over at home, his wife was real dubious about the whole idea. George Delong did the job.

... [T]he next thing was the press. It was the middle of the week when Joe Zwach called



Arch Pease and his mother, Mary Pease, in old Pease Printery office, undated.

me. "Arch, this is Joe," he said, "and I am down at New Ulm. Got a problem. To get this damn press out of the basement is going to take a bit of work. Instead of the \$600 I quoted you, it will be more like \$1600." "In fact," he continued, "we have to take some of it apart. It will take a bit of doing. Shall we go ahead?" I could have cried. "Maybe someday I will learn," I said to myself, "I sure missed the boat on this one. I missed the building of a pit, the taking of the press from the basement, what else can there be?"

I watched while the press was brought into the plant, placed on the timbers and fastened to the floor. Then the rest of the press was put in place and it was ready to roll. All of this, of course, was not done in a single day but took several.

At last it was ready for the first run and then came the problems. The press started to roll and the web broke. It was adjusted and broke again. Although the press run began about 3:30 p.m. it was after 10 p.m. and only a few hundred papers were off the press. Finally I called a friend of mine in Minneapolis and told him of the trouble. "Call Sidney Johnson over in St. Paul," he said. "He is the best pressman around and maybe he can help you."

And so at 10:30 p.m. a call was made to Sidney. "I don't know," Sidney said when he was reached, "I just got home from a call down state and I am tired." I carefully explained the situation to him and after awhile Sidney said, wait right there and I'll be out. He was given directions and sure enough at midnight he was there.

The way Sidney went to work on the press, you knew that he was a pressman. After an hour of checking this and that he said that the trouble was one of two things. "We'll try this one first," he said and snap, the web broke again. "Well," Sidney said, "That's that."

So he began loosening all of the belts that moved the paper towards the folder and he started the press again. This time there was no break and as Sidney increased the speed of the eight page Angle Bar Model E Duplex, he got it up to 7200 an hour and I was almost sure that the press was going to jump out of the plant and into the river. "You won't have much trouble with that press from now on," Sidney said, "It is a good press but like everything else when it is moved it has to be check out all over again." It was 2 a.m. before Sidney left the plant, the papers were all off the press and my first experience with a roll fed press was over.

A few weeks later I thought back to the night that the press started running and remembered that some of the employees had at first called it "Arch's Folly." But since that night the press had run very well. Each week there was a web break or two but that was all and something that it was real easy to live with.

All seemed to be going well but business was off and that meant we had to scratch to even meet the payroll. For several weeks I had not been able to cash my own check as there were not funds enough in the bank. And I was worried because knowing that in a few days the balance was due on the press and we had spent so much money in getting the press out of that New Ulm basement that we didn't have any money left. It was on Thursday that I received a call from Wally Mickelson who had sold me the press and Wally said, "You know, Arch, you owe me some money. It is due on Monday and I hope that you'll get it in the mail on time."

I replied that we are having a bit of trouble and that we might be a bit late making the payment to which Wally replied, "Well, don't be too late. You have 30 days to pay it up from Monday or else I'll have to take it back..."

Saturday came and, as usual, I was at the plant most of the day. But there were no real sizable checks in the mail and I was really down in the dumps when I went home. That evening I learned that my daughter had to have a new dress, my son needed new shoes and my wife should have a new dress but there was no way it could be done. Frankly, I was nearing the end of the road and I did not know just what to do about it all



Arch Pease by press holding 1965 (Centennial) edition of Anoka Union.

And so as I went to bed that Saturday night, I prayed for help and finally dropped off to sleep. Then the phone rang. A look at the clock showed it was just midnight..."You better get dressed and come down to the plant right away," the voice said, "This is Rusty, your police chief and we have a problem." And Rusty was so right. The first thing that I saw when after arriving at the plant was the tail end of a semi-trailer sticking out of the side of the building. The cab was inside. "The rig skidded on the tracks," Rusty told me, "then it jack-knifed and the cab went right through the side of your building. We better get inside to see what damage was done there."

And the damage was there. The truck's cab had broken through the building's side, smashed to job presses and upset a third, run over several thousand pieces of completed job work and the place was a mess. With the help of a tow truck, that semi and cab were finally extricated from the building and, with the help of two policemen and a big canvas tarpaulin, the hole in the building was temporarily closed but someone had to stay there the rest of the night and so that was a job for me.

On Sunday I managed to get a couple of men who boarded up the side of the building until they could get the materials to brick in the side and cleanup inside began. Two presses were damaged beyond repair and it was necessary to buy another press to stay in business. And I just did not know what to do.

The same afternoon a claims agent from the owners of the semi trailer came and offered to make settlement. By this time I had some figures. ...And so the total added up to \$8,700. The insurance company offered \$1,500 and it was not accepted. I told them that \$10,000 was what would be acceptable and not a cent less or the issue would be decided in court. This was a reasonable request because of the time lost, my own work on it, the cleanup, inconvenience and besides, it was none of my doing.

The insurance company refused. So an attorney was hired. They went over the case. ...Once seated in the office my attorney, Ernie Jorgenson who was a long time friend, said "I heard that you were having a bit of a hard time in paying for that press you got in." I allowed as this was true. "Well," Jorgy said, "Here is something for you." And he handed me a check for \$18,000 [from the insurance company] "Will you settle for this?" "How did you do it?" I asked. "That is a secret," Jorgy said and would say no more. "How much do I owe you," I asked and Jorgy replied, "Nothing. This could give you the start that you need and that is pay enough." ...

At my first opportunity I went to the bank, got two certified checks and sent one to Wally Mickelson ...and also a check to the equipment supplier in Minneapolis and the rest went into the company account and then I cashed my long held pay checks. And if you had been watching me that day, you would have seen me look towards the sky and say, "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You." Oh, yes, my wife got a new dress, shoes etc., our son got the shoes and our daughter got the dress. It pays to believe.

ACHS HIRING PROCESS

By Rebecca Ebneth-Desens

Saying goodbye to exemplary staff as they move to other parts of their career journey never makes the top 10 list of things to do in a day. That said, the growth of staff members does make my top 10—my top five, even—and so here we are, searching for a new human to fill the position of curator/archivist at the Anoka County Historical Society.

Over the past couple of months, we put out the call. Through the gift of PPP and CARES funds (big thanks to the County of Anoka and City of Anoka for selecting us as a recipient!) the Board of Directors resolved to NOT cut the open position and make the budget look a bit shinier for 2021. It felt like low-hanging fruit, that full-time position, but in reality...what is a museum without someone caring for all the legacy items archived there? That position stands as the single most important, mission-driven role at ACHS. So, no pressure.

As we have worked with our Facing Change consultant on DEAI concepts for two years, we thought it most appropriate to put change into true action. The hiring process is fraught with bias (unintended or otherwise) and the challenge of mitigating that, even a little, felt like one we could rise to. We decided to create a blind process.

First, we gathered resumes and cover letters like any other job posting. I sorted them into “qualified” and “unqualified” through the barest of means possible. We accepted history degrees, library and archiving degrees, and life experience as qualifying skills we would need for our new human. These applicants received the same message from me, which laid out the process, expectations, and deadlines associated with achieving employment at ACHS. They next received an invitation to Survey Monkey, where they found a 17-question written interview waiting for them. They all had at least a week to complete this document. The form asked about their work experience, how they would react to various elements of culture at ACHS, and specifics about projects they will work on.

Our next step as a selection committee of six was to read the 27 responses *without seeing their names*. This was the crucial point. We wanted to rank the answers strictly on the content and merit of the words and concepts presented. A personality truly began to take form. The committee also noticed how some people wrote casually, while others treated it like a grant application. Some answers added humor, others forgot they weren't texting. All of them conveyed professional experience and effort. It was truly a humbling experience for us to read the lives before us and hear the thoughts given space to accommodate introverts, autism, and stuttering.

From the rankings, the selection committee created a top 10 and top five list to select candidates for an interview over zoom, which we recorded with the permission of the candidates. This allowed us to hold the interview with just Sara (ACHS volunteer coordinator) and myself rather than the entire selection committee. By recording the interviews, we also shared them with our part-time staff, who until this point, had not been included in the process--or even watch them again ourselves.



Interviewing over Zoom is difficult for everyone to read body language, but most difficult for the candidate. Now, not only do they need to select the “right” attire to fit the organization, but they must construct a background and monitor their environment for distractions. They need a steady internet connection and good microphone as well as decent lighting. I’m happy to say it was actually MY internet connection that went wonky during one conversation, and MY cat that popped up in the background of another. The candidates took it all in stride.

At this point in the process, we had established our top five to be skilled, thoughtful, and full of great ideas for ACHS. Because of the written interview prior to this, we had far more information than a typical face-to-face interview. This played forward in the comfort zone on both sides of the screen, as the candidates said they felt like they had more time to think through their responses, time to research ACHS, and have many of their questions answered prior to our meeting. All of this meant the Zoom interview gave us context of personality and verbal delivery, as well as a chance to follow up on some of the answers they provided.

Within a list of more serious questions, we also asked things like, “how do you make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich” or “how many dishes are left on your counter at bedtime”? The quirky question disarmed the candidate, and they would laugh, think, then provide an honest answer—which said so much about their work process, planning, or preferred environment. “When do you pack for a trip” really asked, “what is your project planning strategy”? Where I would answer such a question with, “a couple days in advance and if I forgot my toothbrush, I could always find a new one wherever I was going” they detailed out lists made and rechecked, packing done and redone, weather reports watched, and itineraries written. For an archivist, this is a much more useful strategy than mine. For a director, however, rigidity is the enemy of a productive workday.

We invited two of the humans to the museum last Friday to have a socially distanced, masked tour of the building. The candidates spent time one-on-one with staff members to hear about the work each of them does and how they share space with the archivist/curator position. We answered questions, opened boxes, and poked around the stacks in the collections. This was their chance to see if they could imagine themselves into our space, our work, and our culture.

I’m happy to report that one did, in fact, accept our offer and will begin working with us before year-end. We are thrilled to have a full staff once more and excited to see where our new three-headed monster will take the Anoka County Historical Society.

I learned so much about myself as a leader—the rules I inadvertently follow, the edge I would be inclined to give to those I knew or had “put in their time” with us in the past. My own proclivity for one type of personality over another, my bias as a white female—all of these were silenced. In what still is a flawed system of hiring, I’m excited to see who I get to work with next. I’m proud ACHS took a different path on finding that human.



Left: Stills from Erin’s Zoom interview



Erin's cats, Oliver & Fantasia, join the family of ACHS staff pets and will be working remotely on team morale.

Meet Erin

When I'm in an archive, I feel like a kid in the candy store. I want to learn everything, explore everywhere, and discover every single piece that might have been forgotten in the crush of the collection. In my last archival position, I worked at Syracuse University's Special Collections Research Center processing their enormous Forrest J Ackerman collection. More accurately, I processed *part* of the Forrest J Ackerman collection, as even sorting through Forrest's mail has been a continuous project for several years now. Forrest J Ackerman (who was an active science fiction literary agent for most of the 20th century) seemed to have kept everything he ever received in the mailbox, whether that was bills, catalogs, or actual correspondence. Organizing Forrest's mail was a like a game of Clue wrapped up in a treasure hunt: there would be fan mail, there were responses from DAW, and then suddenly something would pop up from Walt Disney or the Church of Scientology. Forrest seemed to be connected to everyone, and those connections are what I love so much about archives.

This is one of the reasons I was so eager to apply to The Anoka County Historical Society — and why I'm so excited to have been hired. Even from the brief time I've had, I can see that there are connections everywhere— between artifacts, between places, between past and present, living and dead, between family, friends, and neighbors. It is an amazing, overwhelming experience to see the tangible evidence of our history and our ties to one another. I don't think that importance has ever been clearer than this year.

I will always remember 2020 as the year of COVID-19, worldwide protests, and a presidential election. Despite all this, I will also always remember 2020 as the year I graduated with my Masters degree, moved half-way across the country, got married, and was hired by ACHS. I don't think it's ever been more obvious than now that our history is being written all the time—and that it's our personal stories and our connections as people that give major events real meaning. I'm honored to be able to help bring these stories to life in the community, whether they're the ones that were forged a hundred years ago or those that are being lived today. Thank you for having me!

Introducing History 21: The Vault...

So much of what we do has moved online this year, and with it we've discovered new skills of video editing and production, podcasting, and web design. This opportunity to expand our audience and offer programming regardless of geography or time of day has allowed us to monetize our offerings in different ways. One of these new initiatives is expanding our History 21: The Newsletter to include a podcast and an exclusive space on the website named The Vault.

For a limited time, our current members and donors can create a Vault account FOR FREE as a thank you for your continued support to ACHS.

You have until January 15 to visit www.AnokaCountyHistory.org, click "History21" then "The Vault" and sign up. After January 15, the special programming, bloopers, full-length interviews, and collections behind-the-scenes will switch to a subscription fee of \$5 per month. By signing up before the deadline, you'll ensure access to this special content FOR LIFE. Yes, we like you that much!

...and its friend, the Podcast!



Remember the main article in the last newsletter? Listen to episode 1 and hear what Daryl had to say about finding a surprising kinship with his Great-Great Uncle. Then join us for episode 2 where we unearth some of Santa's hiding places in Anoka County, and stay for episode 3 to hear Arch Pease tell more stories about his time as editor of the *Anoka Union* and life in Anoka.

Find The Vault and The Podcast at AnokaCountyHistory.org!

Even though Covid-19 restrictions closed the History Center to the public, employees could still come in to work. I never had to worry about what I was going to do when I came in. I am responsible for much of the digital imaging (AKA photography). High on my to-do list was getting good images of the Veerac blueprints and technical drawings.

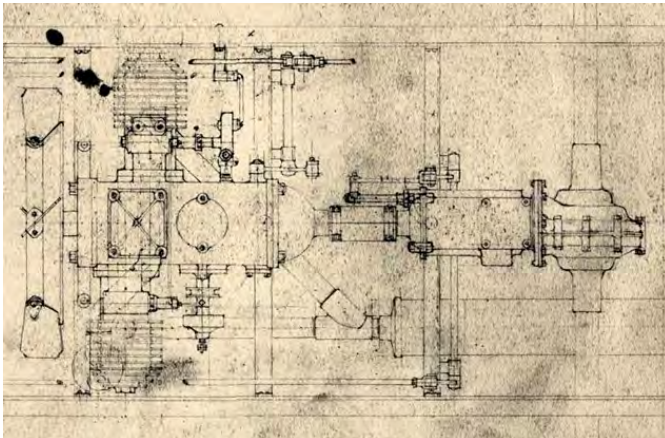


The Veerac Motor Company manufactured vehicles (cars and trucks) on Ferry St. in Anoka for a few years starting in 1910 but they were unable to survive for long in a very competitive market. A bundle of over 100 blueprints and original pencil drawings were donated to us by Myron Martin in 2010. The blueprints were mostly in good condition and showed individual components of the Veerac. They provided some insight into what it took to develop a car in 1910. One of the first steps was to design the building where the manufacturing was to take place. Then every bolt and spring needed to be carefully designed. And of course, the wrench [see above diagram]. Other blueprints in the collection included cylinder heads, connecting rods, crankshafts, and other motor components.

The technical drawings are original pencil drawings on paper. The pencil lines are faint and hard to see against the age-darkened paper. Fortunately, with the image processing capabilities available to us, the images could be enhanced to make them much more readable.

The level of detail shown in these drawings is impressive considering that computer assisted drafting didn't exist yet. One of my favorites is the drive train, a portion of the drawing shown here. I had not realized that the motor, with its two opposing horizontal cylinders, extended the width of the vehicle's body. It's also located directly beneath the driver's seat. Other drawings in the collection show the brake pedal assembly, the framing of the body and roof, the positioning of the leaf springs, and many other construction details.

Now that these blueprints and drawings are digitized, you can see them all on the public access point for our collections database at mncollections.org. Once on the home page, type "Veerac" in the search box and they should appear, as well as other Veerac



items in our collection. You might think that my backlog of digital imaging is shorter now, but that is barely the case. New things have been added to our collections in addition to the existing backlog. As I photograph more objects, you will probably see them in Collections Corner and on mncollections.org.



In our Volunteer World there is one group of super hero volunteers that fly under the radar. In these bi-monthly columns, I usually focus on the volunteers who take care of the stuff at the museum, or the volunteers who headed out to play at the Fair or Threshing Show in the “before times.” They are the ones in the spotlight. While there is some cross over, today I’m talking about the volunteers that take care of ACHS itself—not just its stuff and people. The ACHS Board of Directors. You’ve seen their names every time you open an issue of the History 21: The Newsletter. They are volunteers that fly under the radar — but importance to the organization can’t be diminished.

Our board is comprised of 15 folks. They meet as a full board each month, as well as in smaller committees and task forces. The members discuss and make thoughtful decisions about our budget, membership, the health and state of our collections, and not only where ACHS is today, but how it can continue growing for many more tomorrows.

Usually all those meetings happen at the History Center. But on April 9 the board held their first completely ZOOM meeting. With ages spanning over 50 years, the members had different experiences working with technology. But success! What seemed awkward and eye-crossing skill in April, has become an easier tool by the end of the year, especially for those who are spread geographically across Anoka County.

For their willingness to continue advocating for and ability to imagine ACHS’s future needs we send out the biggest Thank You. *game show voice* BUT that’s not all! Each board member also received a Certificate of Achievement “for conquering web cameras & microphones, to attend ZOOM meetings during this year of COVID in 2020 and in doing so, advancing the mission of ACHS through an uncertain world.” Hopefully soon we can add a roaring party in person with food, music, and laughter.

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

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2018
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Hawaii Nail Spa
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Rum River Restoration



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

OUR HEARTFELT THOUGHTS

Our communities have changed
drastically in 2020. Whatever
that loss looks like for you,
however you grieve right now,
we send our condolences and
our support.

Acknowledging the struggle—
regardless of its form—can bring
strength and unite the groups
we share.

MONTHLY

History Center Hours.

Open hours subject to change during this uncertain time. Please double check the most current open schedule on our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

Remember, FREE Vault sign up ends January 15! Thank you to our members and donors for their continued support of ACHS.

History 21: The Podcast will drop in our blog (soon available on podcasting hubs) the first and third Friday of each month. Look for the new episodes January 1 and 15

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

NEW in the VAULT

- Arch Pease Memoir recounting his life growing up in Anoka and running the *Anoka County Union*
- **FULL** Un-Wise Murder video
- **FULL** Sewing Program video
- Anoka County coloring sheets

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



Anoka County
Historical Society

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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H I S T O R Y 21



Volume 51 No.2 March-April 2021
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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



*In hopes we can meet in-person and outside for the Annual Meeting, the gathering has been scheduled for **MAY 18 AT 7 P.M.** If COVID or the weather make that impossible, we will have the meeting via Zoom (this will include a call-in option for those without internet or web cameras). Members will receive an email with more details within two weeks of the event, so mark your calendars now!*

After a short business meeting to install new Board members and approve the 2020 financial statements, attendees will enjoy special entertainment created just for you! ACHS broke new ground in the past year with programming of all sorts, so expect some of those characters to return for a special Q&A session. What did it feel like to film a true crime drama? How did the staff adapt the Civil War program for a digital classroom presentation? Bring your questions for the panel.

Front Cover: Vivian Daly on the Daly Farm in Andover, 1957.

Object ID: AG100.Daly27

Annual Report Cover: Unidentified gentleman from the Downs family glass negative collection captured in two different poses. Circa 1900

Object ID: 2005.1361.048 & 2005.1361.049



**MUSEUM
CLOSED**

VS

**OPEN
ONLINE**

2020
ANNUAL REPORT
THE YEAR OF COVID

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



I'm grateful to say yet again how 2020 became a year of opportunity for ACHS due in a large part to the strategic plan set forth by the Board of Directors in 2018. The staff and BOD has already implemented a significant portion of the large-scale goals, including focusing all the operations through a digital lens. As a result, when we closed the doors mid-March, all of our financial information, our memberships, the collections, and our project management systems existed online. Once we perfected Zoom, we were off to the races.

Credit for the rest of 2020 goes to our members and donors, without whom we wouldn't have anything to manage! It is entirely because of your generosity and belief in ACHS since 1934 that the museum stands, full of interesting things, poised for more of the same—as well as some new.

It's my utmost pleasure to begin my sixth year as your Director. Thank you for the journey thus far!

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Rebecca Ebnet-Desens".

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens
ACHS Executive Director

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Past Year – 2020 was a year like no other in our collective memory. COVID-19 brought a whole new set of vocabulary words—Social Distancing, Shelter-in-Place, Quarantine, Self-Isolation, Community Spread, Outbreak, Pandemic—the list goes on. These words and the actions associated with them are intended to protect us from disease transmission they also have created separation and virtual and real boundaries.



There were choices early on about how the Anoka County Historical Society and the History Center would proceed. The decisions we made to continue to be available and engaged with the communities we serve meant we switched from bricks and mortar and “in-person” to a digital online environment. A virtual environment that continued to connect with our members and others within Anoka County. Not only did we survive—we thrived. We continue to connect via social media and our fabulous website. We participated in grant programs that allowed us to manage the revenue losses due to Covid-19's impact on our fund raising and supported purchasing of equipment that ensures our digital presence.

I am humbled by the creativity, resilience, and persistence of the staff, volunteers, and ACHS Members who supported us throughout a challenging year. We articulated a new vision and mission statement to ensure we focus on all Anoka County communities and for 2021 extend an invitation that all are welcome to share their stories.

We are pleased to present this annual report that reviews our continued success.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Lotus Hubbard".

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

THE 2020 ACHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Al Pearson, *District #1 Representative*

Kim Hogdal, *District #2 Representative*

Orville Lindquist, *District #3 Representative (Treasurer)*

Lotus Hubbard, *District #4 Representative (President)*

Richard Oxley, *District #5 Representative (Vice-President)*

Open, *District #6 Representative*

Bart Ward, *District #7 Representative*

Steve Florman *At-Large A*

Dennis Berg, *At-Large B*

Daryl Lawrence, *At-Large C*

Johannes Allert, *At-Large D*

Jim Rootes, *At-Large E*

Paul Pierce III, *At-Large F*

Allison Schmitt, *At-Large G (Secretary)*

Mary Nolan, *At-Large H*

Jeff Reinert, *Anoka County Commissioner Liaison*

ACHS STAFF

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, *Executive Director*

Audra Hilse, *Archivist & Collections Manager*

Erin McBrien, *Archivist & Collections Manager*

Sara Given, *Volunteer Coordinator*

Carol Dordan, *Facilities Manager*

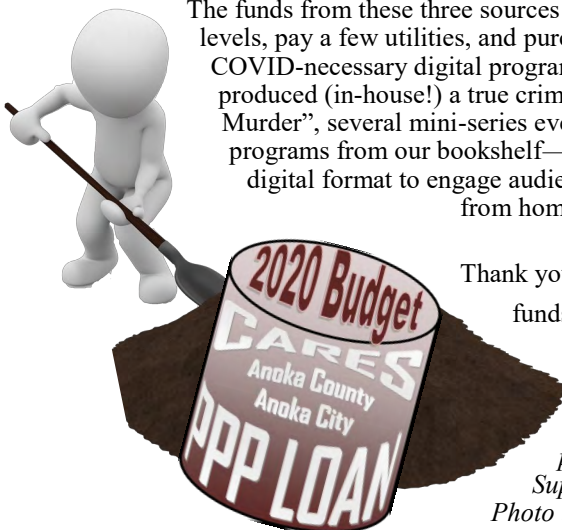
Don Johnson, *Office Staff*

Karen Johnson, *Office Staff*



Our 2020 story would look significantly different without the assistance we received from Federal, State, and local governmental sources. In fact, since we had our entire fundraising/programming season cancelled, we had a **\$55,000 HOLE IN OUR BUDGET**. Gratefully, the **PPP LOAN SUPPLIED \$30,000, ANOKA COUNTY CARES FUNDS GRANTED \$10,000, AND THE CITY OF ANOKA CARES FUNDS ALSO GRANTED \$10,000**. Although the PPP dollars remain a liability for us as we await a decision on our forgiveness application, the opportunity as a small nonprofit to apply for these three sources of funds can't be understated.

The funds from these three sources allowed ACHS to maintain staffing levels, pay a few utilities, and purchase recording equipment to create COVID-necessary digital programming. As a result, we have produced (in-house!) a true crime drama called “An Un-Wise Murder”, several mini-series events on social media, and three programs from our bookshelf—fully recreated in an engaging digital format to engage audiences now studying and working from home.



Thank you isn't enough for receipt of these funds, but it's certainly sincere.

Above: Empty shelves in the paper goods aisle, Wal-Mart Supercenter, Blaine March, 2020. Photo by Vickie Wendel.

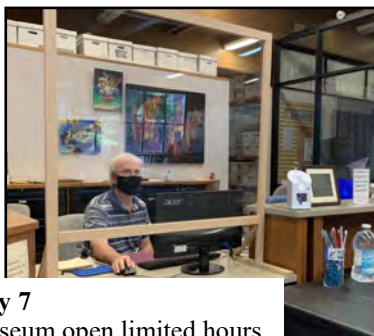
in the painters masks. It might not stop everything coming in and going drops.” Anonymous (May 26, 2020)

March

March 18

Museum Closed. Start working from home with one staff member checking the physical museum.

Left: April Zoom meeting from our home offices



July 7

Museum open limited hours.

Above: Don at the front desk behind a screen he built

Prepping museum for people by assembling safety shields and rearranging furniture.

July



November

November 1 – 7

Staff received a mandatory vacation after stressful year.

Staff trained to disinfect surfaces and bathrooms each hour.

November 23

Closed again to all in-person visits per state regulations. Open to stuffed animals.



January

January 11

Open for appointment only.

“I never dreamed that I would experience a pandemic. It's very different than The Walking Dead show. I know life will never be the same after this.” Fa

PRE-COVID VICTORY!



CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL PROJECT MANAGER (CPPM)

Juuuuust before COVID slammed the door shut, Rebecca, Sara, and Audra spent six full days at the Workforce Center in Blaine to officially learn how to manage projects and earn the Certified Professional Project Manager (CPPM) designation from the University of St. Thomas College of Business. The training, paid for by a grant from Anoka County, has allowed staff to better understand the mechanisms of project management by employing (gasp) math.

Value: \$8,000

*\$2,695 Per Participant

Spoiler Alert: all three received 100% on the certification test!

TRANSITION TO WORK FROM HOME

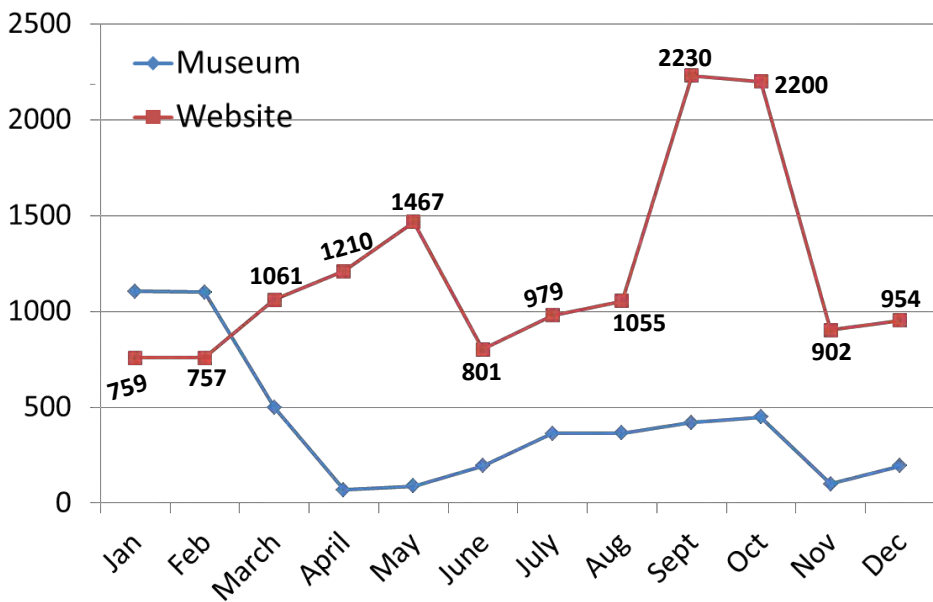
In retrospect, we now refer fondly to our “inadvertent planning” of moving ACHS operations online, making them remotely accessible. In March, we just said, “dang, that worked out well!” We had our flashy new website and online donations system set up, we had Trello to manage those projects in one place, and all the information we needed to access our collection for research requests—providing the internet didn’t let us down. We invested in a subscription to Survey Monkey and set about gathering #HistoryHappensNow, to Zoom so we could have meetings longer than 40 minutes, and StreamYard so we could host programming and the online events with “An Un-Wise Murder”. All we needed now was our comfy pants and pets. Even Daiki helped (below)!

Below: Audra’s home office with her pet snake Daiki.



WEBSITE

More now than ever, our first contact with people is often on our website, AnokaCountyHistory.org. It is our tool for communication, the exhibit hall, the collection, and one way people find the local history they are searching for. Whether they currently live in Anoka County, or are living on the other side of the country, the information is there for them no matter the time of day.



*Museum numbers include staff members entering the building

SOCIAL MEDIA

We may be a staff of introverts, but we have all the digital social skills we need! Delivering information in a way that felt more personal to our audiences on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during the pandemic became even more critical. By using hashtags to group our programming series together, we took a #TourAnokaCounty, explored #MicrofilmMadness, and rose to the challenge of #MNMuseumAlphabet. Knowing our work provided a reprieve from the daily stress for the residents of Anoka County felt truly rewarding.



██████████ Thanks Anoka County Historical Society for the pictures and history, it means a lot to me and I'm sure everyone else in these times of uncertainty... be well friends...

Like Reply Message 1h · Edited



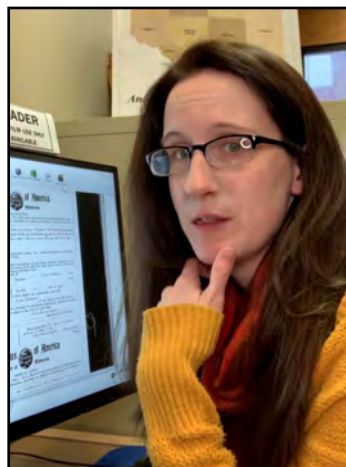
#TourAnokaCounty

April 17—May 8

Each day of the tour featured history & photographs of the cities in the county as well as mini-videos produced with the help of ACHS friends, volunteers and staff.

#MicrofilmMadness

Finding hidden gems and curious records in the microfilm reel resources at ACHS. Including liquor license sagas, estray records, and discovering the North Pole—in Fridley.



end to this, and there is nothing I can do to make it stop. Usually
ut and do that.” Sandy Connor (April 17, 2020)

DIGITAL PROGRAMS

We have a library of programs researched and ready to go in our bookshelf. How to share these programs in a world that has moved away from in-person power point led programs? We turn them digital!

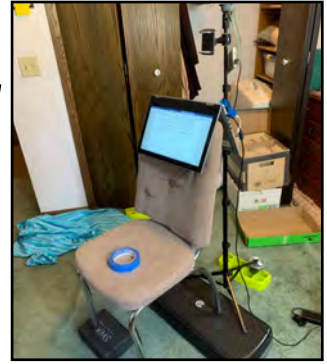
First, we tested out how our wedding program power point would work live on an interactive platform. It worked to a degree, but felt very static. So we decided to become our own video production studio and see how we could translate our programs into consumable videos to watch on-demand.

The test program—a history of the sewing pattern from Sara’s basement at the height of quarantine. We cobbled together a system to capture footage and began teaching ourselves how to use Adobe Rush (video editing for dummies) and Adobe Premiere (video editing for the serious minded.) With the program divided into 10 minute segments, it became easier to consume. A viewer could watch one segment at a time, or binge all six together.

With determination and hours of tutorials on YouTube or Lynda.com, we transferred our history research skills to learning how to edit video. The time spent learning here, gave us the confidence we needed to produce a full-length documentary as our fundraiser for the year. See page 11 for the story on that adventure.

Behind the Scenes

Makeshift teleprompter and camera setup



Finished Program

6 part, 57 minute long program available to watch on demand



CREATE MORE DIGITAL PROGRAMING

We have redecorated Sara’s cube into a mini-studio with backdrops, and invested in a teleprompter and audio equipment. This helped already create a 43 minute Civil War Program in January—and more throughout the year!



With the magic combination of time, stubbornness, and Google, you can teach yourself anything from editing a full length TV show together to starting a podcast. It has been a fun adventure expanding my brain.

Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator



It will get better. Summer will come. We can still go boating and get outside. Not, I will find another and learn something new. Anonymous (April 17, 2020)



HISTORY 21: THE PODCAST

Those of us who discovered the world of podcasts can't get enough of them. Those who haven't discovered this media yet...you're missing out! The format of a portable, audio program suits history geeks perfectly, as it's the STORY that truly matters to the preservation of our community. Creating a podcast for ACHS was one of those items on the to-do list that just never quite made it to the middle, let alone the top, of the page. But, with COVID dragging on into the fall, staff decided adding yet one more digitally accessible format made sense.

EPISODE LIST

1. Daryl Lawrence
2. Impact Services & Santa Stories
3. Arch Pease
4. Erin McBrien
5. Erin Freitag
6. Denise DeMars
7. Maddie Mcnamara

Currently available as blog posts on our website (please excuse the technical difficulties regarding the RSS feed) History 21: The Podcast debuted December 3 and drops the first and third Fridays of each month. Producing a podcast involves brainstorming episode elements and guests, making the recordings, editing the ramblings down to 20 minutes, stitching in the fun music and library notes, and rendering it so our website recognizes the files. From there, staff creates a Show Notes page containing images and additional information listeners could find helpful or interesting after they listen.

One last step: we can't forget to publish the social media teasers and clips, so everyone knows what's coming up on the calendar.

HISTORY 21: THE VAULT

One of the many challenges we discovered about digital programming is balancing the huge time investment up front in creating the show with the "pay-per-view" world of on-demand entertainment. Our solution? History 21: The Vault. This password-protected area of our website contains exclusive content, digital programs, and special promos just for subscribers. Much like your Amazon Prime, Netflix, or Patreon subscriptions, The Vault allows ACHS to monetize the products of our work yet make them accessible when YOU want them. Best of all? The funds raised through this initiative will support our operations and continue to make ACHS a high-quality museum for the community.



FIND ON THE VAULT:

- ⇒ Full, unedited podcast interviews
- ⇒ The UnWise Murder complete program
- ⇒ High School video yearbooks (coming)
- ⇒ & MORE!

VOLUNTEERING DURING COVID



One of the fun parts of volunteering for a historical society is helping care for the old stuff. With the museum closed, or limiting volunteers for the majority of the year many of the ways volunteers helped at the museum were put on pause.

But the help didn't stop. Projects shifted just like so many other things to work at home and took advantage of all the ways to connect digitally.

4,371*
Volunteer Hours

EQUIVALENT OF
PAID STAFF TIME
\$87,420

* Based on reported volunteer hours.



We're looking ahead to safely reviving the volunteer program in the museum in 2021. How can volunteers best support our mission and the collection with the wide-range of unique skills they bring with them?



The small handful of volunteers who were able to spend time in the museum each had their own sanitized work station, and sported masks of various designs.

FUNDRAISING DURING A PANDEMIC

Or, how to take a never-easy task and make it more difficult

We saw the writing on the wall fairly early that our Lager Fest would collapse, the fairs and festivals couldn't happen, and the Ghost Tours...well, an untimely demise for sure. Clearly, things had to go digital—but how could we engage an audience? What would make them feel like they would get value for their donation? How could we replicate the feeling of community present at these events?



Our discussions always came back to storytelling. Could we somehow weave a compelling narrative from our collection like we did in the live courtroom drama of Mary Fridley a few years ago? Could we take our basic knowledge of video editing and actually put together an hour-long production people would *enjoy*?

OF COURSE WE COULD.

Staff combed through the files of County Attorney Albert Pratt to find a likely story, that of the Wise family from Grow, murdered in 1900. We listed the people involved, the places

they named, then mapped the timeline of events. We searched the ACHS archive for images, newspaper clippings, and collection items to make the story visually interesting. We grouped the events into a story arc of five segments and started watching episodes of Dateline to get a feel for the genre. We wrote the script.

To record the necessary “B-roll”, or stock footage, of the deadly night, we borrowed the Ames-Florida-Stork House in Rockford. With Sara dressed up, we filmed boots walking across the floor, pens writing letters, cards being played, and tea cups shattering on the floor. We captured her running through tall grass, the lapping of lakes, expansive bean fields, and friendly cows. Filming continued with several volunteers acting out the script in “live interviews” in the QCTV studio or at the Nowthen Threshing Show grounds and recording testimonials about why history is important.

But how to convey our newly-edited masterpiece to the world without simply hitting play on a Zoom screen share? After much research and some experimentation, we settled on something called StreamYard. This program allowed the staff to present live online, interact with each other, receive comments from the viewers, and share the prerecorded show. The final event lasted an hour and a half with only minimal technical glitches and raised \$3,000 for museum operations.



**TO DO THIS
ALL AGAIN!**

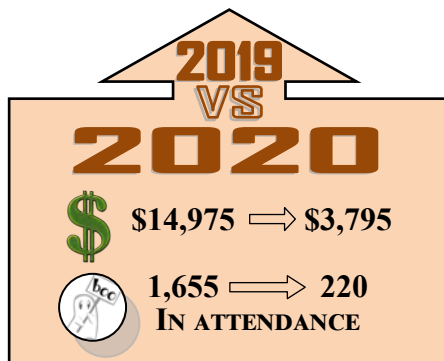
We couldn't find formula. We stopped at every Target from here to Hudson, Wisconsin and Iren. It's a crazy time to be alive. Anonymous. (April 1, 2020)

GHOSTS OF ANOKA TOURS

Covid-19 restrictions and safety concerns had us curtailing the majority of the 2020 in-person Ghost Tour plans, and figuring out a new system to make the Ghost Tours digitally accessible. The 2020 Ghost Tour plan included three Ghostly offerings:

1. The Original [OG] Tour —three volunteer tour guides expressed an interest in leading in person tours. With max capacity set at 12 and masks, participants could enjoy the tour distanced from each other.
2. Zoom Tour— meeting on Zoom, the guide presented the same Ghost Tour stories while sharing extra videos and images not available on the OG tour.
3. Digital Tour—Richard Oxley, ACHS board member and video production instructor at Hennepin Technical College, made digitizing the Ghost Tour part of his class for field videography. The students captured footage of guides giving the tour, as well as b-roll shots of the stops, and drone footage of the city of Anoka. They began creation of the digital tour mid-August and completed final edits in time to premiere October 1.

Tour Type	# Sold	\$\$
Digital Tour	52	\$728
Zoom Tour	5	\$70
Original Tour	153	\$2142
Wise Murder On Demand	10	\$200
Private Event	NA	\$655
Total	220	\$3,795



Highly recommended! I watched it last night.

Like · Reply · Message · 19h



With the 100th Anniversary of Anoka Halloween we were able to still share the Halloween artifacts in the collection with exhibits at:

- Northtown Library
- Rum River Library
- ACHS Museum Gallery
- Online gallery at AnokaCountyHistory.org

“Experienced my first remote meeting of the Lino Lakes City Council via Zoom. Never thought I would be in a pandemic. Will be interested how this will change our future and if on-site meetings will be back.”

KEEPING THE COLLECTION HAPPY

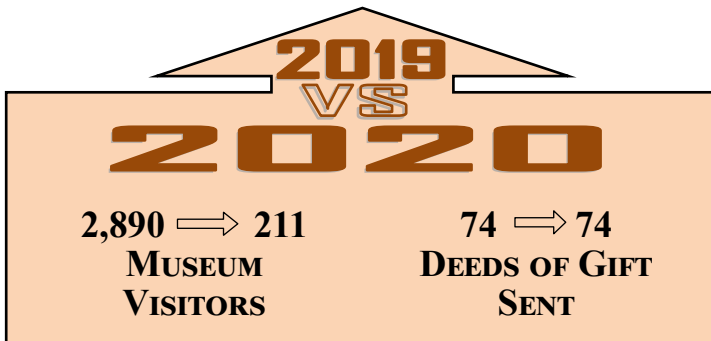
The Covid-19 pandemic made 2020 an unusual year in working with and organizing the ACHS collection while also working remotely for a portion of the year. Spaces in the museum shifted to reflect a year where exhibit building was less of a priority because of the limited visitor access to the building.



Don, ACHS staff, set up a new computer station in the exhibit hall to have a Covid-distanced work space and to power through photographing and digitizing items in the collection.



Audra spread out in other areas of the museum to give items the care they needed before being accessioned into the collection. These tasks included carefully vacuuming small dirt and debris from a pair of uniform trousers.



**OVERALL, I FEEL ____ ABOUT THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC RIGHT NOW**



While we live history every day, creating a legacy story for future generations based on our experiences, witnessing a truly monumental circumstance usually comes once or twice per generation. 2020 undeniably marked itself as one for the books.

If you look at the top of each of these pages, you'll find quotes from people who responded to our surveys. Under the hashtag #HistoryHappensNow, we have promoted the idea that documenting your experience in these extraordinary times will help fuel conversations and memories in the future. Whether it's about COVID-19, the quarantine, online school, working from home, shortages in the stores, vaccines, Black Lives Matter, the violence in the Twin Cities, or the death of George Floyd, making notes as events play out creates a more true vision.

To read more from this gathering effort, please visit our website, click "what we do" then "exhibit hall" then "online only: history gather, COVID-19". You'll find quotes, blog posts, and a place to submit your own musings.

Access to technology was at the forefront of being able to continue the work at ACHS. A non-exhaustive list of the programs and equipment that made 2020 possible:

- ◆ Collective Access—ACHS online database
- ◆ Etapestry—ACHS online people management
- ◆ Zoom
- ◆ Adobe Premiere Pro
- ◆ Adobe Photoshop
- ◆ Adobe Audition
- ◆ Adobe Spark
- ◆ Adobe Rush
- ◆ StreamYard
- ◆ Trello
- ◆ One Drive
- ◆ Dropbox
- ◆ Squarespace
- ◆ Facebook/Twitter/Instagram
- ◆ Buffer.com
- ◆ Vimeo.com
- ◆ YouTube
- ◆ Eventbrite
- ◆ Audiogram
- ◆ Puzzle creator
- ◆ Video cameras
- ◆ Still cameras
- ◆ Microphones
- ◆ Cell phones
- ◆ *And more!*

HIRING NEW HUMAN

To live out our values of inclusion, we designed a blind hiring process that also made space for introverts and less verbal humans to shine.

Using Survey Monkey, qualified job candidates completed a written interview. Our committee then read and ranked the answers without knowing any more than the words on the page.

The results (happily) surprised us and we learned valuable lessons about our assumptions. For more on the process, please check out our blog section on the website.



New Archivist Erin McBrien:

What a supremely strange year. I still remember getting the email over Spring Break that in-person classes had been cancelled. Still, I graduated with my Masters, moved from New York to Minnesota, got married (four people attended, including the judge), and applied for more jobs than I can count. This has been one heck of a year, but I'm so excited to be a part of the ACHS team. Thank you!

Erin McBrien



In spite of its challenges, 2020 also felt like a year of discovery - was it possible to manage a museum collection from home? The answer was, "Not completely," but I could do more than I would have thought, and we made some good progress on the collections in spite of difficult circumstances.

Audra Hulse, Archivist Jan-Oct
(sporting Quarantine Hair)

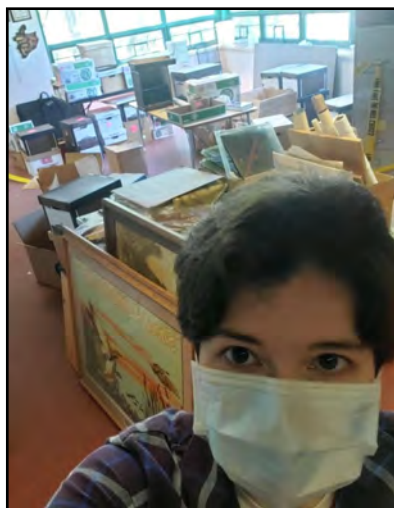
Audra Hulse

anges all the time, but then get overwhelmed and try to tune out and everything.” Anonymous

FEDERAL PROJECT

As a good friend, you can't overlook a milestone birthday—especially if that friend will turn 100! ACHS can't wait for 2022 to arrive and the celebration to commence for Federal Cartridge's centennial.

During 2020, staff from both ACHS and Federal sorted through boxes and boxes of saved artifacts, photographs, and documents. The duplicates were removed and the remaining items found a home in preservation folders and boxes. The collection then moved into our exhibit gallery where they await digitizing and data entry to Collective Access. ACHS also received a Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant to fund the collection of oral histories featuring legacy families—families who have worked at the Federal plant for two and three generations.



*Above: Audra starting the sorting process at an off-site location.
Below: Moving to ACHS and looking more organized.*



The work continues in 2021 as catalogs, photos, and 3D objects are digitized for publication in a special interest magazine, coffee table book, and our online exhibit. We will plan the physical exhibit, a celebration dinner, and maybe even another video project!

ANOKA COUNTY:

THANK YOU

It is with deep gratitude that ACHS acknowledges the role played by the County in continuing to fund a large portion of the History Center operations: **the equivalent of 43 cents per resident.**

Without this core support, ACHS couldn't maintain the professional standards of research, preservation, and heritage we're known for. These funds help us maintain outreach and educational opportunities, as well as operational tasks.

ANOKA COUNTY

LIBRARY

ACHS continues to be a part of the County Library system. Patrons can choose ACHS as a pick up location for library books, and for a significant number of people, the public computers here are the only access they have to the internet. Those that visit for these services become “regulars,” friends, and part of our community.

VISITING THE MUSEUM



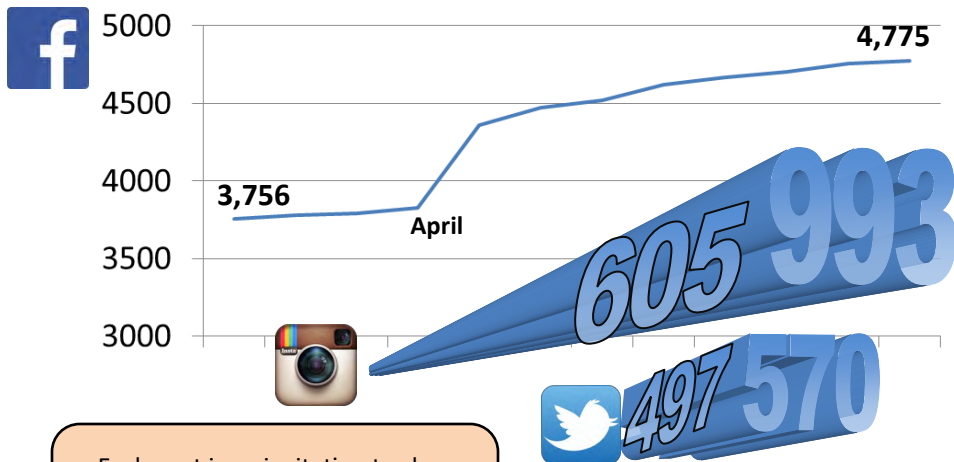
Visitation to the museum may have been curtailed, but people found alternative ways to connect with us and share their love of Anoka County History. We saw jumps in the number of people following us on social media and on the website which corresponded to the onset of Covid quarantine.



We've really enjoyed your series #TourAnokaCounty! Thank you for all of the people who have put time into it. My husband and I grew up in Fridley and never knew the history behind the Banfill-Locke home. I did recognize the old school house that in Fridley. As elementary students we speculated that there were definitely some ghosts within the building. Someone even mentioned seeing bones flying through the air. Ha. Today was Ramsey where we currently live. It was so interesting to hear about the school house and the cemetery. We've had a great time following along. Thank you!

dad and my husband who has preexisting conditions and being joyful to
 st of a difficult situation. ” Kim Hogdal

GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS



Each post is an invitation to share memories and stories that would otherwise be lost.

Anoka County Historical Society
 April 29, 2020 · 🌐

Who remembers Soderquists market
#TourAnokaCounty Ham Lake (3) Located at Crosstown Center on Highway 65 in the same family for 87 years from 1926 to 2013. This view captures the store in 2003 **#AnokaCountyHistory**
#MnMusuems

👍❤️👉 446 220 Comments 257 Shares



They had the best rolls and potato salad. One was a staple for Christmas Eve, the other essential for any summer gathering.

Like · Reply · 42w 🗨️👍👉 3

I had so many found memories of shopping there as a kid.

I'm glad I was given the opportunity to work here for over 10 years. I learned the value of hard work, connecting with customers and building friendships. I'm blessed to have had great mentors ... See More

Like · Reply · 42w 🗨️👍👉 11

Those corn dogs! Lol

Like · Reply · 42w 🗨️👍👉 4

↳ 8 Replies

Best Reuben sandwiches ever! Thursday lunch special I believe.

Like · Reply · 42w 🗨️👍👉 5

WHAT THE BOARD TACKLED



LEADING THROUGH ZOOM, TRELLO LEARNING CURVE

Our 15 Board members successfully tackled technology to hold their first-ever Zoom meeting in April. Since then, all monthly meetings, committee and task force gatherings have taken place online—sometimes still with shouts of glee when the

video pops up. Undeterred, the BOD also learned Trello, the project management software used by ACHS staff. Now a good portion of communication, planning, and document sharing occur in this format, reducing the number of lost emails considerably.

COMMITTEES

The nitty-gritty work of governance takes place in the Gather, Engage, Define Identity, and Management Committees. These groups wrestle with budgets, outreach, identifying voids in the collection, and what the ACHS brand stands for. In 2020, the Board decided to open the doors to volunteers willing to bring their skills to these conversations.

**Interested in joining a committee?
Drop us a line to hear more.**

500
members
SUPPORT
LOCAL HISTORY

MEMBER

WHAT MAKES A MEMBER?



A task force has wrestled with the question during 2020, trying to define “members” and “donors”. Are all donors members? Do members self-select and therefore earn voting rights at ACHS? Aren’t our donors who don’t declare themselves members just as invested in local history?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

FACING CHANGE

Board Members spent the second year of this national initiative sponsored by the American Association of Museums setting goals for year three and rewriting the mission statement of ACHS. In addition, the BOD adopted a Values Statement supporting our commitment to ensuring a representation of all stories in Anoka County live in the collection. During these bi-weekly meetings, members analyzed the culture of the board, where we connect with people, and how we make people feel welcome. They set goals including bringing new voices to the committees and prepping them to lead these groups. The intention of this decision is to not only include more people in the work of governance, but move projects and ideas along faster and increase our impact on communities within Anoka County.



Facing Change:

Advancing Museum Board
Diversity & Inclusion

Our mission is to gather, preserve and share the stories of all the people and communities that are part of Anoka County.

The Anoka County Historical Society is an inclusive organization. We are accountable to the community for presenting and celebrating the stories of Anoka County, as well as those which still need to be told. We invite people to join us on a journey to ignite curiosity about our past and understanding of our present.

2020 FINANCIAL GROWTH

Anoka County Historical Society

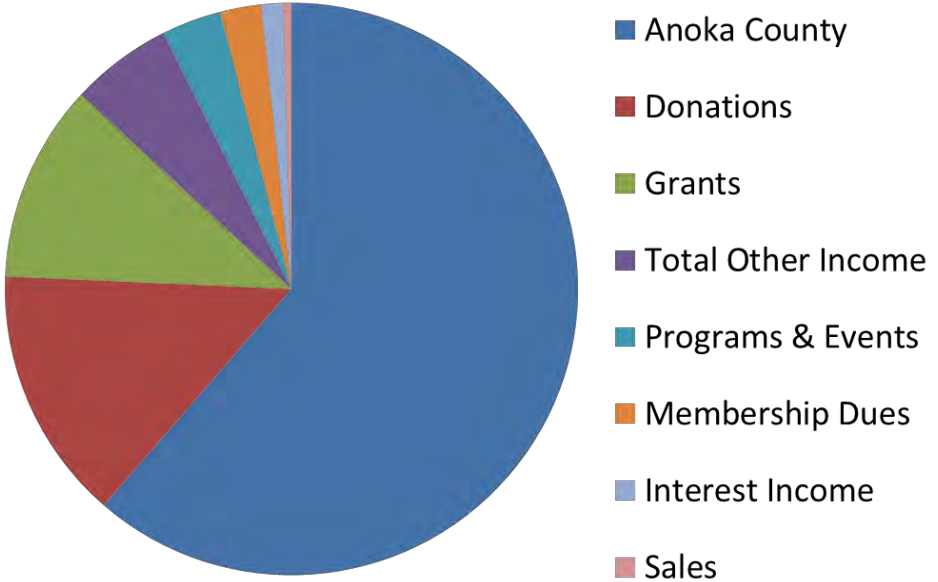
Budget vs. Actuals: budget FY 2020 - FY20 P&L

January - December 2020

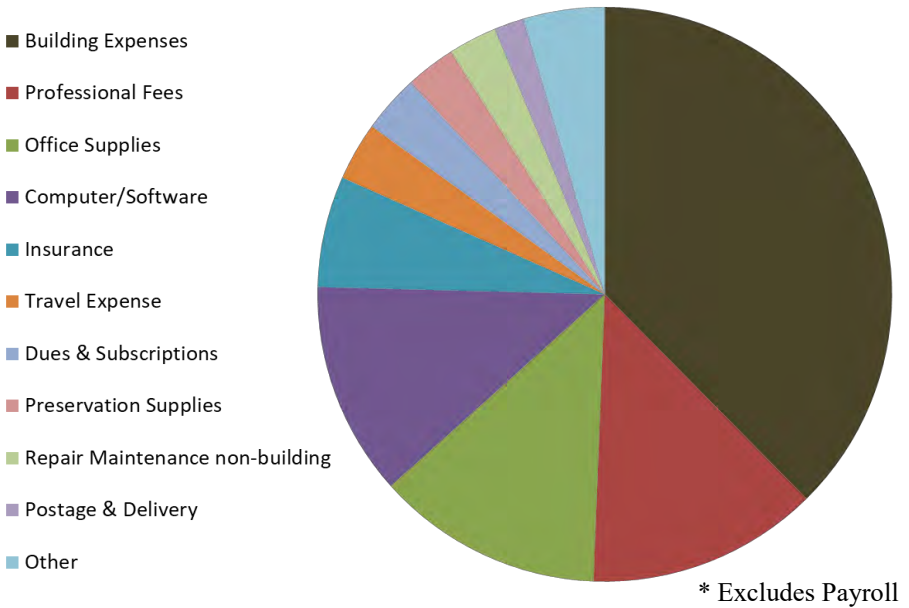
	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
Inkind Revenue	38,085.04	60,000.00	8,085.04	110.11 %
Sales	82.42		82.42	
TOTAL SUPPORT				
Admissions		600.00	-600.00	
Anoka County	152,623.00	152,623.00	0.00	100.00 %
Donations	35,673.64	73,500.00	-37,826.36	48.54 %
Grants	27,788.00		27,788.00	
Interest Income	3,057.30	10,089.39	-7,032.09	30.30 %
Membership Dues	5,752.00	5,000.00	752.00	115.04 %
Other Income	14,340.45	1,011.57	13,328.88	1,417.64 %
Programs and Events:	8,358.15	29,000.00	-20,641.85	28.82 %
Sales	1,146.09	4,508.74	-3,362.65	25.42 %
Total TOTAL SUPPORT	248,738.63	276,332.70	-27,594.07	90.01 %
Uncategorized Revenue	520.75		520.75	
Total Revenue	\$337,426.84	\$356,332.70	\$ -18,905.86	94.69 %
Cost of Goods Sold	\$42.54	\$0.00	\$42.54	0.00%
GROSS PROFIT	\$337,384.30	\$356,332.70	\$ -18,948.40	94.68 %
Expenditures				
Advertising	171.99	390.00	-218.01	44.10 %
Auto Expense	154.00	34.00	120.00	452.94 %
Bank Service Charges	303.46	536.35	-232.89	56.58 %
Building Expenses	32,085.70	31,203.99	881.71	102.83 %
Computer/Software Expense	10,263.51	7,000.00	3,263.51	146.62 %
Depreciation Expense	30,134.16		30,134.16	
Dues and Subscriptions	2,778.70	2,000.00	778.70	138.94 %
Food		900.00	-900.00	
Furniture & Other Equipment	134.78	500.00	-365.22	26.96 %
Gifts	46.33	300.00	-253.67	15.44 %
Human Resources Expense	198.00	1,200.00	-1,002.00	16.50 %
Inkind Rent	80,000.04	80,000.00	0.04	100.00 %
Inkind Services	8,085.00		8,085.00	
Insurance	5,339.29	4,685.00	654.29	113.97 %
Museum Exhibit Expense	997.85	10,000.00	9,002.15	9.98 %
Networking	25.00	300.00	-275.00	8.33 %
Office Supplies	10,872.42	10,450.00	422.42	104.04 %
PAYROLL	158,395.08	174,946.34	-16,551.26	90.54 %
Postage and Delivery	1,438.96	2,700.00	-1,261.04	53.29 %
Preservation Supplies	2,404.32	3,600.00	-1,195.68	66.79 %
Printing and Reproduction	424.94	2,000.00	-1,575.06	21.25 %
Professional Fees	11,104.95	10,500.00	604.95	105.76 %
Program Expense	1,325.04	7,500.00	-6,174.96	17.67 %
Purchases	91.74	800.00	-708.26	11.47 %
QuickBooks Payments Fees	23.89	100.00	-76.11	23.89 %
Reconciliation Discrepancies	-60.00		-60.00	
refund	-6.00		-6.00	
Repair/Maintenance-Non-Building	2,323.00	400.00	1,923.00	580.75 %
Travel Expense	2,801.48	3,684.68	-883.18	75.83 %
Uncategorized Expenditure	38.99		38.99	
Total Expenditures	\$361,896.62	\$355,740.34	\$6,156.28	101.73 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -24,512.32	\$592.36	\$ -25,104.68	-4,138.08 %
Investment Revenue	19,199.56		19,199.56	
Total Other Revenue	\$19,199.56	\$0.00	\$19,199.56	0.00%
NET OTHER REVENUE	\$19,199.56	\$0.00	\$19,199.56	0.00%
NET REVENUE	\$ -5,312.76	\$592.36	\$ -5,905.12	-896.88 %

The "Grants" line item refers to the two CARES grants received from the City of Anoka and Anoka County, as well as Legacy dollars for an oral history project. "Other income" includes \$10,000 received from Federal Cartridge to off-set costs associated with the centennial project. We were able to stay close to budget by cutting expenses in exhibits, programs, and printing. Until it's forgiven, the PPP loan remains a liability.

REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



Annual Appeal

Ralph Ballinger
 Harry & Jeanette Blair
 Julie Braastad
 Carol Buelow
 Ann & Brent Campbell
 Elise Chan g
 Eva Mae Cleator
 Frank & Vivian Daly
 Duane & Joan Dingmann
 Robert & Marilyn
 Douglass
 Mike Dunlap
 Bob & Ellyn Erickson
 Bruce & Karen
 Gengnagel
 Deirdre Hagstrom
 Kim Hogdal
 Lara Homa
 Florence Jacob
 Jim Kordiak
 Luanne Koskinen
 Jim Kugler
 Lynne Larson
 George & Barbara Meyer
 Sue Mickelson
 David & Jeanne Minier
 Cynthia Nelson
 Warren & Lilly Olson
 Mike Oslund
 Dale Peterson
 Dianne Rossbach
 Judith Rufsvold
 Laura Saastamoinen
 Carol Schaubach
 Joyce Schmidt
 Karen Sivanich
 Debra Stenerson
 Ashley Sullivan
 Margaret Ubl
 Barbara Ulvin
 Wesley & Cheryl
 Volkenant
 Sharon Welsh
 Marvin & Sally West
 Ernest Woizeschke
 Peter Wojciechowski

James Wright
 Chuck Zielin

General Donations

Janice Anderson
 Patricia Belousek
 Dennis & Darlene Berg
 Sherry Boyce
 Brookings County
 Historical Society—
 Museum
 Dan Erhart
 Mary Erickson
 Gary & Shelby Erickson
 Sarah Florman
 Joe & Carlene Garrick
 Diann Hendrickson
 Lotus & Richard
 Hubbard
 Jerome & Marilyn
 Manley
 Diane Marsh
 Valerie McNamara
 Gary & Carol Melby
 Robert & Marveen
 Minish
 Carol Moen
 Mary & Scott Nolan
 Phil & Laurie Olmon
 Gary & Eileen Rathbun
 Jeff Reinert
 Joe & Barb Ridge
 Robert Rither
 Chad Roberts
 Allison Schmitt
 Jean Seaborg
 Jill & Steve Smith
 Elizabeth Svercl

New Members

Angela Green
 Rob & Laurie Hanson
 Susan Ketel
 Phil Knutson
 Raymond Turnquist
 Toni Wenzell

Artifact Donors

Dennis Berg
 Elizabeth Bune
 Shirley Christenson
 City of Columbia Heights
 City of Lexington
 Michael Clark
 Denise DeMars
 Chris & Joan Gorham
 Diann Hendrickson
 Lake George
 Conservation Club
 Arlow Lambert
 Orville Lindquist
 Beverly Mercil
 Allerton Paulson
 Dianne Pederson
 Juanita Reed-Boniface
 Barbara Thurston

ACHS Sustaining Members

Scott & Michelle
 Hardesty
 Lotus & Richard
 Hubbard
 Courtney Jones
 Northeast Bank
 Gina Overacker
 Robert Rither
 Allison & Brian Schmitt
 Rita Warpeha
 Melanie Weeks

ACHS Business Members

Anoka Knights of
 Columbus Council
 2018
 Fifth Avenue Dental
 Hammerheart Brewing
 Hawaii Nail Spa
 Nowthen Historical
 Power Association
 Peterson Shoes
 Pierce Refrigeration
 Rum River Restoration

M
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Y

History Center Hours.

Open hours subject to change during this uncertain time. Please double check the most current open schedule on our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. via Zoom
Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

ELECTION INFO

Every year about this time, the dreams of the Anoka County Historical Society Board of Directors turn to the closing of one year and the opening of another. An indication of this is planning for the annual meeting in May when new members of the board are installed.

Serving on a nonprofit board of directors carries with it the heady responsibility of setting the strategic course for the organization, maintaining financial stewardship and committing volunteer time to ensure goals are met. That weight also comes with the ability to think big, imagine an interesting future for ACHS and put those innovations into place for future patrons.

Recently, the directors rewrote the mission and values statement to reflect a focus on documenting history as it occurs AND preserving the past that already happened. The board decided part of that invitation was expanding who could participate in the committees by removing the assumption it was for board members only. Now, as we not only search for new board members, we can also put out a call for volunteers interested in serving on one of four governance committees: Engage, Define Identity, Gather, and Management.

With this new set point in place, we heartily invite you to push your table up next to ours and bring all you are to the world of local history. Please contact ACHS to learn more about serving on a committee (rolling deadline) or to be listed on the ballot for one of the open positions on the Board of Directors (deadline March 19).



Thank you for your support!





Anoka County
Historical Society

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Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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H I S T O R Y 21



Volume 51 No.3 May-June 2021
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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

Board of Directors

District 1: Al Pearson
District 2: Kim Hogdal
District 3: Orville Lindquist (Treasurer)
District 4: Lotus Hubbard (President)
District 5: Richard Oxley (Vice-Pres.)
District 6: Open
District 7: Bart Ward
At-Large A: Steve Florman
At-Large B: Dennis Berg
At-Large C: Daryl Lawrence
At-Large D: Johannes Allert
At-Large E: Jim Rootes
At-Large F: Paul Pierce III
At-Large G: Allison Schmitt (Secretary)
At-Large H: Mary Nolan
County Commissioner Liaison:
Jeff Reinert

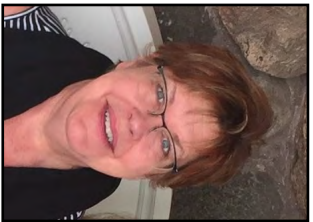
Staff

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens
(Executive Director)
Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)
Erin McBrien (Collections Manager)
Don Johnson (Office Staff)
Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

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Front Cover: Dealer advertising image for Federal Cartridge Corporation, circa 1950.



From the President

The air is starting to warm, the sun higher in the sky, gardens are emerging from winter. We are getting closer to Fishing Opener, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and Last Day of School.

In my family Memorial Day (aka Decoration Day) was especially important. We would harvest—ok pilgrage—every blooming flower in our garden and the gardens of friends. We would gather Mason Jars, water jugs, spades, and brooms, with the blooming flowers and begin our pilgrimage to the cemeteries. We had about six cemeteries to visit since none of our relatives seemed to find final resting places close to one another.

We would arrive at each location and take a stroll around looking for familiar names while someone shared stories from times past. We then met back at the family plots—moms, dads, uncles, cousins, grandparents, great grandparents and clean up their graves and fill the jars with water and flowers.

I find something comforting in those annual visits and sharing of stories. Sometimes there is laughter and sometimes tears, but always a good dose of remembrance. They say that even after someone passes away, if another person shares their story and speaks their name, they are still with us.

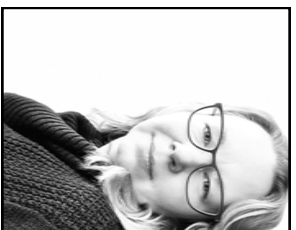
Take time this Memorial Day and visit the places your family rests to share the stories with your children and grandchildren. Pass on this oral tradition of sharing your family's history!

Lotus Hubbard
Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

From the Director

As we emerge from our time warp of no volunteers, reduced hours, and a shuttered museum, I hear from staff a mild concern about reintegration. I feel it myself, who has gotten used to working on one project at a time, finishing an entire email without interruption, and not having the pleasure of unannounced faces popping into my office.

I wonder if we're all feeling a bit uneasy about how to navigate public life once more—or is it just us closet introverts? I'm presenting at the Midwest Archives Conference in May about our #HistoryHappensNow initiative, specifically about our efforts to collect COVID-19 stories. Please donate your musings to ACHS and help us preserve this time in history.



Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Bethel MWA Backdrop

On a towering shelf in the Anoka County Historical Society archives, a 20-foot-long painted canvas sat carefully wrapped and protected from any light, resting and waiting.

The canvas arrived at ACHS after the Bethel City Council decided in a 4-to-1 vote on May 17, 2001 to “donate the curtain to the Historical Society to preserve, protect and keep.” The backdrop suffered water damage along the top edge at some point in its lifetime while it hung in the Bethel City Hall building, and no one wanted to see it damaged further. Since we had just renovated the city library building in Anoka to create our current museum space and continued to settle in, it took some time to organize the banner’s arrival. The time came on a day with no chance of precipitation, after holding our Annual Meeting at Bethel City Hall in 2004.

Since we have stored the banner for nearly 18 years, the only glimpses anyone has had are the original photographs taken of it at Bethel City Hall in 2001—think of those cameras back in the day that imprinted a digital, orange date stamp on the picture. While the photo gave a sense of the size of the item, any additional photographs taken of the individual advertisements let us read them more easily, the image quality wasn’t high enough to bring out the vibrant details.

So, only four days from the 20th anniversary of those original pictures, Archivist Erin McBrien and staff member Don Johnson took on the task to set up this backdrop once again and gather photographs with our modern technology. Check out our video of the process at AnokaCountyHistory.org! In researching the banner, we discovered it was painted in 1916 by the Joy & Cannon Co., thanks to a commission from the Modern Woodmen of America [MWA] Camp 8899 from Bethel. It served as a staging backdrop at their fraternal hall building (built in 1908). The MWA is a benefit organization founded by Joseph Cullet Root in 1883 with the goal of selling life insurance and investments to fund member benefits and charitable works. When it was

founded, membership to the organization did not openly discriminate religiously—with Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and even atheist members. Membership did, however, explicitly exclude men from what they deemed the riskiest jobs, such as firefighting, chimney sweeps, active military in times of war, or professional acrobats to name a few. By the mid-1900s, further restrictions limited membership to white males between 18-45 from the “healthiest” states—which included Minnesota.

The Bethel Camp 8899 incorporated November 9, 1900. The Camp’s Hall, located at 165 Main St. in Bethel, hosted the MWA meetings on the first Saturday of each month, but also silent movies, lectures, music, dinners, and dances. The Village of Bethel reserved 15 years of free rental of the building in 1911. In 1934, the village officially purchased the property. When the city incorporated in 1974, it transformed from “Village Hall” to “City Hall and Community Center”. Today the same building houses the Garphish Brewing Company.

The painted backdrop, now on temporary display in the museum, hung at the back of a raised stage in the building. It advertised 18 businesses, which gives a glimpse into the names and products popular in Bethel at the time. The center panel features an imagined scene of a castle on a rock, surrounded by water with two white swans floating on the sunset kissed waters. In the panel’s corner is written “Joy & Cannon Scenic Co. St Paul, Minn 16,” which led us to believe the canvas was created by this company in 1916.

The Joy & Cannon Scenic Co., named for its two owners, Boyd Phelps Joy and Gerald V. Cannon, hadn’t been in business long when they created the backdrop for Bethel. Joy had spent time in the theater world before he developed an interest in



Above: Modern Woodmen of America Camp 8899 Hall, undated.

Top: Clippings from *The Bethel Banner*, Feb. 3, 1916.

BIG	
MASQUERADE BALL!!	
Given in the	ON
M. W. A. HALL	SATURDAY
AT	February 12,
BETHEL	1916
Given by the Bethel Base Ball Team	
Music Furnished by	
THE DESOTO ORCHESTRA	
INCLUDING THE DRUMS	
Floor will be Reserved for Masked Couples Until 12 p. m.	
SUPPER SERVED AT HUGHES HOTEL	
TICKETS: Gents 75c, Ladies 25c, Spectators 25c	
Come One and All.	Good Order Assured
Get your Masks at SAM BROTHERS	

producing these large scenes. He was 43 when he founded the business with his partner. This business relationship only lasted two years before Cannon enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWI as their first camouflage artist. For this, he earned a world record. The partnership didn’t completely dissolve, but their work together did become more sporadic. For more information on this company or historic theaters and scenery, visit DryPigment.net by Wendy Rae Waszut-Barrett, PhD.



THE ADVERTISEMENTS:

Delving into the 18 advertisements on the backdrop provided tantalizing tidbits of Bethel's early history that help narrow down further when Joy and Cannon painted the piece.

1. "Nelson Brothers Grain, Feed, Flour and Beans Also Feed Grinding, Bethel Minn" The Nelson Brothers, Steiner and Henry, ran their store from 1913 to 1925 and lived together for a time with their parents, a cousin, Steiner's wife, and three children.
2. The second advertisement at the top of the canvas sustained the most water damage, obliterating a portion of the proprietor's name and business. It reads, "J.W. Odenwald Livery Feed and Sale Stable Draying and Heavy Hauling." In a *History of Bethel*, written by the Proper Spirit Club in 1942, they list 10 liverymen who operated at prior to that time, including John Odenwald.

3. "J.W. Bodine Dealer in Groceries Meats, Country Produce Etc. Sale Stable in Connection Live Stock Shipper. Telephone 18-14—Bethel, Minn."

John Bodine owned a livery before opening his grocery in 1900. He ran the establishment for 23 years and even "furnished a meat wagon driven by his brother, Vernal, that made weekly trips throughout the countryside."

4. "The Bethel Banner J.F. Whitteker prop. Subscriptions \$1.00 the Year in Advance." This local paper, first started by Sidney Pierce, was a place to read news from Bethel, East Bethel, St. Francis, Cedar, and even "West Bethel." Whitteker ran the paper until 1926 when he sold it to the *Anoka Herald*. ACHS has issues of the paper on microfilm from 1913-1926 and digitized copies from 1911-1912.

5. "State Bank of Bethel Capital \$10,000, Surplus \$10,000, Deposits \$110,000. Do your banking Business HERE And Grow With Us."

The bank first opened for business in 1903 in the east end of Strong's Hotel before moving into a brick building on the corner of Main and Dewey in Bethel the next year. Unfortunately, the Great Depression hit the bank hard. After a robbery in 1930, the bank closed October 1931. Nearly 10 years later, the writer of Bethel's history recalled that "many were left with only the change in their pockets. It was especially hard on the old people who lost their life's savings and were too old to start working again. Eventually 42.42 per cent of the money was returned."



6. "Hello What's This. Why go to T. Clarkson for your Stationery and School Supplies. Also a fine line of Candies and Cigars."

Many of the proprietors mentioned on the backdrop were active in other ways in the local community in addition to running their own businesses. In addition to selling school supplies, Tom Clarkson was appointed the area's postmaster in 1908 and held the position for 27 years. His post office building also housed Anoka County's Mutual Telephone Co. switchboard when the line extended to Bethel from Constance in 1912.



Some of the businesses listed are difficult to find in lasting records or histories of the area and we don't have much detail beyond their painted advertisements.

7. Geib-Carl Lumber Co. W.C. Smith Manager. Dealer in Lumber - Lath - Shingles - Sash - Doors - Mouldings Etc." Walter Curt Smith managed the company for 25 years.

8. Soderberg Hotel. Martin Soderberg Proprietor Bethel—Minn."
Built in 1902 as the Virginia Hotel.

9. Tonsorial Parlor. First Class Work. Childrens Haircutting a Specialty. W.F.Fleisch, Prop."

10. Geo. A. Gerdin. Every spoke supports the Hub A Square Deal to Everybody. Funeral supplies, hardware, paints, oils, greases, furniture dynamite, implements."

11. "After the show go to the Blanchett & Briere Confectionery for a fresh cigar or a good refreshing drink. Fine candies & tobaccos a specialty."



12. "For the Good of your face. Call on Boon Grace and he will your whiskers erase Barber Shop and Pool Room in Connection Bethel Minn"

13. "Hughes Hotel Henry Hughes Prop. Board by the Day or Week. A home for the boys on the road."

14. "Automobile & Gas Engine Repairing. Supplies and Parts. Oxy-Acetylene welding cutting and carbon burning O.A. Widmark. Bethel Minn"
In addition to welding, Oscar Widmark captured the images of Bethel residents as a photographer.

15. "For all that is good to eat and wear go to Sam Bros. Bethel Minn"
Random tidbit: Edward and John Sam ran their

general store from 1901 to 1936 and after the pickle factory was torn down. The Sam Bros “put up many barrels of dills.”

16. “Bethel Merc. Co. O.E. Edelstine Mgr. General Merchandise clothing groceries Boots & Shoes.”

In an area populated by many recent or second generation Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, or English residents, Oscar and Carrie Edelstine stand out on the 1910 census record. Their birthplaces are recorded as “Rom-Yiddish” and “Aust. Bohemian” respectively. The census takers themselves seem to have been unprepared for this slice of diversity, incorrectly identifying Oscar as from a place and language in 1910, as well as listing their native language as “Jewish” in 1920. There are too many unanswered questions about a family’s story when researchers only have four lines from the census and a painted advert to work with.

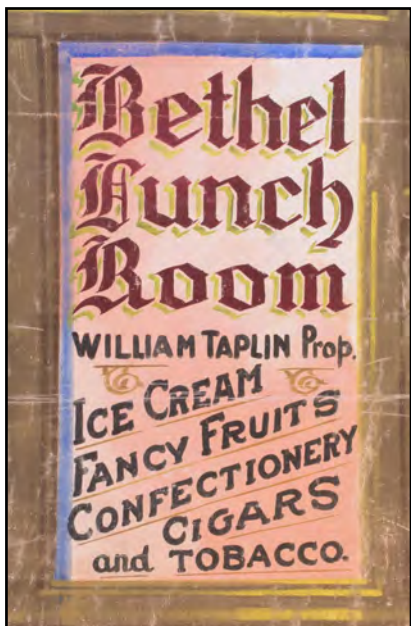


Announcement in the Bethel Banner Feb 17, 1916.

Two advertisements help confirm the date of the piece to 1916.

17. “Bethel Hardware and Auto Co., Hardware, Ford Cars, Auto Supplies, Farm Implements, Plumbing and repairing. H.L. Lucht.—W.J. Wyatt.”

Walter Wyatt and Henry Lucht only owned the company together in 1916 before Wyatt bought his partner out the next year.



18. “Bethel Lunch Room. William Taplin Prop. Ice Cream Fancy Fruits Confectionery Cigars and Tobacco”

Notices placed in the Bethel Banner inform readership that William Taplin purchased the Lunch Room from Mrs. Wm. Brooks in February, 1916 and Mrs. Pearl Stewart in turn took over from Taplin in October of that year. This detail combined with the backdrop advert narrows down its creation to a nine month window.

We will continue to work toward discovering the backdrop’s full story, piecing together one tidbit at a time. With new photographs on file, the value and beauty of this piece can be more fully shared and appreciated after we roll it back up to rest on the shelf once more.

Stop in and visit the banner now through Riverfest in July!



HISTORY 21 THE PODCAST

Never miss another episode and subscribe to the ACHS podcast on your podcast provider! At the beginning of April we finally deciphered the RSS feeds and our podcast can now appear automatically on your device. New episodes drop on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of every month and feature a combination of oral history interviews from the collection and new conversations with our current friends and partners.

Upcoming episodes feature a J.J. Reich, Senior Media Manager of Federal Premium Ammunition and Don Johnson talking about what Federal and ACHS are doing to prepare for their 100th Anniversary in 2022, Charles Horn Jr. spilling the tea on his father's iconic moustache, and how Charles Horn started the company in 1922.



The Vault is an exclusive part of our website where we offer first looks, extended interviews from our podcast, full videos digitized from our collection, and our latest finds.

Support the work of creating this content throughout the year by becoming a Vault Member for \$5/month. Now on the Vault:

- **FULL** Civil War Program
- *History of Bethel Village* by The Proper Spirt Club, 1942
- “Around the County” Cheat Sheets
- Video Yearbooks from Anoka and Blaine High Schools
- Extended podcast interviews
- **FULL (Award-winning!)** Un-Wise Murder video

Back in January when I began assessing the state of our museum's donation backlog, I felt more than a little overwhelmed by what I found. Out of the accessions within the backlog, I counted 70 that we actually knew anything about. They had paperwork, a known donor, a date they came to the museum, and sometimes even a bit of attached background information. But—and this is a big but—each accession averaged about five artifacts. Some had many, many more. I could only guess, but I believed we were looking at close to 350 artifacts that still needed a home within our collection. I immediately proposed a six-month new donations moratorium to the Gather Committee, and thankfully, it was accepted.



Each yellow piece of paper denotes a different donation that required processing.

Now, nearing the beginning of May, we only have 10 accessions left to bring into the collection. There are a couple factors that allowed for this speed:

- The public required fewer spaces in the building due to COVID-19, so I was able to commandeer rooms and tables normally unavailable for collections. An important part of archival processing is seeing what you have.
- The beginning of our concentrated effort to process the backlog coincided with the arrival of a brand-new archival intern! Evelyn studies History at the University of Minnesota, and she's been a huge help processing the backlog. Sometimes the most valuable asset you can have is another pair of hands.

Now, only 10 accessions left is amazing, but they're also some of the largest in the backlog. Many of them contain over 20 artifacts each, so we're not out of the woods yet. But, it's still an incredible accomplishment to have fully processed 35 accessions into the collection in only about three months. But wait, if only 10 accessions are left and 35 accessions have been added to the collection, where did the other 25 go? Well, this brings up one of the most important parts of the archival acquisitions process: rejection.

Rejection is important because not every museum can preserve everything—budget, space, and time simply won't allow it. Because of this, a museum's collection policy is structured around their particular mission. Our mission? To preserve and teach the history of Anoka County. Because of this, we only accept donations that have a significant connection to Anoka County and aren't

duplicates of something we already have in the collection. Out of the 25 accessions denied entry into the museum collection, about 20 of them had no connection to the county at all, and the other five seemed similar enough to existing items that they didn't add significant information to the collection. Without a firm collections policy, it's easy to drown in donations, which makes it more difficult overall to achieve your mission as a museum.

A quick list of some of my favorite backlog donations that have been processed into the collection:

- A wedding dress from the 1930's. We have quite a lot of wedding dresses from the 50's, but almost none from the 30's, and it was in very good condition.
- A Swedish-language Bible. Who knew?
- A pitch pipe with one side etched with the notes G, D, A, E on a music staff. It was part of a collection of family heirlooms, mostly made in Germany, that belonged to German-American immigrants from the late 1800's.
- An icepick that looks more like a tiny pitch-fork.
- A court reporting machine and accompanying steno book, used in courtrooms in the late 50's and early 60's.

Going through the backlog has been an exciting process as a new archivist, since it's given me the opportunity to work with a wide variety of different documents and artifacts. I've learned where we keep the foam cutting knives (in an old coffee tin in the breakroom), I've learned how to wrap and store both quilts and framed pictures (thanks, Don!), and I've learned how to apply wheat paste as an adhesive for archival labels (non-acidic, removable with water). I've also started to become familiar with the many different families, organizations, and individuals that make up the story of Anoka County.



Newly organized back lab space to process all future items accepted into the ACHS collection.

There's about 30 years' worth of donations in the backlog (starting around 1980 and petering off around 2010). It's interesting to see who donated, what they donated, and why it's important to the community. Sometimes it's flashy like an antique camera (cough), other times it's as innocuous as a bundle of receipts from local businesses, but it's all fascinating!

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS 100TH ANNIVERSARY



This 37-square quilt encapsulates 100 years of the Columbia Heights story. From historic locations such as the original John Sullivan House or Forest Park to current day celebrations such as the Jamboree or the 17 City parks, this quilt highlights the history of Columbia Heights.

The quilt was designed and its creation coordinated by Alison Marzolf with help from sewers Judy Allgood, Connie Buesgens, Karen DeMarco, Annette Fink, Lotus Hubbard, Rebecca Loader, Amanda Marquez Simula, Rachel Meyers, Renee Rewitzer, Michele Schluender, Amanda Wendel, and Vickie Wendel; quilters Gail Carlson and Diane

Hasse; and technical assistance from Brian Crawford. The group spent over 300 hours creating this heirloom for the city, now on display.



WINNERS!

The Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM) honored seven local history projects with a Minnesota History Award at their Annual Meeting and Conference on April 29.

Award recipients' completed projects or achieved the criteria for lifetime achievement in 2019 and 2020. While the conference met digitally, we were amazed and elated to receive not one but TWO awards for our work during the past two years. First for our documentary with TPT *We're In This Together* (2019) and the second for the Covid-inspired creation *An Un-Wise Murder* (2020).

Thank you to all of the members, supporters, volunteers who helped us with these projects. Here's to the future and the projects we have yet to dream!

Haven't seen these productions yet? You'll find them on our website under "Veterans Voice", "Digital Programs", or "History 21: The Vault".

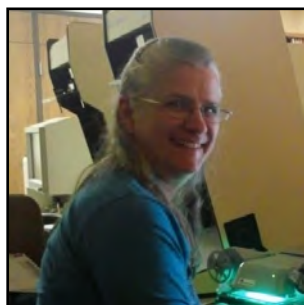
QCTV ANNIVERSARY

On March 30, Quad Cities Television celebrated their 40th anniversary as a local cable station. We would like to extend our congratulations to our



partners and friends for the work you do in the community!

Thank you for promoting small businesses, documenting history, and supporting our fanciful projects.



STUMP THE GENEALOGIST

Free Event by the Anoka County Genealogical Society

May 19, 2021 at 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting link available on the calendar at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Do you have questions about your family history? Are you a genealogist stuck at a brick wall? Not sure where to go next in your research? Join us on Zoom to see if we can help you. Professional genealogist, Cathi Weber and other members of the Anoka County Genealogical Society will be online to try to answer your questions.

You are encouraged to submit your genealogy questions ahead of time by sending them to ACGSMN@yahoo.com or just join in the meeting on Wednesday, May 19.

ACGS is an affiliate of the Anoka County Historical Society. Our Goals are to:

- Host educational events and classes
- Increase involvement and memberships.
- Assist in preserving family history.
- Research genealogy inquiries
- Collect and preserve articles/information of genealogy nature.

General Donations

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Hammerheart Brewing
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Rum River Restoration
Teamsters Local 638



*In hopes we can meet in-person and outside for the Annual Meeting, the gathering has been scheduled for **MAY 18 AT 7 P.M.***

Since COVID and the weather are still very real challenges to this event, we have made a ZOOM link available on our website calendar of events.

You have the option of attending either in-person

or via the live stream on your electronic device (This includes a call-in option for those without internet or web cameras). Members will also receive an email with more details within two weeks of the event, so mark your calendars now!

After a short business meeting to install new Board members and approve the 2020 financial statements, attendees will enjoy special entertainment created just for you! ACHS broke new ground in the past year with programming of all sorts, so expect some of those characters to return for a special Q&A session. There will also be an opportunity for small groups to get a sneak peek at the Federal Cartridge Collection and talk digitizing and archiving with ACHS staff.

History Center Hours.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10 a.m.—2 p.m.

Open hours subject to change during this uncertain time.

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at

AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

History 21: The Podcast the first and third Friday of each month.

Look for new episodes May 7 and 21.

Stump the Genealogist—from the Anoka County Genealogical

Society

WHEN: May 19, 6:30-8:00 pm

Program held on Zoom (link in the ACHS calendar online)

Find more information on page 13

Annual Meeting

WHEN: May 18, 7 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center and on

Zoom (link in the ACHS calendar online)

See page 14 for more details

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

Anoka County
Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

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



Anoka County
Historical Society

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HISTORY

21



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

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Front Cover: Souvenir dance card for the "Firemen's Ball Wednesday, July 4, 1883 Anoka Fire Department Court House". Inside lists order of dances and dance styles. Names listed: Frank Smith, Jim Nugent, Fred Folsom, Harry Weeks. Small tassel and pencil included. The card holder is not listed. 1994.0660.002



From the President

Summer is here. The days are longer, and we have the freedom to gather again. How delicious it is to be able to get out and do things. The History Center hours are expanding and there are summer activities aplenty within Anoka County. Check out the calendar on our website to know where we are and watch for upcoming activities. Subscribe to The Vault. Listen to the Podcasts. Come visit us at the Anoka Riverfest – either at our booth downtown or at our Yard Sale. I am

sure there are treasures waiting to be owned! You'll find us at the Anoka County Fair and the Nowthen Threshing Show—maybe you saw us at Blaine already. We want to see you! This Summer it is a time to Celebrate, visit with your neighbors, or check out community events like the Columbia Heights Centennial! Each week we have opportunities to enjoy being a community. Reach out to new and old friends and family. Listen to their stories and tell yours. Pay attention the stories. Look for those unexpected little nuggets that make your family or community unique. We are working on a Summer Journal with our grandchildren finding something each week to write and draw about. What will you write about in your journal this summer?

Lotus Hubbard

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

From the Director

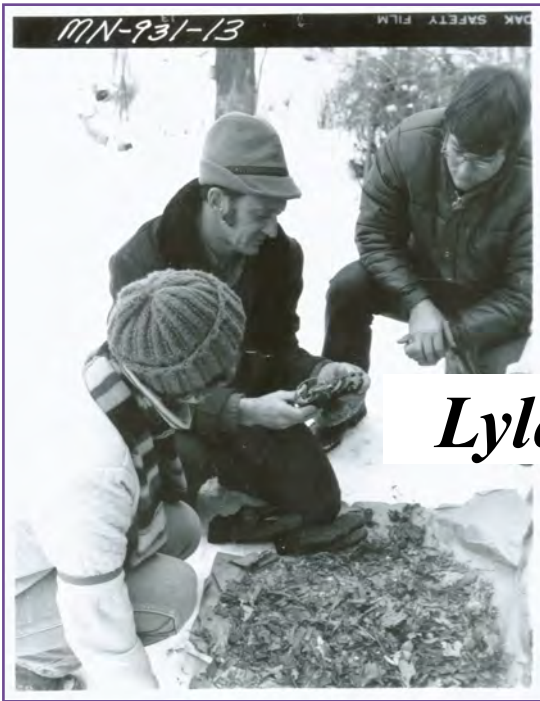
Our inaugural appearance of the summer occurred at the Cars for Neighbors fundraiser in Ramsey on that crazy hot Saturday the beginning of June. We followed that up three weeks later in the west pavilion of Blaine, enjoying a lovely breeze with our conversations while racing Jell-O derby cars. At both festivals, we engage passersby in the vital role ACHS plays in the community of Anoka County by preserving our collective story—as well as have some fun and shenanigans.



A local history museum must serve a variety of roles: we're a community center, a gathering place, an idea collator, and an information container. We make connections through time, over miles, and within the walls of that new house you just bought. We harvest the shared legacy of our experiences and preserve them for future generations to investigate. What can we do for you and those you know? Where can we make more impact in the communities you're part of?

Rebecca Ebneth-Desens

Rebecca Ebneth-Desens, Executive Director



Lyle Bradley

*“Lyle R. Bradley, 96, of Andover, MN passed away peacefully with family at his side on Monday, June 7, 2021. ... Lyle was born November 22, 1924 in Dubuque, IA ... where he developed a love for birds and fascination with flight that was central to his life. As young man, Lyle went off to war in the Pacific flying the F4U Corsair in WWII, and continued his service in the Korean War and many years in the Marine Reserves, retiring as a Lt. Col. after 42 years. In 1954, Lyle met Carol at a teacher’s summer school class in Duluth, MN. They were married June 25, 1955, and established their homestead on the Rum River in Grow Township, outside Anoka, MN where they raised their five children and resided until the end. Lyle was a beloved Science Teacher at Anoka Senior High School from 1955 until he retired as the District 11 Science Consultant in 1984. He will be remembered by hundreds of AHS students for the famous Summer Biology Field Trips, every summer from 1961 – 1983, where he was known affectionately as Bugs. It was through a field trip to Wyoming that he discovered the dinosaur site the Science Museum of Minnesota has on display. Throughout his life, to the end, Lyle was a committed citizen having served on the Metropolitan Airport Commission, the Minnesota Zoo Board, local Grow Township government before it was the City of Andover, Community Ed Ornithology classes, started the Wood Duck Society, belonged to a writers group and was a published co-author of a book called ‘Marine Wings’.” **Obituary Anoka UnionHerald, June 2021***

*Oral History transcript conducted by Dave Niles in the collection of ACHS:
Recorded May 22, 2003. Full transcript available upon request.*

On joining the military during WWII

BRADLEY: This would have been 1942, the fall or '42. Two of us were boxing and we just took a little break and we decided both were going to join the Marine Corps. We were both interested in aviation but at that time you had to be a college graduate

before you got into aviation. Anyway, so we went down and signed up in the Marine Corps the next day and they said stay in school, so we both stayed in school.

The next week they changed the rule, you only had to be in college to get into aviation. So I went up and talked to one of the guys that was involved in that and he said, "If you pass our tests we'll take care of the Marine Corps." So that's what got me into aviation. I came to Minneapolis the day I was 18 and went through the testing program down here and passed it. Bob Peet [??], the other guy, came up with me and he didn't pass because he had a very slight lisp...

First of all, we went through the physical. You had to get through the physical exam first but there was no problem there. I remember the doctor checking my pulse said, "Good God," he said, "I don't know if you're alive or dead. You've got a 42 pulse." He even called one of his buddies over, you know, and he said, "What have you been doing?" Well, I was on the college cross-country team at that time so I was in very good shape. After going through the physical then they gave us a mental test and I thought they were relatively easy so passed them. Then the rough part was the interview. After you went through all those tests they put you in a room and I remember, there were three Lt. Commanders, if I remember right, one of them medical and two of them regular.

And they started asking you very embarrassing questions. They asked things about your drinking habits, about your sexual habits, all kinds of really very personal questions. What they tried to do, I made the mistake, I came in chewing gum and my God, you'd think I'd committed a felony just for chewing gum. So anyway, but that was the idea. And I saw guys come out of that room crying. That was their purpose, to break you down and rattle you. Anyway, I got through that okay and I guess I passed.

After passing the tests

BRADLEY: I went back to school at the University of Dubuque. I stayed there until about the 1st of March when I got my orders, and I had to report to Aberdeen, South Dakota. In Aberdeen we were in the CPP program, Civilian Pilot Program...I got through that okay and then from there went to Iowa City for pre-flight.

That's where we really got involved with the military. That was basically about 75% physical and about 25% mental. They really [unintelligible], we played football, we wrestled, we did track, we went through the obstacle course. That was a real challenge. As a matter of fact, in our platoon, we lost, in the whole thing, let's see, there were 30 guys in the company so that would have been 10 out of each platoon that left the end of the first week...They treated us wonderful, boy, the crew there was just second to none. But it was a long day. We started at 5:30 in the morning, we were out doing pushups at 6 o'clock in the morning, and long before breakfast we had a good days work in. Then went all day long. We had activities all morning, then in the afternoon for the first 3 hours we had Code, we had several different classes, then from 4 to 6 we had sports. I played soccer and boxed. You had to



choose a sport, so I had 6 weeks of soccer and 6 weeks of boxing. In the evening, oh, swimming was a big thing and quite a number of people didn't make swimming. That was a big thing because we had to swim, I can't remember all of these exactly, but I think we had to swim to the point of swimming two miles. You had to inflate your own clothes as a life preserver. I remember we had a swimming coach by the name of Bartle [??], he was out of the University of Michigan, and everyone thought what a cruel, heartless guy. If somebody couldn't make it and he was on the bottom, he'd let him lay there for several minutes before he'd do anything. But you know when it comes right down to it, really, that hard nosed military I think, now when I look back on it, was just excellent for all of us. Because you never know when you're going to get into a real bind, either in war or whatever, and you look back and say, well, gee, this **is** a breeze compared to what I went through in the military.

Niles: So then you graduated from pre-flight and then what?

BRADLEY: Then came up to Minneapolis and we called it E-base...we had the old bi-plane, the N2S Stearman. Oh, what a wonderful airplane. I still enjoy flying that occasionally. But open cockpit. We were here in September, October and November. It was cold in November. We had to fly with sheepskins on and face masks, etc. That was just a delightful three months because we flew an airplane that I really loved... We had a lot of course work, a lot of course work on code and a lot of things on recognition. Oh, I'll tell you one thing on recognition. I'm a nut on birds, I do a lot of bird spotting and I run classes on birds, etc. This happened in pre-flight in Iowa City. They called me in one time and they said, "Do you realize it's a court martial offense to cheat on tests?" I didn't know what they were talking about. I said, "I haven't been cheating on any tests." Well, they said, you go through these recognition courses and you get them all right all of the time. No one does that. I didn't know what the dickens they were talking about.

See, when they would flash these pictures of airplanes up on the wall for just a second and we had to know every airplane from every country in the world that was involved with the war. They said, "We have 15 new slides here and you'd better get them all right." They were three, I don't know what they were, Lieutenant Commanders if I remember, or something like that. They flashed these on the board and I got them all right. They had my records there and were going through them, and they said, "Well, look at this guy here, here's his former biology teacher says he's so good on birds, and a former Scoutmaster said he was our bird merit badge counselor at age 12, etc." I'd been interested in birds ever since I was a little kid. Anyway, they finally figured that was the

reason. But I was always very good on recognition. So we had a lot of recognition, every place we went we had recognition of airplanes, we had to stay up on it...

Niles.: Okay. So you got assigned to the Bennington. This is about when?

BRADLEY: This would be about December, early January, I guess it was, of '45. I joined Squadron 123, there were two Marine squadrons on board that carrier... We trained seven pilots in each squadron. It was





interesting, we went out as a replacement team, eight of us. ... One of the reasons why was the Bennington had lost six pilots in a matter of two hops about a week before that. They had hit an island called KaiKai [??] Island ... , that's close to Okinawa. On one dive three pilots, they picked off three airplanes. They had really heavy anti-aircraft guns. That was one of the primary fields the Japanese were using for their kamikazes. ... Guess where we went on our first mission. Right back to that island. So we were a little nervous about that because they had a very effective anti-aircraft. We circled up there for a couple hours, just waiting and keeping an eye on the field, etc. before we went down. We didn't lose anybody that day. Anyway, so that was my introduction to combat.

Anyway, now later on I was recalled to Korea five years later and I was sitting in a

railroad station in Namra [??] Japan, that was the city that was supposed to be the capitol ahead of Tokyo, and there was a Japanese man sitting across the counter from me. He was glaring at me. I thought, well, he could be about the right age, Japanese veteran, mad, etc. He got up out of his seat and he came around and I didn't want to get caught off balance so I turned like this. He came up, and in perfect English, he said, "What kind of airplane do you fly?", because I had my wings on. Anyway this started a very good friendship. He invited me over to his house that night so we went over, we killed a bottle of sake, and his wife had fixed some wonderful rice cakes, etc. He was a medical doctor at that time so he took me into the schools there at Namra on several trips, into his home and his hospital, etc. Anyway, the reason I jumped from the plane that I shot down, I asked him what kind of plane he flew, he was a Japanese pilot. So he got the recognition books out and he said, "There's the plane." And that was the same type of plane I had shot down, a twin engine Mick [??] we called them. So I told him a friend of mine had shot one of those down. "Oh," he said, "where was he?" So I pointed at the map and he said, "That had to be from our squadron because we were the only ones in southern Japan that had that plane." He said, "When was it?" "Well," I said, "I can't remember exactly," but I gave him an approximate date and he had a list of all the pilots that had been in the squadron. So then I went back and checked my logbook and the next time we were together I told him the date it was shot down. He wanted to know the name of the pilot and I said I didn't remember the name of the pilot. The last time we were together I told him I had a confession to make, I said, "I was the guy the shot down your friend." He got another bottle of sake out and we had a toast to his departed friend I had shot down ... That was an interesting time.



Subscribe to History 21: The Podcast and listen to more of Lyle's story from this Oral History.

The full Oral History is also available on demand on The Vault at AnokaCountyHistory.org

KASSANDRA

I am currently a graduate student at University of Minnesota Mankato studying to get my Master of Science in History. After graduation from my current Master's program in about a year, I plan to immediately attend to University of Wisconsin-Madison in pursuit of a Master of Library and Information Science degree. My long-term career goal is to eventually work as a special collections' archivist at a university. I am hoping that this internship will provide me with the necessary experience to land me a job as an archivist at a museum, library, or university.

During my time working with Anoka County Historical Society on the Federal Cartridge collection, some of the most interesting items I have come across were confidential documents about the draft in World War II, dozens of ammunitions blueprints, and a document detailing the hourly wages of Federal employees in the 1920s through 1930s, including a substantial number of women working for them at the time. It has been an exceptionally rewarding experience working with artifacts of a company that was a significant part of my childhood and the many memories I made with my father hunting.



YHARNET

Hello everyone! I just completed my master's degree in Library and Information Science, where I specialized in Archives/Special Collections. Currently, I work at a part-time job as a library page and two internships—here at ACHS and the latter as an Oral History intern at Minnesota Historical Society. I'm thrilled to work on the Federal Cartridge Company (FCC) collection this summer. The coolest item I've seen so far is a small scale from the 1930s used to weigh products before shipping. Recently, I toured the FCC campus where I could match how the collection relates to manufacturing and the company culture.

This summer, I hope to improve my skills in processing materials and creating physical exhibits. I aspire to organize collections physically and intellectually for researcher access; and curate an exhibit honoring the experiences of different communities and organizations like FCC. My dream career is to be an archivist using my skill set to lift up underrepresented communities.

During graduate school, I had a professional practice experience with the George Floyd Global Memorial which made me realize the importance of local community members expressing their own stories of the Black experience through offerings, art, flowers, etc. I want to use my career to advocate for social justice issues and manage collections filling gaps typically forgotten throughout history.

The Riverfest tradition is back and organizers are expecting larger-than-usual crowds on July 10. The History Center will open it's doors from 10-4 p.m. to the public for games, treats, and a sneak-peek into the framed objects included in the anniversary collection. Grab a selfie with a life-sized cutout of Charles Horn, the founder of Federal Cartridge Company, and see an original photo of the first staff he hired in 1925. You'll also view other framed images on display include a parade float, Christmas celebration, advertising, and aerial images of the plant.

While you're at the museum, we have a couple favors to ask: do you know families who worked at Federal for several generations? Do you have a special memory of the company or the impact it had on Anoka County? We're looking for stories to make the centennial exhibit in 2022 more personal than just displaying some really great looking artifacts. Help us make next year truly special by donating your memory. Not available for Riverfest? No problem! Submit your story on our website.



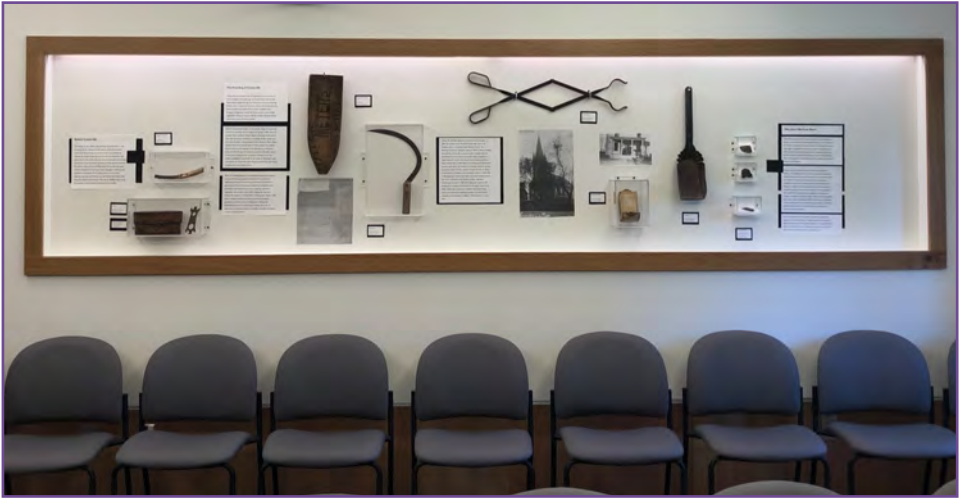
We know Riverfest is all about searching for the best craft item in town, so make sure you come on over to the Anoka County History Center to peruse OUR items for sale!

All sale proceeds will go towards the preservation of artifacts in the collection. We need boxes, tissue paper, shelving, folders, photography equipment, work benches...you name it! Help us save history while also making your home look spiffy with unique items.

Regardless of weather, you can find your next treasure: if it's lovely, we'll be outside the building, but if the much-needed rain appears, we will have tables set up inside.

Did we mention we have air conditioning and flush toilets? Never underestimate knowing where those are during a city-wide festival! Grab a cool treat for free on the way out of our gallery and we guarantee it's time well spent.

Please note: items for sale were either donated for this purpose, deaccessioned from the collection because they didn't have a connection to the County, or may be duplicates of an item that does have a good story and provenance.



Curating an exhibit is the most public part of an archivist's job. It allows us to step out of the backroom, away from piles of artifacts and spreadsheets full of data, and design something that will be seen by the community. It's an exhilarating process to consider what we share with other people. At the beginning of this year, a new dimension was added to this excitement when the City of Centerville reached out to us about designing a display on their behalf using their historical collection.

Organizing an exhibit with an outside collection can feel strange. First of all, it requires becoming familiar with entirely new artifacts. It takes time to analyze the significance of certain artifacts and how to best arrange them to tell a story, since that's what curating an exhibit is really all about.

Not only has this helped me as a new Collections Manager learn more about exhibit design, it's also introduced me the history of Centerville. The first documented white settler of the area was Francis LaMotte, who arrived in the spring of 1852. He was soon followed by many others from French Canada. These people initially came to the area because of the abundance of wild game, birds, and fish. After fur trading became unsustainable, the settlers turned to farming, which deforested the area and converted marshland into fields for growing hay, corn, potatoes, and other vegetables while also raising cattle. Reportedly, Charles Peltier began the very first Centerville business--a sawmill built on Clearwater creek in 1854. Other residents followed his lead and started businesses such as milling, barrel making, and blacksmithing. Many of Centerville's residents also took on important, civic positions such as town council member.

Centerville officially organized in Anoka County on August 11, 1857. The citizens chose the name "Centerville" due to its location, which is a relatively equal distance from St. Paul, Stillwater, and Anoka. Originally platted in 1854 by Peltier, Lavallee, and LaMotte, Centerville continued to grow steadily with the establishment of more farms,

homes, and other organizations. Centerville's first church, the Church of St. Genevieve of Paris, began holding Mass in 1859. Before the building of St. Genevieve's, services were held in the homes of community members and led by pioneer priests. The first school in Centerville held its classes in the kitchen of LaVallee's home during the winter of 1854-1855. Later, classes were held in the small, wooden church that was St. Genevieve's first building. A dedicated schoolhouse was built in 1865 and taught students until forming the Centennial School District with other towns in the 1950s. Centerville experienced significant growth in its early history, eventually incorporating as a village in 1910 and later as a city in 1974.

As museum workers, the real difficulty of exhibit design is that we have such varied amounts of information on certain artifacts. For every piece in our collection accompanied by reliable, extensive documentation there are 10 more we know almost nothing about. How old something is, how much it was valued when it was first made, how many were created, and how much influence its creators had all impact how much is known about an artifact today. For instance, we know so much about the first French Canadian and German settlers of Centerville because their legacy travelled from person to person through the years. This occurred through books, newspaper articles, word of mouth, or protected heirlooms. Their history lives on through their descendants and many artifacts and records saved by their families.

On the flip side, this is also why we don't know more about the Dakota or the Ojibwe. We don't know the date they shaped the pottery because once removed, the burial site was destroyed. We don't know the name of who crafted the tools because the craftsman was forced to relocate, and their descendants are no longer our neighbors. We don't know why their ancestors built the mounds they did, what battles they fought, or what agreements they made. When Centerville was settled, State and Federal officials saw them as an obstacle to land and resources. Later, those governments worked to erase the native story, history, and culture through assimilation. Because of all this, we have no real context on Dakota and Ojibwe artifacts. They are some of the oldest, rarest, and potentially the most revelatory, but they are also the most difficult to exhibit.

We are lucky to have the larger Minnesota museum network to help us illuminate difficult topics. Through articles available on tribe and reservation websites, as well as resources created by the Minnesota Historical Society, I began to piece together information that reveals a fragment of what has been lost and obscured. I learned that the ancestors of the Ojibwe and the Dakota made this area their home thousands of years before the founding of Centerville. They utilized natural resources such as wild rice, waterfowl, and game animals as well as waterways for travel and trade. The dense woods supplied materials for shelter, tools, and hand-crafted items. The people built great nations composed of numerous unique languages, traditions, and individual communities. They went to war, formed alliances, married, had children, and shared with each other their histories, customs, and cultures. They left an indelible mark as the first people on this land and continue to do so today.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Every year, the ACHS membership elects people to sit on the Board of Directors. These representatives have determined the strategic future and governance of ACHS since 1934, when the organization began. Elected for a second three-year term are VP Rich Oxley and Jim Rootes, while Maddie McNamara and Dee Ann Christiansen begin their first term on the BOD.



A sophomore at the Anoka High School, Maddie spent time with ACHS at part of the Teen Council for four years documenting their daily experiences in school for the collection to preserve our story. She looks forward to volunteering on the Board of Directors to help make connections with the younger generation and share her perspective with the other members.



A retired Social Studies teacher, Dee Ann lives in Coon Rapids and has worked for years in education and is excited to bring that background to a leadership position at ACHS. She also serves in the League of Women Voters—ABC and is active in community advocacy.

What's new with the Board of Directors?

The Board is comprised of four committees (Gather, Engage, Define Identity, and Management) and two task forces (Facing Change and Membership) who meet outside of the regular board meetings. Recently, the Management committee has discussed investment opportunities and updating our long-term portfolio strategy. Define Identity has brought solutions to our onboarding process forward, which resulted in the full board approving new Board member expectations. Gather and Engage work with staff to manage the collection, outreach, and events, including the upcoming Yard Sale and Riverfest exhibit opening. The task forces continue to discuss a strategy of reaching out to new communities in Anoka County to increase membership, relationships, and influence—all through a lens of diversity and inclusion.



Have you tried turning it off and on again? This past year as we kept our staff and volunteers safe, volunteer projects and events nearly disappeared. We are so happy to get rolling again with events this summer! Prepped with vaccinations and a new **JOY** we are excited to return to our summer staples.

We need **YOU** to help restart the machine
and bring ACHS out into the world again.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Riverfest** July 10. We need **15 volunteers** to help in 2 hour shifts at our table on Jackson street, at the yard sale, and giving out treats. Perks—bumping into all those people around town you haven't seen in a year (including us!)
- **Anoka County Fair** July 20—25. We need **36 volunteers** to help in 3 hour shifts at our Farmhouse on the County Fair grounds. Play old games, chat with new friends, and enjoy the best spot at the fair (the porch swing.) Perks—a free ticket to the fair and first dibs on the whimmy diddle.
- **Nowthen Threshing Show**—Aug 20-22. We need **18 volunteers** to help in 4/5 hour shifts at the General Store. Old cars, so many old tractors, and PICKLES! Perks—a free ticket to the show and perfect seat to watch the tractor parade.

BUT SARA, I'M MORE OF AN INSIDE CAT (OR DOG)!

- Federal Photograph Scanning
- Transcribing oral histories/recording oral histories
- Booking programs with care centers, schools, or?
- Encouraging people to become members
- Transcribing documents, letters, and other fun things in the collection

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

Mel & Kathy Aanerud
American Legion Post
#102 Edward B. Cutter
Florence Arnoldy
Vernon & Catherine
Bauer
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New Members

Dee Ann Christensen

ACHS Sustaining Members

Scott & Michelle
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Allison & Brian Schmitt
Rita Warpeha
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ACHS Business Members

Anoka Knights of
Columbus Council
2018
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Rum River Restoration
Teamsters Local 638

Collection Find



Now: ALL of the music can fit in our pocket.
Then: the Phonograph/Edison Standard, circa 1905. The metal horn (or morning glory apparatus) stands about half as tall as a refrigerator. This machine belonged to Louise Dill Cleator. She was a lifelong resident of Anoka. Died July 1984. Lived in little house on highway #47 for many years.

History Center Hours.

Tuesday - Friday 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Open hours subject to change during this uncertain time.

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at

AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

History 21: The Podcast the first and third Friday of each month.

Look for new episodes May 7 and 21.

Riverfest Exhibit Sneak Peak & Yard Sale

WHEN: June 10

Welcome back to the museum with treats, a sneak peek at the Federal collection, and a yard sale! Museum open 10a.m.—4 p.m. More details page 9.

Anoka County Fair

WHEN: June 20-25

Visit us at the Farmhouse as you enjoy the fair OR sign up to be a volunteer and play with us for a shift. More details about volunteering page 13 and the fair in general at www.AnokaCountyFair.com

Nowthen Threshing Show

WHEN: August 20-22

We'll be back at the general store! Stop by for a visit OR hang out with us for a shift. Did you know the pickles taste sweeter when you volunteer? More details page 13 and at www.NowthenThreshing.com

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

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



Anoka County
Historical Society

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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HISTORY

21



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

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Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

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Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Erin McBrien (Collections Manager)

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Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

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Soon

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Front Cover: Mr. and Mrs. George Kottke standing by their buses in front of the building that Main Motor, Anoka used to display and house used cars and trucks and Allis-Chalmers farm equipment. (Object ID: PCSM128)



From the President

Summer is easing its way into Labor Day, start of school, and fall. The rituals of summer have breathed life and texture into our days by allowing us to do those things that bring us together. At AHCS, we celebrated 100 years of Columbia Heights, held a Jell-O Derby at the Blaine Festival, engaged with people at the Anoka Riverfest and had a Yard Sale. The farmhouse at the Anoka County Fair brought a glimpse of life in days past and the General Store at the Nowthen Threshing Show dispensed dill

pickles, candy, bits of history, and gossip. We began some new relationships at the “Conocer Los Parques” event in Fridley. In the upcoming months we will be at the Linwood Township 150th and the Nowthen Heritage Fest—and of course hosting our famous Ghost Tours.

Our mission of preserving, gathering, and celebrating Anoka County’s stories requires us to find opportunities to make connections, inspire interest, and gain trust. Trust that we will honor the history of all the communities within Anoka County – telling the stories with their voices and point of view.

Thanks to all who stopped by to say hi—you breathe life into History. Your stories really do Matter!

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

From the Director

For all the joys I feel working at ACHS, the sorrow of losing good friends, volunteers, and community members really hit home in the last few weeks. It’s a testament to the quality of humans in Anoka County whom I’ve had the pleasure to meet—that so quickly I feel connected to them, enjoy their presence for too short a time, and am left with a hole the size of their hug. Three celebrations of life in as many weeks carries a weight.



Perhaps it’s because we work closely with you when you’re giving of yourselves. We have the gift of knowing your home remodels, the antics of pets, the grandchildren’s firsts. We’re fast-tracked into your lives and get to witness not only the social media moments, but the meaningful ones. Sometimes we’re the place to distract you, sometimes you bring us treats from vacations.

However long and in whatever way, we cherish the times we have with you—and miss you when you’re gone.

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Linwood: 150 years and still growing

Logan Grant Sr. in Linwood baseball uniform. (ID# 2008.1837.117)

Celebrations like these only come along, well...once in a lifetime. From September 7-11, Linwood Township will commemorate its history with a long list of events and activities, including a medallion hunt, carnival games, parade, and history exhibit at the Grange. For more information on the activities planned, visit the Linwood Family Fun day group on Facebook, linwoodtownship.govoffice.com, or call the Township Hall at 651-462-2812.

In the Beginning

The first white settlers moved to the Linwood area in 1855 to become residents of Bethel and Columbus. County Commissioners recognized the area as independent from it's neighbors in 1871, creating what now stands as the last remaining township in Anoka County.

The area's population growth after the Civil War produced a considerable number of farmers who banded together to create the Crescent Grange Hall #512 organization in 1874. L.O. Tombler made the motion at a meeting on February 23, 1881 to build a hall on land





owned by J.G. Green. The first Saturday in June the Grange met to lay the foundation, later appointing George Haskell as foreman. They met sporadically during the summer and fall to work on the hall, but progress didn't occur at the rate they expected. On November 30, the group voted to postpone work on the hall until Spring.

Members of the Crescent Grange of Linwood Township included both male and female members, as is evidenced by group photos and a list of charter members (J.H. Dawson, F.J. Dawson, F. McGregor, James McGregor, J.G. Green, John Grant, W.L. Bullard, Sanford Broadbent, W.F. Holden, M.M. Ryan, Jesse Moore, R.M. Grand, Julia A. Dawson, Jennie M. Dawson, Annie McGregor, Abbie Holden, Evalena Green, Mary A. Grant, Eliza A. Bullard, and Mary Broadbent). On July 4, 1882 the Crescent Grange held its first celebration at the hall, drawing a large crowd and proceeds of \$87.62 to go

towards the new hall. The building received a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

The backbone of agriculture in Linwood extended beyond the typical crops of wheat and rye to claim the third largest pumpkin in the world (as of 1994). But we digress...more notably Moses E. Clap and George H. Wyman deeded 2,207



Above: Popcorn School, Linwood School District 51. Black and white, taken during the winter, 1937. (ID# 2015.0159.001)

Left: Class photograph of the District 51 school in Linwood. The first girl on the right in the second row down from the top is identified as Mae Kriesel, a neighbor of the donor. Not dated. (ID# 2014.0159.011)



Sail boating on Martin Lake in Linwood, Mr. and Mrs. C.M. Jewett pictured. (ID#

acres of land to the Minnesota Grass Twine company of St. Paul for \$28,500. A large portion of this land was swamp where wire grass grew which could be used to manufacture rugs, carpets, twine, etc.

This sedge grass was too coarse and hard for animal feed, but the Twine Company believed the grass could be

harvested and used to make twine. They bought roughly 30,000 acres in the Columbus and Linwood area, but their efforts failed. Other companies became interested in the grass and several invested in Anoka County's wire grass.

The Crex Carpet Company wanted to use the long grass to weave lightweight, inexpensive rugs. More successful than twine, it turned out the plant material could hold decorative paint or dye. Soon over 300 people were employed during the busy seasons, living in four "camps" to house and feed the workers. Wages in the wire grass business were one to two dollars per day, but if a man provided his own team of horses, he received twice as much. The average wage for men in the U.S. in 1910 was 26 cents an hour, or \$2.06 for an eight-hour day. Pay in the wire grass camps was about average—unless you brought your horses, then it was very good pay.

Meadow View Farm, owned in 1915 by Frank King, was a 300 acre farm that ran 35 head of cattle and a butter making business. The entire King extended family worked on the operation, which also raised pigs, corn, rye, oats, and clover. King served as the treasurer of school district #4, was a member of the Linwood Farmers' Club, and of the Grange.

Mr. and Mrs. William Holden owned Greenwood Farm in 1915, then one of the oldest homes in the township. The place covered 246 acres, 40 of which the Holden's cultivated with help from their sons. They raised cows and potatoes as well as rye, wheat, clover, and alfalfa. The property housed the old post office for 20 years, 10 of which Mrs. A.M. Holden presided as post mistress. William Holden served on the town board, S.G. Holden was the assessor of the township, and Fred Holden worked as treasurer of school district #35.

**TREASURES FROM
"LINWOOD TOWNSHIP":**

It's said that when early settler, Sanford Broadbent, would walk to Anoka and when offered a ride on a wagon pulled by horses, would refuse, saying it would slow him down.

Early Settler, Mrs. McGregor, would walk from her home to St. Paul and knit a pair of stockings on the way.

The school district was organized in 1860. One of the old schools was called the Popcorn School, which acquired its name at Christmas when the children decorated the school with popcorn. Linwood School District #35 opened for students in 1924. It replaced an earlier school house #35 which was moved to Forest Lake and became part of District 831. The school, District #35, closed in 1960. As of 1991 the building had been turned into a restaurant. Also still in



GAR Hall located in Linwood, photo taken in August of 1975. (ID# 1.07)

existence is the Carlisle School, built in 1925. In 1961, the present school was built and as the community grew so did the school. Additions were added in 1970-71.

During WWI, the Helping Hand Club was created with neighboring East Bethel women, one of many clubs and organizations to get their start in this community. The Linwood Volunteer Fire Department saw it's start in the early 1950s, fighting fires with pump cans and hard labor. In 1968 a new Fire and Community building was built.

Growth continued with the construction of the original Town Hall and Fire Garage, built in 1969, then the addition of the Senior Center in 1987. Across the road from the Linwood Community Building is Carroll Broadbent Memorial Park, established in 1987, where there are two baseball fields, a football field, a basketball court, a playground area, and a picnic pavilion. In the winter, the Township also provides a warming house which serves a hockey rink and a skating rink. Commitment to community continues with activities such as Linwood Family Fun Day and the Firemen's Dance.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS AT THE 150TH CELEBRATION:

Thursday, September 9th

5 pm: Cemetery tour. Trolley pick-up/drop-off in front of town hall.

5-8 pm: Yard games, gunny sack races, three legged races and much more at Carroll Broadbent Memorial Park; History of Linwood Township exhibit at the Grange Hall.



One of our most recent donations, brought in only a week or so ago, caused quite a buzz when it arrived at ACHS. And how could it not? Not only did the donation consist of books and documents, it was also comprised of an A. H. Reid butter worker, a foot-powered potato cutter, a potato planter, and—the star of the show—a swinging butter churn

(specifically, a Davis Swing Churn patented on May 1, 1877 and September 9, 1879 by Vermont Farm Machine Co. of Bellows Falls, Vermont). We were especially fascinated by the churn, which consisted of a yellow-painted barrel that rests in a wooden swing (see below). At the time, a swinging churn was the state-of-the-art device for making butter, and indispensable for a dairy farm. However, our real excitement came from the connections these objects have with the county.

According to the donor, Dr. Bruce Gleason, the artifacts were originally purchased by his great-grandparents Ole and Louise Lagersen. Dr. Gleason has researched his great grandfather's journey from Norway to Minneapolis, where he met Louise (nee Hovelsrud), to their eventual settling in Anoka County. He shared some of his writing on the subject:

"They owned and ran a small general store in the Seven Corners area of Minneapolis (current west bank of the University of Minnesota campus), and in 1895 bought an 80-acre farm in Burns Township, Anoka County—on the southern edge of a settlement known as Nowthen. At some point, the farm was titled Clovernook Farm following a custom of the time of naming farms.

"At Clovernook the Lagersens developed a prize-winning Jersey herd in addition to a state-of-the-times crop farm—raising alfalfa, rye, wheat, potatoes, corn, and oats—doing all of the field work with horses. They also took strong interests in the community and along with being instrumental in bringing the first telephone service to Burns Township, became members of the St. Francis Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church upon their arrival in 1895, which was part of a two-point parish (two congregations pastored by one minister) along with a congregation at Burns about ¼ mile from their farm. This was a logical organization as Burns Township was originally part of St. Francis. In 1902 the organization of the Burns ME Church transferred to Elk River along with the membership of Ole and Louise who continued to attend at Burns. The Burns church closed in 1925 but the Elk River congregation continues



Left: Image of a similar swinging butter churn from <http://butterchurnhistory.com/davis.html>

to hold Burns ME records at the time of this writing. Following its closing, the Burns ME church building reverted back to the Hare family—the original owners of the property on which the church was built, and was converted into a house. The building continues as a private home at the time of this writing.”

Dr. Gleason continued with his memories of his grandparents and parents on the same farm:

“Following Louise’s death in 1932 and the passing of the farm to all seven children, my grandmother, Ingaborg, by this point was married to Joe Peterson (son of Otto and Beata Peterson of Dayton Township—and brother to Phil Peterson) and the two of them bought Clovernook from the six other Lagersen siblings. Taking possession of the farm with their three-year-old daughter, Joanne—my mother—the three of them continued the Clovernook dairy farm tradition begun by Ole and Louise. My grandfather Joe, was still milking cows at the age of 75 when he died in 1963. By this point, my mother was married to Lindahl Gleason who had grown up on a farm four miles northeast of Nowthen. As one of five children born to them, I have many happy memories of visiting and staying with my grandparents at Clovernook—feeding and milking cows (as a five-year-old). Because my mother was an only child, she was the sole inheritor of Clovernook, and it was then passed to my father when she died in 1978. Dad sold the buildings in the early 1990s, but retained most of the acreage except for the property on which the Nowthen Christian and Missionary Alliance Church stands—land that was donated by Joe and Inga Peterson in 1963. Dad donated further property to the church in the 1990s. Following Dad’s death in 2020, my sisters and I sold the remaining land (following 124 years of ownership) along with the Gleason farm, which we had owned for 79 years.

“The four items that we are offering the Anoka County Historical Society, a swinging butter churn, a butter worker, a potato seed cutter, and a potato planter, were all used for years at Clovernook, and hold distinct places in family memories as well as key places in the work that Ole and Louise did in forming not only the lives of their descendants but also in shaping Anoka County and the State of Minnesota.”

As a community archive, ACHS is home to many pieces of family history. Tradition, memories, and stories all have a place here in our collection. We are proud to act as caretakers to these important family memories, whether they’re recent or centuries old. Dr. Gleason’s donation is a perfect example of this, as the legacy of his family’s early history in Minnesota lives on through the artifacts and documents brought to our historical society. What would Ole and Louise’s life in America have been like without their dairy farm? Would they have been able to cultivate the same connections, or build the same kind of prosperity for their family? These pieces of history aren’t just important to the families connected to them, but to our shared history in its entirety. Handling these artifacts or seeing them in an exhibit helps us experience larger connections—between people, between places, between past and present—in a truly tangible way. The importance of family collections is in how this tangible connection is preserved, not just today but for future generations.



IN LOVING MEMORY, MARY NOLAN

Mary joined the ACHS Board of Directors in 2019, bringing her expertise in teaching and nursing with her. She served on the Define Identity committee and Facing Change task force, helping to ensure ACHS created an inclusive and thoughtful space for everyone.

At events, Mary would volunteer to sell tickets, tidy up tables, or be designated as the EMT on-site. She advocated for local history, believing everyone had a story to tell. When she began telling hers to people, their eyes always grew wide at the array of experiences in her life, including nursing in Haiti. Most importantly, Mary would laugh and say something smart—either intelligent or snarky—and people responded in kind.



A lover of Disney, quilting, books, Legos, Mary worked at Mercy Hospital in Intensive Care and the Emergency Room. She spent the next part of her career with Allina Home Health Care, Metropolitan Heart and Vascular, and Kidney



Specialists of Minnesota, ending by teaching at Anoka Technical College.

Mary's husband, Scott, has accepted the Board's offer to fulfill the remainder of her term.

IN LOVING MEMORY, BRAD HOLMBO

To work or play in Anoka meant coming into contact—usually a hug—with Brad. Whether at the car show, Halloween, the Chamber, or though Federal Cartridge, he volunteered at seemingly everything. For ACHS, he would pop in for a treat, just to say hi, ask to use our electric for the car show, or tell stories of his 40+ career at Federal. We crossed paths at the Legion or at events like the wrestling anniversary, Riverfest, or parades. Once he even donated some money to compensate for the public using our toilets regularly.

Brad and his wife, Deb, had agreed to identify images of people and events in the 100th anniversary collection of Federal, as well as record an oral history of their shared experience working through so much change at the company. We will mourn the loss of an interview scheduled not quite soon enough.

RIP, friend. Your smile and laugh will be greatly missed—as will your stories.



26 MONARK

Worth Noting



How would Deb and Brad Holmbo describe the experience of having triplets? "Overwhelming" and "devastating", they responded, respectively, when asked the question. Now that it's all over and he is sure that babies and mother are healthy, Brad says, "I feel great!"

Married seven years this August, the couple is glad to have travelled and done many of the things they have, now that they will have the responsibility of three new family members. As for furniture, clothing, and other necessities required for infant care, Brad says, they've been stockpiling new and hand-me-down items since December, when they first learned through ultrasound that Deb would have triplets. Their five bedroom rambler is also roomy enough to accommodate everyone.

Triplets Rachael (4 lbs. 4 oz.), Joshua (4 lbs. 10 oz.) and Adam (4 lbs. 15 oz.) were born Saturday, March 19. Brad, who works in the .22 Plant, second shift, and Debbie (second shift, Medical) have no other children. Grandpa Dean (Gib) Holmbo works in Hoffman Assembly and Great Grandma Nina Paul is a Federal retiree, having worked in the .22 Plant some 33 years.

Although Deb's family has no history of multiple births, Brad's side has several sets of twins, including his Dad.



The first—could we go as far as to call it an ANNUAL—Yard Sale was held at ACHS during the Anoka Riverfest celebration in July. Items for sale included deaccessioned artifacts that held no provenance to the county or those accepted into the collection with no true story accompanying it. Some items came to us specifically to sell and raise money for collections preservation. Thanks to you and everyone else who swarmed the front of the building looking for treasures (tiny screwdrivers to fix player pianos included!) we can continue to pay our intern, Yharnet, a stipend through the end of the year. Her work on the Federal Cartridge Anniversary Collection has proved invaluable this summer.



We are pleased to announce that in person genealogy meetings will resume soon! The executive board of the **ANOKA COUNTY GENEALOGY SOCIETY** has scheduled the following meeting:

Shaking the Tree
Tuesday, September 21
6:00 p.m.
Anoka County Historical Society
2135 Third Avenue
Anoka, Minnesota 55303

The program will highlight speakers from several genealogy associations such as The Mayflower Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Minnesota Genealogy Society, German Genealogy Society and the Pomeron Regional Group to name a few. These organizations have many unique resources that may help in your research. Come join us.

* Masks will be required.



THE GHOSTS ARE BACK IN TOWN*
 (*Yes, I definitely sung that title)

That's right! We are back for the 17th annual Ghost Tours in the City of Anoka, combining the digital options we created last year, with even more in-person tours. So you can choose your ghostly fun.

Would you like to watch the tour from the comfort of your own home, or even on your phone as you take yourself on the tour? Our completely digital tour is for you.

How about a tour guide Zooming in to share the stories you love, with even more photographs you can't see on the walking tour? Our interactive Zoom tour is for you.

But if you would like the classic experience, our public tours start the first weekend in September. In order to ensure the comfort and safety of our in-person guests we have made a few adjustments:

- New Museum hours! —The history center will now be open 1-7:30 p.m. during the nights we host Ghost Tours so you can more easily visit the museum before your tour. We ask that all patrons wear a mask in the building.
- Tours are staggered by 30 minutes to avoid group overlap.
- Hear your guide better with a reduced tour capacity of 15.

Our guides are excited to share the History & Mystery hidden in the buildings and along the streets in the City of Anoka. Choose your tour and sign up today at AnokaCountyHistory.org

May you be well this spooky season with only Boos and never boo boos.

Sara Given
 Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

Anoka County
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Abby Sherman
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Courtney Jones
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Allison & Brian Schmitt
Rita Warpeha
Melanie Weeks

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2018
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Rum River Restoration
Teamsters Local 638



**NOWTHEN THRESHING
SHOW**

Thank you to all who helped or visited us at the General Store during the Nowthen Threshing Show! The weather was *beautiful* and contributed to a run on candy and pickles. We were three pickles shy of selling out 20 FULL 128 oz. jars of pickles. (They just taste better in the company of tractors!)

History Center Hours—special for Ghost Tour season!

Wednesday 10-4 p.m.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 1-7:30 p.m.

Call us for a research reservation or to schedule shenanigans!

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

History 21: The Podcast the first and third Friday of each month. Don't miss these upcoming episodes and subscribe today!

September 3: Our museum friends in Isanti Co. September 17: Living in a haunted house. October 1: Karen George and Anoka Halloween Royalty. October 17: John Jost & Anoka Halloween's 100th Anniversary.

Ghost Tours

WHEN: Various dates September and October

The History & Mystery continues—whether you want to enjoy a completely digital tour from your couch, connect with a guide over Zoom, or take the original walking tour in person we have a Ghost Tour for you!

Find more information and specific tour dates at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Shaking the Tree—AC Genealogical Society

WHEN: Sept. 21, 6 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center

Learn about unique research resources with speakers from The Mayflower Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Minnesota Genealogy Society, German Genealogy Society and the Pomeron Regional Group.

Nowthen Heritage Festival

WHEN: Sept. 25, Nowthen Memorial Park

Come say hello and drool over our Grosslein Model T Truck on display.

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

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



Anoka County
Historical Society

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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HISTORY

21



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

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Front Cover: Allan B. Stahlberg's 1961 Columbia Heights Homecoming Pinback button. Object ID: 2019.1772.051



From the President

We have a goal of "Sharing our Anoka County Stories One Person at a Time". So, what does that look like? I think it means that when someone visits us (whether its at the museum, on our website, in "The Vault," or at our programs) they find something of themselves. For myself, the newspaper with WWII Anoka County draft registers contains the name of an uncle who died when I was three years old. I also find the photos of a school that is long gone but still exists as a childhood memory.

Or perhaps the photos of libraries where generations of children continue to find books to bring home - for some its bedtime reading, for others a way to learn English. Anoka County has residents with deep, long tended roots, and other residents that have only recently made the county their home, place of employment, or place of worship. It is our responsibility to curate all these community stories. We need to include treasured belongings that accompanied families as they settled into our neighborhoods. These items tell the story of culture, of family, of individual courage, daily living, and hope. We need to provide opportunities to allow their stories to be told in their own words; whether from recently discovered journals in an attic or from a newly settled family just starting to settle in.

We want all visitors to find their History living within our collections.

Lotus Hubbard

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

From the Director

I'm discovering that adulthood, more specifically my job at ACHS, is mostly saying, "when I get done with this project, I'll have more time..." Accepting I'm lying to myself has set me free.

We have done an incredible job of stacking up projects such that we will never experience boredom and never have a free minute to wonder what to do with ourselves. The ACHS staff and board members are curious people and the ideas of 3-D printing a VEERAC truck, bringing back the cemetery tours, documenting changes throughout the county, translating our website and other materials into Spanish, or recording an audio tour of our exhibit hall popcorn up with ease. The trick remains picking the projects with the most appeal, the most income potential, or the most impact for future researchers.



I'm excited to be rounding out seven years already as director. The number of projects on the list may not have shrunk, but we've certainly gotten a pile of things done!

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director

The Changing Land

*By Daryl Lawrence,
ACHS Board Member*

I hadn't really considered the land would be changed forever someday. Was it a remote possibility? Of course, but it remained empty for two decades. If nothing had happened to it yet, then nothing would probably ever happen to it.

I speak, of course, about the land my family used to own at the corner of Crosstown Boulevard and Highway 65. For over 100 years, my family claimed that land before it sold when I was in high school. I helped my grandparents pack their belongings and move to their new house a few miles north in East Bethel. After that, the company who owned the land rented the houses for a year or two, then destroyed them all. That was the biggest hurt—knowing, truly, you could never go home again. It had always been a dream of mine that should I win the lottery, I would buy the land back and construct perfect recreations of the several houses that once stood there.

Time kept going and during the past month, I noticed on my commute the land was changing—minimally. The Holiday station on the corner announced they were closing for renovations. I saw, one morning, that both the Holiday station and the neighboring VFW, the Don Hansen Post, were both pulled down. Well now, I thought to myself, that will be some station if it will now take up all that space!

Then the construction kept expanding. I watched as it overtook part of the pasture where my great-grandparents let their dairy cows graze. By the time I was growing up, the cows were long gone, only to be replaced by us kids dramatically reenacting passages from the Little House books we had just read. The former pasture had also been used as a cut between the neighborhood lying to the south of our land and the businesses on Crosstown—kids would ride their bikes on the well-worn path to spend their allowance on candy at Holiday, and maybe rent a tape up at the local video store a bit further on.

Then the construction expanded. It took up the whole pasture. On one of my morning commutes I sat and watched as developers ripped down the last two trees at the north end of the pasture. A tear leaked from my eye as I thought of how many generations of my family those trees had seen grow up. However, I also considered it a privilege that one of us who so loved that land was able to witness a last glimpse of its beauty before it was gone forever.

That same day, during my afternoon commute, I saw that the construction had extended to where my grandparent's house had once stood. There had been a large pine tree standing since time immemorial (well, immemorial to me, at least). It was the absolute best climbing tree—we used to see who could get the highest before having to climb back down, our hands sticky with sap.

A few years ago I had dared to visit the land, although it was no longer owned by my family. I visited the house locations, saw where my Grandma's carefully tended vegetable garden had once been (the garden gate fence posts were still there!), and saw that some birdhouses my Grandpa had built were still doing their duty, sitting on posts at the north end of the pasture. Even those vestiges are now gone. The only time I have ever seen the land look so uniform was the dead of winter, when snow blanketed everything around the house and you had a clear view of Holiday, all the way across the field, as you stood in the driveway of the house.

I'm still in shock that such drastic change has been enacted on the land, although it is a prime piece of real estate. It is proof that time marches on, which I don't think any of us like at some point in our lives. It also shows how much those of us who live in more remote parts of the county witness change more frequently as time goes on. We are a growing county with new people coming to enjoy what some of us have known for generations. This is a great thing! Living elsewhere, I found it hard to describe why I loved my hometown so much; now, there are more people who understand because they live in a place I have loved all my life.

This isn't a recent phenomenon, land being purposed for a different use, and it will continue happening. It has even happened to my family before, as we used to own the land where businesses now sit at the northeast corner of the Crosstown and 65



intersection—we said goodbye to that land in the late 1970s, before I was even around to enjoy it. It does highlight those of my generation (so-called Millennials) who should really be documenting their experiences and contributing to places like the Anoka County Historical Society. We aren't just about the Greatest Generation anymore! We need to realize our experiences are, in fact, also a part of the historical fabric woven in the county and that our voices matter. It is time for us to engage with local societies to ensure we are "on the record" as well, and those memories we hold so close to our hearts are there for others to learn from and enjoy down the road. We aren't old (I mean, what does that even mean anymore?), but we aren't the new kids on the block anymore. Think about what you have seen change, what you have seen grow, and talk to us about it!

HOW ONE PRESIDENT'S DECISION FOREVER CHANGED THANKSGIVING

By Clare Bender, ACHS volunteer

History of Thanksgiving

Oral legacy has the pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians sharing the first Thanksgiving in the fall of 1621. The holiday didn't receive its status as a national holiday until President George Washington declared that Thursday, November 26, 1789 would serve as Thanksgiving's official date.

Still, even with Washington's stamp of approval, people did not celebrate Thanksgiving yearly. By the 1850s, the only two national holidays observed were Washington's birthday and Independence Day.

Since colonial days, people did not see much good in celebrating the holiday, whether because of region or religious reasons. In New York of 1795, Governor John Jay received criticism for proclaiming Thanksgiving a regular state holiday. In Pennsylvania, a newspaper proclaimed Thanksgiving as having no place in their state. However, in 1854, one enthusiastic Minnesotan declared Thanksgiving was the best enduring example from the "old Pilgrims" (Restad 94). By 1848, Texas stood as the first southern state to celebrate the holiday. In 1855, the New England and middle states, along with five southern states, took part in celebrating Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving did not become an annual holiday until 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday of November as the official and annual day of celebration. Lincoln did not come to this decision about Thanksgiving without some encouragement though.

Sarah Josepha Hale, a New England resident, was a staunch advocate for the annual celebration of Thanksgiving. Initially, Hale began her efforts in 1827 when she was editor of *American Ladies' Magazine*. In 1837, she became the editor of *Godey's* magazine, where she continued to advocate for the holiday. By the 1850s, Hale declared the holiday could stand as the answer for the lack of "American" holidays.

"To make a national festival, the time of holding it must be fixed by circumstance, by custom, or by statute," notes Penne L. Restad in *Christmas in America: A History*. In 1857, Hale wrote that Thanksgiving was a time "when the noise and tumult of worldliness may be exchanged for the laughter of happy children, the glad greetings of family reunion, and the humble gratitude of Christian heart" (Restad



95). Hale advocated the last Thursday of the month would be ideal for a celebration.

“[That day is] best suited when the people . . . might sit down together . . . and enjoy in national union their feast of gladness, rendering thanks to Almighty God for the blessings of the year,” she said, according to Restad.

After 36 years of perseverance, Hale finally received her wish and an annual celebration of Thanksgiving was instituted by President Lincoln.



Roosevelt's Decision

Everything changed when, 75 years later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not follow in the footsteps of the presidents before him. That year, Thanksgiving fell on November 30. Audaciously, retailers asked Roosevelt to change the day of the holiday so that people had more time for Christmas shopping. Roosevelt acquiesced and Thanksgiving Day changed to the 23rd, ultimately making it the new official celebration day.

Roosevelt did not consider the potential side effects of his decision. Calendar confusion ensued. School and football schedules needed to be changed. The public complained that tradition should top overly zealous business owners who were looking for more cash flow.

Ultimately, the new date did not result in more early Christmas shopping. Businesses noted that profits remained the same, regardless on which date people celebrated. The disagreements continued until 1941 when Congress declared that by law Thanksgiving would take place every fourth Thursday of November.

Ironically, the holiday that symbolizes unity and togetherness was also the holiday that almost tore the United States apart. But at least for this year, turkeys will have a little bit longer to plan their escape.

Left: Pictured is the Atwood family sharing Thanksgiving dinner in November, 1953. Kate Atwood is seated at the head of the table. Seated immediately next to Kate on either side are her son-in-law, Arthur Pinney, and daughter, Emma (Atwood) Pinney. The man who is standing is probably George Atwood. (Object ID 2015.0401.028)

Above: A billboard visible behind a car accident that occurred on November 1961 advertises Swift's Premium Butterball turkey. Object ID Nelson0036-003)



If you've ever stopped by the ACHS booth during a festival, you've probably looked over some of our hands-on plat maps. It's always fun to see people puzzle over where their house would be or where their grandparents' farm was located. People's faces light up when they recognize an old road, a railway, or a half-forgotten name. It's also an informative time, as we explain why there's no 1914 map for Coon Rapids, or hear for the first time an old, old story about what was once Grow Township. One thing you may not have noticed, though, was the name printed at the bottom of most Anoka County plat maps: H.E. Blewett. Until recently, I didn't think much about it either.

In our efforts to update ACHS's current collection, we have been reprocessing some of our oldest artifacts. Reprocessing is the word for when we update how artifacts in our collection are organized, stored, labeled, or cataloged. Oftentimes, the oldest artifacts and documents in our collection need a combination of all four.

Recently, we have been working on a series of unlabeled boxes we found on the shelves in main collection storage. There were four boxes in total, larger than normal archival document boxes, and full—FULL—of old notebooks. These notebooks are all bound in brown leather and are about average diary size. They are labeled in black ink, both on the covers and the spines, usually just with a number. There are about 60 of these journals, and after only about a second of perusal, you can tell that they're survey books used by engineers. Because of the state these books were found in, they needed the full works of reprocessing: a new assessment so that we know what's in them, a new organization so they make some sense, all new labels, and storage in non-acidic archival boxes that will protect them for years to come. Then they need records in the system so we can find them again and can become a useful resource to county historians.

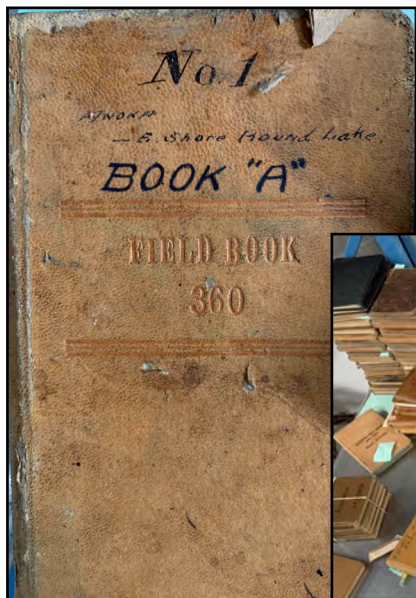
A collection of over 60 nearly identical books filled with only half-recognizable shorthand and lines of equations is a daunting thing for anyone to reprocess, but ACHS's youngest board member has been tackling it with style! Maddie has been coming into ACHS for a few hours a week to work on the collection with me, and it's been amazing to watch her progress. Archival processing is mostly detective work, and Maddie is an A+ detective.

In only two sessions, Maddie unboxed all 60 books and started sorting them based on names of engineers, construction projects, cover titles, and

handwriting. Some books were already tied together—why is that? And why is it that so many of the journals contain multiple styles of handwriting? Why are there so many different but reoccurring names? And who, who, who is HEB? “HEB” was an initial set found at the beginning of most of the journals, along with a rotating list of other names. Eventually, as we were working together on the collection, we realized simultaneously that “HEB” was Harold Blewett, the man most of our maps are attributed to.

After this discovery, processing became far quicker and easier, and Maddie made a few more valuable discoveries. She realized that Harold Blewett probably had a team or a company who worked under him on construction projects all over the county, hence the rotating list of names at the front of the notebooks. She also realized that the notebooks were used by multiple engineers at once. The engineers would grab a notebook that was assigned to a certain project at a certain time—they were communal property. Then she discovered the pencil notations were made by a different hand than the writing in the pen. Dip pens would have been common at the time, and not something you’d want to bring into the field, so the pen marks were likely added afterward to delineate different sections of the notebooks. Most of the pen writing can probably be attributed to Harold Blewett himself, as it seems to have been how he checked up on all the projects being worked on by his junior engineers. After all this was determined, Maddie discovered two notebooks that had been used as indexes for all the others, and after a little double checking, we were able to confirm much of what she had deduced.

These journals, many of which are over a hundred years old, represent a wealth of knowledge about the birth of the county as we know it. It’s been an amazing opportunity to watch someone reassemble this collection, and we hope we can share it with everyone soon!





WHAT'S GOING ON...

The Define Identity committee and Facing Change task force have spent time during the last two months reading the museum's policies through a diversity and inclusion lens. This work, begun three years ago, has provided the opportunity to reevaluate how ACHS can and should represent all residents of Anoka County. Once the committee has draft revisions of these policies, which include such documents as the Volunteer policy, Donations policy, and Code of Ethics, the full board will weigh in with their suggestions before any changes are approved.

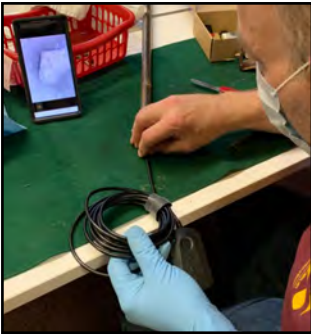
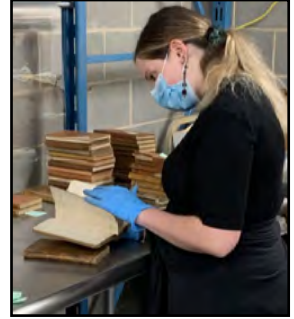
The Management committee has focused their attention on the budget, an annual task that prepares ACHS staff for their work in the upcoming year. While most line items don't change much, we will have an increase in exhibit expenses to create the Federal Cartridge Company centennial, a decrease in copier expenses, and with a bit of luck, an increase in paid programming and presentations. Staff anticipates expanding the Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour to accommodate demand experienced in 2021 as well as adding Spanish language tours so more of the county can enjoy them. The committee continues to discuss how to move ACHS toward providing staff salaries and benefits consistent with similar jobs in the nonprofit sector.

The Engage committee attended to the Nowthen Heritage Festival, where the Grosslein truck was on display along with information and artifacts. Students from the Hennepin Technical College took the opportunity to film board member Al Pearson talking about the Model T as well as general footage of the event. New to this event was the distribution of the Story Gathering Form, a booklet designed to assist families in documenting their histories. As the winter moves on, the goal will be to fine-tune this tool so that it's available online as well as in print—hopefully even some of them boomerang back to ACHS for our collection!

A reminder that the Board meetings are open to the membership by Zoom. Contact Rebecca@anokacountyhistory.org for the link. Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

MADDIE

I've been working on deaccessioning and sifting through old boxes of random items set aside because we were not sure what the contents were or why the Historical Society had them in their possession. The boxes contained all kinds of interesting things such as: children's toys, a whole box of eyeglasses, magazines, field books, old farm tools, stuffed animals, and Vietnam war memorabilia. I went through the items, and either found their numbers or set them aside if they weren't numbered. For the items that had numbers, I searched through the database and found the accession record and checked the description of the objects to see if it was relevant to the county or the Historical Society. If they were relevant, the items were marked as "keep", and sometimes marked as "relocation" if they didn't have a proper home location. If the items were not relevant, they were recommended for deaccessioning. The next things that I am going to be working on is sorting through the items set aside for deaccession. After going over the items with Erin, I will be helping with the paperwork to formally deaccession the items.



STEVE FLORMAN GUN REPAIR

This fall, I reassembled a M1861 Springfield .58 caliber rifle-musket in our collection, the workhorse infantry weapon of the Union Army in the Civil War. This particular musket was originally carried by a member of the Second Minnesota Infantry, which accompanied General William T. Sherman on his conquest of Atlanta and his March to the Sea. The soldier brought it home to Minnesota after the War, and his descendants donated it to the Society. It was rusty, the wood was dried out, the steel parts eroded, and there was something stuck down the barrel. (That last made us a

little nervous—more than one museum has accepted a donated antique firearm with powder and ball still in the barrel!)

Just before Covid in 2020, I had begun the partial restoration and conservation of this significant artifact. I had carefully disassembled it, taking care not to strip screws, gouge wood, or scratch metal more than time and use had already done. I identified and extracted the harmless stone fragment lodged in the barrel (sigh of relief), carefully cleaned the surface rust and conditioned the deep patina on the exposed metal parts, worked and oiled the internal lock parts until the action was once again smooth. I applied three soaking coats of a mix of linseed oil and mineral spirits to the dried-out stock after gently removing the adhesive residue from an old cataloguing sticker. Finally, I reassembled the musket and presented it to our archivist for proper storage and eventual display.



NOWTHEN HERITAGE FESTIVAL
Members of the ACHS board and students from Hennepin Technical College crashed the festival on September 25. While board members shared their love of local history, a handmade reproduction Civil War uniform, and our Model-T Grosslein truck, the students captured the day on film. Each conversation started with who we are and what the museum has, but ended with the

focus shifted—what is YOUR story. How are those stories, memories and photographs being save for the future, and how can ACHS help with that?

GHOST TOURS!

On the first Saturday of September, a group of 15 people kicked off the start to the 2021 Ghost Tour Season for the ACHS. In the following two months, a dedicated and amazing group of volunteers gave up their Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings to share the History & Mystery of Anoka.

The tours began as a fun part of Riverfest in July, 2004 and 17 years later they have grown to become a local “must attend” event, and an essential part of Anoka Halloween.

We continued offering the digital tour options that students created, and were able to increase the in-person tour options by a staggering 150%.

The tour allows us to connect with new friends locally, and people come from across MN to attend. ACHS director Rebecca helped share the tour internationally in England during an interview with BBC-5.



The Stats

2 Months

8 Guides

60 Tours

900+ Visitors

\$12,000

* Stats reflect in-person tour numbers



THE VOLUNTEER CATCH-22

Volunteers are an amazing gift to the museum—I am constantly amazed at how much we can accomplish and achieve because we have such talented, caring, and fun people who want to help the museum (in a variety of different ways.) We are able to soar because we have help. This fall, a small team of Ghost Tour Guides raised over \$12,000 for the museum. The tours they led were sold out. Think of what we could have raised if there were more guides to lead tours?

Over the past couple of months, another team of volunteers worked their way through scanning a box of Federal Cartridge employee photographs. Working together they knocked out one box which included approximately 1,900 individual photographs. Where would they have been with more people on the team?

A couple of other volunteers have been planting themselves at the microfilm machine each week to create digital clips of individual newspaper pages. The goal is to translate the newspapers that we currently only have on microfilm into digital, and searchable PDF documents. It's a slow process—but worth it to increase the local paper's accessibility. Soon *The Blaine Life* from 1963-1964 will be key-word searchable. (Trust me the advertisements are amazing!)

Volunteers make what we achieve possible. The Catch-22 in that statement is that sometimes we get too busy to be able to ask for help, or organize the help that is reaching out and ready to go.

With the end of our busiest time of the year, otherwise known as “Ghost Tour Season,” we are ready to hit “reset” at the museum. What projects can we tackle together while the temperature drops, and the snow comes?

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

Jenna Elizabeth Adams
 Anoka Halloween Inc.
 Mike & Mary Clark
 Maria Corcoran
 Gary & Shelby Erickson
 Federal Cartridge Co.
 Steve Florman
 Angela Ford
 Mike A. Gamache
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Artifact Donors

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 Laura Irwin-Schack
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New Members

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 Alexander J. Iverson
 T.J. Malaskee
 Neena Scharmer
 August A. Zuanich, III

ACHS Sustaining Members

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 Hardesty
 Lotus & Richard
 Hubbard

Veronica Johnson
 Courtney Jones
 T.J. Malaskee
 Northeast Bank
 Gina Overacker
 Robert Rither
 Allison & Brian Schmitt
 Ned Storla
 Arlene Tesch
 Rita Warpeha
 Melanie Weeks

ACHS Business Members

Anoka Knights of
 Columbus Council
 2018
 Fifth Avenue Dental
 Nowthen Historical
 Power Association
 Peterson Shoes
 Pierce Refrigeration
 Rum River Restoration
 Teamsters Local 638

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE PHOTOGRAPHS

The employee photographs in the ACHS Federal Cartridge collection span decades and showcase a range of hairstyles and pocket protectors. Helpfully, these two employees were identified.

Right: Margaret Janiak, undated. Far right: George LeVeVeque, 1976.



MONTHLY

History Center Hours—New Winter Hours!

Wednesday –Saturday 10-4 p.m.

Call us for a research reservation or to schedule shenanigans!

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find the link to attend digitally at AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

History 21: The Podcast the first and third

Friday of each month. Don't miss these upcoming episodes and subscribe today!

November 5: Dennis Tkach of the Tkach band from Columbia Heights discusses its 40 year legacy and the band antics over the years.

November 19: Facing Change with Lavon.

December 3: TBD

December 17: TBD



The History Center will be closed for the holidays:

- ◆ November 25-26
- ◆ December 24-25
- ◆ December 31, January 1

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



AnokaCoHistory

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



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