



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 42 No. 1

January — February 2012

SERVING:

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

Family Photographs and Wire Grass

By Vickie Wendel, Program Manager

The northeastern part of Anoka County was home to a unique industry in the 1890s because of a tall, tough grass, called wire grass, that grew there. More appropriately, the grass was sedge grass, but locally the common name of wire grass was used. This grass was too coarse and hard for animal feed, but the American Twine Company believed the grass could be harvested and used to make twine. The company bought some 30,000 acres in the Columbus and Linwood areas to harvest grass. Their efforts at making twine failed, but other companies were 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 into rugs that would be lightweight and inexpensive. Another advantage was the ability to paint or dye the rugs. This enterprise was more successful than the twine and the company soon company employed over 300 men during the busy seasons. They established four "camps" to house and feed the men working in the grass fields. Women were also hired, especially for the "flopping" crews. Flopping crews turned the cut grass over to dry it thoroughly.



These men were employees of the wire grass company. It is believed they were loading up to go out to the fields for work. The men lived in company camps. There were some tents used, but the company also put up substantial buildings for mess halls and bunkhouses.

Wages in the wire grass business were one to two dollars per day, but if a man brought his team of horses with him to work, he was paid 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 our day. Pay in the wire grass camps was about average—unless you brought your horses, then it was very good pay.



Horses were a necessity for pulling the gleaners—the machines that cut the grass.

Wire grass was cut much in the same manner as grain using a horse-drawn gleaner to cut the grass. Then the grass was laid in rows to dry. Flopping crews turned the grass over to get it dry on the bottom side. Once the grass was dry, it was tied into bundles with twine, hauled to higher ground, and stacked. Younger boys were hired to make "wire grass knots." They cut a length of twine and tied a loop on one end. These were used by the bundle tiers to bind up individual bundles of wire grass. Cutting and bundling went on until the first snowfall.



"Rubber backs" were the nickname given to those whose job it was to stoop over and flop the rows of cut grass to get it to dry completely.

Continued on page 5

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

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History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

It never ceases to amaze me what donations we get for the Historical Society's collections and that the vast majority of them come from personal collections, often held in a family attic or basement before they come to the surface and are offered to us.

In December, Ken DuFresne, a member from Columbus, brought in a series of family photograph albums. There is certainly no shortage of Anoka County family photo albums out there. But the great thing about these albums is the many photographs of his grandfather and others harvesting wire grass in the swamps in what is today the Carlos Avery Game Preserve in Columbus and Linwood. The photographs depict scenes of flopping crews, mechanized harvesting equipment, and horses stuck in the swamps.

Crews ventured into the bogs with horses fitted with bog shoes—thick, wooden platforms—on their feet to prevent them from sinking into the mud. (Photographs show the bog shoes were not infallible as there are images of crews working to free a horse from the cloying marshes.)

Once harvested, the grass was bundled and loaded onto trains in Forest Lake and sent down to a factory in St. Paul to be used in rug manufacturing. After World War I, international markets were opened up to American consumers and business of wire grass dried up quickly, even if the swamps did not. But for a few decades, this section of the county experienced a unique boom and it was captured by Dufresne's grandfather in this album.

It is so exciting to see something that tells an important part of the county's history from a personal view. Some of you may remember in the last issue of the newsletter, we featured a ballot box that came from Linwood Township. It was brought in by the Broadbent family. Just like the DuFresne album, this wonderful artifact told more than a personal family story. It told a story about the very communal and public process of electing a town board in Linwood. The box partook in events that shaped the entire community, just like the photo album documented an industry that shaped the economy of Linwood and Columbus for many years.

So what else is out there? What other objects and artifacts are in family attics, waiting to be shared? I'm hoping you will look—and then share what you find.

From the President...

By Al Pearson

This is my second article since becoming president of ACHS and I'm thinking of how fortunate we are to live in this country. I think of all the people who volunteer to help others in so many areas. I didn't realize until I was older how many actually take their time to help the community as well as helping individuals.

My wife, Betty is one of 343 volunteers for Allina Hospice, where she may give rides, read to clients, clean, cook, play cards, or visit with them, depending on their needs. One of the purposes of volunteering for hospice is not only to serve the client that needs you, but also to give respite time for the family. It is a privilege to serve people; they become part of our lives.

In Ramsey there are 16 volunteer Reserve Police officers who have important roles to play for the police and for us. They ride along as well as observe and report. They help with community activities where there is extra security needs. Some of our police departments also have Explorer programs for high school age students that want to volunteer their time or may be interested in becoming officers. Our police officers themselves give many hours of time yearly. Our Anoka County fire departments are volunteers; they are paid, but spend untold volunteer hours training and serving our communities in many ways.

There are so many areas to give of your time: libraries, Meals on Wheels, hospitals, schools, churches, local government, many organization are dependent on volunteer help. These volunteers save many tax dollars.

I spent almost 20 years on the Ramsey Fire Board or Public Safety Board and in that time, the Ramsey Lions donated thousands of dollars of equipment to the Ramsey Fire Department. One expensive tool was 'Jaws of Life' to extricate the injured from car crashes saving many lives over the years since. This is just one of many tools and equipment they have given and the Lions, too, are volunteers.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of organizations like ACHS. We could not do what we do without the countless hours of volunteer support we received from people like you. Thank you!

So when you see these folks out in the community giving of themselves, let them know you appreciate their efforts to make our world a better place.

The Story of an Artifact

A Can of Green Ink



The dried out can of green ink from the *Circulating Pines*.

The story told by a leftover and dried out can of ink would not seem important in the grand scheme of things, but for those who read the *Circulating Pines* newspaper, that green ink was as identifiable as a name badge.

For 50+ years, the small, community newspaper from Circle Pines printed its logo on stationary, newspapers, signs, and advertising with its signature pine trees printed in this bright green ink. The dried out ink can, along with many other things, were donated to ACHS when the *Circulating Pines* ceased publication to make certain that even though the paper was no longer in publication, its story would not be forgotten.

The first edition of the Circle Pines community newspaper was printed in January of 1951. It was a four-page news sheet run off on a mimeograph machine and there were 100 copies.

The decision to have a community newspaper came from the residents of Circle Pines. Their first village clerk, Andrew Gibas had been sending post cards to the residents informing them of meetings, agendas, and other community information. When these notices no longer fit on a postcard, a group of citizens got together with the idea of creating their own newspaper. The postmistress, Fylla Peterson, paid for the postage to mail that first edition of the paper in 1951.

With a warm reception and success for the little newspaper, the editors decided to ask people to vote on a name for it. A slate of five names were presented, but not one vote came in. Grace Gibas had jokingly suggested *Circulating Pines* and when no one voted, she voted and the winning name—by the single vote cast—was *Circulating Pines*.



The pressroom sign

Andrew Gibas and Sarah Cunningham as co-editors. A resident of Circle Pines, Richard Delano, printed the paper at his Minneapolis printing business.

The next year, the newspaper was incorporated as a non-profit. Any money made by the little paper was to be donated to a local charity, but Andrew Gibas said that was very seldom an issue as the paper rarely even covered its own expenses. Profits had been expected with advertising

In 1953, the newspaper had an office in the Circle Court apartment building with

from businesses in the growing community, but when that did not happen, Andrew and Grace paid bills out of their own pockets.

In 1957, the *Pines* bought a Harris Offset printing press and brought the actual production of the newspaper back to Circle Pines. The press brought in more income by taking in other print jobs from the community. The offices moved to the Midland Cooperative building and in 1958, Andrew and Grace Gibas became the co-editors. *The Pines* then became a “legal newspaper,” a status that allowed them to print legal notices for the city and school district.

Income from printing legal notices was never a significant source of revenue as Andrew and Grace Gibas kept the editorial attitude of the paper quite aggressive and liberal. That kind of reporting did not always win the *Circulating Pines* friends in the political circles of the community and legal notices were printed in other newspapers.

The Pines offices moved again in 1965 and they set up their presses at 9201 Lexington Avenue. There it remained until the last issue rolled off the presses.

By the 1990s, publication of the *Circulating Pines* became even more challenging. The community was changing and large chain stores were replacing small, cooperative-minded stores. The big chains didn't place ads in small papers with limited circulation.

Compounding the problem were the editorial stands taken by the *Pines*. The Gibas' believed their liberal ideals alienated some readers and potential advertisers as Andrew and Grace stayed true to the cooperative community ideals, even when the community left its cooperative roots behind.

Competition from free, regional shopper-oriented newspapers added to the difficulties of the *Circulating Pines*.

Age, too, began to play a part as both Andrew and Grace were in their 80s.

Several attempts were made to save the little paper by selling it, but no buyer could be found who was willing to take on a business that rarely even made enough to cover its own expenses. On December 29, 1994, the last edition of the *Circulating Pines* was printed. The equipment was sold at auction and back issues of the papers were archived at the Anoka County and Minnesota Historical Societies.

Additional artifacts, including an old can of their signature green ink, were donated to ACHS to tell the story of the *Circulating Pines*. It is currently featured in the *Tell Me a Story* exhibit at ACHS.



One stack of bound issues of the *Circulating Pines*.

We Meant Well...

Caring for scrapbooks and photo albums.

Preserving family photos is nothing new, people have been saving their photos since photography was first made available. How to preserve those photos has changed and not always for the better.

Remember those old photo albums of the first half of the 1900s? The ones with the black pages and photos held in with photo corners? Those were hard to use because pencils or pens didn't show up on the black paper, so we wrote on the photos if we wrote any identification at all. The corners dried out and fell off as the pages were turned so the photos often slipped out, got lost, or folded into the binding. If we didn't use corners, glue on the back of the photo held it in place. The photos also suffered from the acid filled black paper and the constant friction of the photos and corners on the facing page. Glued photos got the friction too, plus the added damage caused by glues and tapes eating through the paper or discoloring the photos. Glues and tapes can also make a photo brittle so that it breaks or the layers of emulsion separate.

We knew those old black pages were not the best, so when a new kind of photo album came along in the 1960s, we started using those wonderful magnetic pages with the clear plastic cover! No more photos sliding out to be lost, no more friction rubbing off the faces, places to write! These were wonderful!

Or so we thought. At the time, we thought we were doing good by our photos, but we really had not done any better and in some cases, even worse than the old black pages.

The "magnetic" pages were acidic cardboard paper coated with a glue and wrapped in a clear plastic sheet that peeled back to allow photos to be put on the glue, then covered over again with the plastic. Time is not kind to these pages. The glue and paper often turns a dark brown, especially along the edges where dirt and air have a chance to get in. The glue is the worst part; it can destroy the color in photographs, make the paper brittle and, worst of all, refuse to come off the photo. That means when you try to take it out, the photo is stressed or torn.



The glue turns brown, collects dirt, and can cause a color shift in photos.

But if you can't take it out and leaving it in continues to compound the damage, what do we do? Here are a few tips anyone can use to preserve their photos.

- ◆ If you have the old black page albums and you can safely remove the photos, do so. Store them in the photo-safe plastic page protectors available at retailers like Archivers. Read the labels to be sure the pages are safe for photographs and do not contain vinyl. There are many safe page protector products and most no longer contain vinyl, but check before buying. Vinyl is very bad for photographs! It emits a gas that will break down the emulsion of photographs and destroy them.
- ◆ Be sure you transfer any information about the photo to its new enclosure.
- ◆ If you cannot remove the photos, put a sheet of acid free paper between the pages to prevent them from rubbing against each other.
- ◆ If you have photos in the magnetic pages, carefully peel the plastic away and hope the glue has dried out so you can lift the

photo out easily. Flex the page slightly to crack the glue if necessary. If the glue is still tight, put the page in the freezer long enough to get it really cold, take it out and quickly flex it just enough to get the frozen glue to crack. This will often get enough loose to remove the photo. If glue stays on the back, leave it there. There is no safe "home remedy" you can use to get it off. Put the photo into a page protector immediately to be sure it doesn't stick to something else when the glue gets warm. **It's ALWAYS better to leave a photo in a sticky album than damage it by trying to remove it.** Scan a copy and make a digital back up.

- ◆ Be sure to transfer any information about the photo to its new enclosure.
- ◆ **NEVER use tape or glue on original photos.** Make a good copy, put your tape or glue on that, and put the original safely away.
- ◆ Keep your photo albums and scrapbooks in a climate controlled space. Think of them as Grandma. You wouldn't keep her in a hot attic, a frozen storage shed, or a humid basement for years, would you?! A closet with stable humidity and temperature and away from constant light is the best place for your old photos—and Grandma.



It is easy to see the tape damage on this photo.

- ◆ **DIGITAL photos** present a whole new set of problems that don't involve glue, but can take away your photos even faster. Technology is changing so fast, it is hard to keep up, but it is vital that you always upgrade your digital photos to whatever the newest media is for storing them. If you don't move them from the floppy disk they were first stored on and the new computer doesn't read those files, your photos are gone!
- ◆ All digital media has a shelf life. CDs, DVDs, thumb drives, photo cards, and whatever comes next, have life spans that are affected by the quality of manufacturing, temperature, moisture, handling, dust and finger oils. **ALWAYS keep a backup of your photos in case what you are using goes bad.** One study by the Smithsonian suggested CD rot can start within 15 years even when the CD is stored under good conditions. Thumb drives and cards get dirty or wear out from use. How many times have you moved that card from your camera to your computer and back again in the past six months? Another good idea is to keep a backup of all your photos in another location in case you have a disaster in your home. New technologies and the internet are making changes in this area, allowing storage in a virtual world. Do your homework on any site you might choose for this to be sure it is going to be there if you need it.
- ◆ **IDENTIFY the photos.** Digital cameras and computers will often date stamp a photo for you, but img673.jpg really doesn't do your daughter's graduation justice. Rename the file or create a folder for all the photos of that event and give it basic identifying information— "Sally Olson graduation 2012". Even better is to add a text file to that same folder with a written description of who, what, when, where, and why the photos in that folder were taken. You could even add scans of newspaper reports of the event, invitations, and more to make it almost a digital scrapbook file. More is always better in that file!!

If you need more information on preserving photographs, call ACHS, 763-421-0600.



As tractors became available, they were put to use in the wire grass fields. This is a steam powered tractor.



A better look at a gleaner.

The stacks of grass bundles were fed into a hay press and bound into 200 pound bales. Once the ground was frozen, loads of these bales were hauled to the railroad for shipping to St. Paul.

Wire grass needed moist, swampy land on which to grow. Ditching efforts in Anoka County for roads and other projects in the early 1900s began to drain the wetlands and the wire grass no longer flourished. Competition from imports available after WWI made the grass in Anoka County unprofitable and operations had completely ceased by 1920. The Crex Carpet Company let most of the land in Anoka County go back for non-payment of taxes. Much of the area that once was wire grass land is now the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Center.

Recently, one of our members, Ken DuFresne, brought his family scrapbooks for help preserving the photos and clippings. He had family members who worked in the wire grass fields and one scrapbook was filled with images of the wire grass operations.



A rail car filled with wire grass ready to ship to St. Paul. The nearest rail station for the company was in Forest Lake.

Ken allowed ACHS to make scanned copies of the photos and share them with researchers and patrons. We all benefit from the current technology that allows family photos to be preserved and shared in more than one location! All of the photos used in this article are from Ken DuFresne's family albums.



The 2011 ornament from Andover.

2011 Holiday Ornament from Andover

The lack of snow didn't dampen the spirits of those gathered on December 6th when the artist and officials from Andover presented the 2011 Holiday ornament to ACHS. Unfortunately, this traditional first Tuesday in December was also the night of Andover's City Council meeting, so they were not able to attend—but since their meeting included the "Truth in Taxation" hearings, everyone was confident the Mayor and Council members would have much rather been with ACHS!

Earl Makinen cut the shape of the city from plastic and Cindy DeRuyter designed and painted it. Each of her images depict something of Andover life—farming, bike trails, wet lands, athletic fields, and even the folklore about the train wreck that supposedly gave Andover its name (it didn't!) Thank you to Andover for providing this one-of-a-kind ornament for the county tree.

Up To Date

Announcements and News

♦Just a reminder that the January 12 and February 13 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

Dolly & Me Teas featured a skit from the 30s Elaine Koehn, Volunteer Coordinator

The teas this December took a little different approach this time to help the girls understand what life was like during the Great Depression. A skit, written by Sara Given, ACHS volunteer, focused on the 1930s. The setting was a farm house in Anoka County in 1934, just before Christmas. Starring in the skit, was Helen, played by Laura Steblay and Darlene Bearl; Mother, played by Megan Steblay and Anna Kirchner; and the younger Helen played by Maria Bell. These volunteers did a wonderful job illustrating for the girls, their mothers and grandmothers how difficult times were in the 1930s, but how they kept their standards high and taught children strong values, passing on a priceless heritage.

Sara used a cookbook *Stories and Recipes of the Great Depression of the 1930's* written by Rita Van Amber, a gift from Sara's grandmother, as a resource to write the skit. The book includes stories, Shirley Temple dolls, and Walt Disney characters such as Mortimer Mouse (whose name was changed to Mickey) endearing him to children even more. Survival tactics taught the children early to dig deep to find the best in themselves. The girls were right at their mothers' sides observing and learning how to put nourishing meals on the table, to reuse old clothing to make baby clothes or lining for mittens, and grandpa's worn out socks became long, warm cuffs for those mittens. Old clothing was carefully recycled and all the bits and pieces were put to good use.

The girls loved the fast paced interaction the skit provided. Even the smallest girl (only three years old) understood times were hard and people used what they had to survive. She said, "They were very poor, but they had a good Christmas" when I asked what she thought it was like long ago.

Before tea was served, we decorated angels and stars with glitter and tinsel under the capable guidance of volunteers Carolyn Waataja, MaDonna Mochinski, Annabelle Huffman, Dianne Pederson, Kelsey Jopp, and Monique Walraven. The little girls were proud of their work and had fun creating their special decoration without totally ruining their Christmas dresses.

At tea time, each little girl selected a special tea cup and saucer for their mother, grandmother and themselves. All enjoyed tea or apple juice and of course one or two sugar cubes. All the girls' names went in a basket and two delighted little girl's names were drawn to win an outfit for their dolls. These outfits are sewn and donated by volunteers for the Dolly and Me Teas. We could not offer these programs without the support and dedication of the wonderful volunteers here at ACHS. **WE APPRECIATE YOU!**

"Body" Building Workshop!

No, not that kind of body building! This kind uses a special foam and lots of hot glue!

Join the fun of learning to create customized dress forms for any garment while actually building a form for a garment in the ACHS textile collection. Participants will make a form for one of the selected garments from the collection that will be featured in an upcoming exhibit.

All tools will be provided. Participants need to be able to stand while cutting form with sharp knives. All instruction will be provided, so you don't need to know anything in advance and you do NOT need any skills in sculpting!

We'll provide a light lunch around noon to keep your strength up!

This workshop is a volunteer opportunity and a chance to learn to do something new. After all, who else do you know that can build a body in a single day?!

Call Elaine at 763-421-0600 to sign up or talk with Vickie if you have more questions.

ACHS Board Elections in March

Have you thought about how you might help the business end of keeping local history? Or how your talents and contacts might benefit the Anoka County Historical Society? The annual election of board officers for ACHS is coming in March and we are looking for candidates willing to serve on the governing body of our organization. The board meets once a month, but is active in many other aspects of the museum, library and archives.

This is a wonderful opportunity to find out what happens "behind-the-scenes" at the History Center in addition to the satisfaction of serving local history.

Call Executive Director Todd Mahon to find out more about the Board's vital role at ACHS. 763-421-0600

Did you send ACHS a copy of your 2011 Christmas Letter for the collection? This collection continues every year, so add your letter to help us record these family histories. Mail or email your letters to ACHS. Call 763-421-0600 if you have questions.

Contributions & New Members — Thank you

(All lists are current to December 30, 2011)

DONATIONS

Julian Andersen Family
Jan & Jim Anderson
LaVerne Anderson
Anonymous
James & Molly Bauer
Darlene Caswell
Jeannine Chamberlain
Mary Chamberlain
D.A.R., Anoka Chapter
Betty Erickson
John & Alice Ganter
Janet Hall
Karen Hand
David Hoagland
Russell Jongewaard
Jeorgette & Jeff Knoll
Melvin L. Larson Jr.
David & Donna Legrid
Shirley Lynch
Pam Mahon
Arlene Mootz
Beverly Olson
Roger & Avis Oppgaard
Dianne Pederson
Charles Porter
Eugene & Anna Rafferty
Eileen Rathbun
William & Virginia Ridge
Terry Scott
Gary & Ann Steen
Nicole Theis-Mahon
Shirley Thompson
Barb Thurston & Joey Norton
Catherine Vesley
Ron & Vickie Wendel
Peter Wojciechowski

EMPLOYEE MATCH

Ameriprise Financial/Dan Frank

IN-KIND DONATIONS

(SOCK HOP)

Anoka County Vietnam Veterans

MEMORIALS & HONORS

In Memory of Allen Sorteberg

From Linda & Miles Robertson, Gary & Pat Sorteberg, and Mark & Ann Sorteberg

In Memory of Vera Larsen

From Dottie Carlson

In Memory of Donna Phillips

From Dottie Carlson

In Honor of Vickie Wendel

From Janet Wilcox

ARTIFACT DONORS

Anoka Halloween Committee
Binie Bertils
Columbia Heights Library
Don Johnson
Bob LaBrec
Andro Menter
Janet Nelson
Philolectian Society
Herman Ridge

NEW MEMBERS

Kathy Carlson, Coon Rapids
Arlene Mootz, Anoka
Al & Betty Pearson, Ramsey
Skip Rither, Andover
Sally Wendel, Blaine



Give to the Max Day!

Were you part of this incredible day of giving? Non-profit organizations across Minnesota were the beneficiaries of more the \$13 million donated during this one special day of focused giving.

ACHS was the recipient for generous donations through the GiveMN website. This is the second year ACHS has been involved with the GiveMN and our members are catching on to how easy and secure donating online can be. The number of donors more than doubled this year and they were very generous!

We appreciate these special donations and value each of our friends who support us with their time, talents and resources.

Remember you can donate to ACHS— or many other charities— anytime through the GiveMN website. It's easy, secure, and fast.

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

Judge James Gibbs, who died September 3, 2011. The Judge was a friend and member of ACHS.

Josiah Abeler, who died September 15, 2011. Josiah was the son of members Jim and Barb Abeler.

Odean Olson, who died September 15, 2011. He was a member of ACHS and supporter of local history.

Allen Sorteberg, who died October 27, 2011. He was a member and supporter of ACHS, and he loved the Home and Garden tour.

Nick Cenaiko, Sr., who died December 15, 2011. Nick was a former Anoka County Commissioner.

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

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Coming Events

January – March

Faces of Anoka County Lobby Exhibit

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Selected images from the collections of ACHS are displayed in the lobby of the History Center and highlight some of the many faces of people who have called this place home.

January 14, 2:00 pm

Fact, Folklore and FABRICation

(Northtown Library, 711 County Road 10, Blaine) How much do we really know about the history and traditions of making? So many stories have been handed down, but they don't always hold up under a close look at history. Find out some of the real stories behind what we all thought we knew about this history of quilt design and construction. This event is FREE and funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

January 21, 10:30am-3:00pm

“Body” Building Workshop!

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Join the fun of learning to create customized dress forms for any garment while actually building a form for a garment in the ACHS textile collection. This workshop is a volunteer opportunity and a chance to learn to do something new! See page 6 for more details.

January 24, 7:00 pm

Journey Down the Mississippi with Doug Oman

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Doug will highlight the many points of interest in the rivers' upper reaches. This journey will take you from northern Minnesota to the Twin Cities. Doug has explored much of the rivers history, culture and of course beauty through his photography and personal stories. FREE

February 11, 10:30 –1:30

Civil War “Winter Camp”

(Centennial Library/Circle Pines City Hall, 100 Civic Center Drive, Circle Pines) Civil War reenactors will set up a winter camp and share with visitors how soldiers from Anoka County spent their winter days in camp. A special traveling exhibit from ACHS featuring Anoka County soldiers is part of this event. This event is FREE and funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



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March — April 2012

Anoka's Company A of the Eighth Regiment

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"The men were mostly farmers, with some lumbermen, averaging in age from 25-30 years old, an age too old to make fancy soldiers..."

This was the description written by William Houlton when asked to write a history of the actions of the Eighth Minnesota Infantry during the Civil War. Men from a single county were placed in the same company, many enlisting together. Company A was made up of almost entirely of Anoka County men. The regiment was being formed to answer the call for more troops issued by the Federal government that summer of 1862, troops necessary to fight the Confederacy, but before the Eighth was fully mustered in, there was another war and this one was on their doorsteps.



Nathan Curiel

The Dakota Indians had signed treaties with the US government to cede land in Minnesota in exchange for money and goods, but the federal government had a Civil War on its hands and was paying little attention to the needs of the Dakota. Crop failures and other struggles drove the Dakota people to desperation. A confrontation between Dakota hunters and some white settlers near Acton, Minnesota, drew the first blood on August 17, 1862. That night, the Dakota's council of war decided to attack settlements in an effort to drive the whites out.

In August of 1862, less than two weeks after the Eighth Minnesota was organized, what was then called the Sioux Uprising began in west central Minnesota. It was a brutal, terrifying, and bloody conflict that left more than 400 white settlers and an unknown number of Dakota people dead. The conflict was over by December, but the scars it left on the people of Minnesota—both white and Indian—are raw yet today.



Elias Pratt

Companies of the Eighth were immediately sent to patrol the western counties of Minnesota to protect and defend settlers. Many settlers fled, seeking safety in the bigger towns. Anoka's hotels overflowed, so residents took in the refugees while



George Henderson

Crow River. The summer of 1863 saw them back on patrol, mostly on horses rather than marching, and back into conflict with the Dakota. Company A's captain, J.S. Cady, was killed in June and Marcus Butterfield, also of Anoka, became its captain. They spent the next winter, 1863-64, at Fort Abercrombie in the Dakota Territory and began a campaign against the Dakota in the spring of 1864. The Eighth Regiment met the Dakota in a series of battles during the summer of 1864 before they were sent South to join the fight against the Confederacy in October. The Eighth was assigned to the 23rd Army Corps and did service in Tennessee, Washington DC, and into North Carolina. They were part of the Union Army that accepted the surrender of Confederate forces under General Joseph Johnston on April 26th, 1865.

Company A was assigned to patrol the areas around the towns of Anoka and Princeton. There were depredations on both sides and these were made worse by the wild reporting and inflammatory stories that filled the newspapers. It was a dark time in Minnesota's history.

The Eighth patrolled on the frontier through the fall of 1862 and wintered at the Chippewa Agency along the



Captain J.S. Cady



Jarvis Nutter

They returned to Fort Snelling and were honorably mustered out of the service on July 11, 1865. The regiment lost one officer, Captain Cady, and 26 enlisted men to fighting and another 56 men to disease during their service.



Martin Bean

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303

(763) 421-0600

Fax (763) 323-0218

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

www.ac-hs.org

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Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

I've been working in the nonprofit world for nearly fourteen years now. For 13 of those years, I have worked closely with boards of directors at a handful of organizations. This month comes with the election of members to the Anoka County Historical Society's board and with it, we will be seeing some new faces on board. As a student of history, I know that history is the study of change. Some celebrate the change, others decry it. In this case, I will say that I am excited to welcome some new faces, but I want to take a moment to reflect on someone who is leaving our board.

I first met Jan Anderson when I was invited to interview for the position of executive director. She, along with Catherine Vesley and Paul Pierce, made up ACHS's Human Resource Committee. Those three were tasked with interviewing applicants and making a recommendation to the full board. Whether they erred or not in selecting me is a debatable point, but six years later I'm still grateful that they chose me. It was with a heavy heart that I received Jan's letter that informed the board she would not be seeking an additional term on the board.

For my money, Jan is everything you want in a board member. She is enthusiastic, willing to try new things, and not afraid to ask questions. She spent her professional career as a teacher and has certainly used those skills to ACHS's benefit. Her writing skills and teaching abilities gave her cause to write *Anoka County and Its Neighbors*, a large-format book designed for reading to students in a class room. But it always amazed me at how Jan was adept at and willing to try things outside of her established skill set. Jan is a great fundraiser. She believes so faithfully in our mission to preserve and promote Anoka County's history that she is one of the best salespersons I know. From personal experience I can say that she is hard to say no to!

All of this leaves me feeling inadequate in expressing how much I'm going to miss having Jan on the board. She deserves a witty, more pun-filled goodbye than this. All I can truly offer is my personal thanks and the gratitude of the entire Historical Society. We are all the beneficiaries of her kindness. Jan has assured me that she will continue to participate in ACHS activities and will be an active member. I assured her that I will hold her to that, if only for a few more Ole and Lena jokes to brighten my days. Thanks Jan.

From the President...

By Al Pearson

I am a farmer and after finishing our 2011 fall harvest season and starting to plan for the next year, I started to think back to the 1940s and 50s when we got out the grain binder in July to cut oats and rye. This machine cut the grain and tied it in 20 to 30 pound bundles. Eight to ten of these bundles were stood together with grain heads to the sun to form shocks. We shocked the grain as quickly as possible to get it dry and ready to thrash.

Next, the threshing machine separated the grain from the straw, both products used for the farm animals.

Not every farmer was able to own their own threshing machine. My Dad co-owned one with a neighbor and it was used to harvest at all the neighboring farms.

Working together was good because everyone had some equipment that was used at each place as they moved from farm to farm. We needed several tractors with wagons to haul the bundles to the threshing machine which was stationary and set up in the farm yard. One man was needed to work and run the threshing machine and one to keep an eye on the grain wagon. The rest of the crew was loading and hauling the bundles in from the fields. I remember one year when we had no grain wagon, so the 17 year old neighbor girl handled bagging the grain. The bags weighed 100 pounds, so it was a big job for a slight girl.

The women had a most important part in this summer harvest. They made mid-morning and mid-afternoon lunch and took it to the men in the field. There was a big dinner at noon with dessert served in the farm house. There was a certain amount of competition to be the best cook which worked to our advantage. We ate really well.

We children were allowed to go with our fathers by the time we were about ten years old to drive the tractors or horse and wagons for the big boys and men to load the bundles. The girls helped with the table setting and keeping the small children busy. They also set up an outdoor wash area for the crew to clean up before coming in for dinner.

If a farmer couldn't pay the threshing bill, well, maybe next year's crop would be better. Or Dad might be offered a calf or steer. He didn't really worry about the bill because he'd get paid sooner or later, one way or another.

This was always a fun time of the year if you were a kid. It was hot in July very hard work. I think I like an air conditioned combine better.

The Story of an Artifact

The Flag of the Eighth Minnesota Infantry

Imagine you are a soldier on a battlefield during the American Civil War. The noise from muskets and cannons all around you is deafening—roaring to the point of pain in your ears. Smoke fills the air. Men around you are running in all directions, firing weapons and shouting, even though you can't hear them. The battle lines are moving, shifting with the tides of the fight and you desperately want—*need*—to know where your regiment is going. Orders shouted by your officers are almost useless in the *mêlée* of noise. Buglers and drummers are sounding the movements you are supposed to follow, but every company has them. Which one do you listen to? Your life may well depend on following the proper command. How can you know where your regiment is and where they are going?

You look for your flag.

Civil War regiments carried flags as signals for the men to know where their lines were. Flags could lead the way in a charge or a retreat, giving the men a visual cue they were trained to follow, but flags were much more than that. The flag was a symbol of pride, of belonging, of unity. Many flags were presented to the units with great ceremony by groups or organizations with the community. Local women were often involved, hand making the silken banners with the finest of fabrics. A regiment that was captured had to surrender its flag, the ultimate in disgrace. Capturing an enemy's flag was an equally high honor. Marshall Sherman of the First Minnesota Infantry was awarded the Medal of Honor for capturing a Confederate flag at the battle of Gettysburg. That very same flag still evokes deep passions. It is in the collections at the Minnesota Historical Society and a group of Virginians want it back, a subject of heated debate still today.

Most Civil War regiments carried two flags, one was the national flag and the other was their regimental flag. The color bearers were highly coveted and honored positions, even though it meant standing—unarmed—in the midst of a battle with the full responsibility of standing firm. If a color bearer broke in fear and ran, he could take the entire regiment with him, causing havoc on a battlefield. With such importance, the man carrying the flag was a favorite target of the enemy and the casualty rates for color bearers was exceptionally high.

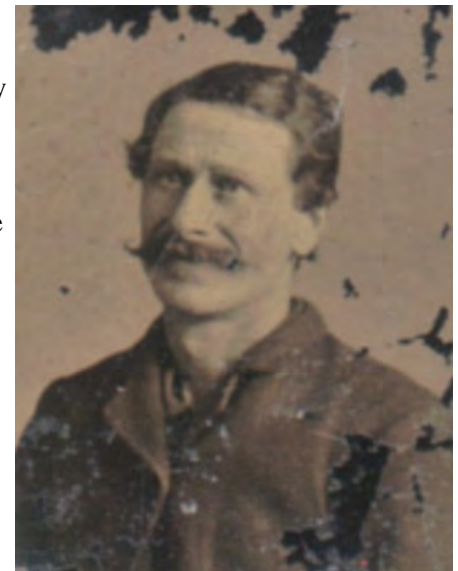
Some regimental flags were hand painted with emblems of the state or the regiment. Some had the names of battles the unit had been in added with paint or ribbons as they carried it through the war. Many regimental flags had to be replaced during the course of the war, but the old flags, the ones riddled with bullet holes, tattered and dirty, were still cherished and some do still exist.



These fragile strips of silk provide enough evidence to see the feathers of the eagle and a bit of the banner it carried in its beak. These are the only pieces in the ACHS collection, but more of the flag is preserved at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Such was the history behind the Eighth Minnesota Infantry's flag. Its main feature was a hand painted eagle clasp ing a ribbon in its beak on ground of blue silk. When the war ended and the men came back to Minnesota to be mustered out of the army, the flag was there. In a grand gesture, the men of the Eighth were allowed to cut a sliver of silk from the flag so each man could keep a bit of their noble banner. While such action destroyed the flag, it did let each man have a piece of it.

One man who kept a cherished bit of that flag was Henry Mansur. Henry was living near Elk River and was only 16 when he managed to get himself mustered into Company A of the Eighth Minnesota Infantry in March of 1864. He served with the regiment through the rest of the war. Henry kept his piece of the flag throughout his life and treasured bits were passed down in the family. In 1995, Henry's great-grandson, Jerry Jacob, brought the flag pieces to ACHS.



Henry Mansur, ca. 1864

U.S. Dakota War History

with author

Dean Urdahl

at the

**Anoka County Historical Society's
Annual Meeting**

March 18, 2:00pm

Anoka City Hall

2015 First Ave N, Anoka

**Cost: \$5.00 for ACHS members, \$7.00
for non-members.**

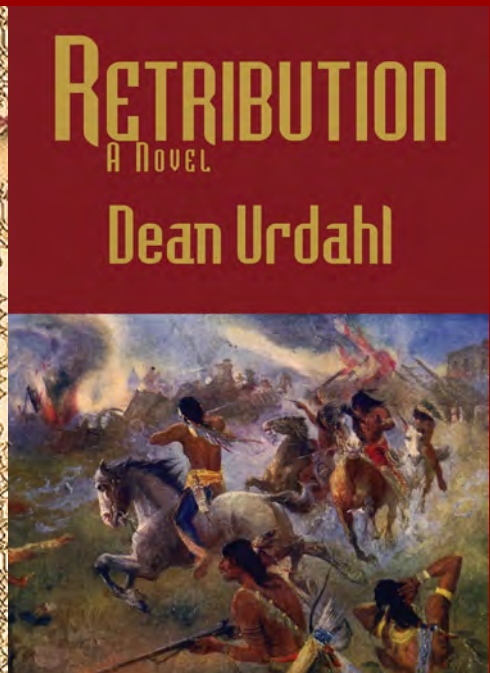
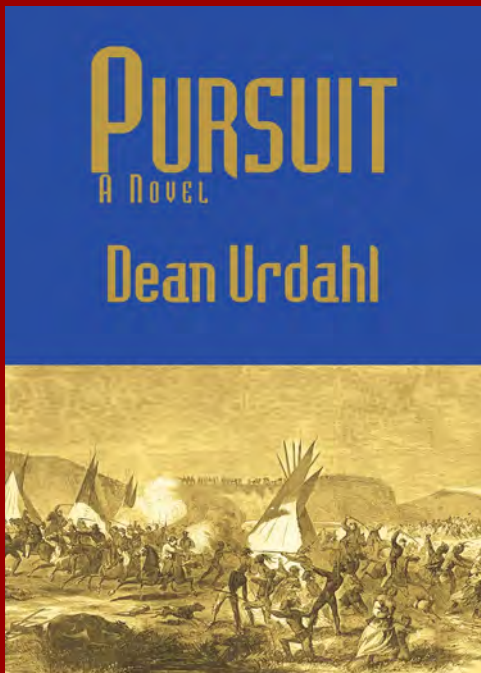
More information:

(763) 421-0600,

www.ac-hs.org



Join the Anoka County Historical Society for its annual meeting and learn more about the 1862 U.S. Dakota War. Author Dean Urdahl has written three novels set in the conflict and featuring actual historical characters. His presentation will include a background on the war, its causes, and its legacy. ACHS will set up a display at the event that will look at Anoka County men who served in Company A of the Eighth Minnesota. The unit was made up largely of Anoka County men (and a woman) and was sent west to fight the Dakota before being sent south to fight the Confederacy during the Civil War. The event will be preceded by a brief business meeting that will include the results of the elections to the ACHS board of directors. Refreshments will be served.



Clothing the County

Fashions from Work to Play



Nearly everyone has—at some point—stood staring at their closet trying to decide what to wear. Clothing is necessary for physical health, but fashion is necessary for our mental health. We all want to look good and the upcoming spring exhibit will highlight what we thought made us look good from the 1800s almost to today. This fashion exhibit will open on May Day, May 1st, with a special evening event, so put the date on your calendar! From work clothes to a night on the town, this exhibit features fashion for men, women, and children from the distant past and the not-so-distant past with commentary on why we wore some of the clothes we chose and why it changed in the ways it did.

Some background

Hand sewing was the only way to make clothing before Isaac Singer began selling his sewing machines on the installment plan in the late 1850s. That “a little money down and so much a month” idea made sewing machines more economically accessible to people and within a few decades, nearly every household had a sewing machine. Mass production also helped by cutting the cost of sewing machines to around \$55 in most areas. Women could sew clothing for their families with these labor saving devices or take in sewing to earn a little extra money.

Ready made or ready to wear clothing was available in the mid 1800s, but limited mostly to coats and undergarments, particularity for men. Most of this was made

in cottage industry settings where each piece was made one at a time. The millions of uniforms needed for the Union Army during the Civil War gave the first real push for mass production of ready-made-clothing and a standard set of body measurements was found to be fairly common, giving rise to a sizing plan in ready made clothing. Men’s clothing continued to be mass produced and sold in increasing amounts after the Civil War, but women’s clothing was still mostly made just for her. This may have been due to the fashions of the day that required well fitted garments. It was not until the 1920s that women’s clothing began to move toward mass production. This was fed by the mail order catalogues that were very popular and carried the latest fashions on their pages. In 1937, the US Department of Agriculture began a study of body sizes aimed a creating a standard sizing that everyone across the clothing industry could follow.

WWII took many women out of the home and put them into jobs that left little time for sewing and, coupled with the better fitting and fashionable clothing available in the ready made market, sewing clothing for the family began to decline. Today, it is considered quite novel to learn of someone sewing all their own clothing.

You can help build this collection for the future!

ACHS has a rich textile collection, but while developing the exhibit, we noticed a number of “holes” in the collection. We’d like our members to help us fill those holes with something from their own closets. **We are specifically asking for garments that someone from Anoka County wore along with any details—when, where, what was the occasion, maybe even a photo of the person wearing it.** These details give the garment provenance, a story, that can be archived with the garment and make it more meaningful to someone in the future.

Clothing does not need to be in new condition; a few wear spots, missing button, or a stain might help tell its story, but it must be clean and in reasonably good condition.

If anything on this list is in your closet or up in your attic, please consider donating it to ACHS to help us continue to build on the fine clothing collection we already have. Call Vickie or Marilyn at 763-421-0600 to discuss what you might have to help us “fill the holes.”

Do you have:

- Wide legged bellbottom hip huggers from the 1960s
- A mini skirt from the 1960s or early 1970s
- Urban cowboy boots, shirts, skirts, or jeans (men’s or women’s) from the 1980s
- A current day baby sleeper or snowsuit
- A current day baby dress or shirt and pants
- A current day disposable diaper or cloth diaper system
- Baby plastic pants that fit over a diaper
- Children’s swim suits, any era.
- Current day maternity clothing
- A string bikini
- Current day pajamas for children or adults
- Current day undergarments, men’s, women’s, and children’s (Any Victoria’s Secret you’re willing to part with?)
- Women’s dresses from the 1980s and 1990s
- A man suit from the 1980s or 1990s (even better to have the shirt and tie that went with it.)
- A fringed leather jacket from the 1970s
- A speedo swim suit
- Halloween costumes (any era)

Up To Date

Greetings Volunteers – by Elaine Koehn

“National Volunteer Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities.”

Congratulations to all of our volunteers! In 2011, you volunteered 5,164.25 hours! Whether you were able to give 200 hours or 10, that time can never be replicated. We may count your time in numbers; we may attempt to place a cash value on your time; but we will all be poorer if we don't realize that once you give your time, it is gone forever. You cannot place a value on something that is priceless.

National Volunteer week is April 15-21. The staff at ACHS wants to show all of you how much you are appreciated. On April 17th, we will provide a luncheon for volunteers who have served at the History Center for ten years or more, initiating our **“Ten Plus Club.”** Your long term commitment serves many purposes. You illustrate to the community the value of our work and by helping us fulfill our mission, you make our load lighter. If you have been with us for over ten years and did not report hours, please give me a call so we can add you to the Club list.

In addition, the Annual Volunteer Recognition is scheduled for Saturday, April 21st, so watch for your invitation and plan to attend. It is fun to set aside special time for the terrific people who volunteer with ACHS!

Spring is soon upon us and I am busy planning events for the volunteer program, including the Volunteer Appreciation Day, the Spring Teas in conjunction with the opening of the new fashion exhibit in our gallery, and preparing for Ghost Tours and all the summer events.

This spring, in conjunction with the new exhibit, we are offering a Ladies Night Out Tea on Thursday nights. It will include a tour of our new fashion exhibit, set to open on **May 1st**, along with a few surprises. The Teas will be on **May 3th** and **May 17th**. Watch for more details about these new adult teas coming soon.

The Saturday **“Dolly and Me Teas”** will be held on **May 12th** and **19th**. Little girls will tour the new exhibit, create a Spring Hat and enjoy tea and pastries and of course, two lucky little girls will win a new outfit for their dolly.

We have three new docents joining the group of cemetery and Ghost Tour Docents. Brandis Marty, Dawn Rust and Jeannie Max have expressed an interest and will join us at the Docent Training on Saturday, April 28th. We are fortunate to have these volunteers join our team. They all possess a great deal of experience and have the leadership qualities necessary to enhance our tours.

Finally, I would like to welcome Jean McFarlane – working with research; David Venhuizen – scanning photos; and Katie Varderbruggen who helped out at the Body Building Workshop and is interested in studying history to become a curator. We are very fortunate to have each of you!

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the March 8 and April 12 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

Charter Members of the Ten Plus Club

Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud. –Helen Dyer

Ten Plus Club

Jan Anderson
Marilyn Anderson, Staff
Dennis Berg
Shirley Christenson
Mike & Mary Clark
Carol Dordan, Staff
Lucille Elrite
Dan Frank
Judy Hanna
David Legrid
Darlene Levens
Becky Loader
Genevieve Meyer
Linda Mundle
Paul III & Mary Pierce
Bill Prugh

Lynne Rickert
Pat Serreyn
Violet Smith
Wes & Lois Spadgenske
Ann Steen
Marlys Talbot
Sandy Thorsen, Staff
Barb Thurston
Catherine Vesley
Deb Wallace
Bart & Ellen Ward
Tom Ward, Tom
Vickie Wendel, Staff
Ron Wendel Family
Ernie & Sharon Woizeschke
Lester & Shirley Ziegler

I commend these volunteers! Your dedication and commitment to the History Center is greatly appreciated. If for some reason, hours were not recorded and someone was omitted, please give Elaine call at (763)421-0600.

Thank You!!

Beginning Genealogy Class

Tuesday, March 13

4:30-6:30

Anoka County History Center

\$7.00 for non-members

\$5.00 for members (ACHS or ACGS)

To register call 763-421-0600

or

email ACGSMN@yahoo.com

Contributions & New Members — Thank you

(All lists are current to February 27, 2012)

DONATIONS

David & Winnifred Conger
Linwood Township
Jerome & Marilyn Manley
Orville Lindquist
Rachel Peterson
Lynne Rickert
Jill Weaver

EMPLOYEE MATCH

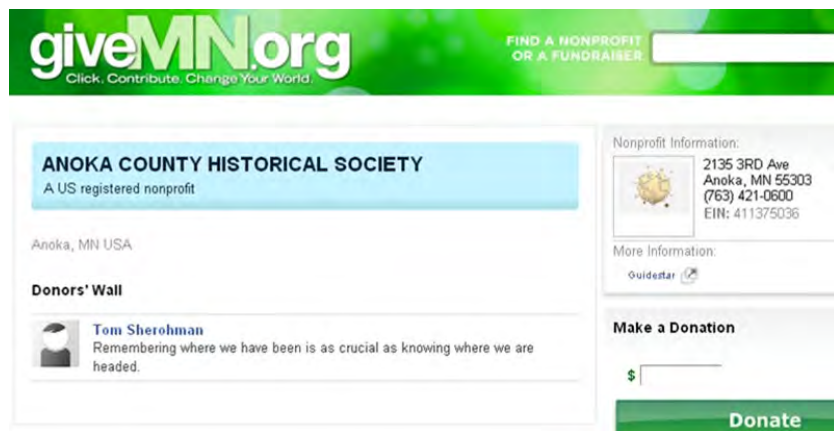
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Janet Eppers
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Karen Little
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Eileen Rathbun
Skip Rither
David VenHuizen
Dave Westendorf estate

NEW MEMBERS

Jerry & Pat Gallagher, Phoenix, AZ
Dorothy Hallin, St. Bonifacius
Diann Hendrickson, Blaine
Bill & Kate Morphew, Andover
Matthew & Shelly Pahl, Cedar
David VenHuizen, Anoka



Give to the Max Day comes only once a year, but the GiveMN site is available all year to make donations right from your smart phone or computer!

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

Janet Douglass Johnson, who died on December 20, 2011. Pat had been a member of ACHS for years and was a loyal supporter of local history..

Dave Westendorf, who died on December 26, 2011. Dave was a member, a veteran, and friend.

Doretta Hoium, who died on February 9, 2012. Doretta was the mother of our ACHS "Friday" volunteer, Pam Fredrick.

Donald Soderquist, who died on February 1, 2012. Don was the husband of Lorraine, a life time member and avid supporter of ACHS and local history.

Pieced and Patched Exhibit Closing! **Last Chance to see 30+ Historic Quilts!**

Saturday, March 17, 2012

10:00 — 4:00

See quilts from the collection of the Anoka County Historical Society that span the years from the mid-1800s to modern day. Each has a special story told in the exhibit. The quilts are returning to their safe storage for preservation, so don't miss your chance to see them!

2:00

Got a quilt of your own (made or inherited) and want to know how to preserve it safely? Bring it along to show and we'll help evaluate the best ways of preserving it. Samples of preservation materials and suggestions for keeping quilts as heirlooms for generations will be discussed.

Anoka County Historical Society
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Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600

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Coming Events

March — April

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Images highlight some of the many faces of people who have called this place home.

March 10, 2:00 pm

(Rum River Library, 4201 6th Ave., Anoka) Quilts can do much more than warm your toes, they can warm your heart, too! This program presents slides of quilts in the collection of ACHS along with their stories. This event is FREE and funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

March 17, 2:00 pm

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) This will be the last chance to see these wonderful quilts before they are tucked carefully away to preserve them. Got a quilt of your own (made or inherited) and want to know how best to keep it safe? Bring it along to show and we'll help evaluate the best ways of preserving it. Free

March 18, 2:00 pm

(Anoka City Hall, 2015 1st Ave. N., lower level) Dean Urdahl has written three historical fiction books centered around the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 and will speak about this conflict. ACHS Board election results will be announced during a short business meeting. See page 4 for more.

April 14, 2:00 pm

(23100 Rum River Blvd., St. Francis) Relive local history with slides, stories, and artifacts from this city and its citizens. The program will be held in the Rum River North Park shelter building. This event is FREE and funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

April 17, Noon

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) A special time to honor those who have been volunteering for ten years or more with ACHS! See page 6 for more information.

April 21, 2:00-4:00 pm

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) A day to say thank you to all of our incredible volunteers! See page 6 for more info.

Faces of Anoka County Lobby Exhibit

Quilts and Their Stories

Pieced and Patched Quilt Exhibit Closing Event

ACHS Annual Meeting & Dakota Conflict Program

The History of St. Francis

Volunteer Recognition for the 10+ Club

Volunteer Recognition Day!!



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 42 No. 3

May – June 2012

SERVING:

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

Honoring Anoka County's Longest Serving Sheriff

By Todd Mahon, Executive Director

Anoka County's longest serving sheriff was Ralph "Buster" Talbot. He was elected by the people of Anoka County in six consecutive elections between 1962 and 1982. He retired at the end of his four-year term in 1986. But he may have never been in that position had it not been for his appointment to the position of sheriff by the Anoka County board in the fall of 1960.

In October of that year, Sheriff Mike Auspos informed the county board that he would retire on December 1, 1960, with two years remaining in his elected term. Sheriff Auspos was a larger-than-life figure in the county with many press accounts of his high speed chases, shootouts, and his physical stature, turning him into a figure of near mythological proportions.

The task of replacing the legendary Auspos fell to the five-member Anoka County Board of Commissioners. In his letter of resignation, Auspos gave his endorsement and recommendation to Irv Barrett, a deputy in the office. Commissioners Gus Johnson and Fred Knodt supported Barrett for sheriff; Johnson was the chair of the board. The only other name that received any serious consideration was Talbot's.

When asked about what his thoughts were on the possibility of him serving as sheriff Talbot said, "I was young and cocky and I thought 'why not?'" Talbot explained how he and Barrett had discussed the issue of them both wanting to be the next Anoka County Sheriff. "I told him if I got it, I wanted him to work for me and if he got it, I would work for him."

Talbot had the support of Commissioner Ed Fields. Commissioner Al Kordiak knew he would have to work with whomever was appointed sheriff. He had a man from Columbia Heights who he preferred, but he couldn't get support from any of the other commissioners for his candidate. He felt both Barrett and Talbot were capable men and could handle the job, so he was interested in supporting the winner of the board vote. The unknown vote belonged to Commissioner Mervale Stinson.

How the final vote played out was effected by the board's rules of procedure and Kordiak's political canniness. On the day the vote was to take place, Knodt made a motion to appoint Barrett. As chair, Johnson was unable to second the motion and none of the other three commissioners offered to second the motion. Then Stinson made a motion to appoint Talbot and Fields seconded it. The standard was to vote in order of district



Sheriff Buster Talbot at his desk, ca.1970s.

numbers. Knodt, representing district #1 voted no. Johnson, representing district #2 voted no, and Ed Fields, representing district #3 voted yes. Next came Kordiak, representing district #4.

Kordiak was still uncertain what Stinson's final vote would be, despite the fact that it was Stinson who had made the motion to appoint Talbot. If Kordiak voted for Talbot and Stinson voted no, then Kordiak would have voted on the losing side. Instead he chose to hold his vote—the only time in his 32 year career that he would do so. Stinson held true to his motion and voted for Talbot, which gave Kordiak the chance to break the tie and give Talbot the 3-2 vote.

The citizens of Anoka County would have their say on Talbot's qualifications two years later when he ran on the ballot in 1962. He was elected in a landslide—his first of many during his 26 years serving as Anoka County's top law officer.

The Anoka County Historical Society will hold a recognition dinner for Buster Talbot on Thursday, September 20, 2012. Watch for more details in the coming months. If you would like to help or participate in some way, contact Todd Mahon, ACHS Executive Director, at 763-421-0600 or todd@ac-hs.org.

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

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At Large B – Dan Frank

At Large C – Tom Ward

At Large D – Dick Lang

At Large F – Paul Pierce, III

At-Large G -- Catherine Vesley

At-Large H -- Harvey Greenburg

County Commissioner Liaison –

Robyn West

Staff

Executive Director – Todd Mahon

Program Manager – Vickie Wendel

Admin. Assistant – Caitlin Frey

Volunteer Coordinator – Elaine Koehn

Curator Projects – Marilyn Anderson

Office Staff – Gail Dahl, Carol Dordan,

Don Johnson

Janitorial – Sandra Thorsen

The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

Volunteers Make ACHS Happen

The month of April is National Volunteer Month, and it is the perfect time to reflect on the state of volunteerism at the Anoka County Historical Society. For our part, ACHS celebrated the month by holding a luncheon for our volunteers that have been with us for ten years or more and held our Volunteer Appreciation Day for all of our volunteers.

It was incredibly gratifying to get so many of our volunteers together in one room. I'll admit, even for me, it is easy to lose sight of the big picture of what our volunteers provide. Our volunteers work in many different areas of our organization. They catalog newspaper and magazine articles in our clippings file, they scan and create records for the photographs in the collections, they conduct tours, they help researchers in the library, they build in the exhibit hall, and so much more.

Each of these smaller things adds up to a larger whole that is the high quality service and programming that ACHS provides. Bit by bit and piece by piece, 125 different ACHS volunteers gave 5,164 hours in 2011. That is the equivalent of two and a half full-time employees. What an incredible way to extend the resources of ACHS.

Those of us that volunteer all do it for our own reasons. For some of us, it's a personal connection to the mission of the organization. For others, it is a bond with the people that we work alongside, whether it be other volunteers or the staff. It's no different with our volunteers. Some are here because they love our mission and want to promote Anoka County's history. Others have formed deep friendships and bonds that surpass the mission (I am happy to count many of our volunteers among my personal friends). Whatever the reason, we're happy to have each and every one of our volunteers support us with their valuable time.

I've written it before in these columns, and said it to our volunteers, but I never overlook the gift of time given to the Historical Society. We all have busy lives and each of only get 24 hours in the day. To give any of that precious time to us will forever be appreciated. We all have different capacities to give financial gifts, but no one person has any more time in the day, week, or month than anyone else does. To give some of that precious commodity to us is a true gift.

Thank you to all of our volunteers.

From the President...

By Al Pearson

Over the years I have had the opportunity to do some unusual jobs, one of which I'd like to tell you about now. It involved history in a way I never expected.

About ten years ago, I was asked to restore a 1944 Russian army tank. This was a very well-known and deadly tank during WWII. This particular tank was said to have been captured by the Germans, moved to Poland and the insignias changed to German so they could use for the rest of the war. It somehow wound up in Missouri where our neighbor bought it. It took a considerable trouble to find a truck that could haul something that heavy. The permits for that type of load were a nightmare to get. I had told the owner if he could get the tank to our farm my son, Dan, and I would see what we could do with it to get it running again.

The owners plan was to operate a business called Tank Ride.com, where for \$100.00, a person could have a ride and shoot the guns.

He got it to us and we got the tank running. We painted it with the German markings and mounted two 30 caliber machine guns. Then we designed and installed a gas-oxygen devise in the canon barrel.

On the evening we were going to try out the cannon, the tank was sitting in front of my shop facing US Hwy 10 and the Links Golf Course. Dan put 3 seconds of gas and oxygen in the barrel and fired it. It worked, but we didn't think the report was impressive enough. I told Dan, "Try 10 seconds and I'll add some diesel fuel for a little realistic smoke effect."

WOW!

That rocked the tank with 10 feet of flames and smoke from that cannon!

There happened to be two ladies on the golf course ready to tee off just as we fired. They called the police and reported there were two lunatics shooting across the highway at them. So, the realism was unique and that did become the standard—after we explained to the police what we were doing!

My 14 year old grandson, Doug, helped us fix the tank and started running it for the owner at his business site. So, for the price, six people could ride in the tank and shoot the guns in a simulated battlefield in a rock quarry/gravel pit.

This was a really fun project and certainly gave us—and anyone who rides in the tank—a new perspective on what combat in such a vehicle might have been like. That's history you don't get from a book.

The Story of an Artifact

Prom History

By Caitlin Frey

Prom night has become an iconic rite of passage for many American teenagers, but in the late 19th century, it was an occasion reserved for an elite few. In many ways, the history of prom tells the story of the growth of the middle class and the increasing democratization of the nation's schools.

Here in Anoka County, the prom took hold in the 1940s and 1950s, but it evolved out of an earlier tradition, the Junior-Senior Banquet, that dated back to the 1910s.

"Prom" is short for "promenade" which was the procession into a debutante ball that high-society girls would complete in order to present themselves to society (and signal that they were ready for marriage). Around the turn of the century, colleges and universities took to throwing their own dances with "proms" that mimicked the debutante balls of the upper crust. While college students came from well-to-do families at this time, they were not necessarily from the highest echelon of society, so the prom became just a little more democratic. Eventually, students' use of the term "prom" to describe the entire dance – as opposed to just the march – would stick and become the popular usage we know today.

During the first decades of the 20th century, proms took hold in the high schools as more students began seeking an education beyond the eighth grade. This happened for several reasons. First, social reformers sought to make public education available to more students in an effort to Americanize the growing number of immigrants coming into the country. Second, with the growth of a middle class, more families could afford to let their children stay in school instead of joining the workforce – whether on the farm or in the factory.

This was true in Anoka County, where a new high school opened in Saint Francis in 1914, providing an opportunity for children in the northern half of the county to continue their education



The 1965 Prom in St. Francis.

without commuting to Anoka. Part of the effort to get both working- and middle-class students involved in school was to teach them "acceptable" social behaviors. Dances and banquets that imitated the upper class provided just such lessons in social etiquette, while also giving students a chance to have some fun.

In Anoka, high school students had a chance to show off their finest manners and clothes at the Junior-Senior Banquet. This event is documented in yearbooks as far back as 1911. The Junior class was responsible for selecting a theme, hosting the banquet, and giving a program of entertainment for the seniors. Decorating themes ranged from "Japanese" to "Dutch" and "Pirate" to "Night Club." The first banquets were held in February of each year, but during the 1920s, the date switched to the early May season that we now associate with prom. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the banquet was held in varying venues across Anoka, including the Masonic Temple and the Knights of Columbus Hall. With the onset of the Depression, the banquet was moved to the school gymnasium.

Continued on page 6



A Junior-Senior Banquet dress, ca. 1930s.



Anoka High School Prom, 1961.



Clothing the County

Fashion for Every Occasion

Join us on May 1 at 7:00pm for the opening of our newest exhibition featuring more than two dozen garments from the permanent collections.



Preserving Your Textiles

Now that our past and present exhibits have everyone thinking about preserving even recent garments, quilts, and other textiles, it is time to share some tips about how to care for and preserve those precious textiles we all have.

Clothing, quilts, towels, blankets, anything made from any kind of cloth can be considered a textile. Most textiles can be treated in the same ways for preservation purposes. The tips here are meant to be a guide to home preservation, not a professional conservator's assessment.

In his book, *Saving Stuff*, by Don Williams, a senior conservator at the Smithsonian Institute, he says to think of your textile like you think of Grandma. You wouldn't leave Grandma closed up in a hot car on a summer day, would you? Or put her in an unheated garage over winter? Or let the dog chew on her? Of course not! Williams says you should treat your precious textiles the same way you would treat Grandma.

- Always keep your special textiles in a clean, moderate environment (not too hot, too cold, too dry, or too damp).
- Resist using or wearing heirlooms. Use for display only.
- Rotate the textiles on display every six to nine months.
- Limit exposure to sunlight, bright lights, and fluorescent bulbs.
- Use acid-free tissue paper and boxes or tubs* for storage.
- Watch for insect infestations!
- Consult with a textile conservator before washing or repairing.
- Wood (i.e. in trunks, cedar chests, dresser drawers) releases acids that can damage fibers. If you want to use a wooden storage container, line it with Mylar (Mylar is a trade name for an inert, clear polyester based plastic sheeting. It is safe for most archival uses). You need to protect your items from the wood, which will off-gas and discolor your textile.
- Rolling smaller textiles can eliminate fold lines. Separate items from each other with cotton sheeting or acid-free paper.
- Plan folds so that any previous fold lines are not used repeatedly.
- Plan size to fit in your box (not too loosely, not too tightly).
- Do not use plastic bags! Cotton or muslin storage bags make excellent dust covers. Cotton sheets can be used to make a storage bag. Do not bleach or use harsh detergents when preparing your cotton sheeting for a storage bag. Rinse it well to remove all residues.
- Air your textiles once or twice a year. Spread them out flat in a low light, fresh air area.

- When displayed, hang the textile so that stress of its own weight is evenly distributed across the entire width of the item. Displaying textiles flat, such as on a bed is the best way to show off the item without stress on the fabric. Avoid beds near windows, especially south facing windows. When the item is not being viewed, put a clean white sheet over it to protect it from dust and light. Make sure the dog/cat is not allowed in this room!

Did you note that * next to the "tubs" as a storage container? There are many kinds of plastic boxes for storage available and not all of them are bad. Certain kinds can be excellent storage containers, but choose carefully! Before you buy a tub for storage, look for the plastic code (recycling code). Codes 1, 2, 4, or 5 are okay, but 5 is the best.

Those plastic codes identify what chemicals are used in the manufacturing of the plastic. The most common plastics are:



PETE polyethylene terephthalate, code #1. This kind of plastic is often found in peanut butter jars as it is an excellent oxygen barrier, necessary to keep peanut butter fresh. It will also slow down the tarnish on your silverware.



HDPE High density polyethelene, code #2. This is the very dense, harder kind of foam often found in packing materials.



LDPE low density polyethelene, code #4 is also used in packing materials, but has a more foamier feel to it. Neither will feel like the brittle "Styrofoam" we are so familiar with. That is another chemical and not appropriate for any kind of archival use.



Polypropylene, code #5, is the plastic used in most quality storage tubs such as Rubbermaid or Sterlite.

Plastics with the #3 code are usually polyvinyls and are NOT APPROPRIATE for archival uses. Vinyl off-gasses and many materials can be damaged by this off-gassing. Think new car smell. That is most likely off-gassing from the vinyls used to make that new car. Plastic tubs are especially good if your area is prone to moisture (floods), but be careful in areas of high humidity. Trapping too much humidity inside a plastic tub is a recipe for mold.

While this certainly is not a complete list for preserving a special prom dress, great grandma's quilt, or a christening gown, following the tips presented here will help preserve those textiles for generations to come, making them true heirlooms. If you have further questions, please call ACHS and we'll be happy to help or find another expert who can help you.

Up To Date

Volunteer News – by Elaine Koehn

Celebrate Mothers Day at the History Center on Thursday, May 3 & 17th 6-8 pm.

On May 13, 2012, mothers from around the world will be honored. The first attempts to establish a "Mothers Day" in the U.S. were mostly marked by women's peace groups. A common early activity was the meeting of groups of mothers whose sons had fought or died on opposite sides of the American Civil War. There were several limited observances in the 1870s and the 1880s, but only on the local level.

In 1868, Ann Jarvis created a committee to establish a "Mother's Friendship Day." Her purpose was to reunite families that had been divided during the Civil War. She wanted to see it expand into an annual memorial for mothers. Jarvis died in 1905 before the celebration became popular.

Mothers Day was established by Anna Marie Jarvis, the daughter of Ann Jarvis, with the help of Philadelphia merchant, John Wanamaker, following the death of her mother.

Jarvis campaigned to establish Mother's Day first as a U.S. national holiday and then later as an international holiday. The holiday was officially declared by the state of West Virginia in 1910, and the rest of the states followed quickly.

On May 8, 1914, the U.S. Congress passed a law designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day and requested a proclamation. On May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation declaring the first national Mother's Day as a day for American citizens to show the flag in honor of those mothers whose sons had died in war.

And here is a suggestion for Mother's Day! Treat your mothers, daughters, and grandmothers to a Ladies Night Out at the Museum. This adult program will feature a tour of the new exhibit with models portraying history from 1860s to the 1960s, and a presentation on the history of aprons. Best of all, you will have time together to learn, talk, and enjoy tea and pastries.

Many volunteers are involved in planning and presenting this new program. I would like to extend a special thank you to Ann Steen, Jean McFarlane, Julie VanderBloomer and Sara Given for the time and efforts they put forth in planning the Ladies Night Out at the Museum program.

Other programs we will be offering in May and June include the Dolly and Me Teas for younger girls, Ghost Tours of Anoka and we will be soon approaching the Anoka County Fair. Call the History Center for more information on these events.

Happy Mother's Day!

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the May 10 and June 14 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

Prom History, Continued from page 3

The popularity of the prom as an event didn't take hold across the country until the 1940s. In the 1930s, with the emergence of psychology as a discipline, adolescence began to be understood as a separate stage of life from adulthood.

With the boom of the postwar years, advertising firms identified a new group of consumers: teenagers. Because of this discovery, the number of products aimed at teenagers grew exponentially, including makeup, soda, records, clothes and more. Prom became a part of this teenage culture.

In Anoka and St. Francis, kids began informally referring to the Junior-Senior banquet as "prom" by 1944. By the late 1950s, the event, as commemorated in year-books, was officially known as the Junior-Senior Prom.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, prom has continued to evolve. The banquet portion was dropped and the dance became the main focus. Now, kids usually go out to dinner at a nice restaurant in a group. Live bands, like the Neumann's Nightingales that played at the 1927 Anoka banquet, gave way to DJs who played the latest top 40 hits. Dressing up has always been a part of the prom experience, and ACHS has several prom dresses in its collection, including a salmon taffeta dress with rhine-

stone ornaments (1930s) and a dark green polyester dress with a matching bolero jacket trimmed in ostrich feathers (1970). These dresses are on display as a part of the Fashion exhibit. The featured garments in this exhibit will change throughout the year, so stop in this spring and take a look at these dresses during prom season!



Contributions & New Members – Thank you

(All lists are current to April 16, 2012)

DONATIONS

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Marlys Burman
Robert & Beverly Burtness
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Tim & Yvonne Curran
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In Memory of Roger Carlson, Joe Chutich,
Lawrence Elrite, Lucille Lehn, Joyce Paul,
Bob Schwappach, and Don Smith

From Maxine Larson

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NEW MEMBERS

Gerald Glaeve, Mt. Horeb, WI
Dale & Sandra Wucher, Anoka



Give to the Max Day comes only once a year, but the GiveMN site is available all year to make donations right from your smart phone or computer!

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

James Swisher, who passed away May 19, 2011. James was a long time member of ACHS and a great supporter of local history.

Collecting for the Future!

Thank you to those who have checked their closets for items on our list and helped us fill in some gaps in the ACHS garment collection. We appreciate your help and trust with these textiles.

There are still some things we're looking for, so please check the amended list and see if there is something you might have that will fit into the collection. **We are specifically asking for garments that someone from Anoka County wore along with any details—when, where, what was the occasion, maybe even a photo of the person wearing it.** These details give the garment provenance, a story, that can be archived with the garment and make it more meaningful to someone in the future.

Clothing does not need to be in new condition; a few wear spots, missing button, or a stain might help tell its story, but it must be clean and in reasonably good condition.

If anything on this list is in your closet or up in your attic, please consider donating it to ACHS to help us continue to build on the fine clothing collection we already have. Call Vickie or Marilyn at 763-421-0600 to discuss what you might have to help us "fill the holes."

Do you have:

- Work clothes—shirts with work logos, uniforms, work boots, work jeans, protective gear, etc.
- Wrist watch, any era, style, or price
- Swim suits, bathing caps, nose/ear plugs, bikini, man's Speedo, children's swimwear, any era.
- A belly band (maternity clothing)
- Wide legged bellbottom hip huggers from the 1960s
- A mini skirt from the 1960s or early 1970s
- 1980s Urban cowboy men's boots, shirts, jeans
- A current day baby sleeper or snowsuit
- A current day baby dress or shirt and pants
- A current day disposable diaper or cloth diaper system
- Baby plastic pants that fit over a diaper
- Current day pajamas for adults
- Current day undergarments, men's, women's, and children's (Still don't have any Victoria's Secret!)
- A man suit from the 1980s or 1990s (with shirt and tie)
- A fringed leather jacket from the 1970s
- Halloween costumes (any era)
- A prom dress (2000 or newer)
- Tuxedo, any era after 1930
- Current day costume jewelry

Anoka County Historical Society
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Coming Events

May 1, 7:00 pm

Clothing the County: Fashion for Every Occasion

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) The new exhibition *Clothing the County: Fashion For Every Occasion* features more than two dozen dresses, uniforms, gowns and more from the Historical Society's permanent collections. The exhibit examines the influences that have dictated the choices that Anoka County residents have made. Free.

May 3 & 17, 6:00 pm

Ladies Night Out

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Tour the new Fashion exhibit with live models, then have tea and treats with a dash more fashion history! \$7 for members, \$10 for non members. Make your reservation—space is limited!!

May 5, 2:00 pm

Women's Walking Tour of Anoka

(Meet at the Anoka County History Center and Library.) In partnership with Anoka's Diva Days, guests are invited to a walking tour in downtown Anoka focusing on the stories of women who shaped the community—a female doctor, a Civil Rights activist, business women, and more. Tickets are \$5 and limited to 25 people. Call for your reservation.

May 12, 2:00 pm

Fashion Trends

(Northtown Library, 711 County Road 10, Blaine) Why were bustles, hoopskirts, leisure suits, and more, popular clothing of their times? Find out at this interactive fashion program. This event is FREE, funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

May 12 & 19, various times

Dolly and Me Teas

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) The day includes a guided tour of our new fashion exhibit, making your own hat, and enjoying a tea. \$7 for girls, \$10 for adults and dollies attend free. Call for times and reservations.

June 9, 10:00 am—2:00 pm

Live at the Library: Civil War Artillery & S.A.S.

(Rum River Library, 4201 6th Avenue, Anoka) Every library has unique event on this day and Rum River will host a Civil War Artillery Camp and a group of ladies hold a Soldier's Aid Society meeting just as might have been done 150 years ago. This event is FREE, funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 42 No. 4

July — August 2012

Anoka's Heritage Home & Garden Tour

SERVING:

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



302 Fremont

The oldest section of this house is the east section, built in 1852 by the Shaw family. It was used as both a residence and a store. The store was on the first floor on the east end. The rest of the

first floor and the entire second floor served as the home for the Shaws who sold it in 1860. For the next ten years it passed through a number of hands until Weston Hammons, an attorney from Maine, purchased it. Hammons built the “new” part of the house—a two and a half story addition on the west end of the home and remodeled the front façade. Then the home was purchased by Justus DeGraff and it stayed in the DeGraff family for 82 years until Marie DeGraff, a well-known artist and teacher, sold the home to the Follrath family. The Follraths deserve much of the credit for restoring the home to its 1870 appearance.

By 2000, Lorraine Follrath was living here alone and was no longer able to care for it. The house was sold in 2002 and Worldwide Properties proposed building a 24 unit senior housing facility after it said it could find no feasible way to restore the house. In 2004, the home was placed on the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota’s Ten Most Endangered Properties List because of their concern for its future. The following year, Worldwide Properties gave up its efforts to redevelop the site and the home was sold to Paul Kaiser who worked on the home until he sold it to its current owners in 2008.

624 Park Street

This lovely home was built in 1892 by Charles and Mary McIntire. The two had married that year. Charles worked for the Washburn Mill Co. and his 1918 obituary tells us that he also operated a restaurant for several years. He suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1899, which likely forced him and Mary out of the house. Mary worked at the Anoka State Hospital. In 1900, the house was purchased by Anna Ticknor and her daughter, Zale Ticknor Niles. It seems likely this house was their temporary home as the Niles’ were in the process of remodeling their stately home on the other side of the river, Ticknor Hill. Zale died in 1902, but this property was not sold by the estate until 1909 when Hugh and Ellen Mary Donnelly purchased it. Hugh worked for Deere and Webber and traveled



extensively for his job. The 1930 census shows Hugh and Ellen living with their five adult children in the home, but Hugh’s ’32 obituary lists four of the children living out of state. Ellen Mary died in 1953. One of their daughters, also named Ellen, lived in the home with her husband, Dr. Mark Jurek. Ellen taught at Anoka High School and Mark was a veterinarian. Mark and Ellen remodeled the main floor and the upstairs bedroom in 1954. Ellen died in 1993; Mark died in 1979.

The current owners have been in the home for two years after purchasing it from the Gerald and Mary Skjolsvik. Since that time, they completed a major remodel of the upstairs and added a master bath. During the renovation, an 1888 newspaper was found in the walls of the upstairs bedroom.

616 Park Street

For over forty years, this house was owned by Bernice Annon, a single mother. She and her ex-husband, Dr. Walter T. Annon, Sr., grew up in Anoka and lived in Philadelphia while he established his medical career. Following the divorce, Bernice returned to Anoka. In this home, she raised Walter Jr. (their daughter had moved on by 1933). After the alimony stopped coming, Bernice taught piano lessons on a baby grand piano in the living room. Walter Jr. recalls that Bernice was not such a good piano player, though she had been playing since childhood, but she was a very good teacher of piano. To further make ends meet, Bernice took in boarders, usually school teachers. Bernice wasn’t much of a gardener. Walter Jr. remembers her preference for Lilies of the Valley, but that’s about it for gardening.



With the current owners, gardening’s a different story! Today, the front and back yard are defined by extensive gardens. The back yard is generally shadier than the front and therefore has more hostas and woodland plants. The front yard includes native prairie plants and a few tomato plants. The backyard features a sauna that was built mostly by the wife and her friend in 1997. Neither woman had any practical experience in construction, but they took the project on, designed and drafted the plans, dug the foundation, and laid the concrete themselves. They solicited some help with the walls and roof, but the building is theirs and remains a monument to their friendship.

For tickets to tour these home and gardens—and several more—see page 5!

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

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E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

www.ac-hs.org

History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

Summer School of a Different Sort

Working for a historical society, I often get asked why I got into history and museums. I wish I could say it's because I came from a family that debated the merits of the Federalist Papers around the dinner table. If I really think hard about it, I can probably trace my interest in history back to the family vacations I went on as a child. For my family, summer vacations usually consisted of packing up the two kids and the family cat in a Toyota Chinook and pointing the truck south and west.

Traveling to and staying in state and national parks across the great American west was my first hands-on experience with history, but I don't think I realized it at the time. At most of these locations, when my family was resting up and cooling down from a long hike at the visitor's center, I would find myself drawn to exhibits about the early pioneers that passed through and settled these areas. I loved the reprinted dime store novels about outlaws like Jesse James and Billy the Kid that were found in the gift shops (I didn't find out until later that most of those stories were at best exaggerated and at worst complete fiction).

In early June this year, my wife and I took our two-year old daughter on a camping trip to Lake Chetek in southwestern Minnesota. The state park is about 30 minutes from Walnut Grove, which is the home to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum. My daughter was captivated by the exhibits and buildings on site, and we escaped with only \$60 spent in the gift shop (bonnet, dress for dolly, books, and stickers) and nearly every night since we've been home, she asks us to read her a "Laura and Mary" story. We might have another history lover on our hands.

I hope you'll spend some of your summer learning about history, too. You can do it close to home. Visit us at the Anoka County History Center to see our great exhibits, learn about home arts on a 1920s farm at the county fair in July, or come to the Nowthen Threshing Show in August to see us in the general store.

There is also the Fridley Historical Society's museum to visit, Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, a WWII tank in Bunker Hills Park, the Ridell House in the River Front Regional Park—there are so many places to find history!

From the President...

By Al Pearson

Tom Ward, a friend and former neighbor, recently showed me a March 20, 1946, *Anoka Union* that had an article about my family. We were moving to a bigger farm. At the time we were living on the corner of Co. Rd. 5 and Hwy. 47, where the Savannah Oaks Senior Building is now. Our neighbors, friends and some community people gave us a going away party for our 6 mile move.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Pearson Given a Farewell Party

Mr. and Mrs. Reinhard Pearson and four sons, David, Alan, Jon and Dennis were honored at a neighborhood farewell surprise party given for them, Saturday evening, in the schoolhouse in district 28 when about 75 friends enjoyed the evening with them.

Mrs. Martin Gorham extended a cordial welcome to the family and friends followed by a welcome recitation by Lorraine Gorham. Several selections were given at intervals by Lester Skogquist on the accordion and Maynard Gamm on the guitar which were greatly appreciated and a fine contribution from the young men. Miss Donna Gorham sang "Some Sunday Morning", Gale and Donna Gorham sang "Bell Bottom-Trousers" and Gale Gorham sang "We'll Swap the Old Jalop", accompanied by Mr. Skogquist and Mr. Gamm. Miss Edith Patch gave a talk, and in her delightful and humorous manner presented the Pearson family with some useful electric appliances for their new home. Mr. and Mrs. Pearson responded in a happy manner, full of appreciation for the party and substantial remembrances.

Mr. Pearson is a member of the school board. He and his family have lived in Ramsey for the past 13 years and will soon move to the Bowers brothers farm which he will operate. They will be missed in that locality but have the best wishes from this group for their health and success in their new home.

A buffet supper was served from prettily decorated tables to close the evening. Mr. and Mrs. Warren Spence and daughter of Dayton and Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Briere of Anoka joined them in the get-together. A guest book contained the names of all present and was left with the honored guests.

The committee serving were: Mmes. Martin Gorham, Henry Kolbe, Harold Spence and A. H. Smith.

To think that the Superintendent of Rural Schools, Edith Patch, The Grocery Store Man, as we called him, A. J. Briere with local musicians and singers were there to bid us well and entertain all, is quite amazing.

To have a going away party with 75 guests to move just 6 miles shows how caring our friends and neighbors were. Sixty-six years, later I still choose to live in Ramsey, enjoying friends and neighbors.

Some of our Oldest Artifacts — The Bison Bones

“Old” may be a relative term, but there is little doubt that among the oldest artifacts in the ACHS collections are the bison bones.



It is likely these bones are close to 10,000 years old!

They are from the extinct species, *Bison Occidentalis*, a larger version of the living bison we see today. The bones were found in a black dirt pit along Coon Creek in Andover.

Bison Occidentalis is the scientific name for the extinct species of bison that was larger than the current bison of modern day America. The *Bison Occidentalis* is believed to have died out around the time of the end of the last glacier that covered Minnesota, about 10,000 years ago.

Scientists believe the *Bison Occidentalis* died because it could not compete for food with the smaller *Bison Bison* (the scientific name for the modern bison). The larger bison needed more and better food than the smaller bison. Food supplies were scarce, so the animal that needed less food and could get by with poorer qualities of food survived.



Bison occidentalis



But what about the buffalo? Weren't those found here too? No, buffalo have never been native to the North American continent. It was the early settlers who named the animal that reminded them of the African buffalo. Scientifically, the bison of North America are more closely related to the African and Asian bison.

That name, though wrong, stuck. Besides, Bison Bill Cody just doesn't have the same ring to it!



The bones in the ACHS collection, as are many other bones in collections throughout America, were found in bogs or what had been a bog thousands of years ago. An easy guess is to say that the bison must have gone into the bog, got stuck and died there. That is probably not the answer. It is likely just as many bison died in fields as in bogs, but bogs preserved the bones. Bones left on a prairie decayed to dust if they were not carried off by other animals.

Those bogs may also provide part of the reason for the bones being a dark brown color rather than the creamy white we might expect.

When the bones in the ACHS collection were found in the 1970s, they were taken to the University of Minnesota for identification. A preservative was applied to help keep the bones from deteriorating. The brown color can come from that, but it is also likely the natural tannins from decaying plant material found in peat bogs darkened the bones as well.

The bones are currently on display in the *Tell Me a Story* exhibit at the Anoka County History Center so you can see them up close and in person!



Oral Histories Preserve Our Stories

By Executive Director Todd Mahon

In April, the Anoka County Historical Society lost a good friend when Andover's Stanley Knoll passed away.

Stanley and his family operated a vegetable farm in Andover. In 1979, as a part of the Peatland Project, test plots were planted on the Knoll farm that included six varieties each of potatoes, onions, lettuce, carrots, celery, cauliflower, broccoli, peas, and spinach, plus tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe,

cucumber, beets, dried beans, and raspberries. Earlier, in 1966, Knoll planted miniature carrot varieties at a time when companies and regulatory agencies were trying to advise on what kinds of vegetables were suitable for the sandy soil in the western portion of Anoka County.

And how do we know all of this? Because Stanley and his wife, Delores, sat down for a formal oral history interview with ACHS in January 2004. Historian Linda Cameron interviewed the couple in their home as a part of a project to document Anoka County's agricultural history. The interview is



The Knoll family farm in Andover, 2004.

fascinating. Knoll not only tells some good anecdotes, but he really provides wonderful, detailed information about what crops he planted, why he chose them, and how the economics of farming worked in Anoka County in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The Anoka County Historical Society has hundreds of recorded interviews in its permanent collection. Many of them, like Stanley's and Delores's, are transcribed (which makes them infinitely more useful for researchers).

We couldn't do it without the willing participants like Stanley and Delores Knoll, and now that both have passed on, we have a terrific document that will live on. Staff and volunteers are always on the lookout for people that can not only share their personal story, but can place it in a context that tells the story of the broader community.

ACHS is exploring the idea of doing a large scale oral history project that looks at the Anoka State Hospital. Opened in 1900 across the Rum River from the county fairgrounds, the state hospital was one of the largest employers in the community. If you were an employee, a patient, or had some other relationship with the state hospital, please contact us. We'd like to record your story.



The grounds of the Anoka State Hospital, not long after it was opened in 1900. ACHS is looking for participants in a potential oral history project examining the hospital.

Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

Sunday,

July 15, 2012

1:00pm - 5:00pm



Tour all sites for
\$10
 Day of price: \$12

Every ticket holder is eligible for a **FREE** one-night stay at Anoka's Ticknor Hill Bed and Breakfast.
 Raffle Prizes worth at least \$25 at all business stops!!

Open house tours of homes and gardens in Anoka's Slab Town and Whiskey Flats neighborhoods and several historical commercial buildings. The tour includes four properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

Advance Tickets on sale at the Anoka County History Center and at the Artique on the day of the tour.

A fundraiser hosted by:



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Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the July 10 and August 14 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

We Need Your Help!

Do you have extra wire hangers in your closet? We'd love to have some! We are going through our garment collection and finding some of the old hangers are stretching out and need replacing. If you have some sturdy wire hangers you can share, we would appreciate having them very much.

The other item the collections are in need of are clean sheets, preferably white but any color is fine as long as they have been washed a few times.

We have a group of volunteers all set to wrap the hangers with padding and sew a cover with pieces of the cotton. These padded hangers help distribute the weight of the garment as it hangs, relieving much of the stress from the fabric in the shoulders. The padded hangers also keep fabric from creasing, another risk for textiles.

Hangers and sheets can be dropped off at the History Center at anytime during our open hours.

Our garment collections thank you!

School District #28 in Ramsey

Did you attend school there? Or have a family member who did and they shared stories about the school? There is a project underway to document School District #28 in Ramsey and we'd like to hear from you. If you have any information or memories of school days in this school, please call ACHS. Photos, old reports cards, notes or assignments are all great resources and we'd love to make copies of them. Call Todd at 763-421-0600 or email at todd@ac-hs.org. Thanks for helping preserve this history!

Anoka State Hospital Project

ACHS is exploring the idea of an oral history project to document the human history of the Anoka State Hospital, now known as the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center. If you or someone you know has worked at this facility, participated in a program offered by it, or had another connection to its time as a state hospital, either past or present, we'd like to hear from you.

If there are enough contacts located to make this into a formal project, we will begin setting up interviews with them to record their experiences. There is nothing to feel intimidated about in these interviews. There are no right or wrong answers, we are only asking for your experiences and the opportunity to record them.

If you are or know of someone with connections to the Anoka State Hospital—either now or many years past—please call Todd or Vickie at 763-421-0600.

Greetings Volunteers! By Elaine Koehn

Summer is here! Riverfest is July 14, the Home and Garden Tour is July 15, and the Anoka County Fair runs July 24-29. The Ghost Tours continue on the first and third Thursday and Saturday of each month. There are parades and community festivals! It's a great time of year!

We are planning something new this year at the History Center for Riverfest. From 10 am – 2 pm, for a \$5.00 suggested donation, we will be taking digital photographs of patrons dressed in historical costumes. The costumes were donated to the History Center by Mike and Mary Clark. Of course, we will have a booth to sell tickets for the Annual Home and Garden show at the intersection of Second and Jackson. If you can help out with either of these, please give me a call.

Home and Garden Tour tickets are on sale. \$10.00 for tickets purchased in advance and \$12.00 on the day of the event. We will be touring homes from the Whiskey Flats and Slabtown areas and will need approximately 25 volunteers to staff these homes. The homes and gardens are beautiful and volunteers get a tour at the end of the day.

Our volunteers are wonderful and the schedule for the Anoka County Fair is nearly complete. I still need a volunteer for the last day of the fair, Sunday from 3:00 -8:00 pm. This time does include packing up the farmhouse. I also need a couple extra volunteers to cover in case of emergencies. We have a nice variety of activities planned—woodworking, quilting, water color painting, kids games from the 30's, and lace making to name a few. Volunteers talk about the house, farm life, and of course have breaks to sample fair food!

Welcome to several new volunteers! Karah Hutchinson is attending St. Cloud University and working on a clothing project and entering the information into Past Perfect. She also confessed to me she wants to be a Vickie when she grows up! Our second intern is Nick Walstad, who is attending Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Nick is researching artifacts from our political collection and documenting his findings into Past Perfect. Several high school graduates are helping out over the summer before leaving for college in the fall. Nora Wehrle-Harlan, Rachel Hedin and Cameron Halstead are working on the Watershed project, scanning photos into Past Perfect. Not new to ACHS, but also helping on this project is Sandra Connor.

Finally, five new volunteers attended training to lead the Ghosts of Anoka tours. Samantha Fredricks and Emily Hall will lead tours over the summer before going off to college. Three additional volunteers, Monique Walraven, Jean McFarlane and Dawn Rust, also attended the training and will be leading tours through October.

All of our volunteers bring special skills and talents to the Historical Society that greatly enriches our programs. We appreciate all that you do!

Contributions & New Members — Thank you

(All lists are current to June 15, 2012.)

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Anonymous
Diane Bemel
Richard Bergling
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Christian Hill Neighborhood
Devon's Gardens
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In memory of Paul Pierce, Jr.
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In memory of Gloria Smith
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Amanda Wendel
Vickie Wendel

NEW MEMBERS

Katie Demarco, Woodbury
Cynthia Nelson, Coon Rapids
Tim Ward, Woodbury



The GiveMN site is available all year to make donations right from your smart phone or computer!

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

Don Hoglund, who passed away on April 13, 2012. Don was a life member, active participant in ACHS events, and supporter of history.

Stanley Knoll, who passed away on April 16, 2012. Stanley was a part of Anoka County's agricultural history.

Paul Pierce, Jr., who passed away on April 22, 2012. Paul was a long time member and support of local history. He was the father of ACHS board member Paul Pierce, III.

Lorraine Hostetler, who passed away on May 12, 2012. Lorraine not only loved history, she made it when she was elected as the only woman mayor of the city of Anoka. She was the mother of ACHS's Sandy Thorsen.

Anoka County Historical Society
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Coming Events

May-August

Shopping in Anoka County

(Anoka County History Center) The lobby exhibit for the summer takes a fun look at shopping for clothing—the ways, stores, and memories of clothing from our past. Visitors are invited to add their own shopping experiences to the exhibit!

July 14, 10 am-2 pm

Anoka Riverfest

(Anoka County History Center) Stop by to have your photo taken in “olde tyme” clothing! We have a selection of costume garments made especially for this kind of fun photography. The suggested donation is \$5 per sitting and we’ll email you the pictures!

July 15, 1 pm to 5 pm

Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

Get your tickets NOW for this fantastic tour of homes and gardens on Anoka’s Slab Town and Whiskey Flats neighborhoods. Several businesses are included in the tour where special displays and activities are happening. Get a 50% off coupon for everything at Devon’s Gardens! Stop by Ticknor Hill B & B to see if you are the lucky winner of a night’s stay! See page 5 for all the details.

July 5, 7, 14, 19 & 21, 7:30 pm.

Ghosts of Anoka Tours

August 2, 4, 16, & 18, 7:30 pm.

(Meet at the History Center) Take a walk on downtown Anoka’s spookier side and hear stories of things that go bump in the night! These tours are filled with stories of history and of unexplained things. Advanced tickets are highly recommended—these popular tours sell out very fast. Reserve your place by calling 763-421-0600 and use your Master or Visa card to be sure you get your place on the tour. Tours are on the first and third Thursday and Saturday of each month through October.

July 24-29

Anoka County Fair

(Anoka County Fair Grounds, North Ferry Street, Anoka) ACHS will continue our tradition of bringing life to the Old Farmhouse. Be sure to stop by to see what is happening when you are at the Fair! Call Elaine at 763-421-0600 to volunteer.

August 17-19

Nowthen Threshing Show

(7415 Old Viking Blvd., Nowthen) Join in the fun as ACHS staffs the General Store at the Threshing show—but remember, when you walk through those doors, the year is 1920! The store is “open for business” from 10 to 7 on Friday and Saturday and 10 to 5 on Sunday.



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 42 No. 5

September — October 2012

SERVING:

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

Sheriff Talbot Left His Mark

Ralph “Buster” Talbot was sworn in as Anoka County’s sheriff in 1960 and served in that office continuously until his retirement in 1986, making him the longest serving sheriff the county has ever had.

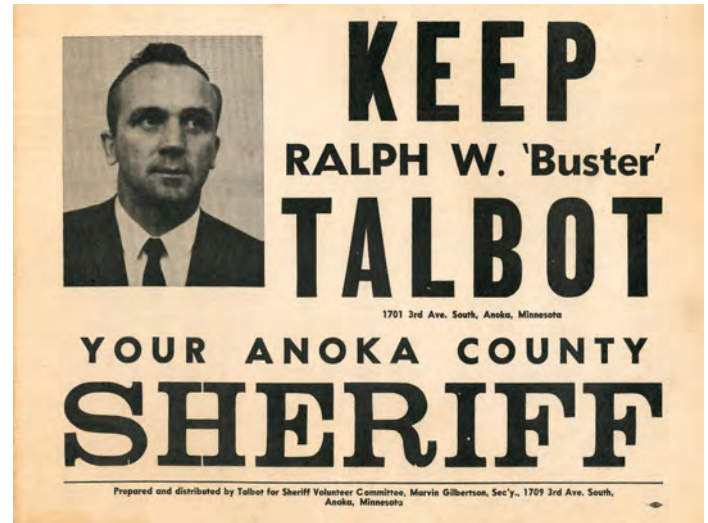
But that is not the most important fact that should be remembered about Buster’s time in office. Buster had the distinction—whether good or bad—of being sheriff over a county that was rapidly changing from rural to suburban, from sparsely populated to densely populated pockets of housing packed with growing families. Despite the need for increased law enforcement, budgets were tight and attitudes were hard. Now bring in Minnesota’s youngest county sheriff and expect him to figure it out.

Buster did more than figure it out. He implemented ideas and programs that are not only still used by Anoka County law enforcement today, but have been emulated across the nation.

Not long after taking the oath of office, Buster teamed up with Anoka County Attorney R.W. Johnson to promote the idea of starting Anoka County’s own radio system instead of contracting with Hennepin County. It was a prelude to the real vision—a radio system to unite all of Anoka County’s law enforcement agencies on a single system to coordinate their efforts and make the best use of resources. This service continues as part of the 911 system, instituted in Anoka County in 1982, that allows the public to dial a single number and receive whatever emergency services might be needed.

In 1966, Buster came to the county board with a plan for a mobile crime lab. He had already secured support from six of the county’s city police departments and the plan was to consolidate the investigation of major crimes with the Sheriff’s Office. This allowed for highly trained officers to investigate crimes across the county, saving individual cities the expense of their own crime labs.

With a shared crime lab and “police net” radio system operating across the county, disparities began to be seen in how each department handled standard calls and that there were differences in training for their officers. A plan developed to have a county training program headed by the Sheriff’s Office, but designed for all law enforcement officers across the county. The idea was not unique to Anoka County; a



movement to standardize and professionalize police was underway in Minnesota and Buster Talbot was appointed to serve on the first state Peace Officer Training Board in 1967.

The training program that followed fed directly into the Mutual Aid Agreement between county and local law enforcement. The Mutual Aid agreement, signed in March of 1968, provided a county coordinated security squad capable of acting as a single unit in an emergency instead of many departments operating separately. The training program, under this mutual aid agreement, was an ambitious one. It was the first program of its kind in the state, and it made Anoka County an example to be watched by many in higher levels of law enforcement.

These partnerships led quickly to the Joint Powers agreement, finalized in 1970. It built on an older, more complicated system that allowed an officer in one department to operate in another department’s service area in the same manner as his/her own. Crossing a city line was not an escape route for a bad guy, nor did an officer outside of his/her own community have to worry about liabilities or insurance.

Working across department lines was more efficient and put more resources available to law enforcement across the county, but it was not the end of collaborative ideas.

(continued on page 4)

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

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Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

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Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

What Makes History Important to YOU?

I often hear supporters of the Anoka County Historical Society lament that people don't like history. On the flip side, when some people learn that I work for a historical society, they sort of embarrassingly tell me that they have never really liked history—almost offering an apology because they presume I'll either be offended or was just about to ask them to write an essay describing the impact of the printing press on the distribution of the Federalist Papers.

I'm not offended when people tell me that they don't like history. Usually, if I draw it out in conversation, I find that most of the people that don't like history are really saying they are not interested in military history or political history. But then I find out what they are interested in and I start asking them about the history of that subject. If they like baseball, it's usually not hard to start asking them their opinions about the greatest players in the game or the best teams. At a certain point, I then like to point out that we've been talking about history, but it's just about the history of something they like.

Now, this newsletter is read mostly by members of the ACHS, so it's assumed that you already have some appreciation of history. But it's still a good exercise to occasionally ask yourself why you are passionate about history and what kind of history you gravitate toward.

For some, they love the history of their family and immerse themselves in genealogy. For others it's a love of their home and community, so they join their local historical society to learn more about that. These are both subjects that connect on a personal level, which is why people can be so passionate about them. But not all of these connections need to be so intensely personal.

So what gets you excited about history? What subjects are you interested in? Which ones would be good for future programming or exhibitions at the Anoka County History Center? We'd like to hear from you!

From the President...

By Al Pearson

When we moved to our present farm in 1946, our community was called Dayton Port, located west of Anoka on Hwy 10 across the Mississippi from Dayton. As a boy, I would ask the older neighbors if anything exciting ever happened here. Our next door neighbor, Harry Warneke, told me about a killing and fire in the one room school house that was on his farm. That was exciting!

This happened many years before, in 1921, during the prohibition years, when the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages was illegal. Mr. Warneke said a man named Frank Kelly, from Mankato was driving with another man and woman to Elk River to buy Canadian Whiskey. Kelly had \$300 when he left home in his car. He was shot west of the school, put in his car, and taken to Elk River where they planned to dump his body in the river. But it was December and the river was frozen over. They then came back, put the body in the school and set it on fire to cover their deeds.

Mr. Warneke and his brother heard shots and went out to investigate, but didn't see anything. They assumed it must have been a car back firing and went inside thinking all was well.

The next morning, they and other neighbors saw the smoldering building, checked it out, saw the body, and called the sheriff.

When the case went to trial, the killer said he was hiding behind a tree just a few feet away and would have shot Mr. Warneke and his brother if they had come one step closer. The perpetrators evidently got into a dispute about the money and the liquor.

As a boy, I didn't think anything bad ever happened in the country, but only in the city. I never thought anything like that could happen almost on my family's door step.

Note: The dead man was identified by the sheriffs from Anoka and Hennepin Counties when they found a piece of half melted jewelry under the body. Evidence at the scene led them to a suspect. He confessed and was sentenced to life in prison just eight days after the murder.

The Teapot Dome

Scandal!!

While preparing for our newest exhibit, *A Democratic Process*, ACHS staff came across a remarkable item in our collection. Likely used as a window display, this die-cut cardboard teapot references the Teapot Dome scandal that rocked the nation in the year before the 1924 presidential election (pictured to left). This sign would have been used by opponents of President Calvin Coolidge as a way to remind voters of the corruption associated with his Republican party.

The Teapot Dome scandal took place between 1922 and 1923 during President Warren Harding's administration. By the time an investigation concluded in 1924, Harding had already died, and Vice-President Calvin Coolidge had assumed the presidency. The scandal centered on Harding's Secretary of the Interior **Albert Fall** who illegally assumed control of oil tracts (one named Teapot Dome and the other Elk Hills) that had been reserved for the Navy. Secretary Fall then leased these oil reserves to **Harry Sinclair** of Sinclair Oil Company and **E.L. Doheny** of Pan-American Oil Company in return for a \$300,000 bribe. Secretary of the Navy **Edward Denby** and Attorney General **Harry Daugherty** also played a role in the illegal dealings.

All of these men are represented on ACHS's teapot, as is the name of **Charles Forbes**, Harding's director of the Veterans' Bureau who was accused of stealing millions from a veterans' hospital project. The black tissue paper spouting from the teapot, as well as the printed drops on the sign, symbolize the oil reserves in question.

Playing out across newspaper headlines only months before the election, the Teapot Dome scandal affected both the Democratic and Republican campaigns of 1924. Republican incumbent Calvin Coolidge fought to separate himself from the scandal by firing the members of Harding's Cabinet who had been involved. Meanwhile, one of the front-running Democratic candidates, William McAdoo, also became tainted after his friendship and business dealings with Doheny were revealed. Because of this, the Democrats went with a second choice for their candidate, John W. Davis of West Virginia, a conservative who was insulated from the whole affair. This nomination divided the Democratic Party as the more liberal contingent backed Progressive Bob LaFollette of Wisconsin, effectively handing the election to Coolidge.

In Minnesota, the presidential vote split between the Republicans and Progressives with Calvin Coolidge winning here in Anoka County. In the editorial pages of the *Anoka County Union*, editor Thomas Granville Pease opined, "Calvin Coolidge will be the next president...he has emerged from the Teapot Dome scandal, the bonus fight and



This is the paper window display—or maybe hat?—in the ACHS collection. It is made in the same style as the paper hats from the 1920s, but we find no references to any kind of teapot such as this being used as a hat. Even as a window display, these Teapot Dome artifacts are rare. It is on display until the end of the year in the *A Democratic Process* exhibit.

the immigration fracas with little if any damage to his popularity.” Pease later noted about the Democratic nominee: “who they will nominate is difficult to predict but it doesn't matter very much” and that “it is a safe wager that LaFollette will get more votes than the Democrats can cast.” Despite predictions of voter apathy, an estimated 1,600 of 3,000 eligible voters participated in the election in the city of Anoka.

In researching this artifact, ACHS staff found that it was a rare example of existing political ephemera surrounding Teapot Dome and the 1924 election. It was learned that the Davis campaign tried to use the scandal to their favor. We cannot document if our teapot was displayed or worn in Anoka County during the campaign, perhaps by one of the few Davis supporters in Minnesota, or if it arrived here via a collector with an interest in political memorabilia. Either way, the political concerns represented by this artifact would have been as familiar to Anoka County inhabitants in 1924 as the issues surrounding the current presidential election are to residents today.

You can stop at the History Center to see the teapot and the rest of *A Democratic Process* through the end of the year. While here, explore the history of local and national elections as they played out in Anoka County and take the time to vote on which of today's political issues will most influence your vote in November.

Sheriff Talbot Continued from page 1

It was under Buster's watch that the Joint Law Enforcement Council came into being. It regionalized police functions such as purchasing, prosecution, record keeping, communications, training, recruitment and testing, grants, acquisition of equipment and property, and specialization of personnel. The council worked across municipal lines and departments to make the most of every available resource. While the departments might jointly negotiate for a better price on office equipment, the responsibility for law enforcement remained within each community. The Joint Law Enforcement Council dealt with law enforcement on an area-wide basis while still preserving individual community responsibility and authority. It was the first cooperative program of its kind in Minnesota and it won an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACO) in 1975.

It was under Buster's watch that the first uniformed female deputies were hired in 1965, and though with great pressure and reluctance, Buster saw the first female patrol officer begin her duties several years later. Buster negotiated the first contracts with county cities that did not have their own police departments. For a fee, county deputies were assigned to that community and acted as its police force. Buster saw the first sexual assault hotline established in Anoka County and facilitated a much closer working relationship between the Sheriff's Office and the County Attorney's Office, making for better prosecution of offenders.

Buster began the first "community watch" program in the

county, asking citizens to watch out for each other and report what they saw. Another new approach to crime prevention Buster used was alerting the community what his deputies were going to be looking for when they patrolled. Speeding, weight restrictions, and drunk driving were the main targets with the idea that if the public knew speeders were especially being targeted, perhaps they were less likely to speed and everyone would be safer.



The first class of Rangers, 1977

Buster oversaw the start of the Ranger program. This volunteer program provided thousands of hours of manpower on the streets to backup regular officers and it won state awards for creative law enforcement solutions.

Buster was a "big picture" kind of sheriff, one who hired the right staff to do their jobs, leaving him to focus on new and innovative ways to protect and serve the public.

Monuments to Life Cemetery Tours

Explore the stories of those who reside in our "silent cities" during the Anoka County Historical Society's *Monuments to Life* cemetery tours. These tours are evenings filled with stories, traditions, characters, history, and symbolism.

Thursday, October 11—Twitchell Cemetery, Lino Lakes

Saturday, October 13—Calvary Cemetery, Anoka

Tuesday, October 16—Constance Cemetery, Andover

Come to one or come to all three!

Tickets for individual tours are \$7.00 (ACHS members)

\$8.00 (non-members)

Ticket Packages 3 Tours for \$18.00 (ACHS members)

\$21.00 (non-members)

Tickets are limited and must be purchased in advance!

You will receive maps with your ticket purchase.

Get your tickets at the Anoka County History Center,

2135 Third Avenue, Anoka,

or by calling 763-421-0600 with your VISA or Mastercard

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

Ralph "Buster" Talbot Recognition Dinner

Benefit for the Anoka County Historical Society



Sept. 20
5pm-9pm
Courtyards of Andover

Join Buster, his family and friends as we recognize his contributions to Anoka County. For 26 years Buster served as sheriff, making him Anoka County's longest serving sheriff.



More info: 763-421-0600 ♦ www.ac-hs.org



Sponsored by:



Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the September 13 and October 11 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

Greetings Volunteers! *By Elaine Koehn*

ACHS volunteers are certainly making their presence known this summer! Riverfest, Home and Garden, Anoka County Fair, Nowthen Threshing Show, and 4H farmfest all had volunteer representation. These additional commitments along with all of the ongoing volunteer positions are commendable.

Volunteers worked hard on Saturday, July 14th at Riverfest. Kevin and Patti Bellows, Sandy Connor, Sandy Thorsen, and Faith Kammerdiener sold tickets for the Home and Garden Show. In addition, we staffed a photo booth, our first attempt at utilizing all the costumes donated by Mike and Mary Clark. Patrons had fun dressing up in the old time clothes and having their pictures taken. Many did group shots and volunteers, Gary Greb, Sara Given and Carolyn Waataja, were available to help them select clothing for their photo. We suggested a donation of \$5.00 and we were kept quite busy. Darlene Bearl stopped by to check out the progress and was quickly recruited to help staff the front desk.

I am also very grateful to the 33 volunteers that worked at the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour on Sunday, July 15th. It was a very hot day, but loyal volunteers were posted at each of the locations to ensure patrons would have a positive experience. Some sold tickets at the Artique, some were at the home locations and some were stationed at the gardens. Volunteers also worked on the administrative level to plan this annual event. Home and Garden Tours would not be successful without your time and dedication.

On July 23rd, volunteers helped to clean and set up the old farm house to get it ready for the opening day of the fair. On July 24-29th, volunteers came with all of their wonderful skills and talents to staff the old farm house. Many volunteers illustrated their talents through a variety of activities such as wood carving, lace making, butter churning, making lye soap, embroidery and activities for children. Those touring the farm house were especially interested in the round ice box and wood cooking stove. "I remember my Grandmother cooking on a stove like that" was a very familiar phrase. Thank you all so much for your time, the shifts were long and hot, but you proved what we already knew, ACHS volunteers are the best.

The Nowthen Threshing Show held from August 16 -18th is one of the most successful in the Midwest. It gathers hundreds of rare and historic antique tractors, small engines, steam engines, trucks , cars, implements and tools in one

Jean McFarlane selling candy at the Nowthen Threshing Show Store.



place for a three day event that brings the past to the present. The event is for people of all ages and the General

Store stocked penny candy and gallons of our famous dill pickles. This year, the store had a new line for sale—doll clothes sewn by volunteers. They didn't last long and every single piece was sold! The country store is staffed by ACHS volunteers dressed in costume. Again, long shifts, constantly on your feet, and continuous questions and chatter with visitors, but the volunteer crew begs to be asked again for the next year, so obviously they are having a great time.

Finally, Gary Greb will staff a table at the 4H Farm Fest event on September 30th making Corn Husk Dolls or as he says "Corn Husk Action Figures." Little boys won't make dolls, but will stand in line for action figures. Gary has done this every year and really enjoys the kids that he works with.

All of the activity at these events has been a great opportunity for me to work with and get to know many of you better. I am always so impressed by the ongoing dedication and consistency that you all show. We appreciate all of our dedicated volunteers and look forward to many more opportunities to work together for our common goal.

Those are the special events—all the projects at the History Center are still going, too. Karah Hawkins is more than halfway through documenting, measuring, inspecting and researching garments in the clothing cabinets. She came to ACHS as an intern for a class at St. Cloud State, but she used up those hours long ago and is still coming in once a week to continue her project.

Nickolas Walstad is another college student who came to us for some hands-on experience and he got it with our political collection research and assistance with the *A Democratic Process* exhibit. Other volunteers like Cheryl, Emily, Linda, Darlene, Marlys—the list goes on and on—are at the History Center every week, working behind the scenes, quietly doing the vital record keeping and research that preserves history.

What would we do without all of our hardworking and dedicated volunteers? Probably close the History Center doors, because we couldn't do this without them!

Contributions & New Members — Thank you

(All lists are current to August 17, 2012.)

DONATIONS

June Bendix
Gregory & Jackie Bortnem
Sherry Boyce
Chema Malu
Mike Ferris
Dale & Judy Frank
Ping Fung-Houger
Grassroots Co-op
Sara Klabunde
Linwood Township
Nancy Martin
Amy Michelsen
Cyndy Nelson
Kara Olson
Beverly Oyler
Dorothy Peterson
Winness Pierce
Philip Pinewski
Kevin Pouttu
Joy Reichel
Akanksha Shukla
Roger Sundstrom
Sara Telander
Nicole Theis-Mahon
Rita Warpeha
Denise Wenzel
Ernie & Sharon Woizeschke
Karen Woldstad

MEMORIALS

In memory of Paul Pierce, Jr.
From Debra Williamson
In memory of Elsie Zimmerman
From Dottie Carlson
In memory of William Ridge
From Dottie Carlson

HONORS

In honor of Buster Talbot
From Robert & Lois Blewett
In honor of Buster Talbot
From David Hoagland
In honor of Buster Talbot
From Mary Sell
In honor of Buster Talbot
From Donna Smith

EMPLOYEE MATCH

Ameriprise Financial/Dan Frank

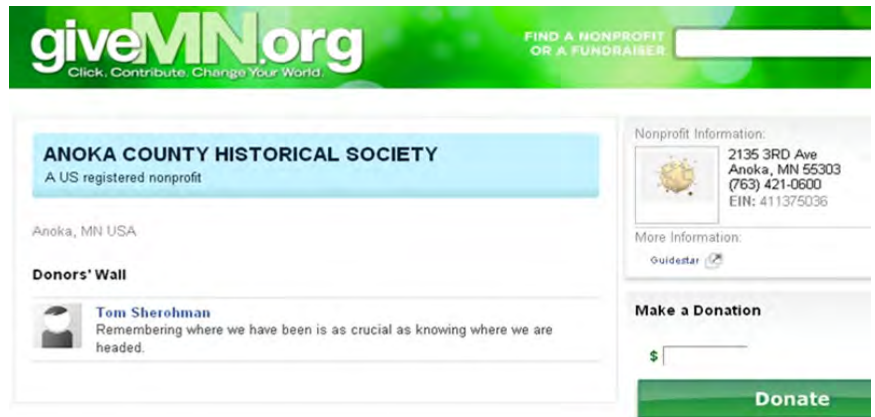
NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Connolly, Ramsey
Judith O'Connor, St. Francis

ARTIFACT DONORS

Anoka County Sheriff's Office
Dennis Berg
Kathleen Brown
Marlys Chutich
Mike Clark
James Collins
Gail Dahl
Jennifer Delgado
James Duerr, Sr.
Eugene Hauff
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Rebecca Loader

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Norwegian American
Historical Association
Shirley Pierce
Lynne Rickert
Rum River Library
Alvin Schaut
Pat Schwappach
Donald Stafford
Cary Thelen
Craig Torbenson
Bart Ward
Tom Ward
Ernie Woizeschke



The GiveMN site is available all year to make donations right from your smart phone or computer!

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

Myrtle Eveland, who passed away in February 2012. Myrtle was a life member of ACHS, a teacher and supporter of history.

Rod McCardle, who passed away in July, 2012. Rod was a member of ACHS and spent many hours researching and identifying photos in the ACHS collections.

Will Ridge, who passed away in July, 2012. Will was a long time member of ACHS, treasured family history, and was the great-grandson of the Union's first volunteer, Aaron Greenwald.

Joyce Bonnell Sage, who passed away on August 11, 2012. Joyce was a long time member of ACHS who supported history with her many gifts.

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

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Coming Events

September 6, 8, 20 & 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Ghosts of Anoka Tour

October 4, 6, 13, 18, 20, 23 through 27, 30 & 31, with more added as demand requires 7:30 p.m.

Meet at the History Center. Tickets required. This Ghost Tour goes to places where something unexplained has happened and lets guests decide what it might be! Adult tickets are \$7 for non-members, \$5 for members and \$5 for children under 18 years. Get your tickets early, as we sell out of these popular tickets *fast!* We accept VISA and Mastercard.

September 20, 6:00 p.m.

Buster Talbot Tribute Dinner

(Andover) This is a not-to-be-missed event for an icon of Anoka County law enforcement, so get your tickets now! See page 5.

September 15, 9am-noon

Ghost Tour Docent Training

(Cub Foods, Riverdale) Have you ever thought about being a tour guide for the wildly popular Ghosts of Anoka tours? We are training new guides now! Call Elaine at 763-421-0600 if you are interested in attending the session.

September 22, 10-dusk

City of Nowthen Heritage Day

(Nowthen City Hall, 19800 Nowthen Blvd.) Celebrate the history and heritage of Nowthen! The day begins is filled with historical displays, crafts, food, games, music, and more! ACHS will have an exhibit on Nowthen history from 10:00-4:00.

September 30

4-H Farm Fest

(Waldoch Farms, Lino Lakes) Explore educational and interactive booths, petting zoo, puppet shows and more at this family friendly event sponsored by the Anoka County 4-H. Free.

October 11, 13, & 16, 7:00 p.m.

Annual “Monuments to Life” Cemetery Tours

The 10th annual *Monuments to Life* cemetery tour series. This year’s tour starts at the **Twitchell Cemetery in Lino Lakes on Thursday, October 11th**. Next is **Calvary Cemetery in Anoka on Saturday, October 13th**, and the tours wrap up on **Tuesday, October 16th, at the Constance Cemetery in Andover**. All tours begin at 7:00 and go on rain or shine. Buy a single tour ticket or save money with a ticket package for all three! See page 4 for more details.

October 13, 2:00 p.m.

Fashion Trends Program

(Rum River Library) A look at changes in fashion over the decades, featuring a costumed interpreter and lots of fun fashion stories as well as a selection of clothing articles from the past. This event is FREE and funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



History Center News

Newsletter of the Anoka County Historical Society

Vol. 42 No. 6

November – December 2012

SERVING:

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

Anoka County's First Enclosed Mall — Northtown

When Northtown Mall opened in October of 1972, it was the third largest shopping area in the Twin Cities and the first such mall to not be owned by Dayton's. The site, 137 acres purchased in 1965, was chosen based on the roads that intersected near it, connecting Blaine, Spring Lake Park, Coon Rapids and a very short distance to Fridley. In 1971, some 500 local people were set to work to build the mall that opened 13 months later. The first major department stores to open in the mall were Montgomery Wards, Powers, Woolworth, and Young Quinlan with Walgreen's the following year. The cost to build the mall was \$30 million dollars and it had more than 900,000 feet of floor space in 1972.

Northtown Mall offered more than just



The sunken rest area of the mall, ca. 1970s.

shopping. The fully enclosed mall had a sunken rest area surrounded with tropical plants, a man-made waterfall, and a walk down aquarium.

It hosted a 30 foot replica of the *Titanic* from the 1953 movie, glass blowing demonstrations, model railroads shows, student art fairs, antique shows, craft fairs, doll shows, non-profit organization showcases, and much, much more. The 15th anniversary celebration featured a "Miracle Mile of Quarters" and raised \$11,000 for the Children's Miracle Network. Dance teams, choirs, and boy/girl scouts did



The champagne fountain used at the celebration of the mall's opening in October of 1972.

performances and demonstrations. The mall saw it all, including the beginning of "mall walkers" who make their daily miles in the climate controlled comfort of the enclosed mall.



One of the original mall entrances. These were remodeled in 2010-11.

Ownership of the mall has changed from the Robert Muir Company, who built it, to Rein Northtown Associates in 1985. The selling price was \$33 million. Rein only owned the mall for nine months before selling it to the Angeles Corporation. In 1998, Glimcher Realty bought the mall for \$54 million and continues to own it today.

Special thanks to the Blaine Historical Society for sharing their information and photos about Northtown Mall.

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303

(763) 421-0600

Fax (763) 323-0218

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

www.ac-hs.org

History Center Hours:

Tuesday 10-8

Wednesday-Friday 10-5

Saturday 10-4

Board of Directors

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Vice President – William Erhart (At Large E)

District #2 – Bill Prugh

District #3 – Orville Lindquist

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At-Large H -- Harvey Greenburg

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Don Johnson

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The Anoka County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions to ACHS are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

From the Director...

By Todd Mahon

Change is a part of history and it is a part of the Anoka County Historical Society, too. We are committed to regularly changing our exhibition galleries. The reason for this is twofold. We want to bring in new audiences to the History Center as well as give everyone who has visited a reason to come back. The second reason is that our mission is to preserve Anoka County's history and with that, we need to ensure that we are taking proper care of the objects in our collection.

Perhaps the most important thing the Anoka County Historical Society accomplished with our move from our old home in Colonial Hall to the History Center in 2002, was creating space to properly store the collection instead of having most of our objects on permanent display.

The objects in our collection tell stories about the county's history and connect us in a very direct way to that history. This is both why we exhibit them, and why we have to keep them in storage, away from the light and environment that breaks them down. All physical objects age, but there are many steps a museum can take to slow down that process so the object will last for future generations to see and learn from.

Ultraviolet light is probably the universal culprit in breaking down any object. You've certainly noticed this with the fading of any photos you may have had hanging on your own walls over the years or an old quilt that has covered your bed for a period of years. Certainly, we have taken precautions to filter light coming from the windows and from bulbs, but all light, even filtered light, will eventually break down any physical object. Fading color is the visible part of the damage—light is also breaking down the physical structure of the object beneath that surface color.

We balance between sharing the objects with the public and preserving them for the future. But the happy part of this balance means that we get to bring new things out and examine different aspects of our history.

Which means that there is probably something new at the History Center if you haven't been here since this summer! Come "cast your ballot" in the exhibit *A Democratic Process* which opened in August or check out *Safe For Democracy: A Closer Look at Anoka County in WWI* before it closes at the end of the year.

From the President...

By Al Pearson

The following is an article taken from the *Anoka County History* book published in 1982. This location is part of our farm at 8846 Hwy. 10. I wonder how many of us know this part of Anoka County history?

Ramsey Township, on the south and west corner of Anoka County, has a rich and interesting history that includes a period when it contained the first permanent settlement in the area. The area was once considered a contender for the Minnesota territorial capital, the fact is well known to those interested in local history. In the more than 125 years of history, Ramsey has many times been on the verge of developing into a large urban center.

Ramsey had an area of 21,000 acres, now reduced to 19,851 acres following the annexation of a portion by the City of Anoka. The Mississippi River borders the south and the Rum River on the east. Trott Brook flows in an easterly direction across the northern part. Several lakes still exist, others have disappeared.

In 1852 the town site of Itasca was laid out on sections 19 and 30 in Ramsey, near the trading post which was near the present Hwy 10 Wayside Rest. The proprietors were Hatch, Beatty, Wilkinson and Ramsey, whose name was later given the township. One of the famous old buildings built by the group was the Itasca Hotel. Itasca also boasted several houses, trading post, stage coach barn, railroad station and post office. The first government wagon road, was established in 1852, passed through Itasca coming from Point Douglas, St. Paul, St. Anthony and Anoka then north to Fort Ripley. The stage coaches traveled this trail and in mid-July, 1855, 300 Red River ox carts passed through on their way to St. Paul with loads of furs and pemmican.

The township was organized in 1857 and named Watertown, but changed to Dover in 1858, then later that year changed to Ramsey.

Ramsey Township was incorporated as a City Nov. 12, 1974. The first sermon preached in Anoka County was in Ramsey. It has been said that the County's first post office was at Itasca in Ramsey, but there is claim now to one at Manomin (now Fridley) 20 days earlier. One of the first schools was in Ramsey. The first breaking of land for farming was in Ramsey. In 1860, the population was 192 people. In 2012, the population is estimated at 23,000.

So much history!

“Dewey” on Display

The loss of a beloved animal is heartbreaking. People go to great lengths to deal with the loss of their pets, from fishy funerals in the bathroom to the pet taxidermy portrayed in Animal Planet’s “American Stuffers.”

About 100 years ago, one Anoka County family, the Ruffcorns, faced that dilemma when their horse, Dewey, died. Douglas Ruffcorn (1866-1943) and his wife Mary Ann (1867-1934) raised a large family on their farm in Linwood Township. When Dewey died, they had his hide tanned, and turned it into a sleigh blanket and several pair of mittens. This “waste not, want not” approach meant that Dewey continued to serve his family with warmth for many years.

Horsehide leather is not a novel idea. As long



The blanket made from the Ruffcorn’s horse is large, 58” x 68”, and backed with a thick black wool.



Two pairs of mittens made from the Ruffcorn horse’s hide.

as

people have been using horses for labor, they have also used them for leather.

Horsehide is less prone to stretching than cowhide leather, and so, for decades horsehide was the preferred material for the covering of baseballs. Leather jackets, gun holsters, and shoes are other items that are often made of horsehide. Since the 1980s, the cost of horsehide has become prohibitive. Subsequently, baseballs are now covered with cowhide, and the price of other horsehide goods has gone up considerably.

The Ruffcorn’s horsehide blanket and mittens are now in the care of the Anoka County Historical Society and will be on display with other winter clothing

as a part of the ongoing “Clothing the County” exhibit. The exhibit will also feature a bison fur coat, as well as more traditional coats, hats, mittens, and cold weather gear from the 1880s to the present.



While it is known that this is the Ruffcorn family on their farm and there is a light colored horse in the photo, we do not know if that horse is Dewey.

Time to Write Those Christmas Letters!

Whether you love them or hate them, the season of holiday letters is upon us! ACHS has been collecting holiday letters for several years now and we are looking forward to adding even more to the collection this year. Please put us on your mailing list!

Holiday letters provide great snapshots of our lives in right here and right now: what we were doing, what was important to us, how we changed, what we hoped for, and more. Historians of the future will love these treasure troves of information. With that in mind, there are websites and articles now devoted to helping people write better holiday letters, but many aren't taking history in mind. We'd like to give you some tips for not only writing a more enjoyable letter, but one that will be read 50 or 100 years from now with the same wonder and enjoyment as during the holiday season of 2012. Some of these tips appeared in the December 2008 *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, but we've added our own historical hints as well.

1. Put the year and your name on the letter somewhere! It is amazing how many letters give no clue as to the writer or the year it was written, the writer just assuming the reader will know from the card and stamp cancellation. What if the letter is separated from the card and envelope? History will want your name with this story—don't leave history guessing!
2. Keep it short. This isn't a novel you are sending, it's a quick recap of the high points of your life in the past year. Since you are sending more than one of these letters, be careful not to assume the readers all know the background. Choose only those high points that will connect and make sense to your readers and leave the inside jokes and lavish details out.
3. Include milestones in your life such as graduations, weddings, births, major moves, etc. Genealogists appreciate these milestones and major events help your readers mark a place or time. This is especially good if your letter goes to people you usually only keep in contact with during the holidays. If little Suzie was married last summer, she's not 12 anymore and reading about her wedding will make an impact!

4. Use a little humor to keep the letter enjoyable. Everyone likes to laugh and it is an instant connection between reader and writer. If the fire department sent you a letter saying after the 15th time they rescued your cat from a tree, future rescues will incur a charge, tell that story. Your readers will smile and know your cat is still in the family.

5. Be careful how much boasting you do. Sure, tell the world that little Johnny was the valedictorian of his class, it is something to be proud of and something your friends and family will want to share. Tell this kind of news in a creative way or use humor to diffuse some of the "bragginess." And keep this list to a minimum!

6. Put the most effort into the words you use, not the clipart and type faces. Overdone art makes a letter hard to read and takes away space for real news. Choose a font and color that is easy to read. Don't make your readers work to get your news.

7. Keep a positive tone, even if you feel compelled to talk about a death or disaster. Don't dwell on these, no innumerable list of downers about aging or illnesses, and skip the gory details. People want to feel good at this time of year and you don't need the pity, do you?

8. Be yourself when you write. Let it be a conversation with your reader. Avoid the flowery phrases and \$100 words you would never use in conversation. These are your friends you are writing to—talk to them like friends.

9. Add a hand written note with your letter to that specific person, something only they would know about or be interested in. It takes away the impersonal nature of mass produced letters.



2012 Ornament Presentation & Christmas in the Trenches

Join ACHS in welcoming in the holiday season on when we debut our 2012 community ornament for the County Tree that will be on display in our lobby throughout the holiday season. This continues a tradition started to ask each community in turn to provide a special ornament for the County Tree with a presentation night in early December. The date will be announced soon! You'll have to attend to find out which community and see what they will hang on the tree to represent them for 2012!

The holiday season is a time for miracles and one of the most "famous" miracles is the story of the Christmas Truce of World War One. A brief program will share some of the words of the soldiers who

experienced it and the history of the event on an evening in early December. We'll be announcing the date soon! In addition, we'll look at what was happening in Anoka County that holiday season of 1914, even though America was not yet involved in the Great War.

This will also be an excellent time to take one last look at the World War One exhibit, *Safe for Democracy*, before it closes forever in January of 2013.

Is it

Trash or Treasure?

A Road Show Event

from the Anoka County Historical Society
and the Coon Rapids Historical Commission



Bring your antiques and mystery objects and let our experts tell you if the item has value, how you can care for it, and even advise you how you can sell it for its fullest value if you choose.

Bring a donation for the ACBC Emergency Food Shelf.

Tuesday, November 13 ♦ 7:00-9:00pm

Coon Rapids Senior Center ♦ 1155 Robinson Drive, Coon Rapids

Bring in up to three (3) items and a specialist will let you know if they are "trash or treasure"!

- No large items, please!
- You are responsible for the moving and the safety of your items while on City of Coon Rapids property.
- There will NOT be any buying or selling at the event.

Please bring one non-perishable food item for each item reviewed or a cash donation. If you have questions, please contact the Anoka County Historical Society at (763) 421-0600. No advance registration needed but doors may close early, so the event can end at 9:00 PM.

Up To Date

Announcements and News

◆Just a reminder that the November 8 and December 13 ACHS Board of Directors meetings will be at 6:00 p.m. All are held at the History Center. Board meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.

Greetings Volunteers! *By Elaine Koehn*

By the time you read this, the Ghost Tour season will be finished and another successful Halloween season will be behind us. The community has supported ACHS enthusiastically, with a final total that will be more than 45 tours in the month of October alone. Some of the nights were rainy and cold, but from the number of tickets sold, it is evident that Minnesotans are a hardy lot!

A special thank you to this year's Ghost tour docents, without whom the tours would not be possible: Gary Greb, Darlene Bearl, Maria King, Ann Steen, Lynne Rickert, June Anderson, Jeri Bates, Faith Kammerdiener, Sara Given, Shana Schmitz, Lyle Bradley, Dan Schink, and Wayne Chevalier. I also want to welcome new docents this year: Emily Hall, Jean McFarlane, and Monique Walraven. Everyone did a fabulous job. THANK YOU ALL!!

Along with Ghost tours, many of the docents played characters, helped with research or scripts, and led cemetery tours. A special thank you to June Anderson, Maria King, Darlene Bearl, Madonna Mochinski, Wayne Chevalier, Ken Dufresne, and Terrie Rihs who volunteered during the Twitchell, Constance and Calvary Cemetery tours—some volunteered at more than one cemetery!

As one season ends, another one begins. We will soon be approaching the holiday season. Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays for many reasons. I was born on Thanksgiving Day and have been very thankful to my parents ever since. Thanksgiving is also the time of year when we can express our gratitude for all those who touch our lives. It is America's harvest festival—a time to acknowledge the help of family and friends and a reminder of what a gift it is to be alive. It's a day to overindulge in the here and now, even as we reflect on the past.

When I look at the volunteer sign-in sheet, I am reminded every day of all of the people who deserve our thanks. Some of you come several times in a month, some of you dedicate your time to a specific program or share a special skill, and some are on our "call list" for special projects when we need you. All of these gifts weave together an outstanding group of dedicated volunteers.

In the words of William Arthur Ward, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

A very special thank you to each of you for all you do to make the Historical Society such a success.



Congratulations!

Beatrice Helen Frey was born on August 31, 2012 (ten days late!) to ACHS staff member Caitlin Frey and her husband, Dan. Beatrice is happy, healthy, and starting to sleep more at night.

As hard as it was to leave that sweet baby, Caitlin is back to work at ACHS and will be happy to help you at the front desk.

Sweaters & Jackets with Stories Needed!

Do you have a **holiday sweater** with an angora snowman? Or a big knitted Santa with a pompom or bells on his hat? We've all seen them, bought them, worn them, and maybe even laughed at them, but ACHS does not have a single one in the collection!

How about a **ski jacket**? These are a must-have item for even non-skiers, but ACHS doesn't have a ski jacket in the collection.

We are looking for just a couple of these ubiquitous sweaters and jackets from Anoka County with **good provenance** (a good story) to add to our clothing and textile collection. If you have such a sweater or jacket and would be willing to donate it, please call Vickie at 763-421-0600.

Contributions & New Members – Thank you

(All lists are current to October 19, 2012.)

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Jackie Bergman-O'Brien, Dayton
James Collins, Anoka
Gloria Harwig & Fred Blume, Coon Rapids
Bonnie Karl, Coon Rapids
Carol McCellips, Ramsey
Madonna Mochinski, Coon Rapids
Bob O'Brien, Dayton

DONATIONS

Robert W. Akin II
Ann Essling
Edward and Margaret Faherty
Gloria Harwig
James and Sandra Karasch
Dean Klinkenberg
Michael Nelson
Philolectian Society
Alice Pickering
Gary and Karen Siewert
Ralph "Buster" Talbot
Adam Walker

EMPLOYEE MATCH

Ameriprise Financial—Dan Frank

MEMORIALS

In memory of Jerry Jacob
From Dottie Carlson
In memory of Joyce Sage
From Donald Sage

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Dave and Jeanie Almgren
Anoka County Sheriff's Office
Anoka Masonic Lodge #30
Dennis Berg
Bonita Blomiley
Juanita Reed Boniface
Tom Brandl
Diane Buganski
Mike Clark
Mrs. Eva Mae Cleator
City of Columbia Heights
Coon Rapids Senior Center
Gail Dahl
Curtis Dahlin

James Ernst
Don Johnson
Maria King
Georgette Knoll
Brent Lee
Charles Lucas
Marilyn Martin
Robert Muskovitz
Shirley Pierce
Shirley Reich
Lorraine Soderquist
Bart Ward

SPECIAL DONATIONS

IN HONOR OF

BUSTER TALBOT

Robert Akin II
Carl Anderson
Merle Anderson
Jerry Cain & Devaine Trossen
Jon & Mary Caine
Marlys Chutich
Casey Clark
James Collins
Beverly Dehn
Duane Dingmann
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Jennifer Schwarzrock
Steven Stodden
Jerry & Marlene Stone
Bill & Toni Talbot
Lael Theis
Donald Venne
Tom Ward
Maude-Ruth E. Watson
Vickie & Ron Wendel
Marvin & Sally West
Ed Wilberg
Carl Youngquist

The Anoka County Historical Society extends our sincere sympathy to the families of:

James Johansen, who passed away on October 12, 2012.
Jim was the owner operator of the Johansen Bus Company for many years, a long time supporter of history and ACHS member.

giveMN.org
Click. Contribute. Change Your World.

FIND A NONPROFIT OR A FUNDRAISER

ANOKA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
A US registered nonprofit

Anoka, MN USA

Donors' Wall

Tom Sherohman
Remembering where we have been is as crucial as knowing where we are headed.

Nonprofit Information:
2135 3RD Ave
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
EIN: 411375036

More Information:
Guidestar

Make a Donation

\$

Donate

Minnesota's "Give to the Max Day" Returns on November 15

Minnesota's nonprofit organizations ask Minnesotans to give to their favorite charities at GiveMN.org during the fourth annual "Give to the Max Day" on Nov. 15, with hopes of raising as much money as possible for nonprofit organizations in 24 hours (starting at midnight on Nov. 15 through midnight on Nov. 16).

The Anoka County Historical Society is a part of "Give to the Max Day" and we are encouraging everyone to support the preservation of local history by making a special donation on November 15 through the Give MN program. GiveMN has raised more than \$33 million for more than 5,000 nonprofits since its 2009 debut. Last year's "Give to the Max Day" drew an astounding 42,596 donors. As a result, more than \$10 million was raised for the 3,663 participating nonprofit organizations.

GiveMN offers several incentives to encourage nonprofit organization and donor participation in "Give to the Max Day." There are three tiers of prize grants of matching cash awards for the top three nonprofit organizations (colleges and universities excluded) which receive the most dollars during "Give to the Max Day." Additional prize grants will be awarded to nonprofits in 4th through 10th place on the main leaderboard.

Other matching cash awards will be given to organizations through randomly chosen individual donors.

This is a great time to make a special donation to your nonprofit with a chance to win them additional money throughout the Give to the Max Day event!

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

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Coming Events

November 10, 2:00 pm

The Soldier's Aid Society

(Rum River Library, 4201 6th Avenue N., Anoka.) The patriotic fervor that swept across the North when the first shots were fired in 1861 did not just affect the men who enlisted in droves—women were caught up in the excitement of supporting the cause as well. This living history presentation shares stories of the work of these women and the results of what they accomplished. FREE

November 13, 7:00-9:00 pm

Trash or Treasure?

(Coon Rapids Senior Center, 11155 Robinson Drive, Coon Rapids) Bring your antiques and mystery objects and let our experts tell you if the item has value. We'll also share tips on how to care for them. See page 5 for full details.

November 21, Noon — 1:00 pm

Celebrating PIE!

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) Bring your favorite holiday pie for all to sample as we share stories and history about this holiday favorite! Many people will be baking pies for the big meal the next day, so bake one early, take a break and join us for some fun history about pies. This is a roundtable discussion where everyone is welcome to share their stories about PIES. FREE

December—Date TBA, 7:00 p.m.

Christmas in the Trenches & Ornament Presentation

(Anoka County History Center and Library.) We will unveil the 2012 ornament for the Anoka County Tree—you'll have to attend to know which city it's from and the share a program about the 1914 Christmas Truce of WWI. This brief program will share some of the words of the soldiers who experienced it and the history of the event. We will also look at what was happening in Anoka County in that holiday season of 1914, even though America was not yet involved in the Great War. See page 4 for more details. FREE

December 15, 10:30-1:30

A Civil War Christmas

(Circle Pines City Hall, 200 Civil Heights Circle, Circle Pines) What was this celebration like in Anoka County in the 1860s? Did they put up a tree in their homes? Did they send gifts to the soldiers serving in the Civil War? Come to this special event to learn more about one of America's favorite holidays with hands-on activities and lots of holiday history. FREE