



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



MINNESOTA DIGITAL LIBRARY
minnesota reflections



A Digital Partnership

By Molly Huber, Minnesota Digital Library Outreach Coordinator

The Anoka County Historical Society was among the first cultural heritage organizations to contribute to the Minnesota Digital Library at its founding over a decade ago.

What is the Minnesota Digital Library? It is a collective that promotes the creation and preservation of Minnesota's digital legacy. Administratively based at the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) is best known for its signature project, Minnesota Reflections. Minnesota Reflections is an online collection of digitized primary materials shared by individual contributing organizations around the state. The collection started with only images, but has since expanded to include letters, diaries, records, oral histories, video and postcards, among other materials.

This collection of over 245,000 digitized items is available through our website, reflections.mndigital.org. It can be accessed from anywhere in the state and beyond. Once on the site, users can search for anything of interest, be it a name, location, event or date, and see what they find. Although each contributor has their own landing page, and materials from each organization are kept together within the database. The collection is fully searchable across contributors, so materials from Anoka can be found in context with items from other organizations, adding to the richness of the discovery. Minnesota Reflections is a resource for learning, both for local users to learn more about the history of their community and for people outside of the area to learn about us and our history. One can lose oneself for many minutes, if not hours, just exploring the rich and surprising resources available.

Minnesota Reflections is all about tying local history to larger stories. Our capacity to provide a larger context through bringing disparate resources together in one place is further amplified by MDL's participation in the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Founded just two and a half years ago, the DPLA does on a national scale what Minnesota Reflections does for the state. It aggregates digital collections from all over the country into one searchable database, again freely available to users via a website, dp.la. There, digitized materials from Minnesota's cultural heritage organizations, shared with Minnesota Reflections, are findable among resources from the Smithsonian, New York Public Library, and other notable organizations, plus other small, local history organizations from far-flung corners of the country. Like Minnesota Reflections, it is a wonderful place in which to get lost.

As noted above, the Anoka County Historical Society (ACHS) was among the first contributors to Minnesota Reflections, and generously shared additional materials again a few years later. In keeping with the early directive, ACHS contributed photographs, first of general historical interest to the county, and for the second submission, focusing on the construction of the Coon Rapids Dam in the early 20th century. Images like that of the dam construction are invaluable for researchers on this topic, capturing as they do the construction methods and how the project was approached. These images of the Coon Rapids Dam can also be compared to images of the

Image Above: ACHS photograph of Coon Rapids Dam construction site shared with Minnesota Reflections.

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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AnokaCountyHistory.org

History Center Hours

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

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

From the President...History of 316 East Main

By William Erhart

The building which I currently occupy, 316 East Main Street, Anoka has an interesting history. It is located across from the Anoka County Courthouse, and lies between the old Post Office which still stands and what was once the Weaver family home. The land was originally transferred to James M. Jared on June 26, 1852. The ownership wound its way through many of the names that are still well-known in the Anoka area, including the Cutters, the Weavers and the Ticknors.

Leeds D. Cutter ended up owning the property for a number of years. He was a very well-known and successful attorney/businessman. He was a World War II pilot. After the war, he came back and started his law practice, as well as running a title and abstract company in this location. His influence increased greatly over the years, representing the towns banks, lumber companies and important individuals. At one time he served as the Anoka County Attorney.

Mr. Cutter also acquired a sea plane that was stored in the summertime on the Mississippi River. In 1960, in a trip up to the Great Slave Lake, he was involved in a boating accident and did not survive. At the time, he was a partner in the law firm known as Cutter and Babcock. After he died, Mr. Babcock moved the law practice west on Main Street.

Mary Ellen, his widow, rented the building to Chuck Weaver, who took possession of the building and built the firm of Weaver, Talle and Herrick. The law office continued to occupy the premises until Mr. Weaver became Chairman of the Metropolitan Council in 1980. At that time, the remaining law partners went elsewhere. Thereafter, the premises was used primarily as an administrative office for one of the local medical clinics for a number of years. Attorney Fred Soucie, who started his own law firm, leased the premises for a number of years. The property was then sold to Elizabeth Erhart and myself in 2001. Following extensive remodeling, the upper level was occupied by Tony Elfelt and myself. More recently, the upstairs has been rented by three separate law firms including Huberty Law Firm, Bienvenidos Law Firm and Erhart & Elfelt.

The building was constructed in three phases, the last being a front section which was added in 1962. Extensive remodeling occurred in 2001. Currently, in addition to the law firms, there is a bonding company and counselors that occupy the premises.



From the Director...And

yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?

By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp

Shakespeare aside, Annie sang hopefully about clearing away the cobwebs and the sorrows while preachers remind us that to dust we will return and a mother's visit tends to force a feverish round of cleaning otherwise left, perhaps, until that proverbial "tomorrow". We speak of the "dusty annals" of history, of dusty old homes, and of dust bunnies running amok under the bed. Happy sunbeams tend to illuminate even the smallest speck floating in the air, racy teenagers happily leave friends in the dust of raging tires, and how often have you followed a car down the highway that begged, "wash me?"

We can either kick up dust or let it settle. We can watch as another one bites the dust and then leave our grief in the dust—although that might cause a dust up. Of course, then we can just dust ourselves off at that point and keep on truckin'.

Sneeze once, move on.

As a historian, I'm surrounded by aged artifacts and smelly papers. As a mom-of-a-teenager, I need a cleaning crew to manage the accumulated "life" we live in. As a daughter, I watched my mom heal from cancer a couple of springs ago and my own problems grow pale by comparison. As a divorced-the-Army-cuz-deployments-changed-my-life woman, I'm finding my way into a new life I hadn't planned on living—thankful for my role at ACHS. Dust? Sure. Life is full of it. Grab a mask and let's dig in to those plans we made. Or pretend you're a chinchilla and simply enjoy the mess of a work in progress. Either way, we're wielding a brand new set of feathers, poised to clear a path through this great big game of life, staring down the New Year. ACHS has some grand ideas and thanks to our members and friends, we also have some resources to work with.

Quick, before I sneeze a second time.

construction of other Minnesota dams such as the Rapidan Dam in Blue Earth County, the Zumbro Power Dam, Zumbro, and the Onalaska Dam near La Crescent. Images of each of these projects are available in Minnesota Reflections, and are findable through a simple search on the website. Also important are the images of local people and places provided by the ACHS. Sharing local history like this makes it easier for those who are interested in genealogy and family history to further their research, providing names, dates and places that can locate a family in a time period and locality.

Being able to more easily find unique historic materials and put them in context of other related items is one of the most important functions of a resource like Minnesota Reflections. Before, to find the same volume of materials, one would have had to visit many small and large historical societies and archives, potentially in far-flung locations, and painstakingly assembled a mental map of what was available where, and how it all fit together. With something like Minnesota Reflections and on a larger scale, DPLA, all a researcher or genealogist or student needs is time, a computer and an internet connection. The ability to compile histories and tell stories with that information is exponentially increased.

The increase in storytelling ability that comes with the aggregation of digitized original materials is true for both individuals and organizations like the ACHS. Just the process of digitizing historic collections can be beneficial for organizations in a number of ways. The organization has to know what it has before it can select the best/most in demand/most in need of preservation items to be digitized, so there has to be a process of going through the collection and organizing it before digitization can even begin. This often leads to the discovery of hitherto unknown treasures hidden away. The materials also need to be described to be able to be found on the internet, so organizations are often inspired to talk to knowledgeable community members and capture and record some of the facts and stories they have shared over the years. Whole narratives can be uncovered and then illustrated in ways not possible before.

From a physical perspective, digitizing items makes them more easily shared, and not just over the internet. For example, digitized images can be used for exhibits and displays, in materials published by the organization, in books or wherever the organization has need of them. Each organization that contributed to Minnesota Reflections receives a high resolution digital copy of everything they have scanned. This is important for preservation purposes as well. Having a digital copy of something lessens the need of handling the actual physical object, and it can be more readily protected from light or other potential damage. Also, some materials such as cassette tapes or certain types of film, are deteriorating due to the nature of their composition and can no longer be listened to or viewed. Digitizing them captures the audio and visual and makes them accessible again, even if the original continues to deteriorate. As an added layer of protection the Minnesota Digital Library provides high quality digital preservation of everything contributed to Minnesota Reflections as well, maintaining a separate copy up to the latest digital standards. So items are both easier to find and far less likely to be lost, either the physical original or the digital copy.

Minnesota Reflections is a boon for educators and students as well. It provides access to primary historical materials, again easily

accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Teachers and home educators can use the materials found here to illustrate key historic events, and tie what was happening locally to national narratives. For example, we recently have been collecting a number of materials of all types related to World War I, in anticipation of the one hundred year anniversary of the United States' participation in that conflict. *With the Colors from Anoka County*, a published honor roll containing names of and basic information about every man and woman from Anoka County who served in the war, will soon be published in Minnesota Reflections as part of a collection of honor rolls of this type from every county across the state.

Minnesota Reflections is also an excellent source of primary source materials for students who wish to participate in History Day. The theme for this year's competition is Exploration, Encounter and Exchange, and materials available at reflections.mndigital.org that address this theme include maps of all types, information about American Indians in the area, the establishment of Fort Snelling, and exploration along the northern part of the Mississippi River. From a more local perspective, the pictures of the Anoka-Champlin bridge contributed to Minnesota Reflections by the ACHS could be used to tell the story of how building a bridge to connect these two communities made exchange and communication between them more possible.

So what does it mean for the Anoka County Historical Society to be part of Minnesota Reflections? Your history, the stories of your community, are made more accessible to researchers and students both in your immediate area, throughout the state and beyond. Participation in Minnesota Reflections puts Anoka County on a national stage, in ways not possible before digitization. Connections can be made and relationships built. Plus, digitization helps to ensure the preservation and health of your community's historic materials, collected and cared for by ACHS, for decades to come. Minnesota Reflections and MDL have been pleased to partner with ACHS and look forward to further developing that relationship in the years ahead. Thank you for sharing your history with us!

Digital Preservation Day

Learn more about MDL, contribute to our digital legacy and preserve treasured photographs or documents at this event at the Rum River Library on March 12, 2016.

Bring photos or letter-sized documents important to you or your family history to be scanned with professional equipment provided by Minitex and the Minnesota Digital Library. Community members will go home with a digital copy of whatever they brought to get scanned, and all materials will then may be added to the collections of the Anoka County Historical Society. Community scanning is offered in partnership with Minitex and the Anoka County Library. Scanning is free but may be limited to 3-10 items per person.



When: March 12

Time: 11 a.m.—4 p.m.

Where: Rum River Library
4201—6th Ave, Anoka

Wondering what to bring? We'd be especially interested in anything to do with your connections to the Anoka State Hospital—and then come to the program about its history at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m.

Collections Corner

A Toddler's Steps Preserved

By Audra Hilse, ACHS Archivist & Administrator



Anoka County is fortunate to have many Century Farms – farms that have been in the same family for more than 100 years. The Anoka County Historical Society, in addition to having the history and background of these farms, also has wonderful oral history interviews from people in many of these families (look for them on our website at AnokaCountyHistory.org under Online Resources). Sometimes, we are also fortunate enough to be given donations of papers and artifacts which further document the stories of these long-time Anoka County residents.

Some of the Century Farms are actually well past the 100 year mark, as is the case for the Peterson Farm in St. Francis, which will have been owned by the Peterson family for 130 years come 2017. Originally purchased by Louis (or Lewis) Peterson on May 31, 1887, he and his wife Christina lived there until their deaths in 1932 and 1941. Louis did logging and blacksmithing, as well as running the farm. Both were Swedish immigrants, and they had four children: Edward, Esther, Arthur, and William.

The farm stayed with William, who married Mary Mattson in 1931. Known as “Big Bill” for his height (6’ 3”), William primarily did dairy farming with Mary’s help. She was a cheerful woman, and he was well-respected and loved throughout the St. Francis community. They had one son, Graydon, and lived most of their lives on the farm. William passed away in 1979, Mary in 1984.

Graydon, after joining the Marines and then working at IBM for 30 years, returned to the Peterson farm with his wife Helen (Dawson) and their three children after his father’s death in 1979. The original farm house still stands on the property (with many additions and remodels over the years), as do the original chicken coop, pig shed and parts of the original barn.

Along with these long-standing buildings, many of the family’s possessions from over the years have also been preserved, and Graydon and Helen recently brought some of these to ACHS as a donation. Graydon was born at home in 1936, and some of the clothes that he wore when he was young were put away and saved. In addition to several small outfits and a (synthetic) fur overcoat and hat, there were also four pairs of small children’s shoes that were part of this donation.

Unusually, all four pairs are still in their original shoe boxes, although all of them were obviously worn at some point. The nicest pair is blue, and was likely worn only when Graydon dressed up, possibly for church on Sundays or for family events. Another pair, well-worn and scuffed, is a little set of brown work boots; one can easily picture a young boy tromping around the farm in them, at work or at play. Graydon remembers being told by his father that as a boy he wanted to be an auctioneer when he grew up, and would often auction off the calves to an imaginary audience. He learned to hand-milk the cattle from his father, and helped around the farm until he graduated from St. Francis High School and joined the Marines in 1954.

Children’s clothing and shoes (especially in their original shoe boxes), are scarce in the ACHS collections, as these types of things were often used until they were completely worn out and not worth keeping anymore. It is possible that the unique combination of Graydon being an only child, and the late-Depression era mentality which encouraged families to save everything, preserved these particular garments and shoes. It is these quirks of history, and the generosity of donors like Graydon and Helen, that allow us such concrete glimpses into Anoka County’s past.



Volunteer World

By Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator

Happy New Year! While 2015 was a good year, there is something about the freshness of starting a new year with all the possibilities in the coming months. Many people make New Year's resolutions, but I prefer to make a new year "Things to Do" list. The list contains the things that I have always wanted to do and yet, never get around to doing. Last year my adventures took me to see a show at The Lyric Arts Theater in downtown Anoka, I entered something in the creative arts building at the State Fair, and tried (for the first and only time, blech) coconut water. I'm still working on my new To Do list for this year, but the things on it already are: visiting all 19 national register properties in Anoka County, take a community education class, and try to like beets. I have high hopes for the first two, but I'm not optimistic about the last.

As you are looking at your upcoming year, think about the volunteer opportunities here at the Anoka County Historical Society. Maybe you always wanted to help with the Home and Garden Tour, or spend time in the Farm House at the Anoka County Fair. Perhaps your secret is that you are an amazing tour guide and want to join the ranks as a guide of the Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours. So, as you and I are both contemplating the upcoming year I thought I would share some of the volunteer opportunities that will be available this year. This is by no means a comprehensive list—it's just a highlight. If you are interested in any of the below, pencil it in your calendar and let me know to keep you in mind.

Thanks!

Sara Given

Volunteer Coordinator ACHS

2016 Volunteer Opportunities (the short list):

- ◇ Represent ACHS at a city festival Various Dates, May—September
From festivals to parades each city has a way to celebrate and ACHS wants to be a part of the fun.
- ◇ Ghost Tour Guides Training in April/May Tours run June-October
These costumed guides lead walking tours around the city of Anoka talking about the history and mystery of the town.
- ◇ Riverfest help July
While we don't know what we will do yet, ACHS is part of this busy, craft-filled day each year.
- ◇ Home and Garden Tour July
This year's tour will focus on multiple neighborhoods and the different history behind them as well as beautiful homes and gardens.
- ◇ Anoka County Fair Farmhouse July
Enjoy a day at the fair sitting in the ACHS Farmhouse—greet fairgoers, talk history, show off craft skills, and encourage others to join in fun activities.
- ◇ Organize the ACHS tool shopOngoing, flexible
Our screws, screwdrivers, wood and all things handy are "unhandily" disorganized and in need of TLC and someone to whip them into organizational shape.
- ◇ Front desk aidOngoing, scheduled
Help Sara and Audra get more done by helping them at the front desk. This would include answering phone calls, checking out library books and chatting with ACHS guests. You never know what will happen in the course of a day at the history center.
- ◇ Other events or projects! Volunteers do so much for us throughout the year, I ran out of room. If you have volunteered with us before, thank you! If you have not volunteered for ACHS before, call or email Sara for information on becoming an official ACHS volunteer at Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org or 763-421-0600

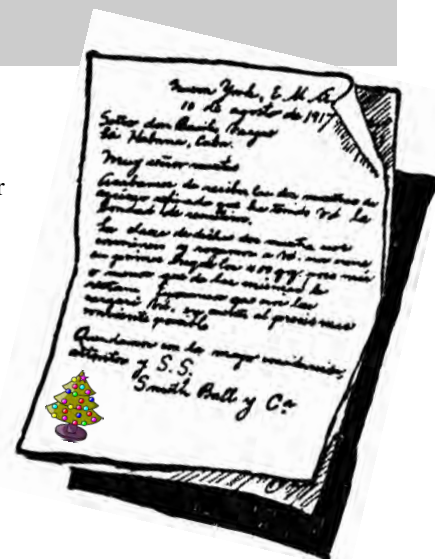
Send your Christmas Letter to ACHS

Many people send out Christmas, holiday or just end-of-year letters to friends and family. It's a fun letter, usually with a few photographs of what the family has been up to throughout the year. This tradition is so natural in many homes that people don't think about it - but that letter is a treasure trove of history. A year from now, ten years or fifty that one letter summarizing what your family has accomplished, changed or taken pride in during the year 2015 is a snapshot in the lives and history of Anoka County. So, take a look at that family letter in a new light, and send a copy to the Anoka County Historical Society. We can save it in our archive and preserve this piece of your family history!

Send Christmas Letters to:

2135 Third Ave N
Anoka, MN 55303

Or email it directly to the ACHS Archivist at
Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org



Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to December 17, 2015

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If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org or visit our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

Programs & Events



The Anoka County Library Dewey Lectures Organize Like an Archaeologist January 12, 4 p.m.

Location: Crooked Lake Library
11440 Crooked Lake Blvd., Coon Rapids

Join archaeologist Jeremy Nienow for a fun, hands-on typology activity to learn all about how archaeologists place things into meaningful groups, analyze artifacts and interpret the past. Nienow is a professional archaeologist and is working with the Anoka County Historical Society to assess Anoka County's archaeological history. This program is funded by a Heritage partnership grant received by ACHS. All ages are welcome, but an adult must accompany children under 12. No registration required for this free program but seating is limited.



Library Program Rum Runners and Temperance Tantrums January 23, 1 p.m.

Location: Rum River Library
4201 6th Ave, Anoka, 55303

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

No registration required for this free program but seating may be limited.

For more information call 763-576-4695.

Cost: FREE



Library Program Love and Valentine's Day in Anoka County February 13, 1 p.m.

Location: Northtown Library
711 County Rd 10 NE, Blaine, 55434

Valentine's Day. It is the day of love, couples and all things romance. The skeptics may say that it is only a plot from the greeting card and candy companies....but Anoka County residents were celebrating and engaging with Valentine's Day long before Hallmark Company even began. Find out how Valentine's Day has been celebrated in Anoka from the county's founding up until the present. Valentines, newspaper advertisements, parties and more tell the story. This program is offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

No registration required for this free program but seating may be limited.

For more information call 763-576-4695.

Cost: FREE



Library Program & Digital Preservation Event The History of the Anoka State Hospital

March 12

Time: Program at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Scanning Event 11 a.m.—4 p.m.

Location: Rum River Library
4201 6th Ave, Anoka, 55303

Mental hospitals bring lots of imagery to mind, much of which is based on pop culture and ignorance. What was life really like for patients and staff? Join us for this thought provoking and informative program. Learn about the history of the Anoka State Hospital which opened its doors over 100 years ago. Back by popular demand, this program on the history of the Anoka State Hospital will be given twice. Programs are offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and are funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

This will be our second community digital preservation event. Scanning equipment provided by Minitex and the Minnesota Digital Library. Scanning is free but may be limited to 3-10 items per person.

Wondering what to bring? We'd be especially interested in anything to do with your connections to the Anoka State Hospital—and then come to the program about its history at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m.

For more information about this event see page 3.

Cost: FREE



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

LeOra Kroger
2015

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

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A Postal History

With the multiple methods of communication we enjoy today, many of which literally reside at our fingertips and transmit instantly, it's difficult to comprehend a letter taking weeks to reach its destination.

Colonial communication begun in 1639, when the General Court of Massachusetts designated a Boston tavern owned by Richard Fairbanks as the "official repository of mail brought from or sent overseas" according to *The United States Postal Service: An American History, 1775-2006*. The system expanded during the Revolutionary War when Benjamin Franklin served as Postmaster General, and later employed the use of stagecoaches, railroads, the Pony Express, and motor vehicles to become the institution we know today.

Minnesota joined the story courtesy of Fort Snelling, which became the first Post Office of the territory. Some community post offices were established in the late 1840s, though more commonly a decade later. According to *The Post Offices of Minnesota*, by 1870, 10 offices in Anoka County had been established. This doubled by 1900 only to trickle back to five and six offices by 1978.

Since the borders of Anoka County have shifted through the years, it's difficult to identify the first official Post Office. The cities of Manomin, Decorri, and Itasca began their post offices in 1852, followed by Anoka in 1854, Columbus in 1856, and Cedar Valley, Oak Grove, and St. Francis in 1857. Centerville opened on September 17, 1863

then closed two years later only to reopen once more in 1866. The former Columbus location reopened as Centerville in 1893 and operated until 1905, with a "mail to" location of Hugo. The Lino office closed about the same time, having operated since 1894.

The designation of these early post offices rarely indicated their true function—the home of a settler family. Often a room contained a desk with compartments, a wall of cubbies, or perhaps simply a box where townspeople could come and collect their mail. The Mort Post Office, for instance, was located in the Purmort home in Bethel. A Post Office could also have shared space in a general store, much like the Constance Post Office, which was moved to its final site by Abel Stromgren and operated until the mid-1920s.

In an interview conducted on March 22, 1992, Ruth Gardner recalled that her grandparents James and Rebecca (Dyer) Cooper had the post office in a corner of their living room in Bethel from 1863 to 1899. The wooden pine desk has a slanted lid that raises to reveal 12 pigeon holes—one for each of the original settlers—and three drawers that held stamps and other supplies. The stagecoach stopped at the Cooper's on the way from Minneapolis twice each week. Rebecca would feed the stagecoach driver while James fed, and sometimes exchanged, the horses.

Cooper's Corner is located at the intersection of Highway 65 and County Road 24 in

Above: James Cooper's postal desk from Bethel.

Continued on page 2

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
Fax (763) 323-0218
E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org
AnokaCountyHistory.org

History Center Hours

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

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

From the President...

By William Erhart

As my term as President comes to an end, it is important to look both back and forward. As members of the ACHS, we have an interest in the past and preserving it. I stated in one of my first articles, those who do not study history will no doubt repeat it. Having grown up and being a fourth generation Pine Countyian, I have now lived in Anoka County for close to four decades. I served initially as a director on the ACHS Board, then as President, and learned and experienced the colorful history of Anoka County.

One of the most interesting aspects of serving was listening to the story of the numerous Board members who lived the better part of their lives in Anoka County. The stories that they told during the Board meetings were fascinating, to say the least. Some of these Board members included Tom Ward, Dick Lang, Harvey Greenberg, Al Pearson, Dennis Berg, and Paul Pierce, and tell stories that range from Anoka County resident's involvement in the Civil War, life during prohibition, gangster visits, locations of stills used to make moonshine, successful minority businesses and the start of major corporations including Federal Cartridge and Medtronic.

During my term, we successfully celebrated WCCO Radio's 90th anniversary. Many of the radio personalities attended and shared their memories with the attendees. We also honored Natalie Haas for her lifetime services provided to the community at this year's dinner.

The ACHS was saddened to learn that Todd Mahon, its Executive Director for almost 10 years, had received employment at the State Historical Society. His years resulted in a huge enhancement in the organization, now housed in a facility that can not only preserve antiquity, but organize it and display it to be used as a resource to the general public.

Following Todd's departure, the Board spent a substantial amount of time locating and securing our new Executive Director Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, who came on in the spring of 2015. She has displayed an incredible amount of energy and passion, further enhancing the organization. I saw firsthand that both our staff and volunteers have a profoundly deep interest in history. Their passion can be easily seen in their dedication to the organization and, more importantly, to preserving history. The services they provide to the organization need to be recognized. In addition, the modest pay that our staff receives is nothing in comparison to the contributions they make on a daily basis.

During my tenure, I worked directly with Vickie Wendel who served as interim Executive Director, Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator and Audra Hilse, Archivist and Administrator. I thank each of you for your hard work and commitment. Also, the volunteers who are recognized annually remain a foundation for the organization. I firmly believe under our new Executive Director and staff, this organization will continue to flourish.

In the future, we have many opportunities to both expand the services of collecting and organizing meaningful Anoka County history that will be available for each successive generation. The success of this goal has given our thrust into working with students and their participation in recent programs. With the dedication of staff and volunteers, the ACHS will continue to provide first class services, programs, and events to further the knowledge of the County. Currently, we have begun the process of redoing the exhibition hall, working on suburbanization and prohibition exhibits, while also meeting with Federal Cartridge to preserve their history and expanding our educational partnership.

Also, it remains very important that we have an active Board. Many of the members have served on the Board for a lengthy period of time, though some of them, due to their age or health, can no longer serve. I would request that if you have an interest in serving on the Board of Directors, you contact either our Executive Director or myself, or one of the other Board members to express interest in serving.

Continued from Page 1

today's East Bethel. James settled on the northwest corner and built his first house there in 1854. He returned to Pennsylvania to gather his family and move them to Minnesota, but when they arrived, the house had been destroyed. They built a temporary sod house until they could build a new house from lumber and wooden pegs.

When Hugh Spence built his store on the southeast corner in 1876, his store became the stagecoach stop. In 1878, he took over as the postmaster. The desk continued to serve the people of the area as their post office until 1899 when rural home delivery of mail came to Anoka County. Since many of the families in the Cooper's Corner area were related, the desk stayed in the family until 1983, when it and its story were brought to the Anoka County Historical Society.

From the Director...

By Rebecca Ebnert Mavencamp

You read about our proposed exhibit overhaul in the Annual Appeal letter and graciously made the project possible! It's with joyous hearts we have begun digging into the concept of Suburbanization and its major impact on just about any topic you can think of.

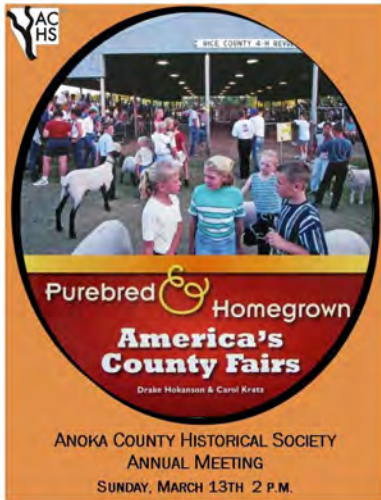
The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, for instance, occurred as a direct result of the fast and furious sprawl of the 1950s, establishing the National Register of Historic Places. As Section 1.b.5 states, "in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways, and residential, commercial, and industrial developments, the present governmental and nongovernmental historic preservation programs and activities are inadequate to insure future generations a genuine opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the rich heritage of our Nation."

This has had a direct impact on 19 locations in Anoka County that now reside on the register. One of these is the "Old Post Office" on Main Street Anoka, which coincidentally enough, is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. In recognition of this event, the ACHS has partnered with the retail vendors currently occupying the space to plan a commemoration of the cornerstone laying, with QCTV to produce an *It's Your History* episode documenting the construction, as well as website content, a printed booklet, exploration box, and presentation.

So how does a 100 year old building connect to an exhibit hall remodel focused on the era of Suburbia? New homes meant more people, which meant more mail, which meant an expensive and historic building no longer fit the needs of its community as a post office --but could be repurposed as a school and then a retail space. It's a representative story of the effects of expansion, adapting to change, and finding new life in traditional places, all seen through the lens of optimistic possibility tinged with the slight shadow of regret.

Now imagine that pattern of output as it relates to the County Fair, immunizations, schools, clubs, agriculture, businesses...as well as a driving tour of the other 18 historic properties! Thank you again for making the first phase of these projects possible this year.

ACHS Annual Meeting: March 13, 2—4 p.m.



Recall your own memories from County Fair time at this event as author-photographers Drake Hokanson and Carol Kratz share the history and depth of traditions still alive and well across America.

Hokanson and Kratz go beyond the caricature of fair life and explore how the events represent American heritage. They'll tell you why they think county fairs have helped define us as a nation of free-thinking, self-reliant, community focused people.

You'll have a chance to meet the authors, view a display of Anoka County's Fair, and enjoy light refreshments. This event is open to the public and will include a brief membership meeting. Tickets available until March 10.

When: Sunday, March 13, 2-4 p.m.

Where: Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Dr. NE
Blaine, MN 55449

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

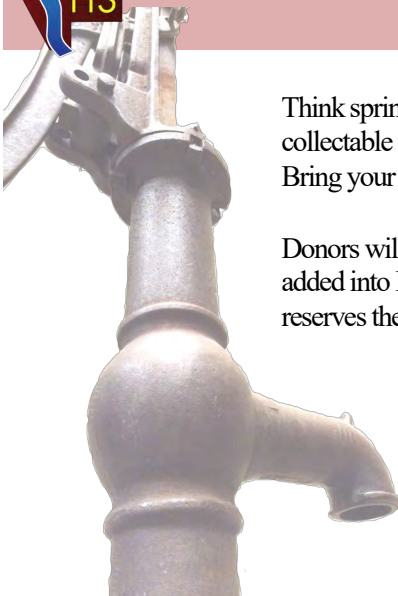
Visit AnokaCountyHistory.org

or call

763-421-0600 to purchase tickets.



ACHS 2ND ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION SEEKS DONATIONS



Think spring cleaning and check your attic - the Anoka County Historical Society is seeking donations of collectable objects for an online auction fundraiser. Please consider donating antiques, memorabilia, and more. Bring your donation to the Anoka County History Center in Anoka.

Donors will receive a receipt for their donations to use for tax purposes. Items donated for the auction will NOT be added into Historical Society's museum collection and no museum items will be sold in this auction. The ACHS reserves the right to refuse any items.

- Vintage accessories
- China or porcelain
- Antique sporting goods
- Signed artwork

Donations accepted until April 29

Auction date TBD

Call 763-421-0600 or visit our website for more on what types of items to donate:
AnokaCountyHistory.org

Story of an Artifact

Milk and Papers *By Vickie Wendel, ACHS Program Manager*

We take for granted that the milk we drink with our cookies will be fresh, wholesome and pure, but have you thought about where that standard of quality originated?

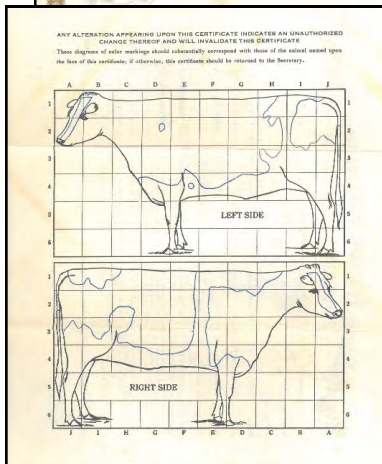
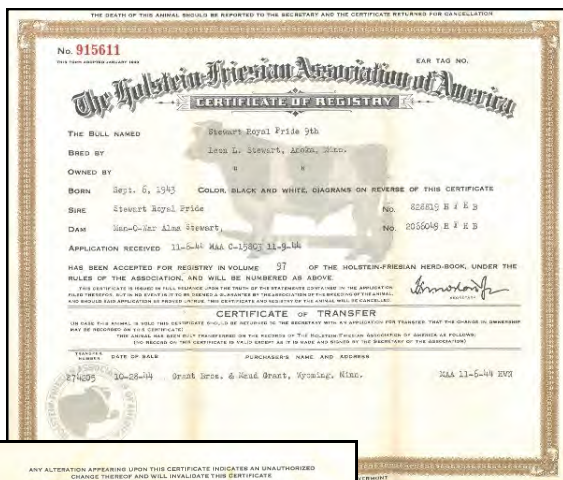
Before milk standards were introduced, farmers were paid by the weight of their product. Sometimes, farmers would cheat by adding water to their milk to make it weigh more, resulting in very inconsistent taste and quality. In 1890, Stephen Babcock, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, developed a way to “test” milk by measuring the exact amount of butterfat it contained. Farmers could then be paid by the butterfat content of their milk rather than simple weight. This encouraged farmers to have high quality milk and they began testing individual cows to determine the total amount of milk produced and the percentage of butterfat. Careful record keeping provided information on higher quality feeds or which cows the farmer should consider for sale.

Selective breeding became another important factor. A well-producing cow would likely pass on her genes to her calves, especially if she could be bred by a bull from good producing mother.

A collection of papers from the Logan Grant Farm in Linwood points to the record keeping and work involved with improving a herd and producing better milk.

The page pictured above comes from a record book the Grants used to track the amount of milk produced by each cow and what she ate, as well as her age, breeding history, and more. Each cow had its own page with name and number at the top, like this one for “Aggie.” Not all of the Grant’s cows had such simple names--the record book has a page for a cow named “Notch in ear.”

MONTHLY INDIVIDUAL COW RECORD.											
Name and No. of Cow <i>Aggie 1</i> ; Breed <i>Grade Holstein</i> ; Age _____; Weight _____											
When Fresh <i>Dec 20</i> ; Sex of Calf _____; When Last Bred _____											
Name and Breed of Bull _____											
Period of Testing, from <i>Jan 1</i> 19 <i>19</i> , to _____ 19____											
Testing Period, Calendar Month or 4 Weeks	YIELD DURING TESTING PERIOD					FEED FED DURING TESTING PERIOD (Estimated or Determined)			TOTAL COST OF FEED	RETURNS Above cost of Feed Below cost of Feed	REMARKS
	Lib. Milk	Almonds That	Lib. Butterfat	Value Butterfat	Value Butter	ROUGHAGE					
						Hay	Straw	Grain			
<i>Jan.</i>	<i>726</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2.7%</i>		<i>62</i>	<i>1200</i>		<i>1.24</i>			
<i>Feb.</i>	<i>602</i>	<i>3.4</i>	<i>2.1%</i>		<i>62</i>	<i>1000</i>					
<i>Mar.</i>	<i>530</i>				<i>62</i>	<i>900</i>					
<i>April</i>	<i>534</i>										



The Grants bought a number of cows with “Certificates of Registry,” another method of improving the herd through pure breeding. This meant the cows had a traceable bloodline and proven history. The certificate, left, is for a bull named Stewart Royal Pride, 9th, which Leon Stewart of Anoka bred and sold to the Grants in 1944. To identify a registered animal, the back of the certificate included a chart on which to draw the animal’s markings.

Inspections were important—and necessary—to sell milk. Diseases in cattle appeared in milk and inspections by state officials certified that animals remained disease free. Farmers expected to receive these kinds of certificates when they purchased cattle. The Grant collection includes a certificate from the Minnesota State Livestock Sanitary Board in 1924. Inspectors tested and certified the bull calf in question before the sale to Logan Grant. The certificate listed the sire and dam of the calf, as well as its breed and notation that it was a “pure bred.”

Logan Grant actively bought cattle to add to the quantity and quality of his herd, watching sale ads and making inquiries. A letter addressed to Logan on March 26, 1929 describes the breeding behind the calves that the seller, Guy C. Ridler, offered. The letter also stated the asking price for the calves—bull calves were \$100 and a heifer calf was \$65.

Another document in the collection indicates Grant did buy at least one calf from Ridler. A registered calf named Oakwood Pontiac Ormsby Walker was sold to Logan Grant two days after the date on the letter.

This collection of papers and documents from the Grant family tells many stories about their life, their expectations, and their hopes through receipts, certificates, forms, and charts. They saved agricultural bulletins about better feeding of dairy cows and how to improve their herd. While the collection doesn't contain personal stories of great drama, those

everyday stories of a family working to improve their farm in Linwood are the sort we can relate to as ordinary tales much like our own. Maybe that is history's greatest appeal—it tells stories of people not so different than ourselves despite the distance in time.

Assuming you finished your milk and cookies while reading this, how about taking some time to think about the papers, charts, certificates, and forms you will leave behind? What will they tell the future about your life?

Collections Corner

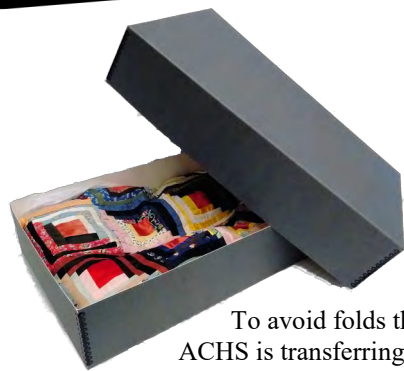
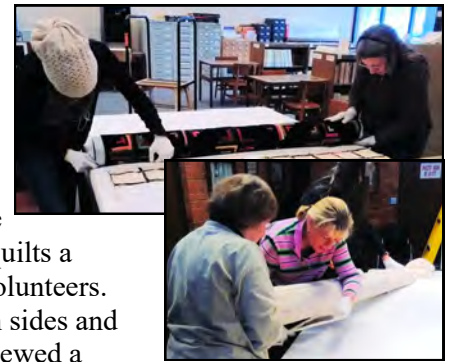
By Audra Hilse, ACHS Archivist

It's wonderful that we can provide a good home for every new artifact that walks in our door, preserving it for future use. Equally wonderful is when we can look at the artifacts already in the collection, make sure they're doing all right, and (sometimes) to update our preservation techniques. As with any profession, archivists and curators are growing our knowledge and discovering better ways to do our jobs. When we learn of newer techniques that will be even better at preserving items in our care, we find the time and resources to apply those improved techniques as soon as possible. We've given our quilts a thorough check-up in one of these preservation updates with the help of some amazing volunteers.

Volunteers took out every quilt, double-checked its measurements, photographed both sides and any damaged areas (camera technology is another thing that has progressed!), and hand-sewed a number on the quilt using our new numbering system for the collections. We also checked past and present condition of the quilts; I'm pleased to say that all are stable, so our preservation efforts seem successful. Volunteers folded larger quilts, though along different lines from the past to avoid stressing the same areas of fabric. They then padded the folds with acid-free tissue to avoid creating sharp folds and slid the quilts back into their acid-free boxes to protect them from light exposure and dust.

If the quilt was under 70", we housed it in our new textile rack built by a staff member. Each of these smaller quilts were rolled with acid-free tissue paper around a 4" diameter plastic pipe to prevent the fabric from rubbing against itself. Once rolled, the quilt received a cover of unbleached muslin fabric, which volunteers gently tied in place. A tag with the quilt's accession number was tied around the outside of the roll for easy identification and a dowel rod put through the middle of the pipe. After all this documentation and rolling, the quilt finally came to rest on the new rack! We're glad to roll so many of our quilts using this preservation technique that eliminates the stress of folds in textiles. We still have plenty of room on the rack, so we'll use this same technique on other textiles in the collection. The ACHS has many amazing quilts, and having so much volunteer help allowed us to do a thorough check of them and to improve our storage of many. Just as importantly, it gives us a greater chance to appreciate these quilts, know their stories, and see how they fit into the history of our county.

To help with the continued preservation needs of the collection, and highlight some of the amazing artifacts at the ACHS, we are instituting an Adopt-an-Artifact program, beginning with our quilts. Check out the details of the program below. Perhaps you are interested in adopting a quilt yourself, or gifting an adoption to a special quilter in your life. We'll keep you posted on all the efforts and any new preservation techniques in the history world.



To avoid folds that put stress on fabrics, ACHS is transferring quilts stored in boxes to a rolled storage rack. Each quilt will be rolled on preservation quality plastic with acid free tissue paper and covered with unbleached muslin to keep the quilts protected from dust and light. After being rolled, each quilt will be placed in a specially built rolled storage rack.

Contact the ACHS Archivist, Audra Hilse, to adopt your own Quilt.

Phone: 763-421-0600

Email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org

Adopt- A- quilt

Help ACHS rehouse the quilts in our collection to meet new standards in fabric preservation by adopting a quilt.

Quilt Adoption Levels:

Log Cabin Level—\$50

- Your name acknowledged in ACHS Newsletter and Adoption board at History Center
- Thank you Letter from ACHS Director
- Certificate of adoption with history of your quilt
- 5 X7 photographic print of your quilt
- *Quilts and their Stories* booklet about ACHS Quilts

Star Quilt Level—\$100

- All of the above PLUS
- 8X10 photographic print of your quilt (instead of 5X7)
- ACHS Quilt Pattern Book

Crazy Quilt Level—\$200

- All of the above PLUS
- A 45 minute chat with ACHS Program Manager Vickie Wendel for you and up to 25 of your friends. See your quilt in person, and talk to Vickie about preserving your quilts and other textiles.

* Adoption levels for one full year

Contributions & New Members – Thank You

All lists are current to February 17, 2016

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Mel & Kathy Aanerud
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Anoka Kiwanis
Anoka Lions Club
Anonymous
Richard Bergling
Marlys Burman
Daniel & Mary Capra
Eva Mae Cleator
David & Winnifred Conger
Coon Rapids Veterans of Foreign
Wars Post #9625
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Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member!

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

As a Business Sponsor you will receive all of the above plus a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, credit towards event sponsorships.

If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org or visit our website AnokaCountyHistory.org



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

Sheryl Lockwood
January 13, 2016

Cindy Torfin
1947 - 2015

Programs, Events & Reminders



ACHS Annual Meeting
America's County Fairs by Carol Kratz and Drake Hokanson
March 13, 2—4 p.m.
Location: Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Dr. NE, Blaine, 55434

Recall your own memories from County Fair time at this event as author-photographers Drake Hokanson and Carol Kratz share the history and depth of traditions still alive and well across America. You'll have a chance to meet the authors, view a display of Anoka County's Fair, and enjoy light refreshments. This event is open to the public and will include a brief membership meeting. Tickets available until March 10. **See page 3 for full details**
Cost: \$5/members \$7 non-members



Library Program
Depression Era
April 9
Time: Program at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Scanning Event 11 a.m.—4 p.m.
Location: Northtown Library
711 County Rd 10 NE, Blaine, 55434

The Era of the Great Depression (1930-1940) brought many hardships to the people of the United States and across the world as a result of a decade which saw a stock market crash that left people in complete ruin. Millions of people were unemployed with almost no social safety nets to provide even the basic necessities of life. With a focus on Anoka County, Minnesota, these stories bring home the people and the programs that got America through the tough years of the Great Depression and points out the echoes of those programs that still remain today.

This program is offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. No registration required for this free program but seating may be limited. For more information call 763-576-4695.

Cost: FREE



Library Program
Suburban Homes
April 30
Time: Program at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Scanning Event 11 a.m.—4 p.m.
Location: Crooked Lake Library
11440 Crooked Lake Blvd, Coon Rapids, 55433

Anoka County was largely a rural county with a population of just over 35,000 people in 1950. By 1960, there were more than 85,000 people calling it home. Almost overnight, the face of Anoka County changed from one of farms to sprawling Suburbia. Come explore the first local ideas of suburbanization in Anoka County and how those ideas were replayed decades later to build the communities we know and live in today. This slide show looks at the challenges (roads, schools, safety) and pleasures (country clubs, big yards) of building and living in Anoka County's suburbs.

This program is offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. No registration required for this free program but seating may be limited. For more information call 763-576-4695.

Cost: FREE



Exhibit Hall Changes
Wedding Belles & Beaus
Closing April
Location: Anoka County History Center

Visit the History Center for a final chance to visit the wedding dress exhibit *Wedding Belles & Beaus* in the exhibit hall. These beautiful wedding dresses will be packed away this April to protect the fabric and make way for a new Suburbia exhibit set to open this summer.

Cost: Free for members, \$3/non-members



Library Program & Digital Preservation Event
The History of the Anoka State Hospital
March 12
Time: Program at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Scanning Event 11 a.m.—4 p.m.
Location: Rum River Library
4201 6th Ave, Anoka, 55303

Mental hospitals bring lots of imagery to mind, much of which is based on pop culture and ignorance. What was life really like for patients and staff? Join us for this thought provoking and informative program. Learn about the history of the Anoka State Hospital which opened its doors over 100 years ago. Back by popular demand, this program on the history of the Anoka State Hospital will be given twice. Programs are offered in partnership with Anoka County Library and are funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

Cost: FREE

Digital Preservation Days

Time: 11 a.m.—4 p.m.
March 12—Rum River Library
April 9—Northtown Library
April 30—Crooked Lake Library

Preserve your favorite old photographs, negatives or documents at one of our Digital Preservation Events. Scanning equipment provided by Minitex and the Minnesota Digital Library. Scanning is free but may be limited to 3-10 items per person.

Wondering what to bring? We'd be especially interested in anything to do with your connections to the Anoka State Hospital, the Depression in the 1930's, and the boom of Suburbanization. Preserve your memories and important history with professional quality digital scans, and then enjoy the day's history program.

Cost: FREE

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

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- Spring Lake Park



New appliances. Polio. Sprawl. Vacations. Baby Boom. Clocks with brass rays. Rotary phones. And best of all? Tractor tire sandboxes next to a picnic table covered in Tupperware on a lawn dotted with bright pink flamingos.

But did the suburbanization of Anoka County really begin in the aftermath of World War II? Not quite. In fact, Thomas Lowry filed his first plat to develop Columbia Heights in 1893 for the land he owned south of 45th Avenue. Lowry wanted to build homes to accommodate workers coming to the steel roller mill that opened at 39th and Jackson. He and others felt industry growth would continue, so within two years newspaper articles appear urging people to settle in the developing area.

Lowry offered the best locations in his new community to a grocery store, a dry goods store, a shoe store, and a meat market. They had to be “first class” businesses built of brick, iron, or stone, two stories or more, and no smaller than 22x60 feet. Lowry’s plans included six blocks for manufacturing sites, two blocks of mixed usage, four residential, and three set aside for “right of way” purposes. His investment company laid gas and water lines in the area and promised to expand the street car service and trackage as soon as the population warranted it.

He promoted his new community with free street car rides to an amusement park known as Forest Park in Columbia Heights and, bought the rail car, that carried slain President Abraham Lincoln’s body from Washington to Illinois for burial, as a tourist attraction.

Lowry had dreams of a carefully planned community where families could live in the healthy and wholesome environment of the country, away from the grit and corruption of the city while Father took Mr. Lowry’s street car to work. The idea of commuting

played heavily into Lowry’s plans as he laid out the housing developments along streetcar lines—lines of the Minneapolis Street Car Company which coincidentally Lowry also owned.

Though Lowry died in 1909, he saw the seeds of his plan take root and the village of Columbia Heights become well established.

The idea for a cooperative community, which took the planned community to a new level, came from Valdemar S. Peterson, more commonly known as Pete.

Originally a banker, Pete lost everything in the stock market crash of 1929. He worked hard through the Great Depression to pay back his debts, becoming more obsessed with the idea that a system in which people had so little power over their economic fate was flawed. This led him to investigate cooperative ventures and credit unions where people shared in both profits and risks.

Peterson decided to act on this notion, developing what would become Circle Pines. He thought people could save money through a cooperative venture to mass produce houses and create a sustainable community, sharing in redistributed profits. He partnered with Thomas Ellerby and Paul Steenberg, who both had suffered losses in the depression.

In May of 1946, the trio formed the Golden Lake Development Association and announced plans to build a village on 1,203 acres “to unite the habitation benefits of a functional and contemporary community with the economic advantages of a consumer’s cooperative.”

Their plans meant each house would front a park or walkway and the community would provide adult education, nurseries, educational and recreational activities for all ages. Residents would share ownership of the commercial facilities required for a city, as would the municipal utilities. Any profits made by these entities would be returned to the community.

Continued on page 3

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

Anoka County History Center & Library

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

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

AnokaCountyHistory.org

History Center Hours

Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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

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

From the President...

By Orville Lindquist

The month of March marks an end and a beginning. In addition to the gateway to spring, March is the month of our Annual Meeting of Members . . . a great time in the life of ACHS. The Annual Meeting causes us to look backward at the year we just completed and also causes us to look forward to the year ahead.



2015 was, indeed, a great year. A busy, exciting year with some significant accomplishments:

- “Belles and Beaus” exhibit of wedding dresses and other items opened
- More than doubled museum attendance
- Implemented several new procedures to better manage artifacts
- Began outreach to youth and teens in new and exciting ways
- Reinvigorated our internship program
- Expand outreach to new audiences, throughout Anoka County

All of this (and more) is outlined in the Annual Report. Check it out on our website – www.anokacountyhistory.org. It is a great read!

What about the year ahead? It is filled with possibilities.

- We are blessed with a strong staff – smart, passionate people who care about our members and the stories of Anoka County
- Committed Board members work to expand our reach and find new opportunities to fulfill our mission

March also marks the beginning of my term as Board President. I joined the Board in 2011 and am honored and excited to serve in this new role. Blaine has been my home for 24 years. I am a member of the Blaine Central Lions and have worked for the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities since 1990. My degree is in political science . . . I am a history and government nerd and also serve as the President of the Blaine Historical Society.

Forward!

From the Director...

By Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp

By now you have received either a paper copy or a digital copy of our 2015 annual report. While sending them out created an extra cost to ACHS, we believe the value of our members seeing a full synopsis of the year far outweighed that of printing and organizing the mailing.

What I have come to appreciate more each day that I walk into the office are the gifts and talents of the ACHS staff. Rarely does a group of people--both the day and weekend crew--possess individual talents unique to themselves, unduplicated anywhere else in the group. Be it an eye for graphics, sorting and filing, construction, information retention and assimilation, writing, photography, education, patron and volunteer relations, or technology, this team has it all. And even better, they all respect and honor each other.

While several changes have occurred during the last year, the mission and tradition of ACHS has, and will continue, to stand intact. Since 1934 this organization has served as a place to hold the stories and ideas of the community, making them accessible to the curious. The identity of each city in the County, as broad and diverse as they are, as well as the residents who live there, create the foundation of the historical society. It's what sets Anoka County apart from the other areas of Minnesota and it's what we as staff intend to use as a guide for future endeavors.

Again, thank you for your membership, your support, and your seemingly endless ability to bring artifacts and information to us at the exact right moment. So often, we bring up an exhibit or programming idea and within a week or two, the perfect story comes together to illustrate the point. This has happened several times with the "Farms to Flamingos" planning and I look forward to it continuing!



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Rebecca Ebnet Mavencamp".

The homes planned could not cost less than \$4,000, \$6,000 or \$8,000, but no house could exceed \$20,000 in building costs. Each member of the community had to buy at least one share in the cooperative at \$100 a share. The Golden Lake Development Association anticipated building 500 homes the first year.

The planners expected community members to fill all necessary roles such as postmaster—a position held by V.S. Peterson himself. Members stayed informed courtesy of a two page newsletter delivered starting in 1947 entitled, “Circle Pines—the Cooperative Way.”

After Peterson's death, the Circle Pines village clerk, Andrew Gibas sent meeting agendas and other news on a post card. In short order this grew to a community newspaper run by Rosalie Wahl, a woman who would go on to become the first woman to serve on the Minnesota Supreme Court.

A shopping center was built at the northeast corner of Lake Drive and Lexington in 1947 and shortly after, an apartment complex of 22 efficiency apartments. Many of the new families moving into Circle Pines lived in these apartments until their houses were finished. Those apartments eventually became the Pink Pony Motel and later, the Circle Court Motel.

After only three years, the cooperative lifestyle was abandoned, in part because of problems in securing financing and rifts among leaders. While there is no clear record of dissolution for the Circle Pines Development Association, it appears memberships were no longer sold after about 1951. The cooperative store was still in operation in 1954 and volunteers served as police until the first fulltime officer was hired in 1960.

As the Circle Pines cooperative faded, so grew the concept of what we understand today as "Suburbanization." In November of 1954, Orrin Thompson Construction Company announced it would build 600 homes in Coon Rapids.

Thompson already had a reputation for building large numbers of “tract” homes in Bloomington and Brooklyn Park, a term that referred to the plan of a single builder laying out the streets and building homes throughout a particular area. To keep prices affordable, prospective buyers had a limited choice of floor plans to pick from. While homeowners could add a few options, for the most part, the houses looked very much alike. The first Orrin Thompson homes in Coon Rapids were built in the plat called “North Dale,” which later became Thompson Park.

Again, the idea of providing all the amenities a community could need became central. A water system, parks, country club with a swimming pool, townhouses, and recreation areas joined small neighborhood stores and schools to serve homeowners.

In 1958, Thompson received recognition as one of the nation's outstanding builders. His firm sold more than 1,100 homes in the first eight months of 1958, an all-time record for this part of the country at the time. The “Orrin Thompson era” in Coon Rapids lasted over 15 years and saw the completion of over 4,000 homes in the community.

Blaine experienced their development boom under the planning of Vern Donnay, who announced in August of 1959 that “The largest private building project ever undertaken in the Twin Cities area—a \$28,000,000 community of 2,000 homes in Blaine Village—has been launched.” Beginning on a 240 acre section called Oak Park, Donnay platted 800 lots, furnished it with streets, city gas, storm sewers, and a complete community water system. By April of 1964, Blaine was rated one of the fastest growing communities in the metropolitan area.

Businesses flocked to Blaine, ready to capitalize on potential customers. The first “shopping center”, Oak Park Plaza at 109th and University, started a trend. In 1971 developers selected another site, the triangle of land between Jefferson Street, Highway #10, and University Avenue for another project—you may know it as Northtown, which opened its doors to shoppers in fall of 1972.

Thanks to donations received during our fall annual appeal, the exhibit hall is under construction. The school house reminds us that girls letter jackets used to have a sailor style flap on the back, of film strip machines whose cassette player beeped between slides, and sweaty band uniforms. The case holds computer relics of fringed printer paper, homecoming buttons, and even a red hot-lunch ticket.

At the other end of the hall lays a roll of orange sculptured shag carpet we located, ready to recreate a typical living room in the 1960s and 1970s. No living room would feel complete without a large, wooden TV cabinet and quirky lamp, not to mention a very large ash tray on the coffee table for visitors to use. We called for construction help using our teal rotary phone since every suburban home needs a dog house for Rover, while checking on little Jimmy hanging upside down on the metal swing set.

Slated to open in time for Riverfest July 9, the suburban house and school displays are the tip of this multi-year project. It's not just about teal phones and pink bathroom fixtures, though. "Farms to Flamingos" will investigate many facets of Anoka County lifestyles during the 1950s through 1970s, including safety and health concerns, the civil rights and feminism movements, and the changing face of agriculture.

In planning this exhibit, we happened upon an interesting idea--in 2016 we are as far away from 1950 as the people of 1950 were to 1884. There are 66 years between each date. It was during the building boom of the 1950s and 1960s that Americans became aware of the risk to their previous architectural heritage and created the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings we preserve today throughout the nation as historic treasures only survive because citizens made the intentional decision to set them aside for future generations.

Today, some of the Thompson and Donnay structures have their original owners living in them. Some have begun a second life with a new young family or two calling them home. Either way, these neighborhoods now qualify as historic districts and the

homes as National Register properties since they're over 50 years old. The question we need to ask ourselves is, in another 66 years, will Americans find value in this modern equivalent of an 1884 house?

"Farms to Flamingos: Building a Mid-Century Modern County" may help you discover some answers to that very question.



Meet the ACHS New Board Members

Mary Ann Hoffman

On my coffee table sits "Picturing Anoka County: 150 Years of Anoka County History," a book published by the Anoka County Historical Society in 2006 in honor of the county's sesquicentennial. The photos within remind me of the settlers, workers, and families that established Anoka County. The rich history of this area makes me feel privileged to be a newly elected board member of the ACHS. As a board member, I hope in some small way to help guide it as it continues to devote its personnel and resources to preserving our past and sharing it with the public.

History is in my blood, you might say, as it was my major in college, which led me to teach history for over 30 years. Since retirement, I have served on the board of the Fridley Historical Society, which has given me a taste for working with history on a local basis. I am looking forward to working with the other board members during my term of service.



Shelly Peterson

I've spent my entire life living in Anoka County. Currently, my husband and I reside in Nowthen while our two sons attend college. I work as the Finance Director for the City of Fridley, where I recently moved after having served the City of Anoka as Assistant Finance Director.

Over the years, I've heard many stories from my grandparents and great grandparents of life in the country. As a child, I watched a strip of highway develop around my dad's little pizza place, Clyde's Pizza in East Bethel. I've seen the country fields of Anoka County transform and develop into suburbia. I've come to appreciate that Anoka County is full of history and tradition. While the artifacts and architecture are part of the historical value, I find the stories behind them have become equally important to me. I'm fascinated with those stories and their preservation, which is what I look forward to as I serve on the ACHS Board. I am new to the historical society, and will look to

current members for guidance. There are many exciting things ahead and I'm excited to make contributions where I can.



Harold "Buzz" Netkow

I've been interested in history nearly all my life, starting in grade school and continuing to the present day. I believe we ought to remember the past not only to honor those who have gone on before us, but to ensure that their lives, their deeds and their stories will not be forgotten.

Although I have held a membership at the ACHS for some years now, I know that as a new member of the Board of Directors I'll experience a learning curve regarding the operations, programs, and goals of the organization. My aim is to use whatever talents I may have to help further all of those.

I'm proud to say that years ago I got to know Charlie Sell – the undisputed guru of the history of Anoka and beyond – during the last three years or so of his life. His untimely passing left a void that I doubt will ever be filled. His knowledge, so willingly and freely given to members of the community, makes me think of him as a role model as to how history should be shared.



Join the ACHS Board of Directors!

At-Large Board position Open

Help guide and oversee the future direction of the ACHS as a member of the ACHS Board of Directors. Board Meetings are held at the History Center on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

Time Commitment: 5-10 hours per month.

If you would like to know more, or are interested in joining the board, submit a letter of your interest with a short bio and your resume to the ACHS Executive Director Rebecca at Rebecca@AnokaCountyHistory.org. Position open until filled.



Halloween Stamp Unveiling

The City of Anoka recently received the honor of being selected by the U.S. Postal Service as the official host city for the First Day of Issue (FDOI) and unveiling event of four 2016 Postal Service Jack-O'-Lanterns Forever stamps.

The celebration will take place on Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016 at 11 a.m. at Anoka City Hall Plaza. The event will include a program of notable speakers followed by an afternoon of music and activities. Stamp collectors and event attendees will have the opportunity to purchase the stamps and limited edition FDOI cancellation envelopes, as well as other merchandise showcasing the four stamps. The hashtag #HalloweenStamps will be used to share the news on social media.

In the spirit of Halloween, the U.S. Postal Service will issue stamps featuring creatively carved pumpkins that have stood as symbols of Halloween in the United States since the late 19th century, not long after celebrations of the holiday began here. These are the first Halloween-themed stamps issued by the Postal Service. Paul Montanari designed and carved the pumpkins under the art direction of Derry Noyes of Washington, DC. Sally Andersen-Bruce photographed the lit jack-o'-lanterns used on the stamps.

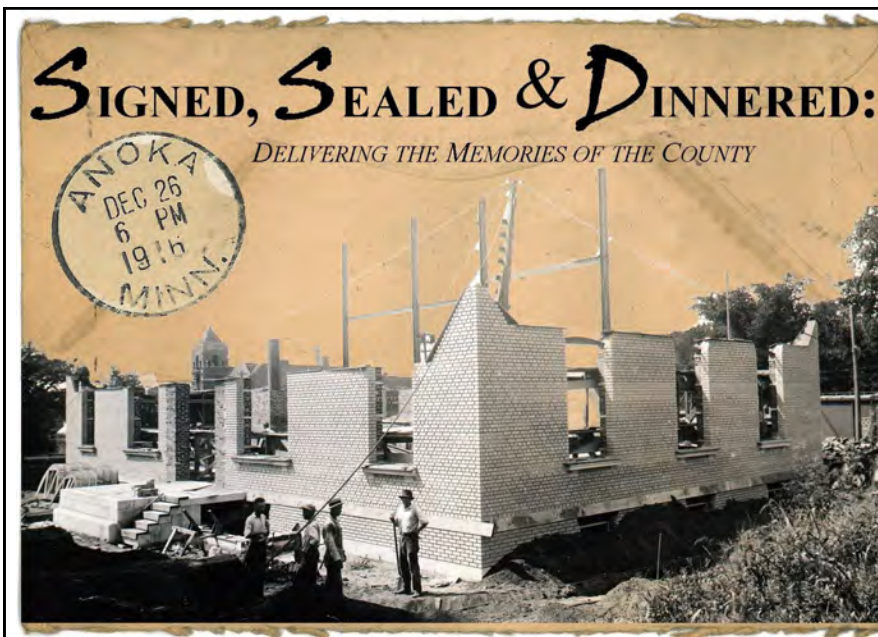
The ACHS has a seat on the planning committee for this event, in addition to an opportunity to speak during the program. Coincidentally, this year is the 100th anniversary of the historic "Old Post Office" located at 300 E. Main St., Anoka and we had already begun planning ways to celebrate this. A QCTV episode of *It's Your History* is now available on YouTube, featuring a series of construction photos and diary selections. The design for a booklet, exhibit display, and memory box will be completed this summer.

As a capstone event for this research and the stamp unveiling, the ACHS will host an evening dinner and fundraiser on Sept 29 beginning at 5:30 p.m. Entitled, "Signed, Sealed and Dinned: Delivering the Memories of the County," the program will celebrate the heritage of the Postal System in Anoka County, the old post office, stamp collecting, and the staff who consistently brave the elements to deliver the mail. Also available that evening will be original art of the old post office, sculptured replicas of the jack-o-lanterns, and other memorabilia. No event by the historical society would be complete without the inclusion of some special artifacts, photos, and answers to the persistent question, "How did we become what we are now?"

We look forward to seeing you at the stamp unveiling as well as the dinner event in the evening!



Stages of construction, 1915-1916.



Join the celebration of Anoka County postal service and the Halloween Stamp at our fundraising dinner.

Save your seat and purchase your tickets now—

AnokaCountyHistory.org

\$45 members (\$50 public)

When: September 29

Time: 5:30 p.m. Social Hour

6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Program

Where: Greenhaven Country Club

2800 Greenhaven Rd, Anoka

St. Francis Glass Plate Negatives



We love photographs in any format, since pictures are an especially rich way to look at our county's history. Some formats are less common, though, and glass plate negatives certainly fall into that category. A recent donation to us of a photograph collection from St. Francis, circa 1900-1920, is almost entirely composed of this type, totaling more than 200 glass plates.

John Lindbloom, a blacksmith in St. Francis at the turn of the century, took this set of photographs. Setting up his camera indoors and out, he captured the people and places around him, taking photographs of his family, his home, his friends and his community. Together, these images of the past give us a glimpse of life in one of Anoka County's oldest communities.

Glass plate negatives date back to the 1850s. Early on, photographers coated each glass plate with a photo-reactive solution ("wet plate") on which to expose the image, but by the 1880s it was possible to purchase "dry plate" negatives that could be placed ready-to-go into the camera. This collection is composed of this type of dry plate glass negatives. While your subject needed to stay still in order to avoid a blurred image, each negative contains amazing detail and a range of tones despite their lack of color. Not surprisingly they are also extremely fragile; the glass plates themselves can break, or the silver emulsion (the chemical solution on one side that reacts with light to create the image) can flake or be easily scratched off of the glass. To avoid harming the images, we make sure to wear gloves and handle the physical plates as little as possible.

Because of the potential fragility of glass plate negatives, we must take care when we process them into the collection, and they require some specific equipment and supplies. Since we do not have all of the things that we need, this collection of negatives is now a part of our Adopt-an-Artifact program! If you would like to adopt all or part of this collection, here is a breakdown of the things that we need to appropriately process and house the negatives:

- Scanner (\$800): We do not currently have a scanner that will scan negatives of this size.
- Acid-free paper photograph sleeves (\$28.50): Each photograph needs to be placed in its own sleeve for protection after it has been scanned. The paper sleeve can then be labeled with appropriate information, and the negatives will not rub against each other. We need 100 sleeves in the 5" x 7" size.
- Acid-free archival boxes (\$35.00): Sleeved negatives will go into archival boxes in order to be stored safely in our Collections area. We need boxes of both the 4" x 6" and 5" x 7" sizes.
- Time to process: Each negative will take approximately 5 minutes to scan and process into sleeves and boxes. There are approximately 233 negatives x 5 minutes each = 20 hours of processing work by ACHS Staff.

Preserving history is neither quick nor cheap. But when it is done properly, our lives and our communities grow much richer for it. With your support, ACHS can continue to provide this service for Anoka County well into the future – whatever that might bring!

Collections Callout: **HELP! We need white sheets!**

Light is one of the most damaging things for our artifacts. In order to protect our larger pieces from fading, we drape them with cotton sheets...and we are almost out!

Send or drop off your old, or new, clean white sheets at the History Center to help protect our collections.

New Collections Corner Display

We didn't want to wait until we processed this entire photographic collection to share it with our members or ACHS visitors, and so it inspired a new exhibit space in our front desk case. We created "Collections Corner: New Arrivals" to highlight the newest items donated to the ACHS collections while they wait to be processed. Make sure to check out the newest donations here when you drop by the History Center—we never know what will show up next!



Sara and Audra clean the case and pose for a "before" shot



The finished display

Where is Slabtown?

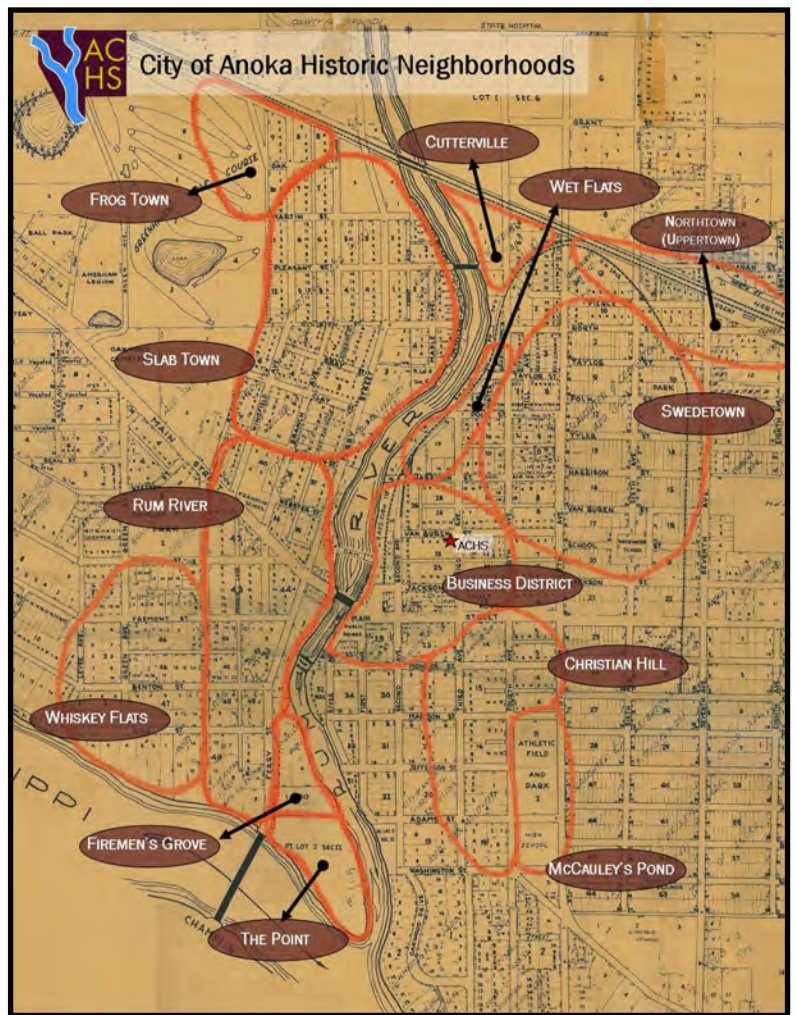
From Swedetown to Slabtown, the city of Anoka's neighborhoods have hidden pasts. Why did these separate neighborhoods exist and have such odd names? Who called those neighborhoods home?

Slabtown, located on the north side of the Rum River roughly between the rail road tracks and Main Street, became home to many of the city's lumber workers in the late 1800s. With a number of lumber mills, including the Washburn or the Reed and Sherwood Sawmills, running multiple saws on numerous shifts the workers needed homes for their families. In 1947, Grace Troy wrote her recollections of life in Anoka and this neighborhood for the ACHS. She came to Anoka with her family as a child in 1877 and moved into 2527 North Ferry Street. From her young memory it seemed as if "horses were always dragging dump carts filled with [wooden] slabs away for fuel, and still acres and acres of them remained making the name [Slabtown] very appropriate...."

Grace saw the massive fire of 1884 decimate many areas of Anoka, witnessed the construction of a new bridge across the Mississippi River and couldn't forget the parties and neighbors in Slabtown including Mrs. Goedick Sr. "who told [their] fortunes for fun."

Slabtown was her childhood home, yet she noted, "...the odious name may yet get changed...although names have a way of clinging after their significance is gone."

This year's 13th Annual Heritage Home and Garden Tour on July 10 will feature these historic neighborhoods. The tour will give all who attend a chance to explore beautiful homes and gardens throughout Anoka, learn about the historic neighborhood of which they are a part, and see the streets and houses around Anoka in a different light.



A 1953 map of Anoka showing the approximate boundaries of Anoka's historic neighborhoods.

13th Annual Home & Garden Tour Reserve your ticket!

Don't miss out on exploring Anoka for the 2016 Home and Garden Tour. This year's tour will include:

- ⇒ "The House that Moved" on Monroe St.
- ⇒ Yard games at the Mad Hatter Restaurant
- ⇒ A vision of gardening with sculptured art

Purchase tickets at ACHS or online at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Win a Cork Gift Card!

Purchase your tickets before **May 31** and enter to win one of two \$75 Gift Cards from Cork Restaurant in downtown Anoka.



ACHS 2ND ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION SEEKS DONATIONS

Donations deadline extended until May 30
Auction date TBD

Think spring cleaning and check your attic - the Anoka County Historical Society is seeking donations of collectable objects for an online auction fundraiser. Please consider donating antiques, memorabilia, and more. Bring your donation to the Anoka County History Center in Anoka.

- Vintage accessories
- China or porcelain
- Antique sporting goods
- Signed artwork

Volunteer World

SPRING is here! The winter months can seemingly drag on forever and spring feels like it will never arrive. Once it does, however, the work begins: spring planting, spring cleaning and springs in our steps. The calendar can fill up quickly. To all the ACHS volunteers, and those who would like to join the volunteer ranks, I wanted to begin the call for volunteers at the various ACHS events over the summer. Check out the opportunities below, get them marked in that calendar and let me know if you are interested in being an ambassador for Anoka County History.

RIVERFEST

When: July 9

Time: 2 hour shifts, 10a.m.-4 p.m.

What: Volunteers to sit and sell tickets at the ACHS booth on Jackson St. OR serve refreshments and greet people for the *Farms to Flamingos* exhibit opening that day. Further event details still TBD.

HOME & GARDEN TOUR

When: July 10

Time: 12:45 p.m.—5 p.m.

What: Volunteers are stationed at each tour stop to check tickets, greet patrons, and help homeowners showcase their home or garden throughout the day

GHOST TOUR GUIDE

When: Various dates through October

Time: Evening hours

What: Lead groups of people on walking tours of Anoka. Must be comfortable with managing larger groups and presenting from the Ghost Tour Script.

Training date: Must attend mandatory training (given in May and June)

WANT TO HELP?

Contact Sara to volunteer or with any questions at -
Phone: 763-421-0600 or
Email:
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

ANOKA COUNTY FAIR

When: July 26-31

Time: 2.5 or 5 hour shifts throughout the day, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

What: Join ACHS for a shift at the Old Farm House. Talk to fair goers about history, ACHS and share your own craft skills, or a provided activity with the public.



Volunteers Called BINGO!

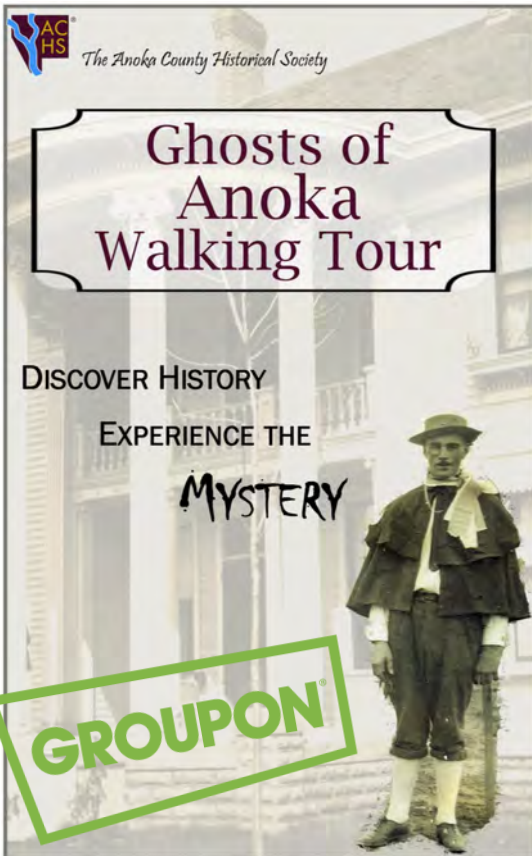
The Anoka County Historical Society Volunteers added to the history of Bingo on April 16 at our annual Volunteer Celebration. We met in the lower level of Anoka's City Hall on a beautiful spring day and enjoyed lunch while overlooking the rushing Rum River falling over the dam. After fueling up and meeting new people, the volunteers prepared their daubers (crayons) ready to play.

A staple of church fundraisers and adapted for long car rides, the game of BINGO has a surprisingly long history. The earliest versions can be traced back to 16th century Italy's "Lo Giuoco del Lotto D'Italia." Immigrants brought their versions over the Atlantic Ocean and in 1929 Edwin S. Lowe, a salesman with a keen eye, witnessed the game at a carnival in Georgia. He thought it would catch on and marketed it as "BEANO" because players marked their cards with beans.

ACHS BINGO followed the rules of the National Bingo Game Association, with one difference: the free space was not free. In order to claim a BINGO using this space the winner shared a story from the era of suburbanization about their life or family.

With their talents, experience and passion for history, the ACHS Volunteers bring so much to our organization. We wouldn't be able to grow, or accomplish what we do without their hands. While our BINGO game had a number of winners throughout multiple rounds, the laughter, and stories that sunny Saturday afternoon were the real goal. Thank you for being the best volunteers we could ask for!

Ghosts return to Anoka



When the ACHS moved to its current location at the old City Library in 2001 the new visibility around the city of Anoka garnered a surge of people visiting to research their home's history. As the curious combed through our archives, the stories came out of odd occurrences, and ghostly apparitions; visitors wanted to know who had lived in under their roof in years past.

The stories came with such regularity, staff members began writing them down and in 2004 program manager Vickie Wendel decided to create something new. The Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour debuted the evening of Riverfest 2004 the day before the first Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour. With only two tours offered, they sold out quickly so only 50 people experienced the mystery and history of Anoka on that beautiful July evening. Despite this small beginning, it was the beginning of a tradition.

The Ghost Tours continued that October and every year since. Costumed guides lead groups of people through neighborhood sidewalks and down Main Street revealing stories of history and mystery in our town. Those who go on the tour come from all across Anoka County but also from across the Metro area, northern Minnesota, France and Australia.

To celebrate the auspicious 13th anniversary of the walking tour, the ACHS and Ghost Tour Guides updated information and are introducing new stories in 2016. We are also partnering with Groupon throughout the summer on Thursday and Saturday nights.

Take advantage of the warm summer evenings and experience an evening hearing ghost stories and Anoka's history. If you join the tour on Thursday evenings you will be a part of our new Premium Ghost Tour, which offers refreshments and conversation after the tour at various locations in Downtown Anoka.

Purchase your tickets for our summer tours at www.groupon.com/deals/anoka-county-historical-society

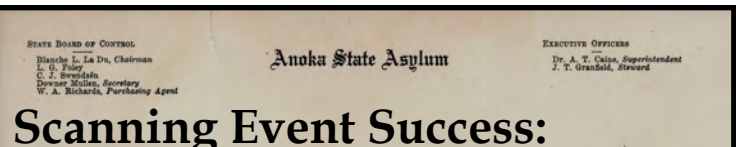


We are excited to announce that this spring the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant program awarded two grants to our Historical Society: Minnesota Bookshelf History and a Microfilm Reader Grant.

The Bookshelf History allows us to purchase new and updated local history books for our research library. These books cover a range of topics in Minnesota history and will be available for researchers or those browsing our reading room collections.

While we are always excited about books, nothing can compare to our joy at purchasing a new microfilm reader through the awarded grant. The new digital reader will allow researchers to read, print and download digital copies of pages to a thumb drive. The new reader should be in place and ready for use this summer. When it is ready, come on in and explore the 19th century newspapers and the local news they captured in their pages.

Combined, the \$10,732 grant money will improve and enhance the research at the ACHS. A heartfelt thank you to the grant program and advocates of historical research.



Scanning Event Success:

This spring the ACHS piloted community Digital Preservation Events with the partnership of the Anoka County Library, Minitex, and Minnesota Digital Library. At four separate scanning days, professional grade scanning equipment was available to scan the images people brought.

People brought in photographs of their parents' courtship, letters written in that now foreign language called "cursive," snapshots of life in Columbia Heights in the 1950s and a glimpse inside the Anoka State Hospital.

In total the digitization specialists scanned over 100 photographs and documents brought in for preservation. The physical documents returned home with participants, along with digital copies that can be shared, copied and protected from damage a physical copy may endure.

While preserving the physical copy is important, each photograph or document has a story and a background that can be so easily lost: who are the people, where was the photograph taken, and why is this important is also saved.

The above letterhead is a portion of a scanned document a patron brought to the March event for digital preservation.

Contributions & New Members – Thank You!

All lists are current to April 20, 2016

General Donations

American Legion Post 102 Auxiliary
Coon Rapids Veterans of
Foreign Wars
Siegfried & Karna Brewer
Daniel & Mary Capra
Suzanne Dilcher
Dan Erhart
Roland & Carol Freeburg
Judy Hanna
Drake Hokanson & Carol Kratz
Jim Johnson
Debra Johnston
Dick & Mary Lang
Leanne Patchen
Rachel Peterson
Paul & Gretchen Sabel
Lori Yager

Artifact Donors

Jeff & Barb Abeler
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Charles Babcock
Bruce Bacon
Jeff Caine
Carver County Historical Society

Columbia Heights
Police Department
Lori Dare
Carol & Bob Dordan
L. Edward Evans
Edward Faherty
Julie Foster
Lotus Hubbard
Donald Johnson
Neil Kruse
David Latterell
Tim Layeux
Nicole Martini
Dolores Martinson
Dianne Pederson
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Martha Weaver West
New Members
Siegfried & Karna Brewer
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Terry Overacker Plumbing

Become a Business Sponsor or Business Member!

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

As a Business Sponsor you will receive all of the above plus a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, and credit towards event sponsorships.

If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org or visit our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

A View of the Past:



We have photographic proof in the collection at ACHS that Jim W. rode the cars, the boats and the rockets at the Coon Rapids Fire Department Carnival in 1955. From each of the photos, it looks like he had the most fun shooting at an imaginary attack on his rocket ship. The carnival was held at Sand Creek Park, located east of the railroad on Northdale Blvd. Object ID: 684.1.05



Follow the Anoka County Historical Society on Facebook for more historic photos shared from our collection of more than 15,000 photographs.

Programs, Events & Reminders

Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours—Groupon Deals

Thursday evenings during the summer will feature the Premium Ghost Tour, upping the ante with refreshments and exclusive access to an extra tour site.

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Anoka County History Center

Cost: two tickets for \$20, available on the Groupon website

Saturday evenings from May through August will feature the traditional Ghost Tour, a one hour walk around Anoka filled with wild yarns and bone-chilling tales from a costumed guide.

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Anoka County History Center

Cost: two tickets for \$10, available on the Groupon website

Exhibit Hall Tours—Groupon Deals

Tuesdays, from May through August, history buffs looking for a behind-the-scenes peek at the exhibits and collections can spend time on a guided exploration of ACHS.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Anoka County History Center

Cost: two tickets for \$10, available on the Groupon website

Rum River Rovers Base Ball

Base ball played by 1860s rules

Games held May– October. The full schedule can be found at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Location: Various cities around MN and WI

Cost: Free

Exhibit Opening

Farms to Flamingos: Building a Mid-Century Modern County

July 9

Location: Anoka County History Center

Cost: FREE

Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

July 10

Location: City of Anoka Neighborhoods

Cost: \$12/members, \$15/non-members

Anoka County Fair

July 26-31

Location: Anoka County Fair Grounds

Cost: Fair Admission \$9. Age 13 and older

Nowthen Threshing Show

August 19-21

Location: Threshing Show Grounds, 7415 Old Viking Blvd. Nowthen

Cost: Day pass \$10 (age 12 and under free)

Unveiling of the First Day Issue Halloween stamp

September 29

Time: 11 a.m. program followed by activities in the afternoon

Location: Anoka City Hall Plaza

Cost: FREE

Signed, Sealed & Dinnereed: Delivering the Memories of the County

September 29

Time: 5:30 social hour

6:30 dinner

7:00 program

Location: Greenhaven Country Club

Cost: \$45/members, \$50/non-members



CALLING ALL 1950-60-70s things!

We need a few more pieces in the exhibit hall to make our house a home. We've got the shag carpet, but we'd love to



get our hands on a pink flamingo (original used one, not a new version), some harvest colored Tupperware

(remember those salt and pepper shakers?), cocktail glasses, Melmac dishes, and toys.

Looking ahead, we will also need donations of clothing—especially 1960s and 1970s items

like bell bottomed jeans and peasant blouses, maxi dresses, mini skirts, or boots.



Got other ideas for items that seem especially evocative of the era? Is your attic bulging with memorabilia of items now



dubbed "vintage" and "mid-century modern?" Send us some photos and we'll see if they work with the upcoming exhibit concepts. The house we're

building will continue to shift from kitchen and living room to bathroom, bedrooms, and utility as we work our way through a variety of stories in Anoka County.



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

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Exploring Anoka's historic neighborhoods



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



The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places as an addition to the jurisdiction of the National Park Service to protect America's landmarks:

“...historic properties significant to the Nation’s heritage are being lost or substantially altered, often inadvertently, with increasing frequency...in the face of ever-increasing extensions of urban centers, highways, and residential, commercial and industrial developments...”

Minnesota claims over 1,600 individual properties on the National Register. Anoka County contains 19 of them, all but one having achieved their listing within the five year period from 1976 - 1980.

In order for a property to be considered eligible for the National Register, it must meet several criteria, including an association with an important historical context and having retained the historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance.

The application for the old Post Office in Anoka states it was “the oldest extant public building in Anoka,” and “the city’s most architecturally significant non-residential building.” For these reasons, the property meets a criteria of significance by exhibiting a text book representation of Georgian revival architecture, a style popular in Great Britain from 1714 to 1776. The stately façade is described in the Dictionary of Architecture with the following:

“A formal arrangement of parts within a symmetrical composition and enriched Classical detail characterize this style. The simple façade is often emphasized by a projecting pediment, with

colossal pilasters and a Palladian window. It often includes dormers, and the entrances ornately decorated with transoms or fanlights over the doors.”

The characteristic Palladian windows are typically made from a larger, arched window banked by two more narrow windows to the side. However, because the Post Office is an example of revival architecture, it features a stylized version in which a single arch encompasses all three windows.

The lot selected for the Post Office was known at the time as Cutter’s Corner, a reference to the family who had owned the land for many years. The *Anoka Union* reported on March 29, 1911 that the Federal Government purchased Cutter’s Corner for \$50 a square foot, a sale that totaled about \$5,000.

“The Union is well pleased with the Cutter location, as it believes it is poor policy for any city to concentrate all its buildings to one locality, and any site a block or two from the business center would be all right,” reported the *Union*.

James Knox Taylor (1857-1929) designed the Post Office while serving as the Acting Supervising Architect in the United States Treasury from 1897 to 1912.

A Minneapolis-based contractor, W.D. Lovell, won the construction bid and worked in conjunction with the



Blueprint drawing of the Palladian window used in the historic Post Office.

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

E-mail: achs@ac-hs.org

AnokaCountyHistory.org

History Center Hours

Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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

Board of Directors

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

From the President...

By Orville Lindquist

Surprises. Sometimes they are unpleasant. Sometimes they are delightful. Here at ACHS, we recently had a huge surprise – of the delightful kind.

We received, out-of-the-blue, a \$50,000 bequest from the estate of LeOra Kroger. A most delightful surprise. A validation of our mission. Totally and completely caught the board and staff off-guard. An amazing gift that presents a host of possibilities.

That was only the beginning of the surprises.

Turns out that no one really knew LeOra as a person – certainly not anyone on the current board or staff. She renewed her membership every year, we recognized her red hair, and we remember chatting with her now and again when she stopped in to look at the exhibits. She loved the displays – she spent hours here wandering and reading, quietly coming and going. But we didn't know *her*. And at some point she stopped coming and the trail went cold.

The generosity of her gift makes us grateful...the mystery makes us curious, so more investigation was in order. Checking with the law office that administered the estate didn't yield any meaningful information, nor did conversations with the staff at The Farmstead in Andover, where LeOra lived her final years. She had no children – no next of kin. She requested no funeral or remembrance, though the United Methodist Church of Anoka expressed their sympathies on their Facebook page. There is nowhere to even send a thank you note for her generosity.

Stories matter. They mattered to LeOra – she came to us to learn the stories of Anoka County.

As humans, we crave stories. For centuries, our ancestors preserved their histories through stories passed from generation to generation. It is the essence of the work we do at ACHS, every single day.

Where there is no story, we want to fill in the gap and the absence of a full story leaves us feeling unsettled. In LeOra's case, we are left with few answers and no fulfilling, happy ending. She left tremendous gifts to us though...certainly in her funds, which will give us some opportunities to advance our work through a few, strategic projects. She gave us other things, too – a chance to reflect on our own lives, our own work and our own, individual legacies.

She believed in ACHS, which is a pretty special gift, as well. Not a bad legacy for someone who chose to quietly and gently impact her world.



From the Director...

By Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp

I've shared many cups of coffee and lunches with Anoka County residents this year, trying to get a feel for the communities inside these borders. With unique identities, goals, and dreams, each story has its own twist. I often lay awake at night wondering how these many facets can be located on the same diamond--and just what that unifying theme might look like.

Recently, my newsfeed erupted with an unnerving number of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances who passed away. Sitting through back-to-back funerals for days I took in all the stories told of these beloved people--family time, inside jokes, the best of who they had grown to be--and felt comfort. Some of them, like former Sheriff Buster Talbot, left a public legacy of service, oral histories, and artifacts in the ACHS collection as well as the personal memories held by friends. Others may still come to the museum as treasures surface during an estate sale or as family members pack up closets. Some may remain private, a gift of memory to their chosen few for their eyes alone.

Together, however, these people experienced an era in which technology use exploded, communication networks expanded, and one way of life fell aside to make room for another. Their individual stories differ, represent opportunities taken or rejected, and outcomes changed perhaps on a whim. But they lived it together. The collective story told on a personal level by friends who, without a doubt, now cherish their memories all the more since there are no more to make.

Always in our hearts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Government appointed Superintendent of the Site, Charles H. Stratton, to the project's completion. Lovell's accepted 1915 bid was \$41,250-- almost \$1 million in today's currency.

Stratton received orders from Acting Supervising Architect James A. Wettmore to transfer to the Anoka project on March 9, 1916. He notes the construction progress each day beginning on April 3, 1916 in a diary now held in the ACHS collections.

Unfortunately, the selection of some of the Post Office's building materials caused some consternation. Knox's original specifications called for a rough red brick to be used for the building's exterior. At the time, no Minnesotan manufacturers made red brick year round since it required the use of large warehouses for indoor drying. The products available in the area lacked structural integrity for large projects by absorbing too much water in the event of humid or wet weather conditions. Following the rejection of a series of red brick samples, the Office of the Supervising Architect suggested that a grey brick, similar to that used in the 1910 construction of the Post Office in Alexandria, be located. The bricks ultimately used in Anoka were locally made in such a way to lessen the absorption of water.

Indecision on the type of brick to use, the cost of the change, and the change in the blueprints, caused a large amount of tension between Lovell, Stratton, and the Supervising Architects office. On April 15, 1916, Stratton wrote the office regarding Lovell's proposal for the cost of the change:

"The amount of this proposal while large is, I believe, the best that can be done under the special circumstances covering shipments and work on this job."

Despite Stratton's recommendation, the official decision was slow in coming, resulting in a work delay and a frustrated Lovell who telegraphed Stratton on April 21:

"Dear Sir: Is there anything that you or I can do to hurry decision face brick Anoka. Valuable time is going by."

Washington finally settled on a variety of brick by May 24.

The next dilemma to strike involved the development of Anoka's sewer system, which followed the approval of the post office project. As a result, questions arose as to the best way to connect the Post Office's waste water to the new system. Stratton wrote Wettmore of the city's decision on September 2:

"...I have secured the passage of a resolution by the City Commissioners of Anoka, granting permission to connect the house sewer from this building to the city sanitary sewer in front of the building in lieu of a manhole at the intersection of 2nd Avenue and Main Street, and am forwarding herewith a copy of the resolution signed by the Mayor and City Clerk, and bearing the City seal."

Yet finally, the project concluded with the magical words:

"The office is in receipt of an inspection report of the 13th [of April, 1917] instant, submitted by Supervising Superintendent Packard in connection with his recent visit to the U. S. Post Office, Anoka, Minnesota, in which he states that the work has been entirely completed in a very satisfactory manner. . . It is noted that this contract is practically finished two months ahead of time for which the office wishes to commend both yourself and the superintendent."

As the city grew, so to did the demands on its postal service. By August 5, 1925 the number of addresses receiving delivery had increased to nearly 600. A second postal worker was added to the staff and the delivery was divided into two routes. In 1956, an addition of a larger loading dock to the rear of the building helped

handle the larger amounts of mail. The building also served as a gathering place after the 1939 tornado, a place to purchase war bonds, or register for the draft.

By 1977, however, the business moved to its current location on 7th Avenue, where it

enjoys a work space 12 times the size of its original. The final mail delivery left the old Post Office on October 22, 1977 and the building went up for sale. Since then, it has been home to several shops, restaurants, and the PACT school.



October 2, 1916: Roughing out the interior. Part of the construction progress photo series taken for documentation by the United States Treasury Department.

The ACHS recently received a Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant to write an article for MNopedia (www.mnopedia.org), discussing each of the National Register locations in the County.

You can discover more about the old Post Office at the museum on September 29 when a new portion of the "Farms to Flamingos: Building a Mid-Century Modern County" exhibit opens in celebration the newly unveiled jack-o-lantern Forever stamp.

Still hungry for history? Buy your ticket now for "Signed, Sealed, and Dinnereed: Delivering the Memories of the County," a fundraising event for ACHS at Greenhaven, also on September 29. Post office themed memorabilia, speakers, and displays will

A poster with a yellow background and a torn-edge effect. At the top left is the ACHS logo. The main heading is "Become a Sponsor" in a large, serif font. Below it are three sponsorship levels: "Gold Sponsor—\$3,000", "Silver Sponsor—\$2,000", and "Bronze Sponsor—\$1,000". In the center is a photograph of a brick building under construction, with a circular postmark overlay that reads "ANOKA DEC 26 6 PM 1916 MINN.". Below the photo is the text "SIGNED, SEALED & DINNEREED: DELIVERING THE MEMORIES OF THE COUNTY" and "September 29, 2016 Greenhaven Golf Course". At the bottom, it says "Sponsorship Levels".

ACHS **Become a Sponsor**

Gold Sponsor—\$3,000
Silver Sponsor—\$2,000
Bronze Sponsor—\$1,000

SIGNED, SEALED & DINNEREED:
DELIVERING THE MEMORIES OF THE COUNTY
September 29, 2016
Greenhaven Golf Course

Sponsorship Levels

Lino Lakes Plane Crash



A close-up of the Aeronca seaplane on the shores of Rice Lake in Lino Lakes.

to fly north for a day-long fishing trip when the plane took off from the Surfside Seaplane base on Rice Lake early the morning of May 17, 1966. It struggled to gain altitude and they eventually circled back towards the lake so they could land. Unfortunately, as the plane approached the Apple Inn (which sat at the intersection of Highway 8 and MN-49), it needed to rise in order to clear some power lines. The plane went nose-up, stalled out, and immediately crashed nose-first into the backyard of a lakeside home.

Several people saw the crash and notified the authorities immediately. They discovered all three passengers had been killed upon impact. Tauer, being the owner of some construction equipment, was called to the scene just moments after the crash. After the coroner had removed the bodies, Tauer hauled the wreckage back to the Seaplane base until it was determined what should be done with it.

Tauer believes that the plane was underpowered for the amount of weight on board; he recalls that in addition to the three passengers, there was 150 feet of half-inch rope, a full cooler of 7-UP soda, and large boxes of regular fishing tackle. As he related the story, he said that when he flew north to go fishing in his own plane, he typically took “a shoebox’s worth” of stuff on board the plane, in order to make sure that it did not weigh too much.

A couple short articles about the crash ran in the local papers, one in the *Anoka County Union* Friday, May 20, 1966 (an identical article ran in the *Blaine Life*), and another in the *Blaine Record* of May 18, the day after the crash. The three victims were identified as the pilot, Fred W. Reichert Jr. (29) of Columbia Heights, and two passengers, Clement A. Kreger Sr. (46) and his son Clement C. Kreger (18), both of Minneapolis. The *Blaine Record* article added the fact that the crash happened at 6:30 a.m., and that it was raining heavily at the time.

These two articles provide some details, but no follow-up articles appear to have been published, so we are grateful to have Tauer's story to fill some gaps between our collection photographs and the news articles.

This is an excellent example of the importance of individuals and communities being involved in maintaining their own history. As staff, we do what we can to capture and preserve events in Anoka County, but often stories occur we aren't aware of, or that we don't have access to, because the information lives in the minds of individuals, or as part of a local story that doesn't really get shared. Thanks to Tauer's generosity, we not only have additional details of this plane crash, but also know a great deal more about the Surfside Seaplane Base on Rice Lake, which has been there since just after WWII, and has a great deal of interesting history in and of itself.

What kind of history lives in your head? Do you have a few moments to capture some of it? Maybe it's writing down a story about your childhood, gathering pictures from family members, or encouraging a long-time county resident to give an oral history interview. It doesn't have to be something large. Even a little bit of effort

Continued on page 5

Here at ACHS, we do our best to capture the stories that go with the objects, documents, and photographs in our collections, as well as the items themselves. In some cases, though, there is only so much information available, and we must make do with less of the story than we would prefer.

One method we use to solve this problem with photographs is the “crowd-sourcing” method of identification. When our resources prove insufficient to find out more about a photograph, publishing it in the newspaper or posting it online where more people can see it is one of our next steps. Sometimes we don't learn anything more about that particular image...but sometimes the right person sees it, and is able to really fill in the gaps in the story.

This happened just recently for us, when we sent a picture of a plane crash in Lino Lakes as our submission that week to the *Quad Cities Press*, which covers the Lino Lakes-Circle Pines area. All that we knew about the crash was that it had happened near a lake in the Lino Lakes area on May 17, 1966; the photograph is from the Nelson Photograph Collection, which captures various accident and crash scenes throughout southern Anoka County in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, we had only a brief response, with one man stopping in to confirm the information that we already had, and to pinpoint the location to the banks of Rice Lake.

Several days later, we received a phone call from a man who had lived on Rice Lake at the time, and was involved in the clean-up of the plane crash. Lyle Tauer, now a resident of Oak Grove, passed along this story to us.

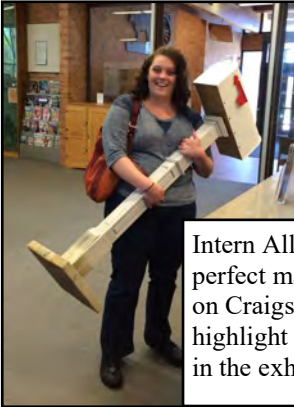
The plane was a four-seat Aeronca seaplane, with a 145HP engine (probably a Continental engine) carrying three passengers. They had intended



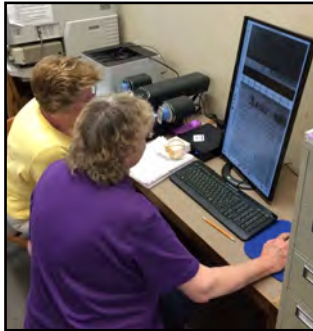
After running this article in the *Quad Cities Press* people came forward with more information and stories about the day.

Volunteer World *By Sara Given, ACHS Volunteer Coordinator*

While children cheer and start relaxing when summer arrives, the months of June, July and August are BUSY at the History Center. With the help of volunteers and interns, in the past couple months we have moved several large exhibit pieces, gained a new printer/scanner/copier, installed a fancy new microfilm reader, rearranged boxes in the collections room, organized collections on the Anoka Masonic Lodge, Old Post Office, Islands of Peace in Fridley, and the East Bethel Booster Club to make them more accessible to researchers, as well as created and installed our new *Farms to Flamingos* exhibit in the museum. I am out of breath just typing that, and it still does not encompass all of the projects and amazing work happening at the History Center each day. Here is a snapshot of some of the projects and new technology that came in the building these past few months:



Intern Allison found the perfect mailbox for us on Craigslist to help highlight Postal History in the exhibit hall.



First day of research on the new microfilm machine purchased courtesy of the History and Cultural Heritage Funds! The system is completely digital and allows patrons using it to print, save to a flash-drive, or email themselves clips of what they find. Come on in and test it out with your research projects!



Intern Brian L. and Volunteer Dustin disassembled and moved a large table out of the Philolectian Meeting Hall. The table separated into a top piece, four column legs, and a bottom cross-piece. This move makes room for summer events and planned renovations. Stay tuned!



After gracing the exhibit hall, the niche from St. Stephen's Church needed to be put away in the collections room to make way for our new Suburban house for the *Farms to Flamingos* exhibit. ACHS Board Member Paul, Intern Jon, and Volunteer Dustin navigated the aisles to put this piece to bed.

Continued from page 4

will preserve more history than we would otherwise have. ACHS is happy to partner with our communities and their members in order to help preserve our shared history. It's important for us to remember that we, as individuals, are the first line of defense against the disappearance of our own history.

Ready to help with another mystery?

Patrice Johnson is a food and culture writer from the Twin Cities working with the Minnesota Historical Society on a book about Swedish Jul in the upper Midwest. While primarily a cookbook, "Swedish Jul" will also contain short interviews and historical references that tie the recipes to our collective community: starting with "artsoppa" and Swedish pancakes, moving into baking and other Christmas prep, "julbord" and meatballs, and ending with aquavit, "glögg" and other cocktails

She will conduct interviews this summer for book content and is searching for individuals who celebrate the holidays with Swedish traditions. Please contact Patrice at johnsonpatricem@yahoo.com or 612-220-0261 if you'd like to contribute to her project!

A View of the Past:



The young fishing duo pictured in the photograph wrote on the back "not much in # but it was fun catching—" A snapshot of Burton Harding with his cousin in 1947 at their farm in Constance, MN. While never an officially organized city, envelopes addressed to a family in 'Constance' always found their way to the destination. Now a part of Ham Lake the name remains a part of street names and businesses in the area.

According to the DNR, there are more than 150 lakes in Anoka County, ranging from officially unnamed bodies of water, to Coon Lake which covers over 1,200 acres. A staple of summer, once the fish are caught and eaten only your stories and memories remain. What are the fishing stories and history of the county that shouldn't be forgotten?



Follow the Anoka County Historical Society on Facebook for more historic photos shared from our collection of more than 15,000 photographs.

Contributions & New Members – Thank You!

All lists are current to June 27, 2016

General Donations

D.A.R., Anoka Chapter
Richard Bergling
Gregory & Jackie Bortnem
Dorothy Carlson
Katie DeMarco
Danna & Waldeane Felix
Dan & Laarni Frank
Roland & Carol Freeburg
Mike & Maria King
David & Donna Legrid
Ronald Peterson
Tom & Linda Sullivan

Donations Made in Memory of

Rita Kovar
Jill Weaver
Marlys Fairbanks
Donald Tesch
Erma Elton

Artifact Donors

Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce
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Chuck Drury
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Coon Rapids Middle School
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Bertha Mae Johnston
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Gwendolyn Quick
Lynne Rickert
Sharron Sandberg
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Artifact Adoptions

Alison Marzolf—Quilts
Gretchen Sable—Quilts
Sandy Connor—Quilts
Linda Kelly—Glass Negatives

New Members

Dustin Hammel
Maggie Snow

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Nowthen Historical Power Association
Peterson Shoes Store
Pierce Refrigeration
Rescuing Pets & Saving Vets
Terry Overacker Plumbing



ACHS Remembers

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

Marlys Chutich

Dick Swanson

Erma Elton

Buster Talbot

Marlys Fairbanks

Donald Tesch

Rita Kovar

Jill Weaver



Programs, Events & Reminders



Rum River Rovers Base Ball

Base ball played by 1860s rules
 Games held May–October. The full schedule can be found at
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 Nowthen
 Cost: Day pass \$10 (age 12 and under free)

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September 29
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Signed, Sealed & Dinnereed: Delivering the Memories of the County

September 29
 Time: 5:30 social hour
 6:30 dinner
 7:00 program
 Location: Greenhaven Country Club
 Cost: \$45/members, \$50/non-members



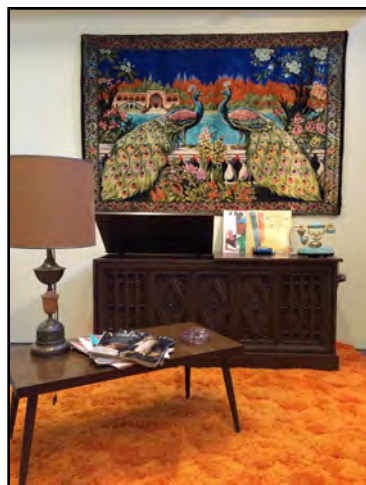
CALLING ALL 1950-60-70s things!

We need a few more pieces in the exhibit hall to make our house a home. We've got the shag carpet, but we'd love to get our hands on a pink flamingo (original used one, not a new version), some harvest colored Tupperware (remember those salt and pepper shakers?), cocktail glasses, Melmac dishes, and toys.

Looking ahead, we will also need donations of clothing—especially 1960s and 1970s items like bell bottomed jeans and peasant blouses, maxi dresses, mini skirts, or boots.

Got other ideas for items that seem especially evocative of the era? Is your attic bulging with memorabilia of items now dubbed "vintage" and "mid-century modern?" Send us some photos and we'll see if they work with the upcoming exhibit concepts. The house we're building will continue to shift from kitchen and living room to bathroom, bedrooms, and utility as we work our way through a variety of stories in Anoka County.

NOW OPEN: Farms to Flamingos Exhibit



Peer into the life of a suburban home—complete with orange carpet, Tupperware, and turquoise rotary phone—while learning about the tract housing that expanded much of Anoka County at our new exhibit *"Farms to Flamingos: Building a Mid-Century Modern County."*

After coming home to a suburban house, take time to play in the tractor tire sandbox and give a treat to Buster the dog in his little house, then imagine the neighborhood children running off to the school down the road. Here memories will float back to days spent listening to the beep of a filmstrip machine or having to rip fringes from notebook paper.



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HISTORY 21

Volume 46 No.5 September-October 2016

INAUGURAL
EDITION
IN COLOR!

Numerologically balanced, Mathematically odd.
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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

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Front Cover: A glass negative image of Myrtle Downs [1866-1937] posing with a cat. Myrtle lived at 1420 - 5th Avenue South in the city of Anoka. Her husband, Rufus T. Downs, was a successful farmer and served as chairman of supervisors in the town of Ramsey, and as a County Commissioner. Object ID#: G2379.25



From the President

When one has a regular column to write, sometimes the personal issues overtake the strictly historic ones.

I recently broke my foot. Not a terrible break, but painful. I wish I had an exciting story like rescuing puppies from a horde of hungry tigers to tell, but the reality is a small, unexciting little accident. This resulted in a few days of crutches before I

graduated to an air-cast boot. Being a "history guy," once the pain went down and I began to move around again, I started to muse about what this straightforward injury in 2016 would have been like back in 1916...or, heaven forbid, back in 1816.

What today is an easily managed, run-of-the-mill fracture wouldn't have been so simple or pain-free. Generations of medical professionals and scientists have miraculously improved care and equipment for lucky beneficiaries like me.

If I had lived in Anoka County even 100 years ago, I would probably have lived on a farm. Being laid up with a broken bone would mean not contributing to a fair share of a great deal of summer work and even requiring special care, taking others away from *their* work. As it is in the modern era, I can get around quite nicely in my SUV and get to my office with an elevator.

It is said that one must know history or be doomed to repeat it. I am sure glad that a lot of history happened before I came along!

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



From the Director

Deciding where to spend precious time remains a perpetual issue both personally and professionally. The events we attend, the people we dine with, and the groups we support shape our future paths. A heavy thought for where to have your next picnic!

It's easy to get caught up in finding the largest, most publicized festival to ensure you're seen by the most and connect with the many. However, the smallest of events mustn't get lost, even if it's just in the payback of appreciative smiles and a red carnation.

I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon with six graduates from the Anoka High School class of 1946. The classmates shared tales of wartime school, walking a mile and a half home after cheerleading practice since there was no bus, or falling for the girl next door. They made candy together, pooling sugar resources due to rationing. They went horseback riding, spent a dime to see a show, and never thought of getting old since they were "just out for a good time."

With some luck, we will all attend our own 70th class reunion. I hope someone much younger will sip coffee and listen to whatever we have to remember.

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



Home Front life: Unboxing memories and building a WWII exhibit from the ground up

December 7, 1941, a day that will live in infamy...

Those words committed the U.S. and Anoka County to a conflict that became known as World War II, changing the face of warfare and politics forever. That war still holds tightly to our memories, even as the “greatest generation” continues to slip away. Taking time to look at those memories is what you’ll be able to do courtesy of a new exhibit in our military gallery, opening later this fall.

But how does a museum give birth to an exhibit? We began several months ago, brainstorming ideas, reading personal accounts, combing through ACHS databases to identify what artifacts we have in our collections and what stories they tell about Anoka County during this time period.

The United States’ involvement in WWII spanned a little more than four years (late 1941-1945) and affected nearly 18 million troops and their families. Even by limiting our scope to only the stories and memories in Anoka County, WWII is far too large of a topic. How can we make it more manageable? We need to identify what the exhibit will (and won’t) be about based on what we have access to and what we can produce in the time allotted.

For example, we have a huge flag presented to Anoka County for selling the most war bonds in the state during the third bond drive. It comes with a wonderful story, but also boasts dimensions of nearly six feet by 10 feet. In order to use this item, we need to dedicate a lot of space to show it off, while also making sure we do no harm to it by having it touched, displaying it in the light too long, or stressing the corners from hanging.

We have uniforms from soldiers who served in all branches of the war. From outerwear to underwear, and sometimes even with secret, embroidered decorations on the inside, these are the pieces of clothing soldiers wore as they left Anoka County for war. These items tell us many stories about their donors and really help to bring that person’s story and memory to life for museum visitors.

Above: Soup mix used by Carol Syring during his service in WWII as a mechanic.

But not every story or memory has an artifact we can display. That doesn't mean the story shouldn't be told, just that we need to think about how those stories best suit the exhibit. Like the many nurses who enlisted from the county--if we don't have a nurse's uniform, or letters that she wrote home, how can we tell her story? We can work to acquire an artifact from a friend or family member willing to donate to the collection or lend to us for the exhibit, but often that's a long shot.



Postcard of Anoka WWII Honor Roll ca 1945

ACHS continues to work toward digital presentation of information, though integrating this into the exhibit space is a few years away. For now, we can take the stories captured through our Oral History program and give them a home on our website. Currently, we have 31 interviews in our WWII oral history collection that give us a chance to hear a particular experience during the war in a person's own words.

Some transcripts tell stories of lives changed by military service like Audrey "Pat" Johnson. She remembers leaving her home in Northfield and heading to New York City for training after she enlisted with the Navy. Following her training, Johnson kept the books and tracked supplies at a Naval Air Station in Iowa. Other transcripts provide a dose of humor, like Glen Lindstrom. He told the officer trying to assign him to a gunnery division that the only thing he knew about guns was that, "They're dangerous." Still others are poignant and remind us how frightening war truly is, like Richard Sorenson. Surrounded by enemy troops and taking heavy fire, Sorenson threw himself on a grenade to protect 15 wounded comrades...and fortunately lived to tell the tale. As our World War II veterans continue to age, we must continue to learn their history so stories like these are not lost forever.

Although many stories of war battles can be told, the main story for most Anoka County residents was their life on the home front. Just what did everyone do here while the soldiers went off to fight? By highlighting the men and women who served, we can focus the exhibit around their families who stayed behind to work and support the war effort, bolstering their loved-one many miles away. We can talk about collections of scrap to donate, growing Victory Gardens, and selling war bonds. We have a pair of socks knitted for the soldiers that followed an "approved" pattern (see picture, left) and can discuss the many women in the county who went to work at Federal Cartridge and Northern Pump (see poem on page 7), filling in the much needed labor force with so many men away fighting.



Service uniform approved knitting patterns

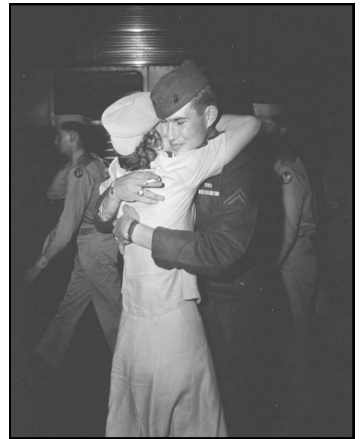
So we will say goodbye to the Civil War exhibit, *All for the Union*, in October in order to welcome WWII to our military gallery in December--just in time for the 75th anniversary of that infamous day. The soldiers' return created the housing boom, so the exhibit

will blend well with *Farms to Flamingos* and all things mid-century modern.

With the theme and stories narrowed down, we look to the physical space in the exhibit hall. How much room do we devote to which part of the story to make the entire experience cohesive? Most often the artifacts we have identified for each part came to us as individuals and not as a series, which requires us to link them together in space and time. This context is very important to visitors understanding what we're trying to say. We cannot just set an artifact out in a case with no explanation. It must have a label to say what that artifact is, where it came from, and when, but also how it fits into the larger story of the exhibit. More research! We need to ensure the label information is accurate and easily provides you with answers. It might be a quick three word headline or an in-depth explanation filled with detail. It might pose a question or invite a conversation. Writing labels is a tricky balancing act!

If we were to hang a blue star banner on the wall, you may find it interesting, simply because it exists. However, if it hung in an actual window above a chair and a radio in a replica living room, it would look different and have a stronger impact. Now, if you saw a mother or a sister or a wife in that chair, waiting for news of her soldier as she worked on knitting him a pair of socks, that blue star becomes even more meaningful. You may think of veterans you know. If the exhibit goes one step further and reveals the name of a soldier from Anoka County lost to the war and their mother who had to take down the blue star and hang a gold one in its place...well, it's not just a banner any more.

We intend to honor the three men from Anoka County who earned Medals of Honor during World War II: Richard Sorenson from Anoka, James LaBelle from Columbia Heights, and Richard Krause from Fridley. Again, context to the artifact delivers the punch. At first glance you will see a photo of Sorenson having a milkshake in Anoka the day he returned home, or hugging his mother (see photo at right). Sorenson survived covering a grenade with his body to spare his fellow soldiers. La Belle and Krause also covered grenades, but they did not survive their actions. Their bravery becomes even more extraordinary when we realize only seven other men in Minnesota received a Medal of Honor during World War II.

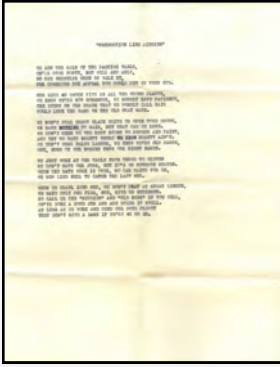


Richard Sorenson greeting his mother, August 4, 1944

ACHS must also consider the question of what to do with artifacts sensitive in nature, such as items the veterans brought home from the war. It wasn't unusual for a Nazi flag or an SS dagger to make its way into the luggage of a returning service person. When displaying items like the flag, emblazoned with the swastika, we can't have it looking down on visitors from the wall. Instead, we must put it in a case, where it is clearly an artifact meant for education, and thus give it a different meaning.

As you can see, assembling an exhibit takes far more planning and research than it appears. Above all, however, the most important question we need to consider is, "what will our visitors take away from this exhibit?" Will you learn something about war? About Anoka County? About yourself? We aim to present a well constructed exhibit that will draw visitors in, give them a chance to add to their experience, and find a reason to connect to the greater context of history.

Artifact Up Close



Jeanette Benson worked for the Federal Cartridge Corporation at the Twin Cities Ordinance plant during WWII. In 1942, she received an increase in pay to 70 cents per hour for her work. As a Packer and Operator II, this poem may have resonated with her as she saved it with other papers from her time employed with the munitions company.

“Production Line Biddies”

We are the gals of the packing table,
We’re over forty, but will and able,
No one whistles when we walk by,
Our combined sex appeal you could put in your eye.

Our size 40 smock fits in all the wrong places,
We know we’re not gorgeous, we merely have patience,
The stuff on our heads that we fondly call hair
Would look the same on the old gray mare.

We don’t wear smart slack suits or open toed shoes,
We have NOTHING to gain, but what can we lose.
We don’t rush to the rest rooms to powder and paint,
And try to make beauty where we know beauty ain’t.
We don’t wear false lashes, we know we’re old dames,
Why, none of our bosses know our right names.

We just work at our table from three to eleven
We don’t hate our jobs, but it’s no seventh heaven.
When the days work is over, no car waits for us,
We run like hell to catch the last bus.

When we crawl into bed, we don’t pray at great length,
We make only one plea, God, give us strength.
So call us the “Biddies” and “Old Hens” if you will.
We’ve done a good job and are doing it still
As long as we work and send our boys plenty
They don’t give a damn if we’re 40 or 20.

What is your family’s WWII story?

In the ACHS collection we have a number of uniforms from different veterans. Uniforms are, by their very name, uniform in nature. But the photographs, papers, and memories are a unique fingerprint for each family. Your family’s story may include someone who served in the military, it may include a victory garden, ration books, a wedding, or a funeral. What does your print look like and how are you preserving that history? How can we help?



Loren and Bob



Corbin Anderson



Frank Anderson



Blanche Eickelberg



Norman Olson



Clarence Anderson

JON ARFSTROM

A lifetime of art



By Audra Hulse,
ACHS Archivist

There is a house in the city of Anoka filled with hundreds and hundreds of original paintings, although you could not tell from the outside.

The artist, Jon Arfstrom, was an unassuming man, rarely found without paintbrush or pencil in hand. Because of this, the legacy he left behind following his December 2015 death is both large and treasured, if also leaving his family feeling overwhelmed at times. The sheer amount of art that Arfstrom produced during his life almost defies comprehension and covers a wide variety of mediums: pencil and pen, oils, acrylics, watercolor, markers, colored pencils, charcoal, and pastels all graced his canvases and sketchbooks.

Subject matter in Arfstrom's art varies almost as widely as his mediums. His work ranges from beautiful watercolor and acrylic landscapes, to the formal portraits of U.S. Presidents he created for his 40-year employer, Brown & Bigelow. He made large acrylic paintings in the surreal genre, with underlying themes of fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Arfstrom won awards both in the United States and in Europe for his work, and one of his paintings resides in a museum in Paris. He did numerous shows of his watercolors and was happy to give demonstrations to those wanting to learn the difficult medium (Arfstrom himself appreciated the challenge of it). He also took his surreal and fantasy works to conventions, showing the pieces and selling some of them. In spite of being known in these particular circles, however, Arfstrom did not put himself out to the wider world, and so many people do not know his name, even if they may be familiar with some of his art. Arfstrom carefully kept his work separated within those



Castle on the Rum
9-19-2007

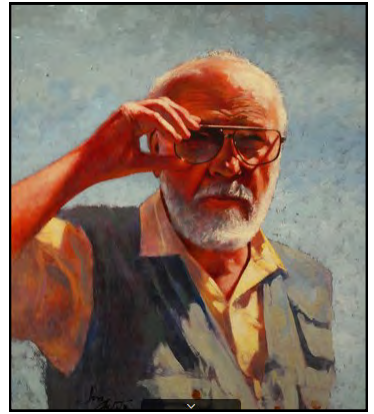
distinct circles as fans of his surreal and fantasy work probably did not know much about his watercolors and his friends in the watercolor world did not see his surreal works.

Early in 2016, the Arfstrom family, including Jon's wife, Norma, and one of his daughters, approached ACHS about preserving his legacy. Arfstrom had lived in Anoka with Norma for the last decade of his life, and scenes of the Halloween parades and the Rum River were common subjects of his art during that time. In addition to his art, Arfstrom was also a dedicated journal writer, noting daily his thoughts and events of the day. Scattered throughout these words are also sketches, cartoonish figures, and miniature watercolor landscapes. The family posed the question, "would ACHS be interested in having some of his art, and helping to tell his story?"

With little hesitation, ACHS staff said yes. While the Arfstroms lived in Duluth and St. Paul throughout much of their lives, they chose to retire to Anoka, and it is clear from his art that Jon was very fond of the area. We have been working with the family for the last several months to identify a representative sample of the art that will come to live permanently in the ACHS Collections, as well as planning an exhibit that will open in mid September. For the first time outside of the Arfstrom family home, the different genres of Arfstrom's art will hang on the same wall at the same time for people to discover and enjoy. We also have some wonderful artifacts to fill in the exhibit including his drafting table, chair, lamp, and various tools of the trade that made up Arfstrom's workspace for many decades, recreated any time the family moved to a new home. To once more recreate his workspace so visitors can see where and how Arfstrom made his art in addition to the art itself, is very exciting. Looking out a little bit further, we also plan to accession his journals, digitize them and make available online, and are looking into funding options to produce (in partnership with DreamHaven Books) a coffee-table style book about Arfstrom's life and art.



Farewell to Eden



Head of Artist Hand to Glasses
1995

We are very grateful to the Arfstrom family for giving us this chance to work with such an amazing collection. We hope you will join us starting mid-September to come see and enjoy Arfstrom's art, and come back periodically as we rotate in new pieces. We hope to keep Jon Arfstrom's legacy alive and well, even though the artist himself is, unfortunately, no longer with us.

VOLUNTEER WORLD

While children rejoice in the relaxation of the summer months, July and August are the busiest months of the year for the Anoka County Historical Society. Your favorite ACHS staff and volunteers have been hopping from event to event having a blast, sharing stories, (litterally) smelling the roses, and meeting alpacas. All of these events give us a chance to make history more mobile, talk with people who didn't know about the ACHS, make new friends, and learn more about Anoka County.

Take a look at some of the things we have had fun with this summer (note that this is not a complete list). If you think it looks fun...mark your summer calendars for next year. We'd love to have you join the events as a visitor or as a volunteer!

Sara Given, ACHS Volunteer Coordinator

Riverfest—July 9

In the exhibit opening for *Farms to Flamingos: Building a Mid-Century Modern County*, ACHS traveled back to the 1950s, '60s and '70s during this year's Riverfest celebration. 'nMotion Dance from Fridley hosted a sock hop outside on the ACHS plaza, and showed off their dance and hula hoop skills. Before or after kicking up their heels, people could come inside to cool off with a root beer float and episodes of *I Love Lucy* in the Philolectian Room or explore the new exhibit. People saw little parts of their past in the exhibits. From classic orange shag carpeting and a telephone chair, to go boots and Tupperware, people began sharing their memories of growing up mid-century. By the end of the day we learned that the peacock tapestry on our wall graced many others, and even accepted the delivery of a 1950s era stove with a great story for the exhibit. If you missed the opening, no worries! Come and view the exhibit and watch as it grows and changes to tell more stories from the heart of Suburbanization.



13th Annual Home & Garden Tour—July 10

More than 500 people attended the tour this year, with a record 102 people purchasing tickets the day of the tour. Homeowners and volunteers greeted visitors at each stop, answered questions, and enjoyed showing off the special table, room or flower they had fallen in love with.

At the different homes and gardens people discovered renovation or gardening tips, a strolling musician or a player piano concert, a kid-created scavenger hunt, peacocks, and new friends or

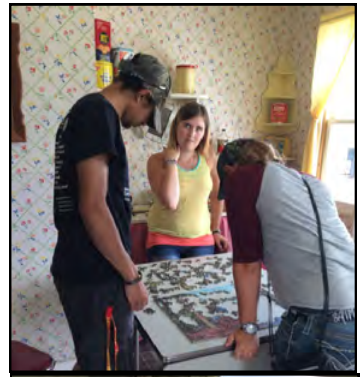
neighbors. What homes and gardens will we discover next for year 14 of Anoka's Home and Garden Tour?

Anoka County Fair—July 29-31

ACHS set up our home away from home in the Farmhouse at the Anoka County Fair again this year. Situated in the Old Farm Place among a one-room school house and the historic Constance Church, our farm house is staged to bring up memories of a 1930s style home in Anoka County.

Some people just wandered through looking at the “Old Stuff.” Others would spend time trying to identify the round appliance in the corner of the kitchen (spoiler alert: it wasn’t a washing machine.) We played with Jacob’s Ladders, cup and ball games, and whimmy diddles while fitting together some 60 year old jigsaw puzzles.

There was always a visitor and a friend to meet, whether local or out of state. The pace is slower on the (pretend) farm, where we've always got time to chat and relax on the porch swing. Next year, carve out some time to stop by, tell a few stories, or listen to the 1930s music on our radio. It’s the best spot at the fair!



Nowthen Threshing Show—August 19-21

It is always 1920 in the General Store with ACHS at the Nowthen Threshing Show. Prohibition just went into effect, and women had won the right to vote. Children (and those who are kids at heart) came with pennies and nickels to purchase candy or pickles from our large pickle jar. The General Store is also a place to visit, talk, and get the best country news. Plus, you never know the characters who might drop in! This year’s Threshing Show began with rain on and off during Friday and Saturday, but the mud didn’t keep people away. Amazingly, they had one of the biggest Sunday attendances for the show's history. Thanks to Jim Rootes and Al Pearson who got Grossein's 1919 Model T delivery truckin the parade!

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!

Don’t wait another two months to find out what the ACHS is up to. Find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We share photographs and artifacts from the collections, updates about upcoming programs, and a behind the scenes look at antics around the History Center.



Anoka County
Historical Society

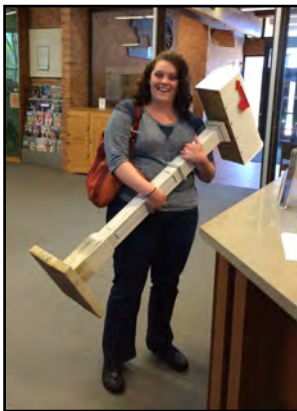


AnokaCoHistory



AnokaCoHistory

Meet Allison, an ACHS Intern



Hometown: Anoka, MN

Favorite place to visit: My favorite places to visit are the Minneapolis Institute of Art and Rocky Mountain National Park. MIA combines art and history beautifully and their rotating exhibits are always interesting. Rocky Mountain National Park provides wonderful camping and hiking opportunities and I always feel one with nature when I visit.

Where did you graduate/what did you study? I just graduated this past December from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. I majored in Archaeology and History with a minor in French. For the latter part of my time at the university I focused on the impacts of colonialism and empirical expansion upon indigenous identities in the ancient European world, primarily Romano-British interactions.

What are you working on for ACHS? I have been working on putting together the Historic Post Office Exhibit and Booklet.

What is the best thing you have stumbled upon in your work here at ACHS: The Great Brick Debacle of 1916. The Superintendent of the Post Office Site and the Contractor sent many heated letters disparaging the quality of the brick and could not agree on a suitable replacement. Who would have thought that would be the most infuriating aspect of Post Office construction?

Goal for beyond ACHS: I hope to earn a masters degree in cultural heritage management with an emphasis in archaeology. I would love to find a position that combines my passion for archaeology with my knack for history in a museum or research setting.

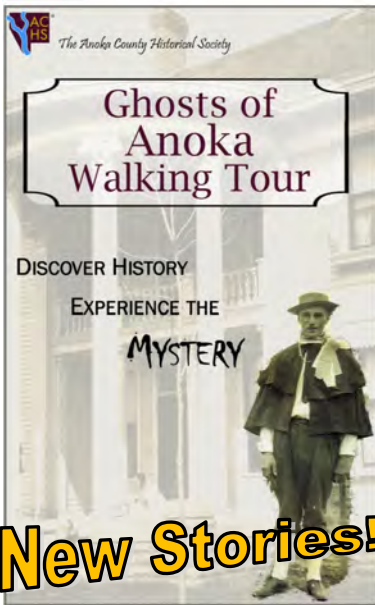


ACHS Remembers



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

William Prugh
2016



Ghosts Return to Anoka Streets

Which house hosted a séance with their church in the 1970s and why doesn't a ghost like rubber chickens? A feature of every Halloween, our **Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour** is back for its 13th season with new and updated stories.

A mixture of history and mystery, a ghost tour guide takes you on a mile walk through neighborhoods and historic downtown Anoka streets while imparting the ghostly experiences of home and business owners along the way. Come enjoy a spirit-filled tour for the first time, or make it a fall tradition and join us again.

Public Ghost Tours available on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays beginning September 16 with a final tour on October 31. Tickets for all tours are available at AnokaCountyHistory.org and are \$9/adults, \$7/children, \$7/members. Private tours are available by appointment.



Don't Miss ACHS's 1919 Model T!

The Grosslein Delivery Truck will make a special Halloween appearance at Anoka's Grand Day Parade on October 29.

Founded in Fridley, the Grosslein Bottling Company [1919-2009] later moved to the city of Anoka and was known for their Mission Orange Soda.

History Rising from the Grave

Explore the stories of those who reside in our "silent cities" during the *Monuments to Life* cemetery tours. These evening tours visit the grave sites of some of the area's best known and least known people. Tour guests will enjoy stories, traditions, characters, history and graveyard symbolism.

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

Oct. 13—Trott Brook Cemetery, Ramsey

Oct. 18—St. Genevieve's Cemetery, Centerville

Cost: \$9/members \$10/non-members



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTORS

All lists are current to August 24, 2016

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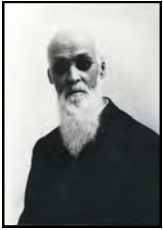
As a Business Member you receive membership benefits, a listing in our newsletter and website, an ACHS window cling to display, and free exhibit admission to all employees.— \$75

As a Business Sponsor you will receive all of the above plus a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, and credit towards event sponsorships.— \$300

If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org or visit our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Tickets and more information available for all programs at AnokaCountyHistory.org



Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours

Sept. 16-Oct. 31 (check website for selected dates)

Location: ACHS and a 1 mile walking route

Cost: \$7/members, \$9/adults, \$7 children (6-17)

Cemetery Tours—Monuments to Life

Oct 13—Trott Brook Cemetery, Ramsey

Oct. 18—St. Genevieve's Cemetery, Centerville

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Tour begins at the cemetery

Cost: \$9/members, \$10/non-members



Unveiling of the First Day Issue Halloween Stamp

September 29

Time: 11 a.m. program followed by activities in the afternoon

Location: Anoka City Hall Plaza

Cost: FREE



Signed, Sealed & DinnereD: Delivering the Memories of the County

September 29

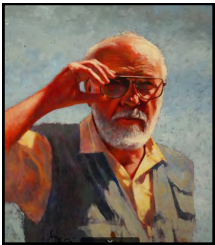
Time: 5:30 social hour

6:30 dinner

7:00 program

Location: Greenhaven Country Club

Cost: \$45/members, \$50/non-members



Jon Arfstrom Exhibit Reception

October 11

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: ACHS

View new exhibit featuring Jon Arfstrom, a prolific artist in the county, and meet his family as they share memories of him.

Cost: FREE

WWII Exhibit Opening & Around the County Ornament Dedication

December 6

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: ACHS

Get a first look at the ACHS's new WWII exhibit and witness as we hang the city of Columbus' ornament to join the other 20 cities on our Around the County tree.

Cost: FREE



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

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HISTORY 21

Volume 46 No.6 November-December 2016

Good enough for Fibonacci, good enough for us
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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

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Front Cover: Granville Sherman Jackson [Sept. 4, 1916– 1984] standing outside with his sled in a big snowstorm in the city of Anoka, March 1924. Granville is seven years old. From Jackson family photos.

Object ID#: P2075.16.84



From the President

Fall has been strange this year. Not bad – but strange. As much as I hate the snow, I am looking forward to winter. Winter is the perfect time to settle in and focus on history, since we are trapped inside. Of course, the best place to focus on history is to come to the History Center and dive deep into your community’s stories. We would love to see you and help you learn more about Anoka County...or your little corner of it.

There are a lot of things you can do at home or on your own. Open an online genealogy research account. Go through family photos (especially the current ones) and actually mark the names of all those people on the back so the next generation isn’t left with a box of mysteries. Organize your family documents and put them in a safe place. Scan photos and papers and organize the files on your computer. Tell stories to the little ones about family members who came before. Preserve that important item of clothing that has been sitting in the back of the closet. DON’T WAIT to do these things...you don’t have to be perfect or do everything at once. Just a bit at a time...slow and steady wins the race. Just start somewhere and leave a trail of ideas and information for those who come after you.

Thanksgiving is coming. It is a perfect time to bring the generations together to relive family memories. While you’re at it, don’t forget to put dates on all those photos. Nothing is more frustrating than finding a good photo with only the words “Aunt Mary and the dog,” no idea of when it was taken, or the dog’s name, for that matter!

Happy Fall and Happy Thanksgiving!

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



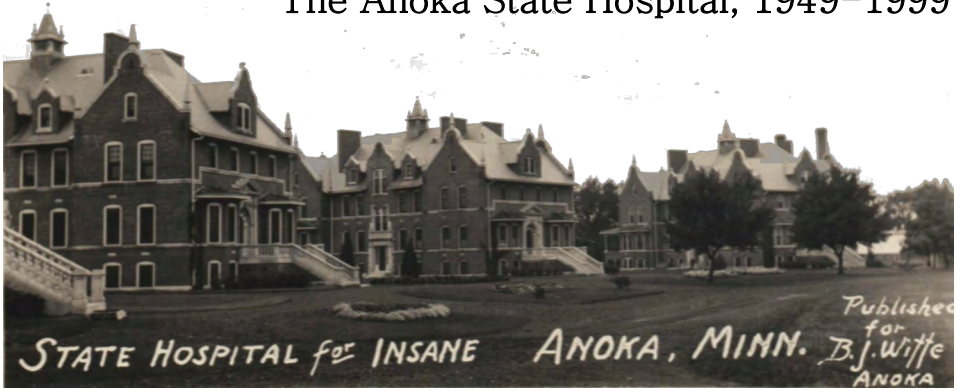
From the Director

While we strive to cover the history of Anoka County year-round, the Halloween season draws us intently to the city of Anoka as we conduct ghost tours as part of the festivities.

While we tell these stories “as they were told to us” by homeowners and business owners in the spirit of playful haunting, we would like to remind our members there are, indeed, real human beings at the root of our historic tales. The level of respect for the subjects of our stories cannot be over-emphasized in the wake of a story published in the *City Pages* magazine recently. The inflammatory, factually inaccurate article named the State Hospital "Minnesota's most haunted spot" that had a "reputation in suffering" where "torture" occurred. This has caused us to redouble our efforts to educate and explain the facility in context. The treatment of mentally ill people has changed through time as the fields of science and psychology learn more, as our social norms shift, and as families become better equipped to help manage the needs of loved ones. This is a far cry from the popular Halloween theme of a mad scientist experimenting on humans who are left to haunt their hospital. A fact we must never forget.

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director

FROM ASYLUM TO TREATMENT CENTER: The Anoka State Hospital, 1949–1999



By Audra Hilse, ACHS Archivist

This is a condensed version of our presentation given at the 2016 Oral History Association Annual Conference in Long Beach, CA.

The State Hospital in Anoka experienced many of the same ups and downs that affected the other Minnesota state hospitals during the first half of the 20th century. A low point of patient living conditions was reached in the 1940s, when the facility, designed to hold 600, actually housed well over 1,200 patients. Staffing needs hadn't grown with the patient numbers, so there were far too few staff members to provide even basic custodial care in a meaningful way.

During that decade, voices throughout the state hospital system in Minnesota began to speak out about the conditions, and as public awareness grew so did the impetus for change. In October of 1949, Minnesota Governor Luther Youngdahl ceremoniously burned 671 strait jackets and other restraints on the Anoka State Hospital grounds. This was the symbolic turning point in how mental health patients were treated, though the full changes took place over many years.

In 2014, the Anoka County Historical Society collected a series of oral histories about the Anoka State Hospital as part of a grant received from the Legacy funds. Twenty-two interviews were conducted with former employees, family members, community members, and patients, running 30-60 minutes in length. Collectively, these individuals had connections with the State Hospital, and often subsequently the Metro Regional Treatment Center, from the late 1940s all the way up through 2014 when the interviews were conducted, a span of almost 70 years.

This period was a time of change with efforts to improve not just at Anoka, but throughout the Minnesota state hospital system. This included many different elements, but three that were especially important (and get mentioned frequently in these Oral Histories): getting tuberculosis in the state hospital system under control, handling community relations, and as time went on, decentralizing the care of individuals with mental illness.

Tuberculosis had spread widely among state hospital

Above: Anoka State Hospital before its name change in 1937

patients in the first half of the 20th century. Beginning in 1950, the Anoka State Hospital became the designated center for treatment of mentally ill patients with tuberculosis. Mentions of tuberculosis and the treatment ward are common in our interviews of those who worked at the facility in the 1940s-1960s, but become rare among those who started their employment in the late 1960s. The isolated ward and aggressive treatments implemented had accomplished their goal, and those resources were reallocated to treating chemical dependencies in the 1970s.

Relationships between any state hospital and the nearby community often contain both beneficial and challenging elements. This appeared true of the Anoka State Hospital, as about three quarters of the interviewees for this project were asked about relations between the hospital and the community, providing mixed responses. Since the hospital sits on grounds within the city limits with unenclosed grounds, a great deal of interaction between patients and the community occurred over the years. Our narrators provided many examples, while reminding us these relations (positive and negative) went both ways.

The wider community beyond the city of Anoka seems to have held a mostly positive perception of the interactions between patients, residents, and businesses. Russ Farrell remembers finding employment for patients being discharged as part of his duties as a vocational counselor during the 1960s. He gave the potential employers “a very open, honest sell” that these were recently-discharged patients from the State Hospital and had great success finding work for them in department stores, hotels, and even a pickle factory in Minneapolis. Dorothy Berger learned it was important to be open with communities when finding houses to use for group homes, but also saw that honesty and explanation improved those community relations over time.

While relations between the State Hospital and the local community had many ups and downs throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the movement toward decentralization of mental health care had a much more constant trajectory. Following its peak of patient numbers in the 1940s, the Anoka State Hospital saw a steady decline in population over the next several decades.

This decline occurred for a number of reasons. In the early part of this period, during the 1950s and 1960s, the development of medications to help those with mental illness played a large role in allowing patients to leave the state hospital.

“...the meds were the important thing,” recalled Berger, “The meds began to improve as people did, companies did research and so on.”

With effective medication available, it was suddenly possible to provide actual treatment to many patients, a distinct break from the attitude of the hospital’s earliest years, when patients were sent there specifically because they were considered untreatable.

A change in attitude, on the part of both patients and staff, was also very important. Berger, a social worker employed at the hospital



A nurse handing out medication to a woman, circa 1950s.

for 15 years starting in 1966, was instrumental in bringing the Fairweather Program to the Anoka State Hospital. This program, developed by psychologist Dr. William Fairweather of California, focused on collaboration.

“[It] was about getting people to work together as a group, getting them to learn to accept the fact that they could be evaluated on how they did each week, and that they would get passes for leaving the hospital on visit based on their step levels, in other words, how well they did in the program,” Berger explained.

The goal of the program, which produced many successful cases, was to prepare patients for living away from the hospital in a small group home. Over time, Berger found more and more communities around the Twin Cities accepted group homes and that many patients were thus able to get away from the hospital and out into the world again.

The Fairweather program and employment opportunities found by Farrell for discharging patients helped those who were able integrate back into the community considerably. In addition, Dr. Kristine Haertl grew the Occupational Therapy program when she joined the Anoka State Hospital in 1988. At that time, she found an interesting mix of attitudes regarding how long patients should be there.

“...I was at that apex working with people from the old school in the ‘80s, who believed clients should live there,” said Haertl. “And, many of the clients did live there. Many of the clients I had worked with were there for over 25 years. However, you had another cohort of clients that typically were leaving within five, six months.”

Our interviewees certainly believed in the goal of the State Hospital to help patients become functional and able to return to their communities when possible.

“[The treatment now] is more humane, it is more scientific and it is probably more beneficial, because there are patients now who live to improve enough so that they are discharged and are able to go to either a halfway house into the community, or even to return to their own family,” said Dr. Markle Karlen.

The trajectory of deinstitutionalization involved more than just the greater effort to treat patients.

“There was a trend of State Hospitals going out of existence,” said former employee Clifford Nelson.

Some of this can be accounted for by the growing existence of nursing homes, which absorbed the population of elderly patients who had formerly been in the state hospital system, some of them undoubtedly suffering from dementia or Alzheimer’s.

As a whole, those interviewed by ACHS during this project at best had concerns about the overall process of decentralization, while many thought that it was not a good thing.

“I don’t know when they started this—putting people out of the mental institutions to just go to halfway houses or live on their own,” said Ann Larson, a



View of a common room in one of the Cottages.

nurse. "And they're not able to do that—most of them aren't. That's why they say there's a lot of homeless people."

Many interviewees were concerned about the number of homeless mentally ill that can be found in both the Anoka and greater Twin Cities metro areas at the time of this project.

"Well, I personally felt that some of them should have remained in the hospital, but I guess the philosophy at that time was that community facilities should be able to take care of them," said Roy Newcomb, an Anoka County Social Service Department caseworker in the 1970s and 80s.

"I do believe there are some individuals who need longer term placement," said Dr. Haertl. "I do not think we have...enough housing options where individuals can go and stay in a supportive environment for long term."

All three former patients that ACHS interviewed as part of this project--Cynthia, Larry, and Kris--felt they had benefited from their time at the Anoka State Hospital. Cynthia and Larry both said they had needed that time under care, and although Kris had mixed feelings about her stay, she did feel that ultimately a correct diagnosis of her mental health problems and finding a good medication to manage them had definitely improved her life. Larry, who was a patient in the adolescent program in the late 1960s, said at the end of his interview, "I think they should open it back up. I think they should have a place for people that have issues with their inner demons."

Among former patients and employees alike, there seemed a strong consensus of opinion: treatment programs for those mentally ill who just need diagnosis, medication, and some short-term care are very important, but equally important are housing and care for those who truly struggle to live on their own, and are in need of long-term support. The shift away from keeping all mentally ill patients in the State Hospital for life appears a good one, though the further shift to taking away that long-term centralized care for everyone was, perhaps, not.



Patients getting ready for bed. Faces have been blurred to protect privacy.

Editors note: Although we had limited room in both our presentation and this article, we encourage you to read the full transcripts of the Anoka State Hospital Oral Histories, which are available on our website at: <https://anokacountyhistory.org/reference-library/oral-history-collection/anoka-state-hospital-oral-interviews/>. Audio and/or video of these interviews are available at the History Center. We also have oral history collections relating to agriculture in Anoka County, as well as World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War on our website at: <https://anokacountyhistory.org/reference-library/oral-history-collection/>.

Bringing Anoka County History to California

In October, ACHS Executive Director Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp and Archivist Audra Hulse attended the Oral History Association 2016 Annual Conference in Long Beach, California.

Invited by Professor Nan Yamane (CSU-Northridge) to present as part of a panel on State Hospital related oral history collections, we discussed the interviews completed for our 2014 Anoka State Hospital Oral History project. A condensed version of that presentation features as the main article of this issue of *History 21*, and a video of the presentation will appear soon - keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for that!

Since the panel only took a couple of hours late on Saturday afternoon, both Rebecca and Audra spent three full conference days attending other panels and absorbing new ideas and technical knowledge to help ACHS complete more and better oral histories in the future. They connected with several other researchers conducting projects related to mental illness and hope to maintain a relationship with them as we move forward with future Anoka State Hospital and mental health related projects in Anoka County.

Panels discussing military narrators gave them some thoughts both about the upcoming WWII exhibit set to open December 6, as well looking ahead to collecting veteran and family stories from the conflicts in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. One panel gave us some helpful resources on oral history training, which we hope to use with future volunteers. Rebecca heard new ideas on how to teach students about oral history that will fit nicely with our Young Historians Club students or classroom work. Audra discovered some important issues about making oral histories and other collections material fully accessible for those with visual or hearing impairments. A consistent

theme throughout many panels also emphasized the importance of continuing to use oral histories over time -- not only capturing the interview before the individual's knowledge and stories are lost, but also leveraging the information into other projects as well. Books, documentaries, and exhibits were all mentioned by conference presenters as viable projects to further use an oral history collection.



Audra poses with members of the panel presentation on mental health prior to the event.

Since Suburbanization sits in the forefront of the minds of ACHS staff due to the current exhibit *Farms to Flamingos*, Rebecca found a session on gentrification and urban renewal particularly interesting. As the inner city populations changed in the 1950s and 60s to create the more affluent suburban ring, so now more “hipster” communities boom in the redeveloping spaces of urban areas, pushing out the historical, often ethnically diverse, communities to the suburbs, with the hope more affordable housing can be built there. The criticism of this movement is the loss of culture and rising tax rates that leave families in a mode of relocation and flux. An under-researched similarity exists between this and the experience of the small family farm during the suburban movement, through which time tax prices rose and development stripped the small communities of their historical identity.

Rebecca and Audra learned a considerable amount in those three full days, and are excited to bring that knowledge back to ACHS and Anoka County. They had the chance to catch a little bit of sun and eat some good food in between panels, and enjoyed relatively smooth travel both going and coming back.

We would like to thank the following donors, who generously helped us out when our limited travel budget wasn't enough to cover this unexpected opportunity!

David VenHuizen	Johannes Allert	Daniel and Mary Capra
Mike and Mary Clark	William and Kate Morphew	Shelly Peterson
Debbra Johnston	Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 470	
Anonymous		

THE ACHS ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Although the written word remains critical to the field of history, little compares with hearing the emotion-filled voices of people who have survived the trials and triumphs of their lives. ACHS has worked for several decades to collect the oral history of Anoka County, and the experiences of the people who live here.

Our collection includes more than 250 interviews held on media from cassette tapes, and CDs to purely digital formats. Transcripts of many of the interviews are available to read in the ACHS Reading Room, or on our website AnokaCountyHistory.org.

In these interviews, past and present residents of Anoka County share their story on topics such as: Law Enforcement, History of Agriculture, Anoka State Hospital, Vietnam War, Korean War and World War II.

A long time resident and former Sheriff, Buster Talbot, conducted three different sessions with ACHS interviewers. During one of these, Buster noted, “Do you know, it really bothers me, I woke up the other morning and I thought, ‘God, I should write a book. I really should, about the family, about the job, and the stories that we – the things we did.’” While he never made that book before he passed away this year, the stories and history Buster would have included now exist, available for the next generation to access.



October Volunteer Champions



On most October evenings chattering groups of people can be seen following a costumed guide through the streets of Anoka on our “Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours.” The 14 Ghost Tour Guide volunteers become the face of ACHS, sharing homeowners’ stories of odd happenings and history tied to the buildings and places on the tour. They lead groups of up to 25 people through darkened streets on rainy or windy nights, past the eyes of the curious. They talk over Anoka Tornados football games, pause for loud motors traveling past on Main Street, and field a variety of questions, that range from what year Anoka became a city, to what’s the best place to go for dinner and a drink after the tour. They do it all.

This year the guides led a record 64 tours in September and October. Thanks to their help, over 1,200 people enjoyed an evening of History and Mystery, and learned more about the Anoka County Historical Society. There is no debate—we would not be able to offer these tours without their help. It is because of their dedication that these tours are one of ACHS’s largest fundraisers for the year allowing us to continue to tell the History of Anoka County.

Sound like your cup of tea, coffee, or even Pepsi (my personal vice)? If you are interested in joining the ranks of these dedicated volunteers, connect with me at the History Center or at Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org. Planning for the 2017 season begins this spring!

A HUGE thank you to 2016’s Official Ghost Tour Guides

June Anderson
Barb Arveson
Jeri Bates
Darlene Bearl
Jillian Cautrell
Steve Florman
Kay George

Theresa Gould
Brian Jewett
Faith Kammerdiener
Elaine Koehn
Shawn Lawson
Mary Nolan
Ann Steen



ACHS Remembers



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

Adrienne Yeager



History Club Update:

The second year of Anoka Middle School for the Arts' "Young Historians Club" kicked off with laughter and learning this October. The club began last year with an astonishing 75 members, which has *increased to an unprecedented membership this school year of nearly 125 students!*

How, you may ask, can this occur? (Cue shocked faces and scary music) With a timekeeper, several volunteers, teachers, and staff happy to shift the group through stations that included the Anoka Dam. While viewing the current dam, the students looked at construction photos, discussed canoe lifts, and learned about the industry supported by the rivers of Anoka County. The students also took a behind the scenes tour of the collections with the ACHS Archivist, explored the Exhibit Hall, and learned about logging by participating in logging themed relay races with ACHS intern Allison.

This after-school activity is optional for sixth grade students at Anoka Middle School. Once a month, the students and their teachers walk the three blocks to the Anoka History Center and rotate through different stations designed to take history out of their text book, and foster a different way of thinking about the history all around us.

We welcome your financial support of this program, which has grown beyond our budget -- please donate by calling or visiting our website



Stamp Unveiling, check!

September 29...a day of celebration in Anoka as the curtain fell from four new jack-o-lantern stamps in front of a packed City Hall plaza, an HPC plaque was commemorated at the old post office, and ACHS hosted their fall fundraising dinner.

You can relive the fun via a video link on our facebook page,

or find photos using the tags #halloweenstamps or #ACHSevents. We would like to thank our sponsors *PSD, Federal Cartridge, Pierce Hotel, City of Anoka, The Weaver Brothers Company, Volunteers for Jim Abeler, the Nordin family, and Pierce Refrigeration* one more time for their support of local history. We also received silent auction items from individuals and businesses, and generous support from the family of Jon Arfstrom. Thanks to our attendees who committed to keeping the momentum of ACHS moving forward!

Find unique gifts with local flavor at the ACHS Gift Shop! Give a piece of local history to those you love this season. From beautiful prints and sassy tote-bags to books exploring the history in our own back yard, there is something for everyone.

Each purchase supports the Anoka County Historical Society and our mission to tell the history and story of Anoka County.

Jon Arfstrom Prints:

Featured in collections and museums across the country, enjoy a piece by this local artist in your own home. Inspired by his view of the Rum River, nature, and the Halloween Parade, these Arfstrom prints are the perfect gift to remind people of the beauty and talent in our County.

Eight prints are available to purchase in various sizes. Not all prints available in all sizes. See the full selection at the Anoka History Center or at AnokaCountyHistory.org



Sunnies in the Forest

16x20 Print: \$50.00

11x14 Print: \$35.00

8x10 Print: \$20.00



Untitled (Winter Scene)



Spooks on Parade



Castle on the Rum



Arfstrom Note Cards (blank)

Thank you, Happy Birthday, Merry Christmas, Thinking of You. Send your thoughts on these special notecards featuring original artwork by Anoka artist Jon Arfstrom.

Halloween Set of 3 \$12.00 3 scenes, 5x7

Rum River Set of 4 \$16.00 2 scenes, 5x7

Out for Delivery Tote

This whimsical tote-bag is a mash up of new and old. Featuring a photograph from the ACHS collection depicting a Rural Free Delivery horse drawn mail wagon. Text reads "Your Package Has Shipped: Out for Delivery."

\$20.00 14x15, 100% cotton, hand wash recommended

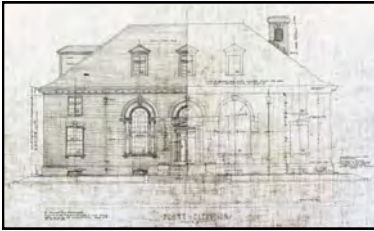


More items available in the ACHS Gift Shop at the Anoka History Center

Anoka Halloween Collectibles

A booklet guide to the history and collectibles of the Halloween Capital of the World.

\$7.00 35 pages, 5x8.5



Local History Booklets

Hand held history ready to travel. Booklet topics include: Anoka Post Office, Woodbury House, Colonial Hall, and Anoka County in the Civil War.

\$5.00 each 24-28 pages, 5x8.5

Anoka Post Office Blueprint

An iconic building in Anoka, this blueprint captures the Georgian architectural elements and Palisade windows of this 1916 building.

\$10.00 11x14

Picturing Anoka County: 150 Years of Anoka County History

Sharron Stockhausen
Our County, our home. From celebrations to heartaches, explore the story of the first 150 years of our County's history.

\$24.09 Members (\$26.77) hardcover, 159 pages, 9x11.5

Keepers of the County

Vickie Wendel
Starting in 1857 the Anoka County Sheriff's department handled everything from murders and car chases to escaped alligators and moonshiners. Look at how the county changed through the lens of those charged with protecting it.

\$29.83 Members (\$33.16) hardcover, 368 pages, 9x12

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!

Don't wait another two months to find out what the ACHS is up to, find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! We share photographs and artifacts from the collections, updates about upcoming programs, and a behind the scenes look at antics around the History Center.



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory



AnokaCoHistory

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTORS

All lists are current to October 24, 2016

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As a Business Member you receive membership benefits, a listing in our newsletter and website, an ACHS window cling to display, and free exhibit admission to all employees.— \$75

As a Business Sponsor you will receive all of the above plus a business card sized ad in our newsletter, an ad with a link on our web site, and credit towards event sponsorships.— \$300

If you want more information or your business would like to become a member or sponsor with ACHS call, 763.421.0600, email Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org or visit our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Our Little Minnesota Nurse: The life and legacy of Theresa Ericksen by Johannes Allert

November 10

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: ACHS

Theresa Ericksen's size, countenance, and demeanor concealed her unbridled independence, professionalism, and drive. Noted for her life of service to others, her greatest accomplishment occurred literally by accident. Learn about her life of service and discover the how this Army Nurse's request lead to the establishment of our state's first national cemetery at Fort Snelling.

Cost: FREE - seating is first-come, first-serve



Veterans Day Dinner & Program

November 12

Time: 6 p.m. social, 7 p.m. dinner

Location: Edward Cutter American Legion, Anoka

Enjoy the company of other service members before a carved ham and turkey dinner! Memorabilia will be on display, including Edward B. Cutter's footlocker from WWI and local history representatives.

Cost: \$11, tickets available for purchase at the Legion



Fridley Historical Society

“Totally Awesome 1980s Christmas”

Saturdays and Sundays, November 19-December 22

Time: 11 a.m.—3 p.m.

View the Fridley Historical Society's new 1980s Christmas exhibit. It seems the decade had gone neon. It was a time of video games, synthesized music, shoulder pads, leg warmers, and friendship bracelets. You made it through the 80s and had big hair to prove it. Come and take a look back.

Cost: FREE

WWII Exhibit Opening, Special Stamp cancellation at the old Post Office, Around the County Ornament Dedication

December 6 - all day activities; Reception from 6 - 8 p.m.

Location: ACHS and the old post office on Third Ave, Anoka

Get a first look at the brand new WWII exhibit, witness as we hang the city of Columbus' ornament to join the other 20 cities on our Around the County tree, and get a special commemorative stamp cancellation to celebrate the 100th anniversary at the old post office. All in one day? Join us for the fun when you can!





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