



# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.1 January-February 2017

Indivisible . . . except by 1, 3, 7 and itself

[AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://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:*

*Object ID#: 2016.1726.062 & 2016.1726.063 Different views of Mary Weber from Centerville. We received these photographs as part of a collection of papers from her son, Donald Weber, after he passed away. The collection contains photographs of the Centerville farm, and tracks the farm's ownership through three generations.*



## From the President



This month 100 years ago on January 11, 1917 the photographer documenting the new Post Office in Anoka captured this image of the Carriers Toilet. In the building blueprints there is a designated Women’s restroom and Carrier restroom, assuming all Carriers would be male. This view shows a room we rarely think to preserve or remember for history. In this new year, what stories or memories are so normal you haven’t thought to pass them on? It may be unremarkable now, but 100 years from now it is unexpected history.

*Orville Lindquist*  
Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



## From the Director

New Year, new us, new roles, new...sigh. With Vickie now retired from her position as Program Manager, ACHS staff has begun to assimilate her duties into the remaining staff time budget. You can imagine how difficult of a task this is proving!

Our theory is as follows: Sara, in her role of Volunteer Coordinator, will train some great people to help give programs, conduct some herself, and use exhibit research to create booklets and PowerPoint presentations - all while helping library patrons and doing her usual job. Audra, our Archivist and Admin guru, can use her knowledge of the collections and time spent with Vickie in the past year to maintain the exhibit hall and look under all those unturned stones of research for us - all while responding to research requests and making sure the memberships and bank accounts look tidy. As for me? Vickie built relationships with an enormous number of community groups and individuals that need maintenance and care. That role fits well with what I see my job as regardless - getting to know you as members and county residents so we can best tell your story. That is, after all, the mission of ACHS!

*Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp*

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



## A MESSAGE FROM VICKIE WENDEL

The first time I heard about the Anoka County Historical Society was about 1986. I was teaching a Community Education class and the instructor in the next room was leading a talk about Anoka County history. She was a volunteer from ACHS and she invited me to visit the museum in Anoka.

*There's a museum in Anoka??*

I went on a tour of Colonial Hall, the home of ACHS soon after, and then began researching in their library. At that time, there were four part-time (roughly 20 hours per week or less) staff and a dozen or so really active volunteers. Since I loved history, they soon invited me to volunteer.

I led tours and helped with events until late summer of 1989 when one of the staff members decided to retire -- and asked me if I could to work at Colonial Hall.

*YES!*

By that time, I already knew the standing mantra around the organization: we have no room for anything and cannot properly keep history unless we get more room. Resolving that took extensive work on the part of many people and fund raising for a solution began in earnest during the spring 1995. By the fall of 2001, we enlisted an army of volunteers and moving vans (quite literally - we included the Anoka National Guard) to take our precious artifacts from Colonial Hall to our new home at the current Anoka County History Center. The remodeling of the building was not complete, but we opened our research library in January of 2002 and held a grand opening in July. More than 1,000 people came through our doors opening day and the best thing was that they were from *ALL OVER THE COUNTY!* People knew about ACHS!! Not only had people become aware a museum existed in the county, but that it was a COUNTY organization—we had reached out to every community to share and preserve THEIR history!



A special highlight for me came a week or so later when a gentleman in a wheelchair came in. He browsed through the library for a bit, then toured the galleries. When he came out, he stopped at the desk to say, “I’ve always loved local history, but I could never get my chair into the old house. Thank you.”

There are so many other memories that stand out about my time at ACHS. One was at the closing ceremony for the Korean War exhibit, when we had more than 100 people here on a very cold January night. Many were Korean War vets and we had included them in the closing program. The president of the Korean War Veterans Chapter of the Twin Cities opened his part with the words, “Korea may be called the Forgotten War, but not here in Anoka County. You remember us. Thank you.”

There are a multitude of farmers and past farmers around the county who all know me from the agriculture exhibit series and they are dear to my heart. Having farm roots myself, I relate to them and even met the challenge when one dared me to drive his tractor! He thought I was a city girl...

Then there are the fire fighters and law officers whom I got to know from working on an exhibit and a series of oral history interviews about those who provide public safety in the county. Shortly after, I was “conscripted” to write the history of the Anoka County Sheriff’s Office—I make it a policy to never argue with heavily armed people, but the experience of getting to know the Sheriff and the people in his office was amazing.

Twice, projects I was a part of won national recognition and awards. The first was the historic interpretation of a trail along the bank of the Rum River with markers and kiosks. I love the idea that it is enjoyed by hundreds of people each week yet today and continues to be a source of great pride for the city of Anoka.



The second project is what I consider the highest achievement of my entire career and that was the exhibit on Vietnam. I first had to earn the trust of those very skeptical veterans (NOT easy), then somehow take their stories—sometimes very painful stories—and turn them into an exhibit that would reach the public in a deeper way than just “a bunch of military stuff.” All I could do was use the words of the vets and let them tell the story.

What happened next was unexpected and amazing. By letting these veterans tell their stories in their way, they healed some old wounds. The community saw them for who they were and rallied behind them. The vets brought their families and shared stories with them they had never spoken of before. I had two wives come to me privately and say their husbands were no longer

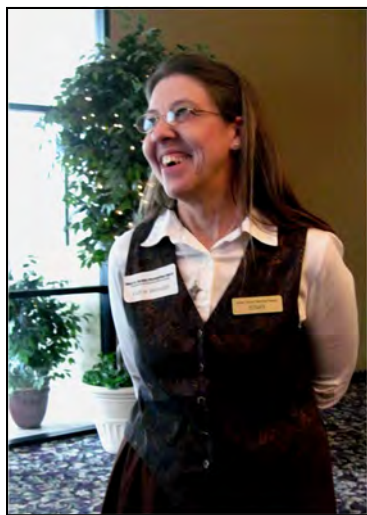


having nightmares--they believed it was because of the chance the vets had to tell their stories.

*THAT is what museum work and history is all about. THAT is what I have been working so hard for—to preserve someone’s story in a way that will make a difference.*

There are so many stories I could tell about my time at ACHS; how it has grown and matured, become one of the most respected county organizations in the state, how we earned state and national awards--but that would only be the first chapter. There are many more ways I can see this organization growing and reaching out. I feel so good about the staff we have and what I know they are capable of doing with the support of a strong board and vibrant membership.

And I *AM* going to be a part of that future! My “retirement” plans include a lot of family time, maybe some travel, but certainly volunteering at ACHS. My heart will always be here.



## CELEBRATING VICKIE WENDEL

After 27 years as an employee with the Anoka County Historical Society and several before that as a volunteer, Vickie Wendel developed a knack for knowing everybody. This was evidenced on December 20, when over 80 people dropped by the History Center to help celebrate her career impact on local history. Rather than calling her transition away from ACHS an "official retirement," staff have preferred to think of it as the beginning of her volunteer career.

With many local media and photographers in the room, friends and family had ample time to reflect on their experiences with Vickie, her contribution to county history, and her lasting impact on ACHS as an organization.

Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart presented Vickie with a Sheriffs coin in recognition for outstanding service.

"In my six years as sheriff of the county, this is the 21st coin that I've issued and only the second one outside of the law enforcement family or arena," said Stewart. "Because she is family, though I'd say we're crossing the line a little bit."

Members of the Vietnam Veterans of America post #470 spoke about how much Vickie and her work on telling their stories in the Vietnam exhibit meant to them. In her name they donated \$500 to ACHS—which Vickie asked be added to our Education Fund to bring more local history to students and youth in the County.

To try and combat many sets of teary eyes, staff members lightened the mood and presented



Vickie with an "Emergency Kit" for when she missed ACHS, which included a stuffed Kraken (a replica of a staff mascot), and ACHS paraphernalia. Staff also formally dedicated the "Vickie Wendel Break Room" in her honor and as "A space dedicated to volunteers & staff as a reminder to always take a granola bar moment." In response to

Vickie's barbs about now being a volunteer and perhaps a bit unruly, Sara Given made sure Vickie had a volunteer application and manual detailing expectations in hand before she left the building.



Not everyone could attend our celebration so we thank those who sent cards, notes and remembrances. A Vickie Wendel display showcases the various period pieces she wore for programs over the years, a maternity outfit donated to the collection, and surprises that mysteriously accumulated in her office cube throughout the years.



While we are sad to see Vickie leave as an employee and will certainly miss her infinite mind and laughter, we wish her the best and eagerly await the future!



Sometimes, objects in our care need more expertise than we have here at the historical society. In this particular case, the objects in question are two large, stained glass windows that used to be part of the Anoka Methodist Church building from the 1870s up through the 1950s. That building, located on the north east corner of Third Avenue and Jackson Street in Anoka, was eventually

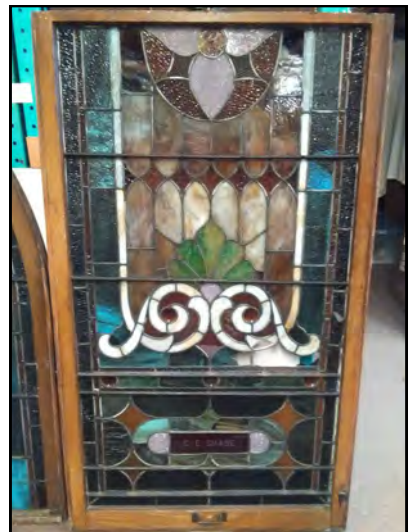
demolished, and the land where it stood is part of the Anoka County Government Center today. While the original church site and building are gone, the congregation continued at a new location on South Street in Anoka.

Three windows, two large and one small, were saved from the demolition, and followed the congregation to the new United Methodist Church building for many years. The church donated them to ACHS in 2014. All three windows have been properly cleaned, as part of a volunteer project. The volunteer, Aly, meticulously swabbed each glass piece before traveling to Rome to further her education in preserving pieces like these. The small stained glass window is in good condition and has been protected appropriately and stored in our collections area.

The two larger windows, unfortunately, have at some point sustained damage. The wooden frame of the peaked window is separating from the glass at the top, and the rectangular window is missing glass pieces in the middle. Unfortunately, stained glass is difficult to stabilize and preserve in a partially damaged condition. Due to the nature of the glass and the lead holding it in place, unless it is fully repaired, a damaged stained glass piece will slowly continue to deteriorate over time.

As one might imagine, though, repairing stained glass is an expensive process. Matching glass must be found to fill in all possible gaps, the seams holding them together must be redone, and they must be set snugly back in their frames. It was not feasible in our budget for either 2014 or 2015. We were looking at ways to raise the needed funds during 2016, when the generosity of a long-time member intervened.

LeOra Kroger was an Anoka resident as well as a member and supporter of ACHS for many years. Sadly, she passed away in late 2015. It was not until early 2016 that ACHS received a notice that she had left the Society a very generous bequest - \$50,000. LeOra left behind no known relatives and only a small circle of friends. The ACHS Staff and Board had lengthy

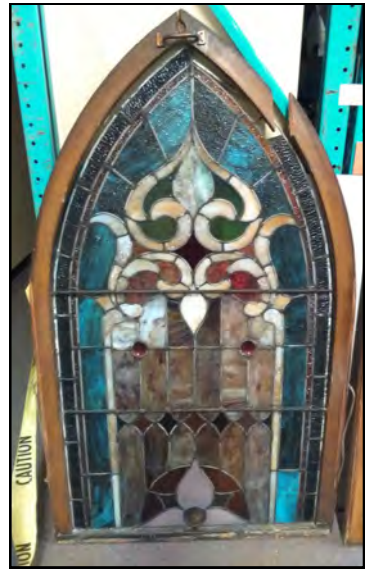




discussions about what projects we could support which would best honor LeOra's memory.

By a happy coincidence, LeOra had been a member of the United Methodist Church. Once we learned that, it was an easy decision to set aside part of the bequest to cover the full repair of the stained glass windows. Once that repair is complete, the windows will hang in the ACHS lobby where they can not only be seen and enjoyed by everyone coming to the museum, but also provide a very visible celebration of LeOra's legacy of generosity and support to ACHS.

Down Home Stained Glass of Anoka will be doing the repairs on these two lovely windows. Due to a busy schedule, they are picking the windows up during the first week of January, 2017. Expect to see the repaired windows hanging up at ACHS sometime in the early part of this year!



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## Donating Artifacts to ACHS:

In this new year as you make your way through family photographs, papers or collected items, you may be wondering, what types of artifacts does the Anoka County Historical Society accept? The simple answer is: many different kinds! However, we have some definite criteria that an artifact must meet before we can accept it. The biggest one is that the item must be **RELATED TO ANOKA COUNTY** in some way. If it doesn't have that Anoka County connection, then we are not able to accept it here – no matter how interesting an artifact it is! The second important criterion is the **STORY OF THE ARTIFACT**. Who did it belong to? How old is it? What was it used for? An old quilt might be a very beautiful item...but if we don't know who made it, when it was made, or what family used it, then it does not tell us much about the story of Anoka County.

When thinking about a new item for the collection, we also keep in mind the condition of the artifact(s), how large or voluminous they are, and whether or not we have anything like them in the collection already. Our resources (of space, money, and time) are unfortunately limited, and therefore we must choose wisely when we accept donations.

So, if you are interested in donating an artifact to us, we urge you to keep these things in mind, and contact us first! We are always happy to talk about a potential donation, answer any questions that you as an artifact donor might have or schedule a time to view the potential donation at ACHS.

### Quick tips:

- Donating an item takes time (there's paperwork!) so plan to sit and fully fill out the history of your item.
- Collection Cap (we have enough of these!): old newspapers, sewing machines, pump organs, WWI & WWII military uniforms.
- Remember the story! A great story transforms an item into a gem of County history.

**W**ith the new year here, I've started to look forward to all the amazing history opportunities in 2017. Vickie's retirement means the remaining staff at ACHS won't have time to make it to all the events we want to visit, or the projects we want to tackle. We like to fancy ourselves Wonder Women, but even she only has two hands and 24 hours in a day! Trust me, I'm working on changing that last one.

Because of this, I want to mobilize our amazing volunteer force to help reach places that we can't, and scratch those itches we can't quite reach on our own. Take a look at the following new volunteer opportunities at ACHS. Each has the description, availability needs and training dates detailed. If you are interested in any of these, give me a call or drop me a note and RSVP to the trainings.

Thanks for your help in helping ACHS do all we do!



Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator

Sara@aAnokaCountyHistory.org

### ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWER



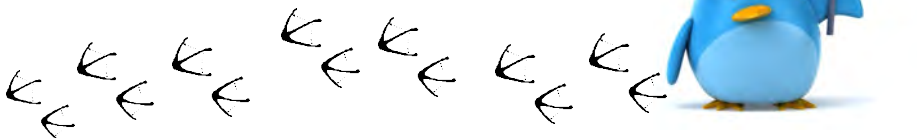
Help preserve history first hand by interviewing those who lived it. Oral histories are a key way to keep our local stories and memories alive for future generations and researchers. We need interviewers to lead and record interviews with Anoka County residents.

**Requirements:** Be comfortable with people, skilled at listening to others' stories, and comfortable with recording technology.

**Availability:** Schedule a minimum of one oral history recording session per month.

**Training:** Thursday, February 2, 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center.

Guest trainer Ryan Barland from MNHS. Receive the MNHS standards for conducting oral interviews, as well as some information on the goals we have about gathering veteran stories.



## ACHS FRONT DESK



See and help with the day to day workings of the History Center at the Front Desk. Your help here allows Sara or Audra to finish programs, process collections or research new exhibits uninterrupted.

**Tasks:** Answer phones, greet patrons, field questions, check out books, manage the public computer wait list, and help with administrative duties.

**Availability:** Minimum two shifts per month to gain experience. Shifts are 3 hours each.

**Training:** Saturday, February 4 at 10:15 a.m. **OR** Tuesday February 21 at 7 p.m. at the History Center. We will cover phone use, the library check out system, and the odd questions and stories that patrons ask front desk staff.

## FAIRS & FESTIVALS HOST

Represent ACHS and have fun at the local town festivals around Anoka County. We want to talk and learn about local history in all corners of the county. One way to do this is to set up a table at each town's festival throughout the summer and fall.

**Requirements:** Be comfortable talking with people, able to pick up the supply box, set up table at festival location, and share basic information about ACHS and our mission.

**Availability:** Festival dates vary. Sign up for at least one festival throughout season.

**Training:** Thursday April 20, 6:30 p.m. at the Anoka History Center. We will cover festival opportunities, ACHS trivia, and provide an introduction to the fun, hands-on artifacts in our festival traveling box.



## Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!

Don't wait another two months to discover 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.



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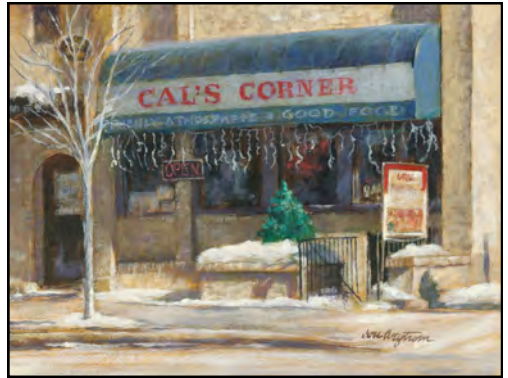
AnokaCoHistory

# ANNUAL APPEAL

Like all the non-profits in the county and state, ACHS relies on the generosity of donors, grantors, and organizations to make ends meet each year. We would like to thank those of you who responded to our annual fall appeal!

While we didn't meet our goal, those who gave increased their giving by 25 percent on average and also included several first time donors who found a project to love. We're extremely grateful to those who stretched and supported the legacy project of Jon Arfstrom's art.

If the annual appeal letter didn't survive the holiday rush at your home, getting lost in a pile or tossed out with the wrapping paper, fear not! You can still send a donation to ACHS by mail or online payment with a memo for staff to designate it to the Jon Arfstrom preservation fund.



## AN EVENING WITH MARY WOODBURY

Join the longest reigning resident of the Woodbury house, Mary Woodbury, at the Mad Hatter for High Tea and journey through history. Mary moved into this house in 1861 when she was just a toddler and lived there with her family, then her husband, until 1936. Who knows the home better than her?

You'll enjoy a specially prepared High Tea created by the acclaimed Mad Hatter Restaurant and visit with Mary as she talks about her home. Share in local 19th century Anoka gossip, hear about her shenanigans as a child, and even receive a keepsake gift booklet about the Woodbury House from Mary.

**Where:** Mad Hatter Restaurant—1632 S. Ferry Street, Anoka

**When:** March 1 at 6 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$45 + tax and gratuity. Reservations made through the Mad Hatter. Limited seating. [www.madhatteranoka.com](http://www.madhatteranoka.com)





## A BRAND NEW LOOK



The Philolectian [FY-lo-LEK-tian] Room is part of the history of education in Anoka County. Named after a philanthropic women's group in the city of Anoka, the Philolectians organized in 1890 and proclaimed themselves "Lovers of Learning." These influential members of the Anoka community saw the need for public library spaces in town, and helped bring the Carnegie Library to Anoka in 1904.

This meeting room at the Anoka County History Center is used for a variety of different activities during the day-day to workings of the historical society: quiet study, board meetings on every second Thursday, hosted programs, over 100

wiggly kids for the Young Historians Club, community meetings, tax preparation, and now the Rum River Writers Group. We also use the room for larger collections projects to lay out quilts or maps for rehousing.

Thanks to an anonymous donation early in 2016 earmarked for this project, we undertook to remake this room which suffered from the amount of use it received. First, new carpet transformed the space, and soon we added new furniture to create a cozy seating area, a beverage buffet for meetings, and bookshelf complete with old tomes. We installed a gallery hanging system, so we can easily feature art by Jon Arfstrom or other pieces from the ACHS collection and a new projection screen.

While the room is not yet complete--we still wish to add a new conference table and electric fireplace insert--it is certainly brighter and ready to continue as a friendly space for learning.



## ACHS Remembers



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

Evertt Levens

Albert Loehlein

**General & Annual**

**Appeal Donations**

LaVerne Anderson  
 Rose Anderson  
 Betty Bearl  
 Dennix & Darlene Berg  
 Shannon Boie  
 Daniel & Mary Capra  
 Dorothy Carlson  
 Jeannine Chamberlain  
 Shirley Christenson  
 Mike & Mary Clark  
 Sandra Connor  
 Jerry & Elizabeth  
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 Carol & Bob Dordan  
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 Lora Hamilton  
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 Barbara Hughes  
 Louie & Kay Job  
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 Carol Moen  
 Arlene Mootz  
 Janet & bill Nelson  
 Harold Netkow  
 Beverly Olson  
 Roger & Avis Oppeward  
 Al & Betty Pearson  
 Charles Porter  
 Lynne & Terry Rickert  
 Michael Ritchie  
 Robert Rither  
 Leslie Ross  
 Rum River Writers  
     Group  
 William & Lona

Schreiber  
 Michael Scott  
 Jean Seaborg  
 Debra Setterberg  
 Jill & Steve Smith  
 Gary & Ann Steen  
 Thomas & Kristi Sullivan  
 Eugene & Monica  
     Swieringa  
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 Barb Thurston & Joey  
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 Darrel Untereker  
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     America #470  
 Wesley & Cheryl  
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 Zilla Way  
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 Ernie & Sharon  
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**Donations Made in**

**Memory of:**

Marlys Chutich  
 Dick Swanson  
 Buster Talbot  
 Jill Weaver

**Artifact Donors**

James & Barbara Abeler  
 Anoka County Farm  
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     Society  
 Samantha Jenson  
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Dennis Koste  
 Martina Lietzau  
 Kathee Lundberg  
 Robert Olson  
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 Gail Schrooten  
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**New Members**

James & Jacqueline  
     Neilson

**ACHS Business**

**Members**

The BIG White House  
 Coon Rapids Historical  
     Commission  
 Dan Gould Jewelers  
 Forest Lake Contracting  
 The Mad Hatter  
 Northeast Bank  
 Nowthen Historical  
     Power Association  
 Peterson Shoes Store  
 Pierce Refrigeration  
 Rescuing Pets & Saving  
     Vets  
 Terry Overacker  
     Plumbing



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**Rum River Writers Group**

Every Thursday, 1:15 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center  
Open to interested and aspiring writers

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center  
Open to membership and the public

**History of Education in Anoka County—Library Program**

January 14 at 2 p.m. at the Rum River Library

Learn about the history of learning from country schools, to the rapid growth of schools with the Baby Boomers.

**Oral History Interview Training**

February 2, 6 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center

See page 10 for more details. Please RSVP by February 1.

**Front Desk Training**

February 4 at 10:15 a.m. *OR* February 21 at 7 p.m. at the Anoka History Center

See page 11 for more details. Please RSVP prior to day of training.

**Arfstrom Exhibit Rotation**

February 7 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Come enjoy more of Jon Arfstrom’s art as we switch our collection items out to showcase new treasures. And food. We’ll have food for you to enjoy.

**Weddings and Marriage in Anoka County—Library Program**

February 11 at 2 p.m. at the Northtown Library

**Family Recipes: Memories that Stick to Your Ribs. A Thrivent and ACHS Workshop**

February 16 at 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center

Learn how to take time out from their sandwich generation lives to preserve their family story, especially through food traditions. Please RSVP to Rebecca at ACHS.

**An Evening with Mary Woodbury**

March 1 at 6 p.m. at the Mad Hatter Restaurant

Cost: \$50, tickets available through Mad Hatter. See page 12 for more detail.

**History of the East Bethel Booster Club—Library Program**

March 11 at 2 p.m. at the North Central Library

**ACHS Annual Meeting**

March 26, Location TBD

Digest the status of ACHS in 2016 with friends and fun.



Anoka County  
Historical Society

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# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.2 March-April 2017

History for the over and under 21

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Busy start to 2017

14 - Thank You to our  
Supporters

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*Front Cover: Sail boating on Martin Lake in Linwood. Mr. and Mrs. C.M. Jewett on board. Undated.*

*Linwood remains the only Township in Anoka County.*

*Object ID#: 2076.1.6*



## From the President

“Everything today will someday be considered history.” Seems funny, doesn’t it? We live in an era of big-box retail and modern, quick-build houses. There is nothing especially historic about those.

This is what people of other generations thought. They built houses and shops to the needs of the day. They were just places to live and do business – much like we regard our more “disposable” architecture today.

After a recent day researching at the History Center, my thinking has shifted. In looking for images of the past, I came across some 2,000 photos of car wrecks from the 1960s. Hulking cars and twisted metal figure prominently. With visuals like these, it is easy to get caught up in the damage and human pain in the foreground . . . and to miss the subtext.

I initially dismissed these photos as “unhelpful” to my project and clicked through the computer images quickly. The background in one photo – in my neighborhood, but 50 years ago – jumped out. As I enlarged the snapshot, I found a bit of history that I didn’t know I had been missing – and it changed the course of my research.

“Back then” no one thought to record the ordinary places that we now view as historic – and oftentimes, are totally lost. It is only because someone recorded happenings that now, are unimportant, can we latch onto little bits of history gleaned from the background.

What are we doing, today, to make sure that our reality gets passed forward?

Something to think about . . .

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



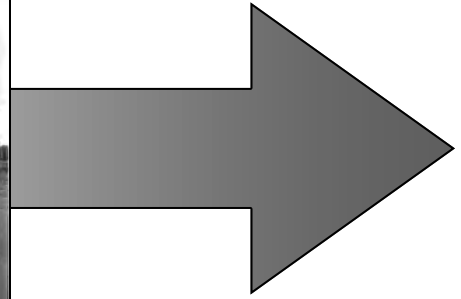
## From the Director

When I took this position two years ago (gulp!) the staff and I jokingly said, "Go big or go home." Since then, they have served as an amazing source of inspiration to do just that. We spend time during staff meetings, whether planned or impromptu, gauging what we know about our patrons, our public, our collections, and our own skills. We brainstorm across large sticky notes with markers, wave our arms around in the air, and shout excitedly as the spark from one idea fuels the next 10. We drop it all onto the calendar, then realize we overextended ourselves and proceed to triage our dreams into reality.

On the next few pages, you'll find an outlook for some goals and dreams at ACHS. You'll discover ah-ha and aw shucks moments, our wish list, the cleaning and organizing, as well as the programming changes for 2017. We're taking a few chances in the hopes you'll come along for the ride with us--it would certainly be lonely out on a limb alone.

Thanks in advance,

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



## HOW WILL WE GET THERE FROM HERE?

Our working title for this section as we compiled the newsletter was, "How ACHS will conquer the world—helping people understand our vision." It seemed at once both truthful and blunt, a bit dreamy, a bit unrealistic, a bit jarring. But so are we. We are innovators in our field. We are intentional about our decisions. ACHS has the gift of staff, volunteers, board, donors, and members who live with a gleam in their eyes. They set goals, create a path, then act to achieve the outcome desired. We see it daily in our business partners, who put themselves out there in the world ready to jump on opportunities, snag the possibilities, and simply run with them.

### *Business Partners Provide Opportunities*



**Attendees at the gallery opening for Jon Arfstrom**

One of those partners, Chema Malu, offered us space in their shop to sell some of Jon Arfstrom's prints, cards, and other items. The store owner offered to host a fundraising evening for us, extending the partnership to Amy Weber-DeRaad, who operates a Mary Kay business. We will receive a portion of sales at both businesses on the evening of April 12 at the Main Street Anoka storefront from 5-8 p.m.

Other partners, like Thrivent Financial and Terry Overacker Plumbing have agreed to co-present two workshop series that meld the best of their business interests and the ACHS mission. In the first, Thrivent has provided refreshments and one of their financial consultants to help ACHS convey the concept of "Legacy." If we change one thing each day, each week, where will it get us both financially and emotionally? Where could we end up in our lives by making a decision to save, donate, or create? What would that mean to our families, communities, and



ourselves? What do we want that legacy to look like when we're gone? We paid special attention to family recipes and cooking traditions, discussing how taking time to create memories feed both body and soul.

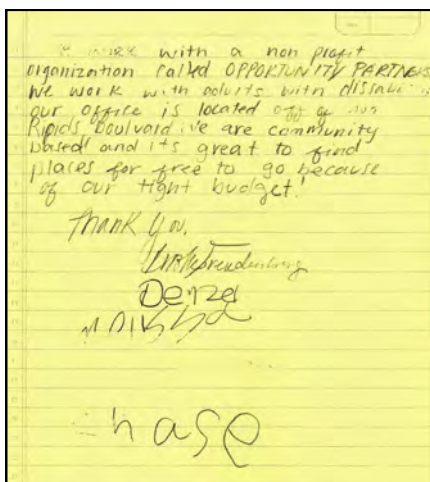
In the second, experts in their fields like Terry Overacker Plumbing have information of particular interest to ACHS patrons...like when they need to renovate the plumbing of an older home. If presented as a series in conjunction with electricians, flooring experts, roofing or siding specialists who can shed light on specialty projects in a "remodelers showcase," the businesses can dispel some myths, our patrons may find some answers, and ACHS will fulfill its mission.

### *Exhibit Hall for All*

Through the generosity of our partners, these programs can often come to the public for free, thus ensuring any barrier to education presented by financial constraints is removed. Most of our programming is donation only, including our newly "flipped" exhibit hall with three distinct viewing areas. Previously, ACHS charged \$3 per person to enter the display area through a rather imposing set of glass doors. Once staff installed the WWII exhibit, however, the decision to ask only a donation per visit made

sense. The message of the "Greatest Generation" ought to reach everyone, regardless of whether they have enough time to spend reading the panels to warrant paying their \$3 entry fee.

As a result of removing this fee, not only has exhibit hall attendance gone up, but so have our donations in relation to the visits. The generosity of those who can give more helps balance those who cannot. Groups serving developmentally disabled adults now visit frequently, as they, too, have a strained financial budget for activity days. Those people picking up library books who only have "a couple of minutes" now dart in to see a portion of the display. Parents with restless children show off a couple interesting pieces of art and don't feel bad about a shortened stay. Those who truly have nothing financially now log out of our public computers and wander in, finding a quiet space to enjoy some stories.



**Thank you letter from Opportunity Partners.**



**Living room vignette displayed in the WWII exhibit**



## *Fundraising: The Dirty Word of Nonprofits*

The only way ACHS can continue to exist and serve our patrons, however, is to raise funds for operations. This seems to be a 24-7 job, as annual appeals, fundraisers, events, shows, and paid appearances for programs must constantly be booked into the calendar. We love that speaking at schools, social clubs, or assisted living facilities not only provides entertainment and enlightenment for a group, but also helps us to literally keep the lights on at the history center. A new experiment for us this year is an appearance at the Mad Hatter tea house in Anoka as the one and only Mary Woodbury. At these dinners throughout the year, Mary will glide from room to room imparting her knowledge of the 1890s high society, as well as dropping quieter little trifles of gossip. Guests will not only receive her entertaining personality, but also a special menu prepared by the award-winning Mad Hatter chefs and a keepsake booklet on the historic Woodbury House.



### *Dinner Series*



Another new experience for us, one that truly falls into the category of "experiment," is a fundraising dinner series. Recognizing that the gifts of ACHS staff lay much more firmly in entertaining multiple, small groups and building relationships than in working a room full of 300 people once per year, we are walking away from the idea of a single fundraising dinner. Instead, we are planning monthly events at the history center for 20 people. These fun and inspirational, catered dinners will focus on a topic and project of ACHS, sponsored by a business. Each event will include private gallery hall and behind the scenes tour, a surprise artifact, games, meal, and an ask of support.

ACHS staff believes in the power of personal connection. We believe in the strength of small groups, in the intimacy that comes from people inviting people to an activity they care about. We acknowledge the benefits of a large dinner or event, however, we think the time required to prepare for it could be better spent on several smaller scale events. A large event requires a massive promotional push, a long list of volunteers, and a laser focus of staff for months prior to develop the "cutsie" elements, programs, and other graphic displays necessary to fill a room. Our past two dinners, while successful in raising funds, have shown staff that if the date isn't perfect, if it conflicts with other organizations, if the topic isn't correct, if technology isn't working, if weather doesn't cooperate...if, if...then the event suffers. Many eggs in one basket, and all of that.

The idea of having smaller events throughout the year in some ways simplifies fundraising from a staff perspective. We can use the museum as a location, thus better meeting our mission of enticing people to visit. We can do smaller scale publicity if one or two enthusiastic donors and supporters like yourself step up for each dinner and

volunteer to invite friends to spend a fun evening. We can better use our volunteer force for these shorter lengths of time. We can show off our collection, help people to understand the museum because they're in it, and have a more fun, intimate relationship with them than in a large dinner setting. If friends like you start thinking big we could even turn a dinner into a family reunion or employee appreciation evening.

We are interested in people's stories. Every artifact, every manuscript, every diary...it's held at ACHS for the story. We need to convey the idea to the public that the preservation of quilts, dresses, stereos etc. are vital for the future not just because of the 3D item itself being rare or significant, but because of the story connected to it. People connect to the story. We can find empathy in our public by telling stories and letting them know we are working with other organizations to tell their story. Who knows that we have had conversations with Federal Cartridge, Lyric Arts, or the North Metro Mayors Association about managing their corporate collections? Who knows we have visited Stepping Stone Emergency Housing to play historic games and encourage the residents to write their stories down? Who knows that research suggests journaling and having the feeling of being heard is critical to healing from rape, domestic abuse, chemical abuse, or a broken home? Who knows that people who spend time studying history have a better understanding of current events and the ramifications of ANY decision made by ANY size Governmental body?

We need to have more of the public connect ACHS with their daily lives. Do you think of the History Center when you're faced with children battling cancer or empty food shelves? You should. That emotional connection with the social causes you champion in other organizations fits here – because we keep the stories of those challenges. Behind the intricacies of building an exhibit, finding money to pay that \$500 per month electric bill, or preserving the collection, lay stories of ordinary humans, extraordinary circumstances, and the legacy that unites us all.

## *You're invited...*

- ≈ **May 3 – 11:30 a.m. luncheon celebrating monumental occasions that sneak up on us (like Rebecca's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday!) and what we should do to look out for those as businesses and individuals**
- ≈ **June 15 – 5:30 p.m. School's out! Explore our revolutionary museum boxes tailored to the sixth grade curriculum and find out how you can help expand this program to the entire county.**
- ≈ **July 20 – 5:30 p.m. Unwrap the past! Fold back the tissue paper and discover a hidden gem you can adopt from the collection to ensure it lives a long, happy life for many more generations.**

**Tickets are \$50 and available at ACHS or [www.anokacountyhistory.org](http://www.anokacountyhistory.org)**

A collection of records from a single family are generally referred to in the preservation world as “family papers.” Family papers would include many actual pieces of paper (correspondence, household or business records, legal documents, etc.), but can also include photographs, and sometimes three-dimensional artifacts as well. We were fortunate enough to recently receive just such a donation from the Weber family in the Centerville area. While we teased a part of the collection as the cover of the last issue of *History 21*, the full collection is sizeable, and tells many parts of the story of this particular family.



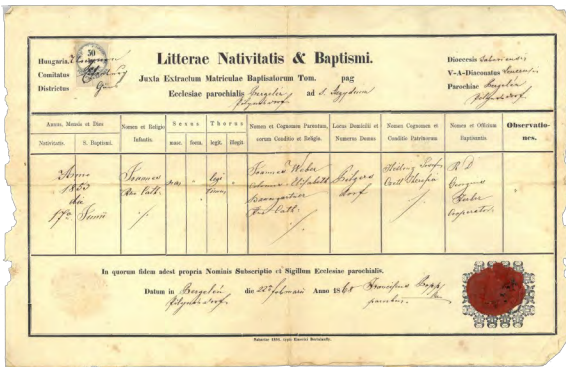
Mary Weber

The earliest records in the Weber collection are three baptismal certificates from the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, dated February 22, 1868. These take a little bit of deciphering, being written in Latin. The dates of birth listed on them are from earlier years – 1820, 1848, and 1853 – so we believe that the family was getting notarized copies of these documents from the Roman Catholic Church before they left Europe to come to the United States. Johann Weber was born on May 29, 1820, and his sons Joseph and Johann [Jr.] were born in 1848 and 1853, respectively. They had two other brothers named Frank and Ignatz. Shortly after these certificates were made, the Weber family moved to America, and settled near Centerville, Minnesota.

They were not the only ones. Centerville was known to have a “French” side and a “German” side in its early years, and the Webers may have been drawn to an area that had other immigrants from Germany and Austria-Hungary. We have a certificate granting citizenship to Joseph Weber on July 23, 1900, and know that he married a woman named Anna Marie (Annie) and had several children: Leonard, Jacob, Martin, Theresa, and John. It was Leonard who inherited the farm from his parents, and later (along with his wife, Mary (Flascher) Weber), passed it down to his son Donald, who was the last Weber to own the farm.

Some of the legal documents that trace these ownership transfers tell us another interesting story: How did older people plan for retirement in the years before nursing

homes and assisted living facilities became common? Donald Weber signed an agreement with his parents, Leonard and Mary, in which they sold the farm to him for one dollar. In return, he agreed that they would be able to live on the farm (have room and board) for the rest of their lives, or were to be paid a monthly stipend of a specified amount, if they chose to or needed to move elsewhere.



Johann[es] Weber baptismal certificate, 1868



Interestingly, Leonard Weber had signed almost the exact same agreement with his parents Joseph and Anna Marie, and Joseph in turn had signed a similar agreement with his father Johann. This arrangement seems to have worked well for the Weber family, since they made the same agreement over three separate generations.



*Mary Weber outside the Weber family farm.*

Other records in the collection tell us other interesting stories. There are draft cards for Leonard Weber for both World War I and World War II – he was exempted from service both times due to the fact that he was a farmer, which was considered a vital occupation. He and Mary received special rations during WWII for the same reason, and Leonard received the Minnesota Agricultural Award in 1943, in “recognition of your efforts to increase vital war food production.” Being heavily into dairy farming, the Webers were members of the Twin Cities Milk Producers Association, and many of those documents are in the collection. There are records which tell about health problems in the family, including some suffered by Leonard’s brother Jacob, as well as Leonard’s own illness and death in 1952. Older photographs show us the Weber farm, livestock, and equipment, giving us a direct look at farming in Centerville in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

How does ACHS handle a collection like this? It came to us in two cardboard boxes and one plastic tub, probably how it had been stored since Donald Weber’s death, and it was for the most part unorganized. Our first job was to sort through everything briefly and get a sense of what was there. After that, a basic sort into one of three categories (paper, photographs, and 3D artifacts) gave us some easier places to get started. In all three of those piles, we had to look through the items and decide which things really helped tell the story of the Weber family, and should be kept, and which things did not help to tell that story.

After sorting, we must then get the items housed in appropriate archival boxes and folders (all acid-free). Paper records were sorted in to relevant groupings, placed in folders, and then housed in document boxes designed for that purpose. After being digitized, photographs were housed similarly. Three-dimensional artifacts receive paper tags or other labels, before being wrapped in tissue and housed in a larger box. Each item also receives a detailed digital record so it can be easily found by researchers. All new collections begin with Audra, the Archivist at ACHS, but larger collections like this require more hands to process swiftly. In this case, staff member Sara helped with initial organization, volunteer Gail scanned and created digital records for the many photographs, and volunteer Kelsie created digital records for all the paper documents—projects which spanned many weeks.

Donald Weber never married, and had no children, but fortunately the story of his family can live on here at the ACHS. The history of the Weber family becomes part of the bigger story of Anoka County and all those who have lived, loved, worked, and died here. This collection tells other stories as well: the stories of people who came here from other places, people who farmed, people on the home front during wartime, and people supporting their parents in old age.

We have amongst our holdings a small collection of 15 Native American pot sherds from Nowthen donated in 1964. In archaeological terms, a sherd is any ceramic piece that has broken away from the original vessel. Even when undecorated, a sherd can tell a ceramicist a lot about the peoples who created the pot or figurine. By examining the temper (the stabilizing mixture present in the clay), manufacture techniques and even the source of the material, Sandy Lake Ware sherds can be identified by a trained eye.

Five of the 15 sherds present in our collection can be attributed to the Sandy Lake Ware typology produced by the Psinomani Complex. In the archeological world a complex describes a group of people united by a system of shared, learned beliefs, but not necessarily from the same culture. This cultural complex is now widely believed to be the ancestors of the modern Dakota peoples (*Psinomani*). *Psinomani* is a Siouan term translating as ‘wild rice gatherers.’ This complex spanned from the Late Woodland to Early Historical contact (AD 1100 - 1750). Current day Anoka County is included in the southern portion of the Sandy Lake Distribution (the purple color in Figure 1). The ceramic traveled farther distances than the Psinomani Complex. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Psinomani inhabited Anoka County with the ware making its way south to our area along water trade routes instead.

The ceramic ware itself is easily identified by its distinctive cord and fabric texture designs appearing on the exterior surface of most vessels (Figure 2). Cord-wrapped sticks were commonly used to make the impressions. One sherd in our collection appears to display the line where the cord being wrapped around the vessel lapped itself leaving a visible seam on the surface. The temper present in the Sandy Lake sherds consists of a variety of shell, grit, and shell/grit. The use of the temper is based upon a combination of local availability and cultural variation.

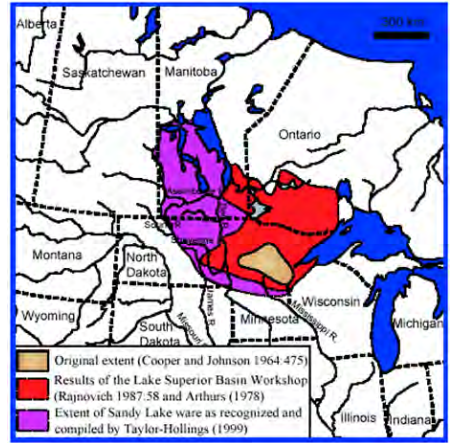


Figure 1: Recognized Sandy Lake Ware distribution



Figure 2: Sandy Lake Ware grouping from the ACHS collections.

# REMEMBERING TOM WARD:

**VOLUNTEER, BOARD MEMBER, DRUMMER, GENTLEMAN**

We had to say an unfortunate goodbye this past month to a well-loved, long-time ACHS volunteer, board member and friend. Tom Ward passed away after spending decades writing and telling stories of his life in Anoka County, always giving freely of his time, and bringing joy to several generations through his music. His skills as a drummer in his own ensemble shone at various ACHS events and during Anoka's Riverfest.

Please join us for an evening remembering and honoring a friend to history.



**When:** March 21

**Time:** 6 p.m. Social

7 p.m. ACHS honors a friend

**Where:** Anoka County History Center



**ACHS Remembers**



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

LaVerne Grosslein  
1925-2017



Gracious! The past two months have sped by with gross disregard for all posted speed limit signs. Volunteers have been working hard at the History Center. We held our first Oral History Interviewer training with Ryan Barland the Oral History Curator from MNHS. We inundated him with questions throughout his presentation, and everyone left with new insights in recording and saving our stories. Other volunteers attended our Front Desk trainings and learned about the daily workings of the history center from answering phones to greeting patrons. After training, they were eager to get started and have been taking shifts at the

desk this past month. (Miss out? Front desk volunteer positions still open.)

In addition to our trainings, volunteers have joined us throughout the weeks to help patrons with genealogy questions, and other volunteers gathered to stuff large envelopes for a mailing to ACHS members. On the side of collections, volunteers Kelsie, Dave, Gail, Debbie, Courtney, and intern Allison have helped us organize the Weber Collection, Edith Patch Collection, a photographic collection of 1970s era public works projects in the City of Anoka, continued an ongoing index of County Tax Assessment books, and found an elusive Anoka Report from 1974.

Special thanks goes out to Johannes who helped unload a shipment of materials slated for our new *History 21 Gift Shop*, coming soon to the exhibit hall, and who even sacrificed his reading glasses in the moving process.

Before we get any busier in the upcoming months, we want to take time to CELEBRATE all of our amazing volunteers who helped ACHS in 2016. So ask yourself—did you represent ACHS at the County Fair, a festival, or on the Home and Garden Tour? Have you succumbed to our puppy dog eyes and moved tables, pounded nails, or stuffed envelopes? Or perhaps have you helped organize part of the collection with ACHS staff members. If so—YOU ARE INVITED! (Check your mail also—more specific invitations will be sent). We will have food, music and fun. From parlor games, to scavenger hunts with a heap of door prizes, come and enjoy an evening of friendship and relaxation on us.

**VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION:**

**When:** April 19

**Time:** Open House 5:30 p.m.-8 p.m.

**Where:** Anoka History Center

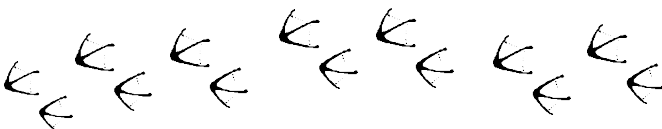
**Who:** Our beloved ACHS friends who have volunteered in 2016

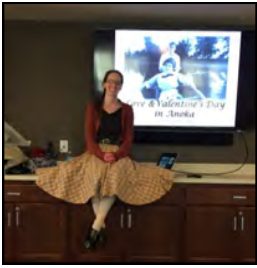
RSVP requested

Sara Given

Volunteer Coordinator

Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org





## Dueling Valentine's Day Programs

We love to bring our programs and local history to new places and on February 8th TWO local senior groups booked our program about Valentine's Day in Anoka County to be given at roughly the same time. While we are talented, we can't yet be in two places at once. Because of our new Front Desk Volunteer position, we were able to make it to both programs. The volunteer (Jane) settled in at the front desk with another staff member and together they answered phone calls, and kept the History Center open so that both Sara and Audra could leave to give presentations at the Coon Rapids Senior Center and Walker Plaza.

Both events went smoothly and over 60 people learned more about our local history. After the programs, Audra joined the Coon Rapids seniors for a snack and heard stories, while Sara joined an impromptu concert at Walker. As residents returned to their rooms, a senior sat at the piano in the room and began to play. Those remaining joined in to sing when they knew the words. *Programs out and about in the county aren't just about presenting and leaving right away—but rather a chance to join the community in hearing their stories, or create a new memory, a new page of history.*

---

## FAIRS & FESTIVALS HOST



Represent ACHS and have fun at the local town festivals around Anoka County. We want to talk and learn about local history in all corners of the county. One way to do this is to set up a table at each town's festival throughout the summer and fall.

**Requirements:** Be comfortable talking with people, able to pick up the supply box, set up table at festival location, and share basic information about ACHS and our mission.

**Availability:** Festival dates vary. Sign up for at least one festival throughout season.

**Training:** Thursday April 20, 6:30 p.m. at the Anoka History Center. We will cover festival opportunities, ACHS trivia, and provide an introduction to the fun, hands-on artifacts in our festival traveling box.

---

## Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!

Don't wait another two months to discover 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



**General Donations**

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Susan Gardiner  
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Bonnie McDonald & Michael Johnson  
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Jane Price  
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Patricia Reuss  
Joe & Barb Ridge  
Rum River Writers Group  
Mary Sell  
Don & Catherine Vesley  
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Barbara Weldon  
Norah Wyman

**Donations Made in  
Memory of:**

Arthur Dussl  
Tom Ward

**Artifact Donors**

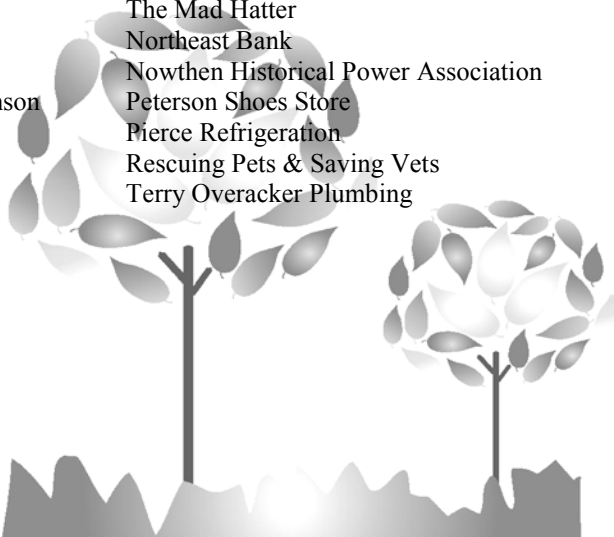
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Nancy Chamberlin  
Columbia Heights Public Schools  
Bruce Gengnagel  
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Robert Lauer  
The Philolectian Society  
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**New Members**

Steven Engelhardt  
Andro Menter

**ACHS Business  
Members**

The BIG White House  
Coon Rapids Historical Commission  
Dan Gould Jewelers  
Forest Lake Contracting  
The Mad Hatter  
Northeast Bank  
Nowthen Historical Power Association  
Peterson Shoes Store  
Pierce Refrigeration  
Rescuing Pets & Saving Vets  
Terry Overacker Plumbing



**Become a Business Sponsor or 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.— \$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](mailto:Audra@AnokaCountyHistory.org) or visit our website [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org)

**Rum River Writers Group**

Every Thursday, 1:15 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center  
Open to interested and aspiring writers

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center  
Open to membership and the public

**An Evening with Mary Woodbury**

March 1 at 6 p.m. at the Mad Hatter Restaurant—1632 S. Ferry St. Anoka  
Join the longest reigning resident of the Woodbury house, Mary Woodbury, at the Mad Hatter for High Tea and a journey through history.

**Cost:** \$45 + tax, reservations made through the Mad Hatter. Limited Seating.  
[www.MadHatterAnoka.com](http://www.MadHatterAnoka.com)

**History of the East Bethel Booster Club—Library Program**

March 11 at 2 p.m. at the North Central Library

Learn the story of the Booster Club, their ups and downs, and the lasting legacy they have left in East Bethel.

**ACHS Annual Meeting**

March 26, at 2 p.m. at the NEW Linwood Township Hall

Digest the status of ACHS in 2016 with friends, fun, and of course...food! Special guest Lisa Sorenson will discuss her experience as a teacher using our museum boxes in the classroom then you'll get a chance to check them out yourself.

**Family Archives—Library Program**

April 8 at 2 p.m. at the Rum River Library

While you're digging through your closets, why not take a little extra time to index your collection, sort out documents, or label some archival folders? Not sure how? The Anoka County Historical Society's Collections Manager will break it down for you into some easy to handle steps so you can get the past organized for the future.

**Fairs and Festivals Volunteer Training**

April 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center

See page 13 for more details.

**Volunteer Celebration**

April 19—Open House 5:30 p.m.-8 p.m.—Anoka County History Center

We will have food, music and fun. From parlor games, to scavenger hunts with a heap of door prizes, enjoy an evening of friendship and relaxation on us.

**Who:** Our beloved ACHS friends who have volunteered in 2016

RSVP requested, separate invitation also sent. See page 12 for more details.



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Historical Society  
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# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.3 May-June 2017

Scandium (atomic number 21) is our spirit element

[AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://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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(Executive Director)

Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Audra Hilse (Archivist & Administrator)

Gail Dahl (Office Staff)

Carol Dordan (Office Staff)

Don Johnson (Office Staff)

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*Front Cover: Unidentified baby in a Ticknor family photograph album. This happy baby in cloth diaper is enjoying the sunshine, undated circa 1910*

*Object ID#: 1975.I*





## From the President

Summer is coming. Even though our excitement increases when we think of sunny days, plants in the garden and kids running through sprinklers – the calendar pages keep turning.

Because our summers are so short, we guard our time and try to stuff as much into it as possible. There is so much to do and so little time. Something to consider when building summer plans – attending your local community festival.

Anoka County is blessed with a variety of events with 17 celebrations scheduled for 2017. Many of these festivals date back decades or more, to the time before the urbanization spread out so far, to the time when most communities were smaller and their citizens more connected to each other.

Not all community events are what they once were. This year “49’er Days” became “Fridley Fest,” condensing from three days to just one day due to the difficulty of finding volunteers. In Blaine, the story is happier – the “Blaine Blazin’ 4<sup>th</sup>” (which was not on July 4) turned into “Blaine Festival” a few years ago, with a completely new volunteer group and a renewed spirit (but still not over July 4).

The point is – we can’t take these community festivals for granted. We need to support them, patronize their sponsors and most importantly – we need to ATTEND them. Community doesn’t happen by itself and these touchstones with our past demand our participation to remain touchstones for the future. ACHS will be there! Come with a purpose and represent ACHS at your local festival.

Get your calendar – and have a fantastic summer!

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



## From the Director

Too often the tendency we all have to retreat into our shells, comfortable with the way we do things, wins out over seeking others to challenge us. This is especially true when limited budgets reduce the opportunities for continuing education. I had the pleasure of attending the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MAHLM) conference in Walker recently to surround myself with 120 other history geeks who exude pride in their organizations, a drive to improve, and the optimism to know it could all work--peppered with keen questions and a healthy dose of pragmatism. I presented twice, relaying our experiences at ACHS in making ourselves stand out from the crowd and also about our Museum Boxes for the middle schools. I received some fantastic program ideas, updates on our collections software, and helpful tips for helping our researchers use the Minnesota Historical Society resources for genealogy work. Can't wait to put them all to good use!

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director

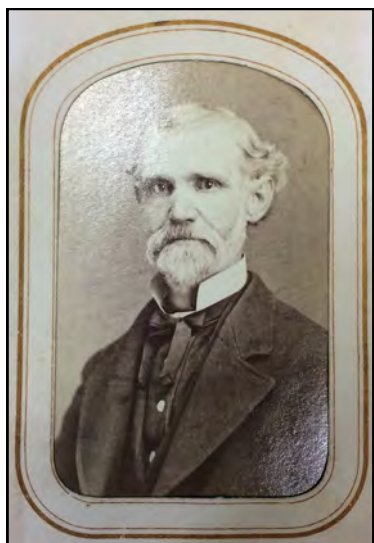


## LOOKING GOOD AT 150

Birthdays mark milestones each year—our successes, our challenges, our memories. They provide a time to ponder our growing past and plan our shrinking future as time marches on to the infinite drumbeat we all know. The childish exuberance with which we counted down months and weeks to the special day, losing sleep over the candy and presents surely to rain down on us from family and friends, culminated in a puff of smoke. We would grin at those gathered to sing, proud to be the center of attention. We would extend our eager hands to strangers, holding up stubby fistfuls of fingers as a badge of honor for adding yet one more year. At a certain point, however, we stopped feeling pride in the addition of another year, gaining a more practical outlook of our milestones. Unlike people, buildings tend to pass their early birthdays relatively unnoticed—no party, no presents, no cake. Perhaps a nod to the calendar date, should construction have proven particularly memorable. This year, however, the city of Anoka can pause to take note of the impressive birthday of one of its oldest residents: the lovely Ticknor Hill.

The first generation of the Ticknor family were among the original white settlers in Anoka. Born in 1827 in Massachusetts, Heman (often misprinted as Herman) Ticknor moved to Anoka in 1855 and helped shape the growth of this fast-expanding area. Early town residents constructed buildings on the West side of the Rum river, just north of the Mississippi River. Albert Goodrich, in his history of Anoka County in 1905, credits Heman Ticknor with shifting the businesses to the East bank. “Mr. Ticknor came to the conclusion that the east side would eventually be more favorable for trading purposes, and accordingly made overtures to the town site proprietors for the purchase of twenty-five feet on the corner of Main street and First avenue...” wrote Goodrich.

While the purchase of that lot fell through, Heman opened his first Dry Goods Store in 1855 “on an inner lot.” Five years later, he converted the store into a cigar



Heman Ticknor

manufacturing business. Building upon his success, Heman expanded his businesses to include a Drug Store, which he opened in 1864.

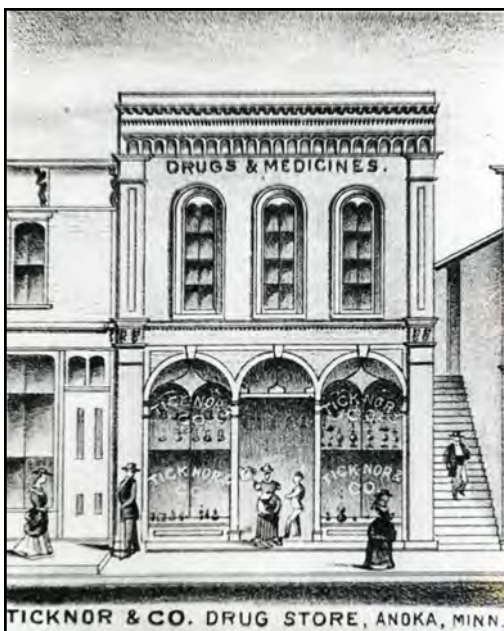
Three years later, the Ticknor Hill home appeared in the landscape of Anoka. Constructed for his new wife, Anna Sweeney Greenwald, and her two young sons from her first marriage to Aaron Greenwald, the mansion boasted a “T” shaped floor plan. In this original configuration, the front entrance overlooked the confluence of the Rum and Mississippi Rivers. Still evident today are the original Gothic elements comprised of gables and their elaborate bargeboards, along with the arched windows in the front façade from the first plans. On the inside, visitors will find three fireplaces, one built with locally manufactured brick.

Following Heman’s death in 1901, his daughter Zale, and son-in-law, John Niles, took up residence in the home and put their own unique architectural touches in place. John worked as an attorney while Zale worked within Anoka’s well known Philolecitan Society to help establish a city library.

Their plans changed which side of the home the public considered the “front.” They divided the existing structure into three sections and then the front (west) section facing the river switched places with the rear (east) section while the center section remained intact. These subtle but

significant changes gave the house a fashionable new Third Avenue South address-- highly desirable in 1901. Historians believe the change of address contributed a great deal to the desire to remodel. Architectural changes to the tower section included Queen Anne and Neo-Classic elements. The family added a full front porch along with Corinthian columns, a projecting bay window, and *porte cochere* (a gabled structure a car could pass beneath.)

In 1930, the next generation took possession of the house. Natalie Niles, daughter of John and Zale, married Arthur Lee Smith. That same year, the Smiths built a one and a half story addition to the back of the house. A few years later, they made further modifications to the residence,



Drawing of Ticknor Drug Store, Main St., undated

dividing it into three sections for apartments. In 1977, descendants of the Ticknors sold the home whereupon extensive interior remodeling converted the house into a duplex. That same year, the house received a designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

By 1996, the famed house had assumed yet another role—that of bed and breakfast. Once again, the house underwent substantial remodeling, this time to create four separate rooms with a private bath to accommodate patrons. Exterior renovations did not result in any major changes to the structure.

Through all of these changes, the house has retained its history and charm as well as its Third Avenue address (even though the home’s driveway is now only accessed from Jefferson St.).

To honor the home’s 150th birthday, its place on the National Register of Historic Places, and the family’s deep connection to Anoka County history, ACHS has a number of plans to celebrate.

In 2016 we applied for, and received, a grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for \$6,000 to compile and write MNopedia articles on all 18 National Register Properties in Anoka County. MNopedia (<http://www.mnopedia.org/>) is a free, online encyclopedia whose mission it is to “share current, reliable and relevant information about significant people, places, events, and things in Minnesota history.” Unlike Wikipedia, where any user can edit any article, the content of MNopedia is evaluated by the Minnesota Historical Society and written by historians, researchers, and experts prior to publication. MNopedia articles provide the curious with an easy read on hundreds of different topics spanning Minnesota history, its people, and buildings. The articles written by ACHS staff and contributors are a maximum of 700 words, intended to draw people into the history and stories behind Anoka County’s historic places. These articles are currently under review by sites editors and will be available online by the end of the summer.

A short article is static and limited, so to capture more of the story of Ticknor, ACHS again teamed up with QCTV (Quad Cities Television) to produce the next episode of *It’s Your History*. By focusing on the home and its story, this episode not only touches on the history, but also delves into some of the items in the ACHS collection. ACHS Archivist Audra Hulse reveals packages of tobacco sold in the Ticknor store, Heman’s painted portrait, and an intricately beaded shawl Anna Greenwald Ticknor wore in the 1880s. Each item is a reminder of *how* the Ticknor family lived, not just *where*.

The final segments of the show take you behind the scenes of the Bed & Breakfast



*View of the Ticknor home, circa 1898*





*“Mother Ticknor” Anna Sweeney  
Greenwald Ticknor*

with Lynne Rickert, a Ticknor family descendent, who began the business, as well as Deb Wallace, the current proprietor. Ever have that feeling of needing some time away...but not needing the hassle of packing on the miles to feel that relief? How about wanting the joy of a cozy fire, lovely people to deliver coffee to your door, and the warm smells of omelets and French toast wafting up the stairs? Linen napkins? Plush carpet? A whirlpool? Today’s Ticknor delivers.

Mark your calendars for even more of ACHS’s birthday present to Ticknor—a new exhibit and a special Heritage Home and Garden Tour! You can get a sneak peek at the gallery hall in June, but the big reveal detailing even more of the Ticknor family story will not be one to miss during Anoka’s Riverfest on July 8. While the family’s history in Anoka dates to 1855, the legacy goes back even further to England and includes original land grants approved by King George III in the 1700s. It’s not everyday that we

have items over 200 years old on display at the history center—this is one not to miss! That and cake—we’ll have cake! And dancers, don’t forget the dancers from ‘Nmotion Dance Studio who will return for an encore performance after their debut last summer.

The culmination of the birthday celebration will occur during Anoka’s 14th Annual Heritage Home and Garden Tour the following day, July 9. A long-standing partnership between the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission and ACHS that provides much-needed funds for both organizations, the tour features a variety of architecture, gardening, and history around the city. Ticknor Bed & Breakfast will be on the tour—with special games, events, music, and surprises. Croquet? Musical entertainment? More cake! Art by Arfstrom? And precautions regarding those 150 candles Deb needs to blow out!



## 14TH ANNUAL ANOKA HERITAGE HOME & GARDEN TOUR

Visit the beautiful and historic gems across the city of Anoka.

**When:** July 9  
**Time:** 1 p.m.– 5 p.m.  
**Where:** Beautiful city of Anoka treasures.  
**Tickets:** early bird tickets \$12 on sale starting June 1



## Lake Netta School

At one time, dozens of one-room school houses dotted the landscape of Anoka County. Some of these buildings still stand, though none are being used as school houses today. The smaller school districts “consolidated” in the 1950s and 1960s as a swiftly growing population in the county left the one-room schools unable to cope with the influx of children. During this period most of the current schools in the county were built, and the smaller districts were joined into the larger districts that we have today. For more on this story of school consolidation, please stop in to the Museum and check out the part of the *Farms to Flamingos* Suburbanization Exhibit in the School House.



What happened, then, to all of those one-room school houses? Some buildings are now gone, whether due to neglect or some other need for the land they occupied. Others remain as historical places, such as one in Ramsey, and others have been repurposed. A donation given to ACHS last year provided us with some interesting information about one of the old schools in Ham Lake – District #24, known as the Lake Netta School.

Originally built in 1889, a new building replaced that structure in 1935,



functioning as a school until 1961. At some point after that, the building was sold to private individuals who turned it into a home, and it remains a residence to this day. It is located on East Lake Netta Drive in Ham Lake. While it was common in Anoka County’s early years for rural homes to serve as schools, it has been much less common for a school to serve as a home!

The current owners of the property found items related to the school in both the attic and the yard. While the family kept and enjoyed these items for many years, they chose to donate them to ACHS for preservation and public access. Among the items donated was a Tootsietoy brand toy truck from their line of diecast automobiles, its yellow paint rubbed off in many places; a pair of spectacles, surprisingly intact, with gold wire frames; a small, writing slate, which looks well-used; and two books. One is titled “Primary Language Lessons,” and is a grammar textbook. While it was published in 1911, a note inside the front cover indicates that it was purchased by the school as part of a set in 1924. The second book is a Spelling Workbook that was published in 1941. This one belonged to a Lake Netta student named Richard Mahnke, and he completed the whole thing.

Many paper items were included in the donation as well, including a complete attendance record for Lake Netta School from fall of 1914 through the spring of 1918

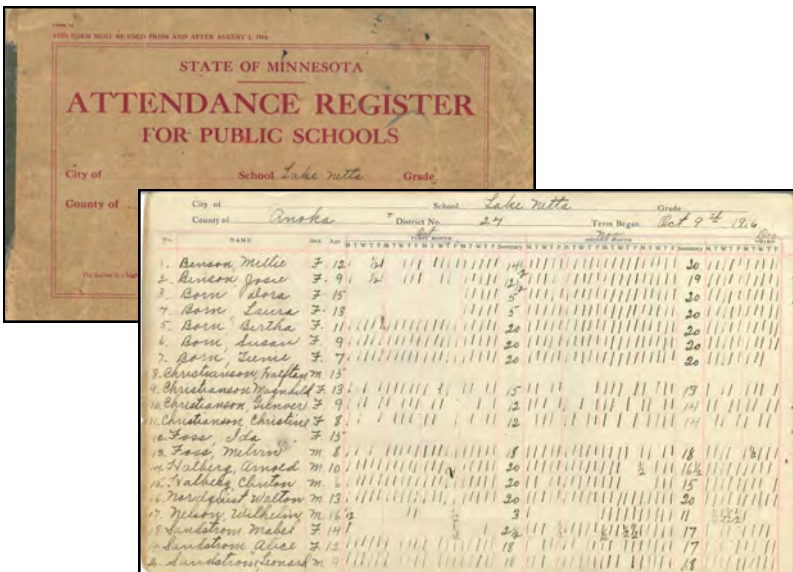


(see below), and a resignation letter from a teacher in 1924 who felt that the conditions she had to work in were untenable. School supply and book orders tell us more about how the school functioned, and reveal some surprising parallels to today: one order form dating from the 1910s to the early 1920s includes construction paper, calendars, watercolors (semi moist), building blocks, and Crayola. Not so different from supplies

that elementary school students still use today!

There are two great photographs in the collection as well, dated circa 1951. One of them (see previous page) shows a Lake Netta class outside their schoolhouse, and the other shows a different class inside the school, so that we know what their classroom looked like. The clock is visible in the second picture, telling us that it was taken at 4:05pm; the students are all sitting at their desks and look cheerful, but one imagines that they were excited about getting to go home soon. Together, the items in this donation give us a much better picture of what Lake Netta School was like for teachers and students from about the 1920s into the early 1950s.

All too often, it is luck that preserves these pieces of history for us: luck that they were not thrown away, luck that the conditions in the schoolhouse attic did not cause them to deteriorate, luck that the family who lived there discovered them and decided to save them. We are fortunate when this happens, but it would be better to not have to rely solely on luck to determine what gets preserved for the future! Here at the Historical Society, we are trying to think ahead when we can, to collect things that are easily accessible *now* because we know that they will be much harder to find 50 or 100 years from now. This is something that everyone can think about – what parts of your story, or your family’s, would be easier to save now, rather than later?

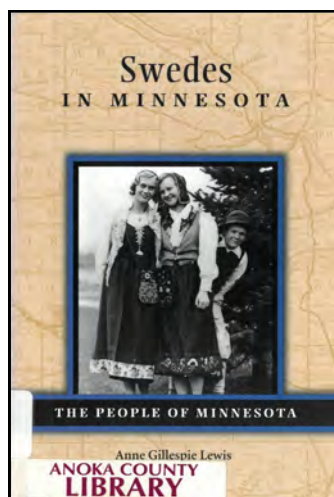


Welcome to an introduction to the fascinating material available in the Anoka County Historical Society Reference library. While the ACHS must limit its collections to material relevant to Anoka County, the reference library contains material on a wide variety of topics. Among them is a series produced by the Minnesota Historical Society, *The People of Minnesota*, that includes, *Swedes in Minnesota*.

Within its pages, discover Swedish churches, creameries, logging camps, and boarding houses. Did you know a Swedish woman was a practicing doctor in Isanti County by the late 1880's? Learn about Hans Mattson who served as Minnesota Secretary of State from 1870-1872, the first Swedish American to hold a state office. When did the Swedish Hospital open in Minneapolis? Find the Swedish roots for Lutheran Social Services.

*Swedes in Minnesota* by Anne Gillespie Lewis, reports that in the 2000 Census 13% of the people in Anoka County claimed Swedish ancestry. Whether you are one of them (or only wish you were!) you will enjoy this introduction to Swedish history in Minnesota. Topics include early immigrants, settlers in rural areas and cities, churches, and cultural events. Pictures depict the history and culture of Swedes in Minnesota. Insets provide insights on specific individuals, families and businesses. Traditional Swedish foods and their role in preserving Swedish culture are included. There are two recipes for Swedish Meatballs – and a caution about asking for a recipe in a Swedish gathering. A highlight is the selection from the memoirs of Evelina Mansson. Mansson came to Minnesota in 1905, and lived here for six years. After returning to Sweden she recorded her experiences. There is information on Swedish cultural events still held in Minnesota and on organizations for Swedish-Americans, as well as suggestions for further reading.

Not Swedish? Other books in the series discuss the Irish, Norwegians, Jews, African-Americans, Germans, and Chinese in Minnesota: a reminder that Minnesotans have a multitude of histories to be proud of.



*Sandy Connor has been a volunteer with the ACHS for more than 10 years. She can be found helping at the front desk at the History Center, setting up home at the Farmhouse during the County Fair, and selling tickets for the Home and Garden Tour at Riverfest. Her dedication, smile, interest in local history, and sparkly glasses cannot be matched.*



# Night at the Museum

FUNDRAISING DINNER SERIES

Reserve your spot now for our exclusive Night at the Museum dinner events. Each night offers a gourmet, plated dinner, behind the scenes tours, and special artifacts. Each dinner has a different theme—so find the one YOU LOVE! Purchase your tickets quick, there are only 20 tickets for each dinner.

**Tickets: \$50**

Tickets and more information available at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or Anoka History Center

## JUNE 15

Schools OUT! Play with the Museum boxes that captivated students this school year.

## JULY 20

Collections— Unwrapped! Witness the unveiling of some of the oddest items in the ACHS collections, and how to protect them..

## SEPTEMBER 20 & OCTOBER 11

Anoka Halloween goodies are collected all over the world. Talk Halloween and get an up-close look at ACHS's exclusive collection of Anoka Halloween memorabilia.



## SEPTEMBER 27 & OCTOBER 18

It's a who-done-it night. Become detectives, interrogate suspects, or try to get away with murder at ACHS's inaugural murder mystery dinners. Character sheets given prior to dinner.



## HISTORY 21 GIFT SHOP



Where do you go to find the perfect gift for the local history lover? ACHS's newly updated History 21 Gift Shop!

This March, volunteers helped construct a new space to feature our items for sale. Art prints from the Jon Arfstrom collection, books written by local authors, booklets highlighting local history, and more are available for purchase at the Anoka History Center.



Can't make it to the History Center? Stop by Chema Malu at 208 E Main St. for our satellite store. With a store packed with local treasures, the ACHS gift shop gems fit right in.





Celebrating our Volunteers!

Laughter, conversation and music permeated the air at this year's Volunteer Celebration. The evening began with the first ever ACHS orchestra concert. With Mandy Meisner on flute, Rebecca on French horn, and Audra on clarinet, I conducted the piece. With the first note, everyone immediately realized that our group needed much more practice and so I finished the piece solo on my cello!



Along with the musical concert, people helped themselves to brats and cookies, played board games, put together puzzles, and connected with other volunteers they pass, but never get to talk to, throughout the year.

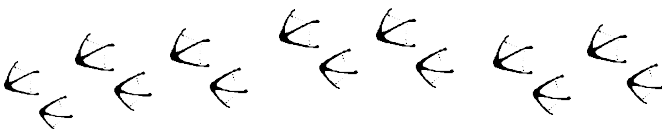


The volunteers at ACHS make our organization a better place. The 1965 History Center building with its brick, box-like construction can feel cold when you are all alone. But with the smiles, talents, skills, and passion of each volunteer that walks through the door, or the volunteer that helps bring history out into the world, turns the box into a home. Volunteers help us care for the history within our walls, but they also transform it from a static name on a page, to a living memory of our local past. While we pull out all the stops to say a big thank you once a year at this celebration, the thank yous extend throughout the year. The times you care for the collection like a gem, the times you help get the newsletter out on time, the times you tell a new friend about ACHS, the times... the times... you make ACHS a community and make it possible to share history to the county.

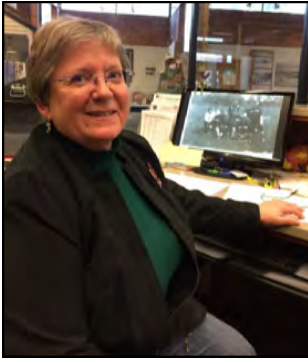


This event was made possible by our Gold sponsor Pierce Motel and Friend of ACHS Thrivent Financial who also helped serve the delicious food so our volunteers didn't have to volunteer at their own celebration.

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org







Meet Jane LaMusga

**Where do you hail from?**

I moved to Anoka in 1963 just in time to enter 7th grade in what now is the Sandburg building. Graduated in 1969 from the High School on 5th, graduation was held at Goodrich Field.

**What do you do at ACHS?**

Mainly answer questions! I answer the phone, help with email inquiries, and get to dabble in some genealogy research for patrons.

**What is the most surprising thing you've come across while volunteering?**

I love to chat with people and I have been surprised by how many people I have Anoka connections with that pop through the door— patrons and other volunteers.

**What do you love?**

History and how it ties into individual family stories. I hold a certificate in Genealogical Research and this is a perfect fit for my passion.

**WANTED**

**GHOST TOUR GUIDES**



Are you, or someone you know, comfortable speaking in front of crowds of people? Love local history? Intrigued by ghost stories? AND have time this Ghost Tour season (Aug-Oct.)?

**Audition to be one of ACHS's new Ghost Tour Guides!**

Contact Sara for more information and to schedule an interview  
[Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)

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

Don't wait another two months to discover 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

**General Donations**

American Legion Auxiliary Edward B. Cutter Unit  
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 Mille Lacs Grand Casino  
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 Peter Wojciechowski

**New Members**

Mary Jerde  
 Wilda Shelly  
 Kessie Wilson

**ACHS Business Members**

The BIG White House  
 Coon Rapids Historical Commission  
 Dan Gould Jewelers  
 Forest Lake Contracting  
 Northeast Bank  
 Nowthen Historical Power Association  
 Peterson Shoes  
 Pierce Refrigeration  
 Terry Overacker Plumbing

**Donations Made in Memory of:**

Carl Steinwall  
 Tom Ward



**Artifact Donors**

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**Become a Business or Sustaining Member!**

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



**NEW!** (For Individuals or Businesses) A Sustaining Membership includes the benefits of a regular membership, a shout-out in our newsletter, and recognition on our web site. You also receive an annual free personalized Group Tour for you and 14 friends (must be scheduled in advance) will come with complimentary refreshments.— \$150

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

**M  
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**Rum River Writers Group**

Every Thursday, 1:15 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center  
Open to interested and aspiring writers

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center  
Open to membership and the public

**Rum River Rovers Baseball Team**

Watch and cheer on our Anoka County baseball team. These players play a gentleman’s game using original 1860s rules. Full schedule at:  
[anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/](http://anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/)

**A Living Legacy: Food, Faith, Church, Charity**

May 10 at 6 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center  
We’re teaming up with Thrivent to present ideas on dusting off the old family cookbook to discover more about how you can adapt and update family recipes to reflect your modern situation! Add to the living legacy with a giving plan inspired by generosity; sharing of your time, talents and treasures provides meaningful ways of expressing your values and puts your faith into action! Join us to learn more of how to turn your acts of generosity into a legacy that will bless all who receive!

**An Evening with Mary Woodbury**

May 24 at 6 p.m. at the Mad Hatter Restaurant—1632 S. Ferry St. Anoka  
Join the longest reigning resident of the Woodbury house, Mary Woodbury, at the Mad Hatter for High Tea and a journey through history.  
**Cost:** \$45 + tax, reservations made through the Mad Hatter. Limited Seating.  
[www.MadHatterAnoka.com](http://www.MadHatterAnoka.com)

**14th Annual Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour**

July 9, 1 p.m.—5 p.m. throughout the city of Anoka  
Tickets: \$12 advance, available for purchase after June 1

**Night at the Museum Dinner Series**

Various dates 5:30 p.m.– 8 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center  
Learn more and have FUN at a dinner on your favorite topic.  
See page 11 for more details.  
Tickets: \$50 available at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or the History Center

**Ghost Tours**

Book a private ghost tour for your group this summer and enjoy the history and mystery of Anoka on a beautiful evening walk. Group: min 15, max 25.  
Tickets: \$9 adults, \$7 members. Schedule your tour by calling Sara at 763-421-0600



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Historical Society  
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Historical Society



# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.4 July-August 2017

Shorter than route 66 but closer to home.

[AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://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: Unidentified boys in the back of a truck during an Anoka Parade. Undated.*

*Object ID#: 2016.0173.003*





## From the President

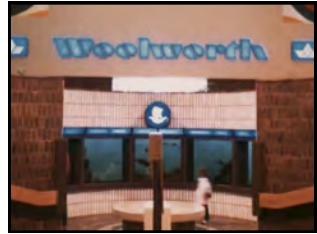
One of my favorite recollections in Anoka County is the most fleeting. I didn't grow up here, but visited my aunt and her family in Coon Rapids several times a year. This was the mid-1970's. Little did I know back then (when my age was in the single digits) that one of the new, hot places of the day was Northtown Mall. I didn't know that Northtown had only opened in 1972 and was the first major shopping center in the

Twin Cities that wasn't a "Dale." I just knew it was an exciting place to visit.

The best part of Northtown for me – and for so many others I have talked with in recent years – were the huge aquariums in front of Woolworth's (now Best Buy). I was a small-town kid, so this was a cool thing to do in "the Cities." Going to "see the fish" was something my sister and I definitely thought was payoff for the long drive.

Time has passed and the aquariums are long gone. The photograph on the right is the only one I have found. Malls are becoming endangered species in the era of online shopping and quick delivery. Northtown looks vastly different from how it appeared 40 years ago. I can't walk through the mall, though, without remembering the how glamorous those aquariums were.

Things have changed and so many of those changes are for the better. Youth of today will have their own memories to look back upon. Still, I am a little sorry that the kids in my life won't know the joy of watching those fish.



*Orville Lindquist*  
Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



## From the Director

We have hit the six-month mark from when our dear Vickie Wendel retired. Since then, staff have burned up the phones texting and calling her with questions, fishing for information out of her cavernous mind to fill gaps in ours.

It was a pleasure then, to call attention to her 30 years of service one more time when she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MAHLM). Given to history professionals who show a devotion to their career, generally making an indelible mark on the organizations they serve, the award felt like the perfect capstone to mark the beginning of another chapter in the story that only Vickie can write for us.



*Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp*

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



## COLUMBIA HEIGHTS GARDEN CLUB: GROWING FLOWERS & A CITY

By Grant Wilson, ACHS Intern

I began my internship in the archives department of the Anoka County Historical Society in April. Since then, friends and family have asked me what it is that I am working on while I am there. Well, the first day I arrived, Sara Given presented to me a box labeled “Columbia Heights Garden Club.” This box contains letters, programs, newspaper clippings, and record books filled with hundreds of meeting minutes spanning almost three decades. Sara told me my first project was to go through everything in this box and organize it in a way that makes sense. When I tell people my hours at the history center mostly consist of reading through letters and meeting minutes upon meeting minutes from a garden club that functioned decades ago, they have the same reaction you are possibly having right now. Generally, they raise their eyebrows, quietly say, “Oh, okay,” and move onto another topic of conversation.

If I am honest, I was not the most enthusiastic about this project when first presented with it. What could possibly be interesting about a garden club? Surely there is nothing compelling about elderly women gathering in the parlor of their home, discussing how beautiful their gardens are. The beginning of this experience certainly tested my claim that I have

repeatedly stated to many acquaintances who ask me what aspect of history I like the most: “I love all history.” But as I sift through the wealth of history in this box, I realize how wholly inaccurate my initial expectations about

...as I sift through the wealth of history in this box, I realize how wholly inaccurate my initial expectations about the people who made up the Columbia Heights Garden Club were.

the people who made up the Columbia Heights Garden Club were. The members of the Columbia Heights Garden Club were dedicated to improving not only the beauty of their homes, but ultimately the beauty of the community in which they took so much pride: Columbia Heights, Minnesota.

The majority of the information we have concerning the Columbia Heights Garden Club comes from our collection of meeting minutes that chronicle the club's activities from 1938-1966 (although we possess a bank record that suggests the club existed as late as 1970). These minutes give us a clear idea of the club's goals, plans, activities, and concerns, but only go into superficial detail. Article clippings and correspondence supplement some of this information and it is where these sources intersect that provides the basis for this article.

The club organized in November of 1938. Earlier that fall, the Columbia Heights State Bank hosted a flower and vegetable exhibition in their lobby. According to a handwritten summary of the first years of the club's existence, "The moving spirit [behind] this undertaking was John Seman, then employed by the bank." Turnout for the exhibition was unexpectedly high and enthusiastic. Gathered in the lobby with the attendees, Seman suggested establishing a community garden club. On November 1, 1938, a number of Columbia Heights citizens gathered in the parlors of the Church of Immaculate Conception and organized the Columbia Heights Garden Club.

For over 30 years, the Columbia Heights Garden Club remained an active organization in its local community. The club met once a month, with their annual meeting occurring in November, election of officers in December, and committee appointments usually occurring in December or January. The club was affiliated with the Minnesota State Horticulture Society, a relationship that enabled several benefits including free issues of the *Minnesota Horticulturist*, free access to the society's library, and arrangements for guest speakers to attend the club's meetings. These guest speakers lectured on a host of subjects related to gardening, such as soil, flower arrangements, or when and how to trim plants. Even representatives of the Coca-Cola company attended meetings in 1940 and 1941, showing pictures of flower arrangements and serving "a bottle of ice cold coco [sic] cola to all present." They made monetary donations to the Red Cross, local hospitals, and the Minnesota State Horticulture Society. They toured one another's gardens and attended an annual picnic at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Breyley, where the club enjoyed wonderful food and the beauty of the Breyley estate.

While the Columbia Heights Garden Club enjoyed tending to their own gardens as well as admiring one another's, their foremost concern was the beautification of Columbia Heights itself. The Columbia Heights Garden Club believed that the beauty of their city would instill beauty in the attitude of its citizens. In April 1941, club member Mrs. P. Theodore Oleson submitted an article to the *Minnesota Horticulturist*,



summarizing the growth and activities of the club since 1938. She concluded her article by stating, "We believe that by keeping our eyes fixed on an ultimate goal, and by working tirelessly, with Mother Nature, our dependable and powerful ally, our dreams will become realities, our community will be enriched and our people encouraged to a friendlier fellowship and a finer citizenship."

Mr. O.H. Prestemon, charter member of the Columbia Heights Garden Club and eventual mayor of Columbia Heights, was possibly the most vocal member of the club and its biggest believer in this goal. Prestemon had a column in the *Columbia Record* entitled "Prestemon's Points."

Prestemon used this platform to express his belief in the club's work and the value of beautification, what he had gained from his visits to various gardens and nurseries, and to announce upcoming activities the club sponsored within the community. The Anoka County Historical Society possesses several of these articles in which Prestemon articulates the practical benefits of the beautification of any city.

"It affects the growth, real estate values, the type of people attracted, volume of business," asserts Prestemon in one article. "It makes for civic pride and loyalty; it profoundly affects our entire outlook on life. We don't look with pride on bigger and better weeds."

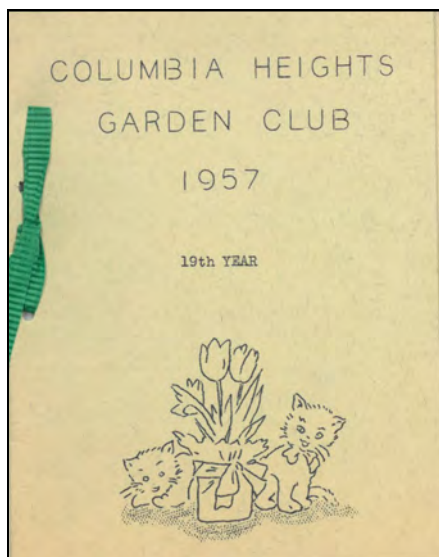
One event that illustrates the Garden Club's endeavor is their "Window Flower Show" or "strolling flower show" of 1950. In fact, a scrapbook at ACHS devotes much of its space to newspaper clippings documenting this flower show. During the weekend of September 1 and 2, businesses throughout the city of Columbia Heights displayed flower and garden arrangements in their windows. Residents and visitors were encouraged to take a long walk and appreciate these beautiful floral displays.

"We want you to know...that this is a non-competitive show," said a statement released by the organizing committee. "There are no prizes. We want to demonstrate that the Garden Club members are interested in flowers for the sake of flowers alone and because of what they do for houses and environment [sic]."

Prestemon commented further on the purpose of this show in his column.

"It comes down to this: we are all interested in a better community in which to live," Prestemon wrote. "There are a hundred ways to accomplish this and the garden club members feel they are contributing something through their efforts, not alone by organized effort but as individuals through example and precept. Anything anyone does to make a better community results in some benefit to all."

The Window Flower and Garden Show is only one example of the Columbia Heights Garden Club's efforts to improve the attractiveness of their city. They also wrote to county commissioners, city officials, and state legislators concerning the obstacles facing the beautification of Columbia Heights and Anoka County. In June of 1957, the Garden Club addressed the Anoka County commissioners regarding the





# Columbia Heights Garden Club

Columbia Heights, Minn.

Received

Cash Awards at Flower Show, Aug. 29th & 30th, 1942.  
Sweepstakes

|                    |                    |        |                         |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| Mrs. Jones Adkins, | 4055 Jefferson St. | \$ .75 | <i>Jones Adkins</i>     |
| Betty Barrington   | 3828 Jackson St.   | 2.00   | <i>Betty Barrington</i> |

mosquito epidemic plaguing Minnesota.

"Now therefore be it resolved: that the Columbia Heights Garden Club urge that this county participate in an area wide program of mosquito abatement, to include at the least five or six neighboring counties," wrote the club.

The club also wrote to Senator Ralph W. Johnson of the Minnesota State Senate concerning the unsightly presence of billboards along interstate highways. Another letter, written in July 1960 to the Minnesota State Highway Department, urged the state to develop rest areas alongside highways in Anoka County.

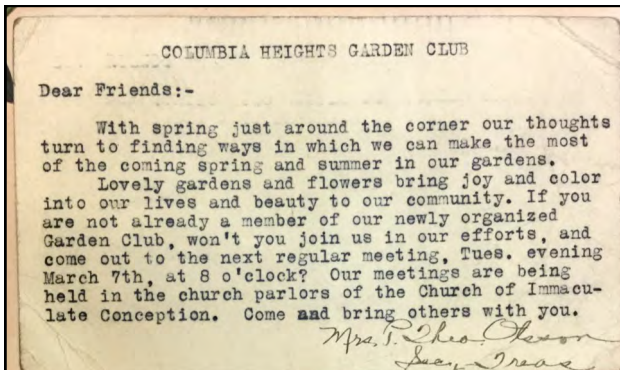
"The Columbia Heights Garden Club shares the consensus of all the people in the rapidly growing Anoka County over the lack of provisions for transients passing through our area for some place for them to place to the side of the road and enjoy a brief rest, a snack and recreation," they wrote.

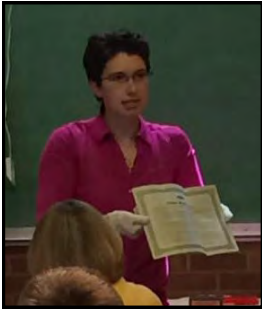
The club also contacted Columbia Heights officials encouraging them to purchase vacant lots so that they may be converted into beautiful parks. Foremost in their minds always was the further beautification and aesthetic improvement of Columbia Heights and the surrounding area so that it may be a pleasant and wholesome place to live and visit.

Although a Google search will yield virtually no results directly related to the Columbia Heights Garden Club, the organization remained a significant presence in Anoka County for over 30 years. The attendees of that first exhibition in the fall of 1938 may have initially only shared an interest in flowers and gardening, but the members of the club appeared anything but half-hearted. The club was not merely a hobby that got them out of the house once a month. They were a serious organization with elected officers, appointed committees, sponsored events, and advocacy to state legislators - all in the hopes of achieving their ultimate goal of making Columbia Heights a beautiful, desirable place to live; a city whose beauty permeated throughout

the entire community, positively altering the way its citizens conducted themselves.

While we may not feel so compelled, perhaps the example of the Columbia Heights Garden Club can move us enough to simply take time and smell the roses.





Not unlike other professions, it is important that ACHS staff continually improve our specialized knowledge and training so that the ACHS collections, archives, and organization receive the best possible care.

One way I do this is by attending the annual Midwest Archives Conference, where workshops, panels, and lectures presented by other archivists provide me with new and improved skills to bring back to ACHS. This year, I attended the 2017 Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) in Omaha, Nebraska at the beginning of April. I would like to thank the Twin Cities Archivists Roundtable (TCART) for their

assistance with a generous Professional Development Scholarship to offset some of the conference costs.

One of the highlights of this year's conference for me was a workshop on creating mounts and supports for artifacts on display. As of this year, I am responsible for not only the collections at the Historical Society, but also for the exhibits. I have some limited previous experience with exhibit-building, but also lots still to learn. This workshop, "Exhibit Mount Basics & Beyond," was very helpful.

The three women conducting the workshop did an excellent job explaining how to build different structures for artifacts on display, keeping the mount itself unobtrusive while still giving the artifact the support that it needs. They provided hands-on practice for two exhibit mounts and provided instructions on how to create many more. I practiced mounting a flat item, such as a document or photograph, onto a supporting board using corners or strips of Mylar to hold the item in place – an excellent way to keep adhesives away from an artifact. We also created book cradles, a technique of scoring and folding acid-free mat board up to form two triangular supports and a base. A fragile book can then rest open in this cradle, with the spine and the pages all fully supported.

Additionally, the workshop provided samples of good materials to work with for exhibit-building, as well as a list of resources and further reading. I recently put my new knowledge into practice when creating our new exhibit on the Ticknor House in Anoka. Flat mounts support two fragile prescriptions dated c. 1900, which can now be safely propped up and displayed for visitors. We also have two Ticknor family photograph albums, one from the late 1800s and the other from the early 1900s, which I wanted to display. Building each a custom support (one a full book cradle, the other a half-cradle), allows me to display them without putting additional stress on their spines.

Further techniques discussed in the workshop included skills like sewing small pillows out of Tyvek or unbleached cotton fabric on which small, delicate items can



*Sample wheel of archival materials*



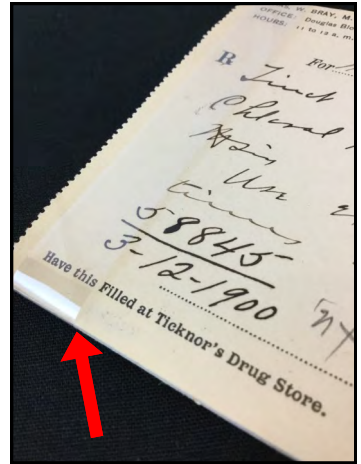
safely rest. You can see examples of this technique in the Ticknor exhibit as well. Look for a glass medicine bottle with an interesting Ticknor & Co. drug store label on it resting on such a pillow.

A later panel session touched on similar themes to the workshop, providing advice and examples for supporting artifacts while they are in storage, rather than on display. Several ideas for building useful yet cost-effective supports were shared, and attendees could later access the program as a reference. I will use this information on the organizational side of our collections storage at ACHS in the future, so that our artifacts can have good support and protection while we stay within our available funds for preservation.

Other aspects of the conference provided intellectual support and encouragement for some of our projects and goals here at the history center. A lunch-time forum focused on the idea of collaboration between libraries, archives, and museums. Since ACHS has long-term relationships with the Anoka County Library system and the Minnesota Digital Library, it's encouraging to know we are certainly not alone in pursuing collaborations of this nature. Our unique projects with these organizations allowed me content to share with my colleagues during the course of the event. Museums, archives, and libraries have much to offer each other as institutions, as well as our patrons, who can have easier access to a greater number and variety of resources when we work in collaboration.

Although they are projects for another year at ACHS, I was also glad to attend panels discussing the issues of Web Archiving (preserving websites and other internet content) and Digital Content Migration (making sure that various types of digital content remain accessible despite changing hardware, software, and file formats) to begin planning. These panels gave me some new information and ideas about these processes. As we look to tackle these projects in the future, I think the more we can learn about them beforehand, the better. Hearing how other institutions are undertaking them, whether singly or cooperatively, as well as their challenges and solutions, are helpful in this regard.

The Midwest Archives Conference allowed for me to connect with colleagues in my profession and to bring new or improved knowledge back to ACHS. It is my goal that we improve our collections management and continue to present top-notch, interesting exhibits to our visitors. I hope to attend both MAC and local TCART professional events for many years to come.



*An almost invisible way to mount this paper using Mylar.*



*Finished mount*

# World War I Resources

## in the Reference Library

On April 6, 1917 the US declared war on Germany. Why? What happened then? The ACHS Research Library has a good selection of books for World War I research.

**EYEWITNESS WORLD WAR I**, written by Simon Adams and photographed by Andy Crawford (call number 940.3 AD), is a great starting place for information on “The War to End all Wars.” Chapters begin with a concise overview of the topic. This is followed by photographs accompanied by detailed information about the subjects of the pictures.

You’ll want to see the Navy Recruitment poster described in the book as, “When the U.S. entered the war in April 1917, a poster showing an attractive woman in naval uniform urged volunteers to enlist.” Learn what else women did in the war. Find out why Alexei Brusilov, Joseph Joffre, Gabriel Voisen and others are “Important Personalities.” Check the “Fascinating Facts” section for information on preparing food in field kitchens, messenger dogs, and the first tank. Read the “Questions and Answers” to discover why tanks were called tanks. Another section describes “Major Battles.” Other topics included weapons, uniforms, gas masks, trench life, sand shoes, espionage, and more.

If **EYEWITNESS WORLD WAR I** leaves you looking for more in-depth information, try **WORLD WAR I: A VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA**, General Editor: Simon Forty call number 940.3 FO.

**Want to see WWI exhibits at other historical societies? Try the Minnesota History Center, Dodge County Historical Society, Olmsted County Historical Society, or Otter Tail County Historical Society**



*Sandy Connor has been a volunteer with the ACHS for more than 10 years. She can be found helping at the front desk at the History Center, setting up home at the Farmhouse during the County Fair, and selling tickets for the Home and Garden Tour at Riverfest. Her dedication, smile, interest in local history, and sparkly glasses cannot be matched.*

# Come to Dinner, We miss you!



Did you attend Buster Talbot's, or Natalie Haas Steffen's recognition dinners? Did you celebrate the Halloween Stamp unveiling at our dinner this past September? In doing so you helped support ACHS and contributed to an important part of keeping us a financially healthy organization.

**With hundreds of people attending these large events, we didn't have a chance to connect with YOU.** As a result, this year we created smaller, exclusive *Night at the Museum* fundraising dinners from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Each dinner has a different theme: learn about the hidden pieces of the ACHS Collection, special Halloween artifacts, or dust off your detective skills at a murder mystery. These limited seating events also offer a gourmet, plated dinner, behind the scenes tours, special artifacts, and lots of laughter and fun. Invite a friend and purchase your tickets now! **A fun night for you will help ACHS continue our mission to keep telling our Local History.** Tickets: \$50 via website or phone.

## July 20 Dinner

Collections— Un-wrapped! Fold back the tissue paper and witness the unveiling of some of the oddest items in the ACHS collections! Become a foster parent to an artifact you choose to adopt and help ensure it lives a long and happy life for future generations.



## August 24 Dinner

Jon Arfstrom [1928-2015] lived his life creating art. Pencil, pen, oils, acrylics, watercolor, markers, colored pencils, charcoal, and pastels all found a home in his work. Enjoy a relaxing evening with people who knew him while helping to support his legacy project of digitizing diaries, a book, and an online exhibit for the museum.



## September 20 & October 11 Dinners

Anoka Halloween goodies are collected all over the world. Talk Halloween, get an up-close look at ACHS's exclusive collection of Anoka Halloween memorabilia...and hear some ghost stories!



## September 27 & October 18 Dinners

It's a who-done-it night of mayhem! Become detectives, interrogate suspects-- or try to get away with murder at ACHS's inaugural murder mystery dinners.

Character profiles given prior to event.





Sometimes I feel like we are Elmer Fudd, “Shhhhhhhh be very, very, quiet we’re huntin’ (history) rabbits.” If we are too loud people might hear us coming. While the sneak attack works well for my cat, it doesn’t work so well for museums—it just means that

people don’t know about us or continue to think of history as boring.

That is definitely not true! We know we're cool. Our volunteers know that history doesn't have to be boring, that it can be exciting and thought-provoking. Our local stories can make us cry just as easily as they can make us laugh. We can be surprised by the rich history right in our own backyard, the house down the street, or that place across town.

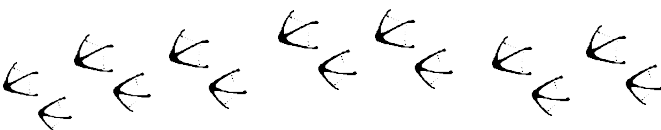
SO I am placing a summer challenge to all of our volunteer friends: don’t let ACHS be a secret anymore! Talk to your friends and when you speak of us, shout from the

(metaphorical) rooftops. If you must speak in hushed tones, do so from awe. The more we share our love of history, the more we advocate for ACHS and let others know we’re cool too, the more friends we will have. These new friends will have new stories to share, and help ACHS grow.

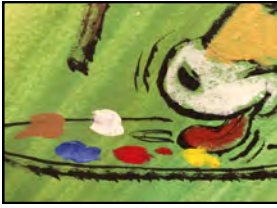


Further proof we’re not boring.

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org







**MUSEUM SCAVENGER HUNTS**

Not sure where to take the kids on summer break? Bring them by the History Center! Our exhibit hall is FREE to ALL and is a chance to share your own stories along the way. There is also a FREE Scavenger Hunt that takes you from one end of the exhibit hall to the other searching for the unexpected. (Like the item above!)

**Ghost Tours**

They aren't just for the fall anymore! Book a private ghost tour for your group of people-- friends, family, co-workers, club, senior center, etc. Enjoy the history and mystery of Anoka on a beautiful evening walk this summer. Please keep group size between 15-25 participants.

Tickets: \$9 adults, \$7 members. Schedule your tour by calling Sara at 763-421-0600

**WANTED**

**GHOST TOUR GUIDES**



Are you, or someone you know, comfortable speaking in front of crowds of people? Love local history? Intrigued by ghost stories? AND have time this Ghost Tour season (Aug-Oct.)?

**Auditions August 4 & 5**

**Prepare any 5-minute story and show what you have to be a new Ghost Tour Guide.**

Contact Sara for more information and to schedule an audition  
[Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)

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

Don't wait another two months to discover 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



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**Become a Business or Sustaining Member!**

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



**NEW!** (For Individuals or Businesses) A Sustaining Membership includes the benefits of a regular membership, a shout-out in our newsletter, and recognition on our web site. You also receive an annual free personalized Group Tour for you and 14 friends (must be scheduled in advance). Will come with complimentary refreshments.— \$150

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

**Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, NOW FOR FREE:**

Tuesday 10 a.m.—8 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center

Open to membership and the public

**Rum River Rovers Baseball Team**

Watch and cheer on our Anoka County baseball team. These players play a gentleman's game using original 1860s rules. Full schedule at:

[anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/](http://anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/)

**Riverfest**

July 8, 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Cost: FREE but donations welcome

A new exhibit explores the life of four generations of Ticknors, from Heman through his great-grandson, who fought in the second World War. On display are family land grants from the 1700s, photograph albums, clothing, and military dog tags. No party would be complete without entertainment and refreshments, including performances by the students of 'Nmotion Dance Center of Fridley, special musical appearances, and treats of ice cream and cake.

**14th Annual Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour**

July 9, 1 p.m.—5 p.m. throughout the city of Anoka

Tickets: \$12 advance, \$15 the day of the tour

You will discover an elaborate birthday celebration at the Ticknor Hill Bed and Breakfast, where cake, candles, live music, lawn games, and even view antique fire trucks (all those candles could be dangerous!) will occur in addition to the home tour. You'll also find fraternal organizations past and present of Anoka, have a chat with a professional gardener and soil conservationist, and see musical sculptured art.

**East Bethel Booster Club program**

July 15, 2:30 p.m. in the council chambers of the East Bethel City Hall

Cost: FREE

East Bethel is the largest city in Anoka County by land area. How did this community come to be its own city, and how did that city grow and develop? Shortly after incorporation in 1957, a group of determined citizens formed the East Bethel Booster Club. Under the leadership of John H. Nordin, they spent the next two decades helping their new city to grow and prosper. Learn the story of the Booster Club, their ups and downs, and the lasting legacy they have left in East Bethel.



Anoka County  
Historical Society  
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Anoka County  
Historical Society



# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.5 September-October 2017

Scandium (atomic number 21) is our spirit element

[AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://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: Coon Rapids School Band circa 1937. Object ID#: 887.1.09*

*Front Row: John Foley, Mary Foley, Dave McArdle, unidentified.*

*2nd Row: Joyce Miller, [unintelligible] Soterberg, Allie Soterberg, Roberta Haines, unidentified, Jim Edwards, Bob Jacob.*

*3rd Row: unidentified, Bob Ramacher, Unidentified, Unidentified, Daisy Westland, Evelyn Swanson, Earl Jacob, Jerry Jacob.*

*Back: L.O Jacob.*





## From the President

Summer is over; so is the State Fair . . . time for “back to school”.

Whether your school days took place in a one-room schoolhouse, in a new suburban school of the 1960s or in a technology-laden building of today, going to school is one of our unifying experiences. Love it or hate it, school days are part of our childhoods and formative to our adult lives. September gives me more feelings of nostalgia than any other time of the year. Seeing the ads for new clothes, lunch boxes and backpacks bring me right back to being a teenager . . . not to mention how my inner geek emerges when I see all those marvelous school supplies! Even if you remember Junior High or High School with something less than fondness, take a moment now to think back. Find something or someone that was important to you from those days. Maybe even reach out to that old school friend or make a visit to your hometown. Think about how much that world has changed since “way back when” and how far YOU have come.

In my younger years, I was one of those kids who had trouble sleeping the night before the first day of school. Truth be told, I still do.

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



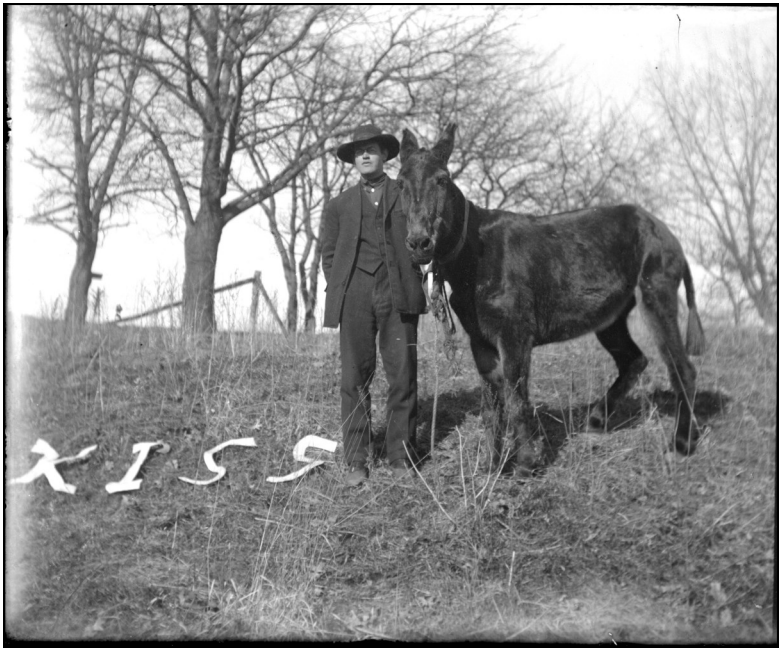
## From the Director

Trying to disrupt the assumption that history is only for people who seek out information from the past, ACHS took advantage of a generous offer from Chema Malu in August. The Main



Street Anoka storefront donated a portion of the space they occupied in Northtown Mall for a pop-up exhibit and gift shop, allowing us to get in front of different people than we typically see. Although a temporary location, it afforded us the opportunity of creating a fun space to showcase our publications, the art of Jon Arfstrom, and some free handouts. The partnerships that exist between ACHS and businesses like Chema Malu, as well as the other non-profits in Anoka County, are vital for our existence. It’s with true gratitude for these relationships that I write this.

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director



Object ID# 2005.1361.279

## WHAT TO DO WITH THAT?

Museums collect stories of past generations to allow present generations a better understanding of the events and circumstances that brought us here. Unfortunately, not every story can be saved, nor every artifact preserved.

In an ideal world, the collections of ACHS would reflect the exact demographic nature of the County we serve, as well as the interests of those individuals and their era-specific lifestyle. In reality, however, an artifact collection is only as strong and diverse as the donations we receive and the donors they represent. Additionally, the donations that do make it into our archives often only reflect the best sides of the residents who owned them—but clearly some break that rule!

What does a museum, or history center, do when an artifact forces you to take a mental step back? ACHS feels it's critical to not reject items that come to us based on how distastefully we may perceive them; keeping in mind the historical context in which items lived or worked helps us to accurately reflect the individuals who owned them. However, just because we choose to preserve a tarnished view of the people who preceded us, doesn't mean that it is always appropriate to exhibit or display these items. If we do choose to display them, the context or understanding, both of the past and the present, must be acknowledged.

A few things in the ACHS collection traverse the spectrum of potentially offensive materials.

The above image originated as a glass plate negative. This means that the photographer inserted a small sheet of glass that had been treated with a dry, gelatin-type emulsion on one side into the camera, then exposed the glass to light entering through a lens to record the image. This particular negative (reversed into the positive

when it was scanned for the ACHS collection) comes from the Downs Family collection, and is one of many such negatives, most of them dated c. 1900 and taken in either Ramsey or Anoka. In this one, some effort was clearly taken to send the message of “Kiss A--,” or possibly “Kiss my A--.” Since this is a sentiment that might well be expressed today, it is interesting to have this photograph, which shows us quite clearly that people living in Anoka County almost 120 years ago were not too dissimilar to us. It serves as a good reminder that people of the past were not as uptight or straight-laced as we sometimes imagine them; they had senses of humor like ours, used insults as we do, and were sometimes willing to go to great lengths to thumb their nose at someone. In this case, the message here is subtle and mild enough that we feel comfortable sharing this photo on our Facebook page, as well as here in the newsletter.

Another glass plate negative in the collection bears a more explicit swear word etched down the front of a young man’s shirt. While we reprinted the first image in this newsletter without alteration, the second would require censoring to publish it, as many would find it a great deal more offensive: the profanity “pig f-----” could indicate a literally inappropriate relationship with pigs, or simply an expression of derision. Since the context for this is missing, we can only guess as to its real truth. Was it written to indicate a strong dislike of the person in the picture? As a literal accusation? A pal ragging on a friend? We don’t know. We do believe that having a more rounded, rather than a rosy, view of Anoka County’s past is beneficial. To that end, we will preserve the image even though we probably wouldn’t display it publically.

Another item potentially more controversial than potty-mouthed photographs is the Ouija Board in the collection. People view this item through many different lenses. For some it represents a toy, but for others it strikes a much deeper, religious chord. “Talking boards” as they were known outside of the name brand, were developed in the mid-1800s as part of the spiritualist movement that swept across America during that time. These boards usually depicted the letters of the alphabet, numbers 0-9, plus “Yes” and “No.” People used them to gain answers more quickly while communicating with spirits of the dead. The Ouija board is the familiar version of a talking board developed by entrepreneurs Charles Kennard and Elijah Bond of Massachusetts in 1891. The pair patented and sold it as a game or toy. Later, William Fuld ran the company and he and his descendants continued to manufacture the game well into the 20th century. It did not become widely controversial until the movie *The Exorcist* was released in 1973; the movie depicts a young girl being possessed by a demon through her use of a Ouija board. After the movie’s release, Christian religious groups have objected to the use of talking boards, considering them offensive and potentially dangerous. Practitioners of the Wiccan religion sometimes use talking boards, often



Object ID# 585

cautioning users to take proper precautions according to their ritual practices. This complicated recent history coupled with the fact that Ouija boards are still bought and used by many people today, means ACHS must have a larger context in mind when exhibiting the one in the collection; while it is just a toy to some, to others it is a tool, or even something that is culturally offensive.

We have a couple pairs of Victoria's Secret underwear in the collection here at ACHS. Does that surprise you? We have underwear from earlier eras, including corsets, pantaloons, and petticoats. It's unlikely anyone would think twice if we displayed any of these in the exhibit hall, although that would be quite scandalous to someone from the 19th century. Somehow it feels different when the underwear is "old." But residents of Anoka County purchase and wear lingerie, and just as we have an interest in how people clothed themselves in the past, people 50 years from now will be interested in how people dress themselves today.



*Victoria's Secret bag and underwear (never worn). Object ID# 3058 & 3059*

In 1916, a city of Anoka resident named Roe Chase wrote a pageant titled "History of Agriculture," which was subsequently performed at the Anoka amphitheater. The play consists of 12 separate scenes, placed in a vaguely chronological order. It begins with a Biblical scene, then progresses on through scenes of agriculture in several cultures, such as Ancient Egypt, China, and Early America, with Native Americans, Pilgrims, and enslaved peoples. In the time and place Chase wrote this play, his understanding of some of these cultures was different from our understanding today; a consequence of this is that some of the depictions are fairly



*Cast of the "History of Agriculture" by Roe Chase at the Anoka Amphitheater, 1916. Object ID# 2076.1.97*

offensive to modern eyes. The photograph below depicts actors in black face, and scene six, set in China, instructs the "about forty Chinese men and women" characters to "all jabber Chinese words such as 'Wong ting che fang tong wan hung chho,' etc in a shrill voice." Keeping these things in mind, the script of the pageant is something that ACHS chooses to keep and preserve, as it gives us information about what people in Anoka County knew and believed at that time. We would likely not consider staging the pageant as a live play, however, since



*Nazi paraphernalia brought back by an Anoka County soldier after WWII.*

that format does not allow for the context and interpretation that are possible for an artifact in a museum.

In our current WWII exhibit, there is a section displaying items that soldiers brought home with them. Those stationed in Germany often brought back Nazi materials, and a few of those have made their way into the collection at ACHS. One man brought back some knives

previously owned by Germans, which have the swastika on them, and also a large red banner, which features the swastika in a white circle on one end. These items were brought to the United States as spoils of war, taken from a defeated enemy, and were later donated to ACHS by that soldier's family. When we put up our WWII exhibit last December, we wanted to display these items because they are interesting and show a common behavior of American servicemen stationed in Europe late in the war. But Nazi symbols have very strong historical meanings and context, so we chose how to display them carefully; they lay flat in a locked exhibit case, with the banner folded up so that only part of it is showing. This, and the signs that we have put out with these artifacts, make their context clear as things brought home by an American soldier in the wake of Nazi Germany's defeat. To display them in another manner, such as to hang the banner at full-length on the wall, would have been less appropriate.

The current political context for these artifacts from Nazi Germany has changed since we put up the exhibit. It is part of our job as historians and museum curators to understand that perceptions of imagery change around us, sometimes rapidly. How do we in the history world respond to these changes? Removing them from the exhibit is not our current choice (though eventually that section of the exhibit may change to something else entirely). Rather, we will try to remain aware of the changing context of the present, and be prepared to hold a conversation with anyone visiting the museum who might have concerns about the artifacts being on display.

Culturally sensitive materials like Nazi swastikas, Ouija boards, and pin-up art can be on display if done carefully and with background accompanying them to create context. Items such as the photos, however, would cross a line for many families and will remain in a red folder to reduce the possibility of offence. Preservation and exhibition are two separate aspects of museum work, and while we try to make sure that all artifacts are preserved, not all of them are appropriate for the exhibit hall.

It is important to remember that Acquisition staff and committees are a crucial gatekeeper to what future generations know about the lives we led. We would like, if possible, to preserve an accurate picture of Anoka County's past, which often means thinking about preserving an accurate picture of Anoka County's present. This is not always easy, and mistakes can be made. If we keep our eyes and minds open, though, we have a better chance of recognizing and preserving those artifacts that give us a thorough, well-rounded view of our history.



## Halloween Happenings

With September upon us, the Halloween Capital of the World is gearing up for its favorite holiday! We here at ACHS are doing the same. Over the past few months we have set up a photo studio in the front of the Exhibit Hall here at the History Center. Having this dedicated space with appropriate lighting and back-drops to take photographs of our artifacts has proven immensely valuable already, and it will continue to make the collections better moving forward!

We took advantage of the studio recently to make sure that we have high-quality photographs of all our Anoka Halloween artifacts. In addition to the many buttons and medallions, we have some rarer items as well, including the license plate topper pictured at the top left. We look forward to expanding our collection of Anoka Halloween artifacts as that organization moves towards its 100th year.



**HALLOWEEN**  
**unlock**<sup>ed</sup>

September 20

October 11

Spend an evening at the museum as we unveil Halloween Collectibles in the ACHS collection. From the earliest Anoka Halloween buttons to original art from the designer of the Halloween Medallion, Alyce Vick. Join other Halloween lovers in September or October and share your stories about the Halloween Capital of the World. Plated gourmet dinner and behind the scenes tour included. Social Hour begins at 5:30 p.m.

**Tickets:** \$50, available for purchase at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) and at ACHS. Seating is limited.

## The Anokan Artist: Alexander S. Masley

We have the good fortune here at ACHS to be (re) discovering treasures in our collection on a regular basis. Recently, staff member Don stumbled across a series of original drawings that were done for the 1922 Anokan, the yearbook of Anoka High School. In researching the name of the artist, Alexander S. Masley, we realized that these were some early pieces of art from someone who became internationally famous later in his art career.

Alexander Masley was born in 1903 to Czechoslovakian parents in Akeley, Minnesota. The family had moved to Minneapolis by 1905, and the 1920 federal census shows the Masleys in Anoka. By that time, Alexander was 16 and attending Anoka High School.

By his senior year, “Alex” was well-known among his classmates for his art. The 1922 Class Will states that he bequeaths his “artistic genius” to the “already adequate store” of two younger students. He and fellow senior Martha J. Mox are listed as the official Artists on the Annual Board of the Anokan for that year. They collaborated on the artwork heading each class section of the yearbook (Seniors, Juniors, etc.), but Alex did the section art for the rest of the 1922 yearbook (Faculty, Athletics, Press, Alumni, etc.) There are 12 illustrations in total, including the four collaborations between Alex and Martha; we have the original drawings for all but one of them here at ACHS, donated many years later by the woman who was Editor-in-Chief of the Anokan in 1922. The class illustrations are a set, showing the development of the students from an “ape” as freshmen up to being a wise older man as seniors. The other section illustrations show Alex’s talent, his style shifting to fit with the topic of each drawing.

The 1922 class prophecy printed in the Anokan pinned him as being editor of the Chicago Tribune Art and Cartooning Department later in his life, but the truth is even more interesting. He went on to study first at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis School of Art, and then studied abroad in Europe during the 1930s. He became focused on wood engraving, wood-block prints, and printmaking, and it was in these areas that he became well-known as an artist. During the 1940s, he finished degrees at the UofM and Columbia University. Having earned his doctorate, Alex was invited by the University of New Mexico to create a Department of Art Education in Albuquerque, a position that he held until he retired in 1969. The department later named a building after him, and Alexander Masley passed away in 1996.

ACHS will be putting up a lobby exhibit about Masley and the 1922 Anokan artwork in the next couple of weeks. Stop in to learn more about him and see the art!



## RESEARCH LIBRARY FINDS

Parades and festivals throughout the summer sparkle with the crowns from each town's crowned Ambassadors and Royalty. The cities of St. Francis, East Bethel, Fridley, and Anoka all have royalty that represent their city throughout the year.

While Anoka's Halloween Parade dates back to 1920, the city Queens did not begin to appear in the newspapers until 1941. The newspaper described the 1941 event specifically as a "beauty contest," the winner of which would then go on to attend community and civic events. With the United States committed in World War II and many men in the County fighting overseas, the Anoka Halloween parade took a hiatus for two years, but the next Queen didn't appear until 1946 when Marion Peterson was crowned. Marion would represent the city at the St. Paul Winter Carnival and Minneapolis' Aquatennial.

The local newspaper is a time-capsule for details of these early parades and events. What did people read about each week, and what news was important to the town? ACHS has a collection of local newspapers from around the county on microfilm all available to browse on our digital microfilm machine.

Come browse an interesting year, or look for something specific, you may trip across a fun find, like who was crowned Halloween Queen.



1946 Halloween Queen entrants at Greenhaven



Reprinted from the *Anoka Union*, October 29, 1941.

### ***Harriet Pitchford Halloween Queen***

*Miss Harriet Pitchford, petite, charming, twinkling-eyes brunet, will reign as "Miss Anoka, Queen of the Halloween Capital of America," for the coming year and represent Anoka in the Minneapolis Aquatennial next summer. Her two attendants, Miss Evelyn Leger and Miss Ruth Johnson, will be seen on the queen's float in the parade Friday night. ...*

*The 25 contestants, attired in formal wear, were reviewed in a group, from which Cedric Adams chose six girls to compete in a quiz program. The girls were then presented in groups of 10, and the winners announced. Miss Pitchford was award first place with a gift of \$25 in cash and a beautiful bouquet of roses. Misses Leger and Johnson each received \$5 in cash and the honor of being attendants to the queen in the parade Friday night.*



# Murder

# Mystery

## Hollywood Lies September 27 at the Anoka County History Center

It's a night of glamour at Hollywood's prestigious movie "Eric" awards. As movie stars and directors arrive they reel from news that Best Actor nominee Tom Speed has died in a mysterious car accident. Why did this actor have to die, who isn't what they seem, who will come out of the night as winners and who will be unmasked as a murderer? Gourmet, buffet dinner.

## Murder at Sea October 18 at the Mad Hatter Restaurant

Board the SS. Libertania at the Mad Hatter Restaurant for a trip across the Atlantic set in 1914. The moment the ship sets sail, the Captain announces war has been declared on Germany. In the aftermath of this momentous news, the Captain is shot....dead. All passengers and crew are suspect. Can the murderer be caught and their secrets unearthed by the time the Libertania arrives in Southampton? Light buffet. Sponsored by the Weaver Family.

---

### Get your Tickets now!

It's a who-done-it night of mayhem! Become detectives, interrogate suspects, try to get away with murder, or just watch the fun at ACHS's inaugural murder mystery dinners. Social time begins at 5:30 p.m. and seating is limited for both events. Character profiles given prior to event. Shhhh they're confidential until the night. No spilling secrets.

**Tickets:** \$50/each Available for purchase at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or at the Anoka County History Center.



### ACHS Volunteer Venture

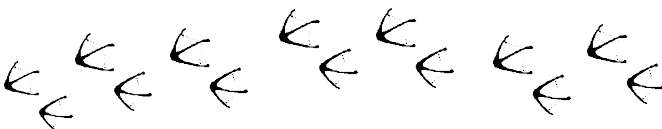
You may have noticed a new emailed newsletter in your inboxes this past month dedicated exclusively to keeping up with all the volunteer happenings around the History Center. Our amazing volunteers do so much for our organization: you wash dishes after events, scan photographs, travel back in time to work in our 1920s General Store or answer the phone on the first ring. On top of that, new opportunities come around more frequently than this main newsletter can keep up with, or some of our volunteers aren't members and won't receive this publication.

So—I have created the ACHS Volunteer Venture. This monthly e-newsletter will keep all of our volunteers up to date on new volunteer opportunities, and stories about what other volunteers have been up to.

If any ACHS member would like to join the ACHS Volunteer ranks let me know and I can officially place your name on our volunteer roles. You will then keep up to date with volunteer happenings and needs around ACHS and the County with this new e-newsletter. We keep history alive and help others discover the richness in our county because of help from people like you.

THANK YOU!

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)





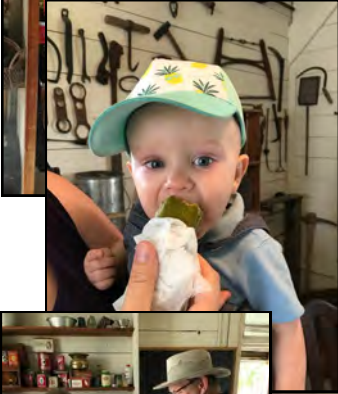
**Nowthen Threshing Show!**

The General Store opened to the Threshing Show crowds August 18-20 and began selling candy and pickles right away to excited kids and adults. We sold over 9 gallons of pickles, and countless dum-dums, smarties and other treats.

Those who entered the store traveled back in time to 1920. While some took to time-travel well, others became confused and wouldn't believe us until we pointed out the date on the calendar on the wall. With the passage of the 18th amendment prohibiting alcohol, and the 19th amendment giving women the vote, there was plenty to talk about around the store.

Thank you to all who visited the store, if you placed an order and are waiting for your vacuum cleaner or washing machine, we are still waiting for the shipment to arrive. 😊

Also thank you to all the volunteers who jumped right in, helped with important candy choice decisions, and kept our store the best spot on the show grounds.



**ACHS Remembers**



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

Maxine Larson  
1933-2017



**General Donations**

Anonymous  
 Richard Bergling  
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**Become a Business or Sustaining Member!**

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



**NEW!** (For Individuals or Businesses) A Sustaining Membership includes the benefits of a regular membership, a shout-out in our newsletter, and recognition on our web site. You also receive an annual free personalized Group Tour for you and 14 friends (must be scheduled in advance). Will come with complimentary refreshments.— \$150

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

**Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, NOW FOR FREE:**

Tuesday 10 a.m.—8 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

**ACHS Board Meetings**

Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center

Open to membership and the public.

**Rum River Writers Group**

Every Thursday, 1:15 p.m. at the Anoka County History Center

Open to interested and aspiring writers

**Rum River Rovers Baseball Team**

Watch and cheer on our Anoka County baseball team. These players play a gentleman's game using original 1860s rules. Full schedule at:

[anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/](http://anokacountyhistory.org/rum-river-rovers-vintage-base-ball/)

**Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tours**

Join a costumed guide on a tour of history of mystery around the city of Anoka. Public tours run throughout September and October.

Tickets: \$9 adults, \$7 members & children (age 6-17) Available for purchase at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or at the Anoka History Center.

**Night at the Museum Dinner: Halloween Unlocked**

September 20 & October 11 at the Anoka History Center.

Tickets: \$50. See Page 8 for more details.

**Murder Mystery: Hollywood Lies**

September 27 at the Anoka History Center

Tickets \$50. See page 11 for more details.

**Murder Mystery: Murder at Sea**

October 18 at the Mad Hatter Restaurant

Tickets \$50. See page 11 for more details.

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

Don't wait another two months to discover 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



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# HISTORY 21

Volume 47 No.6 November-December 2017

One more than 20 since math began

[AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://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: The family captured Marion Schulz's surprise at opening a much-wanted present of tap shoes at Christmas, ca 1955.*

*Object ID#: 2425.A*



## From the President

Holiday time is fast-approaching...so are snow and ice. I am thankful for holidays (if not for winter) and especially look forward to Thanksgiving. While I am a big fan of turkey, dressing, and cranberries, I am a bigger fan of all the non-food opportunities in store.

I love that we collectively get to STOP at Thanksgiving and really celebrate – more deeply than at any other time of year. Many other holidays have religious roots, meaning that they are not universally celebrated. Secular holidays – Labor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day – usually focus on activity, as we move in hundreds of different directions for our specific observances.

Not so with Thanksgiving. We flock to hearth and home – some even still go over the river and through the woods to Grandmother’s house. We turn to the embrace of family and friends. For a short time, normal business grinds to a halt. We cook, eat, spend time with those we love and we focus on what is most important to us.

That said, it is good to remember that not everyone has as much to be thankful for. In the midst of celebrating our own bounty, the very nature of Thanksgiving gives us a time to reflect on our lives, on how we can be a beacon to others, and on our proper places in the universe. I just love that.

Wishing you blessings during this most wonderful of holidays.

Orville Lindquist, ACHS President



## From the Director

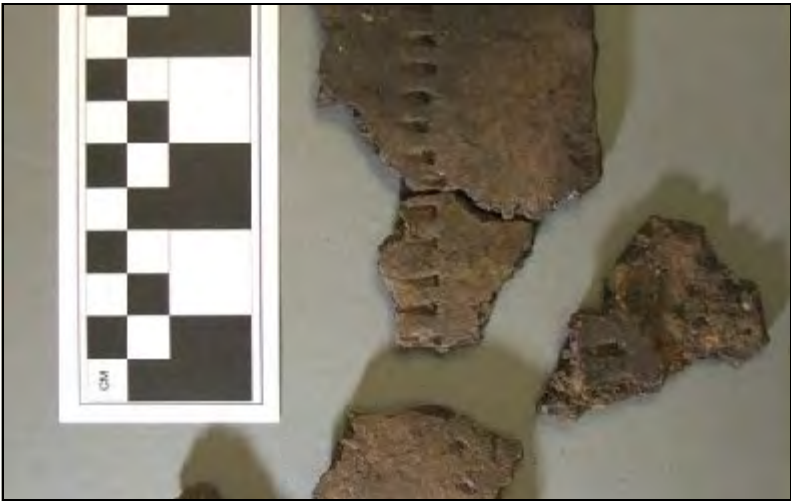
Non-profit organizations in general, historical societies in particular, have the gift of working with volunteers. By the nature of our place of business being your chosen place of recreation, we develop deep and meaningful relationships with you through shared stories that we treasure. Often these spill over into social media channels, a walk in the woods, or a shared meal, truly blurring the lines between our professional and personal selves.

The friendly atmosphere and camaraderie at the museum create an environment conducive to trading memories of childhood and school, or simply unloading the life drama of yesterday on friendly ears. These stories become part of the fabric of Anoka County as the years pass by, growing legends and expanding the historic record. We (as corny as it sounds) become a family working toward the same goal of preservation. Yet we’re a place of business with a job to do.

This year brought an onslaught of daily challenges, surgeries, chronic illnesses, and death to our volunteer pool. Having these events take friends from our routine has reinforced the depth of the relationships and just how very much every face is cherished at the History Center.

Rebecca Ebnet-Mavencamp, Executive Director





*Archaeological collection objects beside a sizing guide*

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL ALPHA SITES

The Alpha Sites Project began as a multiphase project in 2015 with four partners (Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey, and Scott County Historical Societies) joining together to explore the ground beneath our feet and the objects in these collections.

The main goal of Phase I focused on creating an understanding of archaeological resources within each county. During this Legacy grant project, the partners considered three questions:

1. What do we know about archaeological sites in the county?
2. What do we have in our current collections
3. Where would we look for archaeological sites?

The answers appeared in a prepared project report and various public presentations. Since more than 200 recorded and reported sites exist in Anoka County alone, as well as the items held in the Historical Society collections, developing archaeological context became critical to understanding these subsurface resources better. This background research and documentation paved the way for the current Phase II of the Alpha Sites Project the partners have embarked upon.

During 2017 and 2018, the Alpha Sites Project is looking at reported archaeological sites in Anoka, Dakota, and Scott Counties with the goal of recording these locations as confirmed archaeological areas. The term “Alpha Site” is a designation for a reported, though not recorded or confirmed archaeological site. Many times, Alpha Sites are location leads based on historical narratives or accounts, or avocational collections. Often Alpha Sites have not been visited by a professional archaeologist and accessible site information is limited.

The work of myself and my team for the duration of this grant has begun by diving deeper into the exploration of these reported sites to determine if they still exist and are recognizable. Since this data is many years old, it's possible that construction has obliterated a location and made the site impractical for digging. Next, my team and I will conduct field visits to document and photograph these sites to update the historic record of their existence. Completion of Minnesota State Site Forms will occur for any and all sites identified.

The 25 Alpha Sites reported in Anoka County are both prehistoric and historic sites. An example of a prehistoric Alpha Site would be

21ANb. The number “21” refers to the state of Minnesota, “AN” to Anoka County, and “b” the second reported alpha site in the county. Site 21ANb is a mound site first recorded in 1911 in Newton Winchell’s *Aborigines of Minnesota*. The description given merely says that “Mr. P. F. Pratt reported the occurrence of a mound near the right bank of Coon Creek”. As you can see, the information provided in the current site form is quite



limited. It is our hope that through aerial photo analysis and a field visit, we might truly identify this site. We intend to also use Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.



Other examples of Alpha Sites can be found in the numerous historic sites, such as 21ANj, the Anoka Lumber Company. This site was identified in Andreas' 1874 plat map. It is recorded as a mill with few details in the archaeological site form. In the 1970's and 1980's, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) inventoried old buildings across the state. These historic structures sometimes overlap with the archaeological Alpha Sites. Site

21ANj is one such site. Recorded as a standing structure, the mill may still exist and warrants a site visit to see if archaeological features such as foundations or privies may be present at the site.

A big component of Phase II is public involvement. There will be opportunities for interested individuals to be involved as much as possible by assisting in the identification and recording of these sites. Presentations such as the one we conducted in September for Minnesota State Archaeology Month, are a great way to learn about the project and get updates on where we are at. This winter, we will be asking for more assistance in researching, recording, and documenting the historic Alpha Sites, beginning with an event scheduled for November 28 and another on January 13. Watch for more information on these exciting opportunities to explore Anoka County history from a completely different perspective! In the spring of 2018, we will host more public archaeology events where volunteers can get their hands (or at least their shoes!) dirty doing real archaeology work as we visit more sites and record what still exists.

How can you help now? Watch your inbox for project opportunities or contact the Historical Society and ask to be placed on our volunteer list. There is something for everyone's skill level, from research to site visits to digging in the dirt. We hope to see you soon!

*Blondo Consulting, established in 2009, assists clients in the region and beyond to successfully complete compliance archaeology and cultural resources studies prior to project completion. Our staff has expertise in prehistoric and historic archaeology, tribal history, historic buildings, and legal requirements for projects.*

# Finding Their VOICE

*A preservation project of our  
most recent veterans*



*Our collection needs your photos,  
letters, and memorabilia depicting the  
last 30 years of military conflicts.*

We maintain a dedicated space in the exhibit hall to share the experiences of our veterans. Since its inception, ACHS has worked to interpret Anoka County's involvement in major conflicts.

Our next project will focus on gathering the stories from our most recent veterans who fought in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, as well as any number of missions in Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan over the last 30 years. Our goal is to record 50 oral histories, gather artifacts to preserve this modern story in our collection, and create an experience both online and in the exhibit hall to better help the public understand the complexities of citizen-soldiers, robotic warfare, and the effects on families of heavy media coverage of these deployments.

***In order to accomplish our goal with this project, we will need:***

- Veterans willing to have a candid conversation about their deployment, subsequent lives, and future aspirations.
- Families willing to share the story of the home front challenges, artifacts for preservation, and photos.
- Funding for staff to take the time to get to know these local families, earn their trust, and respectfully listen to what they have to say; for online exhibits, digitization, and gallery fabrication.

Join us **January 27** for a fundraising brunch at the  
**Federal Cartridge Clubhouse** in Anoka  
to kick-start this project and help us tell this story. **Tickets, \$50**

## Islands of Peace

In June of 1971, Ed Wilmes of Fridley described a serious lack he identified in the Twin Cities community: a place for the disabled, physically handicapped, or the blind to go to enjoy nature.

“I watched the cars with their boats and campers going up north to get away for a while and find some cool spot to enjoy,” said Wilmes. “This is fine for those people, but then I would come back to the cities and go [to] the Vets hospital, soldier’s home and the nursing homes. These people had no place to go and if they did, there is nobody to take them even for an hour or a day.”

He saw an opportunity to address that lack of accessible outdoor space in the form of three islands in the Mississippi River, located between Fridley, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center. Wilmes received support and encouragement from everyone he spoke to about his vision, including local volunteers, the three cities, the Governor of Minnesota, and even the United States Navy. In April of 1973, the Foundation for the Islands of Peace formed as a private, non-profit organization. From there work began to turn the islands into the park that Wilmes envisioned. By July, the U.S. Navy Seabees and the U.S. Air Force had laid down basic paved trails to start providing access.

By 1977, a Program Committee was established to expand the outdoor opportunities available at the park, with an emphasis on making sure that any such facility or programming would be accessible to the handicapped. All walkways were paved, eight feet wide, had less than a five percent grade, and broad white stripes painted at the edges to facilitate use by those in wheelchairs and those hard of sight. Special picnic tables boasted an extra three inches of height and shorter benches, which allowed for access by anyone using a wheelchair, and a 28’ pontoon boat acted as a ferry to the islands. All trail signs included Braille, so that blind or hard-of-sight individuals could still learn about the nature of the park.

The three islands served different purposes. Chase’s Island, a seven-acre peninsula on the Fridley side, was fully developed with trails, camping and picnic areas, as well as piers for fishing. Durnam Island, a 66-acre location in Brooklyn Center, was developed with a minimal trail system, boat dock, and a small shelter, but otherwise remained untouched as a flood plain forest. The smallest island, Gil Hodges Island, was only five and a half acres and left completely undeveloped as a wildlife refuge.

We are fortunate to have the early records and a few photographs from the Islands of Peace foundation in the collections of ACHS, including Wilmes’ vision.

“I thought of the times that the word peace was used in demonstrations and meetings but they always seemed to be surrounded by evidence of violence,” he said. “Because there is an area here that is peaceful and can offer peace to all, I decided on the name ‘Islands of Peace.’”



*Officials headed out to one of the islands.*



Shocking death of founding family daughter

# Mary Fridley Murdered?

FAMILY HIRES P.I. TO INVESTIGATE

Husband denies any wrong-doing

Join the Trial of the Century at the  
Anoka County History Center on  
December 14, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.

LOCAL FRIENDS OF  
HISTORY TO ATTEND

Put Fred Price on trial again for the murder of his wife Mary Fridley Price. Was it **MURDER**, or a tragic **ACCIDENT**? You decide, with the help of **COUNTY ATTORNEY TONY PALUMBO** and our amazing volunteers cast as witnesses, the accused, and a stellar legal team.

**Tickets on  
Sale Now!**



## TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets: \$50/each for purchase at [AnokaCountyHistory.org](http://AnokaCountyHistory.org) or the History Center.

Court is called to order at 5:30 p.m., seating is limited, dinner served.

### Least Competent County Criminals from the 1800s

The following is an excerpt from a transcription of a ledger containing cases heard by a Justice of the Peace in the Centerville area in the late 1800s. Oliver Dupre was a farmer in Centerville; members of the Dupre family still live in the area today. This case was written on pages 7 and 9 of the ledger. All spelling, punctuation, and grammar has been kept intact and as it was originally written; summaries or additions by ACHS are marked with brackets.



*State of Minisota Plaintiff* and [name uncertain, something like Eseba Vassaer]  
*Defendant* [...]

*On complaint being Entered by Oliver Dupree on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December AD 1870*  
[name uncertain] *was arraigned for Petit Larceny*

*The Complainant Sworn and testified as as follows[:] I had traps set on Rondeau Lake and saw defendant take two of my traps and run away. I followed him and caught up to him and told him he had better stop and settle with him (Dupree) but defendant ran again and would not listen to him*

*The above occurrence took place on the Fourteenth day of December.*

*Cross Examined and swears as follows*

[Justice of the Peace questioned Oliver Dupree about what he witnessed and whether he could see the defendant clearly from three acres away; to which Dupree said he could.]

*What course did the defendant take from Rondo Lake when you followed him[?] Answer he came to the mouth of hardwood creek and I came on defendant's track all the way [way] came within ten feet of him of him and asked him to stop and settle with him (Dupree) but he ran in the tamarack like a deer. Here Defendant convicted himself by saying complainant was as much as 30 feet off.*

[Two other men, including Paul Peltier, were sworn in and asked if it was possible to recognize a person from three acres away; both agreed that it was possible.]

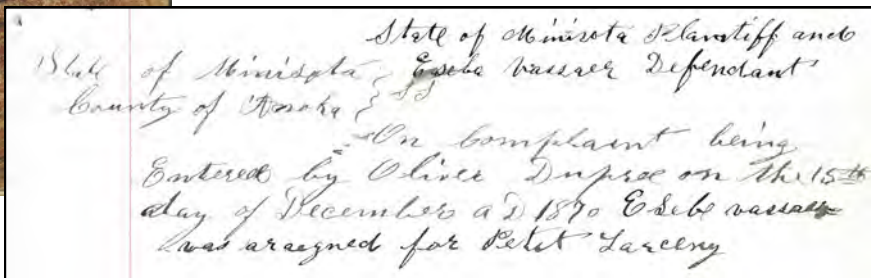


*Defendant found guilty and fined Five dollars and costs of Court also said defendant is Required to return two traps to the Complainant or the value of the same.*

*Fine \$5.00*

*Costs 3.00*

*[Total] 8.00*



**MEMBERS  
ONLY**

# Holiday Party!

We want to say THANK YOU for being a part of the ACHS family for another year, so we are throwing an end of year party just for you. Join us on December 5 for an exclusive members only celebration. There will be treats, music, games, laughter, trimming of the tree, and a special gift from the staff and board.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, December 5

**TIME:** Open house, 5:30p.m.-8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Anoka County History Center

*Please RSVP by December 3*



## ACHS Remembers



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

Bruce Bacon

1940-2017

Organic farm pioneer

Stan Kowalski

1926-2017

Professional Wrestler  
ACHS Oral History Interviewee

Maxine Larson

1933-2017

ACHS Treasurer 1975-1979  
ACHS President 1979-1994



## Our Ghosts are Teenagers!

This month marks the end of the Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour's 14th season. A crew of 12 guides shared the history and mystery of Anoka to over 1,500 people in September and October. I can't say thank you enough to the dedicated volunteer guides. They stepped up tour after tour, made the participants feel welcome, and helped them have a memorable evening. While these tours are a chance for us to meet new people and introduce them to the fun and resources available at the ACHS, they are also a significant fundraiser helping us to keep the lights on and history accessible throughout the year.

If you want to join the ranks of these elite volunteers, it's never too early! Let me know and you can start working on learning about how to lead these fun-filled tours now.

Sara Given  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org](mailto:Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org)

Follow me  
to the  
New Year!





October isn't all about Ghost Tours (what?!)—we hosted a number of other fun events this past month both in and out of the History Center. Check them out!



**Boos & Brews** with the MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce. Sixty chamber members met at Lyric Arts for a drink and conversation before splitting into three groups to enjoy a mini-ghost tour to the History Center. Here they played in the museum on a scavenger hunt and shared a delicious taco bar from Casa Rio. What a fun way to introduce ACHS to MetroNorth members from across the county!

At **Halloween Unlocked** we featured artifacts and collectibles from the Halloween Capital of the World at a formal dinner at the History Center. Those who attended browsed the full collection of buttons and medallions brought together and unveiled just for this event. The collection pieces on display that drew the most attention, however were the crown of Anoka's 1961 Queen and original artwork from Alyce Vick, who designed the Halloween medallion by Anoka City Hall.



The Columbia Heights-Fridley Kiwanis got all dolled up for a **private Murder Mystery** party at the History Center. The members had the whole museum to themselves, enjoyed a catered buffet meal, and then dove right into playing characters in "Hollywood Lies." Over the course of the evening, they attempted to apprehend the murderer and successfully created and performed two amazing movie preview skits. Think this would be fun? Book the museum for your own Murder Mystery with a group of 20 or more.

**Murder at Sea Murder Mystery** at the Mad Hatter Restaurant and Tea Room. Passengers went all out as they searched for a murderer on board the U.S.S. Libertania. In a surprising twist, the murderer almost got away with the dastardly deed as the passengers dealt with the unexpected presence of the Italian Mob on board. Special thank you to the Weaver Family for sponsoring this event. Miss out? No worries we'll be hosting this event again next year.





**General Donations**

Mel & Kathy Aanerud  
 Michelle Baker  
 Phillip & Harriett Beach  
 Sherry Boyce  
 Sandra Connor  
 Danna & Waldeane Felix  
 Friends of Fridley Senior Program  
 Donald Johnson  
 Patrick & Linda McBride  
 Alfred Oftedahl  
 Stephen & Marilyn Perry  
 Ronald Peterson  
 Arthur Reese  
 Rum River Writers Group  
 Zilla Way

Peterson Shoes  
 Pierce Refrigeration

**Artifact Adopters**

John & Shaaron Freeburg  
 Liz Mcfarland  
 Sue Mickelson

**Artifact Donors**

Anoka Lioness Club  
 Phillip Beach  
 Coon Rapids Federated Women’s Club  
 Rolf Gruber  
 Marvin Hathaway  
 Don Johnson  
 Cheryl Olesen  
 Jim & Connie Siirila  
 Bart & Ellen Ward

**New Members**

Sue Mickelson  
 Stephen & Marilyn Perry  
 Darrell Pierson  
 Leslie & Denise Pierson

**ACHS Sustaining Members**

Terry Overacker Plumbing

**ACHS Business Members**

The BIG White House  
 Coon Rapids Historical Commission  
 Forest Lake Contracting  
 Northeast Bank  
 Nowthen Historical Power Association



**Become a Business or Sustaining Member!**

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



**NEW!** (For Individuals or Businesses) A Sustaining Membership includes the benefits of a regular membership, a shout-out in our newsletter, and recognition on our web site. You also receive an annual free personalized Group Tour for you and 14 friends (must be scheduled in advance). Will come with complimentary refreshments.— \$150

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

**M** **Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, NOW FOR FREE:**

Tuesdays 10 a.m.—8 p.m.

Wednesdays-Fridays 10 a.m.—5 p.m.

Saturdays 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

**M**  
**O**  
**N**  
**T**  
**H**  
**L**  
**Y** **ACHS Board Meetings**  
Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center  
Open to membership and the public.**Journeys in Anoka County***December 2, 2 p.m. at the Johnsville Library*

Anoka County has its fair share of citizens who have undertaken long journeys. We will share stories of three individuals: a French Catholic priest who came to a new land; a Civil War soldier who roamed far afield, and a young man determined to see how far he could get in a home-made kayak.

**Member Appreciation Holiday Party***December 5, 5:30 p.m.– 8 p.m. Open House*

For members only—For more information see page 11.

**World War I in Anoka County***December 9, 2 p.m. at Rum River Library*

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the US entry into WWI. Learn about an Anoka High School nurse, Theresa Ericksen, who went overseas to help injured soldiers, and the Sammie Backers Club started by high school students, who made sure soldiers received mail from home.

**Mary Fridley *Murdered?* Mock-Trial***December 14, 5:30 p.m. at the Anoka History Center*

Tickets \$50. See page 9 for more details.

**SAVE THE DATE!****January Fundraising Brunch: Finding Their Voice***January 27, 10 a.m. at the Federal Cartridge Clubhouse, Anoka*

Tickets \$50. See page 11 for more details

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

Don't wait another two months to discover 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



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

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