

H I S T O R Y 21



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

Board of Directors

District 1: Al Pearson

District 2: Kim Hogdal

District 3: Orville Lindquist (Treasurer)

District 4: Lotus Hubbard (Vice-Pres.)

District 5: Richard Oxley

District 6: Open

District 7: Bart Ward

At-Large A: Steve Florman

At-Large B: Dennis Berg (President)

At-Large C: Mike Scott

At-Large D: Johannes Allert

At-Large E: Jim Rootes

At-Large F: Paul Pierce III

At-Large G: Allison Schmitt

At-Large H: Mary Nolan

County Commissioner Liaison:

Mandy Meisner

Staff

Rebecca Ebnat-Desens

(Executive Director)

Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Audra Hilse (Collections Manager)

Carol Dordan (Office Staff)

Don Johnson (Office Staff)

Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

Table of Contents:

3 - Letters from the ACHS
President and Director

4 - Play it Again...Nate?

8 - Thermo-Serv Bits & Bobs

9 - Archiving Tips and Tricks

10 - Political Devil Doll

11 - The Exhibit Hall Plan

12 - Volunteer World:
Volunteer sneak peak at 2020

13 - Save the Date volunteers needed

15 - Upcoming Events

Front Cover: Donald Weber and Henry Flascher, standing outside in the snow. There is a dog in the photo as well as a carriage that would have been pulled by horses. Donald Weber is the young child, less than 2 years old. Henry is holding a rifle over his head. Donald Weber is from Centerville, Minnesota.
Object ID: 2016.1726.001

From the President

Have you ever thought about writing your life story? That was my 2019 New Year's Resolution. My grandparents and great-grandparents had recorded in writing the hardships they encountered homesteading in Minnesota. This background knowledge of my ancestry encouraged me to also strive to make my life and community better.



Last winter I spent six-weeks on an emotional roller coaster writing my life story. I thought I was writing it for my family, but the reward was all mine. It made me realize how many times in my life God, family and friends had been there for me. The inner peace of having shared my story, including Viet Nam, has helped me become content with my life.

Writing my history was important to me because I wanted my grandchildren to have what I was given. I encourage everyone to write a letter recording the history of your life.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis R. Berg". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Dennis Berg, ACHS President



From the Director

If you count the one I was born in, I'm now closing out my fifth decade in this world. Right smack in the middle of an optimistic timeline, teetering on too young to be old and too old to be young. It's the no mans land of age where neither group really wants to claim ownership of you. I love the new ideas and technology, but find myself waxing poetic about memories and my childhood. I am energized by the teenagers and calmed by the elderly. I

drift between wanting to conquer the world and just wanting to go home for a good nap in the chair. I remember the Challenger explosion but not the Kennedy assassination. 9-11 changed my life.

I've committed to being a better steward of my personal experiences in 2020, to practice more what I preach about journaling and documenting. I know that by writing the story as I live, it will create a more full and accurate picture for when I die. I'll create my own history, and I invite you to think of the present as the past of the future.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Play it again, um, Nate...

Nate Otto, owner and operator of Rum River Player Piano Restorations and self-proclaimed local Player Piano Nut, put on a toe-tapping show that morphed into an impromptu singalong during our members-only party held at ACHS on December 3. You missed it? You're in luck! Nate has agreed to make an encore appearance for our annual meeting, planned for March 29. Think you saw it all the first time? We have brainstormed some surprises for you including a theatrical interpretation of a silent movie—complete, of course, with a musical score from a player piano.

Simply stated, a player piano is an acoustic piano that contains a pneumatic mechanism, powered by suction, which plays perforated music rolls.

“The seed for my interest in player pianos was planted in the late 1950's by my grandfather who purchased a 1918 Packard Player Piano from a fellow churchgoer,” said Nate. “He put masking tape on all of the bellows to help shore up some of the leaks in the then 30-year-old instrument so he could use it to make music for neighborhood dance parties.”

The three uncles took turns pumping this piano in the family basement of their North Minneapolis home while the adults danced and sang to songs like “Dardanella” and “When I Take my Vacation in Heaven”. Eventually, Nate's grandfather removed the pumping pedals and installed a vacuum cleaner motor to keep the aging player system limping along. In the mid 1980's, the family hoisted the piano out of the basement and brought it to an uncle's cabin in Richmond, MN, where Nate encountered the instrument and played songs from the “Lion King” and “Charlie Brown”, still with the suction motor groaning in the background. It eventually fell out of service entirely, despite the masking tape.

About 10 years ago, when Nate had a job as a mechanic, he decided it was time to get the piano playing again. He found a “How-To” book, bought supplies and advice from a Player Piano shop in Minneapolis, and after 250 hours, a few mistakes, and a lot of learning later, he had the piano playing again *WITH* the foot pedals.

“For the first time I got to pump the piano just as my uncles did when they were

young,” said Nate.

The shop in Minneapolis noticed Nate’s knack for the restoration work and hired him on part time for about seven years. When the shop closed its doors in 2018 upon the owner’s retirement, Nate opened his own restoration practice in Anoka. The first year went well and he’s now entering his second year with many projects filling the calendar.

The “population density” of the player piano throughout the decades followed a typical “boom and a bust” schedule, reaching their height of popularity between 1908 and 1929. Prior to that, several companies manufactured piano playing devices called “push-up” players, so named because they could be rolled up to the existing family piano, and when pumped, the machine used its 65 fingers to play songs on 65 note rolls. These machines were cumbersome, however, and as soon as piano builders integrated the player system into the cabinet of the piano as one unit, the pushup players fell to the wayside.

The new inner-player units had all the features of a regular piano, plus levers in front of the keyboard to control tempo, loudness of the bass and treble sections, and sustain pedal control. They also played the full 88-note scale. However, various roll manufacturers were producing music rolls in at least five different sizes. The absence of a standardized format created a barrier to the growth of the overall industry. In 1908, a decision was made at a Buffalo NY Convention of Manufacturers that all makes of player pianos would play a 9-holes-to-the-inch 88 note format. This consensus helped avoid a Battle of the Formats, which has afflicted every type of music media to follow the piano roll.

Now, with the familiarity of a given song and some musical mindfulness, almost anyone could sit down at the player piano and recreate the performance of the original roll artist. However, the foot-pumped player piano was not entirely automatic—the music coded in the roll was only a foundation. The player pianist needed to interpret those holes and create lifelike music using the playback controls on the machine as well as pumping force.

“Anyone who thinks a player piano is a soulless machine that pounds out tunes has the wrong impression of a proper player piano,” said Nate. “They say the piano roll just remembers the notes of a song, if you want to make true music the rest is up to you.”

From 1900 to 1931, over 2.5 million player pianos were manufactured and sold in the United States. From 1910 to 1925, 85% of pianos made in the States were player pianos. Sales of player pianos peaked in 1923 with over 347,000 players made in the US that year alone—valued at over \$104 million. (1.5 billion in today’s dollars). In that time there were almost a thousand different models of pianos from hundreds of makers, and nearly 100 different player system manufacturers. There were factories in many of the



This photo of a pushup player was taken at the Downs residence on 5th Avenue in Anoka in 1910. ID: 2005.1361.016



*Player piano roll storage in the Downs' home.
ID: 2005.1361.086*

large river towns of the US and larger metropolitan areas like New York, Ohio, and Illinois. Minnesota had three piano companies: Raudenbush and PS Wick, both in Saint Paul, and Schimmel in Faribault. To supply the music for all these machines, over 50 established roll manufacturers existed. One of the most popular piano roll arrangers, J Lawrence Cook, produced around 10,000 titles alone. One source estimates there are nearly one million total piano roll arrangements, representing the dawn of the commoditization of mass produced, pre-recorded music.

During the 1910's and 20's, these home players were not the only automatic musical instruments filling the air with popular music of the day. There were also what are called reproducing players, which generally fit into grand pianos and had coding in the piano roll to control dynamics, as well as the ability to rewind and replay rolls automatically. Since they were fit with an electric motor, they did not require foot pumping. Reproducing pianos were touted for their sophisticated, expressive abilities and therefore were marketed and sold to the wealthy, generally with classical music being preferred on these instruments.

In the 10's and 20's the public demanded its automatic music on the go! Many amusement parks, billiard halls, bowling alleys, clubs, dance halls, hotels, and restaurants had coin-operated pianos to entertain their guests. These machines had an electric pump and required no foot pumping. Their cabinets often featured elaborate art glass, which housed not only a piano, but often also drums, xylophone, wood block, triangle, and in some cases one or two ranks of organ pipes. Some of these units weren't even fitted with a keyboard because no one would be dropping nickels in the slot if there was someone sitting down playing the piano! These machines were built just as much to entertain as they were for profit.

The most likely place to find a nickelodeon in the twenties was undoubtedly the Speakeasy, followed closely by the houses of ill-repute. Nickelodeons offered lively music to stimulate the clientele - perfect for a trade dependent on a quick turnaround time!

Player pianos could also be found in movie houses. Silent films were all but silent, and the Los Angeles Film Music company produced player piano rolls arranged specifically for accompanying silent films. The instruments playing these rolls, called Photoplayers, were much more than just a piano—they usually had two spoolboxes, so the operator could play one roll while the other could rewind, keeping the theme of the music in line with what was showing on screen. Most models also featured organ pipes. Using cords, buttons, and pedals, the operator could play sound effects such as a car horn, siren, train whistle, crash cymbal, or baby cry, even a dog bark effect to match the action on the screen.

But with the advent of sound films in 1927, photoplayers quickly became obsolete. With that, electrical recording in the phonograph industry had drastically improved and phonographs were outselling player pianos - not only because of improved sound quality, but this technology was more inexpensive to produce than what was involved in manufacturing a player piano. A handful of inventive player manufacturers built pianos with a record player built into the piano cabinet, and sold records and piano rolls designed to be played together as a sort of duet, but by this time player pianos were quickly falling out of favor. Electrical recording and amplification was also improving for radios. These technological advances combined with the stock market crash of 1929 brought the close of the Golden Age of player pianos. There was a small revival of player piano production in the 1960's and 70's, but production numbers and build quality never quite came close to the Golden Age.

"Since I started my business over a year ago, I have added over 100 customers to my card file, all with pianos, mostly in the Metro area," said Nate. "I am thankful there are people out there also afflicted with the Player Piano bug, and that have an interest in keeping these players alive."

These instruments of living history represent not only the Golden Age of pianos 100 years ago, but retain the power to allow us to experience what its like to make captivating music just as the original owners did when the piano was new.



To me, sitting down and pumping a hundred-year-old player piano is the closest I'll ever come to actual time travel. Being able to play a piano roll just as it would have been played when manufactured long ago is a powerful experience. And, since player pianos allow the operator to control the dynamics of the music, I get to be involved in the artistry of the song as the piano reads the roll. This makes for a very immersive experience!

I grew up with a player piano that was owned by my grandparents. They purchased several rolls with popular Disney songs of my childhood to share with me. Hearing songs from The Lion King and Charlie Brown planted the seed for my interest in mechanical music at a young age. Now, as an adult, my interest in these interests is multi-faceted. As a full-time restorer, I have the privilege of bringing heirloom pianos back to life for families that will pass their treasured instruments to their younger generations, just like my grandparents did with me. I also get an inside look at how these pianos were designed and manufactured, uncovering secrets that haven't seen the light of day since the piano left the factory - each piano that comes through my shop is unique in this way, and I get to become part of that piano's story and journey. And as a steward of my own piano roll and piano collection, I have had a first hand look and listen to the evolution of popular music and pianos from the Edwardian era and beyond the 1960's. I have really enjoyed being able to dive into the past through old songs and their lyrics, discovering music that is certainly old but very new to me.

Nate Otto, Rum River Restoration



Our current lobby exhibit features artifacts from several local county businesses, one of which is Thermo-Serv, makers of the iconic plastic drinkware. Begun in 1952 as NFC Engineering Company, they originally made parts for the defense industry. Manufacturing with plastic was a growing area and founder Nelson F. Cornelius turned his eye to this new market. The company's "first proprietary product" was the "THERMO-SERV 32 ounce insulated beverage server," 1956-57. This and later products were created using a process called

injection molding, where molten plastic is forced into a carefully made mold the shape of the desired product; the plastic then cools and sets in the desired shape.

Cornelius passed away in 1962 at the age of 46, but his family remained closely involved with the company for several years. Cornelius' wife, Ivadell, served as board chair following her husband's death and their son, David, also served on the board, as well as heading the engineering department. By that same year in 1962, the company manufactured more than 7 million separate items, and employed about 125 people.

In 1965, West Bend Company of Wisconsin purchased the company and it became West Bend Thermo-Serv, Inc. Due to confusion over the names, the company changed to be simply "Thermo-Serv" in June of 1970, though they continued to be part of the larger West Bend Company. As reported in the employee newsletter at the time, "We are now proud to use our trade name as our company name."

ACHS has a fairly complete collection of this publication thanks to Madeline Betlach, a long-time employee of the company. The first issue of the newsletter was published with "? ? ?" in place of title. Employees chose "The Plastic Press" in a naming contest, a title that didn't change until at least 1987. Although the contents shift over the years, reports on long-time employees, information on the company bowling, softball, and golf leagues, and updates about new products or changes at the company are common throughout.

Another interesting piece in the collection is a small figure made of strings of clear plastic. The injection molding process created excess strings of plastic and the employees would use the strings to create small paperweights and other items. Although not presenting the same tidy appearance as the company's official products, this unique item seems to match the tone of the employee newsletters, indicating that Thermo-Serv was a place where employees enjoyed working.

The Thermo-Serv brand is still produced, though the company sold sometime after 1987 and the Anoka factory closed. We have been unable to locate a good source indicating the date of this final sale—please contact ACHS if you remember when this happened. The brand is currently manufactured in Dallas, TX.



Archiving TIPS & tricks

PRESERVING YOUR PAPER RECORDS

Now is a great time to think about your family papers and ways you could improve their lifespan!

Family papers: this category can include a variety of materials (usually unpublished), such letters, diaries, certificates (achievement, birth, marriage, death), documentation of important life events (buying a new house, moving, career achievements), military records, or anything else that might tell about the life of a family member or ancestor.

Step 1: Where are your documents?

Just as we recommended for photographs, start by making a list to identify where your paper documents live and about how many there are. This gets the information out of your head and helps you avoid overlooking something. The list might look like this:

- 1 folder, filing cabinet
- 2 banker's boxes, attic
- 3 diaries, office bookshelf

Step 2: What condition are the documents in?

The target preservation conditions to aim for are the same as those for photographs:

- **Temperature:** *Steady* temperature, ideally 65°-70°F.
- **Relative Humidity:** *Steady* relative humidity, ideally 35%-55%.
- **Water and Sunlight:** Exposure to either of these things is damaging. Make sure to keep your family papers somewhere relatively dark (such as inside a box), and away from places that might be exposed to water.

Step 3: What should I do next?

- **Identify:** Figure out what kinds of documents you have; a quick once-over of everything might help before you dig into the details. Do some things belong together (such as several documents related to a wedding), or do some need to be in chronological order (such as a series of letters)? Work with family members as needed to identify people and places referenced in the documents, and make sure to write that information down.
- **Weed:** Consider removing unneeded duplicates, or papers that can't be preserved any longer (too crumbled or too faded).
- **Store:** Paper documents should be stored in acid-free folders. Related documents can be grouped together in the same folder as long as all are in stable condition. Folders are then labeled to indicate what is in them, possibly with date ranges and an identifying number if desired. With the archival folders being the immediate thing surrounding documents, they are better preserved even in regular boxes. Invest in archival, acid-free boxes if you can. NOTE: Make sure the folders are held flat or upright even if the box is not full, to prevent documents from curving or bending.
- **Ask:** Feel free to contact us at the History Center. We are happy to help!

Political Devil Doll

By Chuck Zielin, ACHS Volunteer

Our Anoka County Historical Society on Third Avenue North in Anoka, houses many rarely-seen treasures. These gems are readily available to the interested public. If curiosity captures you, come on in and let us help you make a discovery! An example of a fun event is the curious find of an 1880's political token. Where did it come from? What was its purpose? How was it used, and did it have any significance? The following is what we found out about this token.

In 1879, at the age of 28, Edward L. Curial, a jeweler here in Anoka, was a political activist. Viewing the upcoming national election for the presidency between James Garfield and General Hancock, he set about designing, building and patenting a political token in the form of a watch fob (a fob being a small item attached to a pocket watch chain that dangled/hung in plain sight between the pocketed watch and the secured end of the chain.) It was a simple way for an individual to make a statement.

Curial's statement was quite interesting. Each fob came in three forms; nonmechanical, mechanical hand, and mechanical hand and tail. Pressing a foot upward activated the mechanical movement(s) raising the arm with its fingers spread. Was the candidate saluting or thumbing his nose at the other candidate? On the third model, with the tail coming up, did it represent the devil or, in combination with the hand influence, say the other candidate was the devil? Either way, it was a humorous message.

To see if his fob had market appeal, Curial secured a New York manufacturer to product 500 items. He then hired street vendors across the nation to sell them. The response was electric – they went like “hot cakes” and the vendors called for more inventory. Curial then asked his New York manufacturer to begin mass production of his creation. Unfortunately, the company was on strike and unable to fulfill the order in time for the election. In the next bi-year election another individual used a similar idea and Curial lost his market edge and did not produce new models using his patent rights.

Curial lived out the rest of his life in Anoka with his wife and two children. He became very active in the temperance movement, being a founding member of the Anoka Temperance Club in the year of 1888. At various times he was nominated for County Assessor, judge of Probate Court, the 6th Congressional seat (1890) and the newly-formed 7th District Congressional Seat (1908.) He always came in second.

When Anoka County took advantage of the new “county option” law in 1915, Curial was very active in having the county board vote to make Anoka County a dry county. Remarkably, this occurred four years before the 18th Amendment (Prohibition Act) was passed in 1919, demonstrating the power of the Prohibition Party at that time in Anoka County. Curial died in 1930 and is buried with his wife in Anoka.

Before his death, Curial also patented a small, plate-sized children's pull toy in 1905 (Patent No. 252,526). When you pulled the two strings, in opposite directions, the sphere would rotate. One could also describe it as whirling or spinning discs driven by twisted cords.



Exhibit Hall



While we work constantly to add new and interesting items to the exhibit hall so each visit to ACHS is different, every few years we plan to reimagine the displays.

Welcome to 2020 and with a new decade comes a new look to the hall!

The Veterans Voice project will take shape in the military gallery, replacing “Getting it Done: Anoka County’s Answer to WWII”. By Riverfest on July 11, you can expect to witness the experience of military families during their deployments beginning in the Gulf War. From the moment a service member brings home the news, through their train up and deployment, and into the never-ending reintegration period, we hope to represent the story of our county residents.

Sooner rather than later, we will introduce the first phase of our diversity exhibit in the school house. People around us in the county all move through life differently, some with hidden challenges and others with visible disabilities. What does it mean to run errands while navigating the bus as a blind person? How does living with dyslexia or colorblindness change your interaction with the world? What can we do for each other to support and encourage our neighbors?

Last but not least, look for the Halloween Centennial to take over the “We Are 100” exhibit space in partnership with Anoka Halloween. Come enjoy the story of Anoka’s favorite holiday told in mugs, buttons, shirts, and other collectibles as well as sparkling crowns, costumes, and photographs.

Have a story to tell? Use the “Tell Your Story” button on our website AnokaCountyHistory.org to tell us a little bit and we’ll get back to you for all the details!





With the rolling over of the calendar to 2020, I am looking ahead to what in the world is on the calendar for the upcoming year. In seeing the long list of things we do at ACHS, I am struck again by what a gift our volunteers are. We wouldn't be able to do even a fraction of our mission without your help. It's a help that comes in many different forms. For some it is researching and writing 600 words about a fun piece of local history for the newspaper. For others it is coming in every week to help Archivist Audra with whatever collection project we are working on that week. Still others advocate for us and share that smile with new friends at the Anoka County Fair, Nowthen Threshing Show or Lager Festival. We need the person sitting at the computer entering collection items into the computer, the person willing to hang out at the Farmhouse talking to people, and the person helping park cars at a large event.

Before things get crazy and those calendars start filling up, I'm calling out and making a blank invitation to all our volunteer hands, as well as your friends and relatives to help out this year. Maybe it's taking ownership of a regular project at the history center, maybe it's playing at one of our events over the summer/fall, or maybe it's even becoming a ghost tour guide. Sooooo, what events, festivals, projects and exhibits need our amazing volunteers' hands and brains, and when are they? Check out our upcoming year and save the date now!

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

SAVE THE DATE

Snip me out and save the date to make sure you don't miss any of the fun.

All Year

Be part of rotating team researching and writing articles for local paper.

March 29

Annual Meeting refreshment table

July 11

Riverfest: refreshment table, tent on Jackson St., exhibit hall greeters, game leaders

July 21—26

Anoka County Fair—multiple days & shifts available

August 14-16

Nowthen Threshing Show—multiple days & shifts available

September 19

Ale & Lager Festival—parking attendants, check in table, ice-runners, game leaders

September/October

Ghost Tour Guides

All Year

Projects around the Anoka County History Center— get matched to your perfect project.

THE BEST GIFT
IS YOU!



General Donations

Jim & Molly Bauer
Sherry Boyce
Mary Chamberlain
DAR Anoka Chapter
Chuck & Mary
Drury
Betty Erickson
Roland & Carol
Freeburg
Mike Gamache
Bruce & Karen
Gengnagel
Karen Hand
Judy Hanna
Mary Hunt
James Johnson
Karen & Don
Johnson
Patricia Lydon
James & Jacqueline
Neilson
Al & Betty Pearson
Stephen & Marilyn
Perry
Dorothy Peterson
Lynne & Terry
Rickert
Mary Sell
Gary & Ann Steen
Catherine Vesley
Wesley & Cheryl
Volkenant
Vickie Wendel
Jonathan Young

Annual Appeal

Dick & Helen Bennett
Terri Bona
Lyle Bradley
Jeannine Chamberlain
Alice Ganter
Julia French
Gloria Given
Drake Hokanson &
Carol Kratz
Orville Lindquist
Diane Marsh
Paula Mohr
Mary & Scott Nolan
Phil & Laurie Olman
Beverly Mercil
Carol Moen
Gary & Eileen
Rathbun
Deborah Shepherd
Darryl & Sonia Stark
Tim & Rose Talbot
Arlene Tesch
Barb Thurston & Joey
Norton
Mildred Wolfe
Sara Wilcox

Artifact Donors

Linda Cameron
Coon Creek Watershed
District
John Knoll
Linda Mundle
Elizabeth Parker
Anthony Peloquin
St. Francis Area
Schools

ACHS New

Members

James Goodrich
Hammerheart Brewing
Richard West

ACHS Sustaining Members

Northeast Bank
Rita Warpeha
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Thomas & Kristi
Sullivan
Terry Overacker
Plumbing

ACHS Business Members

Anoka Dental
Anoka Knights of
Columbus Council
2018
The BIG White House
City of Coon Rapids
Coon Rapids Historical
Commission
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Hawaii Nail Spa
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Plants & Things
Rum River Restoration
Ticknor Hill Bed &
Breakfast
Tomco Company

**M
O
N
T
H
L
Y**

Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, 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.

Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting

Meetings held at the Anoka County History Center.
 Email questions or suggestions to acgsmn@yahoo.com

ACHS Board Application Deadline

WHEN: Thursday, January 30

Members in good standing are encouraged to submit their name to the ballot for one of the open positions in this year’s election:

- Three At large seats (no residency requirement)
- Commissioner district 3 (residency required)
- Commissioner district 4 (residency required)

ACHS Annual Meeting

WHEN: Sunday, March 29

TIME: 2-4 p.m.

WHERE: Anoka County History Center

WHAT: Player piano concert by Nate Otto, a brief business meeting, and annual report (shenanigans promised!)

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



ACHS Remembers



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

DeWayne Johnson
 1943–2019

William Sorenson
 1927-2019

Sharon Woizeschke
 1938-2019



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198



H

I

S

T

O

R


Y



Volume 50 No.2 March-April 2020

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.




Anoka County
Historical Society

Annual Meeting

Squeeze years of piano lessons into a moment and become a player piano master with Nate Otto of Rum River Restoration.

**Note: ACHS business meeting, and piano shenanigans throughout.*



DATE: March 29
TIME: 2 p.m. Social Time
2.30p.m. Program
WHERE: Anoka County History Center

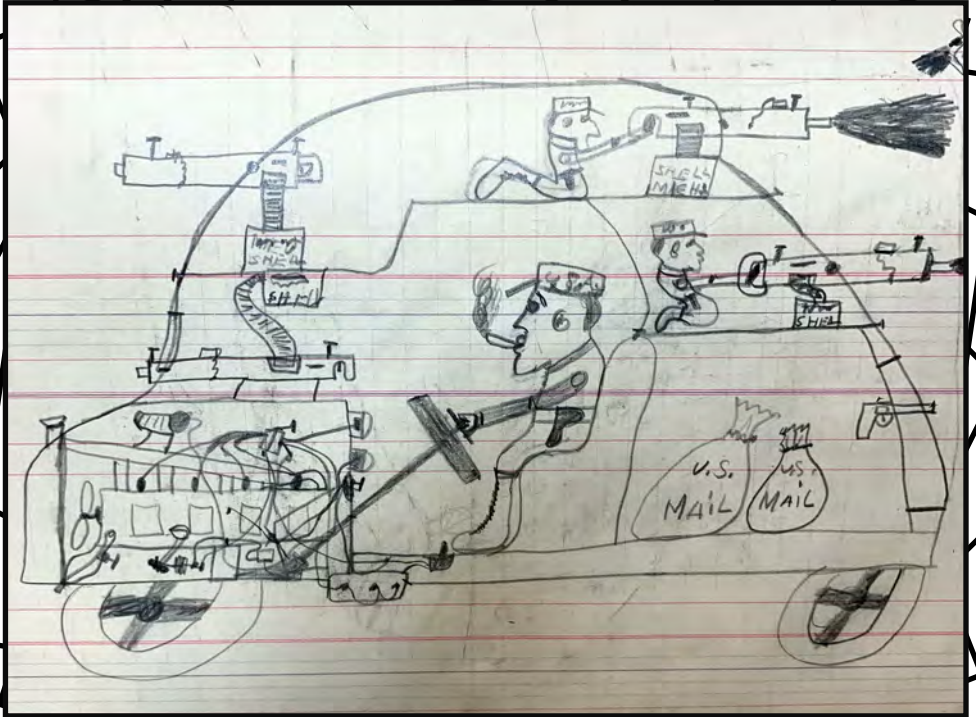
Front Cover: Columbia Heights Court House and Police Station, located on 40th Avenue between Monroe and Quincy Streets, 1960.

Object ID: 2020.1772.002



® ANOKA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Believe it or not, we're rounding the corner on my five-year anniversary already. It's not untruthful to say that myself, the Board, staff, and even ACHS as an organization have all grown during this time.

We have succeeded at big projects like the TPT production, expanded old favorites like the Ghost Tours, and continued to create exhibits with academic rigor. We've added a gift shop and written research booklets, created new programs and updated old ones. We've made new friends who have given us new opportunities while maintaining hard-earned relationships with loyal partners and members. We've moved our data to a new content management system and improved the accessibility of our collections online. New website? Check. Social media presence? Check. Updated bylaws, policies, and investments? Check.

Through it all, you've stopped in with doughnuts, chocolate, coffee, cards, letters, ornaments, books, and doodads to make us smile. You've made us feel loved and appreciated in so many ways, reminding me (and all of the staff!) why we work at a nonprofit.

*So **THANK YOU** for the last five and here's to the next five!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Ebnet-Desens". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

ACHS Executive Director

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In reviewing 2019 I'm happy to report the staff has done an excellent job of again closing out the year with a balanced budget. This year's unbudgeted expense of \$8,000 for a humidification system, paid for out of our maintenance reserves, accounts for the negative balance on the financials found on page 17.

Our success in fundraising this year was limited to completing the Veteran's Voice project, which had a goal of not only covering the TPT contract of nearly \$45,000, but also financing the collection of oral histories and creation of an exhibit. I'm happy to report "mission accomplished!" To date we have taken in a little over \$58,000. Now six months after the premiere, the donations continue to come in along with heart-felt thank you notes from the public.



The health of Anoka County Historical Society relies on you—talking about the interesting things we're doing, the events you've attended, and how ACHS has impacted your life will continue this momentum and help us grow.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Berg". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Dennis Berg, ACHS President

THE 2019 ACHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Al Pearson, *District #1 Representative*

Kim Hogdal, *District #2 Representative*

Orville Lindquist, *District #3 Representative*

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

Richard Oxley, *District #5 Representative*

Dave Bartholomay, *District #6 Representative*

Bart Ward, *District #7 Representative*

Steve Florman *At-Large A (Treasurer)*

Dennis Berg, *At-Large B (President)*

Mike Scott, *At-Large C*

Johannes Allert, *At-Large D*

Jim Rootes, *At-Large E*

Paul Pierce III, *At-Large F*

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

Mary Nolan, *At-Large H*

Mandy Meisner, *Anoka County Commissioner Liaison*

ACHS STAFF

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, *Executive Director*

Audra Hilse, *Archivist & Collections Manager*

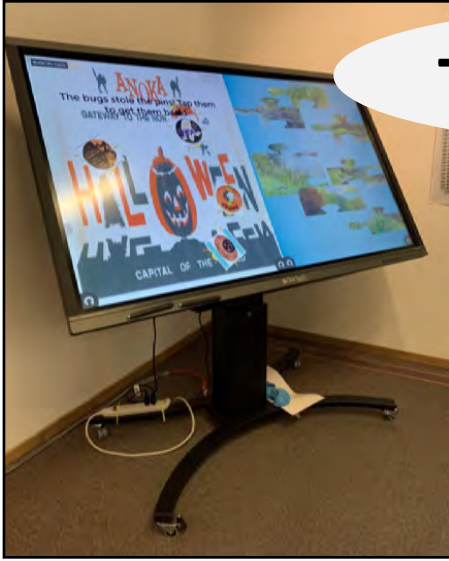
Sara Given, *Volunteer Coordinator*

Carol Dordan, *Facilities Manager*

Don Johnson, *Office Staff*

Karen Johnson, *Office Staff*

TOUCH TABLE



Courtesy of funding from the Shavlik Family Foundation, we installed two multi touch tables at the museum this summer. The devices, which patrons can use standing or sitting, tilted or flat, are programmed by students from the Hennepin Technical College under the instruction of Richard Oxley.

They have raised engagement with historical facts through games, increased our flexibility during program events, and provided for exhibit enrichment. When we displayed cameras and other filming artifacts from the 1939 tornado, the actual film played on the table for people to experience. When Anoka Ambassador Karen George displayed her crown and gown, a series of photos from her year of service gave a depth to the exhibit we simply didn't have physical space for otherwise.



FUN ON THE TABLE

- History Games
- Puzzles
- 1939 Tornado Video
- Halloween Photo Slideshow



MISSION:
ACCOMPLISHED!



How exciting to check things off a never-ending to-do list! This year we turned our collections software public on our newly designed website. It feels like everything is coming together!

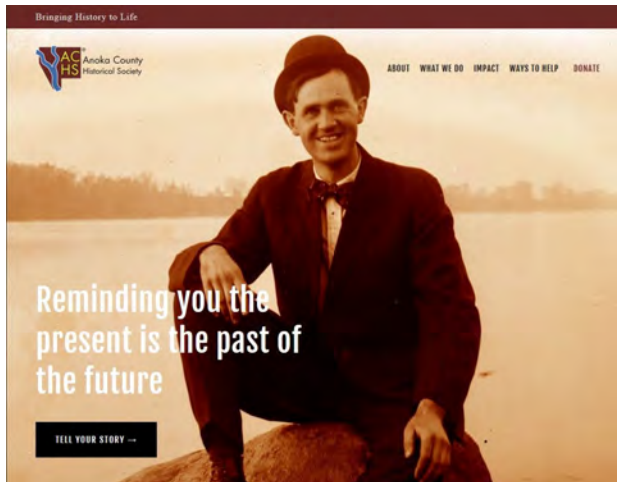
Removing a barrier for our researchers who either live too far away or can't visit during office hours drove the decision to turn much of our collection loose on the internet. While this will remain a never-ending project, every day more and more items are searchable at **AnokaCountyHistory.org**. Just click "What we do" and "online collections database".

Just donated a treasure to us? After it is processed, you and your family now have the ability to see it, double check the information, and even add more details about how it fits into Anoka County History.

June 

14,000

PAGE VIEWS IN
FIRST 6 MONTHS



Thanks to the hard work of our interns and volunteers as well as staff we finished processing several large donations. The benefit of our new database is that you can see all of it from the comfort of your home.

Audra Hilse, Archivist & Administrator



TEAM PRESERVATION

The cliché says “Teamwork makes the dream work” and in this case, it sure held true! Thanks to a partnership with the League of Women Voters—ABC, we hosted a year-long exhibit showcasing the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage and the creation of the League. Now a part of their travelling toolkit, you can find the banners and artifacts wherever League members attend expos or fairs, presentations or events.

Our ability to help organizations organize, document, and present their story is a valuable asset for any business or group. The history center adds the artifacts and information to our database for future research, but (in this case) LWV-ABC maintains ownership and control of them. Together we can preserve more of Anoka County heritage!

LOBBY EXHIBIT—LESLIE COWDEN

Specialist Cowden began his tour in Vietnam on March 1, 1968 as a replacement with the 25th Infantry Division known as the “Tropic Lightning” Division. On January 8, Cowden saved the life of Jon Hovde with his medical training and quick thinking. Tragically, Cowden was killed in action a few weeks later and is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery, Anoka. Cowden was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for “Meritorious Achievement in Ground Operations Against Hostile Forces”, the Silver Star for extraordinary heroism while engaged against an enemy, and the Purple Heart. Read more in “Left for Dead” by Hovde.



2019 COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Giving all flags in the collection the spa treatment with fresh photos and brand new rolled storage.

Before



After



Hidden in the back pages of a business ledger, Arlan Rathbun's interpretation of what cities, rocket ships, and even Mail Trucks [front cover] in Anoka County would look like in the future.

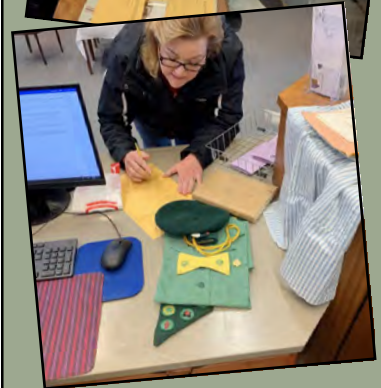


RECORDING THE STORY

Are you ready to donate a treasure of yours to ACHS? Visit our website, click "Ways to Help" then "Contribute to the Collection".

Here you'll find guidelines, suggestions, and other FAQs as well as the artifact donation form we use to capture the story.

(below) Skip and Christine took the time to give us some good details about their items.



ANOKA COUNTY: THANK YOU

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

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

ANOKA COUNTY

LIBRARY

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

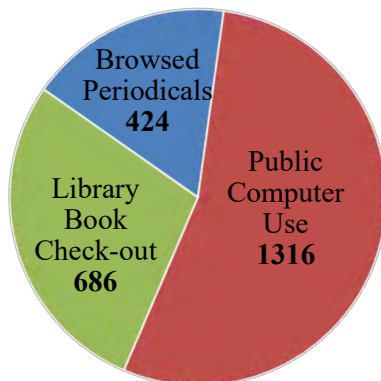
Our partners provide ACHS with new connections to the community and a wider audience reach as well as a fresh approach to storytelling.

12,335

HISTORY CENTER VISITORS



A multi-generational moment of research at the microfilm machine.





Senior Community Service Employment Program

is a federally funded, subsidized work program through the Anoka County Job

Training Center. Senior (55+) workers are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week at a public or private non-profit agency and are paid directly by Anoka County. Two volunteers are placed at ACHS through this program and worked **1,087 HOURS** at the front desk helping our visitors and staff with a wide variety of projects.

Businesses that play together, stay together! Chema Malu, located on Main Street in Anoka, agreed to some cross-promotion

on the bags their customers receive at check-out. We appreciate the visibility and Chema's customers appreciate the interesting packaging and history.



BREWERS



HAMMERHEAD
BREWING COMPANY

- HAYES' PUBLIC HOUSE
- JUNKYARD BREWING
- BAUHAUS BREW LABS
- KLOCKOW BREWING
- FAIR STATE BREWING
- DANGEROUS MAN BREWING
- NORTHBOUND SMOKEHOUSE & BREWPUB
- BENT BREWSTILLERY



TRADITIONAL ALE & LAGER FESTIVAL

The skill of remaking (and sometimes remodeling) a heritage recipe received a spotlight at our first annual festival held on the Nowthen Threshing Show grounds in September. The afternoon included brews made especially for the event, plus programming, music, and food.

Look for this fundraising event again this year!

2019 PARTNERSHIPS



WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

I honestly don't think there was a dry eye in the room during the premiere showing!

Julie Braastad

Anoka County Commissioner

The stories of Anoka County live in the memories of each and every resident, buried in day-to-day survival. This project took time to capture the fears, joy, and challenges that make modern-day deployments so vastly different than any other military experience in our history. Launched in August of 2019, the documentary continues to appear on TPT-MN several times each month, as well as online at www.tpt.org/were-in-this-together.

THANK YOU to our donors and sponsors who raised not only enough money to cover the production of "We're In This Together" but also funding to get ACHS started on an exhibit, artifact storage, and oral history collection.



Thank
you



Spring Lake Park Lions
Vietnam Veterans of
America Chapter 470
Dennis and Darlene Berg
Signature Wealth
Management
Bank of the West

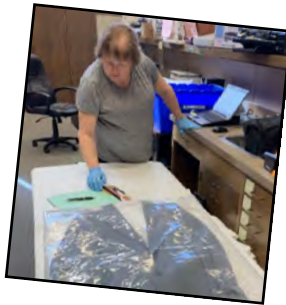
VOLUNTEERS GAVE:

*Volunteer Hours**
5,386



EQUIVALENT OF
PAID STAFF TIME
\$107,720

* Based on reported
volunteer hours.



At the end of the year we calculate one big number totaling the amount of volunteer hours given [see above]. While it's interesting to see the grand total, the year is about so much more than that. It is about the time people carve out from their busy lives to help at the History Center, the shifts that they take at the Anoka County Fair or Nowthen Threshing Show in the heat, rain or shine, and the unique skills each person brings to the table. These are all invaluable gifts and cannot be easily quantified.

Volunteers bring life and love into the museum!



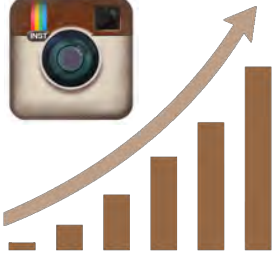
I learn and laugh so much with each volunteer that comes in to help at ACHS. We compare cat stories, sneak cookies from the kitchen, and connect about the highs and lows of the week all while tackling projects at the History Center. History is about people—the living as much as the dead.

Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Sara Given".

SOCIAL MEDIA

We continue to connect and grow our engagement on all of our social media platforms. For some, the ACHS Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram account is their first introduction to us, and for others it's a way they can connect with local Anoka County history after they move from the immediate area.



DOUBLED
OF FOLLOWERS
ON INSTAGRAM



The Anoka High School girls basketball team of 1903-04. Beware their dribble and their hair.
#nationalwomensportsday #anokacountyhistory #basketball P1700.5.26 @AHSchools



This post
4,006
IMPRESSIONS

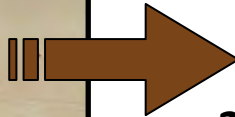


This post

11,101 PEOPLE
REACHED

2,046 Engagements

83 Shares



Anoka County Historical Society

Published by Buffer [?] · March 13, 2019 ·

Dirt street - or mud river? It depends on the season. Main street in Bethel, MN, from the west, undated. #anokacountyhistory 570.1.01 #bethelmn #dirtroads #localhistory Bethel, Minnesota

16TH ANNUAL GHOSTS OF ANOKA WALKING TOURS



1,655
TICKETS SOLD



\$ \$14,975
EARNED



The Ghost Tours celebrated their sweet 16 this year. Nearly 1,700 people attended the 76 volunteer-led tours we hosted over the course of two months. Many came from Anoka County, but others traveled from across the metro area, and a few even from beyond the state.

Each \$9 ticket purchased directly supports our organization, is an opportunity to make new friends, and introduce them to the fun at ACHS.



JELL-O HAS A STORY

With 10 different entries to taste, selecting “Best in Fluff” or “Best Suspension” became a challenge for some. But the real fun? Hearing all the stories of holiday desserts or family meals where a Jell-O salad resided as a staple on a special presentation plate. Entertainment included a Jiggler Toss, Jell-O art mural, and naked Jell-O (thumb) wrestling.



TEEN COUNCIL

What would we give to know the minds of teenagers

from 1910? Even 1950? This group is making sure that doesn't happen for 2019. Every other week, they discuss school, home, and current events, expressing their thoughts on paper through doodles and other journaling techniques. Those pages will join other artifacts in the ACHS collections as a reminder that stories of every age should be preserved. Know a young person who'd like to join?

Cool stuff with cool people:

- ◇ AARP– Tax Services
- ◇ Alexandra House
- ◇ Anoka American Legion Post 102
- ◇ Anoka Chamber of Commerce and Discover Anoka
- ◇ Anoka County Genealogical Society
- ◇ Anoka County Fair Board
- ◇ Anoka *UnionHerald*
- ◇ Andover YMCA
- ◇ Arfstrom Foundation
- ◇ Blaine Festival
- ◇ Breaking Bread Nonprofit coalition
- ◇ Centerville Festival
- ◇ CTN
- ◇ Hammerheart Brewing
- ◇ League of Women Voters-ABC
- ◇ MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
- ◇ Minitex
- ◇ MN Digital Library
- ◇ Nowthen Threshing Show
- ◇ Nowthen Heritage Festival
- ◇ PEO Society
- ◇ Philolectian Society
- ◇ QCTV
- ◇ RSVP
- ◇ Multiple Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis
- ◇ TCART
- ◇ Vietnam Vets
- ◇ Wargo Nature Center

History is an action verb in our lexicon and ACHS works with groups across the county—sometimes at the history center and sometimes in the community. Here are some of our fun adventures this year...



ACHS enjoyed introducing ancient 3D technology to kids at the Anoka County Fair [top], meeting people on the street at Anoka's Riverfest [middle] and slowing down to enjoy the beauty of our county at Fridley's Home and Garden Tour [bottom.]



[Below] Nate Otto from Rum River Restoration created an impromptu sing-a-long for members at an appreciation event.



We engage with the greater museum communities and our colleagues through local and national organizations and events. The History Whatever [top] held at Swedish Institute and MALHM conference in Red Wing were two of our favorites.



Staff and volunteers gave programs in and outside of the county.

Top left: a makeshift rain shelter for program supplies at Wargo Nature Center where we gave programs to 2,000 kids.



Middle left: attendees tested out an 1880s style bustle after a Fashion Trends program.

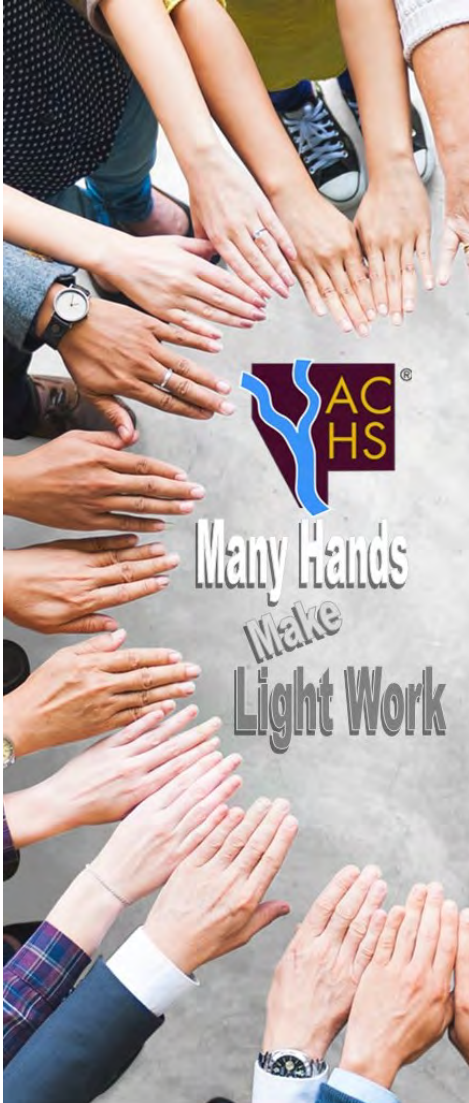


Bottom left: a little silliness during a history bus tour of the city of Anoka.

MEMBERSHIPS

Your membership is not just a financial donation, but a declaration that you believe local history plays a vital role in the community by preserving the story of the path we walk together. We thank our current members who continue their commitment to the operation of the History Center and look forward to welcoming new members.

Help us double our numbers by inviting a friend to join today!



532
members
SUPPORT
LOCAL HISTORY



YOUR MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

Free Group Tour - All members are entitled to bring up to 15 friends for a guided Museum tour of your choice once per year (\$30 value). Tour choices include one of the following: A) Guided Gallery Tour of current exhibits; B) Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the ACHS Collections; or C) Kids' Scavenger Hunt Tour. Tour must be scheduled in advance.

What other member benefits would you like to see?



While donations of money are essential to the operating budget of ACHS, contributions made in-kind cannot be understated. The City of Anoka’s support includes providing office space for our collection and exhibits within walking distance of the downtown excitement. We extend sincere thanks to the City of Anoka for their continued support of local history!



Facing Change:
Advancing Museum Board
Diversity & Inclusion

FACING CHANGE

The Anoka County Historical Society was selected as one of 50 museums nationwide to participate in a pilot project called Facing Change. Led by consultants hired by the American

Alliance of Museums, during the next two years, the Board of Directors will work to craft a policy relating to diversity and inclusion at the governance level of ACHS. The long-term goal includes expanding our organization to better reflect the population demographics of Anoka County in our leadership, membership, and collections archive.



SIGNIFICANT DONATIONS

ACHS treasures each and every donation that arrives in support of local history. Collectively, every dollar adds up and makes an enormous difference. Larger gifts, however, make a special impact for a project’s success. Thank you so very much to everyone who gives according to their ability!

\$500 & Over
Steve Florman
League of Women
Voters
Orville Lindquist
YMCA—Andover

\$1,000 & Over
Anonymous
Bank of the West
Federal Cartridge
Gloria Given
Signature Wealth
Management
Tim & Rose Talbot

\$5,000 & Over
Lyle Bradley
Spring Lake Park Lions

\$10,000 & Over
Anoka County
Connexus Energy

2019 FINANCIAL GROWTH

Anoka County Historical Society

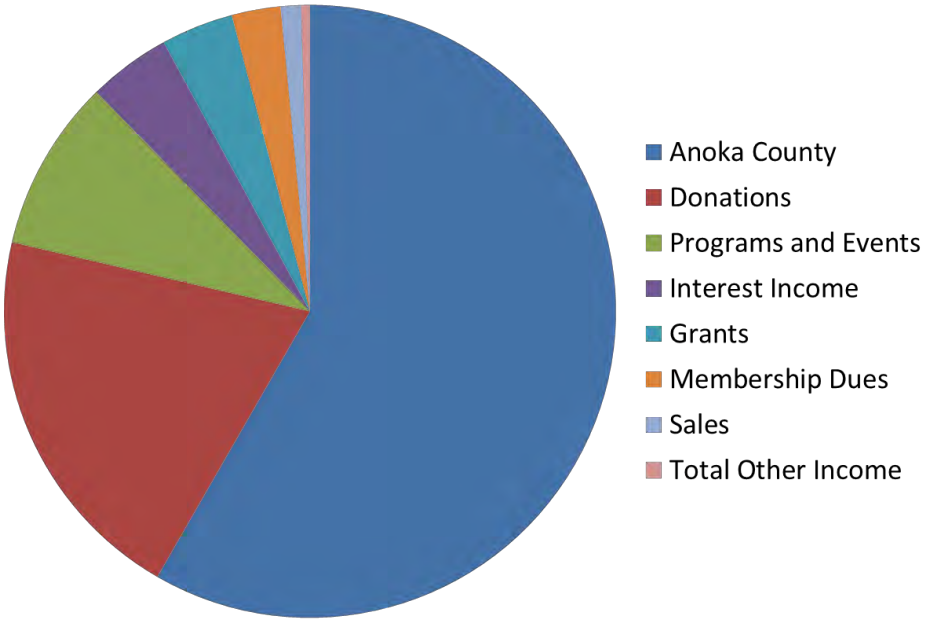
BUDGET VS. ACTUALS: BUDGET FY2019 - FY19 P&L

January - December 2019

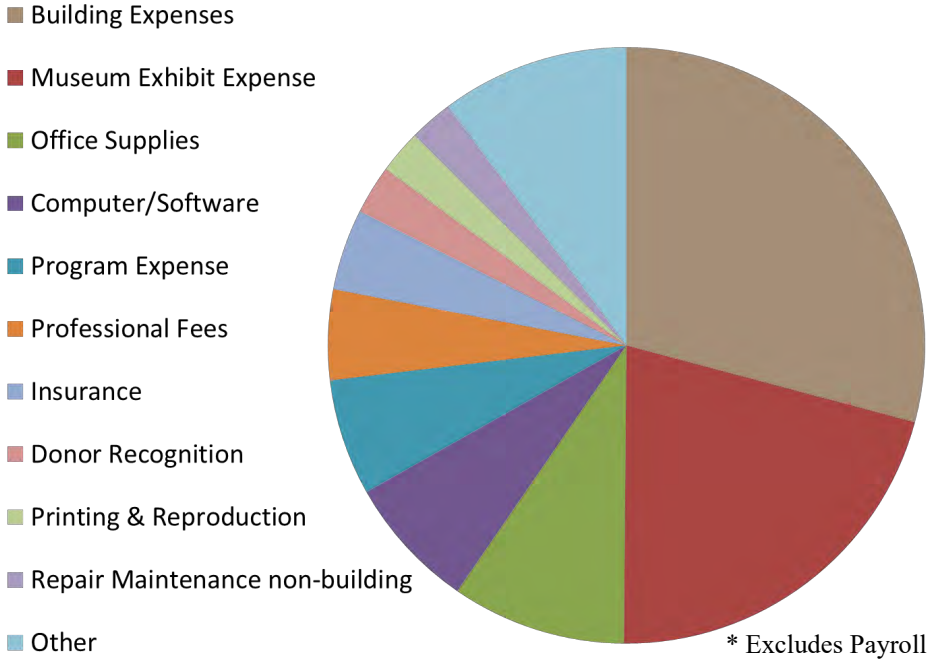
	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
Inkind Revenue	80,000.04		80,000.04	
Sales	100.74	5,000.00	-4,899.26	2.01 %
TOTAL SUPPORT				
Admissions		600.00	-600.00	
Anoka County	152,623.00	152,623.00	0.00	100.00 %
Donations	53,162.21	67,635.00	-14,472.79	78.60 %
Grants	10,000.00		10,000.00	
Interest Income	11,423.50	2,489.39	8,934.11	458.89 %
Membership Dues	6,755.00	7,200.00	-445.00	93.82 %
Other Income	1,209.98	1,198.79	11.19	100.93 %
Programs and Events	23,751.14	31,224.53	-7,473.39	76.07 %
Sales	2,807.05	3,573.23	-766.18	78.56 %
Total TOTAL SUPPORT	261,731.88	266,543.94	-4,812.06	98.19 %
Uncategorized Revenue	68.21	271.60	-203.39	25.11 %
Total Revenue	\$341,900.87	\$271,815.54	\$70,085.33	125.78 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$341,900.87	\$271,815.54	\$70,085.33	125.78 %
Expenditures				
Advertising	221.21	662.00	-440.79	33.42 %
Auto Expense	17.00		17.00	
Bank Service Charges	275.97	992.37	-716.40	27.81 %
Building Expenses	32,546.27	33,039.65	-493.38	98.51 %
Computer/Software Expense	8,082.27	4,800.00	3,282.27	168.38 %
Donor Recognition	2,959.28		2,959.28	
Dues and Subscriptions	2,140.18	1,720.00	420.18	124.43 %
Food	309.50	900.00	-590.50	34.39 %
Furniture & Other Equipment	340.00	960.00	-620.00	35.42 %
Gifts	424.31	300.00	124.31	141.44 %
Human Resources Expense	736.00	1,500.00	-764.00	49.07 %
Inkind Rent	80,000.04		80,000.04	
Insurance	4,920.66	4,716.53	204.13	104.33 %
Museum Exhibit Expense	23,436.52	18,700.00	4,736.52	125.33 %
Networking	35.00	360.00	-325.00	9.72 %
Office Supplies	10,549.22	9,661.07	888.15	109.19 %
OPERATING EXPENSE	181.09		181.09	
PAYROLL	154,389.13	164,908.44	-10,519.31	93.62 %
Postage and Delivery	2,485.63	2,700.00	-214.37	92.06 %
Preservation Supplies	1,583.54	3,600.00	-2,016.46	43.99 %
Printing and Reproduction	2,651.48	2,400.00	251.48	110.48 %
Professional Fees	5,465.00	7,450.00	-1,985.00	73.36 %
Program Expense	7,042.60	8,400.00	-1,357.40	83.48 %
Purchases	398.15	900.00	-501.85	44.24 %
QuickBooks Payments Fees	0.54		0.54	
refund	25.00		25.00	
Repair/Maintenance-Non-Building	2,621.12	720.00	1,901.12	364.04 %
Research Expense		360.00	-360.00	
Travel Expense	2,175.63	3,000.00	-824.37	72.52 %
Uncategorized Expenditure	37.97		37.97	
Total Expenditures	\$346,050.31	\$270,750.06	\$75,300.25	127.81 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -4,149.44	\$1,065.48	\$ -5,214.92	-389.44 %
NET REVENUE	\$ -4,149.44	\$1,065.48	\$ -5,214.92	-389.44 %

Unaudited 2019 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$4,149. This is the result of an unbudgeted expense of \$8,000 to replace the humidification system. If this project expenditure is excluded, the operational revenues exceeded operational expenditures by \$3,851.

REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



**General
Donations**

Ralph Ballinger
Dennis Berg
Blaine Festifval
Marlys Burman
Nancy Cartier
Mike & Mary Clark
John & Shaaron
Freeburg
David Groth
Diann Hendrickson
Mary Jablonski
Gary Larson
Jerome & Marilyn
Manley
Harold Netkow
Robert Rither
Al Stahlberg
Peter Wojciechowski
Chuck Zielin

Artifact Donors

Anoka County
Library
Nancy Cartier
Shirley Christenson
Mary Davich
Suzanne Dilcher
L. Edward Evans
Ronald & Diann
Hendrickson

Marilyn Lestor
George Meyer
Anthony Nathe
David Newville
Al Paulson
Dianne Pederson
Juanita Reed-
Boniface
Registered
Abstractors Inc.
Rhonda Sivarajah
Rita Warpeha
Vicki Wendberg

**ACHS New
Members**

Phillip Blake
Karen Holtin
Kathy Joy Parke

**ACHS
Sustaining
Members**

Northeast Bank
Rita Warpeha
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Thomas & Kristi
Sullivan
Terry Overacker
Plumbing

**ACHS Business
Members**

Anoka Dental
Anoka Knights of
Columbus
Council 2018
The BIG White
House
City of Coon Rapids
Coon Rapids
Historical
Commission
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart
Brewing
Hawaii Nail Spa
Nowthen Historical
Power
Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Plants & Things
Rum River
Restoration
Ticknor Hill Bed &
Breakfast
Tomco Company



**M
O
N
T
H
L
Y**

Visit the History Center! Open 5 days a week, 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.

Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting

Meetings held at the Anoka County History Center.
 Email questions or suggestions to acgsmn@yahoo.com

Board of Directors Election Ballots Due

WHEN: Thursday, March 26
TIME: 5 p.m.

ACHS Annual Meeting

WHEN: Sunday, March 29
TIME: 2-4 p.m.
WHERE: Anoka County History Center
WHAT: Player piano concert by Nate Otto, a brief business meeting, and annual report (shenanigans promised!)

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



ACHS Remembers



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

Robert Blewett
 1930– 2020

Terrell Yeager, MD
 1931-2020



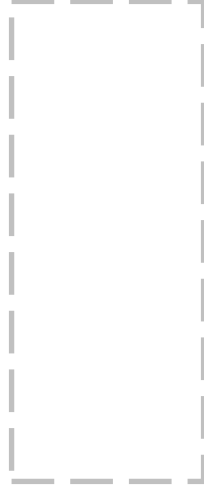
Anoka County
Historical Society
2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE**

PAID

**ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198**



H

I S T O R Y

21



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

Board of Directors

District 1: Al Pearson

District 2: Kim Hogdal

District 3: Orville Lindquist (Treasurer)

District 4: Lotus Hubbard (President)

District 5: Richard Oxley (Vice-Pres.)

District 6: Open

District 7: Bart Ward

At-Large A: Steve Florman

At-Large B: Dennis Berg

At-Large C: Daryl Lawrence

At-Large D: Johannes Allert

At-Large E: Jim Rootes

At-Large F: Paul Pierce III

At-Large G: Allison Schmitt

At-Large H: Mary Nolan

County Commissioner Liaison:

Jeff Reinert

Staff

Rebecca Ebnert-Desens

(Executive Director)

Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Audra Hilse (Collections Manager)

Carol Dordan (Office Staff)

Don Johnson (Office Staff)

Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

Table of Contents:

3 - Letter from the brand new
ACHS President

4 - The Museum Turns Digital

7 - Microfilm Madness

8 - Museum Alphabet project

10 - Collections Corner

12 - Tour Anoka County

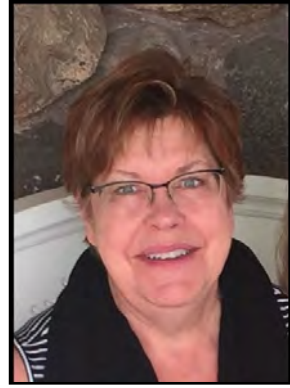
13 - Volunteer World

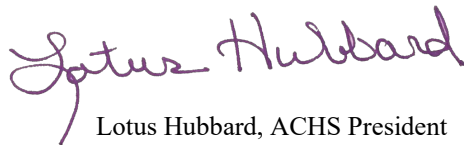
15 - Upcoming Events

*Front Cover: Roy and his cousin Irving Hyatt making ice cream in 1913. Roy's grandfather, Rufus Downs, took these photos after settling in Minnesota in 1856 and eventually marrying Myrtle Hyatt of Anoka (search #MyrtleMonday for happy cat pictures). Part of #MNMuseumAlphabet 2020
Object ID: 2005.1361.010*

From the President

“We are Living in Historic Times”. As a member of the Anoka County Historical Society – our focus has been on preserving history and making it accessible to anyone who cares to reach out and visit. Much of what we do is research – finding where our grandparents lived, where they worked, where they worshipped. What was it like to live during the depression? What was it like to manage a household during WWII rationing? What was it like to stay home because there was danger to all because of the Spanish Flu, Smallpox, Polio? Suddenly we are part of a Worldwide Experience. We are experiencing what was once just historic stories and that are now OUR stories – today, right now. New words have become part of our daily lexicon – “stay at home” and “social distancing” and “Zoom”. The ACHS building is closed to visitors, but we are set up to be “open” virtually during this time of so many closures. Work is getting done; those projects that were waiting in the wings, are now on the main stage. The Website gives access to the collection and our Social Media is keeping us together. The staff are working hard to engage all the Anoka County Community – featuring A-Z items in our collection and now the Tour of Anoka County. Take the “History Gather” survey make your story part of our ACHS Stories. I am so proud to be part of this organization that is making a difference in our new stay at home lives!




Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President



The Museum Turns Digital

By Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director

I'm not going to lie. The middle of March feels like a lifetime in the past and the ACHS staff (though still grinning) would grudgingly admit we mentally resemble laundry that's come through the proverbial wringer. The last eight weeks (or do you prefer two months?) while full of upheaval and change, have illuminated just how well-planned and thorough our museum operations truly are—perhaps by thoughtful accident, but we'll take it!

During the March 12 Board of Directors meeting, ACHS adopted a new “Communicable Disease Protocol”, a general policy we could use in the event of any illness outbreak. It outlined the steps ACHS would take in determining when to restrict building access, when to close, and how to keep staff, volunteers, and members safe. As of the following day, staff prepared the building to restrict public access to the lobby area, bathrooms, and Philo Room, in which we host the tax preparation services. By the time we dusted off our hands with that job, the Governor requested all “entertainment and public gathering spaces” to close to the public.

On Tuesday, March 17, staff members gathered in the museum for a few hours, experiencing for the first time “social distancing” at work. Holding a meeting with six feet between everyone felt like an unusually large bubble and caused considerable shouting to compensate. We posted signs announcing the closure until March 31, tossed out some trash, picked up some work for the afternoon, and locked up. Like every other organization, we clogged up your inbox with closure announcements, assurances we were available online, and the feeling that in two weeks, life would rush back to normal.

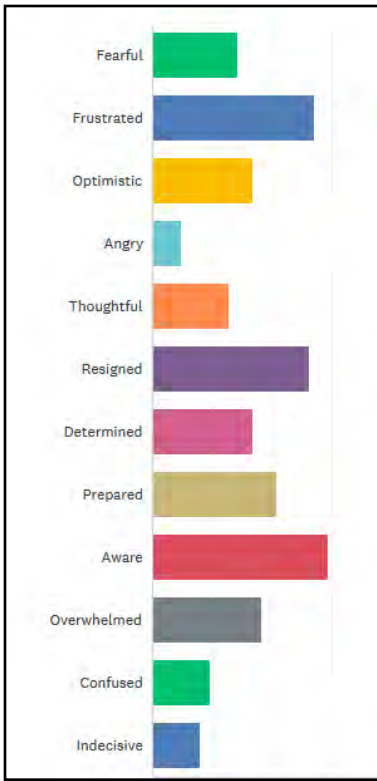
This is where the happy accident comes in. Over the last five years, staff have worked to convert our operations to the cloud. This meant exporting our

collection files from PastPerfect to Collective Access and then working to make them available to the public online, our customer management data from PastPerfect to Etapestry, and our financials from the desktop version of Quickbooks to the online format. We had shifted storage of daily files to Onedrive, Dropbox, and Google Drive. We updated the website, expanded our social media presence, and opened a Vimeo account to store our videos. In short, we made ourselves completely portable in the daily operations of the historical society.

We designated workspaces for staff members in various parts of the building, allowing us to rotate through a work schedule and not cross each other's paths. This worked for approximately one week until the Governor recommended reducing movement as much as possible throughout the state. At this point, staff hunkered down and relied on our online infrastructure to communicate with each other and the public. We created social media posts for #MNMuseumAlphabet, playing along with other historical societies in the state as we shared collection items from A to Z. We created surveys to gather experiences of history as it happened, new website content, and held many meetings via Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangouts, and Facebook Messenger. One staff member became the "museum body", checking the bathrooms, boiler, gathering the mail/voice mail and other facility tasks. We worked to transcribe Jon Arfstrom diaries, process memberships, wrote thank you notes, and paid bills. We continued indexing the collection, editing, uploading, and linking entries into their respective locations in Collective Access. We wrote newspaper pieces on COVID-19 experiences, collected survey responses, kept up relationships, and sought out grant possibilities.

This is business as usual, but not very usual at all. With the exception of the public computer and library use, those who visit the exhibit hall, our walk-in visitors and researchers, and (oh, my gosh!) the volunteers, ACHS is managing to carry on uninterrupted. Staff keeps a Trello board of our work so there is no overlap, we check in daily as individuals, and have had video chats with the whole staff. We are using this time to build our social media presence, contact people via video chat, gather COVID-19 stories and build a new webpage/ collection, promote the "History Happens Today" mentality, harvest information from social media posts made by the community, and be in touch with our nonprofit partners. We have received over 300 responses on the surveys we





One survey question asked people how they felt during this time. These are their answers.

the current story and preserve it for the future. We can make fun and engaging videos; we can work on organizational projects that support our infrastructure functionality. We can build out our website with more content, online exhibits, links to oral histories, and more public facing research content from our collection. We can engage people with quizzes and surveys. We can attend the online webinars we had on our to-do list. We can read the books that have piled up and write the magazine articles we always threatened to make.

OUR CURRENT PLAN will certainly change, but for now, ACHS intends to remain closed to the public through the end of May and quite possibly, June. Depending on how the virus moves through our state and what the Governor decides, we may very well be closed for several more months. When we do open, it will be with protective measures to ensure the safety of our staff, members, and volunteers as well as our patrons. The History Center feels lonely and empty right now, devoid of the laughter, conversations, and curiosity that filled it before. We take heart, however, that we are filling the history gap for you online and in personal conversations. Thank you so very much for supporting us through this historic pandemic! Together, we can create a new future full of tradition, history, and innovation.

created—those responses are the basis for a collection of #CuratingCOVID19 materials.

The sad news is ever-present, however. We can't help but recognize the changing face of fundraising, programs, or outreach efforts. Our summer schedule continues to dwindle as festival after festival either cancels or postpones. Our September Lagerfest is in jeopardy since our partners for that struggle right now to stay in business and gathering several hundred people together may still cause concern by then. Our programs held at schools, nursing homes, and community centers are cancelled. We hope to convert other programs to an online format and still hold them. We keep our fingers crossed that our largest fundraiser, the Ghost Tours, could continue as planned. We have unfinished exhibits that won't open in July, we miss our volunteers, and honestly? We miss each other.

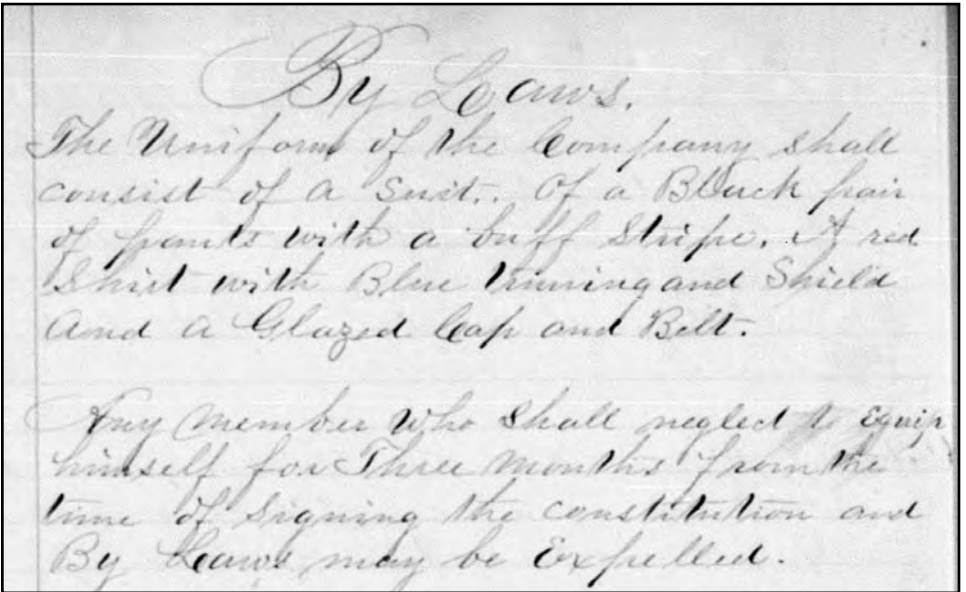
What we CAN do, however, is to continue building our online outreach. In the last two months, our website visits have doubled in comparison with statistics from January and February. Our Facebook posts reached 42,000 people in April—28,000 of them engaging with the post with either a comment, like, or share. We can continue conversations with people, encourage them to become members, to support us as we gather

MICROFILM MADNESS

When people think of microfilm at the history center they think about the newspaper collection: back issues of the *Anoka Union*, the *East Bethel Booster*, *Circulating Pines* and more. But what people don't think of are the collection of miscellaneous County records. To explore these hidden gems. Sara began a series of #MicrofilmMadness. She highlighted Estray records, registration of county farm names, and County Commissioner meeting minutes.

In perusing these rolls, the digital microfilm reader is invaluable. With it you can adjust the image quality and help make faint pen marks visible. What the reader can't do is help decipher the handwriting.

You never know what you will find. Are you able to make out the first sections of the Hook & Ladder Company No 1's Bylaws adopted in 1867? Problems? No worries...translation below.



By Laws

The uniform of the company shall consist of a suit of a black pair of pants with a buff stripe. A red shirt with blue trimming and shield and a glazed cap and belt.

Any member who shall neglect to equip himself for three months from the time of signing the constitution and by laws may be expelled.

#MNMUSEUMALPHABET

As the world continues to distance itself physically, we have come to rely on technology to provide a sense of community. The museum world has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in part by creating hashtags on social media that each of us can use to showcase portions of our collections daily.

Search #MNMuseumAlphabet in your internet browser to discover daily posts beginning with the letter A and progressing through the alphabet. While the ACHS participated in this, you'll also find fun information from the Minnesota Historical Society and several other county historical societies.

More specific to Anoka County, we began this game with Apricot, a doll friend of Strawberry Shortcake, then moved to "B" for Graydon Peterson's baby boots—one pair for running in the yard and one for special occasions. "C" was for Coon Creek, posted with an image of the water winding its way through Coon Rapids about 1900.

On "D day" we couldn't pass up the opportunity to showcase a group of girls dressed in their frilly best at an Anoka parade with dolls in carriages. However, we warned that readers not be fooled by the cuteness! We figured these girls were actually a personality test. Which, we asked, were you? Nap time, smiles, older sister stuck with the littles, feeling cute, or out for revenge? The comments indicated that "nap time" and "revenge" were the crowd favorites.

By the time we reached "E", ACHS staff were full of quarantine talk and decided to throw caution to the wind. Our post about exercise featured materials donated by Mike Clark, which he used in his younger years. The program, distributed by Charles Atlas in the 1950's and 60's, came in installments with directions on how to build your muscles and body. But wait! That's not all! What good is a printed exercise routine during a quarantine if we don't try it out? Sara, our volunteer coordinator, was game enough to film her shenanigans, which you can find in the blog section of our website.

"F" taught us about advertisements for the fancy fruit served at the Bethel Lunch Room, while "G" brought back memories of "gas for less" at Soderville's Independent Dealer service station, ca 1960s. We brought back a favorite post from 2017 featuring Happy Corner in Nowthen for "H" and asked "what's your happy today"? It felt like the silver linings had started to tarnish for some in our community, but one memory of riding the Big Wheels bikes to the store and buying Smarties suckers for a nickel made us chuckle.

"I" featured Roy and his cousin Irving Hyatt making ice cream in 1913 (see the front cover). Roy's grandfather, Rufus Downs, took



these photos after settling in Minnesota in 1856 and eventually marrying Myrtle Hyatt of Anoka (search #MyrtleMonday for happy cat pictures).

We pulled into the middle of the alphabet with St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Lino Lakes, another favorite from the Downs family featuring their mule, and a lace loom.

We related to muddy letter "M". In a telling photo of shared experiences, the driver of an early-model truck needed some help from friends and their horses to get back on the road. Our friends on social media also came to the rescue by suggesting the truck could be a 1924 Model T.

For the letter "N" we featured Northway shopping center of Lexington. Several people tried their hand at identifying the three people posing, which reminds us to wag our finger and admonish you to label all the photos for your family!

We couldn't resist "O" for office, since we had some great pictures from the inside of some Anoka County departments taken about 1926. Our biggest takeaway? The Auditor office had some extremely dubious wiring on their lighting. In fact, we loved this image so much, a few days later we turned it into a digital puzzle you can find on our website.

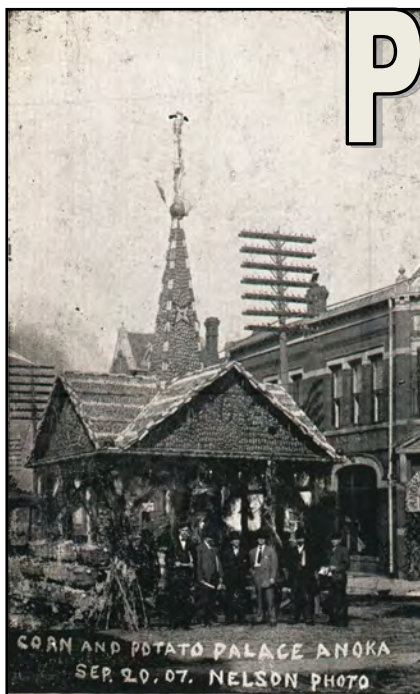
For "P", we headed back outside to the world of agriculture where the potato reigned for many years in the sandy soil of early Anoka County.

In the quiet of quaint home offices where quarrels are hopefully few, we quarantine together...just kidding. We chose "Q" for quilt. The Rum River appeared for "R" (we snuck in some dams for good measure) and settled on sisters for "S", which proved a universal connection of conflicting emotions. A perennial favorite, "T" for tornado brought out a storm of memories for both the 1939 and 1965 events. Much like this epidemic, people recognized that #HistoryHappensToday, documented the aftermath, and submitted them to ACHS for preservation.

As we rounded the corner on "U", it occurred to us that selecting just one uniform would make us sad. Therefore, we began the day with W. J. Miller, Chief Engineer, wearing an impressive hat as part of his Anoka Fire Department uniform on January 28, 1882, continued with Logan Grant Sr. in about 1905 wearing his Linwood baseball uniform, then Wendell Ledine in his WWII uniform.

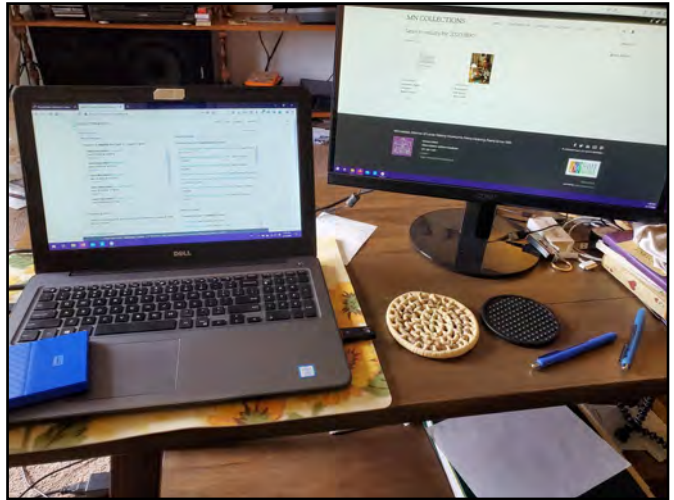
The Giddings family vegetable plot and their giant...we weren't sure...started the "V" conversation followed by Norman & Bessie Jackson's wedding (she could fit in the same dress 50 years later!). We struggled with "X" but discovered a railroad crossing image from 1970 that fit the bill. Why would we do anything other than yearlings for the next letter is beyond us, and for "Z"? Well. Lacking a good picture of zebras, we opted for Zion, as some lovely construction pictures exist of the Zion Lutheran Church, founded in 1870, located on 4th Ave North (and later 4th Ave South) in Anoka.

It was fun making our way through the alphabet, but the quarantine outlasted the available letters. With a wealth of Anoka County History at our fingertips we can continue to share with #TourAnokaCounty (check it out!)



Managing a Museum Collection from Home

It has been a strange month. Prior to the museum closing and the current stay-at-home orders, I had never given any consideration to whether my job could even be attempted from home! It seemed obvious to me that I needed to be physically present at the museum. The past month has taught me that's only partially true.



There are many things I cannot do from home, like processing new (physical) artifacts into the collection, giving them labels, taking their photographs, and finding them secure housing. I cannot build physical exhibits from home. There's no pulling out the right artifacts for Anoka Halloween or the Masonic Lodge building, no setting up display cases for them, or printing photographs here at home. I cannot do much of the research I would normally, like consulting books, microfilm, maps, ledgers, and the physical artifacts themselves in order to better tell the stories.

But this time at home has taught me a lot of collections work I *can* do from home.

Our world is increasingly a digital one. While physical artifacts (including documents and photographs) remain a vital part of museum collections, we also cannot ignore the vast amounts of digital material that people create every day. Although at ACHS the amount of "born digital" material (things like a photograph taken with your cell phone, an email, or a document typed on your computer) is still small in comparison to our physical collections, those digital things are the record of our current age, and we as a museum cannot neglect to collect and preserve them.

There is also the issue of making our collections available to anyone who might wish to learn more about Anoka County history, not just people who happen to live nearby, and are able to physically visit the museum. The current circumstances where no one can visit the museum at all has thrown this issue into sharp relief. This is where our ongoing efforts to digitize things not "born digital" come in to play, whether by scanning photographs or transferring the audio of an oral history from a cassette tape to a digital file. While digitization is not a magic bullet in terms of preservation, it is one important part of our overall preservation strategy, and an especially important part of making the museum collections accessible to people. If no one can learn from the artifacts we have

at the museum, then what is the point of keeping them at all?

Towards both ends, I have been doing my best to improve both our digital collections and access to our existing collections while at home. Our transition to a cloud-based museum database software in 2018 has been the main reason this is possible; I can login to our system from home, and work on both adding new digital material as well as improving older records. Thanks to the public website linked to our database (MNCollections.org), I can also make many of our records available to the public, and I encourage you to go see what is available there!

Here are some of the specific projects I have been working on:

COVID-19: The best time to gather history is while it happens! We are collecting stories and photographs as people document their experiences during this pandemic. Since all of this is born digital material, I can bring those items into the collection off-site, creating records for them in CollectiveAccess, and even making them public so that people can see their stories on the MNCollections website.

Oral Histories: ACHS has an extensive oral history collection covering a wide range of topics, including the experience of our veterans in major military conflicts, law enforcement, the Anoka State Hospital, and Agriculture in Anoka County. While we do not have digitized audio or transcript files for all these interviews, we do for many of them. I am loading those audio and transcript files into our database, making them publicly available, and then linking those records to our main ACHS website so that they are even easier to find.

Cleaning up the database: There are always things to do on the back-end of any database. Different search tools in our CollectiveAccess system allow me to find older records imported from the previous database that need additional information added. While this would not be at the top of my priority list normally, it is still an

important task that is easy to do from home!

Improvements made to our records now will help us once the museum opens again, making everything more accessible to staff and visitors alike.

I hope everyone is healthy, and otherwise as well as you can be during this time. Please consider submitting your thoughts and experiences to us, either through the website or by email! It will help me keep busy. :)



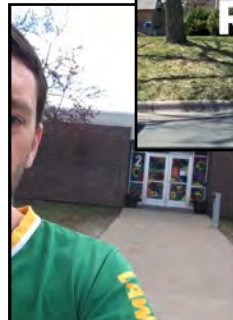
Explore our collections from our website by hovering over “What We Do” and clicking “Online Collections Database”

#TourAnokaCounty

As the Anoka County Historical Society, we care for the history of 20 cities, one Township, and the County as a whole. In order to celebrate each of those places, we started our first #TourAnokaCounty adventure. The kick-off began April 17 on ACHS's social media. In a time when residents are encouraged to limit their travel, this digital tour gave followers a chance to explore the beauty and history of the county without leaving their homes.

Members of the ACHS board, volunteers, and new friends filmed creative mini-videos of interesting places they knew. Steve snuck us into the Staples Cemetery in Andover. Rich popped by the Coon Rapids Dam, while Father Greg Esty opened the doors to St. Genevieve's 1904 church building. Joe Janda from the Coon Lake Improvement Society took us out on the lake, Sara attempted to ride a trike in Circle Pines and Daryl took us back to McKinley Elementary School.

Throughout the day, ACHS not only shared these videos, but also trivia about how each city began, images of places long gone, or a new perspective. Keep an eye out for brand new city pages on our website, too!



Rocky Borchardt

This is the most enjoyable virtual tour I've ever been on! This picture amazes me.... How simple and small those roads were compared to the chaotic multi-lane knotted structure that exists there now.



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory



Did you know that Minnesota ranks second in the nation for highest rate of volunteers? We have a volunteer rate of 45.1 percent, just behind the state of Utah. We see it at the History Center—the number of people willing to step up and help, who are the heartbeat of keeping local history alive.

With our community interactions changing, the history center closed to volunteers and visitors, we are all looking at “what does volunteering with ACHS look like now?” Because we miss you and definitely still need your brains, expertise and help.

What can you do?

- Talk us up—connect (safely) with your family and friends.
- Document and donate—These historic times will be a reference point for years.
- Help with a digital project:
 - Transcribing handwritten journals
 - Transcribing oral history interviews
 - Photography—go into your neighborhoods and business districts and take a photographic record of what it looks like now. Important: each photo comes with a record of what is in the photograph and where it was taken.
 - Interview your family members
 - Look through your family records—what piece of local history is hidden there

Interested in kicking off one of those projects, or inspired with a new idea? Connect with me and I can help get you started! Let’s keep this volunteer train running :)

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

American Legion Edward B.
Cutter Post 102
Mike Gamache
Kim Hogdal
Luanne Koskinen
Mary & Jerome Marquis
MidWestOne Bank
Gladys Odegaard
Roger & Avis Oppedgaard

Artifact Donors

Anoka Kiwanis Club
Jane Bartlett
Vickie Wendel
Judith Ziegler

ACHS Sustaining Members

Northeast Bank
Rita Warpeha
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Thomas & Kristi Sullivan
Terry Overacker Plumbing

ACHS Business Members

Anoka Dental
Anoka Knights of Columbus Council
2018
The BIG White House
City of Coon Rapids
Coon Rapids Historical
Commission
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Hawaii Nail Spa
Nowthen Historical Power
Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Plants & Things
Rum River Restoration
Ticknor Hill Bed & Breakfast
Tomco Company



ACHS Remembers



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

Edward Faherty
1933-2020

Bonita Melting
1935-2020

Delores Schanhaar
1926-2020

George Reynolds
1932-2020

M O N T H L Y	<p>History Center CLOSED but the Society is OPEN!</p> <p>ACHS Board Meetings Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend in the calendar on AnokaCountyHistory.org</p>
--	--

Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting

Email questions or suggestions to acgsmn@yahoo.com

Getting Hitched in Anoka County

WHEN: Saturday, May 16

TIME: 2 p.m.

WHERE: Digital zoom program. Link at AnokaCountyHistory.org
 Love, romance and tradition. We explore it all from the reasons why white wedding dresses became popular to the bridal shower games played right here in Anoka County.

Member Digital Movie Night

WHEN: Friday, June 5

TIME: 7 p.m.

WHERE: Kast digital platform: <https://kast.gg/>
 Hang out, digitally, with ACHS staff and watch a film from the collection. While we can't provide the popcorn, we will provide any commentary and fun. Email to come with sign-in details.

Make a Box Kite

WHEN: Saturday June 20

TIME: 2 p.m.

ONLINE PROGRAM INFORMATION PENDING: The summer months are a perfect time to fly a kite—but have you ever flown one you made? Now is your chance in this session! With some wooden dowels, plastic sheeting, some string, and a bit of patience, you can let your box kite sail into the sky.

Sewing: The Original Jigsaw Puzzle

WHEN: Wednesday July 15

TIME: 6 p.m.

ONLINE PROGRAM INFORMATION PENDING: Wake up your inner seamstress or tailor and try your hand at fitting together antique and modern sewing patterns ready for the machine! Anoka County Historical Society staff will guide you through the puzzle of laying out 1860s pattern pieces, chat about the hard times of World War II and the Depression, then compare how times have changed with the modern clothing pattern.



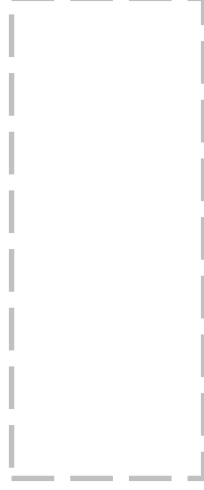
Anoka County
Historical Society
2135 Third Avenue North
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 421-0600
AnokaCountyHistory.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE**

PAID

**ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198**





Anoka County
Historical Society

H I S T O R Y 21



Volume 50 No.4 July-Aug 2020
AnokaCountyHistory.org

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

Board of Directors

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

Staff

- Rebecca Ebnet-Desens
(Executive Director)
- Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)
- Audra Hilse (Collections Manager)
- Carol Dordan (Office Staff)
- Don Johnson (Office Staff)
- Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

Table of Contents:

- 3 - Letters from the ACHS
President and Director
- 4 - The Evolution of “History”
- 8 - An Un-Wise Murder—ACHS
True Crime Mystery
- 10 - Federal Cartridge Collection
Part 1
- 12 - How to Museum
- 13 - Volunteer World:
2020 Volunteer Landscape
- 15 - Upcoming Events

Front Cover: Object ID: P128.1.04

From the President

The Phrase "We are living in Historic Times" seems to hold more meaning these days than ever before in my lifetime.

The COVID19 has impacted all of our collective lives. It has given us a chance to experience things that used to be stories our grandparents shared with us. Things like isolation, shortages and limits when shopping for essentials, and how important our Neighbors are when we are in crisis.

I am so very proud and impressed with the Staff of the Anoka County Historical Society! They have used the tools of modern technology to switch from the in-person in-the-building model to a virtual All-Are-Welcome model. I learned something about each one of our 21 communities from the Tour of Anoka County on social media that allowed us all to "get out". We are sharing our stories thru the History Gather Surveys. Programs are being re-imagined to be Online and Interactive. It seems they have not missed a beat!

We have work to do to keep the ACHS engaged with our members and our community. Working to ensure that we are inclusive to all who reside in Anoka County; this requires intentional effort to invite all the communities of people within our County to be active members.

We need to strive to be that All Are Welcome and All Your History/Stories Matter organization.



Lotus Hubbard
Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President



From the Director

Weeee're baaaaaack!

It all looks different and will do for some time, I'm afraid. Thank you for your patience and support as we navigated the digital world these past few months. Now that we have our feet underneath us in that department, we can tackle the world of cleaning as we go, quarantining our research materials, and cataloging all the fun things you've found during your purge.

The really exciting part for us that came out of the quarantine, is the online fundraiser on page 8 and 9, "An Un-Wise Murder." This completely new format of programming will allow members who typically couldn't physically attend, join us. Check it out here first and then stay tuned for more info!

Rebecca

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



The Evolution of “History”

Since the death of George Floyd and ensuing events in the Twin Cities, both peaceful and violent, our community has felt unsettled and at odds with itself. At the museum, we have noticed an increase in conversations using the word “history” to either bolster or discredit a viewpoint. We have also heard from several people who are realizing what they didn’t learn in history class, what doesn’t make the news, or what their community doesn’t talk much about—or what we flat-out choose to forget over time.

These conversations got us thinking at ACHS about what kind of news coverage existed in the local papers during other national events and how that shaped the community of Anoka County’s understanding and interaction with them. We also thought it a good opportunity to peek into how information changes through time, how a story evolves, and why we can never call history “done”.

The lynching in Duluth of three Black men on June 15, 1920 occurred 100 years ago last month and went largely undiscussed for many years despite the existence of images taken the night of the murders. It wasn’t until 1979 when author Michael Fedo published the first edition of his book documenting the murders of Elmer Clayton, Isaac McGhie, and Elmer Jackson that the history nobody wanted to talk about truly came to light. Fedo published subsequent editions in 2000 and 2016, the last under the title, The Lynchings in Duluth: Second Edition. In interviews, Fedo said much of the primary resources he needed to write the book had been destroyed or lost through time. He relied heavily on oral histories he collected from Duluth residents to recreate the events of that night.

*Above: Anoka Herald June 22, 1920
Right: Anoka Union June 23, 1920
Find transcripts of both on pg. 5*

Back in Anoka County

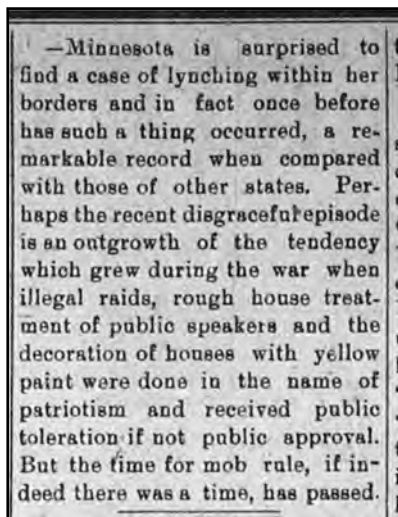
Unless they subscribed to the city newspapers, residents of Anoka County would have not read about the murders until the June 22, 1920 edition of the *Anoka Herald*:

“Minnesota has been disgraced in a startling and unexpected manner. Last Tuesday evening three negroes were lynched in Duluth by a mob of several thousand enraged citizens. That the three negroes were guilty of the frightful crime of which they were charged is no doubt true. In fact it is reported that one of more of them confessed. But all this is no excuse for the lynching. It is a poor travesty on established law and order when, in a community like Duluth, there are to be found three or four thousand men who are unwilling to permit those charged with crime to be tried and dealt with according to law. The persons who participated in the lynching of the three negroes at Duluth are as guilty of murder as if they had hung entirely innocent men...Hereafter with this blot on the record in Minnesota, we must be rather careful about condemning such things in the south where the provocation is often greater and more frequent.”

The delay in reporting is likely due to the timing of laying out the paper, the press run, and the lynching itself. The article that did run in the June 23, 1920 edition of the *Anoka Union*, however, was a small editorial note that said the following:

“Minnesota is surprised to find a case of lynching within her borders and in fact once before has such a thing occurred, a remarkable record when compared with those of other states. Perhaps the recent disgraceful episode is an outgrowth of the tendency which grew during the war when illegal raids, rough house treatment of public speakers and the decoration of houses with yellow paint were done in the name of patriotism and received public toleration, if not public approval. But the time for mob rule, if indeed there was a time, has passed.”

Neither article provided factual information about the event, relying instead on the reader's ability to have procured this in other ways during the previous week. If an Anoka County resident had subscribed to the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, they would have read the headline “Duluth Mob Hangs 3 Negroes to Avenge Young Girl; Three Freed By Lynch Law Court Held in



Battered Jail” on June 16, the day after the lynching. The article has a subhead that reads, “Troops Rush to Aid Helpless Police” and continues to tell the story of how three Black men (named Isaac McGhie, Elmer Jackson, and Nate Green in the article) were arrested for attacking a 17-year old white girl (unnamed), removed from the local jail, and hung on a telephone pole by a mob of 5,000. It mentions a Catholic priest whose attempted to intervene, but went unheeded by the lynching mob, a firehose someone turned on the mob at the jail, and identifies prisoners Louie Williams, John Thomas, and Harry Richardson as “having escaped the noose” since they were “acquitted by a lynch law court” that occurred just before the murders. It also references a second mob who had set out to follow the Robinson Circus to Virginia, MN in search of additional guilty parties.

“General good humor characterized the attitude of the mob at all times, onlookers said, although it was admittedly somewhat grim in places,” wrote the *Tribune*. “As deportment of mobs is measured, it was declared to have been comparatively orderly...”

By comparison, if residents of Anoka County had spoken to anyone in outstate Minnesota, they may have been privy to reports in other newspapers. The Bemidji *Pioneer* newspaper reported the details of the assault on an unnamed girl, calling her “weak and hysterical” while also saying the suspects were “sweated for some time” leading to a confession by the three Black men. In this article, eight police officers were also harmed by the mob upon entering the police station and the murdered men were still named Isaac McGhie, Elmer Jackson, and Nate Green, reportedly dying at 11:30 p.m., 11:38 p.m., and 11:45 p.m., respectively.

The *Winona Republican Herald*, published June 16, 1920, focused less on the details of the lynching and more on the aftermath of prosecuting members of the mob “to the full extent of the law”, the events in Virginia, and a statement from Dr. O.W. Ryan, a “prominent priest”.

“There is no excuse for utter anarchism of such blind violence,” wrote Ryan. “No one can be sure the victims were the guilty ones so the deed must ever be murder pure and simple.”

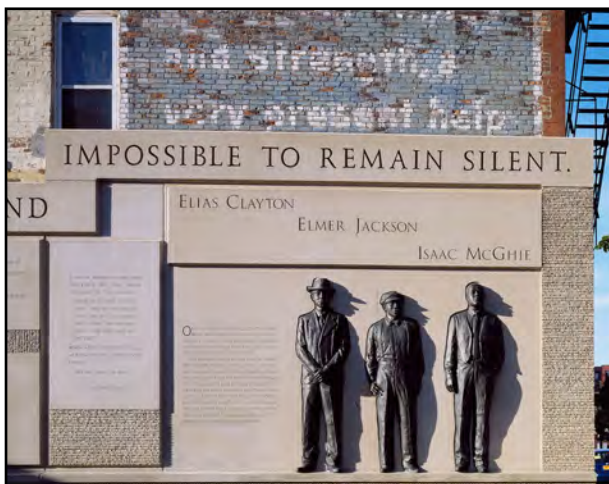
Ryan went on to say the police should have used their weapons to dispel the mob and that “we brot the negroes to this country we have shamefully neglected their education and religion training; there are a host of most respectable men and women among them.”

On June 17, 1920, the *Brainerd Daily Dispatch* ran a headline that said, “Special Grand Jury Investigating Lynching” and reported that the still unnamed girl had 16 assailants. Some called for the resignation of the Public Safety Commissioner who ordered the police not to fire on the mob. Community groups including the Kiwanis and Rotary passed resolutions “demanding the arrest and punishment of the lynchers”.

Interestingly, the paper *The Labor World*, which served Duluth and Superior at the time, made no mention of the lynchings in its June 19 or June 26, 1920 editions.

As Fedo discovered writing his book, information changes and memories morph the

events known as facts. The discrepancies in numbers of attackers, whether the girl saw her doctor after the assault, whether the assault actually occurred, how many Black people were arrested and held, and even the names of those murdered changed through time. The June 26, 1920 edition of the *Tribune* now said that Lonney Clayton was the last man hanged—a direct contradiction to their previous reporting where the third man was named as Nate Green. In fact, the three men who were lynched didn't receive marked gravestones until the 1990s, when their correct identities had apparently been sorted out.



*Lynching memorial in Duluth, dedicated in 2003.
Photo by Carol M. Highsmith, public domain.*

On June 15, 2001, when the *Billings Gazette* ran an Associated Press article headlined, “Duluth recalls dark past of lynchings” the public had acknowledged attempts to push the incident aside in the annals of history for the last 80 years, including deliberately omitting it from the school books. Instead, they now commemorated the event for the first time with poetry readings, a concert, fundraiser for a memorial sculpture, and book readings. By now, the victims of the lynching were named Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson and Isaac McGhie, the story of the rape was called a lie, and they died hanging on a light post.

As we do our best to document the events of our era at the time they happen, we must remain aware that new information, more correct recollections, and different viewpoints will be added as years pass. When conducting research, we must allow for human failure in fact checking, misinformation printed too quickly, or hidden sources yet undiscovered. How will the death of George Floyd, reactions in the Twin Cities, and ripple effects in Anoka County be commemorated 100 years from now? What breadcrumbs can we leave as a community at ACHS to ensure accuracy—giving voice to as many viewpoints as possible?

**We invite you to join this conversation through our
online survey, found on the landing page of our website,
AnokaCountyHistory.org.**



AN UN-WISE MURDER


ACHS TRUE CRIME MYSTERY



SEPTEMBER 19

7 P.M.

TICKETS: ANOKACOUNTYHISTORY.ORG



A family game of cards around the Wise family kitchen table in Grow was cut short in a moment when gunfire exploded through the porch window on May 27, 1900. The daughters, Eliza and Martha, writing letters in the front parlor, ran to fetch help from the neighbors, while their parents and two brothers lay injured and dying.

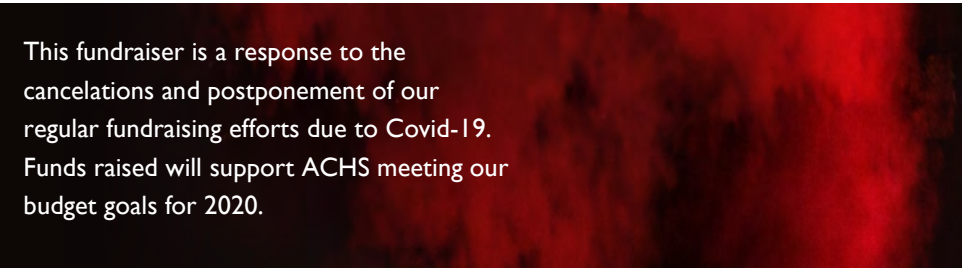
WHO descended upon the Wise family?

WHY were they victims of a murder most foul?

WHAT are the daughters hiding from the investigation?

Join us for the first episode of ACHS **True Crime Mystery**, a digital online fundraiser. Watch as the case unfolds using handwritten notes from the prosecuting attorney, transcripts from the court case, the breaking headlines in local newspapers, as well as treasured love letters from a suspect.

Tickets on sale now at AnokaCountyHistory.org



This fundraiser is a response to the cancelations and postponement of our regular fundraising efforts due to Covid-19. Funds raised will support ACHS meeting our budget goals for 2020.

Federal Cartridge: Part One

While it has been a great relief to work part-time at the museum again since the beginning of June, that is not the only place that I've been working. With a hundred-year anniversary coming up quickly in 2022, Federal Premium Ammunition has partnered with ACHS to get their business archives organized, and I've been spending a couple days a week working to process those materials.

There is a lot to do – the collection contains everything from financial records to metal printing plates – but I indulged my own curiosity by starting with the sizeable collection of packaging materials that were set aside for preservation. While not including every product package that Federal Cartridge has created, it is still a sizeable selection.

My first step was to sort the packaging samples and do some weeding. Consulting with Federal, we decided to keep two copies of each unique piece (when possible); this meant that when I found a whole box full of the exact same pieces, I didn't need to keep all of them. Some boxes had been sorted out in the past, though, and I just had to match up identical pieces to make sure they were organized.

I learned a lot about Federal's product history just doing that much; their product inventory has covered both shotgun shells and various kinds of rifle and pistol ammunition over the years, with many different product lines for different uses,

including hunting and competition target shooting. Another interesting fact I didn't know before starting this job was that Federal served as an ammunition vendor for other companies, creating ammunition and packaging so that places like Sears, Montgomery Ward, and Gambles Stores could sell ammunition under their own brands. While the majority of the



packaging in the collection represents Federal's own brand, there is a good selection of pieces created for these client companies as well.

The next step was more organizing. With all the unneeded duplicates out of the way, I put the outside brands aside and pulled the packaging for each of Federal's product lines together. Then I worked through the items, getting similar pieces together in archival folders with a label to indicate the contents. Once I got through Federal's pieces, I did the same with the outside brands they created as a vendor.

Dating all of these pieces was either very easy or quite a challenge. Many of the packaging pieces were samples sent to someone in the company for review, and had specific dates written on the backs – those were the easy ones. But some had no definite dates on them at all, which meant I either couldn't date them at all, or could only make an estimate based on the look of the packaging or similar-looking pieces that did have dates. With packaging samples from the 1930s up through the early 2000s, I will probably be relying on assistance from Federal to review and pin down dates for some of the pieces more accurately. The institutional memory and knowledge in place in a long-running business can be extensive and helpful for a project like this, even when the people who created some of the earliest packaging are no longer around.

Another interesting aspect of working with packaging was seeing just how much the designs have changed over decades. While this is helpful for dating in some cases (packaging from the 1930s is very distinct from that of the 1990s), over shorter time spans it wasn't always clear: packaging in the 1930s and 1950s didn't necessarily look very different, nor packaging from the 1970s versus the 1980s. I'm grateful that so many of the pieces did have specific dates written on them, or this part of the project would have been more difficult.

With all of the flat packaging (boxes that were never folded out into their three-dimensional forms) taken care of, I still have a smaller amount of assembled boxes to organize, number, and store in archival boxes. Eventually, I'll be getting to a related part of the Federal collection: the metal printing plates that were used to actually print the packaging for many years. Those will come with their own challenges, since many are large, or heavy, or both...but that is a Collections Corner for another newsletter!



Left, Top: Various packaging for target shooting shot shells.

Left, Bottom: 2 - A box of sorted packaging next to pile of weeded duplicates.

Above: Two examples of packaging created by Federal for Montgomery Ward.

HOW TO “MUSEUM”

A COVID-SAVVY GUIDE TO VISITING ACHS

On March 17 we closed our doors to the public and began an unpredictable journey. Now, after 106 days, we opened our doors once again in a new way. Inviting people back into the physical museum has some caveats and difficulties that staff must juggle. Here is a primer on everything you need to know if you would head to the museum during this time of Covid-19.

1 Can your question be answered digitally? Our website is pretty snazzy. Plus if you haven't followed us on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter you are missing out on the fun. AnokaCountyHistory.org

2 Open Hours—we have limited hours now to perfect our cleaning protocols. Making an appointment will guarantee we are free to chat about a donation or project.

3 Wear a mask. Show us your style—are you fun, flirty, or functional blue disposable? If you prefer the unmasked look, we're ok with that, just please use our digital accommodations or the good ol' telephone instead of visiting in person.

4 Look for room max capacities and adjust accordingly. We have socially distanced tables and floor markings to help. People with appointments will get the space before walk-ins so please call ahead!

5 Cleaning is important. Staff will be wiping down surfaces, disinfecting the bathrooms every hour, and cleaning publicly used keyboards and mice. Books and research materials will be quarantined for 72 hours before being re-shelved. We've also retired the hands-on exhibit items and children's toys. Help us out by exploring our resources with a purpose.

6 We are excited to be back!

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10a.m.—2 p.m.
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10a.m.—2 p.m.
Friday	10a.m.—2 p.m.
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed





The museum world, and the world in general, has changed so much from even the last time this newsletter went out. The current view of volunteering at ACHS has changed along with it. Nearly all of our summer and fall events that we need our volunteers help (the Anoka County Fair, Nowthen Threshing Show, Lager Fest) have been canceled. We are going to miss terribly the moments chatting and sharing history either on the steps of the Farmhouse at the fair or General Store in Nowthen.

As for volunteering at the History Center, we are slowly figuring out how that will work. Our first step is opening to the public (see opposite page for our plans on that one). With the additional cleaning, sanitizing and care needed for people to come in the building that means in-person volunteer projects will be severely limited. These two positions will be reserved for those actively working on a collections project that could not be accomplished remotely.

That doesn't mean we don't still need YOU! Now more than ever we need you as our advocates and ambassadors out in the world. From your love of local history and your first hand experience looking at the collections at ACHS you see how important telling our stories are. Look us up on social media, like and share our posts. Tell your neighbors and friends about the resources and fun staff here, and be on the lookout for what we should be including in our collections—

everything from 100 years ago to 10 minutes ago. **You are our front line.**

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

Anoka Women of Today
Norma Arfstrom
Dick & Helen Bennett
Richard Bergling
Gregory & Jackie
Bortnem
David & Kathy Carlson
Mike & Mary Clark
Eva Mae Cleator
Sandra Connor
Gail Dahl
Peter & Angela DeLong
Ed & Marg Faherty
Fidelity Charitable
Janet Galvin
Mike Gamache
Karen Hand
Merlin Hunt
Nancy Lambert
Melvin Larson
Chema Malu
Yvonne mann
Diane Mattson
Gene Merriam
John Novack
Judith O'Connor
Phil & Laurie Olman
Warren & Lilly Olson
James Rootes
Joyce Schmidt
Tom & Linda Sullivan
Catherine Vesley
Sara Wilcox

Veterans Voice Donation

Steve Nelson

New Members

Jim Cox

Artifact Donors

Elaine Alarcon-Totten
Terence Barrett
Sandra Connor
Patricia Dowdell
Lynda Ellis
Ann Essling
Bessie Goranson
Julie Jeppson
Don Johnson
Gina Overacker
Liz Pomplun
Jessie Rowles
Robin Schnaidt
Lori Schubert
Claudia Sehuman
Barbara Scottston
Erik Skogquist
Elizabeth Strootman
Patricia Theobald
Catherine Vesley
Wes Volkenant
Donna Wheeler

ACHS Sustaining Members

Northeast Bank
Rita Warpeha
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Thomas & Kristi Sullivan
Terry Overacker
Plumbing

ACHS Business Members

Anoka Dental
Anoka Knights of
Columbus Council
2018
The BIG White House
City of Coon Rapids
Coon Rapids Historical
Commission
Fifth Avenue Dental
Hammerheart Brewing
Hawaii Nail Spa
Nowthen Historical
Power Association
Peterson Shoes
Pierce Refrigeration
Plants & Things
Rum River Restoration
Ticknor Hill Bed &
Breakfast
Tomco Company



ACHS Remembers



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

Marlene Colvin
1947-2020

Roland E. Freeburg
1926-2020

M
O
N
T
H
L
Y**History Center Hours.**

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

ACHS Board MeetingsSecond Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. at the Anoka History Center
Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at
AnokaCountyHistory.org**Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting**Email questions or suggestions to acgsmn@yahoo.com**Sewing: The Original Jigsaw Puzzle****WHEN:** Wednesday July 15**TIME:** 6 p.m. Event URL: <https://www.facebook.com/anokacountylibrary/>**ONLINE PROGRAM AT THE LIBRARY:** Wake up your inner seamstress or tailor and try your hand at fitting together antique and modern sewing patterns ready for the machine! ACHS staff will guide you through the puzzle of laying out 1860s pattern pieces, chat about the hard times of World War II and the Depression, then compare how times have changed with the modern clothing pattern.**ACHS Mystery: A Wise Murder****WHEN:** Saturday, Sept. 19**TIME:** 7 p.m.**WHERE:** Online program. Viewing instructions given with ticket purchase at AnokaCountyHistory.org See page 8 for more details.**Keep up with the
Fun at ACHS!**Anoka County
Historical Society

AnokaCoHistory

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



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE**

PAID

**ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198**



H I S T O R Y 21



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

Board of Directors

District 1: Al Pearson

District 2: Kim Hogdal

District 3: Orville Lindquist (Treasurer)

District 4: Lotus Hubbard (President)

District 5: Richard Oxley (Vice-Pres.)

District 6: Open

District 7: Bart Ward

At-Large A: Steve Florman

At-Large B: Dennis Berg

At-Large C: Daryl Lawrence

At-Large D: Johannes Allert

At-Large E: Jim Rootes

At-Large F: Paul Pierce III

At-Large G: Allison Schmitt (Secretary)

At-Large H: Mary Nolan

County Commissioner Liaison:

Jeff Reinert

Staff

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

(Executive Director)

Sara Given (Volunteer Coordinator)

Audra Hilse (Collections Manager)

Don Johnson (Office Staff)

Karen Johnson (Office Staff)

Table of Contents:

3 - Letters from the ACHS
President and Director

4 - A New Book on Blaine

8 - Collections Corner Farewell

10 - Halloween Centennial Book

12 - The Most Interesting Fundraiser
In the World

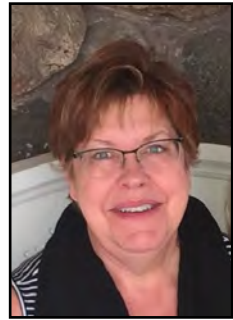
13 - Volunteer World:
A 2020 Ghost Tour Revision

15 - Upcoming Events

Front Cover: Halloween Parade float ribbon from 1958 found in Cheerful Chuggers 4-H Club scrapbook. Object ID: 2586

From the President

Sights, sounds, and smells evoke memories and help us recall stories – some pivotal, some mundane. These sensory memories can create dimension to an old photograph. When we see a sepia toned photo of a family at a picnic...we can imagine the sounds of children laughing and playing, the smell of flowers and grass, and the bright colors of summer. So much more than just the image captured by the camera. Our personal histories help us fill in the story when we share photos or visit an exhibit in the museum. They help make it into our Own Story.



Sounds like the tornado siren, a train whistle, an emergency vehicle, a lawn mower, and church bells trigger memories. For some they may be comforting; and for others they may less so. Church bells at noon reminded us to go home for lunch, the tornado siren urged us to take shelter. The fire truck siren during a parade announced the possibility of candy being thrown to waiting children, but the same sound in the middle of the night meant a family faced trouble.

Each one of us has personal experiences that color our perceptions and reactions to the world around us. The beauty of it all is the endless possibilities and points of view. A photo is not telling just one story, there are many chapters within the depths of the image that the camera caught during one moment.

Next time you look at an exhibit at the history center- close your eyes and try to imagine the sounds, the smells, and the colors surrounded the images...the countless tales that are “just out of sight”.

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President



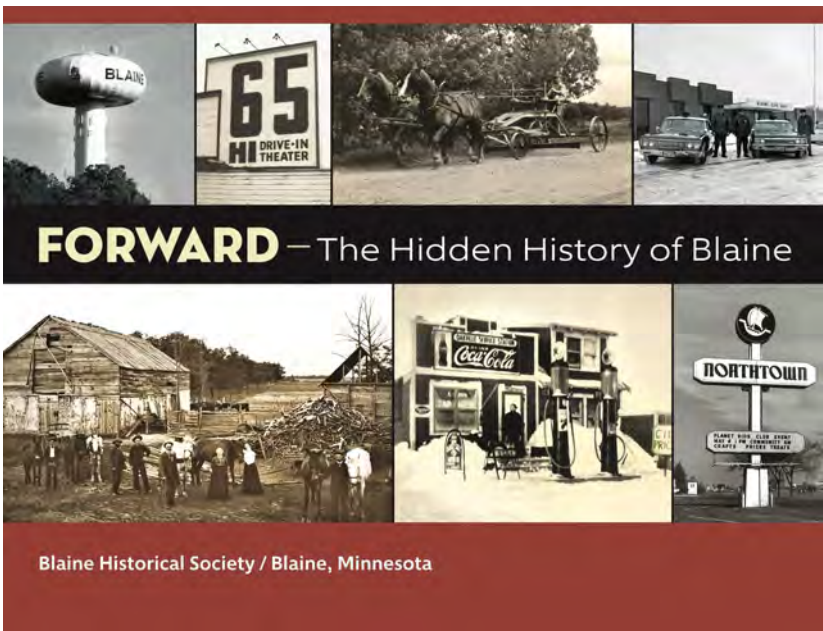
From the Director

It’s no secret the staff at ACHS share a quirkily close bond with each other that makes working together simple and efficient—and fun. In keeping with the rapid change 2020 keeps lobbing our way, two of our work family have decided to turn their focus elsewhere. Carol has retired and Audra accepted an amazing opportunity with the Ayn Rand Institute. Combined, we will say goodbye to 13 (yes, lucky number 13) years of institutional memory and experience.

I will miss both Carol and Audra terribly in our museum world and selfishly wish they would stay. Both of them illustrate a code of ethics many institutions envy, and one that will pose a challenge to fill. But, being a responsible adult, I sincerely wish them well and cross my fingers they grace our doorstep as volunteers and friends for many years to come.

Cheers to you, Carol and Audra! Thank you.

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



A New Book About Blaine

By Orville Lindquist
Blaine Historical Society

In any society, there are a host of stories to tell. Some are well-known while others are lost to the mists of time. Most are simply ordinary stories from ordinary people, businesses, events, and places that, over the years, provide shape for a community.

One wintery day in March 2011, while wandering through the reference section at Northtown Library, we found a half-dozen histories of cities in Anoka County, but no history of the City of Blaine. Staring at the shelves, our disbelief sparked an epiphany. We knew that someone had to tell Blaine’s story and that the Blaine Historical Society should do just that.

Where to begin? We knew a number of legends already – like the one about Greenberry Chambers being the “first permanent resident” of Blaine. But why was the modifier “permanent” attached in every write-up we found? Something didn’t seem right about that. As we dug in, we discovered records that challenged the oft-repeated story.

Conventional wisdom noted Phillip Leddy as the first settler in Blaine, but he died shortly after arriving and that Greenberry Chambers, while not the first resident, was the first

*Above: Book front cover
 Right: Green Chambers’ mark
 in lieu of signature on his Civil
 War Pension application and
 grave located in Oakland
 Cemetery, St. Paul.*

“permanent” resident – settling in the area near the present-day Centennial school campus.

Greenberry Chambers was born an enslaved person in Kentucky and enlisted into the Union Army in 1864 under the promise of receiving his freedom after the war. “Enlisted” in this case really means “sold”. His “owner,” Frank Chambers, received \$300 in compensation for Greenberry’s value, as well as a \$100 bounty normally given to the soldier. Greenberry had no choice in this matter.

After being injured during Army service, Greenberry served out the war as a supervisor cook at a hospital, then gathered his wife and three of his five children (it is not known what happened to the other two children), travelled by steamboat up the Mississippi River to Minnesota, and settled in what became Blaine Township. The Chambers family story is one of struggle – foreclosure on their farm and moving to St. Paul where Greenberry served as a railroad porter well into old age. He died in 1898 and was buried in Oakland Cemetery in what was known as the “African Section”. His story is one of courage as well as challenge. It is certainly appealing to think of him as the “first” resident of Blaine.

The trouble is, after consulting records at the Anoka County Historical Society and other sources, we discovered several things. First, a fellow named Andrew More may well have actually been Blaine’s initial, non-native inhabitant – receiving his land patent in 1855 and appearing on an 1857 township census. Second, Phillip Leddy – whose name is often misspelled in records (one such misspelling is applied to the body of water near his homestead – Laddie Lake) – purchased 40 acres in 1857 and added to his holdings in 1859. Greenberry Chambers came to Blaine in late 1865, well behind More and Leddy, though Leddy did live in Grow Township for a few years in the middle, which adds to the confusion.

More to the point, probate records from Phillip Leddy’s estate show he and his family lived in Blaine for at least ten years before his death in 1872.

The land disbursed in his estate are the same parcels he purchased in 1857 and 1859.

The Greenberry Chambers story is a good one and it feels a shame to disprove it. But, as people concerned with history, we have learned through Chambers, More, and Leddy that history is NOT linear and not EVER final. As each generation moves ahead, it reviews the old stories and learns new things from the




patchwork of records. Sometimes this new information changes the actual stories we have been told or challenges our perceptions of the past.

As we began work on the book, we often heard people remark, “There’s no history in Blaine” or “It’s just trailer parks and sod farms”. Sometimes people went further and added “and big-box retailers” to their critique of the city. While agriculture resides at the heart of Blaine’s story, dwellings of all sorts – tract homes as well as manufactured housing – helped make Blaine...well, *Blaine*. These are parts of our story to be embraced. There is rich content embedded in Blaine’s journey from being swamps and forests, to family homesteads, to significant vegetable and dairy operations, to sod farms, to housing developments, to big business and retail. Along the way, Blaine progressed from village, to township, to city – becoming the largest city in Anoka County, at that.

The more we talked to people, read books containing snippets of information, studied plat maps, explored probate records, and pored over family histories, we began to realize that so many of these stories have hidden in plain sight. And thus, we found the title for the book – “Forward: The Hidden History of Blaine”. So many tales have been left untold, known only to a few, or hidden in plain view because people didn’t recognize their significance.

BUSINESSES



SHOPPING IN BLAINE WAS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT BEFORE THE 1960S

Remodeled Northtown Mall entrance, ca. 2010.

DAILEY COMPANIES: BEGINNING A HOUSING BOOM

In 1948 Everett Dailey, in partnership with Spring Lake Park Lumber owner George Herda, established Dailey Construction. Their business addressed the severe housing shortage created by servicemen returning from the Second World War along with their growing families. The company, located next to Wyatt Brothers Ready Mix on 85th and Central Avenues, built starter homes in Blaine



Model home illustration.



Old Dailey Construction storefront at 85th and Central Avenues.

and the surrounding areas, including Coon Rapids and New Brighton. In 1950 Howard Thorson began working at Dailey. When Everett Dailey was killed in a car accident in Arizona in 1961, Thorson took over the business, renaming it Dailey Homes. Thorson's son Jay grew up in Blaine and attended Blaine Elementary School. He began his career at Dailey while in high

school by sweeping floors. After attending college, in 1974 Jay joined the company as a full-time carpenter and supervisor and later started designing houses.

Dailey's commercial business expanded in the 1980s when the residential building market was flooded with other building companies. Early in the 21st Century it represented nearly 75% of Dailey's sales volume. However, the company still builds all types of homes with a staff of in-house carpenters, project supervisors and designers. In 1987 the offices moved to Central and 109th Avenues. Howard Thorson retired in 1997 and Jay took over the business along with his three brothers. Renamed Dailey Companies and located at 1417–91st Avenue, the business thrived for more than sixty-five years while still maintaining the Dailey name. In 2015 it received recognition by the city as Blaine's oldest company.

We found so many wonderful stories and images to include in the book. Just as a parent loves all of their children, we love all the stories but some are especially intriguing, like the following:

- Much of Blaine was originally claimed by land speculators who never set foot here.
- Jane’s Field – the Anoka County Airport was founded as part of readiness efforts for World War II and has had two separate locations – including parcels of land taken from the Skiba family both times.
- The Aquatore water tower is one of only two of its kind in the nation – because the firm that built it so severely underbid the Blaine tower that the company went into bankruptcy.
- The story of James Elwell and his two stock farms in Blaine that resulted in him building “The Elwell Grade” to connect them—thus creating the road that became the modern-day Lexington Avenue.
- Northtown Mall granted us access to their archive and we found a treasure of photos and paper artifacts. Northtown looked like a pretty groovy place when it opened in 1972 and was the first major shopping center in the Twin Cities not owned by the Dayton family.
- The histories of the pioneer farmers inspired us and the photos we found of their families and their operations made us wish for time travel so we could go back and see these long-lost places ourselves.

This book does not pretend to stand as a comprehensive history, academic work, or literary masterpiece. It is simply an attempt to bring forward the stories that have changed the landscape over time and influenced the city that exists today.

GET YOUR COPY

The book will be available for purchase through the Blaine Historical Society website (www.BlaineHistory.org) or at the Anoka County Historical Society in early September.

Orville Lindquist is the President of the Blaine Historical Society and Treasurer of ACHS. He collected, organized and scanned many of the images in the book.

Karen Klinkenberg is the Vice President of the Blaine Historical Society. She did much of the research behind the stories and wrote most of the manuscript.

COLLECTIONS CORNER FAREWELL

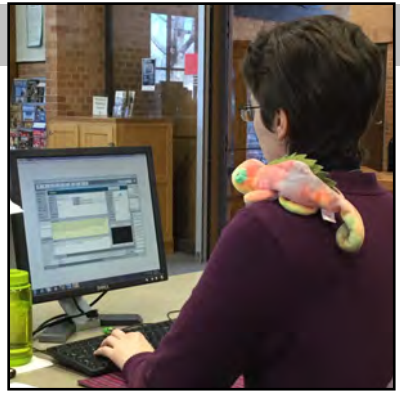
When I sat down to write the Collections Corner last time, I was not expecting it to be my second-to-last one. But life (and this year, it seems) comes with unexpected changes, and so I am now writing my last Collections Corner.

Although I was not expecting to change jobs right now, I recently received an offer from the Ayn Rand Institute to become the digital archivist for the Ayn Rand Archives, which I have accepted. Rand is a personal hero of mine, and I am excited for the opportunity to make her work more accessible.

I am also very sad to be leaving ACHS. I've been here for six years now, and it is by far one of the most interesting jobs I've ever had. I learn new things every day, and Anoka County is full of interesting people and places, no matter the time period. We have stone tools and potsherds from the people who lived here thousands of years ago, letters from the first doctor to live in Anoka, photographs of the Coon Rapids dam being built, end-of-year booklets from many of the rural schools, and dozens of oral histories from people across the county...and that's just a small sample. There wouldn't be time to fully appreciate all of it even if I worked here for 20 years, and the collection is growing all the time.

It is hard to pick favorite things in a collection like the one at ACHS, that has so many varied and interesting things. Photographs, especially older photographs, are always fascinating glimpses of the people who have come before us. I've enjoyed learning about all the different businesses that have found their home in Anoka County over the years, from early companies like Reed & Sherwood, to long-running companies like Federal Cartridge, to more recent businesses like Satin Stitches or brewing companies like 10K and Hammerheart. We have so many artifacts that tell interesting stories about people or places. A kayak from Coon Rapids that circumnavigated the eastern half of the United States. Ledgers that give us a glimpse into the workings of a one-room schoolhouse in Columbus. A footlocker that tells part of Edward Cutter's tragic World War I story. Minutes and correspondence and scrapbooks that capture the county's many 4-H clubs and all the work their members have done over the years. The list goes on and on.

I've also been very fortunate in the people that I've gotten to work with here. From my colleagues to our many dedicated volunteers, I've had so much help and support as I've worked on the ACHS Collections, and they are much farther along and in a much better state because of it. While you might not think that coming up with new shelf-numbering systems and better paperwork and forms sound fun...surprisingly they were, because Sara and I worked together to make them happen. Ambitious exhibit projects, like building a whole garage wall inside the museum, went smoothly because I had Don's capable assistance. And important



partnerships, such as our project with Federal Cartridge, have been possible because of the support of Rebecca and the Board of Directors. Day-to-day work has been vastly improved because of the extensive list of volunteers and interns who have dedicated their time to us, whether it's typing



descriptions into the database, looking up the genealogy of the person a doll belonged to, scanning photographs, or providing subject expertise to add some depth to my own broad knowledge: to all of you, please accept my sincerest thanks for your time and efforts.

And last but certainly not least, it has been good to meet so many of you, our artifact donors, during my time at ACHS, to see your artifacts, to hear your stories. We all have unique history that lives only in our heads, and I'm grateful to have gotten to hear so much of it in the past six years. Donations are the main source of material for the artifact, photograph, and manuscript collections at ACHS, so thank you to everyone who thinks of us as a potential home for your history. Thank you for thinking of your history at all, and for making the effort to preserve it for the future.

I encourage you all to visit our online collections website, mncollections.org, if you haven't had the chance yet. We're adding new records to it all the time, a project which will definitely continue into the future.

Although I will soon no longer be a staff member with ACHS, I hope to be involved with this organization for many years to come. My new job will require some travel, but I will still be living here in Anoka County, so I'll be around. Once again, my thanks to all my colleagues, and to the volunteers, donors, and members of ACHS for a wonderful six years.

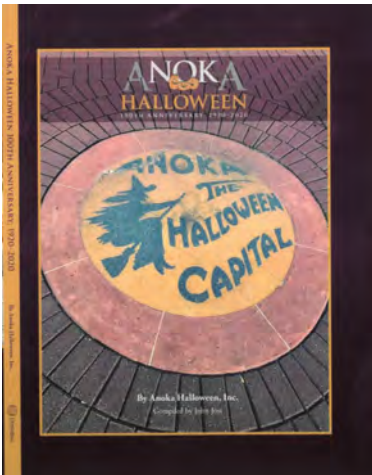
See you around!
Antoinette Giese



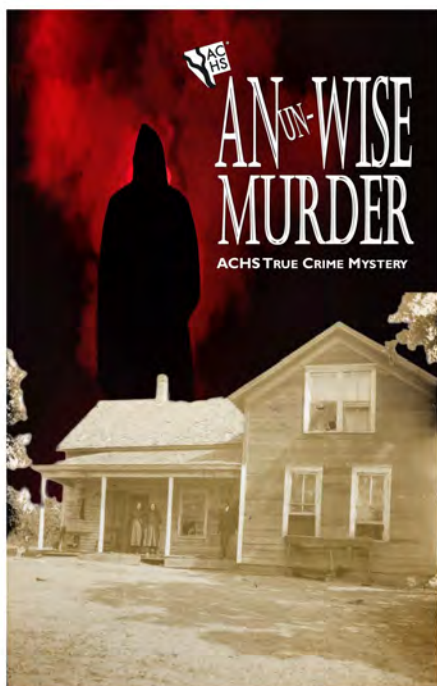


Anoka Halloween
100th Anniversary
1920-2020

Celebrate this centennial milestone with Anoka Halloween by preordering your copy of this historic tome at AnokaHalloween.com Enjoy compiled photos, oral interviews, and many tall tales in this coffee table book.



Anoka Union, Nov. 3, 1920



WHO descended upon the Wise family?

WHY were they victims of a murder most foul?

WHAT are the daughters hiding from the investigation?

Our fundraiser this year looks a little different than normal — but that’s how we roll at the ACHS. Like many non-profits, our budgets and operating style felt a jolt with the onset of Covid-19. We pivoted with it to create a fun and interactive digital TV show all about an Anoka County True Crime Mystery for families to enjoy from the comfort of their home.

A game of cards around the Wise family kitchen table in Grow was cut short in a moment when gunfire exploded through the porch window on May 27, 1900. The daughters, Eliza and Martha, writing letters in the front parlor, ran to fetch help from the neighbors, while their parents and two brothers lay injured and dying.

Watch as the case unfolds using handwritten notes from the prosecuting attorney, transcripts from the court case, the breaking headlines in local newspapers, as well as treasured love letters from a suspect.

On sale now at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Ticket price per household. Enjoy with a watch party at home!

Summer Interns

Hennepin Technical College

Not even a COVID-19 summer could stop our hearty interns from HTC and their fearless leader, Rich Oxley. The group set up socially distanced space in our military gallery, since we're between exhibits at the moment. From that home base, they created "Saturday Showcase" videos of our Clio tour, content using the new touch table software, and recorded testimonials for ACHS social media. See their work on our Facebook page, website, or Vimeo site!



Top: Holly Benson works with intern Dylan Schaufler to record her testimony that will air during the Un-Wise Murder online fundraiser.

Bottom: Dylan navigates the new software, Intuiface, that will power the multi-touch table in the exhibit hall.





In a normal year I would be excitedly talking about the beginning of our 18th Annual **Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour**. . . .and this year is no different! The Ghost Tours are on for 2020, but in a digital format. Now I know what you are thinking. You might have seen *The Ring*, a cautionary horror movie tale of a mysterious video tape that brings trouble to whomever watches it. No worries. Our revamped tour will involve all the same local history and ghostly stories with bonus content that you wouldn't be able to get on a walking tour.

With the help of students from Hennepin Technical College, and our amazing Ghost Tour Guides, the tour will be complete and ready by late September.

How will it work? Purchase your Ghost Tour ticket at AnokaCountyHistory.org. After your purchase, you will receive a link and password providing access to a private video for seven days. You can watch it on your own time, create a family night of fun on the couch, or watch it with flashlights under the covers.

Thank you for joining us on this new adventure of a personal favorite.

Ghosts of Anoka Tour...digital edition.

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

Elaine Alarcon-Totten
Lyle & Jerene
Anderson
Anoka County
Kevin & Patti Bellows
Rosanne Betley
Dave Burns
Terry Eggen
Friends of Fridley
Senior Program
Mike Gamache
Bruce & Karen
Gengnagel
Launa Johnson
Nancy Lambert
Melvin Larson
Jim Plowman & Lynda
Long
Sharron Sandberg
Gregory & Barbara
Ann Smith
Roderick M. Socha
Al & Dawn Springer
Ned Storla
Margaret Ubl
Vickie Wendel
Julienne Wyckoff

Artifact Donors

Abiding Savior
Lutheran Church
Blaine Historical
Society
Diane M. Grinde
Minnesota Streetcar
Museum
Margaret Ubl
Heidi Wyatt

ACHS Sustaining Members

Northeast Bank
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Brian & Allison
Schmitt
Terry Overacker
Plumbing

ACHS Business Members

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



The ACHS Board of Directors has taken up the task of exploring what membership with ACHS means. Please consider helping them by answering the following questions:

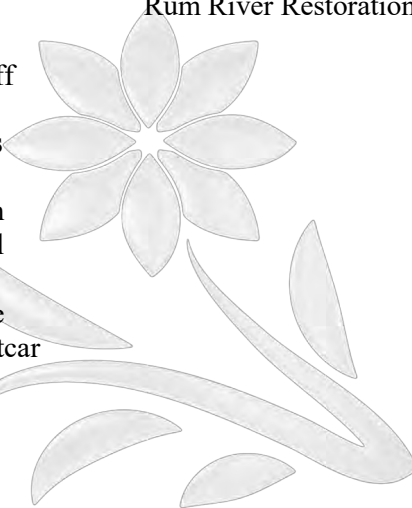
Why did you become a member? Why do you remain a member?

What do you expect for your membership dollars?

What perks of membership would best suit you and your family?

Would you prefer monthly or annual giving? Digital or print content? Long or short programs?

We'd love to hear from you via email (Rebecca@anokacountyhistory.org) or postal mail.



History Center Hours.

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

ACHS Board Meetings

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

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

Anoka County Genealogical Society Meeting

Email questions or suggestions to acgsmn@yahoo.com

ACHS True Crime Mystery: An Un-Wise Murder

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 19

TIME: 7 p.m.

WHERE: Online program with live interaction! Viewing instructions given with ticket purchase at AnokaCountyHistory.org See page 8 for more details.

Proceeds from this fundraiser will help create more digital programming, available free of charge to the schools, residents, and organizations.

Ghosts of Anoka Digital Tour

WHEN: October, 2020

TIME: At your leisure! Once the link is purchased, you may view the program for the remainder of the week.

WHERE: Your phone, living room, kitchen, bedroom...the sky is the limit now that we're digital! Technically, you could even stand on the street corner.

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



Anoka County
Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

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



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE**

PAID

**ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198**



H I S T O R Y 21



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

Board of Directors

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

Staff

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

Table of Contents:

- 3 - Letters from the ACHS
President and Director
- 4 - Understanding Delia
- 8 - ACHS New Mission &
Values Statement
- 10 - We Went LIVE!
- 11 - One Man: Serving in the Navy,
Army & Air Force
- 12 - Ghost Tours 2020
- 13 - Volunteer World:
Our New Procedures
- 15 - Upcoming Events

Front Cover: A pile of sawed lumber in the yard of the Washburn Sawmill, Anoka.

This picture was used in their advertising. Undated.

Object ID: 2057.6.86

From the President

I recently read an African Proverb: “When an Elder dies, it is as if a Library has burnt down”. When I read this, I thought a couple of things... 1) Darn I guess I could be considered an Elder and 2) I think of the stories of my family that are forever lost because I never heard them. We have been talking about how vital it is to capture the stories of the people and families who have called Anoka County “Home”. How important it is to gather them ALL.



The Holidays are approaching and even though for now it’s often virtually, it’s a good time to gather family anecdotes. We developed an oral history questionnaire you can use as a talking guide. Look for old letters and diaries and photos. Share them and talk about them to find out more while those that remember are still here. Oh! How I wish I had paid more attention at family holiday dinners when the toddies and conversation flowed with the memories!

This year make it a family project to decorate your Holidays by documenting the stories! Take the time to wrap yourself in your Family’s History.

Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President



From the Director

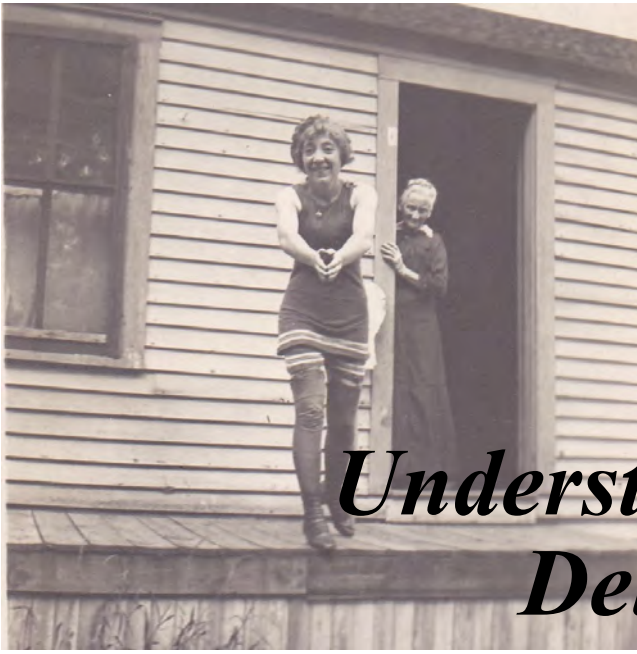
I’m excited for 2021.

We have an amazing opportunity to explore the world of digital programming, video editing, and podcasting. Never before have the stars aligned such that technology, a #HistoryHappensToday mentality, and the public platforms of social media allow organizations like ACHS to self-publish, promote, and survive.

(Google “Question Crunch podcast” or “The Big Scary Show podcast” and see who you find!)

We can do this. We can flourish. Now, more than ever, Anoka County needs local history to document a legacy—the one we’re living every day. What role will you play?

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Understanding Delia

By Daryl Lawrence, ACHS Board of Directors

“Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end! ‘I wonder how many miles I’ve fallen by this time?’ she said aloud. ‘I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth.’” -Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

When was the last time you fell down a historical rabbit hole? It’s always been easy for me to do. Back before the internet, I would reach for a nearby encyclopedia or visit my school library to find a book on something that piqued my interest while reading about something else. Now it’s easier than ever to truly lose yourself in history; I can spend hours clicking through related Wikipedia pages, only to forget how I originally started.

Another corner of the internet that is highly dangerous to a historian’s preconceived notions of time management is Ancestry’s website. Like many, since COVID swept the nation and back to our homes, I found myself with more time to pursue passion projects. One of mine was rounding out my family tree with details I had on paper, but hadn’t been translated to an electronic medium. As with most genealogists, I pay the closest attention to my immediate ancestors; after all, I wouldn’t be here without them. However, I take extra care to tend to those whose line has died out. My stance is there is no one else to

Above: Delia practicing her diving form. Photo Courtesy Daryl Lawrence

take care of documenting their stories, so I need to do it before the details are lost and no more than bland statistics on paper or in a database. Name, date of birth, date of death. It seems so cold and impersonal for people who lived full lives and I take it as a personal mission to help round out their personal histories as much as possible.

It was while I was tending one of the records of this type of ancestor that I saw something odd—a picture. I generally don't upload pictures to Ancestry, as I would rather take a more personal approach and share pictures with those who contact me and are interested, so I knew it wasn't I who had added this picture. In fact, I hadn't seen this picture ever before. For the person in question, I considered myself lucky to have a couple dozen or so pictures of her; she died in 1928, so the fact that more than two dozen snapshots of a person who died so long ago was surprising. I was definitely curious about this, so I clicked and found the user who had uploaded the picture.

“I am doing some work on my family tree (aren't we all?), and I am doing some work on Elmer Olson,” read my message, “I haven't really touched his record at all, but wanted to make sure Delia was marked as his wife. Anyway, that's when I ran across the photo you had uploaded of the two of them and it took me by surprise- as I wasn't aware of anyone else having pictures of them! I'm just reaching out to see how you may be connected and how you have photo of the couple.”

Elmer Olson, my great-great uncle, had outlived his wife by 20 years. Delia had died young, leaving behind Elmer and a seven year old son, Jack. My grandma was born a few years after Delia died, so never met her. She knew Delia well enough to identify



Delia with the students of Glen Carey School, District 57 in Ham Lake. Photo Courtesy Daryl Lawrence

her in pictures, but knew little else aside from that. As I looked at the pictures of Delia, I could feel positive, warm, caring energy emanating from her through the decades. Delia had been a schoolteacher for a local district in Ham Lake and had loved her time with the children; one of the pictures I have of her outside the schoolhouse with students showed her clearly

enjoying being around them. The pictures of her with her husband and son showed her to be affectionate and happy. She's definitely someone I wanted to know more about, but had concluded that I probably just wouldn't.

Months went by and I didn't hear anything from the person I had messaged; not unusual, as Ancestry has a clunky messaging system and one typically doesn't even go on the site unless they are actively engaged in working on research. In the midst of a humid, hot week in July, I was surprised to receive a message back. The mysterious photo uploader was named Nora, and she was Delia's great-niece. Delia was her mother's aunt and while growing up, she heard a lot about Delia from her grandmother, who was Delia's older sister. "*Delia was the most loved of the Sorenson sisters,*" wrote Nora in her first message to me. That was enough for me to be highly interested in what else Nora had available, including some letters and additional pictures.

I felt so fortunate to have a new-found distant cousin (by marriage) who was in the same position as me—the family historian. Both of us had pieces of Elmer, Delia, and Jack's story, and together we were able to piece together what had happened with the family so long ago. Delia suffered from cancer and had battled it for a couple years before succumbing to it in 1928. In her last months, she received treatment at the University of Minnesota; despite fading quickly, she remained upbeat and positive while writing one of her last letters to her mother, dated less than a month before she passed away. The letter was written the day of the 1928 election and Delia pondered not voting that day, as well as asking if her parents had voted. Even as she could no longer hold down food, Delia focused on the positives, "*I will never forget the lovely care I have had here, and for such a long time, too.*" I never knew this side of Delia, or had even seen her handwriting, before Nora scanned and shared it with me. It was a remarkable thing!

Delia and her family, the Sorenson's of Anoka, worked with my family, the Olson's, to ensure young Jack would be taken care of after her death. Nora and I spent quite a few lines of correspondence putting together the



Delia and Elmer.
Photo Courtesy Daryl Lawrence



Delia and her son Jack.
Photo Courtesy Daryl Lawrence

sequence of events, with a little supplemental help from my grandmother, thanks to a phone call I made to her on the subject. Delia and the two families knew Elmer to have a drinking problem, so they landed on a plan whereby Jack would be taken in by Alfred and Minnie Olson, his paternal uncle and aunt, to be raised. Nora translated a letter Delia's mother, Ernestine, had written to her sister in Danish:

“You asked if Delia knew what illness she had. Yes, she knew that for 2 years and knew there was no hope for recovery, but she was always in good spirits. The first year she had to leave her little boy, but she knew that they [Alfred and Minnie] would be good to him, and they promised her that he would go to school and go to high school when he is old enough to go and that is a good thing. We are really happy those people have him and his father can't take him from them.”

From my part, I knew that Jack had received his primary schooling in Ham Lake, and then had gone to live with another aunt and uncle, Emma (Olson) and Melvin Moore in northeast Minneapolis; there was no transportation in Ham Lake to get Jack to Anoka High School in the late 30s, but the Olson's made sure he got the education they promised Delia he would get while she was dying.

By putting together our resources, Nora and I were able to reconstruct what happened as an outcome of two families losing a much-loved member, and how they came together to ensure the protection and education of her only child. Almost a century after she died, Delia's love and care were again known. Although there is no one left who knew her in person, Nora and I know just a bit more about her than anyone has in decades. So jump down that rabbit hole, folks- you never know where you'll end up!

Daryl Lawrence has served on the ACHS Board of Directors for a year. Prior to his election, Daryl worked with the Gather Committee and staff as a volunteer helping to preserve the collections.

ACHS Board of Directors announces refreshed mission statement and new values statement



Facing Change:

Advancing Museum Board
Diversity & Inclusion

For the last two years, ACHS has participated in an initiative called “Facing Change” led by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). This program selected 50 museums from five cities across America ready to concentrate on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) conversations at a governance level.

After attending retreats, meeting with our consultant monthly—then every other week—having discussions off-line with each other, reading, thinking, and analyzing every last word, the Board of Directors unanimously voted to accept new defining language to guide the future of ACHS.

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

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

COVID-19 caught us all off-guard and will continue to change our lives in ways we can't even anticipate yet. At the History Center, we took advantage of the systems we had already moved to the cloud to allow staff to seamlessly work from home. Well, with no printer, it was a little clunky, but nothing we couldn't work around!



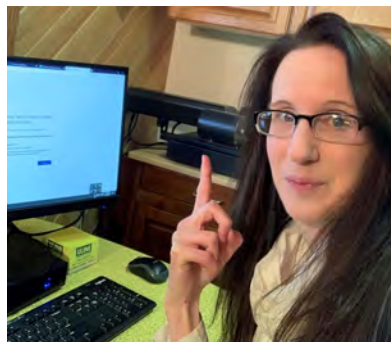
We worked with people remotely, digitized research requests, and created online programming. We applied for grants, received grants, and presented in online conventions. We experimented with new ways to use social media, video editing, and storytelling. We digitized our Ghosts of Anoka Walking Tour. We held an online fundraiser.

Now, more than ever, #HistoryHappensToday.

What ACHS can accomplish in the middle of a historic pandemic, economic crisis, and reimagining of our social system can't be understated. With the right people, tools, and resources, we can document the ongoing story of our changing communities for future generations. We can make the collections more accessible to people of all geographies, age, calendar schedules, and economic means. We can use the internet to gather, curate, and disseminate information in ways not possible even 20 years ago. We can provide some much-needed distraction to the increasingly divisive nature of our society.

Please join in giving the staff of ACHS a standing ovation for the exemplary work they have accomplished recently. We will continue to work hard for you to not only protect the legacy of Anoka County already in our archives, but also the stories yet to come.

By making a financial gift toward our 2020 annual appeal, you will help ACHS close the gap in lost programming revenue from this year. A pledge of any size for 2021 would help the Board of Directors prepare an accurate expenditure budget.



(Above) Staff zoom call Meeting in March. (Below, left) Audra's home office vs Sara's home office (Below, right) with "borrowed" ACHS microfilm machine.



WE WENT LIVE!

Our fundraiser, An Un-Wise Murder, on September 19 streamed LIVE with success. We were proud to share the program with nearly 90 viewers. It was a first foray into a large-scale digital program and we loved the accessibility of being able to share in the fun no matter where you lived. Unlike a traditional event, we can offer the program for On Demand viewing, just like a movie rental on Amazon.

Since COVID-19 cancelled the Annual Meeting on its originally scheduled date in March, we will combine this essential gathering with our annual Holiday party on December 8 at 7 p.m. Join us for an encore viewing of “An Un-Wise Murder”, celebrate ACHS as an organization, and gather with other members virtually via Zoom.

Members will receive an email link on December 1 to attend this event.

WHEN: Tuesday, December 8
TIME: 7 p.m.
WHERE: Zoom—watch for an email with link details Dec. 1



The Korean war broke out in June of 1950 and by July, U.S. troops had entered the war on South Korea's behalf. The war must have been on the minds of Louis LeTendre, Jr. and three of his buddies when, after a night of celebrating at the Apple Inn near Lino Lakes, they decided to join the Navy. The next day they went to Wold-Chamberlain Field (now MSP International Airport) and enlisted. However, after the "celebrating" wore off, they decided they didn't want to be in the Navy. Before they resolved this with the Navy, Louis received a draft notice from the Army in May, 1951 and was soon off to basic training at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Days later the Navy shore patrol arrived at his parent's house looking for him. This was eventually settled, allowing Louis to stay in the Army.



Louis and his fiancée, Mara Lou, had been planning to get married in June of 1951, but now there had to be a change in plans. After Louis completed his basic training, Mara Lou travelled to Georgia and they got married on July 7, 1951 at the No. 10 Chapel at Camp Gordon. Mara Lou had hoped to find work in Georgia until Louis shipped overseas but she couldn't find any so she returned to Minnesota. Louis left for Korea in November of 1951.

While in Korea, Louis sent Mara Lou white silk pajamas with a matching robe and slippers. The pajamas are embroidered with dragons. Mara Lou generously donated this set to the Anoka County Historical Society in 2002.

Although Louis was in the Army, he served with the 440th Signal Battalion attached to the Fifth Air Force, probably part of the SCARWAF (Special Category Army Personnel With The Air Force). Louis has the unusual distinction of having enlisted in the Navy, being drafted by the Army, and serving with the Air Force. He was sent home after a year in Korea in November, 1952.

Louis saved many articles of clothing from his time in Korea and donated them to ACHS in 2002. Most donations of military clothing are limited to the uniforms, but in this case, we also got his socks, belt, garters, knitted gloves, hats, and boots. Also, most unusually, we also received four tank tops in olive drab and two pairs of boxer shorts, one pair in olive drab and the other white. Most people would not have saved such a complete assemblage of clothing, but without people like this we would not have half the items we have in our collections.





A (Mostly) Virtual Anoka Halloween

The need to make our *Ghosts of Anoka Tour* and Halloween exhibits digital this year came with both victories and challenges. In the victory category, we were able to provide digital alternatives of both! Students and faculty of the Hennepin Technical College helped create a fully digital, watch on-demand Ghost Tour, while ACHS staff created virtual galleries of Halloween collectibles hosted on our website.

In the video, seven guides take the viewer on a digital tour of all the familiar places you would go on the traditional walking tour. With the new format, we can share additional information, photographs, and even stories from one of the business owners herself.



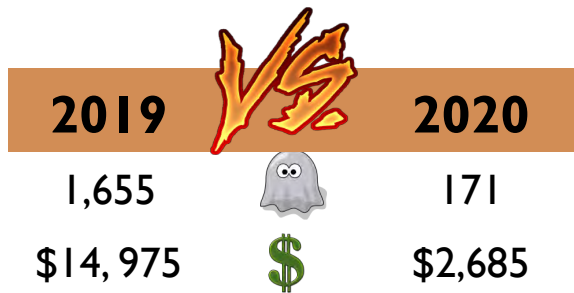
Highly recommended! I watched it last night.

Like · Reply · Message · 19h



2

On the challenge side, digital and limited in person options were not enough to match what the Historical Society was expecting the tours to raise in funds for the museum. The Ghost Tours are the biggest fundraising event of the year, bringing in nearly \$15,000 last year. As we write this, with 11 days to go until Halloween, we have raised only 18% of last year's revenue.



This very visible example of the year no one expected makes our 2021 budgeting exceptionally difficult. ACHS, will rely on the generosity of the public, members, and established donors for funds while we reinvent what it means to preserve history in a post-COVID world. Together, we can succeed!



We're getting the hang of this!

As volunteers start to come in more regularly to the museum to work on projects again, we are figuring out our new systems together. Jane, upper right, comes in on Thursday's to help tackle research requests we receive through our website, but also people who come to visit the building in (masked) person. Dave, upper left, has resumed wading through photographs or slides from potential donations to the museum. In this set are images of St. Francis High School homecoming from the early 1960s. After Dave scans them, he will create records in our database and they will be available for others to search and view. Expect to see our favorites on your go-to social media. 😊

Each volunteer organized their schedule with me, for a 2 or 4 hour shift, and have a dedicated work station while at the museum that is separated and distanced from any other work space. While they work hard, Cindy oversees the front desk and makes her rounds at the top of every hour to sanitize work stations and bathrooms as needed. After volunteer shifts of work, we reset, give it a spritz and wipe down and do it all over again. It may be hard to see in the photographs, but I have assurances that all three are smiling behind their masks.

Right now our volunteer program is set at trickle—and that's ok. We don't have the capacity to handle drop-ins, or play like we have in the past. But I keep thinking about all those rocks that have been worn away and moved with just a trickle of water. The key is to concentrate our efforts.



So that's what we're doing—becoming the OJ Concentrate of volunteering. We'll get back to being juice when we have room in the fridge.

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

American Legion Edward B. Cutter
Post 102
Dick & Helen Bennett
Richard Bergling
Karen Davis
Alan Hansen
Lynne Hansen
Veronica Johnson
Karen & Don Johnson
Alison Marzolf
Janet Meyer
Mary & Scott Nolan
Stephen & Marilyn Perry
Thomas & Kristi Sullivan
Patricia H. Theobald
Wesley & Cheryl Volkenant

Artifact Donors

Abiding Savior Lutheran Church
Dick Bennett
Tony Bolander
Diane Grinde
John Jost
David Larson
Barbara Reichel

ACHS Sustaining Members

Northeast Bank
Robyn West
Roof Medics, LLC
Brian & Allison Schmitt
Terry Overacker Plumbing

ACHS Business Members

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



NOTE FROM ACHS:

We would like to extend our most heartfelt and sincere condolences to the Pearson family of Ramsey who are members and volunteers at ACHS. They recently suffered a personal loss in a very public search for a missing relative.

As the holiday season approaches and 2020 draws to a close, we take this space to offer you and your community strength and healing for the next challenge.

**M
O
N
T
H
L
Y**

History Center Hours.

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

ACHS Board Meetings

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

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

ACHS Holiday Party Annual Meeting

WHEN: Tuesday Dec. 8

TIME: 7 p.m.

WHERE: Zoom program. Link sent to members via email Dec. 1 or upon request.

We're hiring!

While saying goodbye to Audra as our Archivist, Curator, and Collections Manager still doesn't feel real, we want to welcome a new face to the position soon. Please spread the word that we're hiring, directing anyone interested to our website or Zip Recruiter to discover the job posting.

The Anoka County Historical Society will close the first week in November to recognize the dedication of staff during the first six months of COVID-19.

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



Anoka County
Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory

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



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE**

PAID

**ANOKA, MINN.
PERMIT No. 198**

