



ANOKA COUNTY Historical Society

2009 Annual Report

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www.ac-hs.org

Anoka County Historical Society 2009 Annual Report

Executive Director's Summary



Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour
Sunday,
July 12, 2009
1:00pm to 5:00pm

A highlight of the summer, the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour features open house tours of some of the city's most beautiful and historic homes and some of its most well-tended gardens. Raffle prizes will be given away by local businesses on the tour. For more information on the tour and the homes participating, visit www.achs.org or call us at 763-421-0600.

Hosted by:
Anoka County Historical Society

With a FREE one-night stay at participating hotels, Bed and breakfasts in All local businesses are participating. Call 763-421-0600 for details.

Tour all sites for only **\$13**

Proudly Sponsored by:

- Thompson's
- Anoka County Historical Society
- Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission
- St. John's Lutheran Church
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church
- The Christian HR Neighborhood
- PLANT'S FRIENDS
- Dennis Gardens
- ANOKA GARDENS
- The Weaver Family

A favorite community event each summer, the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour is a partnership between ACHS and the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission. The 2009 tour featured homes in Anoka's Swede Town and the Historic Van Buren District.

2009 was a year of continued success for the Anoka County Historical Society (ACHS). We continued our commitment to serving the entire county with our active slate of programs and events. The Historical Society celebrated its 75th year, and we celebrated this by dedicating a major portion of staff time to a project that addressed our extensive object collection. In late 2008, we began the process of going through each of our shelves and boxes in the collection and combing through our electronic database to provide better identification and information to the collection. The project culminated in November of 2009.

In addition to the collections project, the ACHS membership voted to make changes to the bylaws. The changes were approved at a meeting of the membership in February. To most outsiders, the changes will not be noticed, but they allow us as an organization to have longer terms of leadership from the board of directors.

In May, we held a successful fundraiser for the Historical Society's endowment fund. The event was a recognition dinner for former Anoka County Commissioner Al Kordiak. It was just as successful at raising money for the endowment as it was in raising friends for the Historical Society. It was a wonderful evening of sharing history and putting the Historical Society and its good work in front of the community.

We also said goodbye to an annual event with the final Harvest Time Barn Dance in October. This annual fundraiser has been held for six years. It has been a good event, but we are going to freshen up our fundraising with a new event that we expect will be just as popular as the barn dance. Look for more information as 2010 develops.

We closed out the year by opening a new exhibit that featured unique and interesting stories from the collection. The idea was to pull out items from the collection that may not fit into a larger exhibit. We took the opportunity to create a recording booth that allows us to capture even more oral histories for the collection. Visitors to the gallery can take a few moments to record their own Anoka County stories.

We're looking forward to a successful 2010. A top priority is to explore the phenomenon of suburban development in Anoka County and the profound impact that it has had on the county and the entire region. The new Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund is an exciting new potential revenue stream for the Society and for the statewide history community. Exciting times lie ahead in 2010, but first let's review 2009.

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Fundraising and Organizational Development

Donations

The economy's continued struggles make fundraising a difficult task. All things considered, we still did quite well and are grateful for the support of donors at all levels. We raised just over \$45,000 in private donations in 2009.

New to our fundraising schedule in 2009 was a recognition dinner for former Anoka County Commissioner Al Kordiak. On May 14, we gathered at the Courtyards of Andover and honored the retired commissioner for his many decades of public service. The evening doubled as a fundraiser for the Society's endowment fund. The event raised nearly \$10,000.

From people rounding up a couple of bucks on photocopy orders in the research library, individual donations during our end of the

year appeal, and much needed support from local service clubs, donations came in all forms. These diverse sources of funding give us greater flexibility in the current uncertain economic times. They also validate the mission of the organization and our to conduct it.

Attendance at our Harvest Time Barn Dance was down for the second year in a row, which affected the amount we raised through the auctions. However, it was still a good year for the event and we grossed about \$10,700. We have decided to try something new for our fundraising event this fall. We are grateful for our friends and members for their continued support of the Historical Society and hope they will join us for a new event this year.

Membership

384 memberships were taken out or renewed in 2009, representing 545 individuals (taking into account couples and household memberships). We have 60 household memberships, 78 individuals, 244 senior memberships, and 2 student members. Members of ACHS receive our bi-monthly newsletter, free admission to the History Center galleries, and discounts on merchandise and some ACHS events.

Our membership revenues, totaling nearly \$5,500 in 2009, are one of our most reliable sources of income. Many of our members choose to contribute funds above and beyond their annual dues over the course of the year. At the end of the year, the ACHS Board of Directors decided to offer an e-membership at a discounted cost rate. While it's not for everyone, e-members can receive their newsletter and other ACHS correspondence via e-mail.

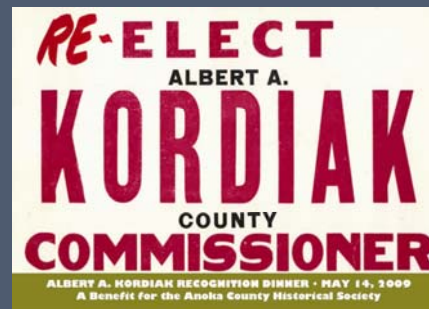
Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Last year over 90 individuals volunteered about 3,550 hours with ACHS. The fact of the matter is, not all of our volunteers report all of the hours they donate, so we know we are doing even better than our records indicate.

To give you an idea of how important this is, the number of recorded hours in 2009 is nearly the equivalent of two full-time staff members. Last year, our volunteers increased our capacity to fulfill our mission by nearly fifty percent. Projects that couldn't

have happened without volunteer efforts include entering and maintaining records into our electronic databases, conducting and transcribing valuable oral histories, conducting research and writing for our newsletter and newspaper column, handling and organizing our objects collections, providing guided tours, and helping staff large events.

Some of us have a greater capacity to give financially, but we all have the same number of hours in the day. We extend a special thanks to those who give their gift of time.



On May 14, ACHS held the Albert A. Kordiak Recognition Dinner as a fundraiser for the endowment. We raised nearly \$10,000 with the event through sponsorships and donations.

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Representatives from the Anoka County Board of Commissioners, Anoka County Library, and Anoka County Historical Society at the dedication ceremony of the new reference collection at the Anoka County History Center. From left to right: Commissioner Dan Erhart, Commissioner Dennis Berg, ACL Board Chair Cathy Montain, ACHS Executive Director Todd Mahon, ACL Board member Jane Daniels, and ACL Executive Director Marlene Moulton Janssen.

Building and Facilities

Facilities

Since 2002, ACHS has called the Anoka County History Center and Library in Anoka our home. The building, owned by the City of Anoka, is leased to the Historical Society for \$1 per year. ACHS takes its role as a tenant and caretaker very seriously and has made hundreds of thousands of dollars in improvements to the building, most of this through a capital campaign that raised \$700,001.

We made a major commitment to the improvement of the building and our intention towards it with the installation of a new boiler system. \$75,000 was spent to replace the original boiler. The project was finished just as the heating season began at the end of 2009. We are seeing an immediate and positive impact on our energy consumption.

In 2005 and 2006, ACHS tackled an issue with the bricks on the

exterior of the building. The baked surface of several hundred bricks had flaked off, exposing the more absorbent core. After spending a significant amount of money to replace the bricks, we are finding that we have merely treated a symptom for a larger problem. In 2008, ACHS entered discussions with the City of Anoka to further address the situation. The result was an agreement to share the cost of an engineer to test the brick, identify the root of the problem, and propose a solution moving forward.

Last year, ACHS and the City contracted with a structural engineering firm to investigate the causes of and solutions for the problem. The good news is that we seem to have addressed the cause, but the final fix to the damage done still needs to be addressed. We will work on this throughout 2010.

Circulating Library

We continued our great relationship with the Anoka County Library (ACL) in 2009. ACHS hosted a deposit collection of approximately 750 books from the ACL in the reading room of the Anoka County History Center and Library. In addition to the deposit collection, the History Center provides an assortment of periodicals for our patrons and two public access Internet terminals.

In 2009, 2,141 books, tapes, and other library items were reserved, charged, or renewed at our facility. Use of our public Internet terminals went up over eleven percent with 4,440 users served. In total, over 8,849 people utilized our library services.

More notably, ACHS and ACL made a significant change to collection. Until December of 2009, ACL's deposit collection at the History Center consisted of popular adult fiction and

children's books that would be checked out to anyone with a valid Anoka County Library card. To help alleviate the financial stress on the ACL, we jointly elected to remove the circulating collection and replaced it with a non-circulating reference collection that focuses on regional interests, genealogy, and collections. The ACL books at the History Center can no longer be checked out. However, we continue to serve as a pick-up and drop-off location, meaning that materials from other ACL locations can be sent to the History Center for pick-up and any ACL materials can be returned at our location.

We are pleased to have this strong relationship with the County Library and are excited to see where this new phase in our relationship takes us.

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Preserving Your History

ACHS Artifact Collection

In November, the Historical Society concluded a major collection documentation project that began in the fall of 2008. At that time, ACHS began the process of providing better and more accurate identification of our three dimensional object collection including physical descriptions, donor information, and the object's history—also known as its provenance. While there are nearly 16,500 objects in our electronic database, nearly 2,000 of them had incomplete records, meaning their origins were unknown.

ACHS staff and volunteers, led by Marilyn Anderson and Vickie Wendel, began a lengthy process of physically separating these objects from the rest of the collection. Once this was done, we combed over the existing records and matched as many objects to their matching records. In some cases the accession number was found hidden inside the seam of a garment, or in an otherwise previously unseen spot. In other cases we only had information on the donor, but no idea if the object had any direct relationship to Anoka County. Old board minutes, going back 75 years, were consulted.

The end result was we were able to provide new and updated information to hundreds of records. Some items were never identified and were deaccessioned from the collection by the board of directors. In all 1,070 items, from 369 records, were

deaccessioned. These included empty frames, unidentified tools, furniture, and more that was never intended for the collection but was instead donated for use by the staff.

All the while, ACHS kept its membership and the public informed and involved in the process. We take our role as guardians of the county's history seriously and understand that it requires the public's trust. We wanted to keep everyone aware of what we were doing and used the project as a way to educate them about what we collect and how we care for it. We received great support from our membership on this project and are proud of the way we handled it.

In addition to this project, we continued to collect and acquire objects, photographs, and documents that tell Anoka County's history. 1,356 items were received or updated in our archival collection. 381 objects were added from 81 accessioned lots. 535 photos were added to or updated in the database.

The items in ACHS's collection are a direct connection to Anoka County's past. They tell the story of how the county was founded, how it was lived in, and help us to understand how the Anoka County of the past became the Anoka County of today.



Executive Director Todd Mahon interviews Jerry Mimbach about his record breaking kayak trip on the ACHS/Quad Cities Television program *It's Your History*. A new show is broadcast each month.

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Preserving Your History (cont.)

Events/Programming/Outreach



June Anderson, one of our volunteer Ghosts of Anoka tour guides, stands in front of an 1883 home featured on the tour. Over 1,300 people went on a ghost tour during 2009.

Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour

For the sixth year, ACHS partnered with the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission to offer the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour. The 2009 tour featured Anoka's Historic Van Buren District and Swede Town. Just north of Main Street, this is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and was settled, as the name suggests, by Swedish immigrants. There were 20 stops on this year's tour, including National Register or Historic Places sites. Over 320 tickets were sold for the event.

Walking Tours

2009 saw continued growth and success for our Ghosts of Anoka walking tours. This tour of Anoka neighborhoods, highlighted by spooky and unexplained tales of things that go bump in the night, is the perfect program for the "Halloween Capital of the World." Tours were given to over 1,300 people. These tours are an important source of revenue for ACHS and are great fun for those on the tour. In 2009, we raised just over \$8,600 from ticket sales.

Monuments to Life Cemetery Tours

Our Monuments to Life cemetery tours brought us to three Anoka County communities in 2009. Forest Hill Cemetery in Anoka, Joyce Chapel Cemetery in Coon Rapids, and East Bethel Cemetery in East Bethel were featured in these tours that highlight the lives and accomplishments of many of its inhabitants—from the prominent to the every day.

It's Your History Television Program

For the fifth consecutive year, ACHS partnered with Quad Cities Television to produce the monthly show *It's Your History*. Hosted by Executive Director Todd Mahon, the programs have included interviews with Anoka County personalities and their perspectives

on county history, basic preservation techniques, topical selections from the collections, and genealogical research tips from the Anoka County Genealogical Society. These 30-minute programs are broadcast on QCTV's stations in Andover, Anoka, Ramsey, and Champlin and are offered for broadcast to other Anoka County stations. The program can also be viewed on QCTV's web site at www.qctv.org. 2009 programs featured segments on a world-record making kayak trip by two Anoka County men, the history of Nowthen amateur baseball, tips on caring for family heirlooms, and much more.

Exhibitions

Two exhibitions opened in the History Center's galleries in 2009. In July, we opened the second exhibit in our series on Anoka County's musical heritage. *How Can I Keep From Singing* focuses on the choral and musical theater traditions from the county. It is a rich collection of photographs, costumes, and recordings from the county's singing past. We were extremely fortunate to have access to cast recordings from the Anoka Opera company to include in the exhibit. The exhibit opened during Anoka's Riverfest celebration. Players from Lyric Arts' production of *Meet Me in St. Louis* performed select numbers from the musical.

In December we opened the exhibit *Tell Me A Story*. It features vignettes of unique objects and their stories. Among the stories featured are Catherine Grimshaw Murray's Bethlehem Star Quilt. The quilt features over 3,500 individual pieces and was handed down through the generations before it was donated to the ACHS. Also featured is a Hessian drum from the American Revolutionary War. The story of how the drum found its way to Anoka County and its role in helping the Historical Society into its current home is told.

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Closing Remarks

2009 was a year to welcome new faces, and recognize some of those who have been with us and supported us for many years. We are extremely fortunate at ACHS to have such great friends in the community and within our organization that provide us with unfailing support. Their belief in us and the work that we do is an affirmation of our mission to preserve and interpret Anoka County's history.

New Board Members

Bill Erhart and Harvey Greenberg were elected to the board of directors in 2009. Bill brings much needed skills to the board with his long career as an attorney. Harvey is the owner of Greenberg Implement in Nowthen and has been a supporter of ACHS and its mission for several years. Greenberg Implement has been serving the farmers of Anoka County and the surrounding region since his father, Albin Greenberg, started the company in 1938. Both Bill and Harvey have jumped right in and are doing great work on the board.

New Writers for Anoka County Union Weekly Column

In 2008, Sharron Stockhausen retired from writing her weekly column for *Anoka County Union* on behalf of ACHS. In 2009, we settled on a rotating group of authors that include June Anderson, Holly Broden, Ryan Dawson, and Jeanine Pratt. These four talented writers took over in the spring after Randy Getchel authored the column for the first three months of the year.

Albert A. Kordiak Recognition Dinner

In May, we worked with former Anoka County commissioner Al Kordiak and his family to hold a fundraiser for ACHS's endowment fund. The event was a wonderful opportunity for ACHS to put itself

in front of a large group of influential people who had a large impact on the county's history and were receptive to our mission. It was a wonderful evening with many great stories. We want to thank the Kordiak family, the event sponsors, and all of the evening's presenters for making it a great success.

Vickie Wendel Celebrates 20 Years With ACHS

At the Harvest Time Barn Dance, ACHS took a few moments to recognize our longest tenured employee when we thanked Vickie Wendel for her twenty years of service. Vickie started her careers with the Historical Society in September of 1989 when we were housed in Colonial Hall.

Vickie has served in many capacities at the historical society in those twenty years. For many people, she is the most recognizable face at the Historical Society. She does many of our public programs and produces our exhibitions.

Vickie was also directly involved with the two awards we received from the American Association of State and Local History in 2004 and 2007. The 2004 award was shared with the City of Anoka for the interpretive signs put along the Rum River walking trails. The 2007 award was for the exhibition *Vietnam: The Veteran's Experience*.

Military and veterans history are close to Vickie's heart. She has been a wonderful liaison for ACHS with the local veterans community. Her efforts to work with them have reaped wonderful benefits for the Historical Society and our mission. We hope for twenty more years with Vickie!



Program Manager Vickie Wendel celebrated 20 years with the Anoka County Historical Society in 2009.



Members of the Anoka County Historical Society's Board of Directors at the Harvest Time Barn Dance. From left to right: Paul Pierce, Bill Erhart, Jan Anderson, Dick Johnson, Patti Kurak, Marilyn Anderson (recorder), Barb Thurston (Anoka County Genealogical Society Liaison), Dan Frank, Judy Hanna, Lori Yager, Catherine Vesley, Tom Sherohman, and Ray Steinke (past president).

**2009 figures shown are from ACHS's internal records and have not been subjected to an independent audit.*



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Financial Report

BALANCE SHEET	12/31/2009	12/31/2008	12/31/2007	12/31/2006
ASSETS				
Total Current Assets	449,834	489,638	527,614	394,628
Total Fixed Assets	<u>244,281</u>	<u>231,038</u>	<u>244,280</u>	<u>263,839</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	694,685	720,676	771,894	658,467
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Total Liabilities	164	3,741	1,950	1,950
Total Equity	<u>694,685</u>	<u>716,935</u>	<u>769,944</u>	<u>656,517</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	694,685	720,676	771,894	658,467
INCOME STATEMENT				
Total Support & Revenue	286,467	187,638	278,133	336,765
Total Expense	<u>318,989</u>	<u>240,647</u>	<u>249,706</u>	<u>245,127</u>
NET	(32,523)	(53,009)	28,427	91,638
REVENUE SOURCES (Gross)				
Anoka County—general	118,298	57,000	167,000	107,120
Other grants	-	-	8,000	13,400
Donations	15,300	19,920	26,787	17,908
Endowment Contributions	-	-	-	-
Special Events	30,349	18,879	21,504	78,534
Library Services	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Admissions	2,613	1,084	1,430	1,380
Fees	2,010	2,863	3,781	5,080
Memberships	5,438	5,267	5,828	5,642
Rental income	7,200	7,200	7,200	7,200
Interest income	1,083	11,878	12,746	11,577
Other income	28,196	3,547	8,857	8,944
TOTAL	286,467	187,638	363,133	336,765