

Transcending Time

CARVER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

31/3 : Summer, 2010

In Memory of Ted and Leona Grivelli

On January 28, 2010, Leona H. Grivelli a former Norwood Young America resident, passed away. Leona was preceded in death by her husband Theodore (Ted). The Grivellis were long term supporters of the Carver County Historical Society. As a result, a portion of Mrs. Grivelli's estate was left to the historical society to help fulfill its mission of collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of Carver County.

In honor of the Grivelli's commitment to learning, the funds bequeathed to the organization have been designated in the following manner according to their wishes:

- A new microfilm machine for the library. The ScanPro 2000 is the newest in genealogy research. It will allow patrons to view microfilm not previously visible. The machine has been ordered and will be available for use in the next 30 days.
- \$6,000 to finish the Veterans Gallery.
- \$4,000 to sponsor the Carver County school programs for two school years. This means that there will be no cost for school programs in 2010-2012!
- \$5,000 for shelving to house the CCHS collections.
- \$25,000 will be added to the endowment fund to ensure the perpetuity of the Carver County Historical Society.

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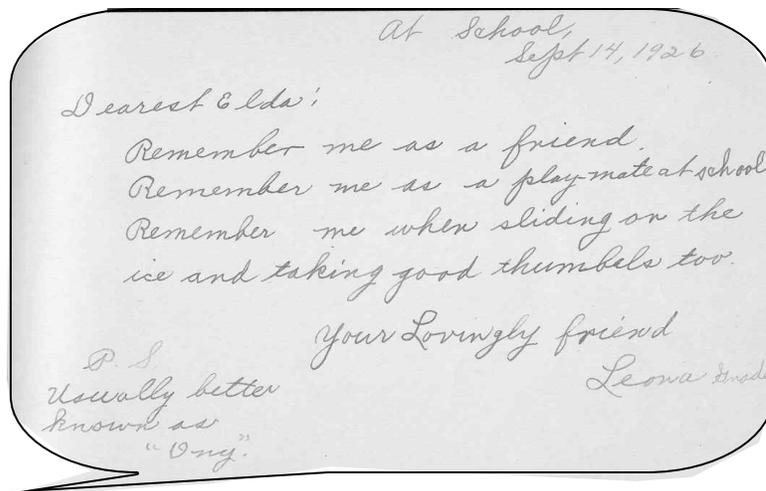
Target Grant

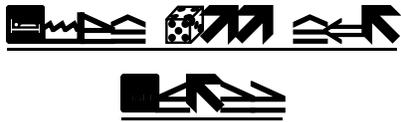
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Membership Update & Donations

Elda Will's
memory book 1926

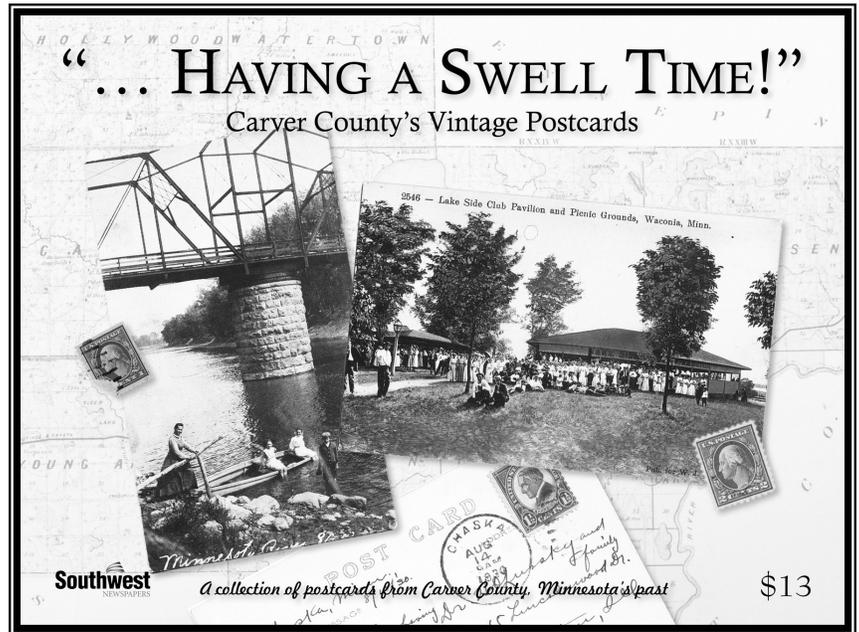
Central School NYA





“...Having a Swell Time!: Carver County’s Vintage Postcards” is a 96-page, soft-cover pictorial of more than 200 penny postcards that were produced to show off local scenes and people around 1900.

The book includes postcards from Bongard, Carver, Chanhassen, Chaska, Cologne, Hamburg, Mayer, New Germany, Norwood Young America, Victoria, Waconia, Watertown, and points in between. The cards depict scenic views, local schools and churches, community celebrations, downtowns, local people and many other interesting topics. Some of the messages penned on the back of the penny postcards are also displayed in the book.



The book is available from the Carver County Historical Society in Waconia or Southwest Newspapers in Shakopee, which publishes the Chanhassen Villager and Chaska Herald, among other publications. Credit-card and mail orders are accepted by calling Southwest Newspapers at (952) 445-3333 during weekday business hours. Cost is \$13, plus \$3 for shipping and handling, if applicable. Member discount is only available at the CCHS.

Now Showing

***The Chanhassen Dinner Theatres:
42 Years of Magic***

This limited time exhibit features the history of the Chanhassen Dinner Theatres and how the development of the theatres impacted the City of Chanhassen. The exhibit is fun, child friendly and free to the public.

Contact the Carver County Historical Society at 952-442-4234 for more information.

The Orphan Train

Wendy Petersen Biorn



Lillian, about age 10

It all started with a quilt. The Carver County Historical Society library researcher, Marlene Magnuson, attended a program by Ann Zemke who used quilts to tell the story of her grandmother. Ann's grandmother, Marjorie (Lind) Peterson arrived in Minnesota via the Orphan Train. Marjorie's story made me wonder if there was a Carver County Orphan Train rider. The story begins.....

New York City in 1830 was at best an immigrant Mecca, at worse a miserable place to live. In 1835, New York City claimed the title of the United States' largest city with a population of 202,589. By 1850, the Irish Potato Famine resulted in a huge influx of Irish immigrants increasing the city's population to 515,547 with one quarter of these people of Irish descent.

Thousands of homeless and/or neglected children roamed the streets in search of money, food and shelter. For protection against street violence, the children banded together to form gangs. Children as young as five were arrested and placed in jail alongside adults as there wasn't a juvenile system in place. The volume of children on the street made a huge impression on a young minister named Charles Loring Brace. Brace wrote, "The great duty is to get (children) utterly out of their surroundings and to send them away to kind Christian homes in the country." Brace raised money, arranged trips and obtained the legal permissions to find new homes for the children. The Children's Aid Society, a predecessor of the current foster care system, worked with children ages five and older. Brace's goal was to place children in Midwest farm families far away from the dangers of New York City. Some children would be adopted, others would remain indentured.

Children under the age of five were taken to The Foundling Asylum of the Sisters of Charity which was run by Mary Irene Fitzgibbon and a small group of Sisters in Greenwich Village. The Foundling Asylum was started in 1869 to care for the large numbers of abandoned children, in the wake of the Civil War. An infant could be anonymously left in a basket at the doorstep. The parent could simply ring a bell and leave. Within four months, 123 babies had been delivered into the Sisters' care.

Both organizations sent children on The Orphan Train. The train, which operated between 1854 and 1929, was the brainchild of Brace. It is estimated that more than 150,000 orphaned, abandoned and homeless children were transported from New York City to 47 of the 48 continental states. One of those states was Minnesota.

The research for an Orphan Train rider began with a trip to the Carver County Historical Society newspaper index. April 11, 1889, Carver Free Press: "A contingent of orphan children from New York City arrived in this state recently. Gerhard Niehaus (Waconia) brought four of them into this county, adopting a bright little girl in his family. The others were distributed to families in the neighborhood." The Waconia Patriot carried Niehaus' obituary on May 2, 1913. "His aged wife and two adopted daughters, Lillian and Anna besides a vast number of friends are left to mourn his demise." A newspaper search for Lillian yielded a marriage to Edward Schraan in 1906, the death of Schraan in 1909 and a second marriage to Joseph Meier of Plato in 1915.



Lillian as a young lady



At this point, with Lillian Meier having moved out of the county, our trail would have gone cold if it hadn't been for Marlene looking in the Crow River Area Phone Book. On a hunch, I called the phone number Marlene found for Mr. Willard Meier and talked to his wife Virginia. After a wonderful conversation Virginia referred me to Eileen Meier Sherrit, Lillian's daughter. From Eileen and her daughter Jill, I learned that Lillian had memories of her siblings and her parents, who were performers. She arrived in Minnesota wearing a maroon dress with a note attached. On this note was her given name, Elizabeth Kenny and her birthdate, Christmas day, 1884. Sometime between 1884 and 1887 Lillian's birth parents were killed in a buggy accident and she and her siblings went to live with their grandmother. By early

1887, Lillian's birth grandmother was unable to care for the children, necessitating the need to turn them over to the Foundling Asylum. She was four when she was placed on the Orphan Train headed to Minnesota. Lillian was a quilter and following her death in 1979, daughters Marcella and Eileen donated two quilts to the museum at the —Carver County Historical Society! Gerhard Niehaus and his wife Anna formally adopted Elizabeth, whom they renamed Lillian. They also legally adopted their second child, Anna Baesler who was born in 1866 in Waconia. Anna's birth parents were Henry and Ludwina Baesler.

Upon returning to the museum in Waconia, Larry Hutchings, our curator, confirmed the donation of the two quilts, both floral appliqué. It is interesting to note that my search for a local Orphan Train rider started with the story of another rider told through a quilt and ended with finding a quilt made Lillian Niehaus!

Minnesota became the first state to have a yearly state reunion of Orphan Train riders on July 1, 1961. The reunion moved from state to state and with each move the name of the reunion changed. The first group was known as "Reunion of the orphans coming from the New York Foundling Hospital, New York Foundling Group, New York Foundling Orphans." The last name change was in 2005 when the reunion name was changed to the "(Minnesota) Orphan Train Riders from New York." Minnesota will hold the 50th Orphan Train reunion this September. Numbers are far from exact, but reunion organizers are aware of six Minnesota riders still alive and 140 nationwide. It is estimated that there are four million descendants of the riders.

If you are, or know someone who was, an Orphan Train rider, we would love to hear from you. Lillian was one of four children who came to Waconia and accounts note that siblings were often kept together. Wouldn't it be wonderful we could locate the children Lillian came with and by some act of God; they were in fact Lillian's siblings?

For more information and to watch the PBS special *The Orphan Trains*, visit the PBS website:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan/>

Additional information can be found at: http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/childrensaidsociety_at.html

<http://orphantrainridersofminnesota.com/>



llama

all ages family day trip

saturday
Oct.
9th
10am — 2pm

- Groom, lead and hike with a llama
- Race in a llama relay
- Experience lots of hands-on llama time
- Pack a picnic lunch on a llama's back
- Learn the history of llamas
- Explore the Adopt—a—Llama program
- Discover a great new 4—H program
- Enjoy fall colors around a campfire
- Meet a local llama farmer

Are you a member of the Carver County Historical Society?
 Registration fee: **FREE!**
 Not a member?
 Join today and save \$20 on the price of your trip!
 Registration fee: **\$20/family**



Target Grant Received



The Carver County Historical Society is proud to announce that it is the recipient of a \$2000 Target grant. The grant will be used to pay for bus transportation between Carver County schools and the CCHS to view the Smithsonian Institution Exhibit, Journey Stories. Journey Stories will be at the CCHS between December 11 and January 22, 2011. This is a free event and has been made possible at the Carver County Historical Society by the Minnesota Humanities Council. While there is no admission fee for this program, groups of 10 or more are encouraged to call for reservations.

952-442-4234

Special Thanks to CCHS donors, New and Renewing Members

Memorials in memory of Emmy Therres

Ms. Val Barlau
Mr. & Mrs. Kelsey Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Willis Loose
Ms. Charisse Schlueter
Mrs. Dianne Strandberg
Mr. Leonard Therres

Annual Fund Drive Donations

General Mills Foundation Gift
Matching Program –Erna Bachtold
Gene Krey
Maddy Schalow
Jim & Rita Zrust

Other Donations

At The Farm – heirloom vegetables and
annuals
Florinda Kelzer Buntrock - The
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Richard Kubs – The Civil War Catalog
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pot
McLeod Cooperative Power – 75 Years
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McLeod Cooperative Power
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Marilu Peters & Elizabeth Biersdorf–
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Photos of Sofie Wittsack
Lois Schulstad – Unpuzzling Your Past
Terry Stodola – Memories of WWII –
83rd Infantry
Marcia Tellers – 1897 Village of Benton
plat map

Veterans Gallery Donations

Kenneth & Keith Kohls
John Varone

New Members

Greg & Debbie Boe – Chaska
Daniel Klein – Chaska
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Shirley Beckman – Chanhassen
Walter Benjamin – Chanhassen
Alice Brose English – Chanhassen
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Do you have a Yearbook lying around?

Yearbooks are hard to collect. People are reluctant to donate the books because of the memories they hold. After a person passes, the books are the first thing the estate throws away, thinking they are worthless. While they may have no monetary value, their historical value is priceless. They are used for research and documenting the community. Donations of year books from all cities and years in Carver County. would be gratefully appreciated.



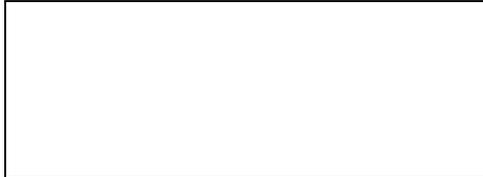
CARVER COUNTY

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E-mail: historical@co.carver.mn.us

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Permit 17
Waconia, MN

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Museum & Library Hours

Mon.-Fri., 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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CARVER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Senior Citizen \$10.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family \$25.00
- Sustaining \$50.00
- Please send a gift membership to the name below. I understand a letter will be sent to the recipient announcing my gift.
- Please accept my donation of _____ toward your annual fund drive.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Gift Membership to: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

The Carver County Historical Society is a non-profit organization supported by memberships and contributions from county residents, business, and government. All members receive *Transcending Time*, this newsletter.

