I Love a Parade!

A parade can happen anywhere. It can be casual, formal, somber, ceremonial, or even grand. Whatever the tone of the event, one thing is certain, parades have been going on since the beginning of time! Most people remember certain historical events because there was a parade that marked the occasion: the end of a war, the death of a president or the celebration of a special anniversary are a few examples of events that people will always remember. In the United States, the flag usually leads the procession. On-lookers stand at attention while it passes and reflect upon what the flag means to them. What historic events do you remember being celebrated with a parade?

Can you help us identify this parade photo from the MCHS archives?

This wagon & buggy parade shows several children strolling down Main Street in Austin, Minnesota dressed in their best clothes. What was this celebration about? Can you help MCHS identify this event?
A Theatrical Passion
By Randal J. Forster, Executive Director- MCHS

As some of you know, I have an extreme passion for the Theatre. When I am not at the Historical Society, you will probably find me at the Frank W. Bridges Theatre. For the past few years, I have also had the privilege of serving as the Co-Executive Director of Summerset Theatre. This past June, Summerset Theatre kicked off its 52nd Season with the production of Disney’s The Little Mermaid, which I had the privilege of directing. Soon Mamma Mia! will come to life on the stage.

As I was going through some old photographs at the Historical Society, I came across one in particular that I found interesting. No one really knows for sure what show the group of young thespians were putting on at the time, however they seemed to have some great costumes for their production.

When I found this photo, I immediately thought of the rich history that theatre plays in our society. This group of young actors worked together to make something special for an audience to enjoy. Most likely, they memorized their lines and worked to develop a “character” that they were trying to portray. They sewed costumes, fancied their hair and even applied some make-up to their faces all so they could experience the art of putting on a show. It left me wondering a few things. What were they thinking about as they sat to pose for the camera? Was this the first play they had ever done? Did they make new friendships that would last a lifetime?

Whenever I am involved with a production, I always learn something new and I always meet new people. I often think about how brave everyone was to try something new, especially if performing on the stage was a new experience. How will this experience now become part of their personal history?

Hopefully they will remember it for a lifetime!
NEW Pillars of the City

The latest Pillars of the City were unveiled on July 3, 2019 at a special ceremony held during Freedom Fest at Bandshell Community Park.

Gertrude Ellis Skinner  November 12, 1865 – March 26, 1960

After graduating from Austin High School, Gertrude Ellis became a teacher and taught grade school first in Austin, then in California, and one summer in Hawaii. In 1890, Ms. Ellis became the first female superintendent of Mower County schools overseeing 130 schools and creating 90 school libraries in Mower County during her tenure. After getting married, she was the associate editor for the Austin Daily Herald and became more engaged in community service as a member of the Austin Floral Club, the Art and Travel Club, and the League of Women Voters. She helped to organize the YWCA in Austin, worked with the local Red Cross during World War I, and formed the Sunshine Society. In 1958, Mrs. Skinner was chosen as Austin’s Centennial Queen, for her commitment to civic causes and because she was held in such high esteem by her fellow citizens.

John O’Rourke  March 23, 1934 – October 18, 2018

As a broadcast journalist, John O’Rourke was the “voice” of Mower County and became known as Austin’s favorite emcee for civic events, pageants, and sporting contests. After graduating from St. Thomas College, he enlisted in the United States Army, serving in Korea with the Armed Forces Radio Division. In 1961, he arrived in Austin and started a career with KAUS Radio and KAAL-TV. In 1972, Austin Area Vocational-Technical Institute asked him to create the Radio and Television Broadcasting Program, and for 23 years, he shared his passion for broadcasting with others as a teacher and mentor. O’Rourke served eight years on the city council, and was mayor of Austin from 1986-1996. As mayor, he developed the radio show called “Meet the Mayor” answering questions directly from the citizens of Austin.

Bonnie Besse Rietz

Bonnie Rietz thrives on helping others to be the best they can be. After serving 8 years on the city council, Ms. Rietz became the first female mayor of the City of Austin in 1997. She was instrumental in expanding the airport runways, developing the Cook Farm Industrial Park, working on the de-nitrification project at the wastewater treatment plant, and constructing Packer Arena along with several apartment complexes within the city. As Vice Chair of the Hormel Foundation and a board member of the Riverland Foundation, she worked on developing the Assurance Scholarship Program. Her vision and leadership played an important role in the formation of Apex Austin, Amis Austin, Access Austin, Page Turners, the Austin Area Drug Task Force, the Welcome Center, the Austin Artworks Festival, and the MacPhail Center For Music in Austin.
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
Barbara K. Lewis, President of the MCHS

The Historical Society is a busy buzzing place! The staff is working hard to make sure there are new and interesting things to see. The Mower County Fair is fast approaching and that means new displays and the grounds are being readied for visitors to the Society.

Be sure to stop into the Administration Building during the fair to see the exciting new display that Jamie is putting together on the Chert Quarry.

The new sidewalk around the train and to the fire hall is being completed as I write this article. Visitors will now have a nice place to push strollers and wheel chairs to view the train. The train cars are in the process of being repainted and logos are being replaced on the cars.

DATES FOR THE FAIR ARE AUGUST 6-11, 2019

We need people to be in the buildings to answer questions from the visitors. The Historical Society will again be providing parking on our property for fairgoers in order to bring in revenue. The shifts for helping are two-three hours each. If you are able to help volunteer in one of the buildings, please call the office at 437-6082 OR if you can help with parking, call 433-4983.

Parking consists of two people per shift- one to take money and hand out parking passes and the other to drive the golf car and show people where to park. The parking people will have a tent and chairs at the entrance by the caboose. It is a fun place to work as you get to meet many people and friends.

I want to thank Smiley Hanson & Dwane Hull for all of their help. Smiley volunteers every week to help me with the mowing, and Dwane helps to keep the weeds controlled around the buildings. I also want to thank Randy for his extra care with planting flowers and trying to control the hungry deer, who seem to love our hosta plants.

Please mark your calendars for the Fall Harvest Celebration on September 28th. This is always a fun day for families AND there is a huge bake sale featuring all sorts of fall favorites. Put on your baker’s hat and bring us your delicious creations!

October 11th and 12th is the Vintage Sale in the Pioneer Building. We welcome your vintage items for the sale, so start saving items for us. We will accept donations after the fair.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT,
~ BARB

Thanks to the following townships for supporting MCHS in 2019
Adams Township
Bennington Township
Clayton Township
Dexter Township
Grand Meadow Township
Lansing Township
Lyle Township
Marshall Township
Nevada Township
Pleasant Valley Township
Racine Township
Racine Township
Red Rock Township
Sargeant Township
Udolpho Township
Windom Township

Thank you for your support!
What is an Endowment Fund?

“An endowment fund is a financial asset, typically held by a non-profit organization, which will provide a permanent source of income for the organization as a long term savings account.”

Did you know that MCHS has an endowment fund?

A few years ago MCHS established an Endowment Fund with the Austin Area Foundation as a way to ensure a permanent source of revenue. Currently our earnings have been re-invested into the fund to continue its growth for the future. As the fund increases over time, so will its earnings. Interest generated by the fund will be spent in support of our mission to discover, collect, preserve, and share the history of Mower County.

A gift to our endowment fund made through your will or trust, may provide your estate with valuable tax savings. Your endowment bequest can be a gift of a specific asset, percentage of your estate or the residue (what is left after specific bequests are made to your family). Your gift will create a permanent legacy to support our work!

Learn more about MCHS Endowment Fund, please contact:

Mower County Historical Society
1303 6th Ave. SW
Austin MN, 55912
(507) 437-6082

Austin Area Foundation
P.O. Box 6
Austin MN, 55912
(507) 434-7494

Cookbooks are $10.00

Stop by the MCHS office or Sweet Reads Bookstore to get your copy today!

Featured Recipe from Alice Ulweling
1951 Christ Episcopal Church Cookbook

Sour Cream Pie

2 eggs well beaten
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. cornstarch
1 cup sour cream
1 T. cinnamon

1 T. vinegar
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 tsp. cloves
1/2 tsp. nutmeg

Mix cornstarch with sugar and add sour cream. Fold in eggs and add rest of the ingredients. Pour into an unbaked pie crust. Bake at 425 for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 300 and bake an additional 45 minutes.
Sparking A Memory
By Sue Doocy

As we get older, we have a fear of forgetting what we just ate, our child’s name or repeating the same question. *Who am I if I cannot remember anything?*

How do you communicate with the 1 in 10 people with memory loss, like Dementia and Alzheimer’s? How can you improve their quality of life and improve their health?

Recently, I attended two sessions at the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums conference where I learned about an app for smartphones and tablets that can help to spark a conversation with people who have memory loss.

By using photos of objects and events that are familiar to most people, along with music, sound effects, read-a-loud and video options from the Minnesota Historical Society, you can then add your own familiar images and objects to tailor the app to your loved one’s personal story.

The Minnesota Historical Society developed workshops for professional and family caregivers to learn more about the app and enhancing the life of those with memory loss. They also provide programs with creative activities in the museum to help spark a memory and encourage conversations by tapping into their senses. Activities such as baking cookies or creating an art project, and asking questions like “*what do you smell*” or “*how does this make you feel*” are good ways to accomplish this.

The idea is to have a conversation without saying, “*Do you remember...?*” which can cause anxiety when the person cannot remember.

By showing a photograph or an object and asking some basic questions, you may be able to draw out a memory, but in the meantime, you can have a conversation about your reactions and your feelings. You can discuss what is in the image or what you can do with an object.

The fragrance of a bouquet of flowers might spark a memory of a child picking dandelions. A sled may trigger a time when children gathered at Skinner’s Hill on a snow day.

At the Minnesota Marine Art Museum in Winona, they invite people with memory loss and their care partners to programs that help stimulate the mind and involve them in a social activity discussing artwork with no pressure. There is no right or wrong answer.

I have taken photographs from our files to help families share memories with a centurion, shared the MNHS’s link for House of Memories app, programs and workshops. I have also printed articles from the newspapers of events in the area to help spark and share memories.

A few resources that might be helpful:

https://www.mnhs.org/houseofmemories

Open Doors to Memory & Imagination
http://www.opendoorstomemory.org

Minnesota Marine Arts Museum https://www.mmam.org/spark

Sparks Programs  http://www.sparkprograms.org

Artsage http://www.artsagemn.org

Lifetime Arts  https://www.lifetimearts.org

[Image of a swinging bridge]

A walk in the park may help spark a conversation.
Where is this swinging bridge?
*(Hint - LaFayette Park and Marcussen Park)*
Thank You

To everyone who donated to the 2019 Annual Donation Appeal


We have currently raised $8,565 towards our goal of $10,000

No donation is too small or too large.
Please contact the MCHS Office to make a contribution AND together we can reach our goal.
The new exhibit featuring the Maynard Green Collection is moving right along. I have had the pleasure of meeting with the Assistant State Archaeologist twice now – Bruce Koenen and volunteers Dan and Leroy have been extremely helpful and answered many of my questions. We have also talked to Tom Trow, the head archaeologist onsite when the Grand Meadow Quarry was surveyed in 1980. With my research and their expertise, I hope the new exhibit will be informative and easy to understand.

Another part of creating this exhibit is processing the donation of the Maynard Green Collection. All donations – big and small – are processed and formally accessioned before the information is put into the computer system we use to keep track of all the items in the collection. Because we are hoping to have the new exhibit open in time for the fair, I am processing the donation at the same time as the exhibit is going up.

Maynard Green displayed his collection in a couple of different ways over his several decades of collection. At one point, he glued most of the pieces to Styrofoam and then later put them in display cases. As a result, many of the projectile points and tools had small pieces of foam and glue stuck to their backs. I decided to remove the foam before applying the accession number. This involved a process of soaking the items in distilled water to soften the glue, gently scraping the glue off, and then applying the number. It took about two weeks because there are almost 900 pieces in the collection!

In the next few weeks, the exhibit should start to take shape in the lobby. It is very exciting to be able to share a new aspect of Mower County history with all of you – a time before Mower County when SE Minnesota was filled with native plants and wildlife. Throughout much of the Prehistoric periods, people in Minnesota and the surrounding region traveled long distances to obtain chert from the Grand Meadow Quarry. The tools and tool pieces found near the quarry show how stone tool technology changed and adapted long before white settlers ever set foot in North America.

Prehistoric Mower County - featuring the Maynard Green Collection will officially be open to the public the first day of the Mower County Fair on August 6, 2019. Watch our Facebook page for more information.

The map of the Grand Meadow Quarry drawn by Lee Raczak when it was surveyed by the State Archaeologist’s office in 1980.
Processing the Maynard Green Collection – soaking the glue and foam off the backs and applying accession numbers. The bottom right picture shows part of the collection sorted into trays after applying the numbers. The next steps are to photograph the pieces and enter the information into the computer.

A special Thank You to the following donors for contributing towards the acquisition of

THE MAYNARD GREEN COLLECTION

~ The Sween Family ~
Clair F. Allen - Ila & Roger Johnson - MCHS Memorial Fund
Sue & Vern Grove - Belita Schindler - Dean & Harriet Ulland - Barbara K. Lewis
Maurice & Bernice Thorsen - Grand Meadow Lions Club Foundation
Phillip & Gail Minnerich - Jim & Milly Burroughs - Judy & David Laskewitz
Jeff & Cindy Ollman - Steve & Dorothy Krob - Fred & Carolyn Bogott

Your generosity is greatly appreciated for keeping this priceless collection in Mower County for future generations
Thanks to all our Ag Sponsors!

2019 Ag Building Sponsors

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Lewis Family Farm  
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Freeborn County Co-Op Oil  
Klouse Construction  
Darrell Ingvaldson Insurance  
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Mower County Corn & Soybean Growers  
Freeborn/Mower Co-Op Services  
Tucker Tiling Company  
Shady Lane Farms  
Mower County Farmers Mutual Insurance Company  
Wagner Construction  
Broskoff Structures  
Lee J. Sackett

The Mower County Historical Society
Lunchbox History Series

Remaining 2019 Events

July 25th
Gary Schindler
“Lincoln’s Funeral Procession—Washington D.C. to Springfield”

August 22nd
Ames Sheldon
“Women at the Very Heart of the Great War”

September 26th
Thomas Trow
“The Grand Meadow Chert Quarry”

October 24th
Jeff Anderson
“History of Anderson Memorials”

All events are held in the Pioneer Building on the grounds of the Historical Society at 12:00 Noon the Fourth Thursday of the month.

“Bring your lunch & Bring a friend!”

FAIR WEEK is August 6-11

The Historical Society needs YOUR help during the Fair.
Sign-up today for a shift to watch one of our Buildings.

Call the office (507) 437-6082

Open House Hours during the Mower County Fair
Tue 12-8, Wed 12-8, Thurs 12-8, Fri 12-8, Sat 12-8, Sun 1-5

See ya’ll at the FAIR!

Thanks to our official Sponsor

Mayo Clinic Health System
Austin - Albert Lea
Thanks to the following donors!

Sharon Babcock
Maureen Steenblock
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in Memory of DeWayne Haberman

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James Sucha
Arlene Bednar

Thank You to those who joined the MCHS or renewed their membership!

*** memberships listed are from 2nd Quarter only
April 1 thru June 30, 2019

Please contact the office if you are unsure about when to pay your membership dues. Memberships are for 1 year and include your subscription to the Mower History Scribe!

Want to help us save postage and paper? Sign up to TODAY to receive the newsletter digitally. Just make sure we have your correct email address!

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Preserving Today for Tomorrow’s History

Site tours available May through September
Tuesday–Friday at 1:00 p.m. or by appointment

MOWER COUNTY FAIR
August 6 – 11, 2019

FALL HARVEST CELEBRATION
September 28, 2019

VINTAGE & ANTIQUE SALE
October 11 – 12, 2019

CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTY
December 13 – 14, 2019

FREE 2019 LUNCHBOX HISTORY SERIES DATES
April 25 • May 23 • June 27
July 25 • August 22
September 26 • October 24

PIONEER BUILDING
12:00 NOON
BRING YOUR LUNCH & BRING A FRIEND!
“The mission of the Mower County Historical Society is to discover, collect, preserve, and share the history of Mower County and relate it to the history of Minnesota.”

Follow us @mowercohistory

Contact Us
To learn more about programs and events at the Mower County Historical Society, please feel free to contact us at anytime.

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info@mowercountyhistory.org
Visit us on the web at www.mowercountyhistory.org

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