

Serving Scott County:

Belle Plaine
 Blakeley
 Credit River
 Elko
 Lydia
 Jordan
 Marystown
 New Market
 New Prague
 Prior Lake
 Savage
 Shakopee
 St. Benedict
 St. Patrick
 Belle Plaine Township
 Blakeley Township
 Cedar Lake Township
 Credit River Township
 Helena Township
 Jackson Township
 Louisville Township
 New Market Township
 Sand Creek Township
 Spring Lake Township
 St. Lawrence Township

Celebrating with Hats Off to Women's History

March is Women's History Month and in celebration, the Scott County Historical Society is exhibiting women's hats from March 1 to May 1 at the Stans Museum in Shakopee. The forty hats on display are from both the Historical Society collection and loans from residents from all over Scott County including New Prague, Elko, Prior Lake, Jordan, and Shakopee.

Hats have been worn for various reasons for centuries. However, women did not wear hats as fashion accessories until the eighteenth century. In the late nineteenth century the standard bonnet was replaced as the headwear of choice by those more suited to the active and social woman of the time.

The close-fitting cloche hat of the 1920s, associated with the short, bobbed hair of the period, proved an

ideal design for mass production. Hollywood glamour influenced hats during the 1930s and 1940s. Feathers, veils, and more masculine styles became popular. After World War II, hats became smaller, gradually losing their place in fashion. The popularity of hats continued until the 1960s when concern for maintaining a hairstyle became more important than the desire to wear a hat.



Women also wear hats for purposes other than that of fashion accessory. Some hats are a mark of a profession such as those worn by nurses or chefs. Other hats serve more practical needs such as a hard-hat or sun visor. Still others are worn as part of a ceremony or ritual like a wedding veil or mortarboard.

See hats like these in the *Hats Off to Women's History* exhibit today!

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Society Seeks Your Input In Web Site Survey

We want to know what you think! A new online survey is up and running. Just go to the Historical Society web site at www.scottcountyhistory.org and click the survey link.

The survey is quick, painless, and will help us know more about what kinds of exhibits you would like to see, what topics we should explore, and what you think about what we already have at the museum. It also allows us to gauge the level of interest in local history and gear programming to visitor

needs and interests. No personal information is required and it is entirely anonymous. You do not need to be a member or Scott County resident to participate in the survey. All input is welcome and helpful.

This online survey is part of a federally funded grant from the Institute of Library and Museum Services to help the historical society assess its strengths and the weaknesses of its activities. Scott County helped design and set-up the special web site.

Thanks to Generous Donors More History Saved, Preserved, Shared

- **Leo Albrecht:** Book, *Belle Plaine: 150 Years, 1854-2004*, Henry Hinds Quit-Claim Deed, 1889, Land Abstract of Michael Moran, 1907, two city Acts, 1881 and 1885, Delinquent Sprinkling Tax, 1916.
- **Sandi Andersen:** Two glass mixing bowls, 1970s.
- **Betty Dols:** Book, *August Dorn Family* by Charlene Scheffler, pair of women's black boots.
- **Dora Fitzgerald:** Two Shakopee postcards, downtown Shakopee and Vierling Bar, c. 1910.
- **Ethel Jacobson:** Twenty-three women's hats, gloves, and purses from New Prague.
- **LaVonne Kroells:** Blakeley Creamery stock certificate, 1953.
- **Melvin and James Laabs:** Killian School Treasurer Records.
- **Gregory Lind:** Book, *A History of the Wermer-skirchens*.
- **George Mikiska:** Seven issues of *The Workbasket*, 1981-1983, and c. 1930 woman's red hat.
- **Mary Carol Majerus:** Image of Father James Mamer, c. 1890.
- **H.A. Dabekaussen-Notermans:** Book, *Notermans: van Limburg tot Wereldwijd*.
- **Lori Trimbo:** St. Mary's church directory, 1976, and Bi-Centennial service program.
- **Tom and Linda Trost:** W.E. Wheelock piano once owned by Clara Able, c. 1900.
- **Donald and Richard Zaun:** Five women's hats.
- **Staff Collected:** Rynda Hardware ink blotter.



From the Director: Change in Air at Museum with Three New Exhibits



Change is in the air. Springtime, hopefully, will be just around the corner. If you haven't been in the museum lately, I urge you to stop in for a visit. The exhibit Hats Off to Women's History is only part of the changes you can expect to see.

In keeping with our responsibility to exhibit the story of Maurice Stans, we have created the new exhibit Accounting for Success. This exhibit outlines the period of Stans life between his Shakopee childhood and his career in Washington, D.C. where he served two presidents. In the exhibit, his achievements and career in the field of accounting, from 1925 to 1955, are chronicled in a concise and meaningful way.

You can expect this kind of change to continue in the Stans African gallery. Both Maurice Stans and his wife, Kathleen, had what they called "a love affair with Africa." The exhibit changes planned for the gallery place the emphasis on their personal experiences as avid travelers, hunters, and photographers. The updated exhibit will include photographs Maurice and Kathleen took on their safaris and of their Watergate apartment decorated with items they brought back.

Lydia School District Records Added to Historical Society Archives

While conducting research for the Lydia Area Historical Society, Don Beuch (president of the SCHS Board of Directors) began looking for Lydia school records. Lydia, located in the center of the county, was once a thriving community where the school served as the center of social life until 1960 when the school district disbanded.

While some Lydia school records can be found at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Don worked to find others. Learning that many of the records were stored in a Jordan school district building Don obtained permission to look through them. He found building specifications, school bond information, teacher ledgers, and attendance records.

Concerned about the safety and care of the records, Don contacted the Jordan superintendent and the Scott County Historical Society. Originally the school district was concerned about data privacy issues. However, with help from the Minnesota Historical Society, permission was granted for the records to be transferred to the Scott County Historical Society last

summer. By law, school records must be preserved. They can be transferred to the State Archives but because of a lack of space county historical societies work with the State Archives to preserve the records and provide public access.

Today, those school records are carefully stored in the archives at the Scott County Historical Society, available for patron research. In addition, other Lydia school records, in the care of local families, have been donated to the museum. Both Larry Haferman and James Laabs donated the records their fathers, Lawrence Haferman and Melvin Laabs, acquired while serving as school treasurers.

Don Beuch continues his efforts to preserve Lydia history working with both the Lydia Area and Scott County Historical Societies. The Lydia society does what it does best—saving the stories and memories of the community. To avoid the expense and needs associated with storing items, SCHS provides safe storage and access to the photographs, papers, and other items linked to the Lydia community.

Historic 100 Year Old Shakopee Piano Graces Stans House Parlor

Last December Tom and Linda Trost contacted the Scott County Historical Society about a possible donation. Years ago, Tom purchased a piano used by his piano teacher in Shakopee and was interested in donating it for use in the Stans House. The piano, built in the early nineteenth century, was made by W.E. Wheelock. Delicately carved musical instruments decorate the front. The date of each tuning is carefully written inside the piano. Although the piano is not in pristine condition, the signs of wear demonstrate its constant use over the past 100 years.

The beloved piano teacher was Clara Abel. Miss Abel graduated from Shakopee High School and attended a one-year normal school to become a teacher. She also attended Mankato Teachers College. During her career, she taught both elementary and high school students, first in English and later as the school librarian. Never married, Clara lived with her older sister, Amelia Abel, in a house on First Street in Shakopee where the Pearson Florist building is today and just blocks from the Stans house.



Today, the piano sits in the front parlor of the Stans house, looking as if it had always been there. Although the Stans family did not have a piano until much later, as a musician J. Hubert Stans directed local bands and gave lessons in his home. If there had been a piano in the house in 1908, it most likely would have been one very similar to Clara's.

To share information about Clara Abel or to donate an item to the museum, call 445-0378.

Sonny Albrecht Takes Up Family Torch as Belle Plaine History Author

As Leo "Sonny" Albrecht looks through his stacks of photographs and documents, he smiles. Local history is the stuff he loves. And perhaps more, he loves sharing it by writing articles, speaking before school groups, and volunteering at the SCHS.

Sonny was not the first Albrecht interested in history. His uncle, Harold Albrecht, served as the unofficial Belle Plaine historian for many years while teaching school, researching genealogy, and writing the Belle Plaine book *This Is Our Town* first published in 1954 and expanded in 1977.

The Albrechts have strong ties to the area. Shoemaker Peter Becker, Sonny's great-grandfather, was the first German settler in Belle Plaine and went on to own the Becker Brickyard there. The Albrechts operated many businesses including the Belle Plaine Hotel. More recently Sonny's father, Leo Albrecht Sr., operated the



Albright Circus for nearly 40 years.

When Harold passed away, the family sorted his belongings and Sonny added Harold's history collection to his own. Now, after years of hard work and hours at the computer, Sonny has written

Belle Plaine: 150 Years. The over 400-page book includes over 400 photographs as it documents the businesses and buildings that have graced Belle Plaine during its 150 years.

Sonny completed this enormous project just in time for the Belle Plaine sesquicentennial celebration. He generously donated the manuscript to the Belle Plaine Historical Society, which has printed the book and made it available for sale. To contact the Belle Plaine Historical Society, call Henrietta Stiles at 952-873-4433.

Belle Plaine & Jordan Celebrate Towns' Sesquicentennials in 2004

This year promises to be filled with celebrations as Jordan and Belle Plaine celebrate their 150th anniversaries in 2004.

The settlement of Jordan began with the erection of a sawmill by brothers Thomas and William Holmes in 1853. The following year, as Thomas was developing Shakopee, William took a claim of 160 acres along Sand Creek and platted a village. Often referred to as "Holmes Mill" by residents, the town founder decided to call the area Jordan City after the biblical River Jordan. The town received its official name when it incorporated with a neighboring village as Jordan in 1872.

William Varner built the county's first gristmill along Sand Creek in 1854. Other mills would eventually follow including King and Co., Foss and Wells, Nicolin Mill, and the Jordan City Mills. The first church organized in Jordan was St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, although an actual building was not constructed until 1855. Other early churches included Emmanuel United Methodist Church and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Judge Chatfield was traveling through the area on his way to hold court in

the southern counties. As he was riding through the Big Woods, he came across a clearing on the southern banks of the Minnesota River. Impressed, he bought the parcel of land and thus the town of Belle Plaine was born.

In 1855, W. H. Stoddard completed the town site survey for Belle Plaine. The first order of business was the formation of the Belle Plaine Company to promote the new city. They built a gristmill, a sawmill, and a hotel, and settlers started arriving daily. Predominately German and Irish, religion was a large part of the new community. In 1860, St. Martin's Catholic Church was built to serve both German and Irish. In 1869, the two ethnic groups, each wanting to hear the word of God in their native language, separated. In 1871, the Germans built Saints Peter & Paul. A few years later the Irish also built a new church, naming theirs Sacred Heart. Other early churches included the Episcopalian Church of the Transfiguration, Presbyterian Church, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Trinity Lutheran.

For more information on Jordan's celebration, go to www.Jordan150th.com. For information on activities in Belle Plaine, call city hall at 873-5553.

From the Research Library with Betty Dols: Courthouse Research

The majority of families doing genealogy research at this time are descendants of European immigrants. They usually came into one of the east coast ports and as they made their way across the country, left clues in the census, churches, and courthouses. The rule, as it has always been, is "start with yourself and build from there." Your parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc. Since death records as well as birth and marriage records are kept by the counties, that is a good place to start. Family members who were born and died as the family moved inland will appear or disappear in the census schedules. Then one can write to the County Recorder of the county in state of occurrence.

The New England states, which are roughly 200 years older than Minnesota, often kept these records in the towns but most have been microfilmed. Minnesota became a state in 1858 and Scott County marriage records were kept from 1856 but birth and death records were not recorded until 1871. All but a very few of these are public records and open to the public.

Other records to be found in the courthouses are land

records and probate records. Land records generally do not provide specific genealogical information but can contain valuable clues. Probate records, especially wills and guardianship records, often contain extensive information. Ownership of land was very important to European immigrants and if there was any owned property they took great pains to protect it. The most important document in a will file is the final distribution, which supplies the names and addresses of the heirs.

At the Scott County Historical Society, we have microfilm copies of the Scott County Probate Distribution files as well as the early indexes to the birth, death, and marriage records, and the Naturalization records. We also have the *Handybook for Genealogists* and Ancestry's *Red Book*, both of which provide information on what is available in courthouse records in other states including addresses and telephone numbers.

And lastly the internet. More and more genealogical information is making its way onto the internet and a good search engine like Google will find them.

-By Betty Dols

In the Volunteer Spotlight: Couple Shares Love of History at Museum

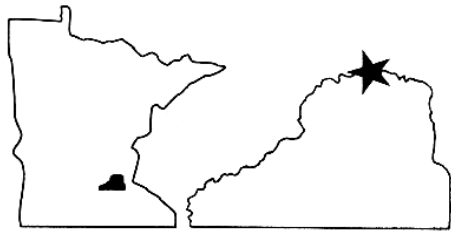


Nicole and Mike Murray are volunteers that can do practically anything. They both have worked and volunteered at Murphy's Landing and Historic Fort Snelling. They both have history backgrounds and Nicole will soon have her masters degree in public history.

We can count on Nicole and Mike when we need extra help at special events. Both have presented programs at the museum; Nicole shared her research on the Minnesota Stove Company and Mike gave a presentation on historic tools and building techniques, bringing his extensive tool collection to share with visitors. Those skills have come in handy when Mike has helped at the Stans House. Nicole also shares her time as a member of the SCHS Board of Directors and committee member.

Nicole works at the Shakopee Junior High while Mike serves in the Minnesota National Guard. In their free time, they travel, visit family, work on their home (just blocks from the museum) and heirloom garden.

**SCOTT COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
searching, saving and sharing the history of Scott County



235 Fuller Street South
Shakopee, MN 55379

Phone: 952-445-0378
Fax: 952-445-4154
info@scottcountyhistory.org
www.scottcountyhistory.org

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Thurs. 9:00—8:00
Sat. 10:00—3:00
Sun., Mon. closed

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**THANKS TO ALL RENEWING MEMBERS
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**

Enjoy Spring With These Scott County Historical Society Programs

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| March 1 | Hats Off to Women’s History
In celebration of women’s history month, enjoy the new hat exhibit from now until May 1 at the museum. | May 12 | Lunchbox Lecture: Shakopee Mural
Gert Roepke will interpret the people and places in the boardroom mural at Central. At Central Family Center.
Noon. Non-members \$2. |
| March 10 | Lunchbox Lecture: Three Rivers Parks
Kathy Dummer from Murphy’s Landing/Three Rivers Park District will talk about the natural history and future of the site. Non-members \$2.
Noon. | May 19 | Lunchbox Lecture: Shakopee Stories
Bill Wermerskirchen, proprietor of Bill’s Toggery in Shakopee, will share stories and memories of the town.
Noon. Non-members \$2. |
| March 25 | Coffee Talk: Heirloom Seeds
Savage resident Rich Williams is back by popular demand to share information on heirloom plants and seed varieties. 6:30 p.m. Non-members \$2. | May 27 | Old Time Games in the Garden Park
Play old fashioned games like drop the handkerchief and more. Kids vs. adults in the hoop rolling contest.
6:30 p.m. Free. |
| April 15 | Coffee Talk: New Market History
New Market native Ron Zweber shares area history. At New Market City Hall.
6:30 p.m. Non-members \$2. | May 27 | Crazy Quilters Club Night
Join the Crazy Quilters the fourth Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the museum for an evening of learning, sewing, and fun. Free. |

*No Lunchbox Lecture in April.