

The Neighborhood Club on Phelps Island - Do you have more information? We'd like to hear from you.

As an educational society we will provide a continuous history of the Westonka area for those who follow after us...

Recording History for our Survivors?

"History must be written of, by and for the survivors." This anonymous quote always renews my quest to learn more about history and get local and personal history recorded. I realize how important it is to collect the history of our community, collect my own family history and see how that history affects some of the decisions made by our community and myself today.

Family histories or books on genealogy of many families often include hundreds or even thousands of names, birthdates, marriage dates, and dates of death. It often includes lists of "professions" of individuals in your family tree. But there is so much more to the "story" of your family.

To begin collecting your personal history, there are many questions that you can ask yourself or members of your family and begin to explore. Since my family on my father's side came from Norway, I am interested in Norwegian as well as American history. I wanted to know why my great-grandfather left Norway, his parents, brother and the rest of his family in 1872 to come to America. He had a wife and two young children. The night before he was to leave for America with 4 non-refundable tickets for the ship, his oldest child died. What made him leave his wife and infant daughter in Norway and board that ship for America alone? What could have been so bad that he packed up his meager belongings to go to a strange land where he had no relatives. Why did his wife not board that ship with him? Where did she live for 2 years before they could purchase more

tickets to go to America?

And on this side of the ocean, what made him choose Minnesota? My great-grandfather took the train from New York to Morris, MN and walked the 30+ miles to Brandon, MN. Why Brandon? He didn't personally know anyone there, so why did he choose that town? The first few nights in Minnesota, he slept in the barn of a "Swede" that he met when he arrived in town. Was there a language problem for that courtesy to be extended? How did he eat and feed himself?

I have discovered he arrived in Morris, MN with only 10 cents in his pocket, so how did he make enough money to buy a farm? How long did it take to earn the money that bought the farm that is still in our family? My great-grandfather was on the school board, creamery board and involved in several other local boards. What made him so politically active? What was happening in Minnesota that caused so many Norwegians, Swedes and Germans to settle here? What else was happening in Minnesota that made it possible for my great-grandfather and my grandfather to succeed in farming? Some of this information you can find by simply reading a U.S. history text and finding the time lines that will show you the depression, the Indian land agreements, and don't forget the Minnesota weather. How did this affect what happened to my family when they first arrived in the area? You will find weather records well documented for the early years of settlement in Minnesota.

I have found the answers to most of those questions for my family and was surprised by some of the answers. Now we're working on more questions and answers for an update to our "book." We're working on labeling the pictures for our "book." Because most of my family's history is centered in Douglas County, their Historical Society in Alexandria, MN has a copy of my family story as it is so far and each time we do an update, we give them another copy. It is important to ask questions of our parents, grandparents, and even ourselves to get our history recorded for our children, and children to come. And the history of a community involves the "stories" of each of the individuals in that community.

Now it could be your turn! When you have the information for your family, the Westonka Historical Society would love a copy of your publication. Do you already have part of your family history written and does it include our area? Are you willing to share a copy with the WHS? Or, if you don't want to write it down, we would love to listen to parts of your story and record them for you, especially if those involve the Westonka community. Are you interested in hiring someone to help you

WE NEED YOU!

The Historical Society is planning an event for late summer or early fall featuring "Island Park" or as it was called **Phelps Island**. We are looking for people who have a history with the Island and have stories and possibly interesting artifacts to share. We also need pictures to help "tell" this story of Island Park. We would be willing to make copies of pictures for you to keep in our collection if you would like. The nature of the island has changed immeasurably in the past 50 years and we know there are people who remember what it was like in the "olden days." **Please contact the Historical Society with any information you may have.**



THE HISTORY DETECTIVE

School Memories: Reflections and Connections
by Dr. Pam Myers, Vice President of WHS

As the school history project proceeds, I am learning about more and more school houses. How many grade schools do you suppose there were in the area that sent their 8th grade graduates to Mound Consolidated High School? (See end of article for the answer, so far.)

Many local residents love to tell about their grade school years, whether in town or in the country. I have interviewed graduates of Lyndale School and Lee School, Armstrong School and Spring Park School, St. Boni Catholic and St. Peter Lutheran, and town students who attended classes in the “little red school house” or in the “old high school.” But these interviews also include references to play days with other country schools whose graduates seem to have

disappeared. No one seems to know anyone who attended Hitsman School or Wagner School. Actually, both the graduates and the buildings appear to have disappeared, leaving me at a loss as to how to proceed.

Serendipity always helps research.

Last week I had an interview with Willis Beal, MCHS graduate, who was recommended to me by his sister, Marilyn Beal Hamilton, MCHS Class of 1948. Willis and Marilyn attended Evergreen Grove School, which was built on Hennepin County Road 11 just west of Lake Sarah. County Road 11 runs from Loretto to Delano. Willis tells me about his classmates and his teachers, and about play days with other schools, including Hitsman.

Again, as I have done before, I asked Willis if he knew anyone who had attended Hitsman School. I had heard from Earl Taylor that it was located on what is now called Hitsman Road, south of Highway 12, just across from Peterson Produce, but Earl had no history or contacts for Hitsman. Willis said I needed to talk with Lorraine Peterson. When I called Peterson Produce, and told my tale to the fellow who answered the phone, he asked whether he should hand the phone to Lorraine. Lorraine said that her husband Gordie attended Hitsman School! She mentioned that she might even have a photo of Gordie and his classmates in front of Hitsman School. What a treasure!

Now, I am still seeking a connection with Wagner School. Can you help? I'll bet someone can.

And how many grade schools do we have, so far? Eighteen (18), including Copeland and Loretto, and three Catholic schools, one Lutheran school, and, the newest addition, the Seventh Day Adventist school in Maple Plain.

We Need Your Time!

Did you know the Visitor Center is open every Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm?

Did you know that we attempt to have at least 2 members of the Historical Society volunteering their time to make this possible? Every Saturday visitors from the community come in to talk to members of the organization, ask questions about the history, buy books, puzzles and other objects the Historical Society has for sale, and come with artifacts or stories they would like to donate to the WHS. This is a great way to spend a few hours on Saturday. But we need more people to help with this activity. **Would you be willing to help with this activity?** You would never be there alone. And as we gather more artifacts into our visitor center, if we have more people working, we could all spend more time cataloging, organizing and making our facility a resource center for our community in their endeavor to learn about our communities' history.

Did you have a chance to get to the Gillespie Center this year for the Holiday Boutique?

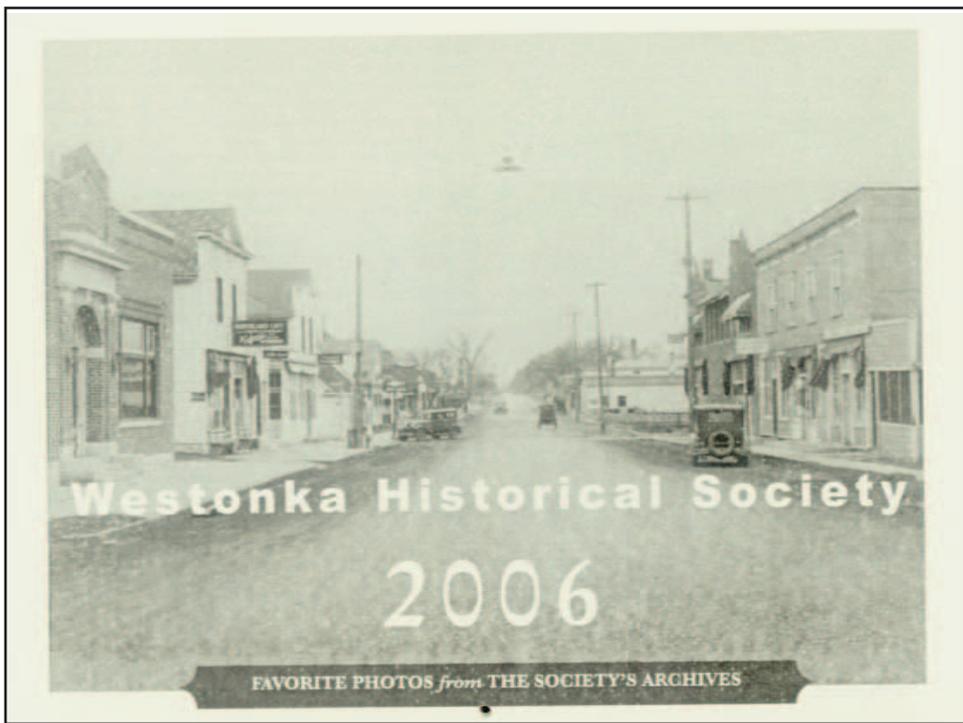
There were wonderful handcrafted items for sale for gifts as well as to use in your own home. The WHS joined the Gillespie Center again this year with over 70 crafters and sold our books, puzzle, and this year we added our new book “*When I Was a Boy*,” some beautiful Sollie store notecards, and a 2006 calendar with pictures from our collection of local history.

This is typically our largest fundraiser. This year we sold enough supplies to cover our rent for one month. This was down from our usual earnings. According to the crew at the Gillespie Center, this year the profits were down for almost everyone, possibly because of so many boutiques around the area this year.

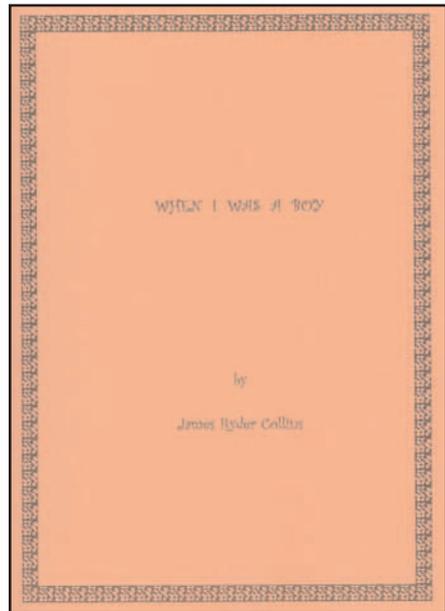
Thanks to those who visited our display and purchased items. Each of our items is still available for sale at the Visitor Center. If you are interested in any of them, stop by any Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00, visit and purchase one of our new items or our other supplies.



This watercolor has been made into a beautiful notecard. It is a copy of a 1960 watercolor by Audrey Holmquist Evans, a 1950 Mound graduate. A picture of Pete and Ed Sollie Store, uncles of the Andrews Sisters. The price of the notecard is \$3.50.



This 2006 calendar includes over 12 pictures from our collection of local history. The photographs include what Commerce Boulevard looked like in 1932, Hotel Del Otero from 1918, a cast picture of students in a 1939 play “*The Pirates of Penzance*,” Lafayette Club, circa 1920s, the Bartlett Hotel, circa 1900s, Queen of the Lakes Parade, circa 1940s, the Narrows, circa 1904, Copeland School from 1958, the Steamer Puritan 1900s and several others. The calendar, as well as the ability to order copies of any of the photographs, is available for sale at the Visitor Center. The price of the calendar is \$10.00.



At the age of 78, James Ryder Collins started writing a book for his family and friends entitled *When I Was A Boy*. This includes business and personal family history and his experiences growing up in Minneapolis and Lake Minnetonka... In the preface to the book he writes “In writing these recollections, I discovered an important thing: I didn’t ask enough questions of my parents, grandmother, and others.” James R. Collins passed away at the age of 89 in 2002. The cost of the book is \$25.00.

Do you see anyone familiar in this photograph?



Please tell us if you do!

The photo shown here was found in our collection with no names. We're hoping our members may be able to help. We know that it was a photo from an activity at Island Park Hall in 1945. Our collection has several photos without names, dates or identification as to the activity and this makes it hard to catalog and even harder to help document our history..

Do you have photos with no identification on them? Have you received photos from your parents or other family members with no identification on them? Will you be passing your photos to your family without identification? Nothing beats having photographs identified with names, dates, and places - so get out those photos you took over the past holidays and get busy identifying them! Maybe sometime you can come to the Visitor Center and help us identify people or places in our collection.

Tips for putting identification on your photographs:

- Do not write with ink on the photos, front or back. Ink can bleed through or rub off onto other photos. You can purchase photo labeling pencils at craft and scrapbooking stores. We also have photo labeling pencils available at the Visitor Center for \$2.00. If it is not possible to use one of these, write in pencil along the edges on the back of the photo.

- Use names for people instead of titles such as grandma. Grandma won't mean anything if you don't know *which* (or even *whose*) grandma is in the photograph.

- Date the photo and note where it was taken. This will help tell its story and place it in time. Dates also accurately document just which year you received that crocheted afghan from Aunt Mabel.

Welcome to new and renewing members since October

Susan Anderson (Mound)
 Lorraine Augdahl (Spring Park)
 Rodney & Martha Beystrom (Mound)
 Cathy J. Black (Hawthorn Woods, IL)
 Harris Burkhalter (Mound)
 Wayne & Susan Burkhalter (Mound)
 Lee Burkhalter (Mound)
 Tom Casey & Roberta Flatten (Mound)
 David Cross (Mound)
 Bruce & Patti Dodds (Mound)
 Audrey W. (Sunni) Evans (Minnetonka)
 Alfred P. Gale (Maple Plain)
 Mike & Mary Jo Hajicek (Mound)
 Lorrie Ham (Mound)

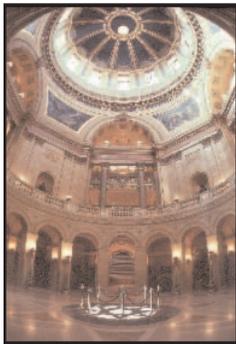
Inyce K. Holtmeyer (Mound)
 Brian Jensen (Waconia)
 Gay Kearin (Maple Plain)
 Patsy Kiesow (Minnetrista)
 Muriel Kolar (Mound)
 Arthur W. Mason (Mound)
 Nancy Nasset (Mound)
 Wally Rasmussen (Mound)
 Mari-Lou Triebenbach (Mound)
 Jeanne Watt (Prior Lake)
 Leah Weycker (Mound)
 Diane Williams (Minnetrista)
 Martha P. Williams (Mound)



Lookout Lodge, Lake Minnetonka,
 Residence of Winthrop B. Chamberlain on Phelps Island.



The picture on the left is from our collection. This is *Lookout Lodge* on Lake Minnetonka. The residence of Winthrop B. Chamberlain on Phelps Island. The picture on the right is a dock on Phelps Bay. There are so many stories about boating, camping, vacationing, hotels, resorts and other activities around Lake Minnetonka. Do you have more information? Call the WHS with your information to add to our program about "Island Park."



On **Monday March 13**, history fans from across the state will gather for the second annual **History Matters Day at the State Capitol**. Join them for costumed characters, history program displays and an Information Fair between 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., and show your support for history during the noontime rally in the historic Capitol Rotunda.

Welcome to our New Board Members

At our November Board meeting we elected new board members: **Art Mason, Lorrie Ham and Mari-Lou Triebenbach**. Each board member comes to WHS with unique talents, interests, and time to help in the preservation of the history of the Westonka Community. Join us at a board meeting to find out more and to see how you can help in the process of developing our **Visitor Center** and look to the future of the Westonka Historical Society.

THANK YOU!!!!

For the following donations to the WHS:

- Mary Opheim - Old Tonka toy truck and stepstool for storeroom
- State Bank of Mound Liberty Bell Coin Bank - Jack Farness
- Clem and Barb Birch- Video and book about history of Watkins

Also a **THANK YOU TO:**

• Roger Schaffer, 1957 Mound graduate visiting from Barton, Vermont stopped by the VC, was impressed with our progress toward having a place where the community can explore our history and made a monetary donation. Thank you!

• And **Special Thanks** to Vern Brandenburg for installing our new shelving at the Visitor Center. Progress is being made and we will soon be in a position to start bringing in the items stored in our collection. However, currently in our "mini museum" we have several small items on display, so come now, come often and watch the changing of the displays. Mary Opheim does a great job of helping our displays stay fresh and current, both at the Gillespie Center and at our VC. Feel free to stop by any Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00 at the VC.

NEW MEMBERS WANTED

If you are not now a member of the Westonka Historical Society and would like to join, we are enclosing a membership application form for your use. Also, if you have not yet seen our new office at the Visitor Center in Mound, we hope you will **come and see us any Saturday** when some of our members **will be there from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** We would be happy to have you come and visit and see our displays. WHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

Books and Puzzles for Sale

Tonka

by Lloyd Laumann and Dennis David - \$30.00

Lake Minnetonka Puzzle

1934 map of Lake Minnetonka - \$20.00

When I Was A Boy

by James Ryder Collins - \$25.00

Minnetrista Memories

by Mildred Krenke Banks - \$11.00

Historical Backgrounds of Mound Minnesota

by Melvin W. Gimmestad - \$6.50

Barefoot on Crane Island

by Marjorie Myers Douglas - \$16.00

Guide and Map of Lake Minnetonka

Advertising Booklet Reprint - \$7.00

Historical Tour of the Westonka Area - Year 2000

by Jeff Magnuson - \$8.00

Picturing Lake Minnetonka: A Postcard History

by Jim Ogland - \$35.00

Several Books by Leo Meloche

American Lotus Note Pad

Color photo by M. Magnuson - \$2.00

Sollie Note Card

1960 Watercolor by Audrey Holmquist Evans - \$3.50

2006 Calendar

12 photos of local history - \$10.00

Books also available in Mound at:

• Larson Printing • The Threshold •

• True Value Hardware • Jubilee •

And in Navarre at: • Gallery Navarre •

The puzzle is available at Lakeshore Interiors. For a complete description of books with order form, write to

2325 Commerce Blvd. Mound, MN 55364
<http://www.westonkahistoricalsociety.org>

Membership Information

Senior/Student.....\$ 10

Family/Individual.....\$ 15

Annual Contributing.....\$ 25

Business.....\$ 50

Patron.....\$ 100

Special Donation - Donor's Choice

Membership dues and special donations are tax deductible. Donations of photographs and artifacts are graciously accepted.

Contact any board member for more

Westonka Historical Society

Sue Cathers, President 952-472-4893

Pamela Myers, Vice President 952-474-1601

Lavonne Adams, Secretary 952-472-1885

Lorrie Ham, Assistant Secretary 952-472-0439

Phyllis O'Malley, Treasurer 952-471-9703

Larry Beno, Past President 952-472-7157

Board Members:

Vern Brandenburg 952-472-5820

Gerald Babb 952-472-2858

Jeanne Brustad 952-471-7019

Thom Flug 952-491-4000

Jeff Magnuson 952-472-3653

Arthur W. Mason 952-472-5346

Mari-Lou Triebenbach 763-559-4961

Honorary Board Members:

Mary Opheim 952-472-4610

Carol Senn 763-473-1196

Newsletter:

Jeanne Brustad, Editor 952-471-7019

Carol Senn, Contributor 763-473-1196

Lavonne Adams, Proofreader 952-472-1885



**Interested in Genealogy?
 There is a Genealogy Gathering
 at the Carver County Historical Society,
 555 West First Street, Waconia,
 on Saturday, January 14
 from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm**

**Find new ways to discover your "story," compare ideas
 with other people interested in Genealogy. All Welcome!
 Questions? Call 952-442-4234**



**3740 Enchanted Lane
Mound, MN 55364**

<http://www.westonkahistoricalsociety.org>

Calendar of Events:

January 14 - Genealogy Gathering - Carver County HS - Waconia - 12:30

January 21 - WHS Board Meeting - 10:00, Visitor Center - Mound

February 18 - WHS Board Meeting - 10:00, Visitor Center - Mound

February 24 - Deadline for March/April Newsletter Items

March 13 - History Matters Day at the State Capital



Wish List for the Westonka Historical Society

- 1) Tape recorder**
- 2) TV**
- 3) VCR**
- 4) DVD player**

These are just a few things that the WHS is in need of to create the visitor center that we would like to create. These items will help us make it possible for our volunteers to organize our collection and make it easier for visitors to enjoy the artifacts and do research of their own. If you have any of these items, please contact the WHS at 952.472.9800.

Purposes and Goals of the Westonka Historical Society

1. Document, preserve, and classify early historical records.
2. Provide children and adults with history of the area accessible to them.
3. Make tapes and recordings to preserve and interpret material unique to our Westonka history.
4. Gather artifacts and reproductions for exhibiting the story of the area.
5. Involve our children with a living program of historical significance to make history “come alive” to them.