



Heritage Happenings

Newsletter of the Woodbury Heritage Society



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Celebrating with the Rath's

Every year since at least 1998, the Rath's family, one of the oldest in Woodbury, have been decorating the Heritage House for the Yule season. The house was originally on their farm before it was moved to Marsh Creek park. We would like to thank the Rath's family for doing this wonderful decorating, and for their dedication to the preservation of the history and culture of our fair city!



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be held on January 15th, from 12:30 until about 3:00. The location is Saint John's Lutheran church in Woodbury at 1975 St. John's Drive. There will be a potluck lunch, so bring a dish if you wish! We hope to see you there!

Important Announcement!

Due to COVID and other circumstances, we find that our memberships and donations are down. We were unable to hold local fundraising events, where our supporters and friends have, in the past, helped support us with our operating costs.

Membership fees and donations help to pay those operating costs. What are our operating costs? They help us maintain the Heritage House and the Miller Barn; they help us hold special historical events; they maintain our web site; and they fund our displays and supplies.

We come to you now to respectfully ask you to consider a year-end gift to help us cover these annual operating costs. All donations are tax-deductible.

If your membership is due or you would like to join this interesting and fun organization, sign-up now!

There are two ways you can join and/or donate:

- 1) Join or donate on-line at: www.heritagesociety.com
- 2) Mail in the form at end of this newsletter



New Board of Directors Members Wanted!

The Woodbury Heritage Society is seeking interested individuals for our Board of Directors. The Board of Directors governs the nonprofit organization and makes decisions regarding its future. They have the responsibility of ensuring all the activities that take place will benefit the organization in some way.

Job Description for a Board Member:

- Responsible for faithful observance of the organization's mission, vision, and values.
- Attend the monthly board meeting (usually 1-1/2 hours) to discuss and vote on issues pertaining to the organization.
- Provide guidance to the organization's culture, effectiveness, and financial sustainability.
- Serve as ambassadors and advocates for the Woodbury Heritage Society.

Board Members serve a three-year term.



A Special Tribute to Clarence Francis Oehlke

By Joyce Flynn

On October 19, I and many others lost a very special individual. Clarence Francis Oehlke, or as many called him, Fran, died peacefully at his beloved farm home in Woodbury.

Fran was born on December 19, 1933 to Clarence and Frances (Neitge) Oehlke. In his childhood and youth, he worked on his father's farm and also as a hired hand, helping to build his neighbor's barn.

In June of 1953, he married the love of his life, Maryllis Esteele Rode. They were inseparable for nearly 70 years. Together they met life head on; complementing one another's abilities and relying on each other's strength. They weathered many storms together as many farming families did over the decades.

I had the great joy of meeting Fran and Maryllis over 17 years ago. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting them at their farm near the big water tower on the high hill off of Manning Avenue. A very large kitchen table filled the kitchen area to feed their seven children over the years. There was always a good pot of coffee and delicious treats awaiting my arrival.

Fran would share stories about life on the farm. He loved big parties, especially when his machine shed was transformed into a dance hall. Music was playing, his feet were moving and I know he had his wonderful smile across his face that would light up a room. His warmth, willingness to share a laugh, and his sense of humor were infectious.

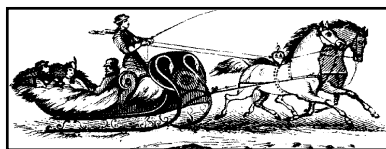
After Fran served in the US Army, he moved back to Minnesota and purchased his family farm. He spent the rest of his long career and life doing what he loved best — farming! He could repair just about every piece of equipment on his farm, as many other farmers have done over the years. Fran was also a great steward of the land. He knew the importance of the land and the role he held as a farmer. Our country was built on the many benefits farmers provided for our communities.

Many who live in Woodbury are not aware that Woodbury's farmers played a key role in feeding the people of the east metro areas with milk, eggs, wheat, corn and many other supplies to nourish growing communities. Today, Woodbury is seen as a very large city with many new homes, shopping malls, box stores and numerous restaurants. Some people do not realize the rich history our community had in farming.

I will miss this very special man who cared about his community and helped in any way he could. He was so dedicated to his loving wife Maryllis and his family.

I'd like to share a poem about farming that I think sums up Fran Oehlke and the many other astonishing lifelong farmers who cared for the land and helped Woodbury grow into the community that it now is. Most of the original Woodbury farms are no longer around, but the wonderful legacy of these farmers' hard work and vision is being experienced every day by our current residents.

We, the Woodbury Heritage Society, thank you, our farmers, and honor your role in our history!



FARMING

*Farming is a passion – a devoted and honorable way of life.
It is a heritage and a legacy that connects one generation to the next
the force that feeds the world.*

Farming requires a strong mind, big heart and profound patience to weather long hours, harsh condition and unpredictable prices. There is a spiritual presence on the farm land and in the land. Here, faith, commitment and integrity provide strength for the unwavering labor that is the foundation of life itself.

It is where roots run deep in the house as they do in the field – where families are bound strong because of shared experiences, and grown with love and tenderness. It is where examples speak louder than words, and where thanksgiving happens more than once a year.

Written by Bonnie Mohr



A Gem of a Book

By Joyce Flynn

On a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon, I was volunteering as a host of the Woodbury Heritage House, located on the corner of Lake Road and Radio Drive. The second and fourth Sunday during the summer months this house is open to the public for tours.

I perused a number of reading items on top of the table. I love to cook and my eyes spotted “Woodbury Community Club Cook Book.” This cook book was originally published in 1923 by the women of the Woodbury Community Club. It was reproduced by the Woodbury Heritage Society in 1993.

As I read through numerous recipes, I found one for a recipe for brown nut bread.

2c. graham flour	¼ c. sugar
1c. white flour	½ c. raisins
2c. sour milk	½ c. nuts
2 tsp soda	1 tsp salt
½ c molasses	

Seed and chop the raisins, chop the nuts, add to the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly. Add the sour milk and the molasses, mix again, pour into greased pans and stand aside for 1 hour then bake in a hot oven.

After I read the ‘hot oven,’ I presumed this recipe was cooked in a wood burning stove. During that time period, some homes still had wood burning stoves. Other recipes suggested moderate oven heat. I am not sure what that temperature is, but I am going to give this recipe a shot!

Another interesting part of this cook book was the ‘Household Hints’ section. Here are a few of their suggestions:

- To prevent an unpleasant odor from the breath after eating onions, cut a sprig of parsley which has been dipped in vinegar.
- For fruit and coffee stains, stretch the stained part over a bowl and pour boiling water through it from a height until the stain disappears.
- Grass stains may be removed by washing with Fels-Naptha soap and water.

My curiosity was now really peaked and I wanted to know about who, where and what the Woodbury Community Club was. Fortunately, while researching, I found my book *Woodbury: A Past to Remember*, which stated the following:

“On January 11, 1918, during World War I, 25 women of Woodbury met at the home of Mrs. I.G. Fritze and organized a Red Cross Club. Lily Neubauer was elected president. They met regularly and made many types of clothing and bandages. These articles were turned over to the military headquarters at Stillwater. In 1919, the boys were coming home, so the club held a reception for the returning soldiers at the Frank Meyer home.

In 1920, the Red Cross Club changed its name to the Woodbury Community Club. The membership had increased to 55. The club met in various homes and enjoyed socials, picnics and house parties during the year. Every Christmas, donations including food and clothing were given to the needy. During the 20s the club raised money in various ways: socials, flower shows, and suppers were held, papers were sold and a cook book was printed under the name The Woodbury Community Cook Book. This was not difficult to sell. Two plays were also given with some of the club members taking part. One play was given at Stillwater with proceeds of \$721.00.

In 1929, a committee was appointed with the idea in mind of building a community hall. The Town Board worked with the committee and a two-acre rectangular tract of land (located on Tower and Afton Roads) where the hall now stands was purchased from Ed Krueger for \$300.00.

The ground-breaking ceremony was held in October with local men doing the preliminary work. Henry Ellman was given the contract to build the hall.

The Club incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1932. It was formally opened in December 15, 1933, and seven years later was clear of debt. The club motto was: “We are laborers together.” The official colors of the club were green and white. The purpose of the hall was to provide a meeting place for various groups and celebrations: Fourth of July, community celebrations, and all public meetings. In 1947, the philosophy of the club was changed, admitting men as members.

Since that time many improvements have been made to the hall. Redecorating has been done, remodeling of the kitchen, and more recently, putting in a basement under a portion of the hall, thus allowing for a small meeting room and lavatory facilities.

The membership of the club has never been much larger than in the beginning, but the members have been faithful. This has resulted in continual improvement of the present facility, and, as a result, the club still stands as a strong organization in the city of Woodbury.”

I now discovered how my cook book came together and who created it. In later years, the club house was sold to a church who in turn sold it to the city. Unfortunately, it was torn down several years ago by the city. It had been one of the few historical buildings still standing in Woodbury.



The History of Christmas Cards

The holidays are a time when we catch up with family or old friends. The cards we receive are messengers of warm greetings and photographic evidence of family growth, expansion, and change. Even in today's digital era, many of us still adhere to the tradition of sending and receiving Christmas cards in the mail.

In the Victorian era, postal mail was the equivalent of today's social media. In England, with the advent of the 'Penny Post,' anyone could send a letter across the country and share all their gossip and well wishes within a relatively short period of time.

For recipients of these epistles, it was considered impolite not to return the favor and post all your own news back to the sender. For people with very large circles of friends and acquaintances, you can imagine how time-consuming this could be. Just think of all the Jane Austen or Charles Dickens novels you have read, and all the time those characters spent answering letters.

In 1843, Sir Henry Cole, a prominent resident of Victorian England with a large volume of correspondence, decided there just wasn't enough time in his day to answer all his Christmas and New Year's letters. His solution was to send a generic Christmas greeting printed along with an illustration, which he could then personalize by adding each name by hand. Thus, the Christmas card was born.

It took some years for the trend to catch on in the United States, but a New England printer named Louis Prang recognized the potential appeal of such a time-saver and began producing holiday postcards in 1875. In 1915, the Christmas card tradition began in earnest when the Hall brothers — Joyce, Rollie and William — created a folding card that allowed a sender to include even more greetings and news. Today, their enduring company is known as Hallmark.



The Raths around 1998



This year's Rath decorators

A Glance to the Past – Minnesota Becomes a State

Life in Woodbury – submitted by Joyce Flynn. Excerpt taken from “Woodbury: A Past To Remember” by the Woodbury Heritage Society.

Changes came swiftly to Woodbury. In the spring of 1849, when the first boat came up the river, news was brought that Saint Paul was to be the capital, and that President Taylor had appointed Governor Ramsey of Pennsylvania to be Governor of the Minnesota Territory.

The 1850s were to see a large influx of settlers into Woodbury. In 1849 only 3,726 people lived in Minnesota. Nine years later Minnesota became a state with a population of 170,000.

People could not resist the rolling, fertile, farm land, close to the towns of Saint Paul and Saint Anthony Falls (now Minneapolis). On January 2nd, 1864, the town issued a call to the patriotic citizens in order to make up its quota for the war. This meeting was held in District 27. It was resolved that a \$100.00 bounty should be offered to whoever would enlist before the next draft. We do not have an exact record as to how many volunteered.

Kerosene came into use in Woodbury during the Civil War. Many of our people hesitated to use this marvelous discovery as it was explosive. But soon they discovered that salt added to the kerosene was a preventative. It was an additional job for one of the young ladies in the household to wash and shine the glass chimneys, keep the lamps filled, and trim the wicks.

Three churches were organized in Woodbury in the early years. Woodbury Methodist, established by a small band in 1853, was soon followed by Salem Lutheran in 1865 and St. John Lutheran in 1868. Our Catholic people went to Guardian Angel in Oakdale; the Catholic settlers in the southeast portion of our township went into Hastings. Some of our Lutheran settlers in the northeast portion of our township went to St. Peter Lutheran Church in Afton township.



Minnesota Christmas

Minnesota Christmas!
All the world is white!
Over crystal snow banks,
Christmas lights shine bright!

Pinewoods all around us,
Still lakes, frozen deep —
Starlight to astound us
In the winter's sleep.

Everything is peaceful
'Round the Christmas tree
Home in Minnesota
With my family.

Carl James Anderson



Volunteers Needed!

The Woodbury Heritage Society is looking for volunteers for three positions:

Office Worker: We need a person to open our research library for a short time at least once a week.

Events Committee Person: The events committee needs help with fundraising and event planning. For more detailed information contact Joyce at: joyce_flynn@msn.com.

Non-garden Landscaper: Maintain the lawn and flowers around the Heritage House. Knowledge of tradition flowers would be a plus.



My heart turns to and fro,
In thinking what will the people say,
They who shall see my monument in after years,
And shall speak of what I have done.

— Queen Hatshepsut, "Speech of the Queen" (c. 1540 B.C.)



8301 Valley Creek Road
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Woodbury Heritage Society

2023 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

(Please print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (Please check appropriate line)

_____ \$30 per individual (Annual Dues for the Calendar Year)

_____ \$35 per household

_____ \$1000 lifetime membership

_____ Additional Gift

Areas of interest: _____

Donations are tax deductible. Send application & check or money order to:

Woodbury Heritage Society
Rick Osborn, Membership Chair
City Hall
8301 Valley Creek Road
Woodbury, MN 55125