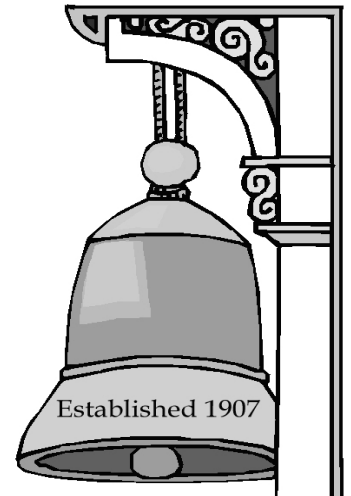




**Western Hennepin County
Pioneer Association, Inc.**



THE OLD SCHOOL BELL

VOLUME 145

CENTENNIAL EDITION 2007

Historic Hamel Library

Come Visit the Hamel Library Museum!

By Laurie Hatcher Merz

Across from Fortin Hardware on the main street in Hamel, sits a quaint, freshly-painted little building full of local history. The Hamel Library Museum may look small, but it holds a surprising amount of information. Visitors will find photos and articles on Hamel's history, the local baseball teams, fire department events, family histories and important events in the area in the past century and much more.

The pint-sized library operated from 1922-1968, so for some visitors, entering the museum will be a trip back to childhood. They may remember Mrs. Roy, the librarian, greeting them, helping with the selection of a book and signing them up for the special reading programs she initiated. There was barely room to turn around in the tiny library, but having those books available to us local children seemed to open up a great big world right there.

The Library Museum is funded by the Uptown Hamel Business Group, with local business owners also taking a turn as guides each week. The museum is open on Fridays from June 1st to

September 28th, from 3-5pm. It is often open during special events in Hamel as well. If you would like to visit at another time, there is a key available at the Hamel Bank and Fortin Hardware. If you are interested in contributing articles, photos or your valuable time to the museum, contact Marilyn Fortin (763)478-0302 or Pete Schmidt (763)559-3119.

The Hamel Library Museum certainly fits the old adage, "good things come in small packages"!



Hamel Library Museum

Photograph Laurie Hatcher Merz

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As volunteers in this organization, we don't see monetary compensation for our efforts. So our rewards are smiling faces, pats on the back, and offers of "Job well-done." Often even these kudos don't come freely, so I'd like to take a little space to thank a few Board Members and others who have been especially supportive in recent months.

Scott Coltrane, recently retired from the Board for health reasons, deserves voluminous thanks for digitizing a great share of our archives and for helping to put us into the 21st century, technology-wise. Already we are seeing the benefits of his labors.

If you attended the Wild West Extravaganza at the Museum recently, you did see a lot of smiling faces. And you enjoyed the professional reenactments of a group called The Old West Society of Minnesota. Normally they charge for their presentations, but for us they appeared free of charge. We greatly appreciate their talents and I know I came away from the day learning a lot about that era. Organizing this event took a lot of hours on the part of many people. We're grateful for volunteers to numerous to mention here, but especially Board Members Jim Dillman, Laurie Merz, and Char Benson. These three did the lion's share of the behind the scenes work.

Briefly, the Capital Campaign is coming along nicely. We've secured several lead contributions, are working on approaching the businesses in the community, and have had a good response from you, our members. We hope to wrap up the campaign by year's end, so if you haven't yet contributed, be aware that every dollar helps us reach our goal. We'd dearly love to have 100% support of our members to prove to other potential donors that those who value what we do are squarely behind our goal. Your thanks will be a nice note from me as well as the knowledge that you will have helped preserve our heritage for generations to come.

Respectfully, Steve Kelley
President

MUSEUM NEWS

Our capital campaign committee reports that things are progressing well. Annette and Todd are the leaders of the fund-raising staff and get help from the leadership of Darcy Haislet, from our board. They meet monthly, and have just recently produced a brochure that details our mission. Contact Darcy or Steve Kelley if you can help in any way. Darcy may be reached at home-763-475-3815 or daytime at 952-475-9233.

We were saddened in the past months by the passing of our two former directors of WHPA, **Adeline West** and **Ed Miller**. Adeline often headed up the quilt

raffle ticket sales, and Ed, a master gardener, was a great leader of this organization, I believe serving as both vice-president and treasurer for a time

Museum News

The museum has a new neighbor. The old McLain-Goshgarian house, at 1977 W. Wayzata Blvd. -just to the west of us- has been completely remodeled and now serves as a pet grooming and supply boutique called **Club Mutts**-formerly Manitou Mutts. They also sell

some antiques. The proprietors are Mary Faith Moore and H M Gabriel. Members of our board worked closely with them on the shared parking arrangement and the grounds look really nice, with some new trees recently planted, and the western view of our building greatly improved. Stop in and meet our new neighbors.

Many thanks to Bob Erickson for arranging to have two large tree stumps in our back yard, near the new Brown Road, chipped out. Jim Dillman made good use of the mulch, and the whole yard looked great for our Wild West Extravaganza on July 21.

We are still receiving compliments on the new "down-lighting" that illuminates our west side. Thanks to Jim Dillman for this. Also, thanks to Mike or Jerry or whoever has been painting our exterior masonry, below the brick-line. All looks great!

Thanks to Scott Coltrane for creating a 70 page customized handbook for our computers. Also he is working with Dick Stubbs and Dan Stubbs on operation and scanning. Thanks to Dan for getting us some DVD's.

Rain is in short supply in this region. For those of you reading this in our great southwest, you are not the only ones suffering from some extreme drought conditions. Some did get a nice rain on the 4th of July (about 1.5 inches), but all the lakes are down and some farmer could be hurting. This year is not quite as bad as the drought of the late 1980's here yet, but neither can rival the drought of the Dust Bowl Years of the 1930's and early 1940's. Local lore tells the story about how they made hay in the lake bed of Holy Name, as it was nearly dried up at that point.

* * * * *

We received a nice letter from Mike and Nancy (Roehl) Getty of Omaha, Nebraska. *"She grew up in Hopkins and is a descendant of*

Mathias, Simon, Adam (WWI Navy Vet) and finally James Edward Roehl, her Dad, A WWI Army Vet, CBI Theatre, 3 Bronze Stars, ret'd Lt. Col., who worked for Honeywell and retires as a reservist. He is buried at Ft. Snelling."

The Getty's also enclosed some copies of St. Antonius Church in Bleckhausen. This building was the home parish of many of the Germans that settled in medina and St. Joseph's parish on Rockford Road in Plymouth. Their church bears a remarkable resemblance to the old Holy Name Church (still there) on Co. Rd. 24. Could the Reiser, Scherer, Stumpf, and Roehl families have borrowed this architecture from their beloved homeland? It certainly sparks one's curiosity.

Thanks to our archivists, especially Charlotte Stevens who is currently collating many of Avery's hand-written memos. This will be a time saver and help in retrieval.

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Capital Campaign Report

Annette Rodriguez gave us a status report at the July Board Meeting showing commitments of over \$640,000 with \$440,000 in pending requests. Great progress!

* * * * *

**100th Anniversary
Kid's Coloring Contest**

On July 14 we kicked off a coloring contest, with the forms being sent out as an insert to The Pioneer newspaper. The prizes are sponsored by the Lake Community Bank and Farmers State Bank of Hamel. The art work is of the Wolsfeld Cabin at Medina City hall and beautifully drawn by John Manro. The categories are 0-8 years old and 9-12

years old. 1st prize is \$50 Visa gift card. 2nd prizes are \$25 gift cards.

The winners and one honorable mention from each category will get to ride on the Museum's float in the Long Lake Corn Day's Parade. Winners are to be announced August 10th.

Dates to Note

August 11-12: Corn Days

Saturday, August 18, 2007, 100th Anniversary Annual Meeting!

The agenda for the annual meeting has been adjusted to have the business meeting prior to Lunch, so it will be an 11 AM start with Pot Luck dinner at Noon. Fried Chicken and beverages provided by WHCPA.

Site: Calvin Presbyterian Church
177 Glendale Drive, Long Lake.

We are planning some special programs to go along with our Centennial celebration. If you have questions contact Charlotte Benson (763-478-4666) or Jane Olson (952-473-2636).

We encourage more family groups-extended families-multi-generational to join us for lunch and the afternoon activities.

Depending on how many children and their ages we are planning on some old time games and fun.

If you have items for your family file in the archives you may bring them to the meeting. The museum will be open at 10 AM that day as well.

There will be tables and information on the fundraiser, quilt restoration, archives, membership and publicity, etc.

Also bring along your memories of the 25th, 50th, and 75th anniversaries of the society.

The most important aspect is that in celebrating our 100th anniversary-we are launching our next 100 years and all our members can help by bringing the younger generations to our Centennial celebration and carry on the tradition.

September 14th -16th-2007: Wolsfeld Cabin at Medina City Hall- Civil War Recruitment Rally. Members of the 1st Minnesota Re-enactors and the US Christian Commission will hold the event these three days in Sept. See what life was like as the War Between the States was just beginning.



Our society was actually formulated in June of 1905, and at that time only open to homesteaders who arrived in Minnesota before we gained statehood in May of 1858.

The group we know of today as the Western Hennepin County Pioneers was finally chartered on August 8th, 1907, at Stubbs Bay of Minnetonka, where the annual meetings would continue to be held for many years.

The original Secretary books for all those early years have been scanned in by Scott. The earliest records are in the fine, yet fading calligraphy of the groups 1st, sec'y- Rolla Stubbs. Warren Wakefield was first president.

Other charter families were: Lydiard, McGary, Turnham, Archibald, Stafford, Carr, Luby, Brown, Johnston, Kassube, Maxwell, Hursh, Parker, Dillman, Butterfield, Talbert, Brooks, Cox, Griswold, Grave, and Smith.

Music in the early years was provided by:

Aug. 18, 1910-The Long Lake Brass Band, 1913- Antlers Park Band, 1915- Long Lake Quartet, 1921-Song by Mrs. Frank Ford, 1923- Songs by Miss Barbara Bell.

The total bill for annual meeting of 1924 was \$42.74, with \$4 being paid for cooking chickens & making coffee, ice cream- \$4.75, carrying water-50 Cents.

Often letters would be read by out-state members, especially from Isaac Christlieb of Fullerton California. His family had settled the Cumberland site at Long Lake.

Early pioneer recollections were often given by Warren Wakefield, Bayard Shaver and Henry Baker.

The secretary of the group often took down first hand accounts of pioneer life, the start of our "oral history collections" this before the advent of easy access to recorded sound. Here is an example from Prudence Reynolds read in 1937:

"Ebenezer B Thompson came to Minnesota from Maine & filed a claim near Osseo in 1854- 160 acres. His grandchildren still own 80 acres of the

old farm- now on Jefferson Highway. Mrs. Reynolds remembered as a child when the ox teams with the 2 wheel carts used in the early days by the Red River Lumber Co. would go squeaking by, as they always squeaked.

Also she remembered many Indian stories. Her father always kept peace with the Indians and they often came to the farm home (log cabin). One fall a number of Indians wanted to go to Pig Island, but as there was so much snow and ice travel was near impossible, so Mr. Reynolds took his ox team and helped them-was gone about 1 week, from 4 miles east of Osseo to what is now St. Paul.

Also she recalled the story of some Indians who came to sharpen their tomahawks at the old grind stone. This was around the time of the U S -Dakota War of 1862."

Next issue-How WHCPA found a permanent home, the growth of the Stubbs library and archives, and more recent developments of our heritage sites.

A HOMESTEAD WITH A SPRING

By Tom Turnham

For the first settlers of Minnesota it would be hard to overemphasize the convenience of having a spring on your own land that could provide a steady supply of pure, cold water. It could be used not only for drinking water for the family and their livestock, but also used for keeping their meat and milk from spoiling during the hot summer months. There were a number of springs around the Lake Minnetonka area but the one that directly affected my pioneer ancestors was the one located along the creek that flows from Clasen Lake to Stubbs Bay and is about 200 yards southeast of the intersection of Watertown Road and Leaf Street. Originally this was part of the homestead of my great-grandparents, Edwin and Emily Maxwell Turnham who had claimed the land in 1855, the year this part of Minnesota had been opened for settlement.



Turnham's cabin, about 1870

It wasn't by accident that they claimed this particular 160 acre parcel with a flowing spring. The previous year Emily's two brothers, Francis and James Maxwell, had come up the Mississippi River from Illinois where the Turnham and Maxwell families were living and had scouted the area for desirable parcels to claim the next year when the state would be opened for settlement. They wrote down various sites they felt would be good to claim but the one they felt was the best was the one with the spring. They went back home to Illinois and told the clan to sell all their holdings so they would be ready to take the first river boat leaving

for St. Paul the next spring after the ice went out. Minnesota looked like the land of opportunity.

That first summer must have been a harrowing one for Edwin and Emily and their four little children between the ages of 2 and 10. Their only shelter, until they could build a log cabin, was a very primitive one consisting of rough poles leaned against a large fallen tree, thatched with marsh grass and sided with slabs of elm bark. How happy they must have been that fall when they finally completed their new, two-story, 16' x 18' log cabin, just before the onset of winter.

There were a number of requirements for the settlers before they would receive title to the land they were claiming. First, they had to complete a cabin, then clear enough land for a garden and pasture and finally build a shelter for their animals. There was a time limit to complete these improvements; I believe it was four years, so there probably was plenty of chopping and sawing going on in the "Big Woods" at that time.

Many of the other settlers who had claims near my great-grandparents used the Turnham Spring as their source of drinking water. It was a wonderful resource to have and they willingly shared it with all. The spring made the Turnham place somewhat of a center of activity in those early years. When neighbors came to replenish their drinking water, they would stop to visit and possibly meet up with friends who were also coming with their empty pails.

A few years later the Turnham place and its spring became a regular stop for the stagecoach that ran from Minneapolis to Watertown. One history source even says that the stagecoach passengers occasionally stayed overnight, with the ladies sleeping upstairs in the house and the gents sleeping in the hayloft of the barn.

The ever-flowing spring even provided the Turnhams with a monetary advantage as there was a law at that time that said any farmer who provided a watering trough for passersby was excused from road poll tax. While this was probably a very small saving, every little bit helped, as the family, like many of their neighbors, was desperately short of money. When the federal government passed a law in 1858 that required larger payments than were originally required, the Turnhams could not make those payments and they were forced to sell 100 acres of their land in order not to lose everything, but they managed to keep the land with the spring.

Edwin and Emily ultimately had a family of six girls and four boys. Because of this large family and their natural hospitality, their place was often the site of neighborhood picnics and holiday celebrations. When the children grew up, they married and left home but fortunately for the parents they didn't move very far away. Family get-togethers at the old homestead remained a regular occurrence with names like Fleming, Stubbs, McCormick, Snoke and May (daughters married names) as well as Turnham represented.

Edwin died in 1879 but Emily lived until 1908 when she passed away at the age of 83. She lived on the original property until her death, the last few years sharing the home with her only unmarried child, Segal, who was known to all as "Teed". Teed eventually inherited the property and owned it until his death in 1951.



Turnham Second Generation

Back Row-L-R: Ella (Turnham) McCormick, Elizabeth (Turnham) Stubbs, Eddie Guy Turnham, Rachel (Turnham) Fleming. Front Row- L-R: Segal (Teed) Turnham (1861-1951), Eva (Turnham) May, James Turnham, Mary (Turnham) Snoke, George Turnham(President of WHPA 1926-49)

An article in the *Minnetonka Record* of August 13, 1915 illustrates the importance of the spring and creek to the family members: *"61 descendents of Mrs. Emily Turnham returned to the old Turnham homestead for a family reunion on July 29, a revival of the old Thanksgiving tradition. - - - There was a plentiful lunch on the bank of the creek and the old residence resounded again with the shouts and laughter of children as they waded in the stream and romped in the meadow. It was interesting to note how many went down again to the spring to kneel and drink as in childhood days."*

After Teed's death, his grand-nephew Bill Mills purchased the old homestead from the estate and platted the property as Swan Lake Addition with a winding street named Cygnet Place running through it. The lot where the spring is located was purchased by Greg and Rosemarie Ehalt in 1960. They built their family residence on the bank of the creek and this is where they still live. When the Ehalts drilled the well for their house they hit the same vein of water that feeds the spring, at a depth of about 80 feet. Their house is just slightly south of where the Turnhams had built their first log cabin.



Greg Ehalt and Tom Turnham at the spring, 2007

The flow of water from the spring nowadays varies quite a bit with the season. It has a small but steady flow in the springtime that reduces to a mere seepage in the dry summer months. We have to use our imagination to visualize the cold, clear flowing rivulet that served our pioneer ancestors so well 150 years ago.

Thanks to Tom and Greg for all this interesting history. Board member Mike Ellis fondly recalls playing in this area as a youngster. The local Boy Scout Troop often used the area for encampments, with four different sites to choose from.

Wild West Extravaganza

As President Steve Kelley mentioned the Wild West Show was a huge success. Around 300 visitors or more showed up during the day to watch 33 re-enactors perform seven skits or “scenarios” as they called them. There was the **Shootout at the Ok Corral**, which as was explained by their MC actually only lasted about 30 seconds, but has gone down as legend in the old west. Their was **Don’t Bring a Knife to a Gunfight, Ladies Revenge, the Wells Fargo Stage Holdup**, and a few others as well as demonstrations in rope twirling and whip cracking, and high bike riding. All thrilling!

This was probably the biggest and best event our organization has hosted in recent memory. It was only made possible by all the volunteers, especially Rick Perry, groups from our board, the Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, the Orono High National Honor Society, and a group from Calvin Presbyterian. Special thanks to Dobo’s Catering of Loretto and to John Hallson of Orono. He is a member of our society and also the Wild

West Society and coordinated this wonderful day. The weather was perfect, not too hot, and you should have seen the traffic on Highway 12 practically come to a standstill when the bullets were flying!

The old west camp included a chuck-wagon, a large camp tent and a two person army tent, a gambler and a dancehall girl, and two whip cracking experts, including John Bickler (a.k.a John Cody).



The cook at the chuck-wagon (below) offered to serve up his homemade beans and maybe a shot of whiskey for all we know.

The montage on the following page shows our President Steve Kelley and our Vice President Laurie Merz in convict outfits, John and Linda holding the parasol, various scenes including "Ladies' Revenge" and other gunplay, and Bob Gasch waiting to be bailed out of jail.







A scene from one of the shootouts on the Museum grounds at Wild West Day.



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