



# Chanhassen Historian

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## HISTORY BITS

### 1898

The Historic Village Hall was built in 1898. It was designed and construction supervised by John C. Geiser, well known for designing churches, including Historic St. Hubert's.

These are some of the building costs in 1898:

\$ 4.50 /Plans  
150.00/ Lumber  
12.55 /Freight  
20.68/ Labor

The building housed the village's fire-fighting equipment, as well as a jail, which still occupies the back room.

### 1940

Richard and Burt Lyman raised turkeys on the Lyman farm in Chanhassen Township. During the Armistice Day Blizzard on November 11, 1940 thousands of turkeys across Minnesota perished including many of the Lyman's birds. One, however, sought shelter in a corn shock on a neighboring farm. It was discovered alive, but thin, three weeks later with its tail frozen to the ground.

*(from Images of America, Carver County, courtesy of Jean Meuwissen)*

### May 1966

The newly-formed Chanhassen Civic Theatre presents its first production "All Because of Agatha" directed by Ken Smith at the St. Hubert's School Auditorium.

## Summer camp brought girls, opportunities to Chanhassen

When I am in the town of Chanhassen running usual errands, I love to drive through some of the older neighborhoods on the East side of the city. Having grown up in Chanhassen, this is my history. I enjoy looking at the interesting and varied architecture of the homes and the beautiful perennial gardens that take over the yards during the summer. But I have my favorite spots. One of these is to take Frontier Trail past W. 77<sup>th</sup> Street, heading towards Sunrise Hills. This area is unusually heavily forested and the terrain is steep and interesting. As I travel from W. 77<sup>th</sup> Street, down the hill to the homes in the 7500 block, I look to my right. It's hard to not be captivated by the dense trees, the steep slope and the occasional home tucked into the woods. The few homes sit high above the street level and remind me of tree houses. I envy the view they must enjoy. But this piece of property has its own history.

In the 1930's, this land was owned by one of the Kerber families. Mr. Kerber ran a dairy and crop farm, as did his many relatives in Chanhassen. But Mr. Kerber had no need for this 44 acre piece of land with all the hills and trees. He found it useless as it was of no value for growing crops or for grazing cattle. In 1939 Mr. Kerber asked Bob White, a local developer, to sell this property for him. Bob White sought the help of his friend Harvey Kruse, an experienced man in the advertising business. Harvey and his wife, Marge, visited the property with the intention of Harvey assisting Bob White in the promotion of the sale. However, the Kruse's fell in love with the land at first sight. Marge Kruse knew exactly what she intended to do with this property. She had been a Physical Education teacher in the Minneapolis school district for many years and she



**Girls attending Glen Acres Camp in Chanhassen had the opportunity for swimming lessons in the campground pool. After the campers left for the summer, youth from town were allowed to use the pool for several weeks before it was closed up for the season.**

had spent many summers working at girls camps. This gave Marge the background to start her own camp. And that is just what she did.

In the next two years, Marge and Harvey bought the land and had a three-room building built on the site. They had built an in-ground swimming pool to accommodate swim lessons. In the summer of 1941, Marge opened up Glen Acres Camp. Although by December, 1941, Pearl Harbor had been bombed and the county was at war, Marge successfully grew and maintained her girls camp in Chanhassen. Her camp would remain in operation from 1941 until 1961 when Marge and Harvey retired.

Marge was an unusual lady for her times. She was strong and resourceful and full of ideas. She was not afraid to put her ideas into action. I was able to discuss the days of Glen Acres camp with **GLEN ACRES CAMP to page 2**

# Glen Acres Camp Continued from page 1

Ted DeLancey, Marge and Harvey's son. He describes his mother as an "impact player". If Marge had her mind set on something, it was going to happen.

Glen Acres was a day camp and was intended for girls between the ages of five and nine, those too young to go to an overnight camp. Marge solicited her campers from Edina and western Minneapolis where young girls did not have the same opportunities to explore nature as the farm girls of Chanhassen. The camp provided transportation and picked up and dropped off the campers every day. As many as 55 campers would come to the camp in a given day. Glen Acres offered swimming, dancing, gardening, handcrafts and nature studies. Marge felt strongly about measuring success and reaching goals. She kept charts and graphs of the girls' accomplishments in areas like swimming. By the end of the month long camp, girls had made measurable accomplishments.

The residents of Chanhassen enjoyed the benefits of having the camp in their

town, even if the local residents were not campers. Ted DeLancey has kept all the neatly hand written records of the camp's 20 years of operation. In those ledgers will be found the many names of Chanhassen residents who the Kruse's employed to run their camp. Ron Roeser, a local octogenarian and lifelong resident of Chanhassen, was a young boy when the camp was in operation. He recalls that when the camp closed after the summer season the Kruses would keep the swimming pool open for a few weeks and allow the town children to come and swim. Ron looked forward to hearing the word the pool was open for the locals. Ron was given swim instructions when he came to the camp for his swims. He believes he would never have learned to swim had it not been for the Kruse's generosity. In the 40s, the children of Chanhassen would never have seen a swimming pool or been given the opportunity to be formally taught to swim.

I also have my own personal story applying to Glen Acres Camp. My

mother, Gladys Schueren, worked at the camp in the 1940s, before she had children. She was a cook, and performed other housekeeping duties. After the camp closed, my mother retained a friendship with the Kruses, until they passed away. Marge died in 1986 at the age of 88, and Harvey a few years prior. In the late 50s and early 60s, my sisters and I were invited to use the pool at the camp during the summer. This was surely a highlight in our summer. I was in admiration of Marge Kruse. I had not known other women who were so confident, and certainly none that had started and ran their own business. I am certain that Marge was an inspiration to many of us young girls in the 1960s.

Ted DeLancey took over the property when his parents retired in the 1960s. He and his wife, Kathy, have retained a residence on the camp property grounds since then. The property is still called Glen Acres. Next time you drive by this area, imagine 55 little girls learning their swim lessons and enjoying the summer days in the 1940s.

Join us for the Carver County

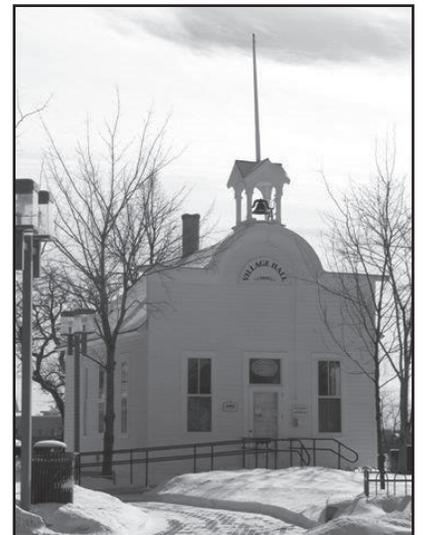
## Annual Community Picnic & Vintage Base Ball Game Sunday, September 21

Festivities will run between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.  
at Heritage Square in Chanhassen  
(by Historic St. Hubert's Church and Village Hall)

Live music by Straw Dust Heart

- Picnic tables (and tent) will be set up in the Square; Bring your own picnic basket or purchase from the "Old Style Picnic" menu by Von Hansons of Chanhassen.
- Historic Display- Featuring images of historic Chanhassen downtown - Local artist invited to display - Main floor of Chanhassen Dinner Theater
- St. Hubert's Cemetery tour- learn what famous people are buried there
- 12:30 p.m. and 1 p.m., backstage tour of the Chanhassen Dinner Theater- limited space, sign up required
- Also featured: Chanhassen Railroad Depot and Old Village Hall tours

Free Vintage Base Ball Game begins at 2:30 p.m. at Chanhassen High School, Storm/Redbird Stadium. (See Page 4)



**\$3** **Valuable Coupon!** **\$3**

Bring this coupon to the Carver County Historical Society Picnic and receive \$3 off on Von Hanson's Picnic Lunch (Regular Price: \$8 Adult, \$5 Children 12 & Under)

September 21st, 2014 11AM - 2PM

**\$3** Cash or check only. Coupon good for up to 2 people. **\$3**

### VON HANSON'S CLASSIC PICNIC

- Smoked tomato
- Seasoned roasted chickens
- Choice of BBQ pork or beef
- Seasoned roasted baby potatoes
- Cole slaw
- Smokey baked beans
- Fresh fruit

- Watermelon boat
- Von Hanson's fresh baked buns
- Condiments

Refreshments Served Courtesy of Chanhassen Historical Society

# President's notes

Do you remember when the heart of Chanhassen centered around the area of the old St Hubert Church and consisted of a gas station, lumber yard, a supper club, a couple of bars, a few homes, the convent, a feed mill, a farmyard and a cornfield? It's hard to believe that as recent as 50 years ago, the simple downtown was about to undergo a major change.



**Lynn Murphy  
CHS President**

Have you ever wondered about how Chanhassen Dinner Theater and the frontier themed buildings connected to it came to be? Or what the eastern most downtown village looked like a half a century ago? It seems that the western frontier style wooden structures now occupied by many local businesses like Seedlings Gifts and Books, Chuck Wagon Charlies Smokehouse and Saloon and Chanhassen Vacuum Service Center are fast becoming a historic area of interest in Chanhassen. This area has a rich history worth learning about. If you don't actually remember a time when this part of the downtown was a newly built complex just opened for business and aren't familiar with how it progressed from what was once a cornfield, we can help.

It all started when Herb Bloomberg first opened Frontier Lumber in 1959 in the heart of Chanhassen on the south side of West 78th Street at the Laredo Drive intersection. Bloomberg designed his lumber yard in a rustic motif and encouraged other business owners to follow suit. He and his wife, Carol, opened a furniture store and a hardware store in 1961 and had a dream of making Chanhassen a destination with a unique theme. As a planning board member, Mr. Bloomberg's proposals paved the way for the future.

Many skeptics back then were doubtful of the progressive vision for Chanhassen of transforming the small main street into a "Frontier" downtown offering quality family entertainment could ever be a success. But in 1968 the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre complex was open to the public. It is reported that a local committee began Frontier Days, a celebration held a week before July 4th "that featured a parade, mock hangings, and a variety of special events," according to A Centennial History. The town was promoted as "The Western-most Town in Minnesota." Frontier Days became a major community

event for a decade and attracted people from all over, including Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who was the guest of honor at the 1970 Frontier Days parade.

Today, more than four decades later, Chanhassen Dinner Theater is proud to be the nation's largest professional dinner theatre; it is also the largest commercial tourist destination in Carver County and according to the CDT web site the largest privately owned restaurant in Minnesota. Although the thriving Frontier Days town celebration of the 1970's a part of the past, many recall.

This year Chanhassen Historical Society hosts the Carver County annual picnic. The community event will be held in the historic Old Village Square in front of Old Village Town Hall. In partnership with Carver County Historical Society and the Arts Consortium of Carver County, we invite our members and all the folks in Carver County to join us for an old style picnic, live musical entertainment, historic tours of Chanhassen Dinner Theater, displays the downtown from the past



**A free vintage base ball game will be played at the Chanhassen High School Storm/Redbirds Stadium at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 21.**

century, artist exhibits and topped off by a vintage base ball game at the Chanhassen High School Storm/Redbirds stadium. It will be a day of celebration and we hope to bring back and reminisce a little bit about the Chanhassen brand of frontier days and simpler times.

See you at the picnic on September 21st!



## Join the Chanhassen Historical Society

Your membership will help with the preservation and restoration projects of Chanhassen's historic buildings, plus educational programs about our community's history. You also automatically become a member of the Carver County Historical Society.

### Membership Application

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual: \$15; Family: \$25; Bronze: \$50 - \$100; Silver: \$101 - \$250; Gold: \$251 - \$500; Platinum: \$500 - \$1,000**

**Make checks payable to: Chanhassen Historical Society,  
P.O. Box 941, Chanhassen, MN 55317**

# As American as apple pie and baseball

The sun is yellow, the breeze is blue and the ball field is green. Your bag of peanuts and beer are half full. The discarded peanut shells crunch beneath your feet, enhancing the ambivalence of the ball game. What more could you ask for? It is a perfect day for a baseball game.

The pitcher winds up, the batter swings, he misses. Strike one, two, three. He's out! End of the seventh inning. The crowd stands, stretches, and erupts into a mass chorus:

“Take me out to the ball game,  
Take me out with the crowd;  
Just buy me some peanuts and Cracker  
Jack,  
I don't care if I never get back.  
Let me root, root, root for the home team,  
If they don't win, it's a shame.  
For it's one, two, three strikes, you're out,  
At the old ball game.”

In 1908, Jack Norwoth wrote the iconic lyrics to *Take Me Out to The Ball Game*. The music was written by Albert Von Tilzer. What is amazing is that baseball is so ingrained in American culture that Von Tilzer and Norwoth wrote the song without

ever having been to a baseball game.

Baseball is an American tradition, yet it has its critics. Ray Fitzgerald once characterized baseball, in the *Boston Globe*, as six minutes of action crammed into two-and-one-half hours. He obviously did not know that the key to enjoying baseball is to get involved. One way of doing that would be to change the rules just a little bit and allow those in the bleachers to participate just a little bit more. Better yet, let's revisit the rules from 1880, base ball (yes, two words), occasionally known as town ball. The best part of 1880 base ball is that rules can be changed as long as both teams agree to abide by the changes.

First, let's change the venue of the game from a nice manicured field to that of a horse or cow pasture. Watching the players dodge cow pies and horse apples could be a lot of fun. It would also make sliding in to a base very interesting. Don't worry about a tree in the middle of the field. That only adds interest and if by chance the ball gets stuck, you can heckle the player or ump that is sent up the tree to get the ball down. Heckling is allowed and encouraged as long as you keep it clean. Foul language will be cause for the

ump to fine the fan.

All baseball gloves will be banned. This could be harmful to the player's hands, so let's make it legal for a ball to be caught after one bounce. A person can be called out not just when tagged. A ball may be thrown at the runner and if hit, the runner will be ruled out.

On Sunday, Sept. 21, at 2:30 p.m., the Chanhassen Historical Society, Arts Consortium of Carver County and the Carver County Historical Society will be hosting a Vintage Base Ball game during the Annual Community Picnic. You are invited to come watch the Red Birds and guests play the St. Croix Vintage Base Ball team which is sponsored by the Stillwater Historical Society, at the Chanhassen High School - Storm/Red Bird Stadium. This event is FREE!

The game will be held following the Annual Community Picnic festivities at the Historic Old Village Square in down town Chanhassen. Festivities will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. with music by Straw Dust Heart. See the ad in this issue for details.

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## Chanhassen Historical Society

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