



Chanhasen Historian

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Chanhasen Tornado Story Jerry Schlenk

It was a breezy day. All the doors to the front of the garage were closed. I went to the overhead door to let a car in for service in the late afternoon of May 6. I opened the door and looked toward Frontier Lumber yard. I saw lumber flying in the air. I walked to the lady in the car and told her to close the windows and lay down on the floor. It looks like a tornado is coming. Then I turned and closed the garage door. I walked toward the back of the garage and looked out the window just north of the garage and saw John Havlik's house that was under construction

explode. Lumber was flying all over. Then I rushed over to the east wall, laid down on the floor under a cabinet. Then all at once the three overhead garage doors flew up, windows were breaking and doors were banging. It was NOISY. I looked to the back wall of the garage and all of a sudden the back wall blew out. I thought about crawling underneath the car. There was a flash of light and a loud explosion. Then it was quiet. It was over.

I got up and helped the lady get off the floor of her car. Then the lady, I and a few other people were standing out in front of the garage and we looked out west toward Victoria and saw another funnel cloud. Thank God it was heading north.

Three days later someone called from Wayzata and said they found the Jerry's Mileage sign in their front yard and asked if I wanted it back.

The tornado was quite an experience.



These are from just a few of the many Chanhasen tornado stories that will be shared at this year's extra special Annual Membership Meeting— taking place on the 60th anniversary of Chanhasen's infamous storm!

See page 3 inside for more information.

A Little Bit of History ... TORNADO EDITION

- "The cliché is real, as I vividly remember the incredibly loud noise passing above our heads like a freight train." – Rick Pearson
- "The weather had gone to an eerie calm and quiet. We saw the smashed Frontier Lumber building and saw Ray Schutlz's new garage blown into a cornfield." – Mark Roeser
- "My husband yelled in a loud terrifying voice "Get into the basement!" The kids and I never moved so fast in our lives." – Mary Jane Klingelhutz
- "I spent the night in the Frontier Lumber truck on site of the lumber yard after the May 6 storm – the building was demolished. One of our Frontier Lumber signs was found in Wayzata." – Fred Oelschlager

Fred Oelschlager — A Life in Chanhassen

Interview by Nancy Simpson

It thrills me when I find a Chanhassenite who has called Chan his home all of his life and has a wonderful story to tell. Fred Oelschlager is one of those people. Many of us know him as the “guy who worked for Herb Bloomberg forever”. But here is a bit more of Fred’s story.

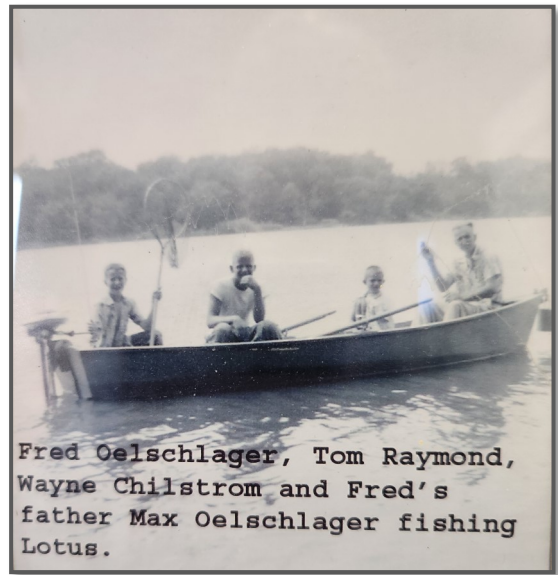
Fred and his family live on the southeast corner of Lotus Lake. He has lived there all of his life. His grandfather first bought this property in the 1920’s. Fred confirmed for me that the legend is true – this property and its original buildings started life as a brothel. The site was originally owned by the Railroad. In 1896 the RR built a dance hall with a bar and piano. The building had 4 bedrooms upstairs dedicated to the brothel. Historically, this tracks with the trend of the Railroad developing destinations along the track route to encourage passenger use of the trains.

Fred’s grandfather, Fred Muller, added to the property and built a farm. Fred’s parents lived there and helped work the farm. Fred was born in 1944, and the third generation in the house began. Eventually Fred and his wife, Rosie, became the sole owners of the property. Many remodels of the property would take place to accommodate the 3 families for the entirety of their lives. During a remodel in the 1970’s, ladies’ nightwear and high heels were found stuffed in the walls of the second floor. I don’t need any more proof to support the earlier brothel legend.

Fred did not have to travel far to meet his lifelong partner, Rosie. In his teens, Fred would drive from his home to the grocery store in Chanhassen for milk for his mother. At the intersection of what is now West 78th Street and Frontier Trail sits a beautiful Victorian home. It’s often called the Kelm\Pauly or Yanisch house. Directly east sat a much smaller home. But Fred saw only the beauty of a young girl who frequently sat on the front steps of the small home. Fred eventually mustered up the courage to stop and introduce himself. All went well until Rosie’s father pulled up and sent Fred on his way. In the years to follow, Fred and Rosie continued contact while Rosie’s dad played interference by cutting their phone calls short. Love prevailed and Fred and Rosie married in 1964.

So, how did Herb Bloomberg enter Fred’s life? In the early 1960’s, Herb and Carol Bloomberg would buy land and build a home on Lotus Lake, slightly north of Fred’s family home. Fred was about 13-14 years old and noticed the large Bloomberg yard. He approached Herb and offered to mow his lawn for a fee. For 90 cents an hour, and the use of his own lawnmower, Fred was employed. Raking leaves and trimming trees were soon added to the chores. But this left Fred without employment in the winter. He approached Herb and was offered work at the Bloomberg Hardware\lumber and furniture store. Fred stocked shelves and mopped floors. Following a tornado that damaged the hardware store in 1965, Herb rebuilt the store and put Fred in charge of the entire Hardware store. In 1983, Bloomberg would sell the hardware store to Kent Ludford. To this day, Kent and Deb own and operate the Merlin’s Ace Hardware store in Chanhassen. The lumber storage buildings were converted to business rental properties. Fred was again offered employment as the manager of this property and it’s 37 tenants. In 2018, the old building was sold, demolished, and made way for the Venue apartments and Aldi. It was time for Fred to retire.

And that’s how you have the same employer for over 60 years.



Fred Oelschlager, Tom Raymond, Wayne Chilstrom and Fred’s father Max Oelschlager fishing Lotus.



Fred Oelschlager, John Raymond and Tom Raymond holding Northern Pike. Lotus Lake - 1955

Photos from Fred’s childhood in Chan, taken in the 1950s (above, left)



PUZZLES AVAILABLE!

Local Artist Lee Newcomb of Chanhassen created this watercolor painting of the Old Village Hall / Chanhassen History Center.

This beautiful painting is available as a jigsaw puzzle for purchase at the History Center – fun for the whole family. Also makes a great gift!

Annual Membership Meeting 2025 And Tornado 60 Year Anniversary



Tuesday May 6, 2025 at 7pm

Chanhasen History Center, 391 W 78th Street

Join us at the Chanhasen History Center on this very special night - the 60th anniversary of the 'Storm of the Century' that hit Chanhasen and surrounding areas on May 6, 1965. We will listen to stories from residents who lived through the storm, and allow time for you to share your own story of the event if you would like! A brief meeting will be followed by the sharing of tornado stories and photos at 7pm.

Light refreshments will be served.

Members and nonmembers are welcome!



Event Info



Chanhasen Housewife, 6 Children Escape As Roof Departs; Goldfish OK Too

BY MRS. RICHARD PEARSON
(As Told to UPI)

CHANHASSEN (UPI) - My husband was flying back from



Chanhasen History Center Opens for 4th Season!

Opening Date: Saturday, May 10th 2025

11am-1pm

And Saturdays all summer!



Come visit the Chanhasen History Center museum, located in the Old Village Hall building at 391 W 78th St.

We can't wait to see you there!

Join the Chanhasen Historical Society!

It's more important than ever to join or renew your membership.

Please consider an additional donation as we continue to develop the History Center and community events.

Check your address label for current membership status.

Membership automatically includes subscription to Carver County Historical Society's mailing list!

Membership Form

Date _____ Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone# () _____ E-mail _____

Individual (\$20) Family (\$30) Additional Donation Amount \$ _____

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

OR PayPal payments to: contact@chanhistorical.org



Notes from the President

Greetings fellow friends of history!

It's hard to believe the Chanhassen Historical Society is in its 18th year – it almost seems like yesterday when a group of caring residents banded together to “save the old church,” (meaning, of course, Historic St. Hubert Church), the last structure still standing in its original location in our historic downtown.

Over the past 60 years Chanhassen has grown from a small village and township into a large and bustling city with all the advantages offered to a suburb of the Twin Cities. These changes have brought both new opportunities and new challenges. For instance, working in collaboration with the St. Hubert community, there is now a plan being developed to restore and upgrade the Historic Church. This is a very exciting prospect, especially for us at the Historical Society given our organization's origins relating to the church. And although we are thrilled about this possible development there are still many challenges we face. The project is by no means a certainty yet. Things are rapidly changing in our city, and public interest is vital to preserving historical landmarks. It's also key in our work to preserve important historical information, such as oral histories, as our senior population ages.

If you feel any sense of curiosity about our wonderful Chanhassen community, I urge you to please **attend our next General Membership meeting on May 6th**. This short meeting will be followed by a number of stories from our citizens' personal experiences of the 1965 Storm of the Century. Sixty years ago, multiple tornadoes tore through Chanhassen and many other Twin Cities communities.



Paula Atkins, President

All are welcome at this event - whether you have a strong desire to dive deep into the history of our community, you have an interest in tornados and extreme weather, or you're simply looking for a new and different socializing opportunity - join us! Everyone is invited, members and non-members alike.

I hope to see you there!

Paula Atkins, President

Remember!

Your membership includes access to photo archives from the Carver County Historical Society!

www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org

Username: cchsJan

Passcode: NZ9G30JW2NWL

Chanhassen Historical Society

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