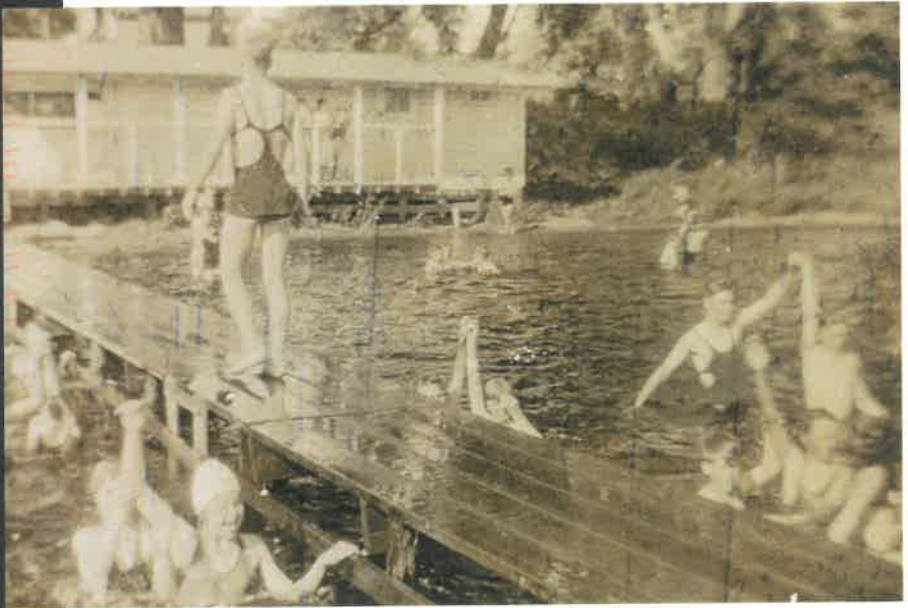




HISTORY 21



Volume 54 No.3 May/June 2024
AnokaCountyHistory.org

History 21 (in honor of the 21 cities in Anoka County) is published by the Anoka County Historical Society six times yearly as a member benefit. The ACHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible within the allowable limits of the law.

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*New Board members will be announced
at the Annual Meeting on May 19.*

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Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

(Executive Director)

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Kassandra Mackenthun

(Collections Manager)

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Front Cover: "The Buddy System....Club Camp: A club camp for 4-H Club members of both Anoka and Sherburne Counties was held at the fair grounds in Anoka June 24 and 25...\$1.00 was charged to each member to take care of all expenses. One hundred and fifty members and leaders attended and the camp was a success from every angle." Photographer: unknown. Anoka County Extension Service Annual Report, 1935. Object ID: AG100.1935.4

From the President



Dear Members and Friends of the Society,

It is with a deep awareness of the many tasks we have before us that I pick up this gavel in the spring of 2024. Back in 2019, the Historical Society embarked upon an ambitious journey to expand our visibility to all the communities in Anoka County. That includes geographic communities – the 21 cities and towns we live in; religious and ethnic communities – the places of worship we attend and the families and backgrounds we come from and live with; and our chosen communities – the people

we spend time with, doing the things we like to do. As we were ramping up, the pandemic hit. We are quickly recapturing our momentum, and putting into action our mission – to gather, preserve, and share the stories of all the people and communities that are part of Anoka County.

These stories are *your* stories. Whether your ancestors were here to fight the Civil War, or you just moved in last week, *you* are part of the history of Anoka County.

It might sound strange to think of yourself as “part of history.” But you’re making history every day, in how you interact with your friends, colleagues, and families, in what you think and say about the world around you. When I have the opportunity to speak with you, I’m always amazed at how these histories grow, intersect, and connect. We are all in this together.

It will be an honor to serve as your president for the next two years. I am excited to move forward together with you.

Steve Florman, incoming President

From the Director

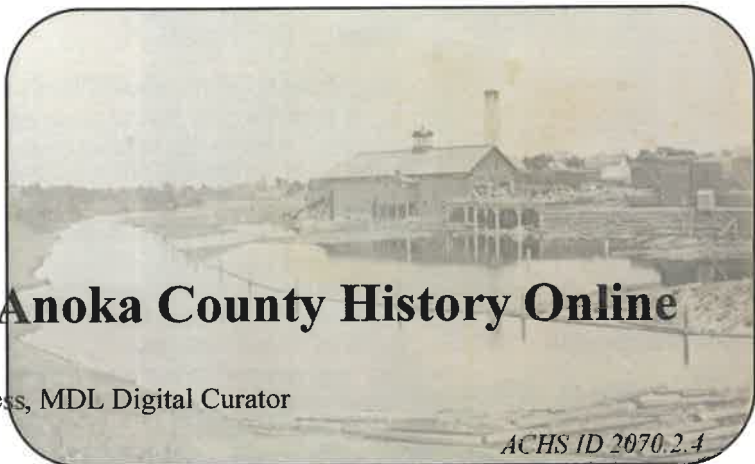
May has consistently ranked number one for me. Selfishly, I celebrate my birthday, and that makes me happy. But really, it’s because of the lilacs and tulips that create this riot of color and scent I’ve forgotten during the winter. The baby farm animals dash all over the place with unmatched energy, the end of school approaches, and the warm sunshine and lack of mosquitoes make the longer evenings so enjoyable.

At ACHS, May signals a new year within a new year. We have our annual meeting (May 19!), add board members, say goodbye to board members, change leadership, and reshuffle the committee members. We take a deep breath, dive into festival and tour season, welcome interns, and turn off our introverted side as best we can.

Welcome to the season! I hope to see you soon so we can enjoy it together.



Rebecca Ebnet-Desens,
Executive Director



Explore Anoka County History Online

By Stephanie Hess, MDL Digital Curator

ACHS ID 2070.2.4

The Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) contains digitized content from Minnesota's cultural heritage organizations in a single website. Over 200 participating organizations, including the Anoka County Historical Society, have contributed photographs, documents, maps, recordings, and more to its free searchable online database.

To get started, visit MDL's website at www.mndigital.org. There, you can browse or search through more than 59,000 items. You can also view the ACHS digital collection by using the "Browse by Contributor" button on the homepage.

MDL has many photographs of people and places throughout Anoka County, particularly the Coon Rapids Dam construction. It also contains some images related to the logging industry, including these highlights:

- Logs stored on the Rum River at the Washburn Mill in Anoka around 1895. (Above)
- Wanigans on the Mississippi River around 1880 (right). These boats functioned as floating bunkhouses and cook shanties as they floated downstream with the men as they worked the logs downriver.
- The J.B. Bassett riverboat and wanigan during a log drive around 1900 (right). Joel Bean Bassett, who owned the J.B. Bassett Lumber Company, designed and built the boat in 1894. This paddle



ACHS ID 2068.4.44D



ACHS ID 2068.2.5

-wheeled operation followed log drives from St. Cloud to Anoka, stopping in Clearwater.

- A group of men at H. F. Brown's logging camp in Anoka County around 1900. (right) The image was donated by R.W. Leach as part of a larger collection of logging photographs.



The MDL collection from the ACHS archive also includes photographs of floating logs in the log boom at the Coon Rapids Dam construction site in 1914, and “dead heads” piled up against the dam in 1916 (left). A sluice way through the dam permitted logs to be floated through after 1916.

In addition to housing copies of these images for researchers and students to discover, MDL staff have curated online resources for students, teachers, and the public to use. These primary source sets, maps, timelines, and online exhibits provide the stories behind historic materials from contributors across the state. You may be particularly interested in checking out the “Lumber Industry in Minnesota” primary source set, which includes an image of a log drive on the river in Anoka County and other resources with discussion questions.

The Minnesota Digital Library is pleased to offer access to these wonderful examples of local history. We hope you enjoy digging deeper into the past through this website!



This year, April has become the unofficial logging history month in the collections department at ACHS. Between the adoption party, which we held at the beginning of the month, and the logging program given the last week in April, the collections business has been all things logging. As the collections manager, it has undoubtedly allowed me to learn about the industry that built this town—literally! Jokes aside, we are fortunate enough to have the tools these early settlers would have used in both our artifact collection and as part of our hands-on collection.

We had multiple logging tools, so ACHS made a “museum in a box” that featured the actual artifacts with which kids and adults could interact. For the program I gave, these tangible artifacts became a crucial part of the experience, especially since talking about the hard work with pictures doesn’t entirely give the perspective that holding onto a heavy iron tool has. Additionally, choosing the month of April was no coincidence either. The logging season lasted from November through April, which I am hopeful added another sensory layer as we talked about what sorts of weather lumberjacks encountered during their Spring drives.

It can be a challenge to make a subject like logging interesting for all ages. At ACHS, we have a written account of life in logging camps from an Anoka resident and former ACHS president called George Atwood. This fascinating account and other documents in our manuscript files provide us with details that excite the imagination. Atwood describes piping hot food freezing to tin plates and enormous log jams broken up by dynamite that paint a picture of the ruggedness of life as a pioneer in the northern forests of Minnesota. Expansive forests of white pine described by early settlers starkly contrast what we see today but add a dash of color to logging history and artifacts.

You can be transported back in time to the beginnings of Anoka County history.

It's your history, too, because although the land and the people have changed, we are all connected through our contributions to the county's history. If you missed out on our logging adoption party and program, don't worry! Items like the spike pole, (right, object ID 393) and the double bitted ax (right, object ID 1880.H) are up for adoption to support the collection preservation. You can visit some hands-on logging artifacts displayed in the exhibit hall or take a peek in the "museum in a box" by request is still on the shelf (I'm thinking Scout troops or homeschool folks would find this particularly useful)

Visit us and explore Anoka County's logging history— your history.

Kassy Mackenthun



Below: Four loggers cutting down a tree, 1910. No location noted. One man is identified as Nels Albert Johnson, to the right of the tree. Johnson also worked for Reed & Sherwood Manufacturing Company in Anoka from 1915 through the 1940s.




ADVENTURES IN CENTERVILLE

As part of our commitment to connect more deeply with each of our 21 cities and townships in Anoka County, we created a cemetery tour and display now on exhibit at the city hall in Centerville.

The display took shape as staff used the ACHS collections to research the individuals buried in St. Genevieve's Cemetery. One resource for this is a birth and death ledger used between 1872 and 1907. When the user opens the book from one direction, the births are visible in cursive. When the user flips the book and begins reading from the other side, they will find the deaths listed. The information inside reveals vital statistics but also illustrates what details people cared to remember—for instance, a parent's place of birth could be listed as "Canada," "Province of Quebec," "Canada East," or "Province of Manitoba," or "Quebec (Irish)."



Visit the exhibit at city hall in Centerville, at the history center, or online (find it in "exhibits") through the summer to learn what killed 21 people in 1872, how many children Lecadie Lamotte gave birth to and what she eventually died from, and even how to read a bit of cursive!



ETIENNE BLUE
1845 - unknown

TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES
SCHEDULE No. 1 - POPULATION
INDIAN POPULATION

Name	Sex	Age	Color	Place of Birth	Year of Natl.
Etienne	Male	31	W	Canada	1814
Vitaline	Female	28	W	Canada	1844
Marguerite	Female	10	W	Canada	1872

In the first 10 years of Centerville's Birth Records, six babies are described as "half-breed" under the column reserved for "color." Etienne Blue and his wife, Vitaline, registered the birth of their daughter, Marguerite, in 1872. The record notes Etienne and Vitaline were born in Pembina Red River, and he worked as a hunter.

Unfortunately, not much more is known about the family. Government records and historical documents disproportionately count and favor white settlers and citizens over the native populations. Research doesn't find the Blue family in any of the State or Federal Census records before 1900.

Etienne is listed on some of the U.S. Indian Census Rolls as part of the "Pembina Chippewa" Tribe, most likely the White Earth Nation in Northern Minnesota today.

ST GENEVIEVE CEMETERY TOUR

June 8 and 22

By 1860, Centerville's white settlers had already reached 350. It was one of three larger settlements in the County (the others being St. Francis and Anoka). A large contingent of those people immigrated from Quebec, spoke French, and created a home for themselves that included the new Church of St. Genevieve. The current church's cemetery contains their stories and those of their descendants.

It's difficult to choose which graves to visit, and stories to tell during tours ACHS will be giving in June. Among them is an amazing stone realistically carved in the likeness of a tree. This memorial, right, stands to remember the life of Mathilde M. [Pepin] LaCroix. From the 1885 Census, we know that Mathilde and her husband were from Canada. Her stone, carved in French, reveals their ties to the French-Canadian community. However, much of Mathilde's story remains a mystery, with only one census record and sparse details about her husband and five children. The care her family took to erect this striking stone with carved scroll, cross and cala lily embodies their final inscription "partie mais pas oublie" - gone but not forgotten.

Join ACHS for a tour of the cemetery this June and hear more of Mathilde's story (the research is ongoing!) and those of her neighbors, including veterans from the Civil War, WWII, and Centerville's first Chairman Oliver Peltier.



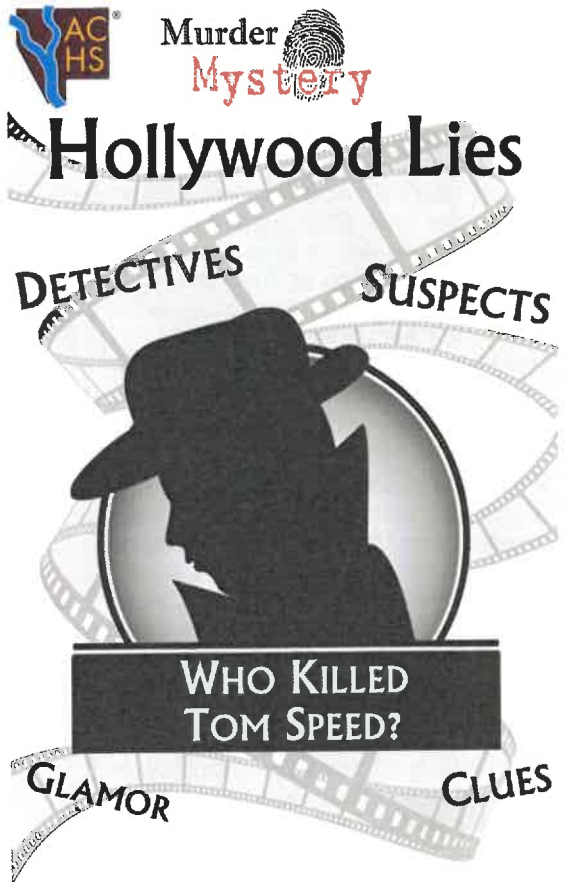
Tickets: \$18 on sale at
AnokaCountyHistory.org



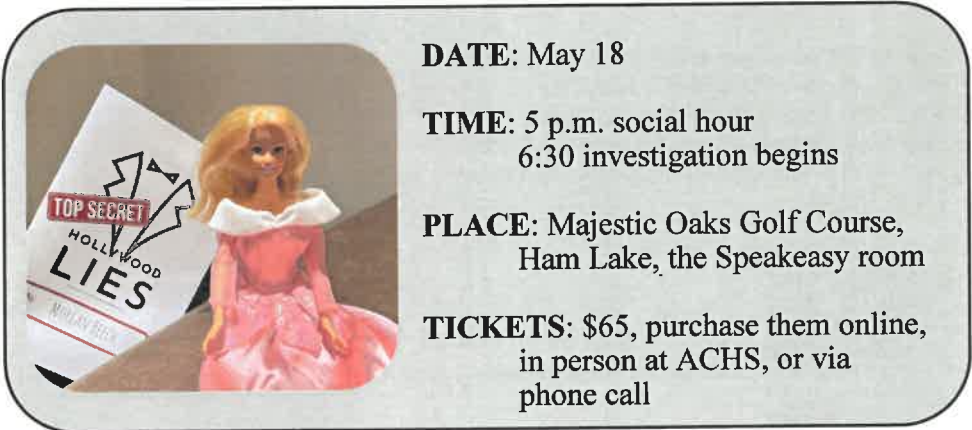
Plan an evening out with family or friends and help ACHS raise funds! Held in the Speakeasy Room of Majestic Oaks, you'll walk the red carpet, enjoy butler passed appetizers, socializing, special Hollywood themed games, and photo booth—all before the investigation begins.

Choose to participate as a character in the murder mystery or as an innocent bystander (we won't judge!)

Sponsorship opportunities are available starting at \$100—a perfect way to let people know you support local history. We're also looking for silent auction items.



The poster features the ACHS logo (a blue and yellow shield with 'ACHS' in white) at the top left. To its right, the words 'Murder Mystery' are written in a stylized font, with a fingerprint icon above the 'y' in 'Mystery'. The main title 'Hollywood Lies' is in large, bold, black letters. Below the title, a film strip graphic curves across the page. The words 'DETECTIVES' and 'SUSPECTS' are written in white on the film strip. In the center, a black silhouette of a detective wearing a hat is shown in profile, looking to the left. Below the silhouette is a black rectangular box with the white text 'WHO KILLED TOM SPEED?'. At the bottom, the words 'GLAMOR' and 'CLUES' are written in white on the film strip.



The event details box has a rounded top and a light gray background. On the left side, there is a photograph of a blonde doll with long hair, wearing a pink dress with a white collar, sitting next to a white envelope. The envelope has a red stamp that says 'TOP SECRET' and the text 'HOLLYWOOD LIES' and 'MAY 18 2018'.

DATE: May 18

TIME: 5 p.m. social hour
6:30 investigation begins

PLACE: Majestic Oaks Golf Course,
Ham Lake, the Speakeasy room

TICKETS: \$65, purchase them online,
in person at ACHS, or via
phone call

Adoption Party

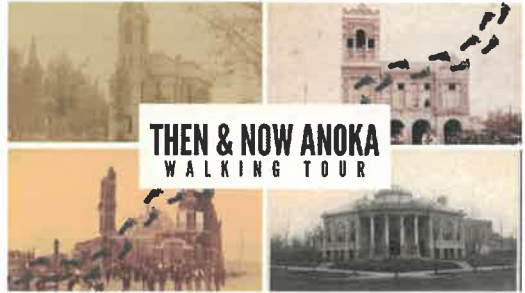
We take time to honor those residents of Anoka County who gave their lives in service to their country each Memorial Day. Now you can make a statement of your support all year long by adopting a piece of military memorabilia in our collection. Come with ideas, or we will help you find the perfect story match. (May 14)

Schools out! Feeling reminiscent about ink wells, pull down maps, and cursive? We have a selection of desks, books, and other learning materials you can make the grade by adopting. It makes the perfect Father's Day gift! (June 11)

Walking Tour of Anoka

Curious about the City of Anoka's past? Take a stroll around the historic city in the newest walking tour from ACHS.

Head out with your guide to hear stories of what was where and who was there to see it. Learn about our own backyard with photos from the collection that show just how much things have changed over more than 160 years. Dress for the weather - in the event of severe weather the tour will be rescheduled. (May 21, 6 p.m.)



Movie Night

Wishing football season didn't end in January? It's your lucky day! May 21 at 6 p.m. we're opening the vault and showing some Tornadoes games from 1939, 1983, and 1984. Treats are on us, first one to the bean bag chair wins!

Jell-O Derby

The fundraising shenanigans continue this year on **Friday, June 28** at the Blaine Festival. For \$10 you can sponsor a car in the Jell-O Derby (need not be present to win!). If you stop by during the event, you can try your hand at Jiggler Toss, Naked Jell-O (thumb) wrestling, or try to find modern day life on some great plat maps from 1919.

Business sponsorships for this event are welcome!





MAPPING PREJUDICE

PLUS
ANNUAL
MEETING

This year's speaker is Rebecca Gillette, Community Engagement Lead of Mapping Prejudice. Operated by the U of M, this program has worked to document the racial covenants on property abstracts by creating interactive maps for Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota - and now Anoka County. Gillette will discuss the project, her personal story, and how you can be more involved. Check it out at mappingprejudice.umn.edu

This presentation will begin a larger conversation between ACHS, Mapping Prejudice, the landowners who discover racial covenants on their properties, and other county residents. Over the next two years, we will research more about the land abstracts, sales, and how this history informs our community identity. Look for community conversations, exhibits, and oral interviews!

ACHS has also partnered with the Anoka Ramsey Community College to look closer at race in Anoka County through primary resources. ACHS will investigate an attempted lynching in Anoka in 1931, the use of blackface at community events, the naming of area landforms like N— Lake, and the disciplining of a Black student in the late 1800s. We will hold panel discussions at the college, create displays, and invite students to use the history center resources to complement their curriculum instruction on these local stories.

Please put the Annual Meeting on your calendar to attend either in-person or virtually. The ACHS bylaws require five percent of our membership to attend the annual meeting to qualify as a quorum. We'll see you on May 19 at 1:30 p.m. for some socializing, a quick year in review, recognition, and Rebecca Gillette's presentation. Count yourself as an active part of the organization (we'll have refreshments, too!)

Members should have received election ballots to cast your vote to select our Board of Directors. Results will be announced at the annual meeting as part of a short business meeting.

While writing and laying out this issue of the ACHS newsletter, summer events like Anoka Riverfest, the Anoka County Fair, and the Nowthen Threshing Show seem so far away. There's plenty of time to talk about them.

But NAY!

Please do not fall into that trap like I do every year. The next newsletter goes out at the beginning of July, and by then, it's too late, and events

are just around the corner. So, this is the official first call for help (and boy, do we need help this year) for our summer events. Check your calendar, save the date, and perhaps even sign up for a volunteer shift already. Need more details? We've got you covered.



THE DETAILS:

Anoka Riverfest: July 13

We are holding down the fort on three fronts this year: the yard sale, Jackson St. booth, and Veterans Park liquor booth. This equals about 25 people deployed at each location throughout the day.

Anoka County Fair: July 23-28

Find ACHS at the Farm House in the little village on fair grounds. With a living room and front porch, complete with porch swing, to relax on volunteers help engage visitors, play games, and chat about old stuff. We need around 35 volunteers for 3 hour shifts throughout the week.

Nowthen Threshing Show: August 16-18

Create a fun atmosphere "back in time" in a general store. Throughout the day you will be chatting with people as they come through, engaging them in conversations. The goal is to greet everyone, answer questions, talk history, and make sure the visitors have a good time and learn about ACHS.

**Sign up for
your shift
today!**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Given".

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

General Donations

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 Clar Carlson
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 John Freeburg
 David Groth
 Judy Hanna
 Audra Hilse
 Alan Nedohon
 Nate Otto
 Al Pearson
 Bill Pettite
 Paul Pierce III
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 Janice Bergstrom
 Luanne Koskinen
 Dawn Sieber
 Mike Dunlap
 Al Pearson

Bruce Saxe
 Joan Christensen
 Judy Hanna
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Bee Memorable
 Fifth Avenue Dental
 KU-MA-IN
 Nowthen Historical Power
 Association
 Peterson Shoes



ACHS Remembers



To those members, volunteers, friends, and neighbors who are no longer with us—you will be missed.

Ray Steinke, 87
 1937-2024

We send our condolences to the family of Ray, who passed away on April 1. A past board member at ACHS, Ray had recently become an active participant in the Rum River library genealogical group. As an adoptee, he had an avid interest in family history and was always learning and building his research skills. Ray was a US Army veteran and had an endless supply of stories about his service years in the late 1950s. He and his family have been part of the St Francis landscape for decades, and he will be missed.

History Center Hours—SUMMER HOURS

Closed Saturday, Sunday, Monday

Tuesday: 1-7 p.m., Wednesday—Friday: 10-4 p.m.

Call us for a research reservation or to schedule shenanigans!

ACHS Board Meetings

Second Thursday of each month. 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Open to membership and the public. Find the link to attend digitally at

AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

Adoption Party: Veterans in Anoka County

When: May 14, 6 p.m.

Tickets: \$10

Hollywood Lies Murder Mystery Fundraiser

When: May 18, 5pm social hour begins.

Majestic Oaks, Ham Lake.

Tickets: \$65 at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Annual Meeting and Mapping Prejudice

When: May 19

Where: Northtown Library, Blaine.

FREE

Then & Now Walking Tour Anoka

When: May 21, 6 pm

Where: Tour begins at the History Center.

Tickets \$15 at AnokaCountyHistory.org

ACHS Movie Night

When: May 21, 6 p.m.

Where: Anoka History Center

Tickets: \$5, members free

St. Genevieve Cemetery Tour

When: June 8, June 22—multiple times available

Tickets: \$18 at AnokaCountyHistory.org

Adoption Party—Education

When: June 11, 6 pm

Where: Anoka History Center

Tickets: \$10

ACHS Movie Night

When: June 18, 6 pm

Where: Anoka History Center

Tickets: \$5, members free

Blaine Jello Derby—Blaine Festival

When: June 28

Where: Aquatore Park, Blaine

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



Anoka County Historical Society



AnokaCoHistory



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