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*Front Cover: Photographic Christmas message with Baby Ruth sitting with her hands in the air with black background. Ruth is wearing white dress, tights and shoes. Message reads: "'So Big' Is our wish sincere For your Merry Christmas And Glad New Year. Frances and Orval Engen and Baby Ruth 1937."
Object ID: 2003.1108.016*

From the President

When I think of this year and ACHS, the words that come to mind are: resilience, persistence, adaptability, amazing. When COVID-19 restrictions were implemented in March, the staff hunkered down safely at home, put together a strategy using digital tools and social media to do their work and to continue to bring history to all of us in Anoka County. Obstacles became opportunities. While so many Historical Societies have closed their doors, ACHS has remained in Business.



Despite the new way of doing business we connected with record numbers of people and can connect to anywhere in the world. We travelled virtually through all 21 communities of Anoka County by the Tour of Anoka County, we explored the collection highlighting interesting artifacts on social media, we created a who-done-it "The Un-Wise Murder Mystery", continued to work with Federal Cartridge to catalog their business history, gathered COVID-19 quarantine stories, virtually toured the graveyards, we are working to ensure that our organization is inclusive and diverse, and have, within the last week, entered into the world of podcasting.

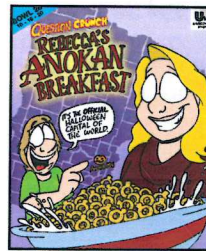
It is due to the collective talents of many people: within the staff, the volunteers and interns, the community, and the Board of Directors that allowed us to thrive. We adapted in the face of adversity, uncertainty, and the unknown and found the strength and the resilience to not only succeed, but to exceed beyond expectations.

It was the right combination coming together at the right time that has allowed this to work.

I ask that you all be ambassadors for us – share our story – direct people to our Website – share our posts on Social Media – listen and learn from our Podcasts - and Be Active Be Engaged!!

Lotus Hubbard
Lotus Hubbard, ACHS President

From the Director



If my days as an Army wife taught me anything, it was that month 10 of a one-year deployment felt like the homestretch. Month eight and nine were awful. Enough was just enough by then. The struggle felt old and I felt spent. But month 10? We got this.

My point? We're turning a corner on the COVID virus and we can soon rebuild from the stress of the past 10 months. Don't get me wrong, reintegration after a deployment was no picnic either, but it provided a new adventure with new goals. So life will be post COVID. A time of rebuilding our communities, rethinking our values, and reimagining what we hold as priorities.

Please share your story with us as you live it.

Rebecca
Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, Executive Director



Arch's Folly

The following is an excerpt from "Memories of Life..." by Arch G. Pease, pg. 45-51. Ellipses indicate text removed by ACHS for narrative purposes. Read his full memoir in History 21: The Vault and tune into History 21: The Podcast to hear an oral interview with Mr. Pease conducted in 1989.

NEWSPAPERING WAS MY BUSINESS

It was a rather beautiful September day as I walked from my home at 8th avenue and Main street in Anoka to the printing office at the foot of Harrison Street. And as I walked, I couldn't help but second guess myself. I should have taken any one of the jobs that had been offered and I would be on easy street for some time. Had I made a mistake? It was too late to change. And so I entered into the building noting that it needed paint, that the front wall slanted, that the whole area was in more than a dilapidated condition. The front office, scarcely big enough to hold three people let alone my father, mother, bookkeeper and myself, had to be rearranged and there was no money to do so.

That first week was a nightmare. While my mother and I got along very beautifully at home, yet she was a demon when in the office. Nothing could be done to suit her and I was not one to accept the relentless criticism that poured out daily.

On October 1st I quit. I went home and was in a real state of despair. I knew it would not work because it just wasn't working. Every suggestion that I made was turned down. And that was that.

Shortly after 5 o'clock that evening, my father and mother drove into the yard and dad asked me, "What is it you really want?" I told him and I minced no words. I was to be in charge of the plant. He and I would work out the policies together. Mother would have to stay home. A five year plan would be worked out for the improvement of the plant.

NEWSPAPERING

... In 1948 things had improved a bit but the cash position of the plant was poor to non-existent. What was needed

Above: "The plant was in a rented building of questionable construction that was built back in 1907 out of bricks from a chimney of a large manufacturing plant. The plant had been dismantled and the chimney felled, the good bricks chipped and that made the walls of the building." [44]

was a new press to replace the three currently in use. It had to be a press that could handle at least eight 8 column pages or 16 tabloid and print from a roll. ...It was a usual Monday at the office when the phone rang ... the caller said that he knew where there was a used newspaper press for sale and suggested that he call a man named Fred Turner in New Ulm, Minnesota, as the press was located there. "I will call him right away," I said, "and many thanks for tipping me off."

After hanging up the phone I turned to my father and said, "There is a newspaper press for sale at New Ulm in the newspaper office there and I think that we should take a good hard look at it." My father answered, "We could surely use it but we cannot afford it. Do you know what the price would be?" I answered that I did not but that I would find out. Fred Turner was called and I learned that the press was a Model E Angle Bar Duplex, capable of printing from a roll and eight pages, eight columns wide at a time. The cutoff was 22 1/2 The asking price was \$10,000.

When my father was told of this he simply replied, "We cannot afford it." And that seemed to end the matter.

On Saturday morning, Arch, in company with his wife, Amy, and two children, Barb and Tom, left Anoka and drove south to New Ulm. He found the offices of the New Ulm Daily Journal and entered the building. ... he was shown into the basement where the paper had its pressroom and there, sure enough, was the press. ... It took some time but a price of \$6,500 was finally agreed upon....

But how was the press going to be paid for? That was a big question. The \$950 that had been put aside was hardly enough to do the job. That bothered. First of all we knew there was no chance of getting financing in our home town. That was for sure. ...

On Monday around noontime Arch drove to that neighboring bank and finally managed to get a loan of enough money to buy the press and at a good rate of interest—5%. And that 5% was to be on the unpaid balance.

Arch was happy. He was back at the shop— and told his father about the deal and his father threw his hands up in the air, said it was "stupid," walked out of the office and went home. At home Arch's father said to his wife, "That kid of ours is nuts. He has made a deal to buy a press and has managed a loan to finance it but he doesn't even realize that it has to be paid off." And so it went. ...

That same day, in the mail, came the drawings of the base for the press. My gosh, "I said when I looked at the drawings, "the press has to have a pit that is five feet deep, have 8" by 8" timbers on either side for the press to rest on, be all concrete and that is a cost I didn't expect. Well, to make a long story short, another \$600 was needed to build



the pit. "I will take this much out of my savings," I said but when he talked this over at home, his wife was real dubious about the whole idea. George Delong did the job.

... [T]he next thing was the press. It was the middle of the week when Joe Zwach called

Arch Pease and his mother, Mary Pease, in old Pease Printery office, undated.

me. "Arch, this is Joe," he said, "and I am down at New Ulm. Got a problem. To get this damn press out of the basement is going to take a bit of work. Instead of the \$600 I quoted you, it will be more like \$1600." "In fact," he continued, "we have to take some of it apart. It will take a bit of doing. Shall we go ahead?" I could have cried. "Maybe someday I will learn," I said to myself, "I sure missed the boat on this one. I missed the building of a pit, the taking of the press from the basement, what else can there be?"

I watched while the press was brought into the plant, placed on the timbers and fastened to the floor. Then the rest of the press was put in place and it was ready to roll. All of this, of course, was not done in a single day but took several.

At last it was ready for the first run and then came the problems. The press started to roll and the web broke. It was adjusted and broke again. Although the press run began about 3:30 p.m. it was after 10 p.m. and only a few hundred papers were off the press. Finally I called a friend of mine in Minneapolis and told him of the trouble. "Call Sidney Johnson over in St. Paul," he said. "He is the best pressman around and maybe he can help you."

And so at 10:30 p.m. a call was made to Sidney. "I don't know," Sidney said when he was reached, "I just got home from a call down state and I am tired." I carefully explained the situation to him and after awhile Sidney said, wait right there and I'll be out. He was given directions and sure enough at midnight he was there.

The way Sidney went to work on the press, you knew that he was a pressman. After an hour of checking this and that he said that the trouble was one of two things. "We'll try this one first," he said and snap, the web broke again. "Well," Sidney said, "That's that."

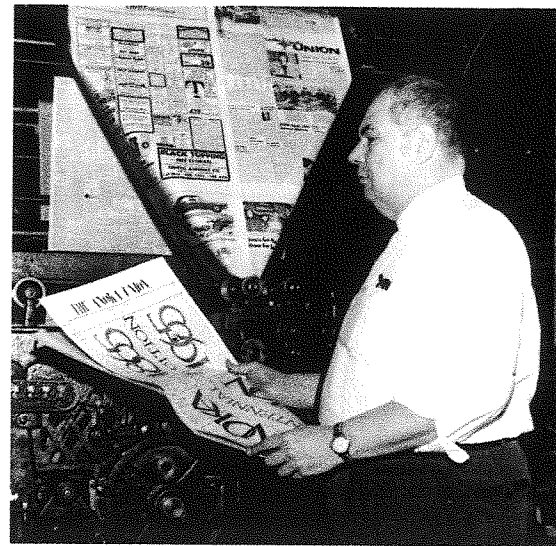
So he began loosening all of the belts that moved the paper towards the folder and he started the press again. This time there was no break and as Sidney increased the speed of the eight page Angle Bar Model E Duplex, he got it up to 7200 an hour and I was almost sure that the press was going to jump out of the plant and into the river. "You won't have much trouble with that press from now on," Sidney said, "It is a good press but like everything else when it is moved it has to be checked out all over again." It was 2 a.m. before Sidney left the plant, the papers were all off the press and my first experience with a roll fed press was over.

A few weeks later I thought back to the night that the press started running and remembered that some of the employees had at first called it "Arch's Folly." But since that night the press had run very well. Each week there was a web break or two but that was all and something that it was real easy to live with.

All seemed to be going well but business was off and that meant we had to scratch to even meet the payroll. For several weeks I had not been able to cash my own check as there were not funds enough in the bank. And I was worried because knowing that in a few days the balance was due on the press and we had spent so much money in getting the press out of that New Ulm basement that we didn't have any money left. It was on Thursday that I received a call from Wally Mickelson who had sold me the press and Wally said, "You know, Arch, you owe me some money. It is due on Monday and I hope that you'll get it in the mail on time."

I replied that we are having a bit of trouble and that we might be a bit late making the payment to which Wally replied, "Well, don't be too late. You have 30 days to pay it up from Monday or else I'll have to take it back."...

Saturday came and, as usual, I was at the plant most of the day. But there were no real sizable checks in the mail and I was really down in the dumps when I went home. That evening I learned that my daughter had to have a new dress, my son needed new shoes and my wife should have a new dress but there was no way it could be done. Frankly, I was nearing the end of the road and I did not know just what to do about it all



Arch Pease by press holding 1965 (Centennial) edition of Anoka Union.

And so as I went to bed that Saturday night, I prayed for help and finally dropped off to sleep. Then the phone rang. A look at the clock showed it was just midnight..."You better get dressed and come down to the plant right away," the voice said, "This is Rusty, your police chief and we have a problem." And Rusty was so right. The first thing that I saw when after arriving at the plant was the tail end of a semi-trailer sticking out of the side of the building. The cab was inside. "The rig skidded on the tracks," Rusty told me, "then it jack-knifed and the cab went right through the side of your building. We better get inside to see what damage was done there."

And the damage was there. The truck's cab had broken through the building's side, smashed to job presses and upset a third, run over several thousand pieces of completed job work and the place was a mess. With the help of a tow truck, that semi and cab were finally extricated from the building and, with the help of two policemen and a big canvas tarpaulin, the hole in the building was temporarily closed but someone had to stay there the rest of the night and so that was a job for me.

On Sunday I managed to get a couple of men who boarded up the side of the building until they could get the materials to brick in the side and cleanup inside began. Two presses were damaged beyond repair and it was necessary to buy another press to stay in business. And I just did not know what to do.

The same afternoon a claims agent from the owners of the semi trailer came and offered to make settlement. By this time I had some figures. ...And so the total added up to \$8,700. The insurance company offered \$1,500 and it was not accepted. I told them that \$10,000 was what would be acceptable and not a cent less or the issue would be decided in court. This was a reasonable request because of the time lost, my own work on it, the cleanup, inconvenience and besides, it was none of my doing.

The insurance company refused. So an attorney was hired. They went over the case. ...Once seated in the office my attorney, Ernie Jorgenson who was a long time friend, said "I heard that you were having a bit of a hard time in paying for that press you got in." I allowed as this was true. "Well," Jorgy said, "Here is something for you." And he handed me a check for \$18,000 [from the insurance company] "Will you settle for this?" "How did you do it?" I asked. "That is a secret," Jorgy said and would say no more. "How much do I owe you," I asked and Jorgy replied, "Nothing. This could give you the start that you need and that is pay enough." ...

At my first opportunity I went to the bank, got two certified checks and sent one to Wally Mickelson ...and also a check to the equipment supplier in Minneapolis and the rest went into the company account and then I cashed my long held pay checks. And if you had been watching me that day, you would have seen me look towards the sky and say, "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You." Oh, yes, my wife got a new dress, shoes etc., our son got the shoes and our daughter got the dress. It pays to believe.

ACHS HIRING PROCESS

By Rebecca Ebnet-Desens

Saying goodbye to exemplary staff as they move to other parts of their career journey never makes the top 10 list of things to do in a day. That said, the growth of staff members does make my top 10—my top five, even—and so here we are, searching for a new human to fill the position of curator/archivist at the Anoka County Historical Society.

Over the past couple of months, we put out the call. Through the gift of PPP and CARES funds (big thanks to the County of Anoka and City of Anoka for selecting us as a recipient!) the Board of Directors resolved to NOT cut the open position and make the budget look a bit shinier for 2021. It felt like low-hanging fruit, that full-time position, but in reality... what is a museum without someone caring for all the legacy items archived there? That position stands as the single most important, mission-driven role at ACHS. So, no pressure.

As we have worked with our Facing Change consultant on DEAI concepts for two years, we thought it most appropriate to put change into true action. The hiring process is fraught with bias (unintended or otherwise) and the challenge of mitigating that, even a little, felt like one we could rise to. We decided to create a blind process.

First, we gathered resumes and cover letters like any other job posting. I sorted them into “qualified” and “unqualified” through the barest of means possible. We accepted history degrees, library and archiving degrees, and life experience as qualifying skills we would need for our new human. These applicants received the same message from me, which laid out the process, expectations, and deadlines associated with achieving employment at ACHS. They next received an invitation to Survey Monkey, where they found a 17-question written interview waiting for them. They all had at least a week to complete this document. The form asked about their work experience, how they would react to various elements of culture at ACHS, and specifics about projects they will work on.

Our next step as a selection committee of six was to read the 27 responses *without seeing their names*. This was the crucial point. We wanted to rank the answers strictly on the content and merit of the words and concepts presented. A personality truly began to take form. The committee also noticed how some people wrote casually, while others treated it like a grant application. Some answers added humor, others forgot they weren't texting. All of them conveyed professional experience and effort. It was truly a humbling experience for us to read the lives before us and hear the thoughts given space to accommodate introverts, autism, and stuttering.

From the rankings, the selection committee created a top 10 and top five list to select candidates for an interview over zoom, which we recorded with the permission of the candidates. This allowed us to hold the interview with just Sara (ACHS volunteer coordinator) and myself rather than the entire selection committee. By recording the interviews, we also shared them with our part-time staff, who until this point, had not been included in the process--or even watch them again ourselves.



Interviewing over Zoom is difficult for everyone to read body language, but most difficult for the candidate. Now, not only do they need to select the “right” attire to fit the organization, but they must construct a background and monitor their environment for distractions. They need a steady internet connection and good microphone as well as decent lighting. I'm happy to say it was actually MY internet connection that went wonky during one conversation, and MY cat that popped up in the background of another. The candidates took it all in stride.

At this point in the process, we had established our top five to be skilled, thoughtful, and full of great ideas for ACHS. Because of the written interview prior to this, we had far more information than a typical face-to-face interview. This played forward in the comfort zone on both sides of the screen, as the candidates said they felt like they had more time to think through their responses, time to research ACHS, and have many of their questions answered prior to our meeting. All of this meant the Zoom interview gave us context of personality and verbal delivery, as well as a chance to follow up on some of the answers they provided.

Within a list of more serious questions, we also asked things like, “how do you make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich” or “how many dishes are left on your counter at bedtime”? The quirky question disarmed the candidate, and they would laugh, think, then provide an honest answer—which said so much about their work process, planning, or preferred environment. “When do you pack for a trip” really asked, “what is your project planning strategy”? Where I would answer such a question with, “a couple days in advance and if I forgot my toothbrush, I could always find a new one wherever I was going” they detailed out lists made and rechecked, packing done and redone, weather reports watched, and itineraries written. For an archivist, this is a much more useful strategy than mine. For a director, however, rigidity is the enemy of a productive workday.

We invited two of the humans to the museum last Friday to have a socially distanced, masked tour of the building. The candidates spent time one-on-one with staff members to hear about the work each of them does and how they share space with the archivist/curator position. We answered questions, opened boxes, and poked around the stacks in the collections. This was their chance to see if they could imagine themselves into our space, our work, and our culture.

I'm happy to report that one did, in fact, accept our offer and will begin working with us before year-end. We are thrilled to have a full staff once more and excited to see where our new three-headed monster will take the Anoka County Historical Society.

I learned so much about myself as a leader—the rules I inadvertently follow, the edge I would be inclined to give to those I knew or had “put in their time” with us in the past. My own proclivity for one type of personality over another, my bias as a white female—all of these were silenced. In what still is a flawed system of hiring, I'm excited to see who I get to work with next. I'm proud ACHS took a different path on finding that human.



Left: Stills from Erin's Zoom interview



Erin's cats, Oliver & Fantasia, join the family of ACHS staff pets and will be working remotely on team morale.

Meet Erin

When I'm in an archive, I feel like a kid in the candy store. I want to learn everything, explore everywhere, and discover every single piece that might have been forgotten in the crush of the collection. In my last archival position, I worked at Syracuse University's Special Collections Research

Center processing their enormous Forrest J Ackerman collection. More accurately, I

processed *part* of the Forrest J Ackerman collection, as even sorting through Forrest's mail has been a continuous project for several years now. Forrest J Ackerman (who was an active science fiction literary agent for most of the 20th century) seemed to have kept everything he ever received in the mailbox, whether that was bills, catalogs, or actual correspondence. Organizing Forrest's mail was a like a game of Clue wrapped up in a treasure hunt: there would be fan mail, there were responses from DAW, and then suddenly something would pop up from Walt Disney or the Church of Scientology. Forrest seemed to be connected to everyone, and those connections are what I love so much about archives.

This is one of the reasons I was so eager to apply to The Anoka County Historical Society — and why I'm so excited to have been hired. Even from the brief time I've had, I can see that there are connections everywhere— between artifacts, between places, between past and present, living and dead, between family, friends, and neighbors. It is an amazing, overwhelming experience to see the tangible evidence of our history and our ties to one another. I don't think that importance has ever been clearer than this year.

I will always remember 2020 as the year of COVID-19, worldwide protests, and a presidential election. Despite all this, I will also always remember 2020 as the year I graduated with my Masters degree, moved half-way across the country, got married, and was hired by ACHS. I don't think it's ever been more obvious than now that our history is being written all the time—and that it's our personal stories and our connections as people that give major events real meaning. I'm honored to be able to help bring these stories to life in the community, whether they're the ones that were forged a hundred years ago or those that are being lived today. Thank you for having me!

Introducing History 21: The Vault...

So much of what we do has moved online this year, and with it we've discovered new skills of video editing and production, podcasting, and web design. This opportunity to expand our audience and offer programming regardless of geography or time of day has allowed us to monetize our offerings in different ways. One of these new initiatives is expanding our History 21: The Newsletter to include a podcast and an exclusive space on the website named The Vault.

For a limited time, our current members and donors can create a Vault account FOR FREE as a thank you for your continued support to ACHS.

You have until January 15 to visit www.AnokaCountyHistory.org, click "History21" then "The Vault" and sign up. After January 15, the special programming, bloopers, full-length interviews, and collections behind-the-scenes will switch to a subscription fee of \$5 per month. By signing up before the deadline, you'll ensure access to this special content FOR LIFE. Yes, we like you that much!

...and its friend, the Podcast!

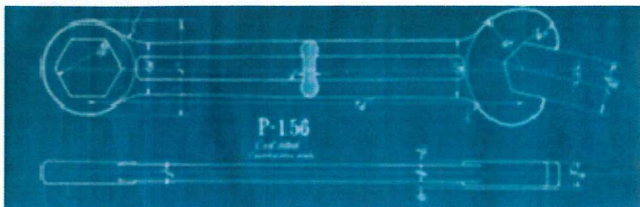


Remember the main article in the last newsletter? Listen to episode 1 and hear what Daryl had to say about finding a surprising kinship with his Great-Great Uncle. Then join us for episode 2 where we unearth some of Santa's hiding places in Anoka County, and stay for episode 3 to hear Arch Pease tell more stories about his time as editor of the *Anoka Union* and life in Anoka.

Find The Vault and The Podcast at AnokaCountyHistory.org!

Even though Covid-19 restrictions closed the History Center to the public, employees could still come in to work. I never had to worry about what I was going to do when I came in. I am

responsible for much of the digital imaging (AKA photography). High on my to-do list was getting good images of the Veerac blueprints and technical drawings.

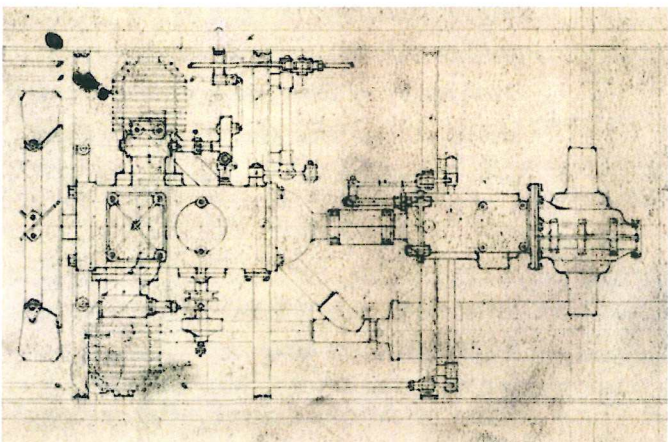


The Veerac Motor Company manufactured vehicles (cars and trucks) on Ferry St. in Anoka for a few years starting in 1910 but they were unable to survive for long in a very competitive market. A bundle of over 100 blueprints and original pencil drawings were donated to us by Myron Martin in 2010. The blueprints were mostly in good condition and showed individual components of the Veerac. They provided some insight into what it took to develop a car in 1910. One of the first steps was to design the building where the manufacturing was to take place. Then every bolt and spring needed to be carefully designed. And of course, the wrench [see above diagram]. Other blueprints in the collection included cylinder heads, connecting rods, crankshafts, and other motor components.

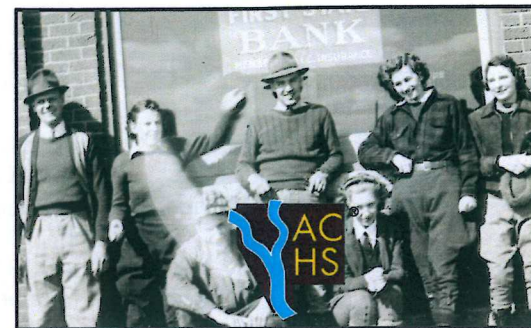
The technical drawings are original pencil drawings on paper. The pencil lines are faint and hard to see against the age-darkened paper. Fortunately, with the image processing capabilities available to us, the images could be enhanced to make them much more readable.

The level of detail shown in these drawings is impressive considering that computer assisted drafting didn't exist yet. One of my favorites is the drive train, a portion of the drawing shown here. I had not realized that the motor, with its two opposing horizontal cylinders, extended the width of the vehicle's body. It's also located directly beneath the driver's seat. Other drawings in the collection show the brake pedal assembly, the framing of the body and roof, the positioning of the leaf springs, and many other construction details.

Now that these blueprints and drawings are digitized, you can see them all on the public access point for our collections database at mncollections.org. Once on the home page, type "Veerac" in the search box and they should appear, as well as other Veerac



items in our collection. You might think that my backlog of digital imaging is shorter now, but that is barely the case. New things have been added to our collections in addition to the existing backlog. As I photograph more objects, you will probably see them in Collections Corner and on mncollections.org.



In our Volunteer World there is one group of super hero volunteers that fly under the radar. In these bi-monthly columns, I usually focus on the volunteers who take care of the stuff at the museum, or the volunteers who headed out to play at the Fair or Threshing Show in the "before times." They are the ones in the spotlight. While there is some cross over, today I'm talking about the volunteers that take care of ACHS itself—not just its stuff and people. The ACHS Board of Directors. You've seen their names every time you open an issue of the History 21: The Newsletter. They are volunteers that fly under the radar — but importance to the organization can't be diminished.

Our board is comprised of 15 folks. They meet as a full board each month, as well as in smaller committees and task forces. The members discuss and make thoughtful decisions about our budget, membership, the health and state of our collections, and not only where ACHS is today, but how it can continue growing for many more tomorrows.

Usually all those meetings happen at the History Center. But on April 9 the board held their first completely ZOOM meeting. With ages spanning over 50 years, the members had different experiences working with technology. But success! What seemed awkward and eye-crossing skill in April, has become an easier tool by the end of the year, especially for those who are spread geographically across Anoka County.

For their willingness to continue advocating for and ability to imagine ACHS's future needs we send out the biggest Thank You. *game show voice* BUT that's not all! Each board member also received a Certificate of Achievement "for conquering web cameras & microphones, to attend ZOOM meetings during this year of COVID in 2020 and in doing so, advancing the mission of ACHS through an uncertain world." Hopefully soon we can add a roaring party in person with food, music, and laughter.

Sara Given
Volunteer Coordinator
Sara@AnokaCountyHistory.org

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Pierce Refrigeration
Rum River Restoration



OUR HEARTFELT THOUGHTS

Our communities have changed drastically in 2020. Whatever that loss looks like for you, however you grieve right now, we send our condolences and our support.

Acknowledging the struggle—regardless of its form—can bring strength and unite the groups we share.

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

MONTHLY

History Center Hours.
Open hours subject to change during this uncertain time. Please double check the most current open schedule on our website AnokaCountyHistory.org

ACHS Board Meetings
Second Thursday of each month. 6 p.m. via Zoom
Open to membership and the public. Find link to attend digitally at AnokaCountyHistory.org on the calendar.

Remember, FREE Vault sign up ends January 15! Thank you to our members and donors for their continued support of ACHS.

Keep up with the Fun at ACHS!



History 21: The Podcast will drop in our blog (soon available on podcasting hubs) the first and third Friday of each month. Look for the new episodes January 1 and 15



AnokaCoHistory

NEW in the VAULT

- Arch Pease Memoir recounting his life growing up in Anoka and running the *Anoka County Union*
- **FULL** Un-Wise Murder video
- **FULL** Sewing Program video
- Anoka County coloring sheets

For more information on our programs, check out the Events section on the ACHS Facebook page or our website calendar.