



# Chanhassen Historian

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## HISTORY BITS

**1865**

Father Magnus Maria Mayr, a Benedictian priest, formally organized St. Hubert parish. He wrote to a fellow priest that he was frustrated with the German immigrants he was trying to shepherd because they tried to become Americans too quickly, leaving their German customs behind because they had settled among others with different "language and religions." He wrote that his goal was to keep the German Catholic immigrants together in the new parish, and indeed, the church attracted many new German immigrants who arrived after the Civil War.

**1936**

There were 60 straight days without rain in the summer, and the temperatures were in the 90s and over 100 during the day. Crop damage was significant.

**1950**

*Maxine's, Snuffy's, Tri-Y, Reed's, Lazy C:*

These are some of the drive-ins where area residents ate hamburgers and fries, drank cokes and chocolate shakes in their cars during the 1950's and 1960's.

**1954**

Bob Johnson, an Edina High School graduate and starting shortstop for the Chanhassen Red Birds during the 1952, 1953 and 1954 seasons, signed a contract with the Detroit Tigers. He went on to have a successful major league career, mostly with the Baltimore Orioles.

## Heck house is one of few historic homes in city

Should you Google the "National Register of Historic Places in Carver County" you will find 34 buildings and Landmarks. Only two of these buildings are located in Chanhassen. The Church of St Hubertus, which we know well. The other is a bit less well known. It is the Albertine and Fred Heck house.



**Built in 1896, the Heck house was occupied by the Heck family for over 105 years. It is located by the intersection of Audubon Road and Lyman Blvd.**

The Heck house is located at the intersection of what

are now Audubon Road and Lyman Blvd., "just at the bottom of the hill." Next time you arrive at this intersection, look to your left to see the Historic Marker.

Tana Erickson and Tim Boyce (husband and wife) are the current homeowners. They invited John Heck (great grandson of Albertina and Friedrich) to a recent interview to talk about the property.

Albertina and Friedrich lived in Prussia. They were 35 and 28 years old when they immigrated to America with their two young girls in 1881 to find a **HECK HOUSE to page 2**

**Historical Society  
Annual Meeting  
Tuesday, April 15  
7 p.m.**

**Chanhassen American  
Legion**

Agenda includes election of officers and board members and a program, "Sharing Stories: Memories of Chanhassen," featuring a panel of area residents.

Refreshments served.

**Current and  
new members invited.**

**Seeking new**

**Board members**

The Chanhassen Historical Society is seeking residents with an interest in Chanhassen history to be a part of its governing body.

The board of directors acts in the best interests of the organization and approves operating budgets, establishes long-term plans, and carries out fundraising activities. Board members also recruit and coordinate volunteers to help with programs throughout the year.

The Board meets every second month on the first Saturday from 9-11a.m. in the Maple Room at City Hall.

If you are interested in serving on the board or volunteering on one of the committees, contact a Board member ASAP (names on Page 4).

# Heck House Continued from page 1

safer life. The family appears to have lived in Shakopee and Chaska until they built the home in which the Heck family resided for over 105 years. It is likely they moved to this area because they knew someone else in the area. Since most immigrants did not speak English, they often sought out others who spoke their language when they came to the U.S.

The house was completed in 1896. The builder also built many other farm homes in the area, also made from Chaska brick. It was one of the first homes (rumor has it may be the FIRST home) in the area to have running water. A windmill on the hill by the house provided great water pressure.

In the accompanying photo, you will notice there is a white wooden structure attached to the house. It was built as a "summer kitchen". The remainder of the house was built with the cream colored Chaska brick commonly seen in older structures in Carver County. The brick is an excellent insulator and trapped heat in a house in the summer if the kitchen was operating. The solution was to build a summer kitchen. A room built of wood that was not insulated allowed the heat from cooking to dissipate through the uninsulated wood.

Fred and Albertina ran a dairy farm on the property. They milked Brown Swiss Dairy cows known for their fine milk quality. The farm eventually included a barn, chicken coop, smoke house, machine shed and granary, along with the house and garage.

Friedrich and Albertina remained owners of the home until 1916. The home was then turned over to the children and occupied by their son, Fred W. F. Heck, and his wife, Ida. Fred had a large machine shed built on the property in 1928. He enlisted several friends to help. Fred provided the beer as the only payment for the work. Fred and several farmers in the area would help each other to accomplish each other's farm work. Fred's contribution was that he owned a "silo filler". This machine would take freshly cut corn stalks, grind them into pieces to make silage, and fill the silo. Fred was also among the first farmers to have a tractor.

Fred W. F. died in 1930, leaving Ida with four small children and a farm to run. These were difficult years, especially during the Depression. Ida had hired hands to help manage the farm, with son Fred L. helping when he was old enough. She eventually remarried and the family remained on the Heck farm. The farm remained a "working farm" until the early 1960s.

Ida and Fredrick's daughter, Marion, took over residence of the property after her Mother's death in 1975, and lived there until 2001. Marion took pride in the preservation of the property.

The summer kitchen was purely utility and the family did not gather for meals in this room. A good sized dining room is attached in the bricked area of the home.

Marion was the last family member to own and occupy the home. It was her effort, at age 74, that placed the home on the National Registry of Historic places in 2001.

Marion put the house on the market by setting a small for sale sign in the front yard. This sign caught the attention of Tana Erickson. Tana and her husband, Tim, like "all things



**Marion was the last Heck family member to occupy the home.**

old," so Tana drove into the driveway to talk to Marion. Tana said she felt like she had taken a quick trip to the past just getting out of the car and standing on the property. Marion had some unusual criteria for the next owner of her family's home. She preferred the new owner to be

of German heritage, and it was her desire that they have children. Tana and Tim qualified on both counts.

What's it like to acquire a "new" home that is over 100 years old? Fortunately, Tana and Tim intend to restore the property to remain as close to the original as possible. This will take a lot of time and money. Fortunately, Tim is a contractor by trade, and can fix almost anything. Tim and Tana have altered the home's floor plan very little, just enough to accommodate today's family. They have carved out a few spots for closets. The biggest change they have undertaken is they have converted the summer kitchen into a fully usable, year-round kitchen. Although the kitchen is made from new materials, the style has remained to reflect the décor of the original home. Tim has also had to work on the outbuildings, especially the barn, to deter further deterioration. Marion left many artifacts in the original home for future generations to enjoy. She left a bed warming stone (which could have been used this winter!), oil lamps on the walls, and many Lutheran books written in German.

When Tim and Tana initially moved into the house, they needed to evict many, many bats from the attic area. The cedar shake roof was ideal for bat entry. It is illegal to kill these bats, so Tim pumped loud rock & roll music into the attic area. Eventually the bats began to circle and find ways to leave the house. Tim recalls it may have been Rolling Stones music.

Everyone loves a ghost story. Tana recalls that within three months of their moving into the house, she was in bed at night and saw a man in the bedroom wearing a blue leisure suit. To this day she does not know if it was a ghost. The figure was not translucent, like you might expect with a ghost. She is otherwise not a ghost suspecting person. Tim woke up to save the day and threw a pillow (he did not see the figure). The intruder (whatever he was) went away.

Tana retained a relationship with Marion until Marion's death. Tana asked Marion about the man in the blue leisure suit. Marion did not recognize him, but did tell Tana that several people had died in that house, so who knows.....?

*Nancy Simpson*

## Dinner Theatre fundraiser a success

The Chanhassen Historical Society held a fundraiser Nov. 9, 2013 at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre for a matinee performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The show was exceptional and was attended by 59 members, their families and friends. Our profit was over \$300. A great time was had by all! The Board would like to extend our thanks to Kathy Gyorfí for organizing this fundraiser.

*Art Mason*

# President's notes

Happy Spring!  
After such a long and cold winter, we're excited to look forward to the upcoming year at CHS.



**Lynn Murphy**  
**CHS President**

With the annual meeting on April 15, we can celebrate the accomplishments of last year. We started out the past year with a program about the history of Mudcura Sanatorium. We learned much about the era of wellness spas and the ecological importance of the Seminary Fen property. Next we learned a lot about photo archiving and invited volunteers to embark on a project to digitize and catalog the photos we've collected over that past few years. Last fall we partnered with the city of Chanhasen for the Cemetery Walk and had a great chicken dinner at the SeptemberFest.

Although the winter has been a long one, CHS has been making plans and setting goals for 2014. We will be purchasing a computer and scanner, as well as archiving software so that we can continue to catalog the photos of historic Chanhasen.

We will be partnering with the Carver County Historical Society and Carver County Arts Consortium to host the Annual County Picnic right here in Chanhasen in September. This will bring a flair of music and art and a chance to show off some of Chanhasen's historic treasures to visitors from around the county. Another project underway is the design and installation of an historic sign on the site in front of old St Hubert's Church that will remind everyone in the community that it is a registered National Historic site. We hope this will be done in time for the 150th anniversary celebration of St Hubert's parish in 2015.

We look forward to having our members join us throughout the year and to fulfill our mission by reminding visitors and residents alike just what is important about Chanhasen and its unique heritage.

We hope to see you at the Annual meeting on April 15th...please mark your calendars!!



**St. Hubert Cemetery Cast:**  
(l-r) Tom Stauber (Gerhard Schroeder), Heather Brands (Sophia Kerber), Mark Taintor (Elmer Kelm), Andy Meuwissen (Joe Meuwissen), Ron Roeser (Albert Pauly), Sally Atkins (Lorraine Roeser), George Hassman (Fred Geiser), Kelly Jeremiason (Mathias Jacques), Bill Caldwell (Gus Sinnen), and Randy Ross (Fr. Fulgence Eich).

## Cemetery Walk a success

Thanks to all who were able to participate in the Cemetery Walk of Pioneer and St. Hubert Cemeteries in October! Guests saw Chanhasen history come to life as they walked through the cemeteries. Actors from the Chaska Valley Family Theatre portrayed prominent past citizens who shared Chanhasen history and pioneer life. We were able to develop scripts for two additional citizens, Willis Wilson, who was a local auctioneer, and Gus Sinnen, who was a farmer, soldier, and city council member.

*Sandy Rodenz*



### Join the Chanhasen Historical Society

Your membership will help with the preservation and restoration projects of Chanhasen'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: Chanhasen Historical Society, P.O. Box 941, Chanhasen, MN 55317**

# In Memory: David Porath valued people, history

David Porath was the Carver County Historical Society treasurer. The day following his passing I received a call from his son, asking what he could do for us. I was taken aback, and asked him what I could do for him. David always put others needs first. This thoughtfulness for others clearly had been taught to his son.

David was the type of person whom we all aspire to become. He had a long, loving marriage and reared two wonderful and caring children. After retiring from the Post Office, he volunteered his time at St. Hubert's, the Chanhassen Historical Society, and the Carver County Historical Society. He worked quietly, making a positive impact wherever he went. Following David's death, I looked to see when his term was up on the board. Just like David, he finished his term two weeks before he died.

David will be sorely missed and we would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.

*Wendy Petersen-Biorn, Carver County Historical Society*

David served as the second Treasurer of the Chanhassen Historical Society. He stepped up to the job when we were in need of someone to organize the finances of our fledgling society and he implemented the accounting practices we use today. As a Chanhassen resident, he was always a quiet presence at our fundraisers and events. David urged our Board to set goals and look to the future of our organization. This past summer he informed us that he would not seek a second term, citing his wishes to become a "Snowbird" and spend more time with family and friends. We were sorry to let him go and grateful for the time he spent training in our new treasurer, Nancy Simpson.

I was privileged to work with and get to know David. We will miss his smiling face!  
*Paula Atkins, Chanhassen Historical Society*

*David wrote this article for the Historian before his death.*

I grew up hearing the story of my South Dakota grandmother as a small girl living through the Blizzard of 1888. I also was entranced by the stories from my German grandfather in Wisconsin of the hard times he endured in the U. S. Army in World War I.

Those were dramatic, but we also have great stories and buildings and cultures to preserve here in Chanhassen. To help make things happen, we manage our Historical Society money very carefully.

The Society has two people separately count and record the incoming dues and donations. And our larger expenses are pre-approved by the whole Board of Directors. These controls ensure that all money is deposited and spent wisely.

The Treasurer also needs to monitor the Society's relationship with the Federal and State governments. The U. S. government asks for information about income and expenses, even though we don't pay taxes.

The State's Secretary of State monitors our legal name and status, and the Attorney General looks into our fundraising.

Being the Treasurer has been fun, and it has been interesting to witness the history of Chanhassen.



**David Porath**

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## Chanhassen Historical Society

P.O. Box 941

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Lynn Murphy, President**

**Phone: 952-353-4547**

**contact@chanhistorical.org**

**Ken Smith, Vice President**

**Claire Mitchell, Secretary**

**Nancy Simpson, Treasurer**

**Sandy Rodenz, Claire Mitchell,**

**Art Mason, Paula Atkins, Mary Goetze**

**Newsletter Editor: Claire Robling**

**Chanhassen Historical Society Website:**

**chanhistorical.org**