



# NEWSLETTER

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Please join us and bring a friend, if any of the following interests you.

- Sharing stories of Shakopee's past.
- Listening to stories of Shakopee's past
- Finding the answers to the questions you have.
- Reminiscing and telling stories of your past.
- Meeting new people or making a new friend.

***The Shakopee Heritage  
Society's Spring  
Membership Meeting  
Will be held April 16  
At the Stans Museum  
235 South Fuller  
Street, Shakopee.***

**Note that the above is a  
change from our usual  
place to meet.**

*We hope to see you there.*

## Editor's notes

By Don Wagner

Please take note that the Membership meeting location has changed. You are going a few blocks away from the library to the ***Stans Museum*** at 235 South Fuller Street Shakopee.

I noticed that The Shakopee Heritage Society does not do much in the line of ceremony when we change Presidents. We vote in a new one and go on about our business. For the record we should say thank you to Joe Collins for all his efforts and accomplishments the last two years. As with each president there are many of both to be appreciated.

We hope you also see the historic articles by Don McNeil and the pictures donated by our members, in the Shakopee Valley News each week. This takes a good deal of time and dedication to do. Don also tries to get video recordings of our Speakers at each membership meeting as well and at other events we attend. Thanks Don, good job as always.

For anyone interested in attending a SHS Board meeting, the meeting time has changed. Meetings are now held on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM in the library's ***upstairs*** meeting room. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings if they wish. No advance notice from the board is needed. Just show up and feel welcome.

Please check if you have paid your dues for this year; you can also ask Pat Ploumen if you want to double check yourself. For some reason even the board members need a reminder once in a while.

If you are out and about make a stop at our local Arby's and see the SHS Photos that are on display at that site. Arby's has recently added a large picture of the Shakopee 1869 map. This Arby's branch is across county road 16 (Marshall Road) from Cub Foods. Most of the Photo's that are there are also donated by our members.

Pat Ploumen and her crew are busy working on lining up a list of houses for the Bi-annual home and site tour. It is beginning to look pretty impressive again. They can still use some more help however, so if you can spare some time!!!! Contact Pat.

*Don't forget that we have a Website [WWW.shakopeeheritage.org](http://WWW.shakopeeheritage.org).* There are many things to see there, among them the newsletters. If you want copies of an article from our newsletter, or copies of the whole newsletter, go to our website and find it there. You, or your friends, can print out just one page or the whole newsletter.

Betty Dols will be awarded a Lifetime Membership at the April membership meeting. She is a fount of information on who is who and what is what in Shakopee's history, and also one of the founding members of the SHS. Congratulations Betty.

Our Speaker for April is Glenn Vange, who will speak to us about his house on the corner of Third Street and Sommerville. Most of us remember it as the Beckrich Home.

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In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, ***'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.'*** (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint)



*Our Speaker from the January meeting was Vern Daniels*

*Speaking on His Town Shakopee*

*And Vern says he has much more he could tell us.*

*We may have to take him up on that at a future meeting.*

**Below is a picture of Gerry Klein, the SHS meet our member's selection for this month. Read the story starting this page about Gerry.**

*As Eileen said in the bio, we enjoy her company, her stories and thank her for her contribution to our group.*

## **MEET OUR MEMBERS:**

### **Gerry Klein**

*By Eileen Schmitz*

**Some years ago Gerry joined the Shakopee Heritage Society so she could share and preserve Shakopee history. She grew up on the East side of Shakopee, a close knit neighborhood of families that knew each other well and celebrated life together. The East side of Shakopee was known as "Macy Town." Gerry recalls her neighbors, the Geroge Kochum (? spelling) family who owned the saloon on Lewis street north of the old Firehouse. Mrs. Kochum kept geese and they were not always confined to the yard so Gerry has some memorable encounters with those geese. Gerry's girlhood home is no longer standing.**

**She was not born in the City of Shakopee but on her parent's farm about**



**four miles south of Shakopee, off of the “Spring Lake Road” as Scott County Highway 17 was known then. It was 1926 and two years later her parents decided to stop farming and came to Shakopee to make their home on Third Ave. Gerry had an older brother Richard and a younger brother, Peter. Richard worked as an accountant for the Shakopee Argus Tribune and as Scott County Auditor.**

**Her father Peter Fitz found employment with the Tydol and Veedol Oil company owned by John Kopisca which was located on First Street on the West end of Shakopee. He delivered oil to local business and farmers. Later John’s son Ora Kopisca owned the business. The building is still standing and there is a landscaping establishment on the premises now. Later Mr. Fitz worked for the Hamm’s Brewery Distributorship driving truck. Mr. Fitz held the post of Third Ward Alderman for seven years.**

**Gerry’s father, Peter Fitz grew up on the family farms in the Lydia, Marystown and Jordan area. His parents were August Fitz and Katherine Henkel. August Fitz came to America from Germany in the 1870’s and made his home in Scott County all of his life.**

**Her mother Hildegarde Menden Fitz at one time worked for Scott County as a home health aide. Gerry’s maternal grandparents Jacob and Elizabeth Hennen Menden owned a farm on the far east end of Fourth Ave. where the Shakopee Utility Garage is now located. The farmhouse is still standing and occupied. Jacob Menden also operated a gravel business. In the beginning of his business he used horses to haul out and deliver the gravel. In the late 1960’s Dr. Halver, Shakopee veterinarian rented the old Menden barn for his chicken business. In later years the barn burned.**

**Gerry attended St. Mark’s parochial school walking and carrying her lunch daily to school. She continued with her education graduating from Shakopee High School in 1945. In her senior year she started working for Northwestern Bell Phone Company working the night shift, 7 PM to 11PM. After graduation and her marriage she continued to work for the telephone company retiring after her third son was born. At the time of her employment there were 6 operators working at one time. The business was located on Holmes and Third Street. “NUMBER PLEASE” is etched in her memory.**

**After her boys were in school she again went back to work, first at the OK Hardware store and then at St. Francis Hospital in the business office retiring in 1988.**

**Gerry and her husband Urban Klein, a Chaska resident, were married in 1947. Their first home was the upstairs apartment of Gerry’s parent’s home on Third Ave. Urban worked for the Hamm’s Brewery Distributorship and later at Rosemount Inc.**

**In January of 1955 they moved from their upstairs apartment to her present home on Third Ave. There they raised their three sons, Terry, David and Bill. Her husband, Urban Klein died in 2001. Gerry still lives in her home that she and her husband bought. Back in 1955 Mr. Pollard who was an instructor at the Air Force Base in Minneapolis was the owner of the house. He was being transferred and Gerry knew that the house would be up for sale. She was determined to buy the house that she had her eye on for some time. To make a long story short, they purchased the house and it is still her home.**

**Gerry is an active member of the Shakopee Heritage Society and has a great memory for the Shakopee of her youth. We enjoy her company, her stories and thank her for her contribution to our group.**



In the photo above donated to the SHS by, Irene Powers. You can see what appears to be a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and on the left the Kline Grocery. Our question is what law office was located on the second story. The answer is available at the membership meeting in April.

### **Shakopee News One Hundred Years Ago Excerpts from Scott County Argus, 1911**

#### **January 1911: Shakopee's Oldest Settler Passes Away**

Mr. John Goenen was the oldest white settler of Shakopee. He was the native of Prussia where he was born in 1831. At the age of 21 he came to Shakopee. For many years he drove the stage between St. Paul and Shakopee, and also operated the old ferry across the Minnesota River when this Country was practically unsettled by white men.

**February 1911: The Henry Simons Lumber Co.** has purchased the Interests of the Interior Lumber Company in Shakopee.

**March 1911: Sold:** Thomas Deveny sold his 90 acre farm located in Jackson township to John J. O'Dowd for a consideration Of \$80.00 per acre.

**March 1911: School News:** Manual training students are exhibiting their skills by means of a newly constructed coat rack and magazine holder.

**April 1911: Shakopee** has established a market for eggs second to none of any town or city in the Minnesota valley. During the month of March five hundred cases of eggs were shipped to the Twin Cities.

#### **Letter from the president.**

It seems like only yesterday when Don McNeil, Betty Dols and I decided that it was time when Shakopee had its own historical group. I am glad to see it still going after over 11 years. We have had a lot of accomplishments to hang our hats on, and are still out there trying to share the rich history of our town.

Our latest project involves the site of the Pond mission house and surrounding area. We are currently working with the City to create a "historic" kiosk in the area near the Faribault Springs. It is in our best

interest to have this area set aside as a park, due to the liabilities associated with public use. I will try to keep everyone updated on the progress of this project.

This is also the year for our house tour. We are anticipating a big turn-out as in the past. Pat Plouman and her team have been working hard on finding houses and sites to share with the public. We will be looking for volunteers to help us on this, so ask Pat how you can help.

The club is also looking into some more club excursion opportunities and Lois Wendt will be seeking sites for us to tour. Last year we visited the Gideon Pond site and all had a wonderful time. I look forward to the next chance to explore.

I want to thank Joe Collins, our past president and Don McNeil for their efforts to keep pictures and the stories from the past in our local paper The Shakopee Valley News. Many people have seen these and made wonderful comments. It is a great way to get our name out there into the minds of our neighbors. I look forward to seeing you at our next upcoming meeting. Hopefully we won't have to trudge through more snow to get down to the Stans Museum and Scott County Historical Society for our next meeting.

Jay Whiting, president

**Shakopee Heritage Society**  
**519 East First Avenue**  
**Shakopee MN 55379**