



Shakopee Heritage Society

Newsletter

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Winter 2017

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Read about memories of the Rohlfs house and the Rohlfs family on pages 1 and 3.



Winter Membership Meeting

Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017 at 1 p.m.
Scott County Historical Society/
Stans Museum
235 Fuller St. S.

It Happened Here 1848 in Tinja-otoŋwe, Prairie des Français, and Prairieville (and eventually, in Sha K' Pay, Minnesota Territory)

Who was living here in 1848? The 600 Mdewakŋtoŋwaŋ Dakota Indians, who lived here first, including Šakpe II and his son, Šakpedan or Little Six; the trappers and traders who lived and work here, including Oliver Faribault and Wakan Yanke; an African American enslaved person, Joseph Godfrey, who escaped from Shakopee in 1848; missionaries including Reverend Samuel W. Pond and Cordelia Eggleston Pond and family, who built the first frame house in Scott County; and a young adult, Jane Lamont Titus, who was part-Dakota, and spoke only Dakota when she moved into the Ponds' home at age 13. In 1848, they all lived around the Faribault Springs, speaking Dakota, French, English, and a combination of languages.

All of this happened in this powerful place. And David R. Schleper wants to tell their stories.

This presentation will focus on the Pathways of History project at the extension of Memorial Park on the south side of County Road 101, near the Pond site foundation, near Faribault Springs. The Shakopee Heritage Society and others who want to find out more about the people who lived right here in 1848 are welcome to attend.

The Rohlfs House (1896-2016)

Compiled by David R. Schleper

In downtown Shakopee, the Rohlfs house, at 931 First Avenue East, was built by 1896. On Oct. 6, 2016, the house was used for practice for the fire department, and then burned down.

The house was built by Fred Rohlfs, a local architect. It was on Block 16, Lot 3 in the East Shakopee plat. It was located on the 1898 map of downtown Shakopee. A well was drilled in 1896, and Shakopee brick was used for construction.

The house was quirky, with floors that slanted, acute corners, and walls lacking any insulation other than newspapers placed under the plaster. The house started small, and grew as time and pocketbooks permitted. In 1904, a brick addition was added. The wonderful craftsmanship made this a place that was unique and special.

Clifford A. Thibodeau remembered the Rohlfs. "I grew up a block away, and remember the Rohlfs well," said Clifford. "We went trick or treating there, and they had the best treats! At Christmas time, all the kids who were their neighbors got \$10 in a Christmas card, every year. They had an orchard in their back lot, and they used to let a few kids gather apples and pears."

Rohlfs House continued on page 3

Editors' Notes

- Don't forget that the winter membership meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 21 at 1 p.m., at **the Scott County Historical Society/Stans Museum (235 Fuller St. S.)**. Please note the different location. We will be voting on bylaw amendments. Please see the enclosed bylaws. Amendments are highlighted in **gray**. Following the membership meeting, David Schleper will provide an update on progress on the History Park. See page 1 for more information, and bring a friend with you!
- Remember that membership dues are due in January of each year. Your easiest way to handle that is by paying them directly to Pat Ploumen at the January meeting, saving the cost of postage or by snail mail to her at 807 7th Ave. E., Shakopee, MN 55379, preferably by the end of January. Checks should be payable to Shakopee Heritage Society. Dues are: Individual, \$10; Family, \$15; Supporting: \$25; Gold Club Sponsor: \$500; Silver Club Sponsor: \$100; Club Sponsor: \$50. Any questions about dues may be directed to Pat at 952-445-2002.
- Elections for board trustees and officers will be in January as usual. We look forward to any members wanting to join the board or serve as an officer. You will be asked at the meeting.
- Don Wagner has recently stepped down as editor of the newsletter. We thank Don for his many years of dedicated service as editor.
- If you missed the last membership meeting, the video of Bill Schrankler's presentation on *Shadows of Time* has been posted on the website at shakopeeheritage.org/videos/.
- To receive future issues of the Shakopee Heritage Society newsletter in color via email, instead of receiving a black and white paper copy, please send your name and email address to info@shakopeeheritage.org.
- For those of you on Facebook, be sure to check out the If you grew up in Shakopee, Minnesota....then you remember... Facebook group. Lots of recent and way-back Shakopee history is posted here.
- If there's anything in particular you'd like to see included in future newsletters, please let a board member know or send an email to info@shakopeeheritage.org.
- Happy Holidays from the Shakopee Heritage Society Board of Trustees!

Remembering our members

Marcia R. Wagner

On Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016 at St. Francis Regional Medical Center in Shakopee, Marcia R. Wagner, age 74, passed away. Marcia was the daughter of Edwin and Ruth Damrow Stuedenman. She was born on June 10, 1942 in Glencoe. She married Donald Wagner on June 10, 1959 in Minneapolis. Marcia and Donald had two sons, Scott and Edward, and lived on First Avenue in Shakopee, where both Marcia and Donald were involved with the Shakopee Heritage Society. Marcia was a homemaker, and a strong supporter of our group.

Irene Marie Powers

Irene passed away on the morning of Sunday, Oct. 9, 2016 at the age of 93. She was born on the family farm in Chanhassen, the daughter of August and Anna Stelten Sinnen. Irene met Joseph Powers, and they exchanged wedding vows on Jan. 20, 1945. Irene and Joseph settled in rural Shakopee and raised their boys, Joe and Greg. Irene was a member of many clubs, including the Shakopee Heritage Society. She will be deeply missed and remembered always.

We Were Here, Too!

African Americans in Early Shakopee

A carpenter, a farmer, a servant...all African American, and all living in Shakopee in the 1800s. An African American slave who escaped from Shakopee, a former slave who built a church in St. Paul, an orderly in the Civil War, a piano player, and a carriage driver...all from Shakopee. David R. Schleper will share their stories at the Scott County Historical Society at the Stans Museum on Thursday, Feb. 9 at 6:30-8 p.m.

Rohlfs House

Continued from page 1

Dan Meyer remembered as a kid the Rohlfs ladies cutting through the alley that used to go right in the middle of their backyard, stopping to eat apples from the apple trees. According to Dan, “They had the best pear tree ever!”

Frederick W. Rohlfs was born April 23, 1865, in Varrel, Hanover, Germany. He came to the United States in 1882 at age 17. He married Louise Krasean, who was born on March 24, 1872, in Waconia, at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Shakopee.

Fred was a highly respected and prominent resident, and a building contractor and architect for the Theo. Hamm Brewing Company in St. Paul in 1901. Before that, he was credited with constructing the first modern business block in Shakopee, which he constructed in 1893 at the corner of 2nd and Lewis Street, then known as the D.L. How building. Fred lived in Shakopee with his wife, Louise, and their six children, Gottlieb, George, Ada, Lydia, Richard, and Fred, Jr., who died in 1928. He served on the city council from 1923 until 1932. He died at age 81 in 1946. Louise derived much happiness from garden, the flowers, and her needlework. She died at age 77 in 1949.

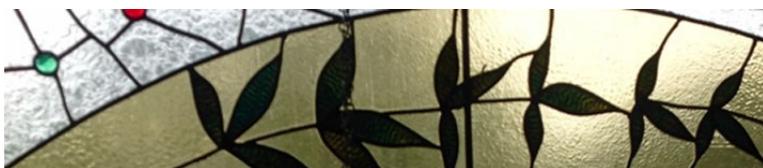
One of my favorite parts of the house was the stained-glass windows, where the windows transformed sunlight into patches of color that drifted around the room, bringing the patchwork floor to life. The windows were called transom windows, and were a hallmark of upward-mobility sensibilities, an aspirational gesture for people at the turn-of-the-century homes, an overlooking fragment of the past.

According to Christine Bouleware, “It may have a clear pane of glass or divided lights of leaded glass or stained glass...I’ve seen it in homes from the 1890s to the 1930s.” While a few window salesman might be wandering Shakopee, enticing developers with sing-song calls about the wares, many of the windows were mail-ordered from places like the Sears catalog, which began selling “kit homes” in the early 20th century.

So often preservation efforts focus on high-end architecture, with fancy homes and mansions. It is rare to uncover preservation efforts aimed at more modest refinements, such as a place like the Rohlfs house, where the glass-lead windows are often more modest, with the windows being the few embellishments. Most of the time, these buildings are not preserved. And this is what happened when the Rohlfs house was burned down.

A few of the windows at the Rohlfs house were removed before the scheduled burn, and the Shakopee Heritage Society now has a few examples of transom windows. But, the house is gone, and that is Shakopee’s loss.

(Some information from A Walking Tour of Historic Shakopee, Shakopee Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, 2007; Working-class Stained Glass Offers a Window into the Past by Bill Lindeke, MINNPOST, Oct. 24, 2016; Married, Scott County Argus, May 7, 1896; Fred Rohlfs Brick Addition, Scott County Argus, Dec. 9, 1904; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rohlfs Observe Golden Wedding, Shakopee Argus-Tribune, May 9, 1946; Fred Rohlfs Died at Home Here Sunday, Shakopee Valley News, Dec. 5, 1946; Fred Rohlfs Died Sunday, Shakopee Argus-Tribune, Dec. 5, 1946; Fred Rohlfs Funeral Here, Shakopee Argus-Tribune, Dec. 12, 1946; Services for Fred Rohlfs: Veteran Shakopee Contractor Buried in Valley Cemetery Last Week, Shakopee Valley News, Dec. 12, 1946; Mrs. Rohlfs Rites Here, Shakopee Argus-Tribune, March 31, 1949.)



Cindy Strand and the Sweet Treat Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant

Compiled by David R. Schleper

The Sweet Treat Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant opened on Jan. 3, 1978, in Shakopee. The manager and owner was Cindy Strand, and at age 18, she was the youngest business owner in Shakopee.

Cindy, the manager and owner, graduated from Shakopee High School. She first thought of the idea of opening a business in her junior sales and marketing class. One of the required projects was to do a study of opening a business. As a senior, Cindy researched the working of a business and compiled information in a manual. Through market research, Cindy found that it would be feasible to open an ice cream parlor and to make it succeed in Shakopee.

The Sweet Treat Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant opened in downtown area of Shakopee, at 226 South Lewis Street. The place was recently the Strunk Pharmacy, or the Old Drug Store, which closed in June 1977 after 120 years of service. The building is the Huber Building, and at that time, was adjacent to Award Realty. The Sweet Treat offered many items, ranging from sandwiches to malts to sundaes. It also sold ice cream cones, pints and ice cream products, which could be eaten at the restaurant or taken out.

Cindy, a former athlete at Shakopee High School, used her business to promote local athletics whenever possible. "I'm pro-athletic, especially for the girls," said Cindy, who assisted with coaching the high school girls' tennis team in 1978.

Today someone could go to grocery store and get special ice cream, but in 1978 the place to go for great ice cream was the Sweet Treat. The most popular ice cream was blue ice cream, with gum inside. Called bubblegum ice cream, it was the kind of cone I would get every time I visited!

Michelle Kay noted, "Used to spend many hours in her shop, playing Fleetwood Mac on the jukebox and eating ice cream with my best friend, Bonnie Jo Mans McIsaac. Good memories for sure!"

According to Cindy Strand, "I'm really grateful to all the Shakopee people for supporting me in this business venture. Without them, it wouldn't have been impossible."

(Some information from Sweet Treat, Vol. 117, No. 26, March 29, 1978; Sweet Treat to Hold Grand Opening May 1-7, Shakopee Valley News, Vol. 117, No. 31; Sweet Treat to Observe Six Month Anniversary, Shakopee Valley News, Vol 117, No. 41, July 5, 1978; Sweet Treat Plans First Anniversary, Shakopee Valley News; Sweet Treat's Young Owner Enlarges Menu, Shakopee Valley News, March 28, 1979.)



Cindy Strand

James Thompson (ca. 1799-1884)

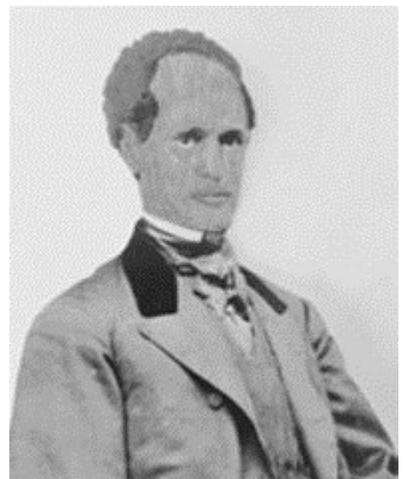
Compiled by David R. Schleper

Five years after Joseph Godfrey, the first African American in Shakopee, escaped, walking forty miles to freedom, another African American man lived in Shakopee. James Thompson, probably one of the most famous African Americans in Minnesota, lived in Shakopee from around 1853 until around 1860. A Sketch of Shakopee Minnesota Historical and Industrial, 1891 by William Hinds, had this one sentence about an African American in Shakopee in 1853:

"Nigger Jim" built where Michael Berens' store is and McKinney built a blacksmith shop back of Strunk & Sons' drug store.

This Jim is James Thompson, one of the best-known African American residents of early Minnesota.

The 1857 census listed James next to William Barnes in the Eagle Creek area. James and



James Thompson

Marpiyawecasta's daughter, Sarah Thompson Barnes, who married William Barnes.

The Berens family had three businesses in Shakopee. Mathias Berens was in the Kohls and Berens store. John Berens had a general merchant in business downtown. The two of them were at the corner of Holmes and First Ave., on the south side of the street, and the other one on the place where Valley Sports is, on the west corner of Holmes St. The other store was a fruit and confectionery store, which was located on the middle of the block, on First Ave., north side, between Holmes and Lewis St. This was Michael Berens's store, and was there for at least 30 years. Michael Berens then sold the store to Math Grommesch, who purchased the store building and confectionery stock according to the Scott County Argus on Aug. 31, 1906.

But before Berens had his confectionery store, Jim Thompson had a store there. This would be Block 3 of Shakopee City. This area was torn down in 1986.

Jim was born ca. 1799 at the plantation of President James Monroe. Monroe's nephew, George, owned James, but sold him to pay for gambling debts. Eventually, James Thompson was emancipated, and he became an interpreter for the Dakota Indians at Kaposia village.

In 1849, a devout Methodist, Jim donated land and supplies to build a church at 325 Market St. in downtown St. Paul, including the broad shingles, some that he cut out himself in the cedar swamp below the Wabasha Street bluff. Besides the shingles and his skilled labor, Jim also assembled a quantity of hand hewn oak timbers, and a town lot to help pay for the bricks.

After building the church, in 1853 Jim, Marpiyawecasta, and their children moved to Shakopee. Most of the articles about Jim don't mention his move to Shakopee, but the Census of 1857 and 1860, the connections to Charles St. Clair and William Barnes, and "Nigger Jim" mentioned in A Sketch of Shakopee Minnesota Historical and Industrial, 1891 by William Hinds make it clear that Jim was in Shakopee. And so people of Shakopee can proudly call Jim Thompson, a slave who used his skills and wits to procure his emancipation through an anti-slavery fundraising endeavor, a free man of color who was an interpreter with the Dakota in Kaposia, a humble man who helped build a church using his own two hands, one of us!

In 1884, James and Marpiyawecasta moved to Nebraska to be closer to their son. Marpiyawecasta Mary Thompson died on Oct. 11, 1884 at her son, George Thompson's, at the Santee Reservation in Nebraska. Four days later, at the same place, James Thompson died on Oct. 15, 1884.

(Some information from Bachman, Walt. Northern Slave, Black Dakota: The Life and Times of Joseph Godfrey. Bloomington, MN: Pond Dakota Press, 2013; Green, William Davis A Peculiar Imbalance: The Fall and Rise of Racial Equality in Early Minnesota. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007; Newson, Thomas. Pen Pictures of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Biographical Sketches of Old Settlers: From the Earliest Settlement of the City, up to and Including the Year 1857. Vol. 1. St. Paul: Thomas Newson, 1886; Taylor, David. African Americans in Minnesota (People of Minnesota) (2002), Minnesota Historical Society Press; Katz, William Loren. Black Pioneers: An Untold Story. Atheneum, 1999; Murphy, Nora. African Americans in Minnesota: Telling Our Own Stories (People of the Heartland). Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000; MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society. "Thompson, James (c.1799-1884)." Accessed May 3, 2016. <http://www.mnopedia.org/person/thompson-james-c1799-1884>); Holmquist, June D. They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2003; Fitzgerald, Nancy. Ex-Slave Helped Found Historic St. Paul Church, St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press, Aug. 28, 1949; Mrs. Mathias Berens Death, Shakopee Tribune, Oct. 31, 1902, p. 4; A Sketch of Shakopee Minnesota Historical and Industrial, 1891 by William Hinds; CultureBrokers Foundation, Inc. 2008. "Points of Entry: The African American Heritage Guide to Saint Paul.", "James Thompson," Saint Paul Historical, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://saintpaulhistorical.com/items/show/251>; E-mail from Walt Bachman to Patrick Rodgers, Jan. 21, 2006, and Walt Bachman to David Schleper Feb. 25, 2015.)

Elections 2017

This upcoming year we will be voting for a president, secretary, and two trustees. All are two-year terms, with the exception of Don Wagner's (one-year term). The election will be held during the winter membership meeting on Saturday, Jan. 21, at the Scott County Historical Society/Stans Museum at 1 p.m. If you're interested in running for a position, please contact any board member and we'll get you on the ballot. We will also ask at the meeting. Those who are currently candidates for the open seats are:

President: Lois Wendt

Trustee: Don McNeil

Secretary: Melissa Whiting

Trustee: Open (One-year term; Don Wagner unable to serve this year)

Save the date for Valley Cemetery tour

Mark your calendar for Betty Dols, who will be sharing stories at the Valley Cemetery. This is an exciting tour for Shakopee Heritage Society members that is worth joining! It will happen on Saturday, May 20, 2017 at the cemetery, which is just east of the Knights Event Center on East Fourth Avenue in Shakopee.

Holiday recipes from the *St. Mary's 1929 Cook Book*

Find the entire cookbook on our website at shakopeeheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/st-marys-cookbook-1929.pdf.

Chocolate Fudge

¼ cup butter, 1 cup white sugar, 1 cup brown sugar, ¼ cup molasses, ½ cup cream or evaporated milk, 2 ounces chocolate, 1 ½ teaspoonfuls vanilla.

Melt butter. Mix together sugar, molasses and cream. Add this to the butter and heat to boiling point. Boil for two and one-half minutes stirring rapidly. Then add chocolate cut fine. Boil five minutes stirring rapidly at first and then more slowly towards the end. Remove from fire, add vanilla. Then stir constantly until the mass thickens. Pour into buttered pan and set in a cool place to harden.

Edna M. Munsch

Ginger Snaps

1 cup brown sugar, ¾ lard, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon ginger, 1 pinch salt, 2 teaspoons soda, 1 cup molasses, 3 ¼ cups flour.

Stir soda in molasses, melt lard and mix all ingredient together. Put half the mixture on a baking board and cover with clean white napkin and roll out thin. Cut with small cookie cutter and replace on tin far enough apart so they will not touch when baked.

Fidelis Tieben

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