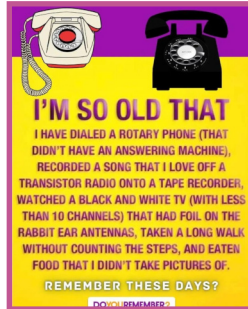


SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Take Me Out to the Ballgame!

The Minors. The Browns. The Carols and Rock Spring. Tribune. Regulars and Two Bens. Tiger. Knights of Columbus. American Legion. Ben's Boys and the Athletics. The Cubs. And the Shakopee Indians.

So many names. So much information about the Riverside Athletic Park, which was in downtown Shakopee from 1903-1983.

Riverside Athletic Park was located on the west side of Highway 169/101 just over the Holmes Street Bridge and the Minnesota River on the left side.

The opening exhibition game in 1903 was against Prior Lake, and in the 8th inning Sullivan drew a base on balls, stole 2nd, 3rd, and home!

The park hosted special events such as a ballgame as part of a homecoming celebrating in 1919 for local soldier back from World War I. (See page 5)



NO GAME TODAY! Shakopee's Riverside Park, rich in the lore of Minnesota amateur baseball, is literally being "torn down" - at least the grandstand. The above picture was taken last Friday as workers began the task of taking down the grandstand - which had been condemned. Riverside Park in Shakopee was the scene of the first out-state Minnesota amateur baseball tourney in 1903. The 1949 state tourney at Shakopee drew 34,280 fans - an attendance mark that has been surpassed only once. This year's Minnesota Amateur baseball tourney opens Thursday evening at Wadena (see Sport Roundings).

Shakopee Heritage Society Presentations Shakopee Community Center



Shakopee Heritage Society gives one-hour presentations at the Shakopee Community Center Šakpe Ti at 1255 Fuller Street South, Shakopee on the second Tuesday of each month from 1-2 pm. The presentations are free.



May 12, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***A Place to Belong: Civil War Veterans in Early Shakopee***

June 9, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***Cata Wambli and the Dakota Alphabet: The Story of Rev. Samuel Pond***

July 14, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***Thomas Holmes & Ety-shah Red Face William Quinn in Holmes Landing 1851***

Aug. 11, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***“We Were Here, Too!” African Americans in Early Shakopee***

Sep. 8, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***The Great Fire of 1879***

Oct. 13, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***Hola! Latinos/Latinas and Hispanics in Early Shakopee***

Nov. 10, 2026 1 to 2 pm: ***Old Town, New Town: Shakopee in the Last 50 Years***

Join the Shakopee Heritage Society!



\$20 per year (will be \$30 next year!), including 96 brochures, 4 newsletters, monthly presentations, cemetery tours, downtown Shakopee tours, and more. To join, send a check, with your name, address, email, phone number to:

Shakopee Heritage Society
2109 Boulder Pointe
Shakopee, MN 55379
952-693-3865



Cemetery Tours

Cemetery Tours happen 4 times a year at 4 cemeteries in the area on a Saturday from 10 am to Noon. People should bring a lawn chair. Contact David Schleper at 952 693 3865 if questions.

- Valley Cemetery Tour:** May 16, 2026 10 to Noon.
- Catholic Cemetery Tour:** June 13, 2026 10 to Noon
- Marystown Cemetery Tour:** June 27, 2026 10 to Noon
- Calvary Cemetery Tour:** July 18, 2026 10 to Noon



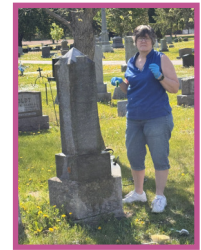


Cemetery Cleaning at Valley Cemetery.

9 am to Noon. Starting in May 2026, and happening every two weeks on Thursday. This is the 5th year that the Daughters of the American Revolution Keewaydin Chapter and the Shakopee Heritage Society have worked on cleaning the cemetery using D2, the cleaner. It's a great opportunity Bring a lawn chair! Contact David Schleper at 952 693 3865 if interested. They are meeting on the second and fourth Thursday, altering at 9 am. Next year we will continue at the Catholic Cemetery on 10th Avenue. Always look for more workers... and it is fun!

May 14, 2026 9 am to Noon
May 28, 2026 9 am to Noon
June 11, 2026 9 am to Noon
June 25, 2026 9 am to Noon
July 9, 2006 9 am to Noon

July 23, 2026 9 am to Noon
August 13, 2026 9 am to Noon
August 27, 2026 9 am to Noon
September 10, 2026 9 am to Noon
September 24, 2026 9 am to Noon



Downtown Shakopee Tour #1

Downtown Shakopee Tour #1 talks about various people and places in downtown Shakopee. Ida Gertrude Gjerdrum Buck (1883-1957), Paul Pablo Edward Schwaesdall (1949-2024), Maximus Max Guiido Wermerskirchen (1931-1959), Charles Manaige (1846-1938), a Chinese man in Shakopee (1892), Sophia de Levie (1919-1943), John Shoto (1798-1899), Mahala Conklin Shumway (1835-1909), Mary Brown Griffin (1825-1882), Jane Lamont Titus (1827-1899), and others will be discussed.

May 9, 2026 Saturday from 10 am to Noon. Meet in front of the Library on Lewis Street. Bring a lawn chair. (This is rescheduled.)

Downtown Shakopee Tour #2

Downtown Shakopee Tour #2 will discuss people in downtown Shakopee including the WPA Mural at Central School, Jacob Ries and the Shakopee Bottling Works, Samaha Islamic Center, the first hospital in Shakopee (and Albert Leclair who was refused treatment), the Great Fire of 1879, which including the destruction of many buildings, including the National Hotel, Miss Hill's Millinery, John Gutenberg Meat Market, and John Frank's Tailer Shop, Charlie Sam and the Chinese Laundry in 1901, and the attempted robbery of John Beren's store, among others.

May 23, 2026 Saturday from 10 am to Noon. Meet in front of the old Central Elementary School. Bring a lawn chair.



Presentations at Benedictine Living Community



952-234-7650

May 19, 2026 1:45 pm to 2:45 at Windermere Way
Honor, Respect, and Sacrifice: Military in Early Shakopee

June 16, 2026 2 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
“We Were Fierce!” Women in Early Shakopee

July 21, 2026 2:00 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
2,416 People and 27 Bars: I’ll Drink to That! Shakopee in the 1930s

August 11, 2026 2 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
The Bricks: The People and the Workers in Early Shakopee

September 15, 2026 2 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
So Groovy! Shakopee in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s

October 20, 2026 2 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
The Battle of Shakopee in 1858

November 17, 2026 2 pm to 3 pm at Windermere Way
Old Town, New Town: Shakopee in the Last 50 Years



Presentations at Scott County Historical Society



Presentations are at the Scott County Historical Society at 235 Fuller St. S., Shakopee and at 952-445-0378. Please call to let them know if you are coming. It’s free! Starts at 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 5:30 to 6:30 pm
A+ for Teachers: Educators in Early Shakopee

Wednesday, October 14, 2026 at 5:30 to 6:30 pm
Weird and Wonderful in Early Shakopee

Wednesday, December 9, 2026 at 5:30 to 6:30 pm
Instigate, Inflammate, and Ignite: Fires in Early Shakopee

This blueprint is of the Riverside Park Grandstand, which was built in 1924.

Four separate bids for the grandstand were submitted, and A.F. Huth was picked to build the stadium for \$2394. The new grandstand, painted dark green, was built by opening day, which was Memorial Day of 1924.

The wall was 320 down the left field line, 310 to the right, and the centerfield wall was 360 feet from the plate.



The Shakopee Players. This is a new old photograph from a Scherkenbach relative that was sent to the Scott County Historical Society this month (before they were going to throw them away!) According to Tom Schleper, "Definitely early 1900s tp, tube 1920. With World War I started in 1914, guessing this was before then. The striped caps two of them were actually popular in the 1880s, so it could be even earlier. The string ties in jerseys also date back to 1880-1910." Also, Tom noted the baseball is a telling factor. "That ball is pre-1900. Leather was dark then. Hard to make out the stitching so likely homemade but def pre-1900s. Likely around 1890!"

- Everything dates between 1890-1990
- Padded pants
- String in collared jerseys
- Pill striped caps
- Fingers not sewn together in the gloves
- Pillow catcher mitt

Baseball is older or even homemade. All of the list show verified vintage equipment between 1890-1910!

Anyone know anyone on the time?

The Shakopee Indians amateur baseball team was established in 1938, and has been representing the community in amateur baseball for 88 years. The team was the Minnesota Amateur Baseball State Champion in 1940, 1959, 2009, and 2010. In 1948, the state tournament happened in Riverside Park, which had 34,263 paid admissions, and a record-breaking crowd of 7,513 attending the last game. The new lights were paid for from the ticket sales! On Sunday, August 13, 1950, Shakopee beat St. Peter 4-3 in the longest game ever played. The 24-inning game decided the Minnesota Valley Championship. The game took 5 hours to complete, as several fights, one including the Sheriff and the fire department prolonged the game!

“Riverside Park was a historic ballpark located down in a bowl-like setting, but it often suffered from flooding and always from mosquitoes!” said Joe Schleper, Jr. “Over the years, it hosted state tournaments with overflow crowds and great teams. I recall my dad bringing me down to the ballpark in the spring of 1965. From the bridge above, we observed that the entire field, including the grandstand and scoreboard, was submerged in water. There were pieces of the outfield fence floating and several boats skimming the water where our ballpark lay underneath.”

According to Steve O’Neill in the book, Scott County Baseball by Tom Melchior, Scott County Historical Society, p. 404, “It seemed that every year the river flooded the plowed field the dike in the outfield the flow seem under the dike and then seep into the outfield. We had a game in July 1983. It was a wet summer again and the dike was leaking as usual.”

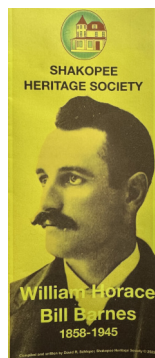
“In July of 1983, we were playing Victoria at Riverside. Bill Heller, a great left-handed pitcher, was up to bat. Bill was not a great hitter, but he got ahold of one and hit a home run. It was like fireworks. As it flew over the snow fence, the other guys and I saw sparks. It was a big deal for Bill to hit a home run, probably the first one ever. The outfielder was going to grab the metal post on the snow fence and jump over the fence to get the ball, and we hollered at him not to touch the fence.”

“The city went down there the next day and found that the fence post hit a wire from one of the outfield lights towers since it was wet, it was arcing. I don’t know how alive it was, but Bill hit his only home run and got fireworks. We’ve never let him forget it, and he reminds us of it often. That fence post was sparking!” said Steve O’Neill.

In 1983, the old wooden stands had been declared condemned due to moisture and rotting conditions. The snow fence sparked if a ball hit it. Any ball that hit near the fence were considered ground-rule doubles as players obviously did not want to go near it!

Bill Heller hit one of the last known round-trippers as the ball bounced off the top of the fence and sparks flew through the fence from left field to center field!

“We continued to play at Riverside Park even after the grandstand was eventually condemned, the outfield fence was replaced by temporary snow fencing, and the surrounding land including the ballpark was bought by the State of Minnesota,” said Joe Schleper, Jr. “As players, we felt an attachment to Riverside Park and really didn’t want to leave, but it ended up being the right decision.”



Remembering Tom Melchior

Tom Melchior, a member of the Shakopee Heritage Society, at age 89, died this month.

Tom was a teacher and coach for 31 years in Burnsville High School, was the Minnesota Teacher off the Year in 1971, and won the Glenn Carlson Award in 1993 by the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame.

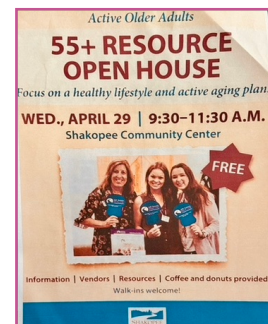
Tom loved telling stories, and the Shakopee Heritage Society loved his presentations.

Tom was also an author. Books that Tom wrote include ***They Called Me Teacher (Stories of Minnesota Country School Teachers 1915-1960); From Both Sides of the Desk, Belle Plaine Baseball 1884-1960;*** and ***Scott County Baseball, and Never Forgotten: Stories by Scott County WWII Minnesota Veterans.***

Thoughts and prayers go to his wife, Susan, and family!



David chatted with active over adults at the 55+ Resource Open House at the Shakopee Community Center on Wednesday, April 29, 2026. Besides grabbing candy, seven people bought *The Shakopee Story*, and several people looked at the Shakopee Heritage Society brochures.



Don't forget to look at the 400 people who lived in Shakopee at shakopeeheritage.org.

And make sure to check the Pathways of Shakopee History self-tour, located on the west part of Memorial Park!





Shakopee Heritage Society
2109 Boulder Pointe
Shakopee, MN 55379

President: David R. Schleper

Vice-President: Sandy Olson

Treasurer: Liz Lundin **Secretary:** Joanne Musick

Trustees: Dave Regan, Melissa Whiting, Jeff and Candace Williamson

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