

# Our Times: Lake City in History

“Preserving Yesterday’s Memories for Tomorrow”

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## PRESIDENT’S CORNER

BY CONSTANCE ANDERSON

The Lake City Historical Society has been in the process of reinventing itself and has grown up and ventured off on its own.

Many years ago the Lake City Historical Society came into being as a chapter of the Wabasha County Historical Society. Together we collaborated on many endeavors and both organizations thrived. However, over time each organization has come to the recognition that, long term, individual interests would be best served by separation. A primary difference today in the two groups is the substantive responsibility borne by the WCHS for its museum at Reads Landing.

For the LCHS, an important part of the reorganization is more freedom to pursue grant money with its new status as a 501c3, not-for-profit organization. Grants from national, state and local sources can assist the society in its mission of collecting, preserving, displaying, and disseminating the history of Lake City and surrounding areas.

We are renewing our efforts to answer with vigor a common question from new residents and old-timers as well. “Why is history important?” Our community is the product of our founding settlers, interactions with Native Americans, and our majestic setting on the shoreline of one of the world’s most historic rivers. We have a once contested but long since verified claim as the birthplace of water skiing. I commend to your attention the research done by our own Katie Himanga into Lake City’s origins beginning with the prelude to settlement in 1830. (See pages 4-6.)

Another exciting initiative of the LCHS is engaging youth of the community with local

(Continued on Page 2.)

## Hollywood at the Corner Of Lakeshore and Lyon

BY BOB NORBERG

The headline above was a working title for what I was certain would appeal to many whose personal experiences as teenagers in the 1950s involved the Hollywood Theatre. They sold and took tickets, marketed candy bars and popcorn, and called the owners for help when adult intervention was needed.

The more accurate headline, after I did extensive research into the Hollywood, would be “Hyping the Hollywood,” paying tribute to the creative force that owners Bob and Florence Fick injected into the management of the local theatre.

When the Ficks purchased the movie house in 1953, the story in the *Graphic* stated that Florence would manage the operation and that immediate plans were being made to double the size of the existing screen, to a width of 30 feet, and install state-of-the-art projection equipment, making Lake City one of the few Minnesota theatres outside the Twin Cities to adopt Cinemascope.

In response to news that Cinemascope was coming, the *Zumbro Falls Enterprise* noted that “it is approximately 24 years since ‘talkies’ were introduced in the Lake City theatre and now this major change in the picture itself, it is said, will have the same impact on the public as adding sound to the old silent movies.”

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*Ken Willers, member of the Lincoln High School Class of 1959, put his early artistic talent on display with this rendering of the Hollywood Theatre during its wide-screen heyday in the 1950s.*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

(Continued from Page 1.)

history. This past spring Wayne Quist and Dori Lindsay initiated a collaboration with Lincoln High School to develop an essay contest with Advanced Placement History students entitled "Why History Matters." Cash awards and certificates went to Alex Holmgren, first place, and Charles Johnson, second place. We hope that drawing youth to an appreciation of our community history will inspire an interest in all history and thus a broader, more sensitive respect for people and their stories throughout the world.

The LCHS is collaborating with The Greater Lake City Community Foundation to endow an ongoing annual history essay award at Lincoln High. Donations in memory of recently deceased LCHS Honorary Member Katie Schmidt became the seed money for the dedicated endowment fund. LCHS is encouraging others to help build the endowment with donations to the foundation, POB 86, Lake City MN, 55041, with "History Matters Endowment" in the memo line.

LCHS invites everyone who has an interest in Lake City history to join as active members and/or support our efforts. See page 8 for a membership application form.

## The Hollywood

(Continued from Page 1.)

Margaret Webster, in her *Graphic* column "PostScripts," quickly took to the wide screen. "Now I know how much it does to improve the showing of pictures. Attended 'Mogambo' Sunday with my own good company and a box of excellent popcorn settled down to the film. Pictorially, it was beautiful. The young fry of Lake City were very well behaved, except for unnecessarily throwing trash about. I wonder whether they realize that they are partially responsible for maintaining a nice theater in Lake City. What would Lake City be without the Hollywood?"

"The Robe" was the first Cinemascope picture to be shown at the Hollywood, followed by "The Ten Commandments," "Around the World in 80 Days," and "Ben Hur." Profits from movies especially made for the Big Screen more than offset losses from "ordinary" films.

In short order the Ficks proved to have a flair for promotion. They did not waste time copying past practices, but quickly became innovation leaders. This observation does not originate with local hearsay. A national trade magazine for theatre owners awarded the Hollywood its \$100 first place award for promotional creativity two years in a row, 1955 and 1956.

In 1955, the Ficks talked *Graphic* editor Gene Hibbard and publisher Larry Oberg, and their wives Elsie and Esther, into taking over the theatre operation for an evening and, in return, the Ficks would take over writing Hibbard's "Run-down" column for a week. The "swap jobs" good-will building idea was so fresh that the magazine touted it to other theatre owners.

As the magazine explained it, the Ficks issued a good-natured taunt to Hibbard: "We visualize the crowds standing under the marquee waiting for tickets and the fun of heckling a newspaper editor trying to run a theatre, assuring mothers he will be their baby sitter, paging customers throughout the auditorium when their friends telephone, lifting little toddlers up to the drinking fountain, and all the other tasks. ... And who knows, this may open the door to you and Larry taking over the bank, hotel or flour mill for a day [in a similar swap arrangement] with business men who may really be frustrated journalists."

In fact, the idea, fully consummated with the cast of characters hand-picked by the Ficks, was such a hit that the local bank signed up to run the Hollywood on another night. A full-page ad teased the reader with a hint of "bankruptcy": LAKE CITY BANK TAKES OVER HOLLYWOOD THEATRE.

Another \$100 first place award from the same magazine was based on Bob Fick's idea to add wrestling to the movie billing. LIVE WRESTLING AT THE HOLLYWOOD, announced the *Graphic* ad, explaining that the feature "Running Wild" would be followed at 9 p.m. by KSTP-TV wrestling stars, "both male and former world's champion ladies." Forty ringside seats were set up on stage.

Fick gave a talk in later years to a local civic group in which he told about his early exposure to the theater business. "I had been working for Mr. Underwood at the Jewell Nursery for several years. Later, when the company was on the brink of receivership, I made a connection with the National Theatre Checking & Research Co.

"This involved mostly weekends, on an assignment basis, traveling to southern Minnesota theatres with a Veeder-Root Clock and counting admissions to hit pictures bought on a percentage basis. The [percentage] dictated by the film companies was so high that most, if not all, theatres would under-report unless a reporter was there to count and submit reports. Even so, we were offered bribes to under-report, and evicted from the theatre if we refused."

Before television began to take hold in the early 1950s, movie houses prospered because they were the prime source of universal entertainment. When the Hollywood began to lose money as people found comfort with a screen in their own living rooms, the Crane owners, both pharmacists, decided to return to their profession and put the Hollywood up for sale. The Ficks made a deal to take over.

Bob invested heavily in advertisements in the *Graphic*, sometimes full pages, prompting editor Hibbard to celebrate the buys as "bourbon sandwiches." In his civic club talk, Fick revealed that for a brief period he and Florence were half owners of a 700-seat movie house in the Florida Keys. They had paid for their holding with half-interest in the Hollywood, half interest in the apartment house they owned here, and a "chunk of money."

**ALL-STAR WRESTLING**  
**Lake City, Minn.**  
**Hollywood Theatre**  
**Thursday Evening, April 19**  
DOORS OPEN AT 7:30 P. M. MATCHES START 9:00 P. M.  
3- All Star Wrestling Matches - 3  
**MAIN EVENT**  
MIXED AUSTRALIAN TAG TEAM  
2 OUT OF 3 FALLS - ONE HOUR TIME LIMIT  
Semi-Final Match—Girls  
ONE FALL - 30 MINUTES  
LA VONNE HARTE vs. MARY MATTSON  
KSTP Star Minneapolis, Minnesota Prohibition, Wisconsin  
Special Match—One Fall, 30 Minutes  
JIM MORGAN vs. DICK EVANS  
Sawtooth Falls, South Dakota Green Bay, Wisconsin

The plan was to operate the Hollywood for six months during warm weather, then run the Keys theatre for the other six months. Then the Ficks had second thoughts, dissolved the partnership and, with the help of local attorney Ken Smith, got their money back. Bob and Florence had dodged a devastating bullet. Hurricane Donna struck Florida in 1960, inundating the theatre with 11 feet of water and nearly drowning the manager.

But, like thousands of movie houses across America, the Hollywood was slowly suffocated into submission by television. Screens that resembled ship portholes in the beginning grew larger, programming proliferated, and mass production was making sets more affordable. Extensive research into the *Graphic* archive did not turn up a date for the final showing at the Hollywood. The last advertisement for a movie there was Sept. 12, 1974.

Florence Fick passed away in 2007 at the age of 89. Bob was 98 at his death in 2012.

## Movie Owners Over the Years

1914: G. R. Swanson, under the name Grand Theatre. Preceded as proprietor for a short period by a Mr. Grant.

1915: Thomas Grogan, Grand.

1916: Leon Sinclair, Grand.

1926: Gil Reding and Charles Stroud, Granada.

1930: Robert V. Dallison, Granada.

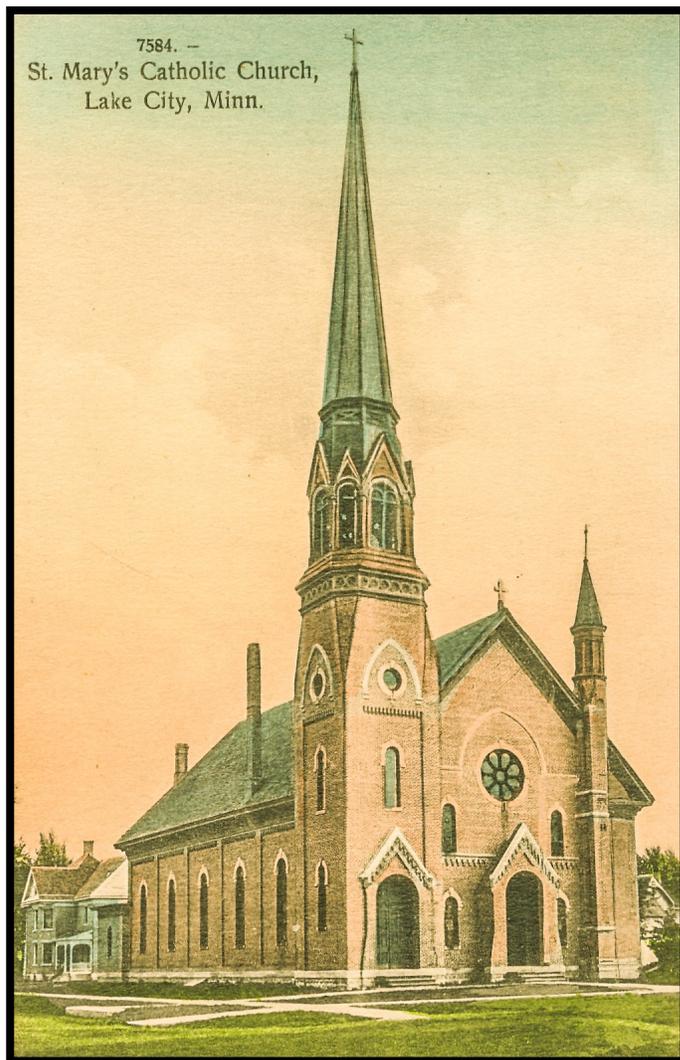
1934: Sheldon and Donna Grengs, Grand.

1936: Arnold Crane, Hollywood.

1954: Florence and Bob Fick, Hollywood

1974: Closed.

Notes: D. C. McKenzie constructed the building in 1914 as a movie theatre with a seating capacity of 600. In the 1914 opening, the feature was "Officer Jim," a drama, followed by two reels of comedy. There were two showings and 1,000 total attendees. The "first talkie" in Lake City was under the Reding/Stroud ownership in 1926. The Grengs of Spooner, Wisconsin, added lights to the canopy, making Lakeshore and Lyon the "bright spot" of town. In 1945, Arnold Crane, aided by John McKenzie, remodeled the building and placed the box office outside the lobby directly under the canopy.--Researcher Sharon Nelson contributed to these notes.



## St. Mary's Constructed on Lyon in 1877

St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church was constructed as a brick edifice at 419 West Lyon Avenue in 1877. The Catholic community had its beginnings in 1856 when Father Felix Tissot came as a missionary, stopping periodically to celebrate mass, perform marriage ceremonies, and baptize new members. An earlier church building had been built on Center Street in 1866.

## New City Hall Planned

The work preparatory to erecting the new city hall is rapidly progressing, and before the public will stand our new edifice. The city fathers are doing some very good work in regard to improving the appearance of our city and every citizen should make it a point to back them in all their undertakings.—*Graphic Sentinel*, Feb. 21, 1899.



# Lake City from Its Beginnings

COMPILED BY KATIE HIMANGA

Forever homeland and resting place of their ancestors, the area that is now Lake City was a place of encampment, hunting, fishing and foraging for the indigenous Dakota people during the era of American expansion west of the colonies. That began to change in 1830 when a tract of land 32 miles long and extending 15 miles inland adjacent to Lake Pepin was set aside in a treaty signed July 15 at Prairie du Chien. It was known as the Half-Breed Tract and set aside as a permanent reservation for the descendants of white men and indigenous women.

In 1852 with the signing of a treaty at Mendota, land west of the Mississippi was ceded to the United States. It included a provision for \$150,000 cash settlement for the Half-Breed Tract, which the U.S. Senate refused to pay when it ratified the treaty the following year. The amended articles were signed on September 4, 1852 in St. Paul. With the stroke of a pen, indigenous land became United States property.

Although individual land ownership did not become legal for several more years, it was during this time that adventurous Americans came west and began making claims to land that eventually became Lake City. This timelines the story from then until the little city, located in the Township of Lake, was incorporated in 1872.

1853 In the fall, brothers Jacob & Philip Boody made a claim on 328 acres on the prairie lying up the lake from the central part of Lake City.

1854 Patrick Conway and sons James and William arrived in the spring and took claims near the old territorial road.

1854 Abner Dwelle (for whom Dwelle Street is named) and family, along with John Boody (cousin of Jacob and Philip) arrived in June and took claims down the lake.

1854 Ferry service to and from Lake City and Wisconsin communities across Lake Pepin, transporting people, horses, buggies, and later automobiles, was available and continued for nearly 70 years.

1854 John Boody's wife gave birth to Lake City's first child that summer.

1854 Territorial delegate Henry Rice introduced legislation in the Senate in July to issue scrip certificates, granting the "half breeds or mixed-bloods" of the Dakota or Sioux nation of Indians up to 640 acres on unoccupied, unsurveyed lands not reserved by the federal government in exchange for relinquishing all rights in the Half Breed Tract. Rice claimed publicly that the Half Breed Scrip Act protected the recipients of the scrip "in every respect" since it specified that "no transfer or conveyance of any of said certificates or scrip shall be valid." Privately, Rice told friends in Minnesota that the bill would create an opportunity for considerable profits.

1854 U. S. Government hired H.H. Johnson to enumerate the Half Breeds and mixed bloods. 638 persons were eventually found to be eligible for scrip.

1855 Quite a number settled upon Lake City in spring, among them Samuel Doughty (for whom Doughty Street is named), Abner Tibbetts, William Barry and Seth Skinner. Tibbetts, a "man of aggressive characteristics," had come from Maine to Racine, Wisconsin in 1853.

1855 Original land survey conducted. Township perimeter completed May 15. Section boundaries completed July 13. Three houses were mentioned on survey.

1855 Samuel Doughty bought the claims of Jacob and Philip Boody

in June and built the first frame house in Lake City.

1855 Red Wing U. S. Land Office established in August.

1856 Survey and plat by B. C. Baldwin done in May, with Tibbetts, Dwelle and Doughty being the proprietors. Indians often encamped near the mouth of the creek just below the city where they stopped to fish and hunt.

1856 Wabasha County organized. Abner Tibbetts was register of deeds.

1856 Rev. Silas Hazlett, a Presbyterian, arrived to join a Lake City population of about 300. He opened the first school on the second floor of a frame building at Main (now Lakeshore) and Marion Streets, drawing some 30 pupils.

1856 Eight pioneers joined in forming the town's first church, First Congregational-Church of Christ, in a wood frame building on the corner of Dwelle and South High Streets.

1856-57 Lake City Temperance League formed to detect and boycott any establishment selling liquor.

1857 General Shields, arriving March 23 at Wabasha, brought scrip from Washington D.C., for distribution to Half Breeds. Land was quickly taken up because of its proximity to water transport. Preemption to unsurveyed land extended in Minnesota. Squatters/settlers now had the right of preemption and homestead rights the same as on other government lands.

1857 A house built at 219 W. Minnesota St. for H. D. Wickham survives today.

1857 Devastating financial panic destroyed the value of real estate. Henry Rice, now Minnesota's senator in Washington, felt that "all of the old settlers of Minnesota [were] ruined hopelessly."

1858 Wabasha County Commissioners met for the first time on January 4. Township boundaries designated and named on April 6.

1858 Lake City School District accepted 202 scholars between the ages of 4 and 21 years.

1858 On May 11 Minnesota becomes a state, the 32nd.

1858 First Lake Township meeting held May 11. Charles W. Hackett, Abner Dwelle and Samuel Doughty were elected supervisors.

1858 Brown's Hotel built at Lake City point. In 1936 it would be described as "an interesting old river tavern, situated on the banks of beautiful Lake Pepin, a part of the Mississippi River. A popular stopping place for tourists and settlers coming up the River from the South."

1860s Lake City becomes a major grain shipping port with nine elevators lining the lakeshore from what is now Ohuta Park (100 block of Park Street) to the 1900 block of North Lakeshore Drive.

1861 Thomas Gibbs & Son Drug Store, whose subsequent owner Don Wheeler advertised in 1940 as "the oldest drug store in Minnesota," opened at 119 South Washington Street. The Gibbs enterprise endures today in Kennedy Drug by Sterling.

1861 First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment raised for Civil War service.

1862 US-Dakota War. Thirty-eight Dakota men, including some from the Lake Pepin area, hanged in Mankato on December 26.

1864 On March 3, Supervisors of the Town of Lake City were given special powers equivalent in general terms to those usually exercised by the board of trustees of an incorporated village, or the common council of an incorporated city, but these special powers were made applicable to a very specific section of the township. "Thenceforth the town supervisors of Lake City had a corporation to look after, which was not incorporated, and the district above described had all the honors and privileges of an incorporated village or city without its liabilities and many of its burdens." The legislature made additional provisions regarding sidewalks, and road and bridge maintenance.

1866 The building at 226 S. Washington Street was built and survives today as the Lake Pepin Pearl Button Co.

1867 Chicago & St. Paul Railway Company was exploring construction route for a railroad.

1867 On March 9 the legislature gave additional powers to supervisors regarding licenses, gaming, fire prevention, jail, construction of a street, and leasing of part of the levee.

1867 In June, city and railroad company began discussions on track construction.

1867 Lake City State Bank (now Alliance) opened, making it the oldest state bank in Minnesota.

1868 On March 6 a special act of the legislature authorized Lake City to issue bonds in aid of construction of the Chicago & St. Paul railway.

1868 Drs. Phineas and Catherine Jewell founded a nursery on 10 acres of land. They hired Catherine's brother, J.M. Underwood, as supervisor. The enterprise would become Jewell Nursery (for which Jewell Avenue is named), expand to 1500 acres and provide first jobs and steady employment to many hundreds of residents over the years.

1869 On Feb 26 voters approved \$75,000 in bonding for railroad construction by a vote of 306-131

1870 Census determines Lake City population as 2,117

1871 J.M. Underwood marries Anna B. Sargeant of Winona on May 4. They become leaders in the Lake City community, in the Minnesota State Horticultural Society and the State Fair. Underwood Park is named for both of them. On the grounds of the State Fair, Underwood Street is named for J.M.

1871 July 25 saw inauguration of regular train service between Lake City and St. Paul. It was extended to Winona on Sept. 6.

1871 Lake City's mail came for the first time by train on Oct. 13, ending stagecoach and steamboat deliveries.

1872 On February 26, incorporation of Lake City, a fractious issue for many years, came to pass. The city's affairs were separated from Lake Township. The two parties agree to a contract

which gave the city 83% of the cash on hand, taxes collected by county treasurer, uncollected taxes, etc. Claims against the old town would be borne in the same proportion. The Fire Department was incorporated, and on April 2, Joel Fletcher was elected as Lake City's first mayor.

1873 Widespread economic panic and collapse.

1877 Three students made up the Lake City high school's first graduating class.

1882 Built by Charles C. Crane, the building at 109 East Center Street has operated to this day as a jewelry store under one ownership or another. It is Swan Jewelry today.

1884 Minnesota National Guard began using an area just south of the city for training exercises, a tract that would eventually embrace 200 acres and be known as Camp Lakeview. It was later relocated and renamed Camp Ripley.

1890 On July 13, Lake Pepin claimed 98 lives, most of them women and children, when the Sea Wing capsized in an intense and unexpected storm.

1899 City Hall built at its present location, 205 West Center Street.

### Sources for Chronology

*In preparing "Lake City from its Beginnings," researcher Katie Himanga carefully footnoted her sources throughout the original manuscript. They have been omitted in this version for space reasons. Much of the information came from volumes of "History of Wabasha County," including the first volume in 1880 and its subsequent updates. She also drew extensively on "Creating Minnesota: A History from the Inside Out," Annette Atkins, 2007.*

### Advice on How to Deploy Half Breed Tract Scrip

*Researcher Katie Himanga found the following material in The Weekly Minnesota of April 4, 1857:*

#### THE HALF BREED SCRIP

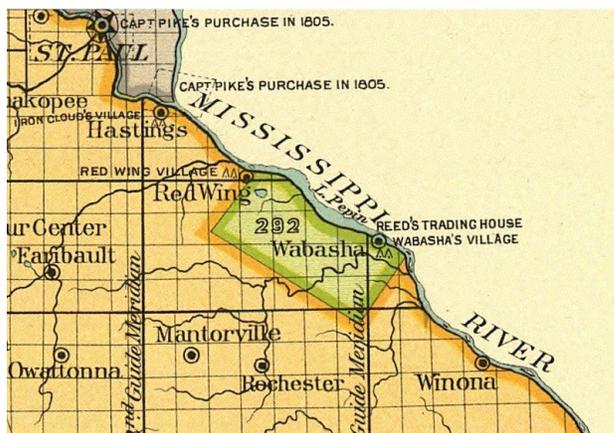
We are glad to learn by the following from the *Lake City Tribune*, that the disposition of the Half-Breed Scrip is likely to cause no trouble between the original owners and the settlers on the Tract. We think the editor gives also, some good advice to all parties:

Gen. Shields, who was appointed by the late Administration, as Commissioner to take the relinquishment of the Half-Breed title and deliver the Scrip, arrived at Wabasha on the 23d inst., and next morning entered upon this business with dispatch. Uniting with great firmness and decision a large amount of urbanity, Gen Shields is well qualified for this delicate task; and we are happy to say that

he seems anxious to do justice to all parties concerned.

There is a great degree of excitement all over the Reservation on the part of the settlers. We counsel our friends to keep cool and not allow themselves to get into a panic. We feel confident that in case any speculator or scrip-holder of any sort should lay scrip

*(Continued on Page 6.)*



*The Prairie du Chien treaty of 1830 established the 33,000 acre "Half Breed Tract," a concession demanded by Chief Wapasha to provide safe space for the descendants of French Canadian fur traders and Native American women. It extended from Barn Bluff in Red Wing to the Beef River below Wabasha and 15 miles inland from the Mississippi River (designated as 292 on the map). All of present day Lake City was part of the tract.*

(Continued from Page 5.)

over an actual settler, the Courts would pronounce it illegal, and the settler obtain redress. Keep cool, therefore, and resolute.

To any speculator disposed to deal in scrip with the intention of using the same upon any actual settler upon this Tract, we give this friendly caution: "Look before you leap!" We are persuaded that not a settler will yield his home (generally including his all) without a struggle. We would not value our life worth a straw were we to make such an attempt, and we should feel that no time nor place would be sufficiently remote to screen us from the just vengeance of one whose home and whose prospects we should thus despoil; we should feel that we merited the deepest indignation of such a man, as well as the abhorrence of every just person in the world.

There are lands enough upon which this scrip can be laid, and as good as those, and where its application will make no one homeless. We advise you to lay your scrip there, and not here. We threaten no one; we advise no settler to proceed to such an extremity as to take life. By no means. Let the circumstances be as aggravating as they will be, we say forbear.

But let the speculator also forbear. Our caution to the settler is but a word of remonstrance to men who feel justly incensed at one of the greatest outrages possible—men who are defending the most sacred of all earthly blessings, and whose feelings, in many instances at least, are wound to the highest pitch. Let no highest pitch speculator trust to the better judgment of the settlers, such as they would exhibit in reference to any other matter. The deepest reprobation awaits every man who shall attempt to speculate upon any man's home made upon these lands.

We are pleased to say in this connection, that the persons who are the primary recipients of the scrip, manifest no disposition, so far as we know, to do any injustice to the settlers; but, on the contrary, show the most honorable disposition to give the settler his claim. They do honor to themselves and secure the respect of every one interested. We name with pleasure Mr. Brisbois and his friends, of Prairie du Chien, and Mr. Faribault and his friends, of Faribault, who all expressed the desire to have the settlers secured in their homes. Several others did likewise. All honor to such men.

## The Lake City Historical Society

### Board Members/Officers

Constance Anderson, President  
Eloise Blattner, Vice President  
Don Schwartz, Secretary/Archivist  
Katie Himanga, Treasurer  
John Albright, Board Member  
Bob Parrott, Board Member

**CHAUTAQUA PROGRAMS**, featuring orators, teachers, preachers, musicians and showmen, constituted an important form of adult education across America for several decades before dying out in the mid-1920s. This photo of a chautauqua tent set up off Lakeshore Drive, space occupied today by a Kwik Trip, appeared in the *Graphic Republican* on June 6, 1916.

## Preparing to Celebrate Lake City's Incorporation 150 Years Ago

By LOIS BORNER

The Lake City MN 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committee formed in 2019 is working with various civic organizations, businesses, and other community members to sponsor events commemorating Lake City's incorporation on February 26, 1872. The goal is to provide a variety of experiences over a year-long period to reflect on the development and growth of Lake City and its connection to Lake Pepin.

Don Schwartz has been writing the 150-week countdown column for the *Lake City Graphic* that is also posted on the Facebook page "Lake City MN 150th Celebration." The information is also shared on the Lake Hits Happenings radio program on Friday mornings. The countdown highlights events from each year beginning in 1872 and will conclude the last weekend in June, 2022, marking the end of the year-long celebration. That Water Ski Days weekend also will be near the 100th anniversary of the invention of waterskiing.

A quilt—the Lake City 150th Community Quilt— has been created to document the city's history. The quilt project provides people of the community with a sense of shared identity and belonging through history, memory and stories. In learning about the past, we learn about ourselves. The quilt, reversible with both sides decorated, is on display at the Lake City Arts Center building, and will remain there through June, 2021. From June 2021 to June 2022 it will be at the Lake City Chamber of Commerce office. Its final home will be in the Lake City Ballroom, where the Lake City Historical Society has a number of displays.

The quilt activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC) thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Planning and obtaining initial funding for other 150th celebration events have begun. Individuals, civic organizations or businesses who would like to help plan an event or contribute financially are invited to contact one of the committee members or join the committee. I am serving as coordinator and current committee members are Andrew Eggenberger, Ann Nibbe, Ben Threinen, Bob Parrott, Constance Anderson, Don Schwartz, Dori Lindsay and Wayne Quist.



## The Grand Excursion

Approximately 1200 people—including writers and editors, former President Millard Fillmore, and big wigs from the East—were part of the Grand Excursion of 1854. Meant to showcase the opening of a rail link from Chicago to the Mississippi, accounts of the journey stirred many Americans to pull up roots and move westward to settle land and begin commercial ventures. Four steamships bore the expeditioners from Rock Island, Illinois, to St. Paul. On June 7, the boats entered Lake Pepin, where they were lashed together to facilitate a night of dancing and partying. Returning downriver, the flotilla transited Lake Pepin during daylight hours. (A repeat of the journey, marking its 150th anniversary, ran from June 25 to July 5, 2004.)

## Oldest Bank in All of Minnesota

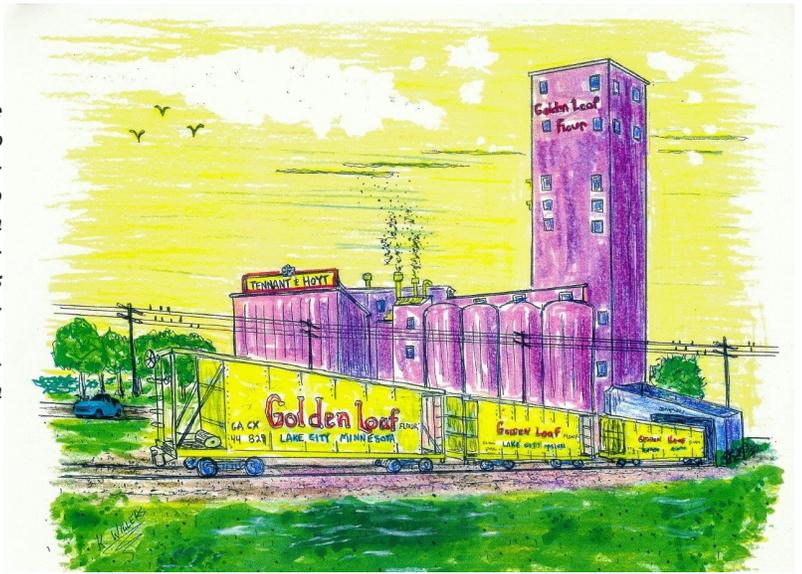
For several years past the Lake City State Bank in Southern Minnesota and, now, since the failure of City Bank in Minneapolis, is the oldest state bank of Minnesota. During all these years it has been prosperous, and though its banking house has been twice destroyed by fire, it has risen again Phoenix-like, and today occupies one of the finest, best arranged banking buildings in the state, and is stronger than ever.—*Lake City Republican*, Feb. 29, 1896.

## Four County Fair Upcoming

On Wednesday, September 14 [1910] and continuing for three days, takes place the big Four County Fair at Lake City. Purses aggregating \$2,500 [\$50,000 in today's dollars] have been hung up for horse, automobile and motorcycle races. The premiums offered this year have been increased to \$2,500 and will be given to exhibitors from Goodhue, Wabasha, Pierce and Pepin Counties.

The free attractions engaged include the Savages in a sensational comedy aerial act, Miller's Dog Show, Millie Hilda, the renowned lady contortionist, and the O'Kura, two Japanese jugglers. Several brass bands will furnish music. Governor Eberhart will open the fair on Wednesday.—*Graphic Republican*, Sept. 9, 1910.

Below: Postcard for the "Big \$10,000 Four County Fair."



## Pen and Ink Drawings Of 1950s Lake City

While we were preparing the front page article on the Hollywood Theater, we asked Ken Willers if we could illustrate it with a rendering of the fascia he did with pen, ink and colored pencils. He not only quickly consented, but offered up his entire portfolio of Lake City scenes during the 1950's. Eighteen of these images have been posted on the website of the Lake City Historical Society ([www.lakecityhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.lakecityhistoricalsociety.com)). They include renderings of the railroad depot, Tennant and Hoyt Flour Mill (above), Carnegie Library, steamship Donna Mae, Rose clothing store, the old VFW on Highway 63, marina skating rink, Terrace Cafe, schools, churches, Patton Park, and car dealerships. Willers was in the Lincoln High Class of 1959, attended Winona State for a year, and completed his education in California. Beginning in 1962, he had a long career with J.C. Penney in California as an artist and store decorator. He is retired and living in Rancho Bernardo, a suburb of San Diego.

**CHARLES G. HOYT** came to Lake City in 1900 and, in company with R. C. Tennant, established the milling firm of Tennant and Hoyt. He previously had been head miller for Pillsbury Mills in Minneapolis for many years. The original structure burned in 1906. The newspaper report of his death at age 64 listed as survivors his three children, Grace, Bessie and Richard.—*Graphic Republican*, April 5, 1912.



## LCHS Membership (Sept., 2020)

*LM=Life Member, HLM=Honorary Life Member.*

Jim and Betty Albright	Dori Lindsay
John Albright	Jim Lyons
Marsha Alexander	Andrea Mackie
Constance Anderson	Jean and Dave Matheny
Toni Anderson	Myrna McCullough
Georgene Arndt <i>LM</i>	Pat McDonald
Alice Atkinson	Dave McKenzie <i>HLM</i>
Janette Benson	Monica Michenfelder
Jean Benson	Mary Ellen Miller <i>LM</i>
Eloise Blattner <i>LM</i>	Patrick & Stephanie Murphy
Pat Blum	Brad & Mary Nelson
Dick Boettcher	Dolores Nelson <i>LM</i>
Ed and Lois Borner	Sharon Nelson <i>HLM</i>
Thomas H. Boyd	Ann Nibbe
Willard and Susan Boyd	Bob and Shari Norberg
Dave and Patti Bremer <i>LM</i>	Casey O'Neil <i>LM</i>
Judy Burfeind <i>LM</i>	Teri Zessman Orth
Sarah McArdle Cabot	Bob Parrott
Jenn Cobb	Andru Peters
Janet Lee Conrad	Todd and Lynn Peterson
James and Roberta Craig	D. Wayne Quist
David Danckwart	Denny Robertson
Shelly Danielson	John and Karen Ryan
Stan Danielson	Jim and Audrey Sass
David Dueholm	Marcia Savela
Carmen Edwards	John and Judy Selck
Andrew Eggenberger	Augie Schleicher
Deirdre Flesche	Dori Schmauss <i>HLM</i>
Pernille Flesche <i>LM</i>	Greg and Deb Schreck
Phil and Dana Gartner	Don and Alice Schwartz
Juanita Glander	Howard Siewert
Joel and Sandy Grettenberg	Lucy Sontag <i>LM</i>
Thomas & Sandra Haglund	Bill and Sue Stiene
Marj Hanson <i>HLM</i>	Ben and Lola Threinen
Robert & Nancy Herron	Robert and Cheryl Vaughn
Gale Hill <i>HLM</i>	Chris Viken
Katie and Larry Himanga	Carol Warfel
Gloria Holst	Lorry Wendland <i>HLM</i>
Ron and Billie Hunt	Laurie Weyant
John and Sharon Hutchison	Gary and Kathy Yotter
Bonnie Johnson	
Dag Knudsen	
Cheryl Luettinger <i>HLM</i>	
Mark Lutjen <i>LM</i>	

### Yes, I Would Like to Join the LCHS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Annual Membership:

**\$10 Per Individual, or  
\$25 Per Family**

**I also want to support the Society's Annual Fund. My contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ will be added to annual membership(s).**

**I have included in my payment gift memberships for the following persons at the individual rate:**

#### Gift Membership For:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

#### Gift Membership For:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**My check for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed and made payable to the Lake City Historical Society.**

**Mail to: Lake City Historical Society  
POB 246  
Lake City, MN 55041**

*The LCHS is a non-profit organization and contributions are deductible for tax purposes.*