



Chanhassen Historian

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A Publication of the Chanhassen Historical Society

Spring 2019

Get to know a Historic Site...

1896

▪ The newly incorporated Village of Chanhassen proceeds with plans to build a Village Hall

▪ John Geiser provides specifications and supervises construction at a cost of:

- \$4.50 for plans
- \$150 for lumber
- \$12.55 for freight
- \$20.68 for labor

Total cost (not including bell or jail) coming in at just:

▫ **\$187.73**



Chanhassen Village Hall

Meet Our New Board Member!

There's no place like home....

"If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own backyard. Because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with."

L Frank Baum , "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz"

I've travelled personally and professionally my entire life and recently lived in New England before returning home to Minnesota. This quote from "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" speaks to me...

Hello! My name is Mary Freeburg Osborne. My parents moved to Chanhassen in 1964 and my brother David and I had the privilege of growing up in the "Best Town in America". Though my husband Dave and I recently built a house in Chaska, my wonderful childhood memories center around Chanhassen.

I celebrate the growth we're seeing in Chanhassen but remember those open fields that were our playground. Those memories conjure up soooo many more: playing hide and seek in the furniture store, hitting tennis balls against the fire department wall, playing pom-pom pole away at the skating rink, CAA softball behind Chanhassen Elementary, dumpster diving at Animal Fair (for stuffed animals) and Minnetonka Labs (for lip and chap sticks), skating across Lotus Lake, sledding down Forcier's hill, Chalet Pizza, burgers at Pauly's, burgers and ice cream at the Lazy C, penny candy at Bart's Pharmacy, and walking down the street to get our mail at the post office until we finally got a mailbox on Huron Street after the street got paved! My cousins, who visited us frequently, still believe as I do that the Frontier Days parade which went by our house, was the best parade in the world. My husband and I still attend the 4th of July celebration to honor Chanhassen's past parades! I am blessed and grateful for my Chanhassen childhood and lifelong friendships.

I recently met friends for drinks at Axel's (which I still see as the Riviera in my mind) and I couldn't help but notice how the store fronts have changed at the dinner theater, which will anchor the new condos and stores. Growth and opportunity are in abundance in Chanhassen. I build IT networks for large corporate and government structures and I'm encouraged by the corporations we are attracting to the area due to new infrastructure and technology. I attended a Carver County mayoral luncheon in January and we celebrated the extensive growth in each city. Life Time Fitness, Paisley Park, and the dinner theater were highlights of the Chanhassen discussion. In 1964 Chanhassen was a village of 350 people and we're on track for a population of over 40,000 in 2025. Housing developments are expanding and our bike trails and open fields are distant happy memories.

I love to travel and consider New England my second home but like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, my heart's desire is in my own backyard and there's no place like Home....



Joe's Place

Nancy Simpson

If you lived in Chanhassen in the 1920s through mid 50s, you likely have your own memories of Joe's Place, a confectionary/tavern/



barber shop/hamburger place with pool tables, owned and operated by Joe Meuwissen. You might even recall the tutti-frutti ice cream. The store was located in the area west of what is now the Goddard School, near the parking lot of the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre.

If you happened to miss that era, I recently caught up with Joe's three surviving children, Rita Rojina and Bob and Howard Meuwissen, who shared stories and recollections of their father's business.

Joe grew up on a farm west of Chaska. Following WWI, he returned home and attended barber school in Minneapolis. After graduating in 1922, he married Susie Scholz. They would eventually have a family of 4 children. When Elmer Kelm suggested Joe open a barber shop in Chanhassen, Joe found space in the Mason\Dimler store for his barber shop.

In 1924 Joe bought the confectionary store with pool tables where he would run the business he called Joe's Place. The original business also held a tavern but no longer did during the days of prohibition, though some moonshine may have appeared from time to time. Joe moved his barber shop into the existing business, and was able to apply for a liquor license with the repeal of prohibition in 1934. He added hamburgers to his offerings. Gas pumps arrived until the DX gas station later opened down the street. Originally the barber shop area was open to the tavern and cooking area but Joe was later required to build a wall between the hair cutting and food serving.

In the early days of Joe's Place, Joe, Susie and their 2 oldest children, Rita and Bob, lived in an apartment above the store. Bob and Rita recall when Bob was just a baby and crawled a little too close to the stairway leading down to the store. He tumbled his way down the steps, but was saved by Bill Jorissen, a frequent patron of Joe's Place, just before hitting the floor at the bottom. By the time Howard was a child, the family home was built on the property that is now the eastern edge of Chapel Hill Academy.

The Meuwissen children recall Sunday as family cleaning day at the store since businesses were not open. Each child had cleaning duties. Rita remembers washing and drying the bar glasses. During the weekly operation of the tavern, glasses were rinsed after each use, but only washed on Sunday. Bob recalls his job cleaning the beer cooler. Often during the week a bottle would break in the cooler and extra care was taken to clean. When Bob left home to join the service, Howard took over this task, along with filling the cooler during the week. Rita and Bob both recall the nasty chore of taking the spittoons outside to clean them thoroughly. Though it seemed arduous,

Rita recalls how they often found pennies and nickels in the spittoons as they cleaned them, making it somewhat exciting. As a child she was baffled that men could lose coins. Only later did she and Bob suspect that their father planted the coins to make the unpleasant task more enjoyable for his children. He was right about that.

Pauly's bar did a thriving business back then, situated just a couple hundred feet away from Joe's Place. After the bar closed on Friday and Saturday nights, patrons would fill Joe's Place to sober up on malts and hamburgers. When Rita reached high school age, she worked at Joe's Place as the hamburger cook/malt maker. Not quite 31 flavors of ice cream, Joe's Place offered high quality Jersey Ice Cream of vanilla, chocolate, tutti-frutti and maple nut.

Joe's Place was one of the few business in Chanhassen during it's time. The area did not have a large selection of banquet facilities so Joe's Place was used for community events. The Eden Prairie Legion did not have its own building and gathered at Joe's for their annual meat raffle fund raiser.

Another memorable annual event at Joe's Place was the turtle soup feed. Local men would live trap snapping turtles in shallow ends of lakes. The neck and legs (the only usable meat of the turtle) were deboned and thrown into a pot of boiling water, along with vegetables. The 3 Meuwissen children all reminisce on the fun times of the turtle feeds. Although wonderful community gatherings, none of them actually remember eating the turtle soup.

In the late 40s, there was an open lot between Joe's Place and the Chan Bank – a perfect place to display movies on the side of the bank building. Joe showed movies while selling ice cream and candy from his store.

Joe's love for movies, hunting, and fishing was apparent. He took family and friends on hunting and fishing trips, and often took his children to movies. Rita recalls leaving on Sundays for week-long family trips to Lake Koronos. But Joe was also a man of trust. His barbershop patrons could always count on Joe being back in time for their Saturday morning shaves and trims.

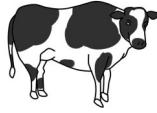
By 1947 the Pine Grill Restaurant was built in the open space next to Joe's. Joe discontinued his barbershop, hamburgers, and confections, retaining only his tavern. In 1953 he was in a serious car accident that slowed him down. He sold his tavern and opened a barbershop across the street. On a Saturday morning in March of 1959, Joe did not feel well. He asked his son Howard to put a sign on the barbershop that Joe would not be in. He died later that same day.

Joe enjoyed his life as a barber and business owner in Chanhassen, embracing his community and the people in it. Join us this fall at our biennial Cemetery Walk to enjoy Joe reminiscing on his life in Chanhassen, as performed by his great-grandson, Andy Meuwissen.



Springtime on the Farm!

- Animals
- Live music
- Scott-Carver Threshers
- Tractor show



- Old-fashioned general store
- Historic wagons & wagon rides
- Food trucks
- Kids games & activities



When: Saturday May 18
10am—4pm

Where: Historic Andrew Peterson Farmstead
8060 Hwy 5, Waconia MN



 \$5/non-members ~ \$3/members ~ 12&under/free! 

**ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

Join the Chanhassen Historical Society!

Your membership will help with the preservation and restoration projects of Chanhassen's historic buildings, plus educational programs about our community's history. You also automatically become a member of the Carver County Historical Society!

Tuesday April 16

6:30-8pm

Maple Room

Chan Senior Center

(Lower level of City Hall)

Join us for light refreshments as we inventory & organize our archives and artifacts in preparation for our possible new home, the Historic Village Hall!

Membership Application

Date _____ Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone# () _____ E-mail _____

- Individual (\$15) Family (\$25) Bronze (\$50-\$100)
 Silver(\$101-\$125) Gold(\$251-\$500) Platinum (\$500-\$1,000)

Make checks payable to: Chanhassen Historical Society

P.O. Box 941, Chanhassen, MN 55317

Notes from the President

I am happy to report some exciting new developments for the coming year!

The Chanhassen Historical Society is working hard on acquiring the Historic Village Hall as a museum and event center! After doing research into how some of our sister Historical Societies here in Carver County obtained buildings to use for their museums, displays, and archive storage, we are getting ready to present our case to the Chanhassen City Council that we be allowed to occupy the Historic Village Hall in Heritage Square. This building holds a great deal of history itself and would be the perfect home for sharing history with the public! **Please sign the enclosed petition and return to us ASAP** – we need them know that there are *at least* 160 families in our community who approve and support this idea!

It is also the year for our semi-annual Cemetery Walk. Please consider volunteering as an actor or host for this exceptional one-day event, taking place on Saturday October 5!

I would like to welcome Mary Freeburg Osborn and Peggy Kerber Tran to our Board of Directors. Both are Chanhassen natives who have a deep love of our community, past and present.

Finally, I would like to express our thanks to Mary Jo Kamerud, who is retiring from her position on our board. Her years of service and dedication have been most welcome, especially in her role as Secretary. Though she will be missed, she will continue to be of invaluable help in our future endeavors!



Paula Atkins, President

Board Members Wanted!

As a board member you can:

- ◆ *Attend bi-monthly meetings*
- ◆ *Volunteer for fun, history-driven events that fit your schedule*
- ◆ *Help further our mission to educate and engage our community through the sharing and preserving of its history*
- ◆ *Have fun and meet new people!*

No
experience
required!

Contact Paula Atkins

952-934-0501

contact@chanhistorical.org

Chanhassen Historical Society

P.O. Box 941

Chanhassen, MN 55317

Board of Directors

Paula Atkins, President

Phone: 952-934-0501

contact@chanhistorical.org

Art Mason, Vice President

Mary Jo Kamerud, Secretary

Lucy Haukoos, Treasurer

Sally Atkins, Newsletter Editor

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chanhistorical.org

