

The Prairie View

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING SUMMER 2014



cummins farmhouse market & vintage sale and the society's annual meeting
COME ONE 'N ALL TO TWO GREAT CPG HOUSE EVENTS

Shop for wonderful spring items and vintage wares while touring our national and locally designated Cummins-Phipps-Grill House

CUMMINS Farmhouse Market

Vintage Sale

April 24, 25 & 26

Thursday 4-7:00

Friday & Saturday 10-3:00

Vintage wares, antiques & botanicals from
Tracy Hope with Retro-Chicks

Locally grown produce and home canned goodies from
Marshall's Farm Market

Purses, fleece bath wraps & baby gifts from
prairieHOMEliving



Members and guests are cordially invited to the

Eden Prairie Historical Society ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 19

at the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House
13600 Pioneer Trail

6:00 Social & Refreshments

6:30 Meeting & Program

7:30 *more* Social & Refreshments

Eden Prairie History 101

Keynote Speakers

Mona Finholt Hanson and Ron Case

These two retired Eden Prairie School District teachers conceived, coordinated and rode the Eden Prairie Historical Bike Tour for 21 years! This year they will take us on our own arm-

chair tour. Pretend for a moment that you are back in elementary school, having Eden Prairie's history shown to you for the first time. Hang on to your hats, this is going to be fun!



150 YEARS OF FUN AT LAKE RILEY PARK

Lake Riley and the surrounding park have been a recreation and entertainment destination for well over 150 years. Clean, deep and teeming with fish, the lake still attracts anglers, swimmers and boaters. The lakeside land, now owned by the City of Eden Prairie, has had many owners. Documents record that Patrick Riley and his son Mathew “made full payment” for their pre-empted land in 1857 and later Eden Prairie maps show lakeside farms belonging to Cavanaughs, Goods, Schmidels and Dorns.

The late Ernie Schuldhiess was an Historical Society board members whose passion was researching Eden Prairie history. His two books of photos and facts, **Picture this Eden Prairie** and **Eden Prairie Book of Days** are the foundation for this article. Ernie grew up on Lake Riley, was an Eden Prairie High School athlete, served in Viet Nam and devoted countless hours to preserving Eden Prairie’s story. Take a newsworthy and occasionally not-so-newsworthy trip back in time with these **newspaper headlines**:

June 6, 1887: Mr. Charlie Good of Riley lake is renting boats

June 29, 1889: Men fishing at Riley’s lake catch 60 rock bass (Crappies) in 1½ hours

June 10, 1895: Fisherman at Riley lake caught fishing with a net

Sept 23, 1897: Eugene Cavanaugh shot 3 pelicans at Riley lake

Aug 7, 1902: Lost: A pair of gold cufflinks at Riley’s lake

July 12, 1933: Lantern Inn opens on Riley lake selling concessions and renting boats

Dec 31, 1935: Lantern Inn to have a big New Years party

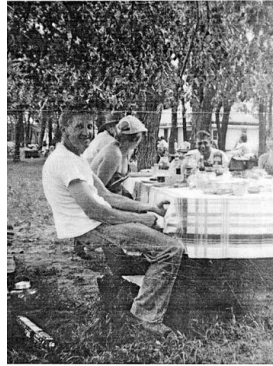
June 2, 1938: “King” Kennedy buys the Lantern Inn at Riley’s lake, renames it King’s Valley

Dec 11, 1939: Residents of the Riley lake area have electricity installed

Dec 9, 1948: “King” Kennedy, owner of King’s Valley dies

Dec 14, 1950: Property goes into foreclosure but City votes down the purchase of King’s Valley for \$12,000

May 29, 1952: Kenneth “Dutch” Schaitberger buys King’s Valley at Riley’s and renames it Dutch’s Resort



From the early 1930’s to about 1980 there has continuously been a privately owned entertainment venue where Riley Lake Park is today. Offering concessions, dancing, boat rentals and more, there has been Lantern Inn, then King’s Valley and finally Dutch’s Resort. In its heyday, Dutch’s Resort was quite a place! Dutch brought in sand for the first beach on the lake, built a boat dock, added changing rooms and updated the pavilion. He sold food, ice cream and drinks. Dutch’s sons, Daniel and Howard Schaitbergen remember:

- that it cost 5¢ to swim and 20¢/hour to rent a boat. The boats were wooden row boats, painted green. Each spring, according to Howard, the boats were submerged in the lake for a few days to tighten them up, then left on the beach to dry.
- There were huge 4th of July celebrations
- The “best” fishing was crappies. Fishermen with cane poles would drag their lines through the water while someone slowly rowed the boat.
- In 1955 Dutch built 6 lakeside houses on the property. Eventually he and his family lived in one. (Two of the six homes were owned by the Schuldhiess family, where Ernie grew up and lived throughout his life.)
- There were Saturday night dances all year. During the winter, after 11:00 closing, there would be sleigh rides. The horses were Mike and Pat and when they died the sleigh was pulled by a tractor.
- Into the 1960’s Howard ran Dutch’s Resort as a popular snowmobile destination serving pizza and beer.

Some time after Dutch’s death in 1975, the City bought about 36 acres from the Schaitbergen family to develop into a city park. Unfortunately, no buildings are left from those early resort days. In 1990, Elaine Jacques, still living in the Riley’s red brick house overlooking the lake, sold the house, farm buildings and what remained of the property to Eden Prairie. That land and buildings have been designated an Eden Prairie Heritage Preservation Site. The combination of the Riley-Jacques Farmstead and Dutch’s Resort is today’s City owned and managed Lake Riley Park where there is still good fishing, boating and swimming. Some things, happily, do not change.



so many dedicated people ABOUT CONNECTEDNESS



The Eden Prairie Historical Society strives to be an active part of the community: we like to connect and partner with fellow non-profits, share what we know about Eden Prairie's past and

present, and educate Eden Prairie citizens about the history that's right here in their own backyards. We recently had a chance to do just that. President Kathie Case and CPG House Committee Co-Chair Katie Qualey were guest speakers of the Lionesses in March at Camp Eden Wood. Katie talked about EPHS today with program updates, membership, CPG House rentals and our upcoming Cummins Farmhouse Market and Vintage Sale. Kathie brought the past to life by sharing some early Lioness memorabilia from EPHS archives and the words to a forgotten Lioness rally song. She went on to tell tales of our formidable and resilient fore-mothers. With old maps of Eden Prairie, members learned more about the Glen Lake Children's Camp (Camp Eden Wood today) and how Eden Prairie's 36 square miles looked generations ago.

always searching EDITOR'S NOTES

The short articles in this newsletter are just the tip of the iceberg. There is so much more to learn about: the history of Lake Riley and Eden Prairie's many other recreational lakes; neighborhood stores and mail delivery; and Eden Prairie athletics. If any of our stories strikes a chord, we would love to hear from you with personal recollections, letters, diaries, photos and family stories to add to our archives and understanding. ● Ernie Schuldhiess' books are available for purchase at the Historical Society's History Center and Museum. ● We have a new phone with answering machine. Please call, 952-949-8580, to confirm hours, share information and ask questions.

what's going on at ephs BITS & PIECES

Aubrey Hookom's Technology Update: "Recently, the Historical Society board agreed to upgrade the History Center's computer, not only because the need was there but more importantly because it was needed to support the most updated version of the museum software *PastPerfect*. *PastPerfect* is the standard software used by historical societies across the country to manage their collections. The software will enable us to keep a comprehensive digital file of our collections, archives, donors and membership information, just to name a few categories. Transferring our collections' information, currently in paper format, to digital format is part of a larger preservation project for which volunteers will be needed. Anyone interested in helping, please contact the Historical Society."



Museum Curator Ann Higgins would like your help. She is developing a new display vignette at the History Center and Museum about Eden Prairie Athletics. We have some wonderful photos in our archives but would love to hear

more stories and perhaps borrow some individual and team memorabilia, uniforms and equipment for the display. Pictured is the girls basketball team of 1935.

Treasure from a bygone era. In Eden Prairie's early days there were multiple post offices, co-located with small general stores in the fronts of homes of four entrepreneurial residents. There was the Tuckey Store and Post Office, the Staring Post Office (latter Goodrich Store and Post Office), The Roland Store and Post Office and the Washburn Post Office (later the Miller Store). Several times a week mail pouches would be dropped at the Eden Prairie Depot. Then the mail had to be delivered, literally through rain, sleet and snow, to the town's four "post offices." Patrons could pick up their mail when shopping in their neighborhood stores. With the coming of rural free delivery in 1902 the four in-home post offices consolidated into one, located at Millers Store. The Historical Society is pleased to have been able to save and showcase the original mail cubbies from the Roland and Tuckey Post Offices (Roland's pictured) at the History Center and Museum.



THE APPLE'S HISTORY IS OUR HISTORY, TOO

When our idealistic forefathers and mothers hiked up the steep river bluffs of Eden Prairie they found a true garden of Eden, ripe for cultivation. They stepped off plots of 40 acres (or more) and built log houses. Eden Prairie was surveyed in 1854 and by the end of 1855 all Eden Prairie land had been purchased. The land produced abundant wheat, corn and potatoes but no apples!

The foundation of successful apple growing in Minnesota, and ultimately the history of the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, began with Peter Miller Gideon. He established a homestead and apple orchard on the shores of Lake Minnetonka near Excelsior in 1853. The orchard started with thirty apple varieties but the harsh Minnesota winters and hot summers killed most of the trees. By his tenth year, only one seedling survived. Desperate and determined, he sent the family's last dollars to Maine for more seeds. Gideon crossed those new seeds with a hardy local crab apple to create an innovative, history-making apple tree, later named the Wealthy, after his wife, Wealthy (Hull) Gideon. The achievement was heralded in a 1870 address by Colonel John Stevens to the Minnesota Horticultural Society, *"True, we were under a cloud for a long time. We planted but did not harvest. Our trees withered and perished. Plant as we would, the trees sickened and died. No wonder, then, we became discouraged. Orchards to the third and fourth planting failed, a constant drain on the pocket without a ray of light in*

the future, influenced us in abandoning the enterprise. But those days, and their trials, have passed."

In March 1878, the Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS), using state funds, started the first Minnetonka Fruit Farm on 116 acres next to Gideon's farm. Gideon was in charge until his retirement in 1889. Of a like mind, he and fellow MSHS members shared their knowledge and seeds freely, giving seedlings away to anyone who asked for them. Our own John Cummins was a close friend, enthusiastic arborist and fellow MSHS member. Cummins' diaries often mention meeting with, debating and exchanging ideas and seeds with Gideon. Cummins' 1921 obituary included this quotation from a friend, *"It was only a few weeks ago that he came to us with his pockets full of seeds of plants that he had carefully gathered for his friends to use. He was a quiet man but always busy studying and working with plants."*

In 1907, the MSHS successfully petitioned for a new fruit breeding and testing farm to be part of the University of Minnesota's Horticulture Department. The farm began on 78 acres and by 1931 had 230. Planting began with extra seeds and seedlings donated by farmers. The Fruit Breeding Farm continued to grow and produce new hardier fruit for decades. Between 1953 and 1970 Dr. Leon C. Snyder was in charge. He was interested in planting for landscapes and dreamed of an outdoor laboratory to create new

plants and an outdoor living classroom for students. Early in his tenure, land was purchased by the University of Minnesota for a Landscape Arboretum. In 1967, the Fruit Breeding Farm became the Horticultural Research Center (HRC), growing more than just fruit and finally, in 1987, the HRC and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum were merged administratively into one program by the University of Minnesota.

When's the last time you visited the U of M Landscape Arboretum? Such an incredible resource, dedicated to education and leading edge research, it is an oasis of beauty, fresh air and a reminder of our own agrarian history.



Cummins in his own apple orchard.

With the responsibility to protect its past, the Society's mission is to: gather, preserve and protect Eden Prairie's historic artifacts and memorabilia; share the stories of its people and places with audiences of all ages; and foster an understanding and appreciation for historic preservation.

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