

BHS NEWSLETTER

B L O O M I N G T O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

VISIT US
WITHOUT
LEAVING
HOME!

- The Old Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice.
- Take a Virtual Tour on our website.
- We will continue to post on Facebook. 'Like' us to get our posts.

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Into the Computer Age

One of the first priorities that was identified this year by the Bloomington Historical Society Board was the need for computer technology at the Old Town Hall Museum.

The three Gateway computers in the museum office were over 20 years old, and had not been used in a decade or more. Two have Microsoft 2000 operating systems. The other was not operational at all.

Volunteers had been using their personal laptops or home computers for BHS purposes, which is clearly not secure or sustainable.

The Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums has developed collections software specifically suited to museums of our size, and we are hoping to purchase it when funds are available. The bid price was just over \$3,000.

The BHS applied for a Minnesota Legacy Grant through the Minnesota State Historical Society to fund new computer equipment and this collections software. Unfortunately, there was not grant funding available for our project.

Several of our Life Members stepped up with generous donations. Two new laptop computers were purchased, and two used desktop computers were donated.



When completed, this project will make Bloomington History much more accessible to our visitors and to the public.

The remaining needs include:

- * Scanner printer
- * Laser Printer
- * Digital Camera
- * Collections Mgmt. software
- * Software training for volunteers
- * Professional transfer of collection inventory from typed and handwritten lists, (the most expensive part of the project.)

Contributions can be mailed to:
Bloomington Historical Society
1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431

Everything was jumbled, but there was always a 'find of the day.' Sometimes it was a treasure, other times it would make us laugh and shake our heads in wonder.

Document Project Nearing Completion

BHS volunteers have not been idle during the past year. Approximately 100 boxes of mixed documents were found stacked in the basement storage area, both on shelves and on the floor. Six hardy volunteers have spent the past six months sorting and filing.



Boxes were filled with old newspaper clippings and Bloomington Park & Recreation records. There were meeting minutes, documents and flyers from River Rendezvous, Summer Fete, Bloomington Orchestra, Bloomington Adult Sports Association, Bloomington Historical Society and other organizations. Duplicates, extraneous or damaged documents have been recycled or shredded.

Re-opening is in sight

The Bloomington Historical Society has been working with the City of Bloomington to put reasonable and safe protocols in place for re-opening the Old Town Hall Museum to the public.

We miss our visitors, but are also very aware that most of our visitors and volunteers are in a demographic that is at high risk for serious complications if exposed to COVID-19. It is exciting that some of our volunteers have now received their vaccinations and are feeling comfortable hosting in the near future.

One of the policies that will be in place for the museum to be open is a requirement that visitors and staff will wear masks while in the building. Hand sanitizer will be available near the entrance.

There will be a limit to the number of people allowed in the building at any one time. This includes both visitors and staff.

We will also be open by appointment. If you would like to visit the museum for a private tour, please contact us and we will make arrangements.



RECENT RESEARCH: THE CHAMBERLAIN ESTATE

One of the loveliest old homes along Auto Club Road is the Chamberlain Estate. Built in 1915 as a summer home for Minneapolis banker Francis Asbury Chamberlain, the home was recently sold. The new homeowners asked BHS to do a little research on the property for them.

Chamberlain was the president of First National Bank. He and his wife Frances had three children and four grandchildren.

Their son, Cyrus Chamberlain, was a fighter pilot in WWI who lost his life in combat over the skies of France. Cyrus had joined the French Foreign Legion before the



United States entered the war, and he served with the Lafayette Escadrille (Flying Corps).

Wold-Chamberlain Field, at what is now the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, was named for Cyrus Chamberlain and another WWI pilot from Minnesota, Ernest Wold. Letters Cyrus wrote home to his family can be found online at Minnesota Reflections.

In 1944-45 a small house on the estate property was sold to an aspiring writer of Western novels, Frederick 'Feike' Feikema. In 1952 he legally changed his name to

Frederick Manfred. He wrote 12 novels while living in Bloomington including "Lord Grizzly". He left Bloomington in 1960. The City had grown, and was no longer the peaceful rural town it had been when he moved in. He continued to write Western novels until his death in 1994.

In the 1980's Manfred's daughter, Freya Manfred Pope, and her husband owned the Chamberlain house.



Left: Cyrus Chamberlain, pilot 1917
Right: Frederick Feikema Manfred,
author

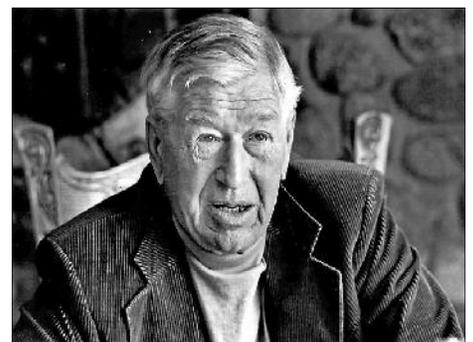




Photo by Steve Johnson

BLOOMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Old Town Hall Museum

Penn Avenue at Old Shakopee Road
Open by appointment only at this time.

Mailing address:

1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431
Phone: 952-881-4114

Email: bloomitarian@gmail.com

Facebook: [BloomingtonMNHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/BloomingtonMNHistoricalSociety)

Founded in 1964, the Bloomington Historical Society is dedicated to the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the City of Bloomington.

Our mission is to collect, preserve and hold in the public trust the many artifacts, photographic images, memorabilia and life stories of the people who have lived in Bloomington.

The organization is run entirely by volunteers and we depend entirely upon your donations for our operations, programs and displays. We are grateful for your ongoing support.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL— 2021

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE/ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- _____ Individual \$ 30.00
- _____ Family \$ 50.00
- _____ Contributing \$ 100.00
- _____ Supporting \$ 250.00
- _____ Patron \$ 500.00
- _____ Corporate \$ 600.00
- _____ Benefactor \$1,000.00

Additional donation: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
Bloomington Historical Society

Mail to: Bloomington Historical Society
1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, MN 55431

Or
Drop off at Old Town Hall Museum
during open hours

_____ YES, I'd love to volunteer at the Old
Town Hall Museum. I'm available: (circle)

Tuesdays noon-4 Wednesdays noon-4

Thursdays noon-4 Saturdays noon-4

Sundays 1-5 pm Other: _____