



Volume 104 August 2021  
9030 Forestview Lane N. Maple Grove, MN 55369 763-494-5983 Open 2nd Sunday of the month

**Maple Grove Historical Preservation Society**

**OFFICERS**

President: Al Madsen  
Vice President: Caroline Schaefer  
Secretary: Joyce Deane  
Treasurer: Patty Reuter  
Newsletter Editor: Pat Ruffing  
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<http://www.maplegrovmnhistory.org>

**Purpose:** To collect and preserve information and artifacts and to educate the community of the history of Maple Grove, MN.



**Regular** **Events**

**Open House:** the Maple Grove History Museum hosts an open house on the second Sunday of every month from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Monthly Meeting:** The third Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the History Museum. Anyone with an interest in history is welcome to join us!

**Quarterly Newsletter:**  
Nov.: Maple Grove's Mayors  
Feb.: Your stories about the telephone!

**Ox Cart site & territorial downtown Maple Grove:** 15310 Territorial Rd (0.7 mi. w. of Fernbrook Lane N. Maple Grove

**Pierre Bottineau House:** Elm Creek Park Reserve: 12400 James Deane Parkway, Maple Grove

**4 History Display Cases at M.G. Gov't Center:** 12800 Arbor Lakes Pkwy N. Maple Grove, MN.

**January:** Annual dues  
**October:** Election of officers at regular meeting



**August 19th**  
**Gather at the Museum at 6 pm**  
**Invite your family & prospective members**  
**Bring your favorite dish**  
**For all to savor**

# Maple Grove's Past



1939

1966

1987

Maple Grove Days Museum  
Open House Theme: Tornadoes  
Sunday July 18th,

## Was City Hall Doomed?

The Tornadoes that hit Maple Grove 1939, 1966 and 1987. On Sunday June 18, 1939 the tornado came from the Hamel area, ripped through Anoka- becoming the "Anoka Twister" and ended up in Wisconsin. It visited the area of city hall on Fernbrook Lane.

The tornado on July 5, 1966 came from the northwest and again touched down near County Rd 30 and Fernbrook Lane- past City Hall. The July 23rd, 1987 tornado whistled past the old city hall and swooped down in the Boundary Creek Area between Zachary and Lancaster Lanes. "The storm of the Century" with some parts of the southern Metro getting up to 10 inches of rain. 298 homes in Maple Grove received damage in that storm.

In a newspaper article in 1987 staff writer Carol Byrne recalls the story of the David and Sue Fisher family when the tornado hit their home at 10703 Pilgrim Lane. Around 6:30 the rain moved in and the sky turned green, and roof shingles started to fly, so the kids and dog were hurried to the crawl space and within seconds the tornado hit! The tornado lifted the two story house off its foundation, and the roof was mostly gone. Their Orrin Thompson dream home of 8 years had on "uninhabitable sign" tacked on it and the City ordered to be torn down! The Fishers wanted their dream home back and hired a contractor to rebuild it to the original plan.

The Brooklyn Park volunteer police reserves brought their field command vehicle to help Maple Grove secure the tornado area. The vehicle is a former school bus that was donated & renovated. It was equipped with radio and telephone, an office, a microwave oven and a coffee pot.



**URGENT Tornado Damages Several Hundred Houses; No Serious Injuries Reported"**  
**AP Headline**  
**July 23, 1987**



Caroline Schaefer & Mary Pruhs preparing the open house

At the Maple Grove Expo several attendees referred to the following event:

"On the evening of September 21, 2005 a series of super-cells produced four tornadoes, widespread wind damage, large hail, and flash-flooding in east central Minnesota. 3 inch hail was reported in Rice Lake (Barron County) Wisconsin while 2.5 inch hail was reported in Andover (Anoka County) Minnesota. Wind gusts of 78 miles per hour were reported in Crystal, Minnesota (Hennepin County) and it is possible that wind gusts reached 100 miles per hour in some areas of Andover. Although four tornadoes occurred, damage was mainly caused by downbursts. For example, most of the tree damage in Maple Grove, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, and north Minneapolis was due to the rear flank downdraft. There was one fatality in Minneapolis in which a large tree branch fell on the victim. Overview Media use of NWS Web News

# July 15th the Maple Grove Parade



July 17th Maple Grove Expo - promoting the open house



Needing a little help from friends at the parade!

## The Great 1939 Tornado

(part of the article by Dorothy Schoenmann.)

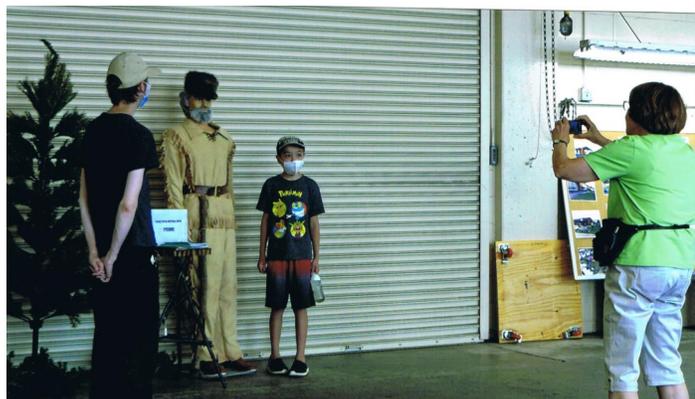
"Sounds like a train but there are no tracks around here"...It was a hot still Sunday afternoon.. people were generally enjoying Father's Day. About 2 p.m. the sky darkened and a dangerous storm began near Maple Plain...

Osseo did not escape the wind entirely as some of its homes also were damaged. There was a Harvest Festival going on at the Catholic Church and Fr. Boerboom is remembered as standing, watching and praying. He announced that a change in the weather was coming as he had the only barometer and it told of a forthcoming storm.

Memorable targets were the two Morehouse homes and barn near Elm Creek along County Rd #30. These homes belonged to Allen and Eva and son Jesse, Estella and children. Both families would have been killed except for the fact they were visiting Grandma Harmon's home in Anoka. After Jessie's family came home from Anoka, the children were standing in somewhat dazed disbelief about their home not being there anymore. A couple passing by in their car offered to help in any way they could. Jessie's wife Estella asked if they would take the children, Jean, Lucy and baby Donnie, to her sister's home in North Minneapolis.

# Pierre Bottineau

Pierre would have been surprised that so many wanted their photos with him—mannequin provided by the Joe Hanf family.





# School Days



School room is popular with kids and adults! Many memories are found in the Osseo Year Books, pictures of the country schools in Maple Grove, and the old desks with homework!

## **Rush Creek Church** by Lillian Weber Havel (from # 62 Nov. 2010)

They started razing the church in 1939, a day or two after the Maple Grove/Anoka tornado. People driving around looking for tornado damage, saw the half wrecked church and we heard them talking about all of the damage the tornado had done to the church. (The tornado hadn't come within a mile of the church.)

When the men tearing down the church heard the "tourists" were blaming the damage on the tornado, they decided to have a little fun. They decorated what was left of the front of the church with the church's Christmas garlands and paper bells before they quit work for the weekend. This had the effect they hoped for. The people driving by then commented on what strange things tornados can do- like putting up Christmas decorations.

## **"Tornado June 18<sup>th</sup> 1939**

by Ted Gelle taken from # 62 Nov 2010

( He lived where the extreme southeast corner of the parking area is at the Elm Creek Rest Area).

We had left the house and took refuge behind a hill just south of our house. We could see the tornado moving along, and every once in awhile boards and debris would come sailing out of the top. After it passed us and we realized we were still alive. We saw that our neighbors (Rambow brothers) barn was smashed to the ground... One thing that caught my eye was a milk can, which I recognized as one that was on the Frank Waschek milk route... I looked at the milk can and the path that the tornado had traveled.

When Frank saw me, he immediately told me to find the milk truck and dig it out from under all the wreckage and get it running, and to go on the milk route the next morning. With the help from volunteers, I managed to dig it out ...got the truck going and found as many milk cans as possible. This was about 9:00 in the evening. I will never forget when we came to the creamery that morning - all the testers were there waiting to test the milk after a sweltering hot day and probably improper cooling. I begged them not to test my load of milk that day. I told them what had happened out there and all the damage... They listened to me and did not test my load that day. When word got around at the creamery everybody came out and wanted to know about the tornado. They looked at the dented up truck etc.

The first place the tornado struck in our neighborhood was the Richard Gelle farm (north two miles on State Highway 101)... They (the Gelles) were visiting friends in Burschville... But when they were on their way home and got just east of Corcoran, they met a herd of cows on that highway. Upon taking a closer look, they realized that the cows were their own- about 3 miles from home.



Open house favorite– the female Maple Grove officer



What's on special this week at the Gambart 's country store?

The second place that was struck was the Grambart place. Old Mrs. Lena Grambart was home alone. She was an elderly lady and was very hard of hearing. She did not see or hear the tornado approaching and was bewildered as to why things were flying around in the house. So she opened the upstairs door to see if the disturbance was up there, and as she opened the door the sewing machine came tumbling down the stairs along with many other things. That's when she started to look for shelter. The only thing left of the place was the part of the house that she was in at the time of the tornado.



Researching family homesteads on our maps!



TOYS FOR BOYS !!!!

### Family Lore ...the 1939 Tornado in Maple Grove

As the storm was approaching, we all got into my grandpa's car. We headed for the storm shelter that was at Harold and Inez Miller's place. We got there and nobody was home and the cellar was locked, so it was back in the car. As grandpa was backing up, he somehow got stuck in the ditch. At that point he made grandma get out of the car to push it to safety. The only problem was that grandma had a broken leg and was in a cast. It didn't make any difference to grandpa. He was always terrified of storms. by Cora White (# 62 Nov 2010)



WHO COULD LIVE WITHOUT A HAT?

### Tornado –1939 Alma Waschek (told on Nov 4, 1982)

...It was as dark as night and the roaring noise got worse. When Frank, who was last, passed the door it blew open again, tearing the lock socket out the door frame. At the bottom of the steps I stopped and wondered, "Where is it you are supposed to go?" Then I remembered the southwest corner. Soon the house started to crack and turn on its foundation, then was lifted up, taking the furnace with it which broke off and fell back into the basement. The basement filled with dirt, boards, planks, beams, rolls of snow fence.

There we were! It started to pour; we had on just regular clothes. But we found some coats in the wreckage. I remember Frank wore a long coat of mine and looked like a freak. We walked around dazed and couldn't believe what we saw. How could two horses still tied to a double manger be standing on the road? Frank took out his pocket knife and cut the ropes to let them go, and go they did! They were just wild.

I saw my doll I had received for my 7<sup>th</sup> birthday lying in the field sopping wet. I turned her over with my foot thinking "How come you're in one piece when everything useful is wrecked?"

We had no storm insurance, as no one at that time had it. Next morning people were lined up in front of the bank to the streets in Osseo to buy insurance. We got \$4000 from the Red Cross to rebuild. That is what Frank set out to do and by November 13<sup>th</sup> we moved back into our place, having built a house and barn...(# 62 Nov 2010)



Rosie Gruidl helping kids make pinwheels and wooden spool necklaces

Snippets from the **White Tornado**  
by Virginia Hoppenrath #59 (She lives 93<sup>rd</sup> Ave N)

July 5, 1966, was not an unusual day. It was hot and humid, but that was welcome for the crops and gardens...Earl ...had gone to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Osseo to a church board meeting. Daughter Jean, then a senior at Osseo High School, went shopping with her friend, Bonnie Wiley...Kenny Smith and sons, came with his new pick-up-truck camper and took our son Steve, age 15...What a peaceful evening this would be, or so I thought.

I was just relaxing on the patio with a fresh cup of coffee and the new Penny's fall catalog. I had just looked outdoors, as Steve should soon be home...the sun was still shining. Just a few minutes later at 8:40 p.m., I was a little nervous as I thought Steve should have been home. So I again went to the breezeway and tried to open the door. My pulse races even now as I remember trying desperately to open the aluminum service door. As I looked up I uttered "Oh no, a tornado!" The entire roof was gone...I saw a glimpse of Smith's pick-up- camper going through the air...

What I didn't know was that Ken Smith had let Steve, Bibbi and the kids out. I experienced a fear at that point that only a mother could feel, because I didn't know where Steve was.



Kathy Sandeen remembers

"I remember sitting at the window, trying to cool off. I was watching the sky; I saw three tails come out of

what appeared to be the only cloud in the sky. Seconds later, the entire cloud came down as one large funnel...as I was sitting there, a photographer from the Osseo paper pulled in the driveway to take pictures of the funnel. I yelled down asking if it really was a tornado (Duh!) His only reply was "Lady, you better get out of there!"

Whether it was the next day or not, I can't remember but I was back at the site. I walked upstairs to find the only things standing were the toilet and the refrigerator. Looking at the total destruction was unbelievable. Then something most incredible happened. Where the wall was in our bedroom laid the crucifix that had hung there. The wood was torn away on the back, but it was otherwise undamaged. In the floor joists was every religious article I had in the house. There was a porcelain nun that held my rosary, still whole with the rosary inside. My prayer book with holy cards inside. I think this was God's way of telling me all would be fine. Another strange thing was that Todd's little brown shoes sat on the floor with the socks still in them. A few weeks later, we got our check book back from the Maytag Company in St. Paul.



Joe Hanf explaining the displays he created of the original downtown Maple Grove along Territorial Road

There was an incredible other side to this gloomy story. The folks in Maple Grove, the Osseo School System (where I was employed), our church, St. Paul's in Osseo, and other neighboring churches gave us unbelievable support...the Star Tribune had accounts of the "White Tornado"... (Cora Jackson) She had a huge shower at Cora's Motel on Lakeland Avenue.

There were many humorous things that happened. Jean had a picture of Jesus in a wooden frame on her bedroom wall... the frame was still in place...the picture turned up pasted to the laths under the plaster in her closet. Pastor Pfothenhauser commented, "Even the good Lord had sense enough to hide".

## Do You Remember when, a tornado was broadcast Alive on KARE TV 5 p.m. news?

Tom Oszman - from tcmmedianow.com wrote an article in MinnPost dated July 18, 2011 and titled: "25 years ago, a tornado made broadcasting history in the Twin Cities." He explains that "Friday July 18, 1986 was a typically sultry Minnesota summer day It all happened live on television — start to finish, for half an hour."

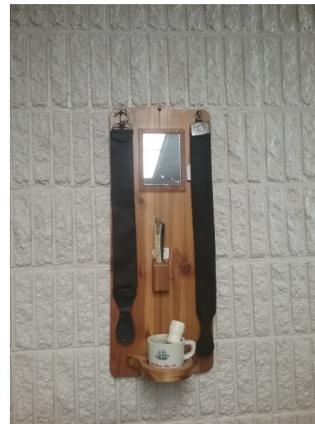
He goes on to state that KARE's television coverage made history. KARE's "Sky 11" chopper pilot Max Messmer and photographer Tom Empey were planning "to get aerial shots of the Minneapolis Aquatennial late that afternoon." They spotted a funnel cloud over Brooklyn Park and decided to check it out. When Messmer was asked on the 5 p.m. news, where he was flying, he said that he had to fly down to view the street signs.

"It was the first live broadcast of the entire life-cycle of a tornado. The broadcast and the video were captured. "News11" at 5 p.m. began with Paul Magers telling viewers "we are going to toss all formalities out the window." "Early on, the tornado remained almost stationary over Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley. As it slowly shifted a few dozen yards in one direction and then another, viewers watched power lines explode in vivid bursts of light and trees being sucked into the eerily undulating white funnel."

In 1986, "KARE TV" was the new name for the former "WUSA" and earlier "WTCN." The station gave viewers a sample that day which changed the viewing habits of long-time WCCO and KSTP fans. "Within a year, KARE was No. 1, and held that spot for the greater part of the next two decades.

And for those who called the KARE studios 25 years ago for a full replay, [digital technology now makes it possible.](#)"

## Framed - a new display of how eyewear has changed over time!



Remember Shaving  
in the Good Old Days?

Donated by Lynn Cook.



Swimming ? In 1900 or 1920?

**Maple-Grove sisters share love of dolls for 50 years Antique dolls on display at history museum by Alicia Miller in Osseo Maple Grove Press on July 8, 2021**



“It all started with a porcelain china-faced bride doll. “Lucy Baukner, of Maple Grove, and her late sister, Jean Morehouse, collected and gifted each other porcelain dolls for over 50 years. Now, most of those dolls have been donated to the Maple Grove History Museum. In total, about 55 dolls were donated.”

“The sisters grew up on a farm in Maple Grove. “Our mother had a porcelain china-faced bride doll that we loved,” Baukner said. “In 1939, a tornado took our house. We found the doll later. It was in pieces. My mother, sister and I felt so bad the doll was destroyed.

The first doll in the sister’s collection was bought in 1963. The dolls the sisters purchased range from the oldest one, from the 1880s, to the newest one, from the 1960s. The dolls were also purchased locally.”

**Is Al Madsen planning the next museum expansion???**



**HOW DO YOU REMEMBER MAPLE GROVE?**



**HOW WILL MAPLE GROVE REMEMBER YOU?**

We need to raise \$500,000 to expand our museum to display our many artifacts and memorabilia. Please include the Maple Grove Historic Preservation Society in your estate plan, your generosity enriches the city of Maple Grove’s vibrancy, and history. Thank you for ensuring that we can bring people together and impact our community through telling our history for future generations..

**Create the future**

**You have the power to do great things!**

- ◆ ONE TIME DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ YEARLY DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ MEMORIAL OF A LOVED ONE \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ CHARITABLE GIFT TO REDUCE TAXABLE INCOME \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ BECOME A MEMBER \_\_SINGLE \$15 \_\_ FAMILY \$30