



MAPLE GROVE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY
12800 Arbor Lakes Parkway, Maple Grove, MN 55311



MAPLE GROVE HISTORY MUSEUM
9030 Forestview Lane N, Door J, Maple Grove MN 55369
www.maplegrovehistorical.org

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

This is the
story of
America



VOLUME 121

NOVEMBER 2025



Lynn Cook

age 73, of Brooklyn Park, MN, passed away peacefully at home on August 22, 2025. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Evelyn, siblings Wilbur Alvin, (Hazel Smaglik, Melvin. He is survived by his loving wife Nancy, children Andy and Jennifer, grandson Michael, brothers Jerry, Neil, and Harlin. Lynn proudly served in the U.S. Army as a military police officer during the Vietnam War. In 1989, Lynn found his calling and joined the Brooklyn Park Fire Department, where he worked for 18 years. He was later promoted to the assistant fire marshal at the St. Cloud Fire Department before retiring in 2016.

LYNN FOUND HIS SECOND CALLING IN RETIREMENT AS A COMMITTED AND DEVOTED VOLUNTEER AT THE MAPLE GROVE HISTORY MUSEUM.

On July 4, 2026, America will celebrate the most important milestone in our country's history—250 years of American Independence. "With a single sheet of parchment and 56 signatures, America began the greatest political journey in human history," said President Trump. of this momentous anniversary.



"On July 28, 2025 officially launched Our American Story America250 —a nationwide initiative designed to preserve the voices of everyday Americans. Set against the iconic backdrop of the United States Capitol, the kickoff event marked the first chapter in a historic journey to collect the largest audiovisual archive of American stories ever created.

Our American Story is more than a tour—it's a national movement. This project offers Americans from across the country a chance to share their lived experiences, family histories, and community ties. These stories, captured in intimate interviews guided by trained facilitators, will serve as a vibrant tapestry of perspectives, values, and memories that reflects the diverse spirit of our nation."

<https://america250.org/news/our-american-story-kicks-off-on-the-national-mall-a-journey-begins/>

Christmas Party and Meeting

Dec 18th , 2025 6:00 pm
Bring your holiday favorite
dish to share
and your friends
to celebrate a fabulous year
at our Museum.



Freedom Train by Rose Gruidl



The train's first tour crisscrossed the country after World War II to promote American heritage and combat rising Cold War tensions. The Mission according to Attorney General Tom C. Clark was to send the nation's founding documents on a rail tour to encourage Americans to re-dedicate themselves to the principles of liberty. The non-profit American Heritage Foundation was created with private funding to lead the effort.

The train carried 127 historical documents and several flags, including original copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Gettysburg Address. To protect the priceless artifacts, the train was armored and guarded around the clock by a handpicked detachment of U.S. Marines.

When the train traveled through the American South, organizers enforced a "no segregation" policy for viewing the exhibits. Stops were canceled in cities, such as Memphis and Birmingham, that refused to comply. The train visited more than 300 cities and was seen by millions of Americans before the tour ended in 1949.

The 1975–1976 American Freedom Train a second, more elaborate Freedom Train was created to celebrate the United States Bicentennial. It's mission was to rekindle patriotism and pride in American accomplishments during a period of national malaise following the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

The 26-car train was pulled by three different steam locomotives restored specifically for the tour. They included the Southern Pacific No. 4449, which was painted in a special red, white, and blue livery.

The train carried over 500 artifacts that covered a broad range of American history and popular culture. Exhibits included a lunar rover, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s pulpit, Judy Garland's dress from *The Wizard of Oz*, and an original copy of the Louisiana Purchase.

A "rolling museum": The train toured all 48 contiguous states over 21 months and was visited by over 7 million people. Many more gathered trackside just to see the train go by.

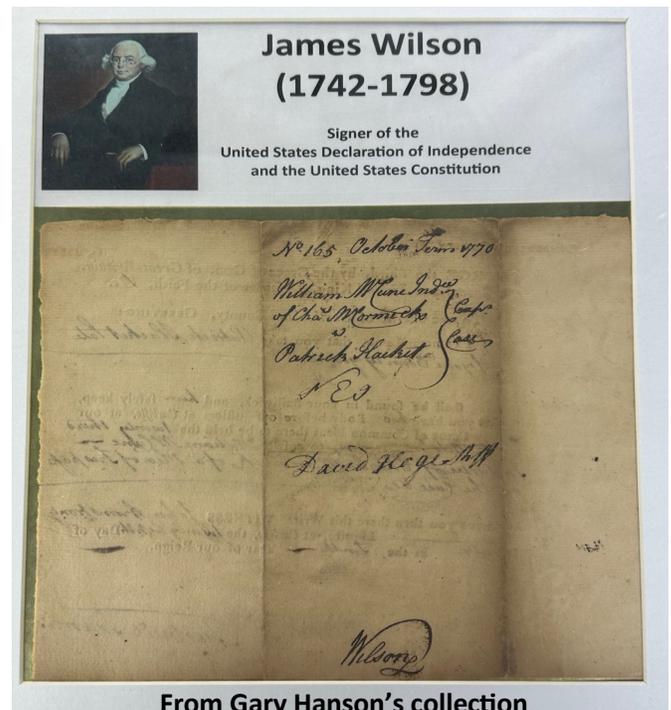
In preparation for America's 250th anniversary the American Steam Railroad Preservation Association is working to restore one of the original 1976 steam locomotives, Reading T-1 2100, which has been renamed American Freedom Train No. 250. The B&O Railroad Museum has started a cosmetic restoration of the original Reading T-1 2101, which also pulled the Bicentennial train.

The organizers for the 2026 train hope to create another unifying national event to inspire a new generation and reignite patriotism.

Sources:
Freedom Train - Wikipedia
Two national Freedom Trains have toured the United States: the 1947–49 special exhibit Freedom Train and the 1975–76 American Free...
Wikipedia

The Story of the 1975-1976 American Freedom Train
The display cars were filled with over 500 precious treasures of Americana. Included in these diverse artifacts were George Washin...
FreedomTrain.org

FREEDOM TRAIN | The American Legion
Jun 16, 2020 — Sgt. Timothy C. Hodge, "One Marine, Many Memories" * Following the Allies' victory over Germany, Italy and Japan in...
The American Legion



From Gary Hanson's collection

A 1776 document by a notable person (and later learned that he was in communication with George Washington at the time he signed the document), and a document signed by James Wilson who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Do Witches cast spells over Halloween History

The Saturday Evening Post Magazine in Oct 2025 carried an intriguing article by Tanya Roth titled: "Women's Work: Casting a Long Spell- Witchcraft in American History. "Once a crime, the witch became a mirror for American fears and desires."

Before the United States Declaration of Independence was signed 1776, "In 1648 Massachusetts Bay Colony published its first book of laws and witchcraft was a capital crime backed by Old Testament citations. Witches were to be killed! The days of the Salem witchcraft have long past, and witches, even executed ones, exonerated. "By the 19th century witches had moved from courtroom to the pages of legend and literature. . . the idea of witches took on a new face in American culture."

L. Frank Baum created the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* where witches could be good or bad. In 1906 the Witch on the broomstick appeared in the Salt Lake Herald hoping folks would give up the absurd idea of real witches.



That didn't stop folks from using the term "witch" to describe women they didn't like! Do witches – coven 13 witches gather at night to make potions and cast spells?

Children's books are full of memorable, fun, magical and spooky witch stories along with wizards, cats, broomsticks, bats and spiders and warts.

Halloween costumes and decorations continue the story. Just visit your pop-up Halloween store in a

vacant office building in Maple Grove today! Attend the Maple Grove MGCO Halloween parade, or Church a "Trunk of Treat" event, attend the Anoka "Halloween Capital of the World" events! Go any bar or casino for Halloween adult parties. Kids get treats at businesses throughout the city.

A "witch" today could define a diverse group of people and practices, often educated, middle-class, practicing spiritual empowerment, connecting to nature, or creating positive change in their lives, not the "evil" or "devil-worshipping" figures of historical stereotypes or

pop culture Witchcraft and Paganism has been on the rise nationally, and Minnesota is considered ahead of the curve. The Twin Cities is home to numerous Pagan organizations, covens, and social groups that have been active for over 40 years. There are local occult shops, metaphysical stores (like some in nearby South Minneapolis's "Witch District"),

Women's Work: Casting a Long Spell- Witchcraft in American History. "Once a crime, the witch became a mirror for American fears and desires." Pat Ruffing



From Gary Hanson's collection - a voyager's cup that would be used for drinking from a river or stream.



Shooting the Rapids,
a painting of Voyageurs by Frances Anne Hopkins



October 22nd Cupcakes & Conversations



The Wednesday, October 22nd Cupcakes & Conversations series covered the 19th century cemeteries of the Maple Grove area in a PowerPoint presentation. Rose Gruidl and Karen Brajdich delivered their learnings to an audience of twenty-five-plus people at the Maple Grove Museum. The presentation also covered funeral and burial rites from the prehistoric age to the 19th century.

In the mid-1850s, Maple Grove had one private and eight public cemeteries within the township's borders. Other cemeteries covered in the presentation were St. Fridolin's Cemetery in Champlin, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Corcoran and St. Vincent's Cemetery in Osseo. Thirteen cemeteries, both private and public, were highlighted in the presentation.

The discussion touched on Minnesota's statutes and legal issues covering private and public cemeteries. Pictures and talking points (date established, original owner, size, etc.) were shared with the audience on each property. All attendees received a Maple Grove map handout that identified cemeteries located in the city. We hope attendees found the presentation interesting and informative.

Everything February

The theme for the February newsletter will be "Everything February." Ideas: valentines, presidents (Washington, Lincoln), love, St. Valentine, leap year, Groundhogs day, Winter Olympics, and heart month.

Black History Month's 40th Anniversary .

February 8, 2026 (50th anniversary): Super Bowl LX

February 1, 2026: In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln signed the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the U.S. '

February 2, 2026: 178th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the Mexican-American War.

February 21-22, 2026 (60th anniversary): Can-Am and Trans-Am racing

A Tragic Story by Gary Hanson

Anna Hermes was the daughter of Margaret Schram-Hermes. It's kind of a tragic story as they had another daughter born the year after Anna, but she passed away as an infant. Three months later her husband, Mathias, passed away at the young age of 28. Margaret never remarried. Instead, she moved back to her mother's house in St. Paul (my 2nd great-grandmother). The house is still standing at 385 Daly Street in St. Paul. My mother said that Margaret always wore black and carried a black umbrella regardless of the weather.

I have included an old scan of Margaret at the family gravesite at Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul. The photo was likely taken around 1912 or so. The small stone at the left is Anna Hermes. The gravesite is now in the center of the cemetery. There are thirteen family



members buried at the site including my mother's sister, Marcella, who died at one year in 1916. There are no living photos of Marcella, only a large cabinet photo of her in the casket in my great-grandfather's house (kind of an elaborate setting), and snapshots of her in the yard and house shortly after her death.

Anna Hermes Hair Wreath on display For the Cupcakes and Conversation event.



Maple Grove Rotary Club Presentation



Maple Grove Rotary Club invited MGHPS for a presentation on the history of our organization. Kate Wodtke, Pat Ruffing, Dave Haase and Karen Brajdich met at Keller Williams Realty on September 23rd. We talked about our mission, exhibits, partnerships, outreach and goals. The Rotary Club donated a number of polio vaccines for children.

We will put on the same presentation for you, the membership, at the November meeting.. We currently have requests from four other organizations to give the same presentation.

Interested in Maple Grove History?

We are writing a history of the township/city and welcome anyone interested in joining the task. There are a number of ways to be involved in the book project. What a fascinating way it will be to learn the history of your community.

Just let us know of your interest by sending an email to: gwbergquist@gmail.com. We also invite you to join our ongoing meetings at the Maple Grove Historical Preservation Society Museum, 9030 Forestview Lane N., Maple Grove.

MGHPS New Officers

President – Pat Ruffing
Vice President – Kate Wodtke
Secretary – Karen Brajdich
Treasurer – the organization will hold off on electing the Treasurer, for now.
Trustees – Joyce Deane , Al Madsen and Virginia Hoppenrath.

Upcoming Cupcakes & Conversations on February 11, 2026

– Jeri Cobb’s February, 2025 presentation on Valentines captured the hearts and minds of all attendees

“Made with Love and Lace.” Jeri Cobb, our esteemed member, and a passionate collector of valentines for over fifty years, will take us on a heartwarming journey through the history of valentine sending. This presentation is enjoyable for both men and women.



Breakfast/Lunch with Santa

sponsored by MGCO



December 6

8:15 – 1p.m

We will have a promotional table in the Community Center.



Osseo 150th Committee video

The Osseo 150th Committee is working on a video to celebrate the city. The video will be completed before the end of the year and posted to the Osseo 150th Committee’s website and the city of Osseo’s website.

Call to Duty



On July 4, 2026 America will celebrate an important milestone in our country's history: 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. On June 14, 2025 President Trump initiated the celebration with a parade in Washington D.C. The U.S. Army was officially established as the nation's first national institution on July 14, 1775, more than a year before Declaration of Independence was written.

"Call to Duty" is the Maple Grove History Museum's current display. It highlights the vital role the U.S. Armed Forces has played in the growth and development of the United States. Along with the Iraq era war military uniform of Ron Wodtke, a proud Marine Veteran, and along with his family, long time resident of Maple Grove. A family is depicted in the exhibit because military service profoundly impacts the entire family's daily life. Military families move far more often than civilian families, affecting the stability and social connections of family members.

Military spouses must often sacrifice their careers. Children must frequently change schools and leave friends behind, which can test their social skills. When a military parent deploys, the other spouse assumes full responsibility for the home and children. Children may experience long periods away from their deployed parent, which can be quite stressful. Feelings of loneliness, anxiety and fear are common for the spouse and children. Communication may also be difficult depending on the service member's location.

The Defense Department and other organizations provide extensive benefits and support. Living on or near a military installation can foster a tight-knit community with other military families who share similar experiences. Military families typically receive stable, low-cost health care, housing allowances and life insurance. These services help families manage the day-to-day demands of military life.

Family reunions can be both joyful and challenging as the routines and roles established during the deployment must be readjusted.

Email Address for MGHPS has changed to maplegroveHPS@gmail.com. This address will replace MGHPS's old address that appeared on our website. Kathy Bjorklund worked with Councilman, Jon McCollough (an IT professional) to establish the new email address. Kathy will maintaining the new email address . Karen Brajdich will be responsible for receiving and answering the questions or comments from the website.



Membership Renewal
is due
JANUARY
1st

MAPLE GROVE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

City of Maple Grove Government Center
12800 Arbor Lakes Parkway, Maple Grove MN 55369-7064

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(renewable each January)

Annual Membership (tax deductible)

- \$15 Individual/Senior
- \$30 Family
- \$100 Supporting Member

I am interested in helping with

- Writing article
- Historic site maintenance
- Displays
- Educational Programs
- Publicity
- Cataloging artifacts
- Calling

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

