

The Radiator Brush



Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum & Historic Cottage 11 Boys' Dormitory
~ Summer 2016 Newsletter Edition ~

CELEBRATE YOUTH EVENT

Join us on Saturday, September 17, for our fourth annual fundraiser for The Children Remembered Legacy Trust. This year we moved the time to earlier in the day (2-5 PM).

We've enlisted some talented local young musicians to help us celebrate the children who lived at the State School and the children of today. The family-centered outdoor event will also include:

- Horse-drawn wagon rides around the grounds, with History Stops along the way
- Performance of "We Were Called State Schoolers" by student actors (abridged)
- Mush-eating competition, including local celebrities
- Children's games
- Other fun family activities

Admittance to the event is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students, and is free to children under 5. We hope you will join us for this fun-filled event to help support our Museum's Legacy Trust!

Follow us on Facebook for more information on The Celebrate Youth Event. If you can't attend, a donation to the Trust would be greatly appreciated.

Why Fundraising Is Crucial!

As a non-profit organization, we currently rely on donations, group tour fees, and Gift Shop sales to cover the Museum's expenses.

The Children Remembered Legacy Trust was created to help ensure that the Museum survives for future generations by providing a steady source of interest income. We have just over \$45,000 in the Trust now; our goal is \$300,000.

Your financial support is crucial in helping us meet our mission to preserve the history of the Minnesota State Public School for Dependent & Neglected Children and to honor the memory of the State School children.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Legacy Trust. A self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016 FROM 2 - 5 PM @ WEST HILLS



MEMORY CORNER

Do you have a memory you'd like to share in *The Radiator Brush*? We would love to hear from you. Memories can be emailed to museum@ci.owatonna.mn.us or mailed to the Orphanage Museum: 540 West Hills Circle Owatonna, MN 55060.

The State School Hospital

by Vivian Swan Manthe

The SPS was a city unto itself...with 16 cottages for the children, the main building for the office, dining room/ kitchen, bakery, power plant, laundry building, school/ gym 1st to 8th grades) and we also had our very own hospital.



Every child entering the SPS got to know the hospital. While we were in C-12 (the detention center), the State made sure we were not carrying a communicable disease, lice, and that we had all shots and vaccinations before we entered the school's mainstream. The hospital was a two-story building with a basement you entered by the back door. The lower level was where the doctor from town had his examining room and the dentist had her room; always seemed like a scary place to a new child.

I got to know the hospital very well, since I was assigned to that

job. The head nurse of the hospital was Miss Dorothea Putter. She was a lovely, kind lady who had a thick accent. My job was to help in the small kitchen, dust mop floors and rooms, help make beds, and run errands. While working in the kitchen one day, I developed pain in my stomach, but, since crying was out of the picture, I held out until the pain got too bad and Miss Putter caught me sobbing. She checked me out, put me to bed, and placed a call to the doctor from town. That evening I had my appendix taken out. Of course, I was terrified. When they put the ether mask on my nose and told me to take deep breaths, I didn't want to do it, since I thought I was dying. When I woke up, I was fully bandaged and throwing up and... best of all...alive! Miss Putter took very good care of her patients and I loved all the personal attention I was getting. In those days, one laid in bed for ten days, but I didn't seem to mind with all of the attention coming my way.

I enjoyed working for Miss Putter. When I was back on my feet, she got permission to take me to see "The Wizard of Oz." I thought I had died and gone to heaven to go to downtown



Miss Dorothea Putter with visiting former State Schooler George Haning.

Owatonna to the theater, with all the city lights glowing. I felt so grown up at 13 years of age. It was truly a special time in my life and I have never forgotten. I'm sure there are many children who have a special memory of Nurse Dorothea Putter; this is mine.

THE CHILDREN
REMEMBERED
Orphanage Legacy Trust

CELEBRATE YOUTH EVENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016 2 - 5 PM @ WEST HILLS



Bring your chair, family & friends and enjoy an afternoon of family fun and entertainment that supports the Orphanage Museum.

Local Musical Talents | Horse Drawn, Historic Wagon Rides
Reader's Theater Performance | Mush Eating Contest | Children's Activities

Presenting Sponsor:

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Please contact us for sponsorship opportunities.

REMEMBERING THE PAST,
LIGHTING A PATH TO THE FUTURE

Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum | 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna, Minnesota | orphanagemuseum.com | 507-774-7369

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LEGACY TRUST

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WORD OF DECEASED STATE SCHOOLERS

Gretchen McGillivray
 (Nina Bayer)

Alvin Thompson

Beverly Swan Horst

Mel Ostwald
 (Melvin Peterson)

10,635 CHILDREN — 10,635 STORIES

by Anne Peterson, Museum Director

One of the biggest thrills I get is uncovering new stories about individual State Schoolers. I never know what a visitor, phone call, or email message may bring. We are fortunate to have 11 books written by or about former State Schoolers in our Gift Shop; however, 11 out of 10,635 is a tiny percentage. I'd like to share a few new stories from families whom I've met since the last issue of *The Radiator Brush*.

George Drew — Frozen

In April 1894, the four youngest boys in the photo on the right, were placed in the State School after their father abandoned them and their mother.

Exactly two years later, young George Drew (far right) was dead. I saw a notation that said, "died April 1, 1896, Freezing Lamberton, Minn," which piqued my curiosity, and I was able to connect with Drew relatives.

This story appeared in the April 10, 1896, issue of *The Owatonna Journal*:

"Superintendent Merrill received a telegram late last week from Redwood County stating that George Drew, a ten-year-old boy who had been placed with a prominent farmer there, had perished in the blizzard which broke over the state last week. It is supposed that George had started to go from the house to the barn during the storm and it is supposed that he was blinded by the storm and either wandered or was blown away, as his body frozen stiff was found in a snow bank some 80 rods from the house when the storm cleared away. The coroner's inquest determined that the boy's death was purely accidental and that no one could be held responsible for his death. George had a good home and the people with whom he lived regret his sad death very much."

However, a letter in George's State School records from a neighbor contends he was not well treated and was expected to do the work of a much older boy. We'll most likely never know if that allegation was followed up on or why George was outside in a blizzard.

There was also a letter from his mother in his file. She had read about the death of a boy named George Drew in the *Duluth Tribune*. Apparently, the State hadn't contacted her yet about George's fate—her letter was dated April 15. She wrote, "I would like to find out whether it is my George or not so don't fail but write and let me know right away." Such a tragic story on so many levels.

The other Drew brothers—Charles, Martin, and Joe—went on to live successful lives after their State School experience.

The photo and letter were shared by Martin's granddaughter, Karen Gregornik, who got the records from the Minnesota Historical Society.



Left to right: Martin, Joseph, Frank, Jr., and George Drew from St. Louis County, Minnesota. This photo was taken shortly before the four older boys were placed in the State School..

Shirley Dodge — Like Family

Shirley Dodge was born Alvina Sylvia Nadeau, one of five siblings. Her family got into severe financial trouble in the mid-1920s and the children were placed in the State School. Little Alvina was adopted by the Dodge family and renamed Shirley. After losing a young daughter from whooping cough, the Dodges came to the State School to complete their family. Shirley became the new little sister to Buena, who was six years older.

When visiting the Museum and sharing Shirley's story, her niece Kathryn Engel stressed that her innocent, loving aunt was like having a second mother—and definitely a family member.

According to Kathryn, Shirley did not know she was adopted for a long time. When she did, she took the initiative to find her family and she had some interaction with them, never harboring any ill feelings. Shirley eventually moved to Montana and married. Kathryn is very grateful that Shirley was part of her life.



Shirley and Buena Dodge.

The Enney Family — Reunion

On Saturday, June 18, as part of a family reunion in Owatonna, several members of the Enney family, from various parts of the United States, came to tour the Museum. It was a time to get acquainted and also learn how the State School played a prominent role in the lives of their family members.

Unfortunately, the death of one parent could quickly tip the stability of a family and resulted in many children being placed in the State School. In 1917, Marion Enney delivered twin daughters, but, tragically, Marion and one of the babies died. That left the father, Herbert Enney, with eight children, newborn to 15. A childless couple took the infant, but for nearly two years, Herbert struggled to take care of his remaining brood. Eventually, Kanabec County intervened and the four youngest children were ordered into the care of the State School in Owatonna, “with the request that their stay be prolonged to give H. W. Enney, father of said children, a chance to re-establish his home to the end that they may be returned to him, in possibly two or three years.”

The case files on these children showed that their father was trying to get them back, but his circumstances

didn't meet the State's evaluation. By 1926, although still wards of the State, Herbert A., George, and Bernice were living with their father again. The State Agent checked on them and reported that, “The home is an ordinary farm house—not clean. Mr. Enney is trying to do the best he can for the boys. He can't keep the house clean and do all the farm work too.” Even if it wasn't clean by State standards, the children had returned to their family unit and were getting the individual love and attention they needed from their father. In 1927, Clarinda also returned to her father and the journey with the State system was coming to a close. Herbert Enney moved to North Dakota and Herbert and George were officially “restored to their father” in July 1930.

The rare photo below was taken in 1919, the day the four youngest children entered the State School. It was found in a file at the Minnesota Historical Society. (We wish we had photos of all the children as they entered SPS!) Their brave, sad faces really capture what it must have felt like to leave home and come to the State School. Thank you to Barbara Stoddard of Utah for sharing this photo and information from the Enney children's records.



A very poignant photo taken the day the four youngest Enney children were placed in the State School in 1919. Left to right: George, Herbert A., Clarinda, and Bernice.



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STEP-BACK-IN-TIME TOURS!

Do you have a group of 10 or more who would love to visit the Orphanage Museum? We are offering a special group tour package, together with Owatonna Tourism and the Steele County Historical Society, where visitors can spend a full day in Owatonna with stops at the Orphanage Museum, Village of Yesteryear, Steele County History Center, and Louis Sullivan Bank. The package includes lunch and a morning or afternoon coffee/snack—a complete package.

Call the **Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism** at 800.423.6466 for full options. One call does it all for one price: \$37/person. They will do all the planning—you just enjoy the day!