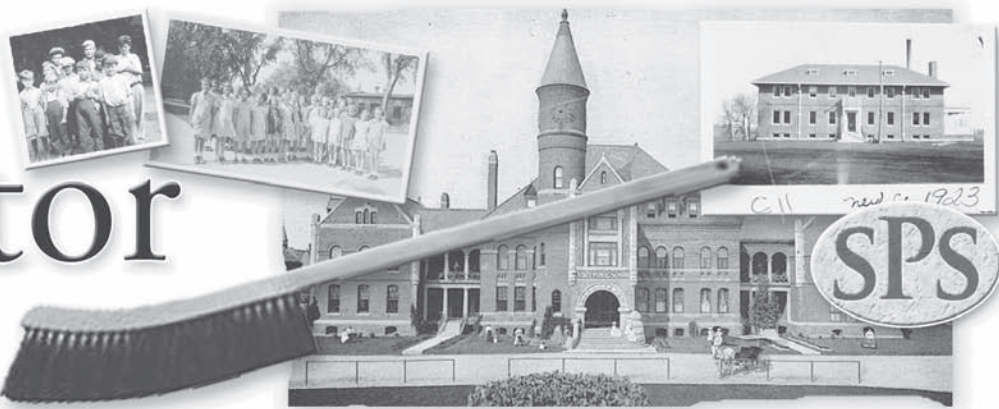


# The Radiator Brush



Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum & Historic Cottage 11 Boys' Dormitory  
~ Spring 2017 Newsletter Edition ~

## ANNUAL ORPHANAGE MUSEUM FALL CELEBRATION

Join us on the afternoon of **Saturday, September 16, 2017**, for our fifth annual celebration and fundraiser for The Children Remembered Legacy Trust. More details will follow in the next newsletter. In the meantime, here are some photos from last year's day of fun, history, and entertainment!



Upper left to right: Mush eating competition, Harvey Ronglien and Myrtle Clark Loch, Farmer Hans Halverson (Darren Schaufenbuel), Harvey & Superintendent Galen Merrill (Jerry Ganfield), horse-drawn wagon, face painting, and C-4 Matron Emma Schaffer (Lyn Andrews).

## DONATIONS

### MEMORIALS

Eva Jensen, Andrew Carlson, and  
Alfred Carlson  
*Ken & Sandy Dinse*

Mel Ostwald  
*Sharon Ostwald*

Louis Reynolds  
*Eugene Krause*

Ruth Reese  
*Harvey & Maxine Ronglien*

Richard Erickson  
*Eunice Erickson*

Marjorie Erickson Anderson  
*Eunice Erickson*  
*Rodney & Suzanne Erickson*

Bob Monahan  
*Shirley Grass*

Verna Minges  
*Harvey & Maxine Ronglien*  
*Cornerstone Church*  
*Mary Ann Grunklee*  
*Gloria Seykora*

Roger Ormand  
*Walter Royce*

Gordon Cariveau  
*Yvonne Cariveau*

Char Stange  
*Hank Stange and Kari Fairbanks*

### GENERAL FUND

Agnes Johnson  
DeLoyce Anderson  
Melody Tenhoff and Julie & Dave  
Lyons – *in honor of Russ Tenhoff*

Patricia Hill

Shelby & Darren Zempel

Jerry & Judy Robinson

Arlend "Buzz" Wilson

William & Patti Hoversten

Suzanne Juarez – *in honor of Ruth*  
*Turnmire's 90th birthday*

Michael & Kathy Baker

Rita Schulze

Milo Beuthien

Robert & Lorraine Peller

### LEGACY TRUST

Fernbrook Family Center  
Kirchner Siding & Window  
Express Employment Professionals  
Einhaus, Mattison, Carver &  
Haberman  
Owatonna Motor Company  
HomeTown Credit Union  
Wenger Corporation  
Paquin Photography  
Walbran & Furness  
Bosch Automotive  
Advanced Coil Technology  
Alexander Lumber Company  
ERA Gillespie

Al & Gloria Kolander

Ken & Sue Baker

Denise Gardener and Family

Harvey & Maxine Ronglien

Peter Razor

Michael Brown

Milo Beuthien

Charles & Emily Herrmann

Mary L. Smith

Betty Boerema

Rebecca Gross

Julie Hedeon

Katherine & Rod Kylo

Joel & Janice Jensen

Clyde Grant

Anonymous – *in honor of Harvey &*  
*Maxine Ronglien*

Yvonne Cariveau

• (M) Deya Marie Gjerdahl,  
*daughter of Judy Buskovick and*  
*granddaughter of Marcella Brown –*  
*1930's State Schooler*

• (M) Gordon Ellis Cariveau, Sr. –  
*Son-in-law of Marie Brown 1930's*  
*State Schooler*

• (M) Kirby Brown – *Son of Andy*  
*(Clarence) Brown 1930's State*  
*Schooler*

**Total \$53,018.47 in Legacy Trust.**

### WORD OF DECEASED STATE SCHOOLERS

Marjorie Erickson Anderson

Helen Hoover Bowers

Gloria Knudson Possehl

## Tourism Brings People & Revenue

In the first three months of 2017, visitors from The Netherlands, Costa Rica, Norway, and Puerto Rico, as well as folks from Kansas, Nebraska, Tennessee, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and, of course, Minnesota signed the Museum's guestbook.

How do they find out about us? The Orphanage Museum has a strong presence on the Internet! Based on reviews, TripAdvisor

lists us first on their "Things to Do in Owatonna." The AAA, Explore Minnesota, and Visit Owatonna websites also send people in our direction. Along with "word of mouth," these are all free sources of advertising.

In 2016, 45 paying group tours brought more than 1,100 visitors to the Museum. Tourism-related revenue from group tours, Cottage 11 donations, and Gift Shop sales reached \$9,897 in 2016—nearly half of our operating budget.

That's a great return investment!



*C-11 volunteer and former State Schooler Kate Sherman shares her story with a family visiting Cottage 11.*

## Thank you, Shelby!

Long-time Board member Shelby Zempel submitted her letter of resignation in February and it was, regrettably, accepted.

Originally Maxine Ronglien asked Shelby, a designer at Federated Insurance, to help create the graphic elements of the Museum, but soon she became an integral part of the whole organization as it grew.

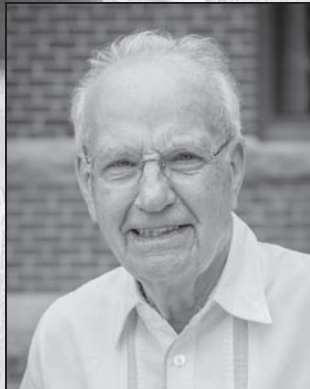
Thank you, Shelby, for the countless ways you helped make the Museum what it is today. Whether designing the newsletter or helping with fundraising events or leading the Board, we sincerely appreciate the huge commitment you made.



*Shelby Zempel shown facilitating the State School Oral History gathering. It was difficult to find a photo of her—she was often behind the camera.*

# "The Boy from C-11" Celebrates 90 years

You are cordially invited to an  
Open House  
in honor of  
Harvey Ronglien  
on his 90th birthday  
Friday, May 5  
from  
3:00–6:00 PM  
Owatonna Arts Center  
Performance Hall



Come to share memories. No gifts please. If you are unable to attend and would still like to send a card, his address is 125 E Park Street, Apt 204, Owatonna, MN 55060.

## COMMEMORATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT WAR

by Vincent Keserich, Steele County Historical Society

On April 6, 1917, the United States Congress declared war on the German Empire and entered the war in Europe. A three-panel exhibit will be on display this summer in the main Museum. Highlights are listed below.

### SPS at War

The war affected every American and the more than 300 State Schoolers were no exception.

There were 111 former State Schoolers serving in the military during World War I. With able-bodied men in the army, the State School experienced a labor shortage during the war. The school farm was especially hard hit. The older boys took up some of the slack, but most of the children were too young to have been of much use as farm hands.

In 1918, Superintendent Galen Merrill reported the children were "anxious to do their share" to help win the war. The children's enthusiasm took many forms, from food conservation to knitting socks.

A junior branch of the Red Cross allowed the younger children to support the war effort. A group of boys gave up part of their summer vacation to knit socks for soldiers. Other students sewed bandages as well as clothes for civilians displaced by the German war machine.

The school kitchens also joined in the effort. Overcoming many "tribulations," the kitchen staff conserved as much food as possible. By 1918 Merrill was able to claim that "Our larder has been a war larder; our menus, war menus, and our supplies used strictly according to the dictates of Mr. [Herbert] Hoover," the head of the US Food Administration.

Another more serious problem was the influenza pandemic, which struck in the autumn of 1918. There were 176 cases of flu at the State School (roughly half the children) but only three students died, along with one teacher.



Despite the trials and tribulations of war, Merrill was pleased with the School's performance: "The spirit of the whole institution has been fine," he wrote. "From the youngest to the oldest everyone has been willing to do his share cheerfully."

### Henry Brown: Orphan, Soldier, Singer, Outstanding Citizen

For much of the twentieth century, Henry George Brown was one of Owatonna's most renowned citizens. That fact is all the more remarkable given his background. Not only was Brown an orphan and a State Schooler, he was an African American in an overwhelmingly white community.

Brown's musical talents were encouraged by his foster family. He played the violin and saxophone, but his voice was his greatest gift. Brown became famous and highly respected for his many solos and work with the First Baptist Church Choir.

In addition to serving his community, Brown was one of the many State Schoolers who served his country in the

First World War. Drafted into the army, Private Brown departed for France in the autumn of 1918. He remained overseas until the spring of 1919, rising to the rank of sergeant.

### 1893-1908

Henry Brown's remarkable life began on April 16, 1893. His grandmother, Emma Brown, was born a slave in Mississippi a year before the Civil War began. In the late 1880s, Emma and her husband headed north, settling in northeast Minneapolis, living in a "shanty town" next to a railroad siding. Brown's mother and father died when he was still a toddler. These misfortunes left him in the care of his widowed grandmother.

Emma "could not control" young Henry. He would often "run away to play" and not come home for several days. Brown attended school near his grandmother's home and there, he attracted the attention of school principal Mary La Rue. She found Brown to be "bright" and was "anxious that he be given the opportunities" he deserved. La Rue used her influence and arranged to have Brown sent to the State School.

With his grandmother's consent, Brown arrived at the school in March 1906 as Case No. 3138. He lived at the State School for the next two years.

*Quotes taken from State Agent's report on Henry Brown.*

### 1908-1917

In 1908, Brown was indentured to Burton and Georgiana Case, who owned a farm in Clinton Falls Township.

The Cases encouraged Brown's natural talents and in 1911, he enrolled at

Pillsbury Academy. For the next five years, he took violin, choral, and voice lessons there. Brown graduated from Pillsbury in 1916 and the student paper predicted that he would make "a mark in the world."

#### 1917-1919

After graduating, Brown attended Fisk University in Nashville and registered for the draft there. After completing his course work, he returned to Minnesota in June. While he waited for his draft number to be drawn, Brown put his voice to work, singing at a Red Cross benefit outside of Medford in August. The benefit earned \$40.10.

On August 2, 1918, Brown headed to Camp Dodge where he was inducted into the army as a private. The army was still racially segregated, so Brown was assigned to the 809th Pioneer Infantry, an all-black unit.

With a short stop at Camp Upton on Long Island's eastern end, Brown departed for Europe on September 22, 1918.

Brown's unit was stationed at Saint-Nazaire, France, far from the front lines. Not only were blacks segregated, but they were consigned to menial tasks like building camps, unloading supply ships, and burying the dead. Consequently, few black units served in combat.

Since he was assigned to chauffeur officials around the camp, Brown was relatively lucky. Their French hosts called the men of the 809th "Black Yankees." Soon the war ended.

With the war over, the US began demobilizing. Now a sergeant, Brown was discharged from the army on July 29 at Camp Grant, Illinois, after a year of service.

#### 1920-1970

Once more a civilian, Brown entered the McPhail School of Music in Minneapolis, staying with his grandmother and sister at his boyhood home. By 1920, he had graduated and was living with his foster siblings in Clinton Falls, where Brown worked on his foster brother's dairy farm.



In the 1920s, Burton Case retired from farming and moved to Owatonna with his daughters and grandchildren. Brown joined his foster father and sisters at their home on North Pine Street and got a job at the Post Office. He worked there for the rest of his life.

When he was not working, Brown gave liberally of his time and talent. He was a right fielder for the Owatonna Aces and he played his saxophone in several local bands. His "resonant" voice attracted the most attention and he performed at thousands of events.

As a member of the First Baptist Church, Brown sang in the choir for over half a century. He also became a fixture at Memorial Day and Flag Day celebrations. One of his favorite venues was the State School where he would sing for the children.

He died on December 16, 1970, at the age of 77 and is buried in the Case family plot in Owatonna.

"Owatonna will miss Henry Brown," commented one obituary. "But what wonderful memories many folks in this city have about a lonely little boy who first came to this city through the Owatonna State School. . . . We commit him to eternity with tenderness, knowing full well that he gave much more than we ever repaid."

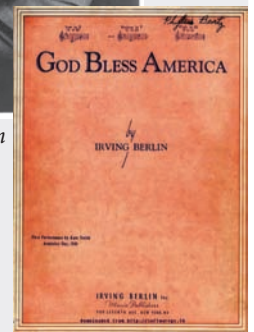
*Keserisch is from Bozeman, Montana, and educated at Montana State University and the University of Iowa.*

#### God Bless America

In September of 1918, Henry Brown traveled to Camp Upton on Long Island's eastern end. Also stationed at Camp Upton was Sergeant Irving Berlin. Already a famous songwriter, Berlin had been inducted into the Army in the spring. That summer, Berlin wrote a musical revue about army life. Its most popular song was "Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning." Berlin also wrote "God Bless America" at Camp Upton. This song would later become Brown's signature performance.



Sgt. Irving Berlin



## Turn-of-the-Century Tales of Intemperance

The State School was required by law to determine the “habits and character” of the parents of children who came to the school. Oftentimes, this was difficult or even impossible, but the School’s agents did their best. Of particular interest were “intemperate” parents, the turn-of-the-century word used to describe alcoholics.

In 1830, Americans consumed 7.1 gallons of alcohol per person. By comparison, the average American consumed 2.3 gallons in 2009, or three times less.

An 1897 law allowed for the admittance of children who were “ill treated so that life, health, or morality is imperiled by reason of the habitual intemperance, grave misconduct or continued personal injury of their parents or guardians.” The State School’s biennial reports were filled with examples of abuse brought on by alcohol. Below are three stories from the 1900 report.

### “A Starved Child”

This little girl was the daughter of a teenage mother. The child lived with her “intemperate and brutal” grandparents. In desperation, the child’s mother contacted a State School agent to save the baby from “incredible” abuse.

The agent found the child with a “famished appearance” Her grandparents, according to the agent, “seemed willing to starve her to death.” She was two and a half years old but weighed only 12.5 pounds. After six months of care at the State School, she was a “plump, beautiful baby” again.

### “A Happy Outcome”

Early in life, this young man suffered two misfortunes. His parents abandoned him as an infant and then a “family of bad character” took him

in. His foster mother was a “very intemperate, degraded woman” and he ended up at the State School as an adolescent.

The young man had a difficult time at the School so officials sent him to the home of a “good Christian farmer.” He promptly ran away from the farm only to return. After that, he reformed himself becoming a “young man of good character.”

### “Once Neglected”

Along with his brother, this little boy arrived at the State School in September. Their father was a “very intemperate” criminal who abandoned his wife and children while on the run for larceny. Their mother was neglectful, more concerned with fancy clothes than with her two sons. Two months after his arrival at the School, a “devoted, Christian” woman took the boy in as a foster son. His brother remained at the School until officials found a “nice” home for him with “a kind papa and mamma.”

Given stories like these, it is easy to see why Prohibition attracted public support.

There was an increased desire for social reform during the period leading to the First World War. Prohibition advocates argued alcohol wasted resources and undermined the war effort. They also drew on popular associations between beer and the German enemy. In early 1919, two months after the war ended, activists

finally succeeded in passing a constitutional amendment to prohibit the sale and production of alcohol.







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## **Return Service Requested**

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*Gilmour Dobie (1879-1948)*

### **GILMOUR “GLOOMY GIL” DOBIE**

Gilmour Dobie was Case File #7. He and his brother were among the first to enter the State School in December of 1886. He went on to great acclaim as a quarterback at the University of Minnesota, but more as a coach.

He served as the head football coach at North Dakota Agricultural College—now North Dakota State University (1906–1907), the University of Washington (1908–1916), the United States Naval Academy (1917–1919), Cornell University (1920–1935), and Boston College (1936–1938), compiling an impressive career record of 182–45–15.

Dobie never lost a football game at Washington, assembling a nine-year unbeaten streak from 1908 to 1916 of 59-0-3 that has never been equaled. Many proclaimed him the greatest college football coach of his day, an era of legends like Knute Rockne, John Heisman and Glenn “Pop” Warner.

There is a book written about his career in our Gift Shop called “Pursuit of Perfection.”