



The Little White Paper

The Monthly Newsletter of the Golden Valley Historical Society
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GOLDEN VALLEY TO EXPERIENCE AN EVENT FOR ONLY THE SIXTH TIME IN OVER 50 YEARS

In the Golden Valley election of 1959 voters chose a plan of government known as Optional Plan B, with the expectation that it would prove better administration for a village that experienced rapid growth and changes following World War II. Under the new plan a city council composed of a mayor and four council members appointed a city manager as the chief executive officer of the village staff. All direction and authority then flowed from the council as a whole through the city manager. Compared with the previous form,

Plan B provided a higher professional level and greater efficiency of administration. The plan has worked effectively for more than 50 years.

The first manager appointed was Roger Ulstad followed by Barkley Ohmans, Jeff Sweet, William Joynes and Tom Burt. Tom Burt will retire as city manager in September, 2015. The city council began searching for his replacement in May, 2015. The initial applicants for the position totaled 46 which has been narrowed by the city council to 7 semifinalists. Following

interviews by the city council, a new city manager will be hired – only the 6th city manager in over 50 years. (In 1972, 13 years after the establishment of the council-manager form of government, Golden Valley became a city when the Minnesota legislature made all villages statutory cities. This did not change the form of government, the main intent being to provide uniformity throughout the state, particularly in matters of local elections.) (Source: “Golden Valley 1886-1986 Minnesota” published by the Centennial Committee, 1986.)

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ASKED, “HOW DID GOLDEN VALLEY GET ITS NAME?”

One of the first families to come to Golden Valley was the Varner family. In 1854 William Varner with his wife and sons, two-year-old Lonie and year-old Clark, left their home in Ohio and made the trip to St. Anthony Falls. Leaving his wife and sons in the town, William took his hatchet and rifle and headed west to find a home site.

He skirted lakes, slogged through swamps and marshes,

climbed hills, and finally came to the foot of a hill so high that he thought it was a mountain. He climbed the hill and looking down he could see the whole valley lush and green dotted with golden daffodils. In the distance he could see a lake shining in the sunlight and he said, “This I my valley, my Golden Valley. This will be my home and the home of my children.”

The spot on which Varner stood is now the Golden Valley Golf and Country Club with the club house standing on a hill that was much higher before it was whittled down by nature and man. Varner brought his wife and sons to the site, built a log cabin, and homesteaded the land. (Source: “Golden Valley 1886-1986 Minnesota”, published by the Centennial Committee.

THE SOCIETY WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE GOLDEN VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL MEETING PROGRAMS:

On Saturday, September 26th, 2015, the Golden Valley Music and Arts Festival will be held under the city water tower in the city hall campus area. There will be a parade beginning at Hampshire Ave. N. and Golden Valley Road starting about 10:00 a.m. and ending at the city hall. Don Minor will be riding in his restored pick-up truck driven by his son (Golden Valley Historical Society sign on each side). The Society will have a tent booth with historic displays, 1888 map,

second generation street signs on display (which can be ordered for \$25.00 each), a survey to find Golden Valley residents who have resided in the village/city for 50 years or more, and of course, membership applications for those who wish to become members of the Society. Society president, Ken Huber, will be supervising free rides on antique kids riding toys. More information will be coming about the other activities and music at the Festival.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Hindsight, of course, is blessed with 20/20 vision; the challenge has always been to foresee the future. Part of the 1940 planning commission report was concerned with transportation and pointed out that "the village is traversed by a number of rail lines. A passenger depot should be located near the village center, preferably on the Minnesota Western Railroad east of Winnetka Avenue and north of Bassett Creek." Apparently few, if any, lined up to board trains from this point and of course the station was never built.

The same report suggests a future need for additional airports to accommodate the "growing tendency for private ownership of planes and the requirements of the War Department for defense purposes." By the late 1940's serious consideration was being given by the Minneapolis-St. Paul

Metro Airports Commission to develop a master plan for secondary airports around the Twin Cities. Part of that plan called for a "Freeman Airport" on lands bounded on the south by Wayzata Boulevard, on the east by the Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern Railroad and on the north by the section line. The report stated this location was desirable because of being adjacent to a railroad and an arterial highway, and only a few minutes drive from the village center. Considerable grass roots and governmental opposition to the program was organized and on November 11, 1946 was conveyed in writing to the Civil Aeronautics Administration in Chicago. (Source: Golden Valley 1886-1986 Minnesota, published by the Golden Valley Centennial Committee.)

PREVIEWS OF UPCOMING GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING PROGRAMS:

September 10 – Dean Urdahl – "Lives Lived Large: Minnesotans in the Public Eye". Election of the Society board of directors.

October 8 – Lyndon Griffin – Women in Command – some of history's great women leaders.

November 12 – Carole Van Valkenberg, Miss Golden Valley - 1969

December – No general membership meeting.

January 14 – JoAnn Funk, "Pearl Button Boom - lecture."

February 11 – Dan Wascoe and Baibi Vegners, Nuance/a duo – Songs written by or made famous by women composers.

March 10 – Doug Ohman, Pioneer Photographs – The trail of Henry Sibley in 1863 in the Dakota War. All general membership programs are held at the Society's historic church at 7:00 p.m.

ACCESSIONS TO THE SOCIETY:

Grace Lutheran Church of Golden Valley donated file folders containing the church bulletins from 1953 to 1978. Betty Crews donated a wire rug beater circa 1918.