



**BETSY-TACY SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER #7
Spring, 1992**

The Betsy-Tacy Society will hold its next meeting at the Blue Earth County Historical Society Heritage Center on Saturday, April 11, 1992 at 2:30 p.m.

**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR
MAUD HART LOVELACE'S' CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS**

Minnesota Governor Arnie Carlson has proclaimed April 25, 1992 to be Maud Hart Lovelace Day.

MANKATO

Maud Hart Lovelace was born on April 25, 1992. The Betsy-Tacy Society will place flowers at her birthplace at 214 Center Street, at the bench, at the cemetery, and at the Lovelace wing of the Minnesota Valley Regional Library. The Betsy-Tacy Society invites members and friends to bring their pails of cocoa and cookies to meet at Lincoln Park at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 24th. For more information, call Doris Berger at 507-388-7549 or Lona Falen at 507-345-8103

MINNEAPOLIS

Betsy-Tacy Society members will meet to celebrate Maud's 100th birthday on April 25, 1992 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Border Book Shop located in Calhoun Square, 3001 Hennepin Avenue South in Minneapolis. Maud Hart Lovelace's newly reissued novel, Early Candlelight will be available. This event is free and open to the public.

THE CONVENTION IS COMING

Perhaps by now you have already received your Registration Guide, have made your program choices, written your check, and mailed it off! Program choices will be honored first come, first served - so register now!

The Registration Guide is a twenty page booklet describing all convention events, programs, speakers, and more! If you have not received your Guide by April 1st, please contact our Convention Registrar, Michele Franck, 294 Chestnut Ave., Boston. MA 02130.

One of the highlights of the July 10-12 weekend will be our Convention Shop. Get an early start on your Christmas shopping, since all proceeds go to the Betsy-Tacy Society. You will be tempted by Victorian paper-dolls, greeting cards, decorative tins, green sealing wax, and all manner of turn-of-the-century goodies. You will find some of your favorite illustrations from the Betsy-Tacy books gracing stationery items, canvas tote bags, and prints.

You are invited to respond to the member profiles section on the registration guide whether you will be able to attend the convention or not. These profiles will be published in a booklet distributed at the convention and will be a valuable aid in keeping all of your new Betsy-Tacy friends straight! (What was the name of the one from Arizona? Who was the one who collects miniatures? etc. etc.)

You are also invited to send us a photo of yourself for a visual collage of our members which will be presented at the convention. Send us a photo of you and your pet, a wedding photo, a graduation photo, anything! Be creative and have your picture snapped while doing some Betsy-Tacy-related activity - writing in your journal, making fudge in your kitchen, or playing the piano! Don't be left out! Write your name on the back of the photo (any size) and send it to either Michele or Sharla at the addresses above. Photos will be returned, if requested.

Help us make the convention a success, and make some new friends while you're at it - volunteer! We need help staffing our registration tables, hospitality room, and carpools. You'll even get first crack at the Convention Shop. Indicate your willingness to volunteer in the space provided on the Registration Form in the Registration Guide. We also need help NOW in our final preparations for the big weekend. If you can make phone calls (no matter where you live) or run chores (if you live near Mankato), please contact our convention coordinator, Sharla Whalen, P.O. Box 4774, Naperville, IL 60567.

THE PHANTOM FRIENDS GO OVER THE BIG HILL

We will be joined at our convention by a group of girls' series book collectors known as the Society of Phantom Friends. As their name suggests, they are fans of books such as the Nancy Drew, Trixie Beldon, and Judy Bolton mystery series. They also collect Lovelace, Wilder, Montgomery, etc. Their nationwide group has a reunion every summer in a series-related location, and they have chosen Mankato for 1992. Their own activities begin Thursday, July 9 at 6:00 p.m. with a buffet supper and sale of new and used books at the Holiday Inn. At 7:00 p.m. they will hold a

discussion of their "Phantom's Choice" book awards nominees. At 8:00 p.m. they will have a series book trivia contest, and at 9:00 p.m. will hold a raffle. The following morning, Friday, July 10, the Phantoms will meet at the Minnesota Valley Regional Library to view the displays and slide shows on Maud Hart Lovelace and Wanda Gag and will hold a gift exchange - each gift being inspired by a girls' series book (such as a broken locket (from a Nancy Drew book) or a print of a long-legged bird (from the Betsy-Tacy series)). The Betsy-Tacy Society would like to help make the Phantoms' visit to Mankato enjoyable. Please check your attics and basements for old mystery series books to donate for a "jumble sale" in the Convention Shop.

Betsy-Tacy Society members are invited to join the Phantoms for their Thursday evening and Friday morning activities. (This would not interfere with the Friday noon-time picnic planned by the Betsy-Tacy Society.) The cost for the Thursday gathering, including supper, and Friday event is \$10.00. Registration for the Phantom events is separate from registration for the Betsy-Tacy Society Convention. To attend the Phantom events, please send a check for \$10 by May 10, 1992 payable to Kate Emburg, to Kate at 4100 Cornelia Way, North Highlands, CA 95660. Call Kate at 916 331-7435 for more information.

TWIN CITIES CHAPTER FORMS

The Betsy-Tacy Society, Twin Cities Chapter, was founded on January 7, 1992 by John Coughlan and Kathleen Baxter, over lunch, and one month later, the chapter has thirty-three paid members and a distinguished board, including Gretchen Wronka, Susan Allen Toth, Colleen Timmins, Lyn Lacy, Michelle Cromer-Poire, Betsy Norum, Marcia Marshall, Amy Dolnick, Karen Nelson Hoyle, and Barbara Carter.

The mission of the chapter is to promote the works and memory of Maud Hart Lovelace, and to establish a fund to assist the Betsy-Tacy Society to one day purchase, restore, and maintain a house in Mankato in which a Maud Hart Lovelace museum can be created.

The Twin Cities group plans to sponsor at least three events each year: a holiday event, a Lovelace birthday event, and one other - such as a bus trip to Lovelace sites in Mankato and/or the Twin Cities. The first event is scheduled for April 25, and will be held at Borders' Book Shop in Calhoun Square. The event will be co-sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society and the Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library. We are making plans for this exciting day now and have sent out almost 100 press releases about the chapter, thanks to Amy Dolnick, our vice-president and PR director. We are hoping to find many undiscovered Lovelace fans, partly through what we hope will be extensive media coverage.

Membership in the Twin Cities group is \$10.00. Children's memberships are \$5.00. We are planning to include special events for children at all of our festivities. They are our future and are very important to us!

For more information regarding the Twin Cities Chapter, contact Kathleen Baxter, 50 94th Circle NW #201, Minneapolis, MN 55448. Phone 612 786-8988.

WHO IS THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY?? WE ARE!!

Diane Kipp from Vancouver, Washington dropped us a note to suggest we provide a geographical breakdown of the Betsy-Tacy Society members. Great idea! This is where we are:

Minnesota: 50%

California: 7.3%

Illinois: 6.7%

New York: 4.7%

Connecticut, Virginia, and Michigan, each 2.1%

Oregon, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio, each 1.6%

Colorado, Maine, Vermont, Wisconsin, Arizona, Massachusetts, Kansas, Texas, Washington, and Rhode Island, each 1%

New Mexico, Florida, North Carolina, Nebraska, Georgia, and Arkansas, each .5%

Germany, Canada, and the People's Republic of China, each .5%

ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED BY OUR MEMBERS

SEASONS TO BETSY

By Brenda Worsley

"The trees along High Street wore pale green chiffon now. Plum trees were in heady bloom. Birds were flying about with bits of straw in their bills, or sitting on eggs, or at least singing madly. Human beings were almost as busy, uncovering flower beds and raking last autumn's leaves."

It's springtime in Deep Valley. Aesthetic visions of this storybook town slowly awaken my senses to a panorama of a more leisurely era, a more gentle way of life. Like the flickering motions of a nickelodeon, images of people and places graced in ageless charm perpetuate themselves in my mind. Through a kaleidoscope of colors I see laughing children flying kites in Lincoln Park as spring belatedly commences. I catch brief glimpses of a familiar red brick turreted high school, the majestic Saul-paugh Hotel, and a small yellow cottage perched at the end of Hill Street.

Finally, the cinema comes to a halt and focuses on one house, one family. In front of a lofty green frame house I see the dignified and benevolent Mr. Ray rolling his newly seeded lawn on the corner of High Street and Plum. Behind him, the porch of that cherished house is hung with baskets of daisies and geraniums, and trailing green vines wind contentedly around the railings.

From inside the Ray home comes the resolute hum of a sewing machine. Miss Mix is creating mild confusion as she produces colorful Easter garments for the three Ray daughters. Bits of bright ribbon and snarls of thread are scattered throughout Mrs. Ray's bedroom, where the seamstress creates her masterpieces. Tossed casually in a corner is a lavish Merry Widow hat, very wide and trimmed with green foliage and ribbon.

Betsy Ray is in her blue flowered bedroom, settled in front of her Uncle Keith's travel-worn trunk. She is supposed to be preparing for the annual Deep Valley High School Essay Contest. Instead, she is daydreaming about

some of the recent escapades of her high-spirited Crowd. She recalls gay excursions behind Old Mag as the Crowd explored the awakening countryside. Glorious bonfires on Carney Sibley's spacious side lawn burn vividly in her mind. She can almost smell the pungent leaves Hunter and Jerry Sibley heaped onto the fire.

Gazing dreamily out her window, she reminisces about other springs, long ago, when she and Tacy and Tib were small children. How she and Tacy colored sand with Easter egg dye and sold it to their friends. She remembers the numerous jaunts she and her steadfast companions made up the Big Hill to search for signs of spring, and the pleasure the exploring trio felt as they discovered violets and Dutchmens breeches burgeoning from beneath the withered leaves.

Betsy smiles as she thinks of that spring the girls anxiously awaited Betsy's tenth birthday. "You have two numbers in your age when you are ten. It's the beginning of growing up," she had told her friends. Her mother had given her a surprise birthday party at night and she HAD felt grown up! That same spring, at the School Entertainment, she and Tacy first performed the Cat Duet and Tib danced the Baby Dance in her accordion pleated dress. Julia, she remembered, had recited a poem about "Queen O' the May."

Downstairs, in the "music room," Julia is practicing zealously at the piano for the Spring Rhetorical. Abruptly, she shifts to one of her favorite operatic pieces. "Mi chiamano Mimi" resounds through the Ray home.

In the cozy kitchen, warm and redolent of home baked breads and spices, Anna is replenishing the cookie jar. Mrs. Ray is making preparations in the dining room for a company dinner. It will be cool tonight, should they have a fire, she wonders?

Solemn, wide-eyed Margaret sits erect and ladylike in an overstuffed chair in the parlor. She reads from her newest fairy book as Washington and Abie lie peacefully at her feet. The sounds and smells of spring in Deep Valley wander in through the open windows.

I find it pleasantly nostalgic to be able to meander through time, if only in my mind, back to a time and place Maud immortalized in her Betsy-Tacy series. Her delightful childhood and teen-age memories have given me innumerable hours of pleasure. They have also, thanks to the Betsy-Tacy Society, brought about new friendships and correspondents.

Friendship is the prevalent theme throughout the Betsy-Tacy books. That first and everlasting friendship Betsy formed with Tacy began in the early spring, at Betsy's fifth birthday party. Maud herself said it so well in Betsy-Tacy. She listed the presents Betsy was given for her birthday and added, "But the nicest present she received was not the usual kind of present. It was the present of a friend. It was Tacy." As a consequence of that friendship, the town of Deep Valley, the Ray family, and "The Crowd" will live forever in the hearts of countless fans.

Maud's fans will want to remember the centennial of her birth on April twenty-fifth this year. As we gather together in Mankato on July 10-12

for the convention, we pay splendid tribute to this charming author for touching the lives of so many readers. Happy Birthday, Maud. Just as Joe assured Betsy, we don't need forget-me-nots to remember you. We have your memories, preserved and gently embraced by the covers of your books.

PARENTING IN THE STYLE OF BOB AND JULE RAY
By Victoria Brouillette

I was not one of the lucky ones who discovered Betsy, Tacy, and Tib in my girlhood and grew up with them. I didn't know my friends in Deep Valley until my own daughter was seven years old and we stumbled upon a tattered copy of Betsy-Tacy in a used book sale just four years ago. Since I was introduced to these books as an adult, I was drawn to the characters of Bob and Jule Ray, Betsy's parents. Their originals, Stella and Thomas Hart, doubtlessly never heard of "parenting skills," but they were successful parents, because Maud Hart Lovelace often stated that she had the happiest childhood that a child could have. Consequently, I started looking through the books to discover what I could learn from the senior Rays about parenting skills.

A tall, straight, handsome man with a carefully honed sense of humor, Mr. Ray was optimistic and clear-thinking. Mrs. Ray was a youthful, attractive, cheerful woman who enjoyed life, her family, and had a solid, romantic partnership with her husband. Encouraged by his wife, Mr. Ray was a perpetual tease. He kidded Betsy about canceling her fifth birthday party because she had bumps all over her head (from her hair being tied up in rags to make curls). The Rays made much of holidays as portrayed in all the Christmas episodes and Betsy's surprise tenth birthday party. Mr. Ray was still teasing on Betsy's 16th birthday when he and Margaret woke Betsy up by dripping a wet washcloth on her face. Betsy celebrated most of that day without Julia and her mother, since Mr. Ray, in a gesture of generosity and understanding, had sent them to Grand Opera in St. Paul.

The Rays showed great interest in the interests of their children. They managed to support them, without pushing or forcing. For example, in Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown, the Rays allowed Betsy to go alone every other Saturday to read at the Carnegie Library, in order to encourage her interest in books. They let her feel grown up and responsible by giving her money to buy her own lunch.

The four high school books reveal more about the senior Rays. Mr. Ray came from a large family in Iowa, where his hard-working, religious mother died in her early forties, but not before she organized the first Protestant church in the area. Mrs. Ray came from nearby Murmuring Lake, where she grew up happily, but her brother and stepfather had problems which resulted in her brother Keith disappearing to go on the stage. The Rays permitted their daughters to do things in which they didn't share as much enthusiasm as their children. For instance, Mrs. Ray let Betsy go to Mrs. Poppy's Christmas party, although she herself had no desire to know Mrs. Poppy better. But when Mrs. Poppy was instrumental in reuniting her and Keith, Mrs. Ray admitted that Betsy's judgment was correct, and Mrs. Poppy would be her friend from then on.

One of the most revealing examples of the Rays' good judgment and support of their children came in Heaven to Betsy, when Julia and Betsy approached

their parents about their desire to join the Episcopal Church. Mr. Ray first asked his wife what she thought of the idea, then he told his daughters: "What the Baptists in Deep Valley will think of mother and me if our girls go off and join the Episcopal Church has nothing to do with the matter ... your mother and I don't enter into this. You're (Julia) almost seventeen years old, and Betsy's past fourteen. Both of you are almost women, and personally I'm glad to discover that you've given some thought to religion ... The important thing isn't what church you want to join but whether you want to join a church at all ... (and) the most important part of religion isn't in any church. It's down in your own heart."

In Betsy in Spite of Herself, the Rays made a major decision when, despite all their family Christmas traditions, they allowed Betsy to travel by herself to visit Tib in Milwaukee. They let her go, not only so she could test her independence, but also, "for a girl who wants to be a writer, it might be educational to spend Christmas in Milwaukee."

The Rays also knew the wisdom of not trying too hard to protect their children "from learning the hard way." In Betsy Was a Junior, the Rays sympathized with Julia's plight about initially not being accepted into the sorority of her choice. They had decided to give Julia an option of going abroad to study singing, her true avocation. But they didn't tell Julia until after she had returned home from the "U," after facing what they expected to be her rejection by the Epsilon Iotas. "She has to learn to take hard knocks. We can't always take them for her, not for you and Margaret either, Betsy."

The Rays practiced letting go gradually. In Heaven to Betsy, they sent Betsy to the Taggart farm, but they let her come home early. In Betsy and Joe, they realized how exhausted Betsy was from schoolwork, so encouraged her to visit the Beidwinkels in the country, which turned out to be the real beginning of her romance with Joe. Mr Ray's biggest, hardest decision about letting Betsy go came in Betsy and the Great World, when she approached him about not returning to the "U." He told her: "I have an idea that the more education a writer has, the better. It's a mistake, too, in this life, to start things and not finish them." Thinking further, Mr. Ray realized that though Betsy needed more education, "college isn't the only place to get an education." He and Mrs. Ray decided to let Betsy have a year in Europe to learn and develop in her own way.

The Rays encouraged their children to follow their own hearts, and tried not to interfere. Mr. Ray had a hard time of it, though, when Betsy announced abruptly upon her return from Europe that she and Joe were getting married, although Joe didn't yet have a job. Mr. Ray was persistently dogmatic in his opinion: "Joe does have to have a job. Marriage isn't all love and kisses, Betsy." As all readers know, Joe got his job and the Rays gave Joe and Betsy a loving, wonderful, albeit rapidly-planned wedding.

The Rays knew when to step in as well as when to draw back, as when they sent the cartons of groceries when Betsy and Joe moved into their first home. Betsy herself knew what she owed her parents from the example of their marriage. On the morning of her wedding, she compiled a list, which included "always, always be gentle and loving. No matter if you're tired or feeling cross. Papa and Mamma don't quarrel ... you and Joe don't need

to, either."

The Rays, and their counterparts, the Harts, would no doubt be the first to admit their uncertainty about some of the decisions they made along the child-rearing road. But always, they were straightforward and honest, pointing out the various advantages and disadvantages of a given situation, offering support and love. In our family, we have tried to take a page from the Betsy books. Since our daughter is an only child, we encourage her to have friends over; we have several "traditional" parties a year. Our daughter expressed an early interest in the theater, as Betsy did in writing. We are trying to be supportive without pushing. We take her to plays; we look at movies and television with her, trying to explain what we think is good, and ask her what she thinks. We take her to countless auditions, knowing that someday she WILL get in a play. We have let her give two plays in our front yard which we videotaped. The first one was an adaptation of Betsy-Tacy and Tib!

Thank you, Bob and Jule!

SUSAN AND JULIE GO OVER THE BIG HILL
by Susan Stanfield

The following are the thoughts of Susan Stanfield after her first visit to Mankato.

Not too long ago I had the opportunity to visit a place I had dreamed of since childhood ... Minnesota. Not very exotic - while most children dream of going to places like Disney World, I had always dreamed of going to Minnesota. It was truly a land of enchantment to me. My best friends while growing up were four little girls: Betsy, Tacy, Laura, and Julie. Only Julie lived outside of fiction - down the street from me in Houston, Texas. The other three lived long ago in Minnesota. Laura was quite well known, being the star of a series of books that even made it to television. Betsy and Tacy also lived in a series of books, but had a smaller following.

Julie and I read the Betsy-Tacy books many times over. We often pretended to be the characters. I always got to be Betsy, and Julie was Tacy. We also played paper dolls and had wild schemes just like our heroines in the books. Once we even had a sand store. Most of all, Julie and I planned. We were going to be famous, see the "Great World," and most importantly, we were going to go to Deep Valley, Minnesota. We were going to climb the Big Hill, just like Betsy and Tacy. It was the only promise we made to each other. Some young girls promise to be each other's bridesmaids, or name their daughters after one another, but not us. We promised that we would never grow too old to love Betsy and Tacy, and that we would someday go see the Big Hill for ourselves.

Well, Julie and I grew up, and during that process, like so many other best friends, we lost touch with each other. Although I lost touch with Julie, I didn't lose my interest in Betsy-Tacy. Last summer I was given the opportunity to visit a friend from Minnesota. I got to see the headwaters of the Mississippi, Lake Superior, and Walnut Grove, the home of Laura Ingalls Wilder. I kept looking on the map for the location of Deep Valley, but it was nowhere to be found. I was bitterly disappointed. Julie and I had always assumed that Betsy and Tacy were based on real

people and a real place. Fortunately, before the end of my trip, I discovered a book that mentioned Maud Hart Lovelace, and that Deep Valley was based upon Mankato, Minnesota. The book even said that the homes of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib were still standing. I couldn't believe my luck, and included a visit to Mankato for the end of my vacation.

As we passed the city limits sign at Mankato, my heart began to beat rapidly. I was really there. The promise I had first made to myself and my best friend Julie over 15 years before, was finally being fulfilled. We went to the public library and I got the file on Lovelace. It had a map to all of the homes as well as some of the other sites of interest. I wandered into the children's reading room, the Maud Hart Lovelace Wing, and was amazed at what I saw. In a glass case there was a picture of the real Betsy and Tacy, and the little glass pitcher that was Tacy's gift to Betsy on her fifth birthday. I was touched that such a fragile relic of a childhood friendship had lasted so long. From the library, we began our quest for Hill Street (actually Center Street). Once I found the street, I quickly spotted the two houses. They are right across from one another, just like they had been in the books. I am sure that after almost 100 years these houses have changed from the time those girls were growing up, but just the same, I felt that I was walking on hallowed ground. I stood in the yard of Betsy's house and peered across the street. I could almost see Tacy standing at the door. I walked to the end of the street and saw the bench where Betsy and Tacy had sat. I am sure it wasn't the same bench, but that didn't matter. Looking up the street my memories of the books mingled with memories of my own childhood. Paperdolls and make believe - I had made it.

As we headed back to Minneapolis and the airport, I felt somewhat sad. I was sorry that I had made the pilgrimage to Deep Valley without her. But after thinking a while, I realized that Julie had been with me, and that everything I had seen that day, I had seen for both of us. The magic of finally doing one of those things you say you will when you grow up sustained me. After all, I was pleased that there was still a bit of the innocence left of that little girl from Houston, who had as best friends characters in a book. I only hope that wherever she may be, Julie has some of that innocence as well, and that someday she will experience the magic of Mankato for herself.

WHAT ARE YOU READING WHEN YOU'RE NOT READING BETSY-TACY?
by Laura Vadaj

Antonia White, The Lost Traveller,
The Sugar House
Beyond the Glass

These three are about an Edwardian Catholic girl with a mother complex, a father complex, a bad marriage, and a breakdown. Great stuff. Especially if you ever wondered what it's like to go mad!

Umbert Eco, The Name of the Rose

A metaphysical murder mystery, in a medieval monastery. Magnificent! And I don't even like mysteries.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, Italian Days

Through Italy, in search of roots. Too difficult for me - she makes some

wild observations - but I loved it anyway!

Herman Wouk, The Cain Mutiny

Wartime adventure on the high seas! A real page-turner! And a major motion picture starring Bogie himself!

Barbara Tuchman, A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century

I've heard history majors scoff at her, but could they do as well? Fascinating stuff.

The Notebook of Gismondo Cavaletti!

O muse and beauty! To be ugly during the Renaissance - or rather, to be obsessed that you are.

Nathaniel Benchley, Bright Candles

A novel about the Danish Resistance. It's aimed at teenagers, but I still reread it, probably for the same reason I loved "Memphis Belle." Do you ever wish you could take part in an elemental good-vs.-evil struggle? Do you wish you could escape from the late twentieth century? Did you ever want to be the Andrews Sisters?

I'll quit before this degenerates into silliness!

A CALL FOR INPUT

Now it's your turn! Let us know what you're reading and what you love to reread. Send your literary lists, creative writing, and black and white drawings (both children's and adult's) to: Lona Falen, 303 Meadow Wood Drive, Mankato, MN 56001.

FROM OUR MAILBOX

"Childcare is the one area where Betsy fails us - she never wrote a book called Betsy's Children. I have a recurring dream where I go into a new, never-before-visited library and find a wonderful children's section. I go straight to the L's and find - Betsy's Children! But just as I'm about to read it, I wake up. So it goes. I'm very much enjoying the B-T newsletters, and hope to make it to the Midwest for the convention." Amy Oseroff, Greenville, NC

"I just rediscovered the Betsy books and I can't begin to tell you how much reading pleasure they have given me! I first read the Betsy-Tacy series during my elementary school years in the mid-1950s. I loved them and imagined this was the sort of childhood my own grandmothers may have had. I continued reading the series in junior and senior high school and Betsy became my heroine. Before graduation from high school 25 years ago, I just had to read the series again while the books were still available to me in the school library. I thought about Betsy and her friends several times during my adult life and always hoped for the opportunity to read the books again someday. But you know how time passes and life goes on ... Recently I had the chance to get my hands on the Betsy books (through my husband who is a school librarian). It was so wonderfully refreshing to read through the series again! Honestly, I think I enjoyed them more this time than ever before. It must be because life and events of the past (early 1900s) are more precious and meaningful to me now that my grandparents are no longer living." Barbara Allen, Roanoke, VA

LAST WORD ON THE GREAT CAKE CONTROVERSY

Merian Lovelace Kirchner writes: "Congratulations on the wonderful job you're doing with the newsletter. I just love it. I vote 'yellow' for Mrs. Kelly's cake."

**A MESSAGE FROM THE OWNER OF THE BIRTHPLACE
OF MAUD HART LOVELACE**

Hello from 214 Center Street. Your president, Doris Berger, has told us that there's some interest by Society members in the fate of the house Maud was born in. Rest easy. It's being lovingly cared for by the current residents: Bob, Tina, Marco, and Quin Rosenstein. We bought it about four (almost five) years ago and have done a lot of work to make it habitable. It had been empty for over a year when we got it. When we discovered the historic significance of it, we became determined to improve it sufficiently that it would be saved for posterity. We have the inside pretty nice now, and are in the process of obtaining some housing rehab money available through a neighborhood program to do some other projects. Specifically the roof (it leaked into our newly done bathroom this fall -- aargh), a small garage, and redoing the porch so it is more like the original design. Also, it is my dream to landscape the tiny yard and put a memorial forget-me-not garden in, since that was Maud's favorite flower. We were looking to sell the house in this last year, since it looked like we would need to move in order to find a job. I (Tina) have just gotten my degree at Mankato State in Urban Studies and am looking for work. Right now I have some good local prospects, so we may not need to move after all. If we do, we assure you all that we'll find someone who loves the house and what it means as much as we do. Quin, who is now four, and was also born in this house (probably in the same spot Maud was, since there are precious few good birthing places in such a small house) takes great joy in pointing out "his" house in the mural that hangs in the Maud Hart Lovelace Wing (children's section) of the Mankato Library. He really enjoys the stories about Betsy and Tacy, and is excited when I point out the places in the neighborhood that we read in the books. I'm starting to ramble, so I'll sign off now. Please drop by and say hi if you're in the neighborhood. Any friend of Betsy's ...

TACY'S HOUSE IS FOR SALE



Price \$45,000

Address	332 Center St., Mankato		LE 4010	
Rms	BR 3+	Bth 2	Lt Sz 60x80	Age 111
Level	Approx Size	Taxes \$1372.98	Local 2450	Sq. Ft. 992
LR	13.6x13.4	A/C	Gas	Zoning
DR		R/O	Water	Mtg S
Kit	7.4x17.5	Ref	FP	Mtge
FR	15.3x15.6	DW	Drapes	Terms Cash out
Bath	1-2 1/4 Full	DSP	Shower	
BR	14x8.2	WS	Bsmt 0-Full	
BR	13.7x13.3	WH	FOAFC BRK STN	
BR	13.7x13.4	Ht Typocran	Key LB	Schools- Jefferson
BR	11.4x12.0	Garage	C	

Large older 2-story home, completely redecorated w/new sinks, counter top in kitchen, new venetian, new carpeting throughout. This home could easily be a 4-bedroom w/plenty of room to spare. 100 amp service, washer & dryer hookups. Front porch list. Single car garage, also connections, bay window. Balance of assessments \$2527.00

Legal Mankato 3rd Addn. the front 30' of S 60' of Lot 148, Block 28
 Owner Maud Ph 145-1840 Occup Ph
 Bkr WEDBET REALTY \$ 1.9 Ph 345-1121 Adj Mankato 3 Ph 345-1546

Tacy's House at 332 Center Street is directly across from "Betsy's house. Around the time of Maud Hart's ("Betsy's") fifth birthday, the large Kenney ("Kelly") family moved from 309 Center Street to the house where they lived through all of Bicky Kenney's ("Tacy Kelly's") school years. Mr. Kenney was the manager of the Singer Manufacturing Company at 514 South Front Street.

Reprinted from Betsy-Tacy in Deep Valley with permission by Carlienne A. Frisch.

TREASURES'S REPORT

Our balance for February, 1992 is \$1,399.78 in our checking account and \$519.74 in our savings account.

The Betsy-Tacy Society has reserved the showcases at the Minnesota Valley Regional Library for the month of July. If anyone has any items they would like to share for the month, Please contact Shirley Lieske, 214 S. 4th St., Mankato, MN 56001. The items would need to be available from July 1st through July 31st. We would like to know by June 1st what items will be available so we will be sure to have room for everything.

BETSY-TACY MEMORABILIA

CONVENTION STICKERS

To get your very own Convention Stickers, for use on letters, memos, and even car bumpers, send \$1.00 (for three stickers) plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope (business-sized) to: Michele Franck, 294 Chestnut Ave., Boston, MA 02130. Actual sticker size is 3 inches.



BETSY-TACY COLLAGES

New in the line of Betsy-Tacy memorabilia are Betsy-Tacy framed collages. These are 8"x10" frames containing photos, postcards, forget-me-nots, memorabilia mentioned in the books, and actual Deep Valley Area antiques. Each collage is different but they may be ordered in three styles: Childhood, High School, or Marriage. Each style contains a photo of Maud, an actual antique postcard of a Betsy-Tacy locale, and forget-me-nots. Other items may include the following:

Childhood: bottle filled with colored "sand", paperdolls, tiny perfume bottle, Christmas ornament, pink feather, etc.

High School: antique jewelry, embroidered hanky, blue plume, dance card pencil, antique floral postcard, etc.

Marriage: antique postcard, jewelry, crocheted doily, antique pen, etc.

No two collages are exactly alike since the antiques and memorabilia are sometimes one-of-a-kind finds at Mankato area antique shops and markets. When ordering, please specify the age-style you would like. If you wish to get a set of two or three, we will try to coordinate them to go together. Price is \$20 each plus \$4 shipping. Order from: Kelly Reuter, Box 31, Amboy, MN 56010. Phone: (507) 674-3119 or 3024





MINIATURE PEWTER FIGURINES OF BETSY, TACY, AND TIB

Author/Illustrator Cheryl Harness has been creating greeting cards and other products for Hallmark, for Current (such as the Mother's Day fan in the most recent Current catalog, as well as the Butterfield Bear items), and on her own for fifteen years. She illustrated her first book in 1986 and is now completing her eleventh, a history book of which she is the author. Cheryl is perhaps best known for The Windchild and her version of The Night Before Christmas. Cheryl has sculpted pewter 2" figurines of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib. You can order them individually for \$8 or order all three for \$22.50 including shipping and handling. Allow three to four weeks for delivery. Order from: Cheryl Harness, 508 E. San Miguel, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 or call 719-473-1256.

All of the above memorabilia will be available at the Convention Shop.

SNOGGESTION FROM OUR PRESIDENT, DORIS BERGER (WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS)

If you are looking for patterns of turn-of-the century fashions to make, check out the ad section in the back of Threads magazine.





"I sit by the side of the road,
 thinking of time gose by,
 thinking of home far away,
 til a tear spring into my eye,
 then a gopher spring up to amuse me,
 and a meadow lark sings me a song,
 when the world is so full of gods creatures
 to be home sick is certainly wrong"

Poem
 by May &
 Hart Loveless
 Drawing by Emily Scott



Book Review: Maud Hart Lovelace's *Early Candlelight*

American philosopher Will Durant described civilization as a stream with banks: too often, he said, history reports only the bloody battles that went on in the stream, ignoring the life that most people lived on the banks. Minnesota author Maud Hart Lovelace understood and captured this concept in intricate detail between the pages of her historical romance novel *Early Candlelight*, immortalizing life in and around Fort Snelling during the 1830s and 1840s. *Early Candlelight*, first published in 1929, is being reprinted by MHS Press on the 100th anniversary of the author's birth on April 25, 1992 (see boxed information).

Lovelace, a native of Mankato, Minn., is best known for her 1940s Betsy-Tacy children's stories. But *Early Candlelight* earned her acclaim as an author of historical fiction. She spent the winter of 1927 at the Minnesota Historical Society doing research for the book. In her words, "I read the Historical Society collections, the diaries and letters of missionaries and fur traders, of army men, and Indian agents and travelers. I studied the Minnesota Indians and documents pertaining to the fur trade."

Many of her characters reflect actual persons. For example, fur trader Jasper Page, the book's romantic hero, mirrors the soon-to-be first governor of Minnesota, Henry H. Sibley. Famous names such as whiskey dealer Pig's Eye and the self-proclaimed missionaries the Pond brothers become three-dimensional figures.

But one winter's research can leave a writer with only a snow-storm of paper. Lovelace took these unlinked entries and fitted them into a fast-paced romance novel that captures any reader's attention. Lovelace tackled the spectrum of family life in both the upper and lower ranks of society. She did not gloss over the tough issues of sexism, racism, alcoholism, and adultery. She portrayed people falling in and out of love and dealt with suicide as well as natural death.

Yet even among the hardships of life, she wrapped her novel in a package of colorful changing scenery that she may have experienced on her many visits to the Fort Snelling area:

Still invisible, the sun tinted the dew on the prairie grasses. It shot with iridescent hues the wisps of mist that trailed on the still waters. It touched the solid towers of the fort into the rose of storied battlements and gilded the lines of the steamboat Imogene, hung with prismatic sails and dim rich banners until she seemed a fairy ship come to rest in the River St. Peters.

Maud Hart Lovelace was destined to be a writer. At the age of 10 she was sending out manuscripts from her office in a neighborhood maple tree. During her

You Are
Invited
To
Commemorate
the
100th birthday of
Maud Hart
Lovelace

Sponsored by the MHS Press,
the Betsy-Tacy Society
(Twin Cities Chapters),
Friends of the Minneapolis
Public Library and Borders
Book Shop

Date: April 25, 1992
Time: 2-4 p.m.
Place: Borders Book
Shop
Calhoun Square
3001 Hennepin
Ave. S.
Minneapolis
825-0336

*Refreshments
*Free and open to the
public

life she wrote six adult novels and 18 children's books. Maud Hart married Delos Lovelace, a newspaper writer, on Nov. 29, 1917. They collaborated on two of her novels, and he declared that his wife must have time for her writing and would have household help.

The Lovelace's only child, daughter Merian, was born in 1931 and in later life encouraged her mother to write about her childhood in Mankato. These stories became the popular Betsy-Tacy series. Maud Hart Lovelace died on March 11, 1980, in Claremont, Calif., and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery in Mankato.

In 1927, Lovelace got the idea for *Early Candlelight* when reading William W. Fowell's *History of Minnesota*. She was intrigued by the contrast between the more formal military life of Fort Snelling and the lives of those on and along the St. Peters (Minnesota) River and on the prairie. In the new MHS Press Borealis Books reprint introduction, Rhoda R. Gilman says, "On September 27, 1929, the first American military review in honor of a woman in private life . . . was given by the Third United States Infantry at Fort Snelling." This novel of old Fort Snelling should win a place in the hearts of a new generation of readers.

EARLY CANDLELIGHT SHINES AGAIN



Maud Hart Lovelace's Early Candlelight is being reprinted by MHS Press in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the author's birth.

You can order a copy of Early Candlelight from the Betsy-Tacy Society. Send \$12.95 (include \$1.50 for handling). Minnesota residents must add 6.5% sales tax. Send your check to: Betsy-Tacy Society, c/o Lona Falen, 303 Meadow Wood Drive, Mankato, MN 56001.

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