



Deep Valley Sun

NEWSLETTER OF THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY

To promote and preserve Maud Hart Lovelace's legacy and her work, encourage and support literacy and conserve historic landmarks in Mankato

VOL. 4 ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2008

Betsy's House Restoration

The BTS Restoration Committee is proud to report on the continued progress at Betsy's House. The house is



beginning to look like a 1900 home again. The custom-made scrollwork for the front porch and the cornice

has been installed. David and Nancy Allan from Winslow Woodcarving designed and built the scrollwork to match the illustration in Betsy-Tacy.

Most of the electrical work has been completed. A security system and UV window protection will be installed this fall. The Blonder Company has donated the wallpaper for the front and back parlors and the main floor bedroom, which will be hung this fall when Hometown returns to film a sixth episode.

Volunteers are still at work stripping and repainting the period interior doors. Denny Weis is building the kitchen cupboard to look as it does in the Betsy-Tacy illustrations.



We were able to locate an antique Victorian lamp for dining room to match the illustration of Betsy's tenth birthday party from *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*.

We're very excited to be so close to the end of the restoration of the main floor of the house. Soon we'll be hanging curtains, moving in furniture and decorating the house to look as it did when Maud lived there as a little girl!

Tacy's house also received some attention this summer as it was badly in need of a fresh coat of paint.

The Society is deeply grateful to all of our members who have given so generously and to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation and the City of Mankato Community Grant Program for the funds awarded this year to help us continue this restoration project.

As we prepare to decorate and furnish Betsy's house, we've put together a "wanted list" using Maud's descriptions of the house from her notes, diaries or the Betsy-Tacy books. If you have any of the items listed below and would like to donate them for Betsy's House, please contact us.

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Kerosene lamps

Front Parlor

Lamps with painted shades

Wicker table

Chairs or rockers

Round piano stool

Bookcase

Coat tree

Rattan curtain in doorway between two parlors

Wanted for Betsy's House - period 1900

Back parlor

Lamps with painted shades

Overstuffed couch

Overstuffed chair

Round parlor stove with horse head nickel trim

Dining room

Dining room table and chairs

Sideboard

Kitchen

Period kettles, tea pot, kitchen dishes and utensils, etc.

Rain barrel outside kitchen door

Bedroom

Decorated wash bowl, pitcher & chamber pot

Lamps with plain glass shade

The Betsy-Tacy Society
Est. 1990
P.O. Box 94
Mankato, MN 56002-0094
507-345-9777
www.betsy-tacysociety.org
501(c)3 organization

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Contact information:

Mail:
P.O. Box 94, Mankato, MN 56002
Membership:
membership@betsy-tacysociety.org
Shop:
shopkeeper@betsy-tacysociety.org

Shop Catalog:

Shop our online catalog: www.betsy-tacysociety.org. PayPal available.
For a catalog: send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 94, Mankato, MN 56002-0094 and mark CATALOG on the front of the envelope.

Tacy's House and Gift Shop

Open every Saturday afternoon from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Tacy's House is located at 332 Center Street in Mankato and Betsy's House is at 333 Center Street.
There is no admission during these hours.

Special House Visits: Call 507-345-9777

For special house visits, advance reservations are requested 2 weeks in advance. Admission for special appointments: \$20.00 - up to 5 people. Over 5 people, additional \$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for ages 5-16. This fee applies to members and non-members of the BTS. Special rates available for bus tours or school visits. Contact us for more details.

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Welcome New Members

June. 1, 2008 - Sept. 30, 2008

Alexander, Kendra
Bouma, Jana
Cleaveland, Nancy
Considine, Jean
Day, Janet Elaine
Dimmel, Marcia
Dunlop, Donna J.
Fassler, Pamela
Hager, Alissa
Hays, Dawn
Hidle, Melinda
Johnson, Joan C.
Loomer, Cecelia Mary
Mader, Barbara
McClain, Judith
Merliss, Lori
Patnaude, William
Peters, Carol M.
Shaneyfelt, SooAe
Whisney, Laura
Woods, Hedda

New Lifetime Members

Wendylee Raun

Donations

The BTS gratefully acknowledges donations received from June. 1, 2008 to Sept. 30, 2008 from the following::

Donations to \$49

Abdo, Julie
Barrett, Dottie
Catron, Bonnie
Chandler, Abigail
Christenson, Kathryn
Dunlop, Donna J. - *Memory of Audre Rome Stake*
Ebert, Gladys
Erickson, Rachel
Hanel, Willa
Huntley, Mary - *Memory of Myrtle Rolstad Karow, Linda*
Koebler, Kristeen
Lee, Royal & Harriet - *Memory of Jean Lander*
McKeeever, Regina
Merliss, Lori
Mohr, Harley
Pepoy, Cornelia
Solsrud, Ardath
Tachibana, Hideko Akamatsu
Thomas, Richard & Jean - *Mortgage*
Turner, Kathleen - *Memory of Ila Flathers*
Tweite, Carol
Voss, Suzann
Yudiskas, Rose Marie

Donations \$50 - \$99

Baab, Lynne
Cox, Janie
Griffith, Helen
Maxson, Mark
Olander, Mike and Sally - *Mortgage*
Sponberg, Florence
Swanson, Wesley & Patricia - *Mortgage*
Terrana, Gina
Taylor, Brett - *Mortgage*
Youel, Alan & Marilyn

Donations \$100 - \$499

Austin, Elsie Jean
Brown, Daniel - *Mortgage*
Fanslow, Gretchen - *Honor of Joan Brown*
Fredell, Joan
Gilbertson, Mary Ann - *Mortgage*
Hanson, Kathryn
Lloyd, Harry - *Mortgage*
Maxson, Mark - *Mortgage*
McGuire, Michael
Parnell, June - *Mortgage*
Richards, Marcia - *Mortgage - Memory of*

Jean Babcock Lander
Rosenlind, Joan - *Mortgage*
Rose, Jennie
Sova Design Canada - *Mortgage - Honor of Sherri Hrycay, designer*
Stollenwerk, Kathy
Thomas, Deborah - *Mortgage*
Thomas, Marjorie - *Mortgage - Memory of Jean Lander*
VanTol, Noel
Whiting, Rhonda - *Mortgage*

Donations \$500 - \$1,000

Ferguson, Gregg & Laura - *Mortgage - Memory of Sarah E. Ferguson*
Johnson, Janine L.
Women Who Book - *Mortgage*

Paver Fundraiser

June 1, 2008 to Sept. 30, 2008

Austin, Elsie Jean
Brown, Bob & Susan
Burford, Stacey
Fast, Herbert
Hiller, Jerald
Hiller, Timothy
Hopkins, Andrea
Hrycay, Michael & Sherri
Johnson, Janine L.
Kanyusik, Carolyn
Lindner, Lori
Mohr, Harley
Schrader, Brendon & Carrie
Schrader, David & Justine
Schrader, Ken & Julie
Shamp, Audrey
Smith, Margaret
Thomas, Richard & Jean
Zehnder, Mary Gitter

In-Kind Donations

Gene Biewen & Noel VanTol - *Hilltop Florist*
Blonder Home Accents
Edenvale Nursery
Brian Duhring - *Culvers Frozen Custard*
Carol Hayes - *Contents*
Ireland Electric
Doug Laven
Mankato Kasota Stone
Piepho Moving & Storage
Denny Weis - *Weis Remodeling*
David & Nancy Allan - *Winslow Wood-carving*

If you prefer your name not be published as a donor, please advise us of your wish.

Volunteers

June 1, 2008 - September 30, 2008
Ron Affolter
Elyse Anderson
Ana-Brit Asplen
Penny Banwart
Anna Lee Bayer
Victoria Bayer
Faith Beiswanger
Josh Beiswanger
Sarah Beiswanger
Halle Blais
Michele Blake
Kathy Bodelson
Sophia Brandt
Bob Brown
Jake Brown
Joan Brown
Susan Brown
Abby Clobes
Joshua Clobes
Nathan Clobes
Alyssa Dieken
Sharon Dieken
Bob Diedrickson

Barb Dunker
Larry Dunker
Rod Elbert
Lona Falencykowski
Jack Frayseth
Tom Hagen
Rachael Hanel
Kathryn Hanson
Kyle Hanson
Logan Hanson
Nathan Hanson
Tammy Hanson
Leah Hasse
Carol Hayes
Madison Hiniker
Hometime crew
Daryl Hrdlicka
Charlie Hurd
Susan Hynes
Elizabeth Hynes
Emily Hynes
Brenda Jaros
David Lamson
Candy Laven
Doug Laven
Jack Madsen
Robbie Madison
Rollie Madison
John Mahoney
Tacy Masters
Joan Nikolay
Rebecca Nowak
Ave Grace Noy
Jacque Noy
Jonathan Noy
Mariah Noy
Alexandria Oldenberg
Laurie Pengra
Kelly Reuter
Daniel Roemhildt
Donahue Sarff
Marilyn Sarff
Mike Schmitz
Barbara Schnoor
David Schrader
Julie Schrader
Justine Schrader
Ken Schrader
Avigail Strege
Bryce Stenzel
Norma Thomas
Susan Wagenhals
Denny Weis

Artifacts & Archive Donations

June 1, 2008 - September 30, 2008

Bruce Bohrad - *antique marble ramp game*
Glenwood Cemetery Association - *stone marker found in storage room bearing Maud Hart Lovelace's name with incorrect birthdate.*
Lillian Dolentz - *area rugs*
Kathryn Hanson - *library table*
Mark Maxson - *Downtown by Maud Hart Lovelace - 1943 1st edition, As We Once Were by Anna Weicking, Photograph - The Purple Special B.P.O.E. Elk's Club Band*
WendyLee Raun - *Victorian Love seat*
Corinne Ryan Seymour - *upright piano*
Hideko Akamatsu Tachibana - *handwritten letter from Maud Hart Lovelace dated 1949*
Sheela Topping - *hard cover King Kong - novelization by Delos W. Lovelace*

Wish list

Antique library table for Tacy's parlor
 Archival boxes & supplies for artifacts
 Copy Machine
 LCD projector

Books by Maud Hart Lovelace: *Petticoat Court*, *The Charming Sally* and *One Stayed at Welcome*.

Wishes Fulfilled

Antique library table for Tacy's dining room

Shop Talk

Special "Members Only" offer

All BTS members whose shop order totals \$50.00 or more will receive a coupon for \$5.00 off your next shop purchase of \$25.00 and up. Your membership expiration date is required for this offer.

This offer is good at Tacy's Gift Shop or our online gift shop at www.betsy-tacysociety.org. For online orders you need to enter your membership expiration date in the Ordering Instructions box found in the checkout cart.

Tacy's Gift Shop Clearance Sale

In an effort to reduce stock and make way for new shop items, we're offering a clearance sale in the gift shop. Please check our shop (at Tacy's house or online) for reduced prices on t-shirts, aprons, porcelain items, and more. Stock is limited and many of these items will no longer be available once sold out.

BTS Fundraiser - Unique Antique Jewelry - Special Custom Orders

In the spirit of Maud Hart Lovelace, a variety of antique typewriter keys have been rescued, painstakingly cleaned and then fashioned into unique and affordable bracelets, pendants and earrings. This jewelry is one of a kind and custom made especially for you. The possibilities are endless for custom made personalized gifts or your own creative ideas. Prices range from \$10 to \$38. Place your order directly from Carole at caroleinterior@cox.net. Be sure to mention you saw her jewelry at Tacy's Gift Shop or on the BTS website and she will donate a portion of the proceeds to the BTS! Several pieces are on display for sale in the gift shop or visit our website to see pictures. This is a great gift idea for the holidays!

NEW! Maud Hart Lovelace Christmas Ornament.

Watch our website for the release of a beautiful, collectible ornament just in time for holiday gift-giving. Pre-order your ornament on-line so it can be shipped as soon as we have it in stock.

Paver Fundraiser

The second group of pavers will be laid when Hometime returns this fall. This fundraiser will continue until the entire space is filled with engraved pavers! Blank pavers were laid and will be replaced by engraved pavers as the orders come in. There is still time to get your name in stone or to give this as a gift in honor or memory of your loved ones. An order form can be downloaded from our website



REMEMBER: the BTS is a non-profit organization and your donations may be tax deductible.

Mortgage News

Thanks to the generous support of our members, we are pleased to report the mortgage has been reduced to \$7220.00 as of September 30, 2008. Help us reach our goal to pay off the mortgage in 2008! If you would like to help you can find details and a form can be downloaded from our website.

The Betsy-Tacy Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and donations are tax-deductible. Please mark "Burn the Mortgage Fundraiser" in the memo line of your check.



Important Membership News

In an effort to simplify record-keeping and make it easier for our members to know when their membership is due, the Betsy-Tacy Society will be changing to a yearly renewal and expiration date.

Beginning January 1, 2009, all memberships will run from January 1 to December 31. If your membership is due to expire any time in 2009, it will now be due in January 2009. We understand this may be confusing as we make the change, so if you have any questions, please contact: julie@betsy-tacysociety.org.

Paving the Way!



Hometime crew laying the new paver walk.
L - R: (kneeling in front) Chris Balamut and Dean Johnson.

Exciting News from HarperCollins

HarperCollins will be re-printing books 5-10 in the Betsy-Tacy series. "Heaven to Betsy" through "Betsy's Wedding" will be published in three 2-book volume sets next Fall 2009.

- Heaven to Betsy and Betsy in Spite of Herself
- Betsy was a Junior and Betsy and Joe
- Betsy and the Great World and Betsy's Wedding

More details will be announced as they become available.

Other Ways You Can Help BTS:

- Membership
- Amazon.com
- TRCA Team Card
- eBay Giving Works
- Greenraising
- Volunteer

For details, visit our website: www.betsy-tacysociety.org or see page 7 in the March 2008 issue of the Deep Valley Sun.



Mark your calendars for July 17-20, 2009 – the next Betsy-Tacy convention!

A convention planning committee and list of volunteers are enthusiastically plotting and planning for "Forget-Me-Nots: Betsy-Tacy Family and Friends" at the Alltel Center in Mankato. Be prepared for a jam-packed weekend starting at Heinz's on Friday night and ending Monday morning with waffles at the Hawthornes with house tours, speakers, themed meals, breakout sessions, and plenty of free time in between.

We have something for everyone. You can count on having an onion sandwich. You may want to play Speed Scrabble or Run up the Big Hill with Betsy and Tacy. There are several special speakers and lots of surprises in store, and you can always end each day in the bar with the Perfectly Awful Girls.

But that's not all. Optional trips to Laura Ingalls Wilder sites, the Twin Cities, and Murmuring Lake are being planned for before and after the convention.

Any profits from the convention will go to the Betsy-Tacy Society to restore and maintain Betsy and Tacy's houses. You can also help the BTS by purchasing souvenirs at the Alltel and at the houses or from the Silent Auction. So start saving your pennies!

Do NOT forget your camera! You'll want a snapshot of you and your Tacy sitting on the bench and photos of sites on the bus or walking tour of Deep Valley. You can take a photo album full of pictures of new and old Maud friends.

For the latest on the convention, including registration form and hotel information, go to: <http://web.mac.com/btconvention/BTConvention/Betsy-TacyConvention.html>

~ The Deep Valley Convention Planning Committee

THREE ROSES.

Maud Palmer Hart



"Oh you darlin' roses! Oh you darlin' roses!" Maggie held the open box as if it were a baby, and the look on her white little face was the look of one who sees a miracle. She stood beside the cracked and curtainless window of her little room. Without and within, chill November twilight was impending. It had not yet gathered the gray roofs and leafless tree-tops of the outer world into its pervading gloom, but the desolate little room already lay in shadows.

"Maggie! Maggie!" It was a child's sing-song shout.

Without lifting her rapt gaze, she answered, "Yes Billie, what is it?"

"Ma says ain't you comin' down to help get dinner?"

"Tell Mrs. Comfy I'll be there right away."

She lifted the three magnificent roses from their tissue paper foldings, held them from her at arm's length, and looked at them with shining eyes. In the cold gray surroundings, they looked warmer, redder, lovelier than ever. She drew them to her again and kissed the biggest, most fragrant one, deep in its colorful heart.

"I love you!" she whispered fiercely. "Now, you're mine! mine—mine!"

She turned reluctantly from the window, approached the wash stand, fumbled for the water pitcher, and lowered the long stems carefully within it. Then, quickening her movements, she unpinned her hat and tossed it on to the bed, wriggled out of her ill fitting jacket, ran from the room, slamming the door behind her, and raced down two flights of stairs into the kitchen.

In the doorway of the kitchen, she stood and blinked. It seemed very bright indeed, in contrast to the dim room above. Steam rose in clouds from the kettles on the glowing stove. Mrs. Comfy's capacious form was bent over the sink. One child was clattering cutlery; another was wailing over a broken dish. Billie was pounding in a corner.

"Hello," said Maggie, briefly.

"Hello there," responded Mrs. Comfy, cheerfully. "Late, weren't you? Cold out doors?"

"Uhuh," replied Maggie, moving towards the stove, "Girls

home?"

"Not yet. My! They'll be hungry, and that boiled dinner does smell good don't it? Father's here, and he brought a friend, a music teacher man."

"I'll get dinner on now," said Maggie, attacking the contents! of the nearest kettle with a big, iron spoon. "You go on in and see to him and his comp'ny. Rosie, you set the table."

Mrs. Comfy protested feebly, but no one paid any attention to her, and Maggie assumed command in a matter-of-fact and fully competent fashion which put Mrs. Comfy's pattering efforts to shame. So the latter laughed easily, untied her bedraggled apron, wiped her hands on the dingy roller towel, ran her fingers through her hair, made an ineffectual attempt to remedy her deficiencies in the matter of waist line, and quitted the kitchen.

Maggie fell to work with nervous energy. She cut bread, dished up smoking vegetables, and put on water for the tea. In the adjoining room, Rosie banged plates and rattled forks assiduously. Several times, the front door creaked, and a new voice and laugh were added to those mingling in the parlor. Finally, Mrs. Comfy shouted, "Girls all home, Maggie. Set 'er on!" and the noisy family streamed into the dining-room.

The music teacher man was assigned to the one place honored with a napkin. He was a little, rusty, white-haired individual, with a face so high-bred and so humorous that it was difficult to classify him as a friend of Mr. Comfy. Mr. Comfy, a battered relic of better times, seated himself at the head of the board, and the others rushed for chairs without any pretense of ceremony. The older girls, the wage-earners of the family, were served first by common consent. They were well grown, blooming girls, dressed in cheap deference to the prevailing fads. Maggie passed plates, filled glasses, brought fresh supplies of bread and butter. She took no part in the clamorous conversation. Mr. Comfy droned of his manifold misfortunes. Mrs. Comfy called proud attention to one after another of her handsome daughters. The girls, loud voiced and free with laughter, related the adventures of the day. The children ate greedily, chattered unceasingly, and now and then called shrilly for Maggie to come and help them a second time. Through it all, Maggie neither looked nor listened. Her thoughts were

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with the dewy roses glorifying the room above.

Suddenly the fragment of a sentence broke in upon her dream, and caused her to stand quite still, with the bowl of steaming potatoes which she happened to be carrying pressed tight against her.

"She stole, you know."

The music teacher man spoke quickly. "Oh, a thief."

"Not exactly a thief," put in Mrs. Comfy, in an extenuating tone, "She wanted them beautiful things so badly."

"But a stolen thing is never beautiful," said the music teacher man.

Maggie leaned toward him. "Never beautiful!" she cried.

The music teacher man looked up at her. She was very small and very thin and very ugly. Her straight brown hair hung in wisps about her face, and her narrow eyes were rather sharp than bright. She had a cold, thin, little nose, and colorless lips which she compressed after she had spoken.

"Never beautiful," repeated the music teacher man. "What is beauty but the power of pleasing? Can a stolen thing please?"

"Why not?" demanded Maggie, sharply.

"I guess you never stole," said the music teacher man gently. "If you had, you'd know."

"Did you ever steal?" Her eyes softened. Her voice was half hushed.

The music teacher man flushed a little. "Yes," he answered, still looking straight into her eyes.

After a moment, she turned and crept back into the kitchen.

"Maggie ain't got no manners," apologized Mrs. Comfy easily, "You could tell she wa'nt one of my girls. They're all sweet-spoken and pretty, like I always was."

"She is a—servant?" inquired the guest.

"Not exactly. Father picked her up on the streets one night when she was a dirty mite of a thing. There wa'nt much room around here, but we always put her some place. She's lots of help."

Maggie scrambled up the two flights of stairs, and burst into her room. The roses were filling every quiet corner with fragrance. She made her way to the wash stand and clutched the water, pitcher in her nervous fingers.

"Oh ain't you just as beautiful as ever?" she panted, trembling with anger. "Ain't you just as beautiful? I wanted you so bad—I wanted you so bad! I was sick of dead leaves 'n dead grass—'n pots—'n kettles—'n brooms—'n dust! I was crazy for you, you soft, pretty things. I couldn't help pickin' up that lady's dollar.

There you was in the window, a-noddin' at me, and—and now you're here! Who says you ain't beautiful no more?"

With desperate craving for consolation, she groped towards the smooth velvet of the flowers, but she encountered a thorn and drew back with a little shaking sob.

At length, she crossed to the bed, found her hat and pinned it on again, slipped into her misfit jacket. She took the roses from the water pitcher and drew the slim stems through her top-most button-hole. She felt the tender petals brush wistfully against her scrawny neck. Down the stairs again she flew. The family were still noisily engaged in the dining-room. She pushed open the kitchen door, and shivered forth into the night. The sky was dark, and a cold wind was tearing from the north. It swept the dead leaves before it in a rush. It pulled at her hat, whipped her thin skirts, chilled her bare fingers, clasped protectingly over the roses. She felt her cautious way through the heterogeneous litter of the back yard, and rounded the house, clinging to the walls, stumbling and picking herself up in grim indifference. Past the rickety porch, down the broken walk, out into the dark street, she hurried, directing her footsteps toward the light and sound of the avenue, a block or so away. She was thoroughly cold in body, confused in purpose, and defiant in spirit.

At the corner where the quiet street met the busy avenue, sat an old blind man at his hand-organ. Maggie hesitated, looked at him, listened to his patient melody, and slowly her fingers closed around the upper stem of the smallest rose.

"I don't need 'em all," she told herself, as she pulled it out, "Of course, he couldn't see it, so 'twouldn't do no good to give him one. But I could, just as well as not, and I s'pose he could feel it and smell it."

She advanced and laid it hesitatingly across the tin cup. Half way across the street, she turned and looked back. He was sniffing at the flower and smiling.

The wind pushed her down the avenue with the laughing, jostling throng. Her head was bent. She did not look into the faces that she passed.

"Extra!" It was a discouraged little cry. "All-about-the—." It broke off altogether.

Maggie stopped again, and encountered the impersonal glance of the newsboy. He was a queer little fellow, with a head that was too large for his small shrinking body. He was clad as lightly as herself, and he was shivering and scowling.

"Paper?" he inquired, with an indifferent stare.

She shook her head. "I ain't got no money. I just thought—I wondered ." She jerked out another long stemmed, heavy headed rose, and offered it to him. He snatched it eagerly. "I didn't need two," she explained, half sulkily, and the crowd bore her on.

The wind was so keen and strong that she was obliged to go

closer to the buildings and walk along in their protection. The windows were brilliantly lighted and tempting with displays of all kinds, but she did not notice them at all. Her eyes were on her splendid rose. It was the last one, the biggest one, the one she had kissed. Suddenly, she stumbled. In one of the narrow doorways, a woman was sitting with a baby. She was closely wrapped in a shawl and her face was in shadow but the baby peered up with a smile, and when he saw Maggie's crimson rose, he clapped his fat and dirty little hands. She paused, again.

"Little baby," she said, slowly.

The baby cowered cheerfully, clutched the air in the direction of her flower, and signified as plainly as a baby could what his desires were.

"I don't—want it," said Maggie, her voice uncertain. She drew

it out and gave it to him. The mother did not even look up. The baby, with a joyful gurgle, grabbed the stem in one hand, caught at the radiant petals with the other, and threw them to the wind.

At the next side street, Maggie turned. She darted blindly into the dimness, and ran until the light of the avenue behind her was a blur, and the murmurings of it came to her on the wind as from a dream. Abruptly, she halted, gathered her flapping coat about her, rushed to the side of the walk, and leaned her head against the chill, brick wall. She whispered brokenly, "That old man liked them roses—an' that sick, little kid—an' that baby. I wonder if he'd think—I wonder if he'd think they're beautiful now."

"Three Roses" by Maud Palmer Hart was printed in *The Minnesota Magazine*, November 1912.

The Books of Maud Hart Lovelace

The following is a letter written by Maud Hart Lovelace to Marjorie Austin Freeman on May 19, 1964, describing her beginnings as a writer and the development of her books. Marjorie Austin Freeman was Maud's step-cousin, a granddaughter of Chauncey Austin. Chauncey Austin was Maud's step-grandfather and husband of her grandmother Albertine Crocker Palmer.



Maud Hart Lovelace, ca. 1933
Minneapolis Public Library

A long time ago, Marjorie, you asked me for the names of the books Delos and I have written, separately and together, and something of their background. I'm sure you are seeking especially for family background so I will give more detail on those books which provide it.

Perhaps you would like to know that, preceding my novels, were dozens of published short stories, the first of which, called "Number Eight", was written in San Diego when I was eighteen. This was in 1911 when I visited Grandma Austin for several months and saw so much of your family at Chula Vista.

Uncle Frank Palmer, who lived then at El Cajon, took a great interest in my constant writing of stories and their consistent rejection by the magazines. He suggested that perhaps they failed to sell because they were hand-written. He loaned me his old Oliver typewriter... He tried to give it to me, but I refused the gift because I knew he liked to write stories, too. On this, I pecked out "Number Eight" and sent it to the Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine. My visit was just ending and soon Grandma and I took the train to Los Angeles where we were to visit her brother, my Great Uncle Abel Crocker. A

newsboy came through our car and I bought a copy of the Times, I scrambled through the magazine section and there was "Number Eight"! I had had no notification of its acceptance; they paid on publication. The moment in which I saw that story in print was one of the happiest of my very happy life.

I continued writing and selling short stories, long after my marriage to Delos W. Lovelace, and when he returned from World War I, he started to do the same. But where his were soon selling to the very best markets... The Saturday Evening Post, Country Gentlemen, Ladies' Home Journal, American, and so on... mine continued to sell mostly to the smaller magazines, I seemed to have no great gift for this field and Delos suggested that I try a novel.

That turned out to be "The Black Angels" (John Day Co. 1926... later reprinted by Grosset and Dunlap.) It was laid in Minnesota from the 1850s through the '80s and



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the town I called Cloudman was, in my mind, Mankato. The plot idea had sprung from the family legend of Uncle Frank, who did not get on well with his step-father, running away from home with an opera troupe and marrying an actress as old as his mother. The character I call Alex was based on Uncle Frank, and mother's memories of his looks and temperament as a boy were helpful to me, as were the yarns he himself had told me in California about his barn-storming days.

My fictional opera troupe was based on the Andrews Opera Company. The Andrews family had lived near Mankato in the early days. All the sons and daughters were musical but one. They were bell ringers at first, then started off in a covered wagon to give concerts and later opera through the middle west. In due time, of course, they took to railroad trains. I am sure the music-loving Randalls must have heard them, especially in the bell ringer period. The one Andrews who stayed at home became a doctor who practised [sic] in Mankato and brought me, and probably some of you Austins, into the world. Uncle Frank did, actually, sing with this company for a time.



However "The Black Angels" was a novel, and so fiction, and although my hero did run away from a stern stepfather, as Uncle Frank had, I did not model my fictional stepfather on Grandpa Austin. Oh, there were a few resemblances, such as Grandpa Austin's dislike of the theater and dancing.

As with all my historical novels, I did for this one a very thorough research job, reading newspapers, magazines, and memoirs of the period, as well as working in Historical Societies and Museums to check costumes, furniture, popular music and so on. This procedure continued, in fact, even with the Betsy-Tacy books. For stories of a period after the turn of the century, Sears Roebuck Catalogues were helpful.

My second novel was "Early Candlelight" (John Day Co. 1939... later Grosset and Dunlap and the Minnesota Press.) In the course of my research for "The Black Angels", I had read Folwell's "History of Minnesota" and was fascinated by the life at Fort Snelling in the early decades of the Nineteenth Century... with its gay routine of dinners, balls and picnics in the midst of Indian country. The story includes the founding of St. Paul. The love scene in the next to last chapter takes place at the meeting of the Minnesota and Blue Earth Rivers, where Mankato's Sibley Park would later be built.

Novel Number Three was "Petticoat Court" (John Day Co. 1930... later Grosset and Dunlap and Sampson Low, Marston and Co. Ltd. of London.) This one is laid in Paris, at the court of Napoleon the Third. It derives something from Minnesota, though. Grandpa and Grandma Austin attended the Paris Exhibition of 1889, and when I was a little girl Grandma used to tell me about Paris and how she had seen the Empress Eugenie, sitting in the Tuileries Gardens. I loved hearing about this old woman in black who once had been acclaimed the most beautiful woman in the world and so, half a lifetime later, I put her into a novel.

Number four, "The Charming Sally", (John Day Co. 1932), tells a fictionalized [sic] story of the Hallam Company, the first theatrical troupe to visit North America. The action takes place in Williamsburg, Virginia, Philadelphia, Providence and Newport, as well as New York, where we were living at the time. These were the cities the real Hallam troupe visited. I named my characters for the actors and actresses on the blaybills and did some intensive research on the London experiences of these theatrical folk. Mr. and Mrs. Hallaro were quite well known. After the book was published, a reader wrote to tell me of the death of the last descendent of the Hallams, In Philadelphia, I believe, not long before.

You, Marjorie, would enjoy the colonial newspapers I read in preparing for that novel. I had done all the research but had not begun the actual writing when Merian was born. Having a baby around helped me with the baby in the book.

Number Five, "One Stayed at Welcome", was written in collaboration with Delos. (John Day Co., 1934) It deals with two young men who came, one from Vermont and the other from Kentucky, to claim land in Minnesota not long after the Mexican War. They founded a town near Minneapolis and named it Welcome, but due to the demands of the plot, only one stayed there. As was usual in our collaborations, I did the research and Delos did most of the plotting. We shared the writing... amicably, too.

Number six, "Gentlemen from England", was another collaboration of Delos and me. (Macmillan Co., 1937) There is some family background here. As a little girl, my mother, Stella Palmer, lived in Winnebago City, Minnesota, where her father, Solomon, a Civil War veteran, died and her mother, Albertine, ran a millinery shop until she married

Chauncey Austin. I believe she met him while attending a Christian Church Conference in Mankato. A milliner there wished to sell out and, discovering this, Albertine who had too much competition in Winnebago City, decided to buy the Mankato shop. However, for a time after Solomon's death, she continued to live in Winnebago City with her children, Frank and Stella.

Winnebago City was near Fairmont, which had been founded by a colony of Englishmen. They had been lured across the ocean by a promoter's assurances that they could make a fortune raising beans. Most of them were wealthy; some were the younger sons of titled persons; and many had brought servants along. Leaving the beans to hired hands, they enjoyed fox-hunting and Mother told us fine stories of the red-coated fox-hunters galloping over the prairie and also loitering around Winnebago City for they particularly liked the Tavern there. Delos delighted in her stories and in time proposed that we do a novel about these English gentlemen.

It would take too much space to tell you the fun I had doing the research on this one. In addition to the usual old American newspapers, I read British sporting journals of my period and the Illustrated London News. I made two trips to Fairmont, interviewing the descendants of the original British settlers, and I went through one of their old mansions and the bachelors' hunting lodge which had doors so tall that, if the whim struck them, the young men could ride their horses inside. Both of these structures have been torn down since then. On one of the trips my dad, mother, and Merian accompanied me. We met an old man who remembered Solomon Palmer and Merian, aged four or so, played happily in the grass of her great-grandfather's grave.

The last book on which Delos and I have collaborated, which I mention out of chronological order, was "The Golden Wedge" (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1942), a collection of South American Indian legends... early ones which may have been told around campfires before the first explorers arrived. We could not get to South America; travel was restricted while we were working on this book because of World War II. But I found a wealth of material in the New York Public Library. We had a glorious time writing the stories and the book is a great favorite with both of us.

After we finished "Gentlemen from England", I found myself reluctant to start another novel... even a collaboration. Merian was six years old and so interesting, so really fascinating to me, that I could not bear to take the time for any long piece of work. I tried short stories again but without much enthusiasm and no success. Meanwhile, as several happy years passed by, I was telling her stories about my childhood in Mankato. By 1939 I was calling myself Betsy and my best friend Tacy, and they had been put into a book.

After that, a Betsy-Tacy story came along almost every year until the mid-fifties. Sometimes I wrote other books... I'll tell you about them later... but they never stopped the flow of Betsy-Tacys. Only illness or travel did that once or twice. Here is the list of books which were either about Betsy herself or Betsy-Tacy characters. All were published by Crowell.

Betsy-Tacy", 1940; "Betsy-Tacy and Tib", 1941; "Over the Big Hill" (later retitled "Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill"), 1942; "Down Town", (later retitled "Betsy and Tacy Go Down Town"), 1943; "Heaven to Betsy", 1945; "Betsy in Spite of Herself", 1946; "Betsy was a Junior", 1947; "Betsy and Joe", 1948; "Carney's Houseparty", 1949; "Emily of Deep Valley," 1950; "Betsy and the Great World", 1952; "Winona's Pony Cart", 1953; and "Betsy's Wedding", 1955. Some of these have also been published in Japan.



All of the Betsy-Tacy books are laid in Minnesota, most of them in Mankato, which I call "Deep Valley." I often used Mankato street names but seldom gave them to the proper streets, which confuses visiting children now. Many, although not all, of the characters are based on real people. In making plots, I have invented freely but usually the invention sprang from fact, for in writing the high school books my diaries were extremely helpful. The Ray family is a true portrayal of the Hart family. Mr. Ray is like Tom Hart; Mrs. Ray like Stella Palmer Hart; Julia like Kathleen; Margaret like Helen, and Betsy is like me except that, of course, I glamorized her to make her a proper heroine. The family life, customs, jokes, traditions are all true and the general pattern of the years is also accurate... for example, Julia went to Europe just when Kathleen did, as well as having much the same adventures. The Uncle Keith in the books is based on my Uncle Frank.

In "Heaven to Betsy", Mr. Ray tells the story of his mother starting the first Protestant Church in her part of Iowa. That is what my Grandmother Hart truly did. I changed the facts in the book only in making her a Baptist. She was really

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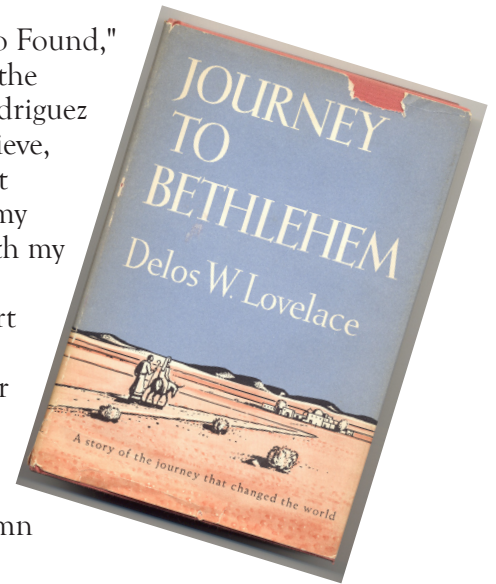
a Methodist, but since Mr. Ray... like my father... was a Baptist I did not wish to confuse my readers. As a matter of fact, Dad was a Methodist when he and mother were married, and she was a member of the Christian Church. I suppose they became Baptists as a compromise.

In "Heaven to Betsy" and also in later books, I describe our family custom of going out to Mother's old home on October 15th, Mother and Dad's wedding anniversary. I give a true picture of Grandpa Austin's beautiful place although I call Madison Lake, Murmuring Lake in the books. They used to show us children the very tree under which he had proposed; more accurately, two trees, the roots of which had grown together. He was camping with another young man on the lane which led along the lake to the wooded part of Grandpa Austin's land. The story was that he came to the Austins' door to borrow a cup of salt and then he and mother went walking. They had been "keeping company" for some years. And Mother would point out the second story window where she sat on her wedding day "wearing a tea gown", looking down the driveway and waiting for Tom's horse and buggy, a rented livery rig, to drive through the big, white gate. A twin row of spicy-smelling evergreens led from the house to that gate and the property was enclosed by a white fence. I

don't doubt, Marjorie, that your parents' attended that wedding.

As for the other juvenile books mentioned earlier, "The Tune is in the Tree", (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1950) is pure fantasy, although inspired by a song mother used to sing. "The Trees Kneel at Christmas", (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1951) is laid in Brooklyn, in the Syrian colony there, but it certainly can claim Mankato as its origin. There was a Syrian colony in Mankato, called Tinkomville, where we sometimes played as children. One little Syrian girl was said to be a princess.

Five years after we Lovelaces came to live in California, I finished "What Cabrillo Found," (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1950). This is a fictionalized [sic] biography for children of the discoverer of California who, as you Austins know better than do I, was Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. When I visited Grandma Austin in 1911, Randall, Bill Randall, Genevieve, Charley and I took a picnic to Point Loma. I have snapshots of us leaning against the Old Spanish Lighthouse. I suppose that was when I first heard the name of my Portuguese hero. You Austins were very kind on that visit... and when I came with my parents in 1915... driving us about to all the points of interest near San Diego. Except for telling about "The Golden Wedge", I have left Delos back writing short stories which he did through the '20s... part of the time as a free lance writer (we then lived at Lake Minnetonka) and part of the time while engaged in newspaper work. He was night editor of the Minneapolis Tribune, reporter and assistant night editor of the New York Daily News, later assistant city editor of the New York Sun and finally a staff writer on the New York World Telegram and Sun. Through some of the New York Sun years, he was also writing a syndicated column called, "Who's News today."



While engaged in newspaper work he wrote two biographies for boys: "Rockne of Notre Dame" (Putnam and Sons, 1931) and "Ike Eisenhower, Statesman and Soldier of Peace" (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1944) Both of these books are still selling briskly.

Besides the novels on which he collaborated with me, he wrote, after retiring from newspaper work, the novel "Journey to Bethlehem", (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1953.) His publishers called it "A richly imagined account of the world's most famous journey." After it was written and had been accepted by the first and only publisher to see it, he went to Palestine to find out whether, as he put it, he had "misplaced a mountain." He hadn't.

In California he has also written "That Dodger Horse", a book for boys and girls, laid on a Minnesota farm. Although this is a modern story, some of it traces back to his own boyhood, but the Lovelaces have too distant a connection with the Austins for me to go into that here. This all-too-long document has strayed too far already from its proposed boundaries.

Maud Hart Lovelace, May 19, 1964

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Mankato, MN 56002-0094

Do not use the address printed in the back of the Betsy-Tacy books and do not address mail to us at the Center Street location. We do not have a mailbox at either house and the mail carrier cannot deliver to these addresses.

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By Phone - Our phone number - 507-345-9777 - reaches an answering service. Please leave your message and it will be returned by someone with the Society who can best help you.

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Season's Greetings!
from the
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2008-2009 Calendar of Events

- Dec. 6* **Victorian Christmas**
Experience an old-fashioned Christmas. Costumed characters from the Betsy-Tacy books, dramatic readings from *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown* by Maud Hart Lovelace. Enjoy the sounds of Christmas with music from the MN Valley Chorale.
- Feb. 21* **Meet the Authors – Mary Huntley and Edna Thayer**
"A Mirthful Spirit – Embracing Laughter for Wellness"
- March 10-12* **South Central Service Cooperative Young Writers & Artists Conference**

*Details on all our events will be posted on our website when available.
You will also find photos of past events on our website.
www.betsy-tacysociety.org*

Address Changes

Please remember to inform us if your mailing address changes. Most of our mailings are sent via bulk mail to save on postage costs and keep membership rates low. Bulk mail is not forwarded even when a change-of-address card is left with the post office.

Important Membership Information

You will find your expiration date on the mailing label. If you mailed your membership dues after September 30, 2008, the new expiration date will not be reflected on this mailing label. If your membership has expired, please consider renewing today! You are very important to us and we don't want to lose you as a valued member. Expiration Date Change: See page 3



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