

DEEP VALLEY SUN

Vol. 13, Issue 3

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

Kathryn Hanson: Betsy-Tacy Founding Member and Dedicated Volunteer

By Penny Banwart



The Betsy Tacy Society could not exist without its dedicated local volunteers (small in number though they may be!). There would be no Saturday open houses at the restored Betsy and Tacy Houses. There would be no mid-week special tours, and no special events. Among those valued volunteers is Kathryn Hanson, “Betsy-Tacy tour guide extraordinaire!”

Kathryn was born in 1927 in Eagle Grove, Iowa, a small town located in North Central Iowa. In 1945, she moved to Minnesota to enroll at St. Olaf College, where she majored in English and history. It was there that she met her future husband, Vern. Soon after their marriage, they moved to Amboy, Minnesota, where Kathryn held her first teaching job and Vern continued his education at what was then called Mankato State College. After his graduation, they moved to Mankato and rented an apartment over a downtown business.

When Kathryn became pregnant with the first of their three children, she was forced to resign from her teaching position. (In those days, pregnant women were not allowed to teach!)

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October Read-Aloud Project

By Amber Massaglia

This has been a difficult year for gatherings in the Betsy-Tacy homes. We all love to see the joy of people coming to the Houses to visit for the first time or to experience them decorated for a new holiday gathering, but unfortunately we’ve had to cancel almost all our planned 2020 events. One might think this has been a very bad year for Betsy-Tacy. But having our doors closed has pushed us to think outside the box—and outside the Deep Valley area altogether! Our events have always been geared to the local folks who can come to the Houses, but COVID-19 prompted us to offer virtual events to the larger community of online followers. In fact, we’ve seen such a positive surge of followers that we plan to continue virtual events even when the Houses are able to reopen.

Our goal is to have an event each month. I knew that October was Reading Disability and Dyslexia Awareness month, and I wanted to combine two things I feel very passionate about: reading disabilities and Betsy-Tacy.

According to the Society for Neuroscience, “5 to 15 percent of Americans—14.5 to 43.5 million children and adults—have dyslexia, a learning disability that makes it difficult to read, write, and spell, no matter how hard the person tries or how intelligent he or she is.” Many members of my family have struggled
(Continued on p. 10)

Message from the President

Fall is in the air in Deep Valley. As I look out the front parlor window, I see the maple tree in front of Tib's house beginning to turn a fire-y orange and red. It's one of my favorite trees on the block, and I can't help thinking that Betsy, Tacy, and Tib walked the same street and saw the same views that I see today.

The air is cool and the hot mint tea in my Heinz Restaurant mug tastes especially good this morning as I think about what the Betsy-Tacy Society has done this summer and plans to take us into 2021. Thankfulness comes to mind. I am so thankful for our Betsy-Tacy Board Members and Advisory Council members.

All of these people have passion for Betsy-Tacy and are willing to share their talents to keep the Society sustainable. We have updated the website, streamlined online shopping, created fun videos on our YouTube site, and finished work on the homes with funding received through the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation grant.

Going forward, we encourage you to shop the online store. There are lots of gift ideas for the holiday season. We appreciate your stories, comments, and support.

Sincerely,
Candy Laven
BTS President

A Message from the Treasurer

The Betsy-Tacy Society appreciates your donations and engagement over these summer months and into fall. We are reliant on your continued support from afar, until it is safe to open the houses and resume our schedule of events.

We have seen an increase in memberships and donations, offsetting our loss in event income. We are so grateful for you, BTS members and fans.

Please donate or shop the Betsy-Tacy Society store, <https://www.betsy-tacysociety.org/shop/>

Sincerely,
Emily Falencykowski-Scott
BTS Treasurer

BTS Board Members

Candy Laven, President
Lona Falencykowski, Vice President
Emily Falencykowski-Scott, Treasurer
Amber Massaglia, Secretary
Elizabeth (Libby) Abdo
Jameel Haque
Sarah Tetzloff
Shandy Weimert

Advisory Council

Penny Banwart
Michele Blake
Jennifer Davis-Kay
Maud Hixson
Susan Hynes
Michelle May



From the Director's Desk

Hello, members! As the end of 2020 approaches, we at the BTS are taking the time to reflect on the past year and look toward what's ahead. I am so proud to be managing our Society as we have expanded our Board, increased our membership levels, engaged our Betsy-Tacy fans through social media, and received money from grants and donations to use for operating costs and maintenance of our lovely Houses.

Looking back even further, these past 3 years in this position have been an amazing experience connecting with passionate and experienced people to bring all of our goals to fruition. We are updating systems to the digital age, adapting to the challenge that this pandemic has brought to our world. I can assure you that we will not be closed forever. We have the ball rolling and have no intention of slowing down.

If you are interested in how you can help us here at the BTS, we are always looking for donations, input from our fans, and volunteers. We are looking for passionate people willing to share some of their time. We need people who are dreamers, organizers, "roll up your sleeves," story tellers, techies, people who know people, and people who like to play dress up! People of all ages are welcome.

Sincerely,
Sarah Urban
Executive Director



Letter to the Editor

June 19, 2020

Dear Editor,

I received my copy of the Spring 2020 Deep Valley Sun by mail in the early days of the virus pandemic. What a joy it was to receive good news that took me away from the gloom and doom constantly bombarding us. Like Betsy waiting for the postman for a letter from home, a daily visit from the mail carrier became a welcome treat from the COVID-19 isolation. Occasionally I would receive a very welcome letter or card from friends, but here was something special; an eight page newsie letter from a whole group of friends!

Curled up in an armchair I devoured every page, savoring every story that transported me to a kinder, gentler time. Digital and social media have their place, but in these unsettled times, it comes with a price, namely worry, uncertainty and anxiety every time you turn on a device. Thank you, Betsy-Tacy Society, for sending me a hard copy through the US Postal Service. You have saved my sanity and lowered my stress level, at least for a little while.

Your friend,

Kathy Stollenwerk
Waterford, WI

2022 Convention

The next Betsy-Tacy Convention is tentatively scheduled for 2022. Follow the Convention plans on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Betsy-Tacy-Convention-2022-147727871980388>

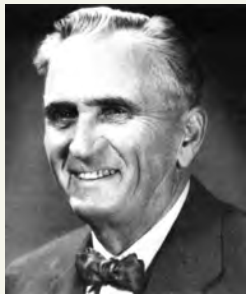
Carney and the Great Universe

By Jennifer Davis-Kay, with guidance from Lona Falenczykowski

Who was Harrison Schmitt, and what is his connection to our favorite eyeglasses-wearing Lovelace heroine?

There are three Harrison Schmitts, and each was or is exceptional in his own way—but only one of them was taught to dance by Carney!

Harrison Lincoln Schmitt, born in 1866, was one of the most eminent figures in the southern Minnesota Bar. He grew up in Mankato, graduated from Mankato High School, and taught for several years in Blue Earth County. After graduating from Northwestern Law School in Chicago, he opened a successful law practice in Mankato in 1893—what is now the Farrish Johnson Law Office. In 1894, Harrison married Esther Grannis, and they had five children. A distinguished lawyer, he served as president of the Minnesota Bar Association in 1914 and handled numerous cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals. He died in 1921 and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery.



Harrison L.'s son, Harrison Ashley Schmitt, was born in 1895. Harrison A. was a mining geologist; his pioneering work in mineral exploration led to an impressive string of successful mining developments, including the Christmas, Esperanza, and Peach Mines of Arizona and Battle Mountain in Nevada. His consulting services were in great demand by many large corporations in the industry, and his papers on the use of systemic geological techniques in ore search were considered to be foremost in the field. He married Ethel Hagan in 1929, and they had two children. In 1962, Dr. Schmitt was named "The Man of American Mining" by the Mining World. He died in 1966.

That brings us to Harrison "Jack" Hagan Schmitt, the third Harrison Schmitt in our story. After graduating from Harvard University with a doctorate in geology, Harrison H. was hired by NASA in 1965 to examine the lunar soil and rock samples the astronauts brought back from their missions. In 1971, he was part of a group of scientist-astronauts—the first group not to be test pilots—chosen for the crew of Apollo 17, the last of the Apollo missions. Dr. Schmitt was the second-to-last man to walk on the moon. In the early 1980s, he became a U.S. Senator for New Mexico. Dr. Schmitt is the author of *Return to the Moon*, which makes the case for establishing human outposts on the moon—an issue dear to his heart.

If you've done the math, you've probably figured out that Harrison #2, the geologist, was the lucky dance pupil. But it's likely that reading about Harrison #3, the astronaut, triggered Marnie Willard Everett's memory—"Why, I knew someone with that name!"—and she immediately wrote to that Harrison to inquire. Jack's mom, Ethel, answered Marnie's letter on September 8, 1973:

Dear Mrs. Everett:

Your letter of September 1 to one Harrison Schmitt came yesterday. Since you were not sure to whom you were writing, I'll try to bring you up to date.

Of this Schmitt family there is only one Harrison now. He is my son, the astronaut, who has an apartment at Houston, Texas. He spends much time away from there. He spoke at Golden, Colo., last night and goes from there to Pasadena, Calif., where he will be with scientists at Caltech for a week.

Harrison Lincoln Schmitt was a lawyer at Mankato at the time you chaperoned Helen, Margaret and K. Wise. He was the father of Harrison Ashley (my late husband) and Helen. My son is Harrison Hagan (my maiden name). He is not married. I do what I can to help him—like answering your letter. I hope you saw his article in the last National Geographic and the insert. He is No. 20 in that picture.



My husband died of a first heart attack October 26, 1966. He had an outstanding career as a mining geologist. He was listed in American Men of Science, among other things; was an author for World Book; discovered several mines; [and] was internationally known, having worked in many foreign countries. One company for which he was consultant set up a \$50,000 memorial fund at the University of Arizona in his honor. We had four children: Alexandra (Sandra, now Decker—they have two teenage daughters); Harrison H.; Paula (died at 15 months); and Armena (now Franks).

Sincerely,

Ethel H. Schmitt

Though Marnie was recovering from a stroke, she couldn't wait to tell her dear friend Maud all about this amazing connection! (Note that Marnie calls her "Maude" with an "e"—and signs her letter with her own name *and* her alter ego's!)

Dear Maude:

I wrote to Harrison Schmitt saying I had taught Harrison Schmitt to dance in the rec room of the Episcopal Church² in Mankato at the corner of Broad and Warren after I had graduated from Vassar in 1914 and wondered if he was the one or a son or grandfather of the astronaut. I mentioned Helen and Margaret Schmitt and K. Wise as being of the group I chaperoned, and this was the reply. I thought you would be interested especially if you read the National Geographic. (I can't even hit the right notes with one finger.) You do not need to return as I have no place to file. I thought you would be interested in Tib's³ reply.

The leaves are beginning to turn, especially the sumac. I am going out with Polly to see the new I. D. S. Skyscraper,⁴ Bill does not want to take me. We are going to see Polly's farm and to Northfield next week with our regular driver. Esther and I are both so incapacitated we can't stay over night. I am walking with a crab cane only if I have someone with me. Only the therapist thinks I could do it alone. I do not want to risk another broken bone. The yard out of my window is a sea of mud. I love your letters.

With love,

Marnie or Carney

Flash-forward to 2006: Lona Falencykowski's brother attends Harrison H's book-signing and has a copy inscribed for his geology and rock-loving sister. Some years later, Lona is going through the papers from Maud's and Merian's estates and finds these letters. She never dreamed that this treasured gift from her brother was a link all the way back to Carney Sibley!

And in one last bit of small-world news: Dan Bellig, a lawyer at the Farrish Johnson Law Office founded by Harrison #1, was the prom date of Emily Falencykowski-Scott! We can only imagine what Carney would have thought of their dancing.



¹ "Summing Up Mankind's Greatest Adventure," *National Geographic Magazine*, September 1973.

² The original St. John's Episcopal church, at the corner of Broad and Warren Streets, was built in 1867. It was rebuilt in 1923 following a fire, and then razed in 1966. The new church built in the same location still stands today. (Source: *Discover Deep Valley* by Julie Schrader.)

³ Marnie's second brother, "Jerry" in the books, was nicknamed "Tib" in real life. (Source: *Future in a Handbasket* by Amy Dolnick Rechner.)

⁴ At 792 feet, the IDS Center at 80 South 8th Street in Minneapolis is the tallest building in the state. It was constructed in 1973.

A “Horseless Carriage” Returns to Deep Valley: Lincoln Park Resident Acquires REO Convertible

By Penny Banwart

Readers of *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown* will recall how the walk downtown, which was most often “uneventful” for Betsy, Tacy, and Tib, becomes unexpectedly exciting when the girls exit Cook’s Bookstore one nice afternoon. After purchasing a nickel’s worth of jaw-breakers at Schulte’s Grocery Store, their destination is the bookstore, where they buy a copy of *Lady Audley’s Secret* for Rena, the Hart family’s hired girl. Upon leaving the store, they see that a crowd is gathering in Front Street, and they encounter their classmate Winona Root on her bicycle. They ask her what’s going on, and Winona gives them a teasing smile.

“Don’t you wish you did know?”

“Of course. Please tell us, Winona.”

Winona stopped pedaling. She rested on long legs.

“Well,” she said, drawing out the suspense. “It came this noon but he’s just got it to going.”

“Who is ‘he’ and what is ‘it’?”

“He is Mr. Poppy who owns the Melbourne Hotel and runs the Opera House. It is down by the Opera House now.”

“But what is ‘it’? Winona Root, you tell us. You might as well! We’ll follow the crowd and find out.”

“All right,” said Winona, not wanting to be cheated of the pleasure of delivering the news. “It’s a horseless carriage.”



A horseless carriage, indeed, and it was one of the first automobiles—though not the very first—in Mankato, Minnesota. The REO automobile referenced in Chapter 2 of *Downtown* was owned by Clarence Saulpaugh, proprietor of the Saulpaugh Hotel. The fictional hotel was the Melbourne Hotel and its owner Mr. Melbourne Poppy.



The REO Motor Car Company was established in 1905 by Ransom E. Olds, who began manufacturing the Oldsmobile in 1897. The company was based in Lansing, Michigan, and produced both automobiles and trucks. By 1907 it was one of the four wealthiest auto manufacturers in the United States. But in 1908, due to increasing competition from Ford and General Motors, its share of the auto industry greatly decreased, and eventually the company manufactured only buses.

In “Deep Valley,” the REO distributor was G.A. Lewis, who owned the Minneopa Garage. Lewis sold both REO cars and REO Speed Wagon vehicles from his business, which was

prominently located at the corner of Cherry and 2nd Street. This two-story brick structure, an important landmark in downtown Mankato, later became the Sears Farm Store and now houses a furniture store.

For decades there were no REO automobiles in Mankato, but that was going to change, due to a series of behind-the-scenes events. In the early '70s, an REO club member in Bangor, Maine, discovered a 1934 REO convertible that had been stored in a barn outside of Clark, New Jersey. The '34 REO Flying Cloud convertible (with a rumble seat!) was one of only 51 manufactured, and the new owner had



it completely restored. Harley Goff, Mankato resident and longtime automobile enthusiast and collector of old cars, heard about this vehicle and its restoration—and in 2019, when the car was finally put up for sale, Harley and wife Janet promptly flew to Bangor, where Harley negotiated a purchase price. The REO was then transported to Mankato by an independent hauler. Forty-six years after learning of its existence, the Goffs were now the proud owners of a shiny light-green 1934 REO convertible!

Harley and Janet have long been part of the Lincoln Park neighborhood. They currently reside on East Pleasant Street (which Maud called “School Street”), only a couple of blocks from the Betsy and Tacy Houses, which is their second home in this neighborhood. In fact, Janet grew up on the same block as Tacy’s home, on Byron Street. Both Janet and her mother, Inella Burns, participated in the festivities at Lincoln School in 1961, when Maud Hart Lovelace returned to her beloved Deep Valley, and Mankato celebrated Betsy-Tacy Days. In fact, Janet was one of the children chosen to dress as Betsy, Tacy, and Tib. As Janet has red hair, she, of course, portrayed Tacy.

When the weather is nice, with no rain in sight, residents of the Lincoln Park neighborhood are often treated to the sight of Harley driving his beautiful REO automobile down their streets. This historic neighborhood, once considered the “silk stocking” district of Mankato, is the perfect home for this elegant and venerable vehicle.



PENNY BANWART, former BTS president, serves on the BTS Advisory Council. A retired Mankato High School German teacher, she now teaches German to her own granddaughter – *eine Arbeit der Liebe!*

Virtual Walking Tours of Deep Valley: A Chat with Amber Massaglia and Shandy Wussow

by Jennifer Davis-Kay

Meet Amber and Shandy—best friends, young moms, BTS Board members, and residents of Betsy’s Hill Street neighborhood. During a lively Zoom conversation with me, they lamented all the fun, cool things they’d had planned for this fall, as members of the BTS Program and Events subcommittee, before COVID hit.

“We were at a loss,” says Shandy, “with our plans at a standstill—and then we came up with this idea.” Using “Discover Deep Valley: Visit the Betsy-Tacy Places in Mankato,” a map created by Julie Schrader and designed by Barbara Bjelland, the friends decided to offer virtual tours of all the beloved sites that people can’t visit right now. “We thought this would be a great way to engage fans and bring them to the special places in the books,” says Amber.



The friends quickly fell into their natural roles. Amber is the researcher; she likes facts, and she does her homework. She drew on three books to offer deep background for the tours: *Discover Deep Valley* and *Maud Hart Lovelace’s Deep Valley* by Julie Schrader and *The Betsy-Tacy Companion* by Sharla Scannell Whalen. “And,” she adds, “of course Lona [Falencykowski], our source for all things Betsy-Tacy!” Shandy describes her role as providing “the fluff”; she likes to extemporize about the neighborhood and talk about why she loves it so much. “I try to personalize the tour,” she says, “and imagine what might capture people’s hearts.”

Both women enjoy sharing the history of their neighborhood and talking with people who have anything to do with the houses. “The houses are so important in the books,” says Amber. “Betsy loved her house.” So far they have toured the general neighborhood, they’ve been inside Alice’s house and Judge Hodges–E. Lloyd Harrington’s house (though the characters are not related in the books, Maud based them on a real-life father and son), and they’ve explored the outside of Winona II’s house. Coming up: a tour of Dorothy’s house and a walk through Tib’s basement! (One of the current owners of Tib’s house, Jameel Haque, is also a new BTS Board member.)

The current homeowners have been receptive and gracious. Charlie Hurd, who owns Alice’s house, knows all of its history; he proudly showed off the working stove in his kitchen from the 1920s. The women had only planned to film the outside of E. Lloyd’s house at 104 Parsons Street, but they caught Barry Koskovich (a founding BTS member) working in his yard, and he invited them in. Barry has lived in the house for 40 years and has meticulously restored it himself; Amber and Shandy oohed and aahed over the hand-built furniture and bookshelves—and a grand piano! Barry’s daughter commented that she was never allowed to leave her bed unmade because her dad would say, “You never know who’s going to come over and want a tour”—“and here we came!” says Shandy. (This house recently went on the market; we discussed buying it and turning it into a Betsy-Tacy Airbnb. Such a fun idea!!)

I ask Amber for the technical details of how she makes the videos, and she laughs, saying, “I record everything on my phone until it dies.”

The women are overjoyed at the response to their videos. Says Amber, “When we went live on Facebook for the first tour, there were some 40 people watching with us. That’s *incredible* for our little grassroots book community! And as we go from house to house, we’re seeing ‘Hi from Canada!’ ‘Hi from Texas!’” “From Missouri, Florida, Rhode Island!” Shandy chimes in. And then they start giggling as they remember their “stalker.” “This guy on a bike is right behind us for the whole tour, and at first we’re like, Why is this guy following us??” Shandy remembers. “Come to find out, *he’s watching the*

live broadcast on Facebook and he's following our tour—from a safe distance, of course. He was so excited to be part of it!" Amber says that she's especially amazed by the number of men who are responding during the videos.

"We were only going to do three tours, that was the plan," says Amber. But the response has been so enthusiastic—"I've always wanted to go there! This is my lifelong dream!"—and people are now requesting different places (the cemetery! Minneopa Falls!), so the friends are planning many more videos. "This can be endless!" says Shandy.

It's a labor of love for both women. The weather has been beautiful, and they're happy to do something together, reconnect during COVID, and spend time outdoors. "This is the perfect antidote to a really rough day," says Amber. "Being in nature, walking for one or two hours, talking about things that we care deeply about—our troubles just melt away. Betsy-Tacy is a better stress-reliever than yoga!" Shandy says that she grew up on Betsy-Tacy and now finds it so special to have it "right in my own backyard." "We just love our neighborhood so much," says Amber.

I ask them to tell me more about their own houses, and both women start laughing again. "Do you have three hours?" says Amber. Each knew that they wanted a historic home; they love that older architecture and having a strong sense of the past. "We want to bring the past into the present and give it the recognition and respect it deserves," says Shandy. She adds that there is something especially wonderful about homes that have stood the test of time; they're over a century old, and nothing can break them down—not weather, not illness, not rambunctious kids. These houses survived the 1918 flu pandemic, they survived polio, and they will survive the current pandemic. "And this helps us see what we can overcome, too," says Shandy. "Nothing will huff and puff and blow these houses down!"

Virtually visit Deep Valley!

- Amber and Shandy's tours are posted on Facebook; go to <https://www.facebook.com/betsytacy>, and click on Videos.
- *Discover Deep Valley* and *Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley* by Julie Schrader are both available for purchase from the BTS Gift Shop.

Betsy-Tacy Trivia Quiz

- Betsy met Joe:
A: in the Butternut Center general store
B: on a farm C: in a restaurant D: in the park
- "Baby Bee" died in 1898 of:
A: pneumonia B: scarlet fever
C: diphtheria D: spinal meningitis
- Flossie Macbeth, who danced with Eleanor Wood and Kathleen Hart, became a nationally known:
A: actress B: author
C: opera singer D: radio personality
- When they wrote their letter to the King of Spain, Betsy, Tacy, and Tib were:
A: 14 B: 12 C: 10 D: 8
- The Carnegie Library opened its door in:
A: 1900 B: 1902 C: 1903 D: 1910
- Tib moved to Milwaukee in grade:
A: 8 B: 6 C: 5 D: 7
- Betsy began piano lessons in grade:
A: 9 B: 10 C: 11 D: 12
- The first Lovelace book illustrated by Vera Neville was:
A: *Heaven to Betsy* B: *Downtown*
C: *Betsy Was a Junior* D: *Over the Big Hill*
- The tree used by Betsy as her "office" was:
A: an oak B: a maple C: a hickory D: an elm
- Kibbeh, made by Naifi's grandmother, was a food made from:
A: beef B: pork C: lamb D: eggplant

Answers can be found on page 13.

Read-Aloud Project (cont.)

with reading throughout their lives. When I was little, my teachers helped me read by cutting a hole in a notecard so I would only see one word at a time. This allowed me to break up the words so I could read them. By the time I was in high school, I was placed in Advanced English because of my writing ability. But although my writing was strong, I was still a slow reader and didn't comprehend what I was actually reading. I was incredibly intimidated by my classmates and quickly got behind on writing assignments. Frankly, I almost didn't get to graduate. Today I am still a slow reader and have a difficult time retaining the information I read.

The Betsy-Tacy Society was founded on this empowering book series and our desire to promote the love of reading literature. People of all reading abilities deserve to know the wonderful stories of Maud Hart Lovelace! I remembered all those times my grandma read *Betsy-Tacy* to me and all the times I read *Betsy-Tacy* to my very own daughter. I thought that reading the first book out loud as part of the Betsy-Tacy Society would be a way to bring Maud's stories to a new generation and to present them in a new way to those who have already read them. Also, reading the books out loud would raise awareness of struggling readers and allow them to easily experience the adventures of Betsy and Tacy. Thus, my idea for the Betsy-Tacy Read Aloud was formed.

My plan was to record different readers reading chapters of *Betsy-Tacy*, upload them to YouTube, and share them on our various social media sites. It seemed simple . . . but I had no idea what I had gotten myself into. I had to find 14 people to read and perform during a pandemic! We ended up with a strong line-up of Betsy-Tacy Society Board members and supporters, Advisory Council members, and Deep Valley natives. Some videos I recorded myself from a safe social distance, and other folks recorded and uploaded the videos themselves. Sometimes we fought the sound of wind and loud vehicles. We fought technology and editing. But Shelby Hart came to the rescue! Our Minnesota State University–Mankato intern quite literally saved the Read Aloud. She edited each chapter with such beautiful detail, down to including Maud's favorite flower: forget-me-nots. Shelby added illustrations and the cute videos before and after each chapter, and she pieced together each chapter. Her work was remarkable, and the Read Aloud simply would not exist without her.

We have had such a positive response to the Betsy-Tacy Read Aloud—many “likes” and wonderfully supportive comments. Our Facebook post for Chapter 1 alone has reached 966 people thus far! One person thanked us for bringing awareness to reading disabilities and dyslexia. Others have thanked us for making the books available in audio! Here's a comment that made us all teary-eyed:

I love that you are doing this! My daughter has dyslexia and other learning differences that make reading a struggle for her. I often would read books aloud with her when she was younger. It was such a joy when we read the Betsy books together and she fell in love with them just as I had when I was a girl. Thank you for spreading awareness and understanding!

All of this reinforces the need for a Read Aloud and why it was born. People with disabilities such as dyslexia are highly intelligent, and they find other ways to learn and get by in a world filled with required reading. Betsy's character teaches us struggling readers that there is more than one way to tell a story. You don't have to be good at reading and writing. Betsy makes up a lot of oral stories. She reminds us that we are intelligent and that our unwritten stories are just as valid. We feel empowered by Betsy as she shares her stories!

Please share the Read Aloud with others as we prepare a new, young, and growing audience of Betsy-Tacy followers. Together, we can help all people enjoy the magic of Maud Hart Lovelace's beloved series. Check out the Betsy-Tacy Society's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube pages for more information on the Betsy-Tacy Read Aloud.

AMBER MASSAGLIA is the BTS Secretary and has been reading Betsy-Tacy books to both of her children since they were born.

Kathryn Hanson (cont.)

As their children grew a bit older, Kathryn began subbing in the Mankato School District and was soon asked by her principal to take a full-time job teaching English. Her decades-long career as an English teacher thus began. After many years of teaching, Kathryn retired from Mankato East High School.

Kathryn was an active member of the Mankato Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). As president of the organization, she hosted a meeting in her home in May of 1961, where someone suggested inviting Maud Hart Lovelace back to her hometown in October of that year. The idea was enthusiastically accepted. Mankato mayor Rex Hill officially proclaimed “Betsy-Tacy Days,” scheduled for October 6–7, 1961, and the AAUW planned a schedule of events. Maud, of Claremont, California, Frances “Bick” Kenney Kirch (Tacy) of Buffalo, New York, and Marjorie “Midge” Gerlach Harris (Tib) of Chicago all agreed to attend. Activities included a talk by Maud at Lincoln School, talks with autograph sessions for children at the library, foot tours of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, a special exhibit at the Blue Earth Country Historical Society, and three sets of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib reenactors. As president of the AAUW, Kathryn was closely involved with the festivities. Remembering that weekend, Kathryn shares that Maud was “very gracious and not difficult to visit with.”

Almost 30 years later, in April of 1990, a few local women—including Kathryn Hanson—gathered together to establish the Betsy-Tacy Society. Their goals were to promote awareness of the Lovelace books, bring all her books into publication, and preserve and protect the homes of Betsy and Tacy. With the strong leadership of Kathryn and other founding members, they accomplished their goals. Kathryn looks back fondly at those days, stating, “Those were happy days, and we kept the interest in the books [alive].”

The Betsy-Tacy Society purchased the childhood homes of both Betsy and Tacy and, with the help of *Hometime* (a syndicated home improvement program on PBS), restored them and opened the homes to the public. By 2008, Betsy-Tacy fans were offered guided tours on Saturdays from April through December and could schedule special tours throughout the year. For over a decade, Kathryn was one of the organization’s most valued tour guides. Many on her tours were delighted to learn that she had met Maud, as well as Midge and Bick, and Kathryn was able to share many details about these ladies as she led her tours. Kathryn gave her last tour in 2019, at age 92!

All involved in any way with the Betsy-Tacy Society thank Kathryn for her dedicated service as a volunteer and for sharing her wealth of information about all things “Betsy and Tacy” with our guests.

Betsy and Tacy Get New Coats

The Betsy-Tacy Society received a grant from the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation to repair and paint the exterior of the Betsy and Tacy Houses. We received several work quotes, and painting contractor Tim Davidson was awarded the contract.

Tim carefully removed the old paint from the cedar lap siding, which is over 130 years old. He replaced deteriorated wood, repaired window sashes, and primed and painted Betsy’s House. She now stands proudly at the base of the Big Hill, dressed in a coat of sunny yellow with crisp white trim.

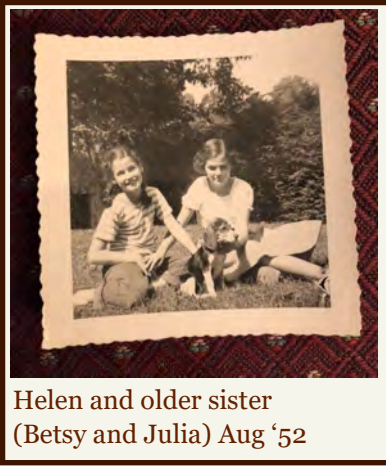
The Tacy House walls needed attention on the north side. Tim scraped and painted the northern exterior and fixed the waned siding and sashes. He carefully blended the paint to touch up other areas that needed refreshing.

Chris High of Northern Comfort Inc. donated a custom-made chimney cover for Tacy’s chimney; BTS Restoration Committee member Doug Laven then installed the cover and tucked the brick joints. Tacy’s House now beams brightly and is ready to welcome guests and fans from near and far.

The BTS is grateful to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation for making this restoration possible. Thank you to the supporters, who stopped daily to view the progress; thank you to our volunteers, who graciously climbed down from their chimney work to talk to visitors; and thank you to the Betsy-Tacy Society Board for their teamwork.

Getting to Know Betsy and Tacy

By Helen Gift



Helen and older sister
(Betsy and Julia) Aug '52

I was in the second grade in 1950 in a public school in the Appalachian Mountains. I was a good reader, having the advantage of being a third child in a family that read together. For years, I had been sitting on the couch listening to *The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew*, *Heidi*, *The Boxcar Children*, and other books of interest being read out loud to my big brother and sister. If just my mother and I were there, we often read picture books from the library together, and she had started me on my own with chapter books such as *The Bobbsey Twins*. Our class was taken to the school library regularly. On one visit, the librarian suggested that I take *Betsy-Tacy* home to read. It was love at first read, and from then on every year I read a new one. I went back and read the ones that followed it (*Downtown* was the only one I owned originally, autographed “to Helen”). In terms of availability, there was a gap before reading the books about Betsy in high school and as a young woman. I remember how excited I was when I found that they existed,

but my devotion has always been to the pre-high school books.

What was the attraction? I lived on a dead-end street next door to Jane (we have been friends since I was born, one month after her). The driveway between us had far more traffic from feet running back and forth than from cars. I had a big sister. There were girls and boys of all ages in the neighborhood, and other houses on the street where we visited non-parental adults. At the end of the street, we had a big hill that was essentially pasture. There was a rough path through a yard at the end of the street, and we went up to pick blackberries, explore and play, sit in our “secret place,” and look over the other side into town. There was a small Syrian population in town. Of course, activities changed depending on our age or who went on a particular adventure, as was the case in the Betsy-Tacy stories.

The attractions to these books come from similarities of experience and the amazing storytelling with upgrades in reading level reflecting maturation of the characters and the readers. More than anything, we owe the spread of these books beyond Minnesota to the foresight of leaders who found it important to get the books into school libraries. I hope in this day and age that the books are available on audio and as e-books.

Meet Our Interns

The BTS is excited to announce that we have partnered with MSU Mankato on a fall semester internship program. Board member Amber Massaglia has long hoped to attract college students as interns, particularly in the areas of grant-writing and fundraising, both of which seem a good fit for history students. New Board member Jameel Haque is on the faculty at MSU, and he knows that the history department is always looking for internship opportunities for the students. Voila! Enter Shelby Hart and Kyle Handke, MSU students pursuing history degrees with an eye to public history (e.g., museums, archives).

Kyle will be with the BTS for 130 hours this semester. He is working with Lona Falenczykowski on a new project: cataloguing a large donation of items gifted to the BTS for fundraising, which involves a fair amount of research and creativity on his part.

Shelby will be with us 30 hours this semester. She has developed a comprehensive social media plan for the BTS and is editing all the videos for the Betsy-Tacy Read-Aloud; Amber says that Shelby’s assistance with this project has been invaluable.

Lona notes that both interns are “incredible”: “They are very enthusiastic and are doing such a great job!”

Jameel reports that MSU is very happy with this placement and the interns’ work. He believes that the BTS can continue this relationship in the spring semester. Amber is already busy making a spring task list!

Introducing a New Advisory Council Member and a New Newsletter

I'm Jennifer Davis-Kay, but you may know me from your email Inbox as E-Blast@Betsy-TacySociety.org. I'm one of the newest BTS Advisory Council members and also the editor of the quarterly E-Blast. It is such a joy to be able to contribute my time and talent to this organization I love so much!

I can't even remember when I first read *Betsy-Tacy*, but I well remember my childhood library in Chico, California. Like Betsy Ray and her Carnegie Library, I climbed many steps to get to the front door, and it felt like entering a sacred space. My library had every Betsy-Tacy book except *Heaven* and *Junior*, and for years I puzzled over the strange gap between *Downtown* and *Betsy in Spite of Herself*—where was Tib?? what had happened to Betsy's braids and Tacy's ringlets, and who were these tall willowy young ladies?? How wonderful it was to finally find the "missing" books and fill in those gaps! In fact, *Junior* became my favorite Betsy book; *Heaven* answered all of my questions, but *Junior* was simply so. much. fun.

Sure, Okto Delta turned out to be a bad, bad idea—but wouldn't you have loved to attend one of those meetings? Betsy's minutes are an uproarious delight to read, and I've used her as a model for my own minutes-taking (like Betsy, I'm frequently drawn to the Secretary role in any organization, and I go wild at the sight of a pencil. And also at the sight of Joe Willard, but that's a topic for another article).

This past year, my love of Betsy-Tacy and my love of writing came together when I approached the BTS Board with an idea: Would they be open to a new newsletter, a brief and jazzy companion to the *Deep Valley Sun*, designed to foster member engagement? They said an enthusiastic yes, and my baby E-Blast was born!

I've produced two issues now, and it's been quite a learning experience. Technology is to me as sewing was to Betsy (perhaps I should title the E-Blast "The Knotted and Blood-Stained Jabot"?), and the glitches are frustrating—not every BTS member received the June or September issue. I promise I'm working on it! Mailchimp (the program I'm using) is still pretty new to me. If your membership is up to date but the E-Blast wasn't emailed to you, please let me know.

I'm now busily at work on the December issue. Do you have an idea for an article or want to contribute a piece? Write to me! The more voices I can include that aren't mine, the better—that's my personal watchword. I'm at E-Blast@Betsy-TacySociety.org, and I'll be so happy to hear from you!



JENNIFER DAVIS-KAY lives in Arlington, Massachusetts, with her amiable husband and two impeccably raised children. She is a cross between Carney and Julia (both practical and dramatic) and loves playing Betsy-Tacy games with her chums via Zoom.

Answers to Betsy-Tacy Trivia Quiz on page 9:

1 **A**, 2 **D**, 3 **C**, 4 **C**, 5 **C**, 6 **A**, 7 **C**, 8 **A**, 9 **B**, 10 **A**

Gift Shop Items

Our website offers many wonderful holiday presents for Betsy-Tacy fans of all ages!
Happy shopping, and happiest of holidays!

Adorn your Christmas tree with **Betsy's House and Tacy's House ornaments**, made of brass and finished in 24-karat gold (\$18 each).



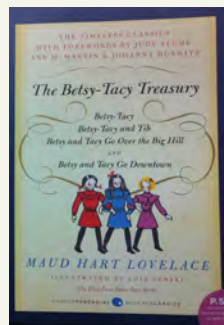
Stocking stuffers include **magnets** (\$1), **Maud signature pens** (\$5), **pencils** (\$1), **postcards** (\$1), **sticky notes** (\$1.50), **bookmarks** (\$2.95), and **note pads** (\$2.75).



This might be the perfect time to introduce a new reader to the series:

Betsy-Tacy (\$6.99)

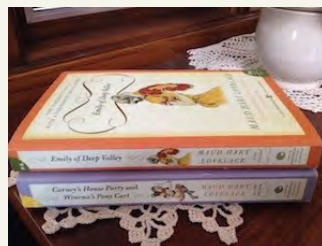
The Betsy-Tacy Treasury, the first four BT books in one volume (\$15.99)



Complete sets are available for purchase:

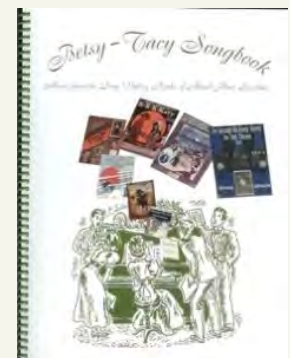
Betsy-Tacy book set (\$64.96)

Deep Valley book set (\$29.98)



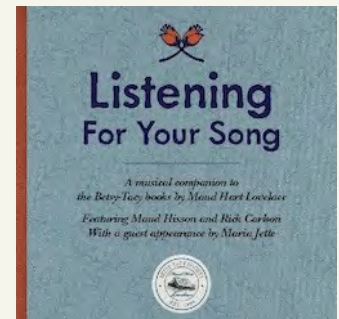
For music lovers we have a song book and two CDs of the music from the series

Betsy-Tacy Songbook (\$25) contains sheet music for 40 songs from our beloved series.



Maud's Music of Deep Valley contains 22 songs performed by pianist Craig Timmerman (\$15).

Listening for Your Song contains 20 songs presented by the singer Maud Hixson (\$15).



* Tax, shipping, and handling for these items is extra. Shipping is \$5 + \$1 for each item after the first.

Loss of a Supporter

The Betsy-Tacy Society is saddened to announce the death of Karl Reuter, husband of our founding member Kelly Dethloff Reuter, to whom he was married for 44 years. Karl, along with Kelly's three children and her parents, was always there to lend Kelly a helping hand with all of the unforgettable events she designed and so beautifully decorated for the Betsy-Tacy Society Conventions that were held from 1992 through 2002. In recent years Kelly has encountered some health challenges, and we know she would appreciate hearing from anyone who would like to reach out to her during this sad time.

Please send cards and letters to:

Kelly Reuter
P.O. Box 31
Amboy, MN 56010



Matilda's Coffee Cake

As seen in *Beyond Domestic Science: Recipes from Betsy-Tacy* (for sale on our website)

“Have some coffee cake at least,” said Mrs. Muller.

—*Betsy-Tacy and Tib*

Ingredients:

- 1½ cakes yeast
- 1 tablespoon and 1 cup sugar, divided
- 1 cup milk, scalded and cooled to lukewarm
- 3 cups flour, sifted
- ½ cup butter
- 1½ cups mixed fruit (citron, raisins and currants in equal parts), lightly floured
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs, well-beaten



Mix yeast and 1 tablespoon sugar into lukewarm milk; add 1½ cups of flour and beat well.

Cover and set aside to rise in a warm spot for about an hour. Cream butter and 1 cup sugar. Add to dough. Add floured mixed fruit. Add enough

remaining flour to make a batter.

Add salt and eggs. Beat for 10 minutes, pour into buttered molds. Fill about half full.

Cover, let rise until molds are nearly full.

Bake in a moderate oven [350– 375°].

One cake will take about an hour to bake, two smaller cakes, 45 minutes.

Contact us:

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The Betsy-Tacy Society

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Find us online:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/betsytacy

Twitter: twitter.com/TacyBetsy

Instagram: www.instagram.com/betsy_tacy

Additional resources:

Maud-L (the Betsy-Tacy E-List):

<https://groups.io/g/Maud-L/join>

Maud-L on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/146486702094218

Betsy-Tacy fans on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/groups/betsytacy

