

DEEP VALLEY SUN

Vol. 13, Issue 2

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

Happy 30th Birthday, Betsy-Tacy Society!

Thirty years ago, a group of Mankato women met at the Blue Earth County Library to establish what became the Betsy-Tacy Society (BTS). Founding members included Doris Berger, the first BTS president; Kelly Reuter, Lona Falenczykowski; Kathryn Hanson; and Shirley Lieske, Blue Earth County librarian, who served as BTS treasurer. The goals of the newly founded Society included:

- Promote the publication of out-of-print Maud Hart Lovelace books
- Plan membership drives and fund-raising events
- Have an annual Betsy-Tacy celebration

From the first BTS newsletter (August 1990):

The *Betsy-Tacy Society* will sponsor a Golden Anniversary celebration of the publication of *Betsy-Tacy*. The Society will hold an old-time ice cream social from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, August 26, 1990, in Lincoln Park [that "pie-shaped wedge"!] in the heart of Betsy-Tacy territory. We will have entertainment, give tours, and play games of the era. We encourage you to wear costumes! (cont. on page 10)



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Thirty Years Later

By Emily Falenczykowski-Scott

This year I am 37, almost as old as my mother, Lona Falenczykowski, was when she and several Mankato women met in the Blue Earth County Library and founded a society dedicated to preserving the literary heritage of local author Maud Hart Lovelace, the Betsy-Tacy Society.

Most of these early founding members had children or grandchildren, who they raised on a steady diet of novels like the Betsy-Tacy series, the Little House books, and *Anne of Green Gables*. The Betsy-Tacy series, however, was going out of print in 1990. Interest was waning. The house now known as "Tacy's house" had been subdivided into several Section 8-eligible apartments, and in "Betsy's house" the owner had glued particle board siding in the rear bedroom, and installed swinging parlor doors.

During the 1970s, Mankato, like many other small cities, strove to be what was considered "progressive" at the time. Front Street was closed off to traffic and enclosed, thereby creating a "mall." The integrity of downtown Mankato was destroyed. A historic landmark, the Saulpaugh Hotel, fell victim to this urban renewal project, being destroyed in 1974 and replaced with a Holiday Inn. Little was left of Maud's Mankato. My mother and her friends wanted to preserve what was left. (cont. on page 13)

Message from the President

Wow, what a change of events since we last talked. Who could have predicted that a pandemic would keep us sheltered in our homes and the Betsy-Tacy homes and tours closed to the public?

Our hope is that you are all safe and healthy and finding ways to stay connected with family and friends. I am working from home and finding time to curl up on the couch in the warm sun of the bay window and re-read the Betsy-Tacy books—fun!

While our doors are closed our online shopping is available at betsy-tacysociety.org and we are promoting a new cookbook, "Beyond Domestic Science: Recipes from Betsy-Tacy." What better time than now to try new recipes, pass along cooking skills to your family and fill the kitchen with the same wonderful aromas of Betsy's kitchen long ago.

The BTS Board has been meeting through Zoom and working on plans to revamp the BTS Gift Shop and re-paint the houses. We continue to find ways to cut expenses and use social media to connect with our fans and generous supporters.

We are grateful to you all and hope you will visit just as soon as it is safe to open our doors.

Sincerely,

Candy Laven

BTS Interim President



A Message from the Treasurer

COVID-19 has been hard on small businesses and individuals. In April the Betsy-Tacy Society made the difficult decision to close its doors and cancel events until further notice. The Betsy-Tacy Society board members, volunteers, and employee, look forward to seeing your faces again in Mankato when it is safe to open the houses and resume our schedule of events. Until then, your donations sustain our heritage and preservation work.

Consider adding us as a beneficiary to your will. In doing so, you help us support preserving the works of Maud and enable us to keep the Betsy and Tacy houses open for fans to enjoy. In addition we have an ongoing Paver Fundraiser for the walkway at Betsy's house. Please donate or shop the Betsy-Tacy Society store,

<https://www.betsy-tacysociety.org/shop/>

Sincerely,

Emily Falenczykowski-Scott

BTS Treasurer

BTS Board Members (as of May 2020)

Candy Laven, President

Lona Falenczykowski, Vice President

Emily Falenczykowski-Scott, Treasurer

Amber Massaglia, Secretary

Elizabeth (Libby) Abdo

Sarah Tetzloff

Shandy Weimert

Advisory Board

Penny Banwart

Michele Blake

Michelle May

From the Director's Desk

Hello, members! As I sit at my desk, by Tacy's bedroom window, it is easy to forget what is happening in the world right now. I still see the neighbors walking their dogs, and the trees and flowers looking ready for summer. What reminds me that things are not normal for this time of year is knowing that I would usually be scheduling guides and shop staff for our open hours, events, and private tours. I miss our loyal fans, and volunteers!

It has been unfortunate that we had to close the Betsy-Tacy Houses during this pandemic, but I promise we will not be closed forever! We have still been busy fundraising and maintaining our membership base. As we wait for the world to get to a place where we can safely open our doors to you again, I hope you will take this time to re-read the Betsy-Tacy books or Maud's other books. If you would like a recommendation, I hope you will not hesitate to reach out to us at the contact details provided below!

Sincerely,
Executive Director
Sarah Urban

Contact us:

Address: Betsy-Tacy Society
P.O. Box 94
Mankato, MN 56002

Phone: (507) 345-9777
Email: BTSMankato@gmail.com
Website: www.Betsy-TacySociety.org

Please find us on:

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:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/146486702094218>

Betsy-Tacy fans on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/betsytacy>



We love our volunteers and could not operate the BTS without them. Though we are closed now, there will soon be much to do! 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.

Please consider becoming a volunteer with the Betsy-Tacy Society. It is a wonderful opportunity to give back to your community and to support the legacy of Maud Hart Lovelace.

Information About 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>

Inspiration From Our Grandparents: Remembering Solomon Palmer & Winnebago City

By Susan Hynes



I live in Mankato, Minnesota at the great bend of the Minnesota River. I am lucky to be able to regularly walk the same streets that Maud Hart Lovelace did growing up here over 100 years ago. Like Maud, I love this river valley town and its surrounding green hills. Many of my friends have lived in the fine old homes that were occupied in real life by the people who inspired characters in the Betsy-Tacy books. I grew up in Winnebago, Minnesota, the town that Maud's grandparents moved to after the Civil War. Rather late in life, I became an amateur historian. The more we

study history, the more we discover connections between people, places and events from the past. Inspiration often comes with such discoveries.

The walk downtown was uneventful. . . as uneventful as a walk could be. It always seemed important to go beyond Lincoln Park, that pie-shaped wedge of lawn with an elm tree and a fountain on it, which marked the end of the neighborhood. . . Ahead stretched Broad Street where fine houses sat on wide, tree-shaded streets. *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown*

The original fountain in Lincoln Park, topped by a bronze statue representing a Union infantry soldier, was dedicated in 1893 when Maud was a year old. That statue and fountain fell into disrepair and were entirely removed by 1927. The grand old elm tree, believed to be over 300 years old, fell victim to Dutch Elm disease and was removed in 1980. The Betsy-Tacy Society planted a disease-resistant elm in its place in April of 1992 to celebrate Maud's 100th birthday. In 2011, a small group of dedicated citizens assembled, determined to reconstruct the statue, its pedestal, and the fountain pool. This effort was completed over a period of four years, and on May 30, 2015 a re-dedication ceremony was held at the Boy in Blue Memorial in Lincoln Park. Preceding the ceremony was a grand parade of Civil War Union Soldier re-enactors, veterans, and ladies of the Daughters of the American Revolution, who marched from the Betsy-Tacy houses to Lincoln Park, led by a Civil War fife and drum corps.

Maud Hart Lovelace's grandfather, Solomon B. Palmer, was a school teacher before serving in the Civil War as a private in Company L, 13th Indiana Cavalry. He is among those commemorated on engraved paver stones surrounding the Boy in Blue memorial.



Mrs. Ray recalled that her father had fought in the Civil War. And Betsy told a story her grandmother had told her. "They were living in Indiana, in a log cabin. Grandpa was teaching school. Lincoln had called for volunteers, but Grandma didn't want Grandpa to enlist. Uncle Keith was only a baby. You weren't born yet, Mamma. One afternoon she saw him coming through the cornfield—tall and thin and red-headed, she said. And he was carrying all the school books in a pile, with the school bell sitting on top. The minute Grandma saw it she knew what had happened, and she began to cry." "But she was proud of him, she said," Betsy added. *Betsy's Wedding*

Maud's grandfather Solomon, was likely the inspiration for one of the immortal trio's misadventures chronicled in *Betsy-Tacy and Tib*. "That spring Tacy had diphtheria. Betsy and Tacy and Tib had always thought that Spring was the nicest part of the year; but it wasn't much fun that year; it wasn't much fun without Tacy." After Tacy came out of quarantine the girls decided they certainly ought to have something to remember each other by. "My Grandma's got something to remember my Grandpa by," said Betsy. "What's she got?" asked Tacy. "It's a piece of hair," said Betsy. "It was cut off his head,

Solomon Palmer

and she wears it in a locket.” Fans will remember this as the beginning of the hair cutting incident when the girls were eight.

During the Civil War, Solomon wrote this in a letter to his wife Albertine, August 16, 1864, from camp overlooking Huntsville, Alabama: “You sent me a hair flower some time ago—and I told you about it. I cannot send you any of my hair now for it is too short. I had it shingled before you wrote for it, but when it is grown out enough you shall have a wisp of it, to kill rats with.”

On December 12, 1864 during a skirmish with a company of rebels at Eddyville, Tennessee, Solomon suffered a gunshot wound that caused him to lose the first three fingers of his left hand. Solomon felt that his greatest loss to that war was that never more could he play the violin. He also contracted tuberculosis during the war, but survived to be honorably discharged in May of 1865. His coughing grew worse all the time, and it was decided in 1870 that he should set out for a new utopia, Minnesota, which was said to be good for consumptives. He had to go ahead of his wife and children. It was wretched for them to have to face another separation. Along the way, he suffered a lung hemorrhage and was cared for by the Odd Fellows, a lodge to which he belonged.

Later that year his wife, Albertine Crocker Palmer, and their two red-headed children, Frank (inspiration for Uncle Keith in the books) and Stella (Maud’s mother and inspiration for Betsy’s irrepressible mother, Mrs. Ray), joined him in my hometown, Winnebago (called Winnebago City at the time) some 35 miles south of Mankato. Growing up in Winnebago, I heard stories from my own grandmother, Mary, of a fort that once stood there and of my great-grandmother, Louisa, and great-grandfather, John (also a Union Calvary veteran), moving to Winnebago City in 1875.

As a child, I often wondered what first brought my ancestors to a place with such cold winters. I now know it was the rich black soil of this fertile land. Summers are warm and, despite a short growing season, crops grow quickly and flourish. I also learned that many Civil War soldiers had succumbed to illnesses like yellow fever, typhoid, malaria, and dysentery in the sweltering summers of the south.

Before leaving Indiana to join her husband in Minnesota, Albertine Palmer learned to be a milliner. She wrote this to Solomon in 1870:

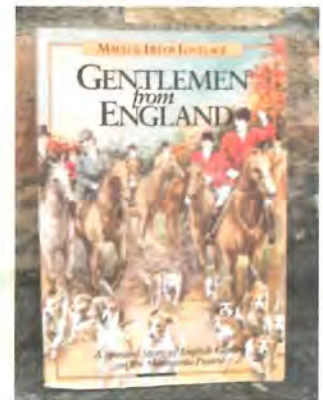
Oh Solomon, I have a nice chance to learn the milliners’ trade. Mrs. Hartman in Tell City has agreed to learn [sic] me very cheap. She is a first class milliner. She said that in 8 days she can learn [sic] me so I can go ahead all by myself. . . She said there was a great deal of money to be made at it, which I already know.

This trade would serve Albertine very well.

Maud remembered her mother, Stella, telling colorful stories about her girlhood years in Winnebago City. Maud wrote this in a 1964 letter:

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 she continued to live in Winnebago City with her children, Frank and Stella.

It was from her mother, Stella, that Maud got the inspiration for the novel *Gentlemen from England*, which she co-authored with her husband Delos in 1937. As Mankato became “Deep Valley,” Winnebago City became “Sisseton City,” and Fairmont became “Rainbow.” (cont. on page 7)



My Lifelong Love Affair with Betsy and Maud

By Kathy Baxter

Betsy Ray stole my heart when I was just a kid. I lived on a farm a few miles from town, which happened to be about to become a famous town: Walnut Grove, Minnesota. My dad was a farmer who had asked a new teacher in town out, and several months later married her—my mom. They both liked to read, a lot, thank heaven. The first thick book I owned was *On the Banks of Plum Creek* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. It had recently had a second edition published, which had illustrations by Garth Williams, who had come to Walnut Grove to see what it and the land where Laura lived looked like. He really got it right. I loved the book, and I also loved the Bobbsey Twins series, but not as much.



My mom had gone to college in Mankato, and we went there a few times, but not often, because it was 85 miles to Mankato. While visiting the Tracy Public Library, 7 miles from Walnut Grove, which did not have a library, Mom pulled a book by an author who had lived in Mankato, she told me, and I checked it out. Lived in Mankato? Now that just did not seem likely.

But I checked it out and took it home, and thus began one of the biggest love affairs of my life. What I wish I had remembered is which book it was. I did remember the name of the author, Maud Hart Lovelace. And the next time we went to Tracy, which was relatively often, I checked out another book by Mrs. Lovelace. I read them, and then I reread them. It never stopped at twice.

I started hinting that a good birthday or Christmas present would be at least one of the Betsy-Tacy books. It worked. I had almost all of them by the time I got out of high school, although *Carney's House Party* was missing in my collection. It was out of print and seemed unobtainable! Mercifully, I was strong enough to resist the terrible temptation to steal the Tracy library copy. I LOVED Carney Sibley! I wished I could belong to a Crowd. Maybe Walnut Grove was too small for Crowds. My best friend liked the books too, but not nearly as much as I.

Finding another big fan took a while. I went to college in Saint Paul, and wonder of wonders, I met a girl in my class named Gretchen, and SHE loved the books too! At some point, we decided to go to Mankato and find the REAL homes of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib. Two other classmates joined us, and we took the Greyhound bus to Mankato, and started finding places! The first place we found was the Carnegie Library! We started researching, librarians helped us, and it did not take long for us to get a map of the city, and addresses of the houses of the main characters in the books. And then we started walking.

I was absolutely stunned to stare at the Kelly house, the Hill Street House, Carney's House, Tib's house, Cab's house, and more. We found the Melborne Hotel, now renamed. We even saw the outside of the High School House. It was a gloriously happy day!



When we returned to Saint Paul, our friends were impressed. We had had such a glorious time that we made a vow to do it again the next year, and we did. We wrote Mrs. Lovelace (for me, it was not the first time; I cherished the letter I had received from her when I was a kid).

Mrs. Lovelace was clearly so pleased that we had undertaken a pilgrimage to her childhood homes. Whenever I think about this experience, I am always wowed that she was as excited as she appeared to be in the letters I had.

Of course, we met Cab and Carney in their homes the second time we went to Mankato. We met Jean, too, and she gave us a

Lifelong Love Affair

ride back to the bus depot. I do not think I would have been more excited to meet Queen Elizabeth II, another longtime idol. I never did get to meet the real Betsy, Tacy, and Tib. None lived anywhere near me, but I DID drive by Tacy's house in Buffalo, New York once!

I have not recovered from falling in love with a great author, the one whose books I loved the most. I loved a lot of books, but Maud Hart Lovelace was at the top of them all, in my opinion. She was the writer who gave me an almost infinite amount of joy, and ultimately led me to many new friends, who are as eager as I to sing her praises.

KATHY BAXTER is a retired educator and children's librarian, whose enthusiasm for all things Betsy-Tacy is infectious. She has championed Maud Hart Lovelace and her work, far and wide, introducing countless children and adults to the world of Deep Valley. Her college pilgrimage to Mankato has been immortalized in her book *My Betsy-Tacy Miracle*, which is available from the BTS gift shop.

Solomon Palmer

(cont.)

More from Maud's 1964 letter:

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.

Maud shared an account of her trip to Minnesota, during which she conducted research for *Gentlemen from England* :

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 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.

Solomon Palmer was 36 years old when he died in 1875 of tuberculosis. The Odd Fellows Lodge was in charge of the funeral, and he was recognized as a Civil War veteran. His grave is at Hillside Cemetery, just north of Winnebago on Highway 169. It is marked with a very simple stone, inscribed with the name "Palmer."

I like to imagine my great-grandmother possibly stepping into Albertine's shop, or attending church services with her at the Methodist Episcopal Church. I'll never know if either of these things really happened. We do know that because Solomon Palmer found his way to Winnebago City, Minnesota his great grand-daughter, Maud, would grow up in the river valley town of Mankato and go on to leave us with these beloved tales of family values and life-long friends.

SUSAN HYNES is a Betsy-Tacy volunteer, and a well-known historian and re-enactor in southern Minnesota. She has a collection of beautiful costumes, many of which she made herself. Susan spends countless hours volunteering for the Blue Earth County Historical Society, and is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She resides in Mankato.

Aunt Zue, an Anti-Vaxxer?

By Penny Banwart



Zula R. Hart
"Class of 1893"
Mankato Normal School

During this COVID-19 pandemic, which we are all experiencing, we are hoping for the rapid development of a vaccine that will end this crisis and enable us to return to the lives we once had.

In recent years here in Minnesota, there has been an outbreak of measles. This disease, once nearly eradicated in North America, has surfaced again, largely due to those who have been labeled "anti-vaxxers," as they refuse to have their children vaccinated, believing that vaccinations can cause harm.

Maud Hart Lovelace left notes about her family, which she probably wrote in the early 1940's. Among them is a short narrative about her colorful "Aunt Zue," who might be labeled an "anti-vaxxer."

Tom Hart, Maud's father, was born to James Adolphus Hart and Arosamond Price Hart, on November 19, 1863, in northeast Iowa, near Decorah. He was the fourth of eleven children. His sister, Ursula Arosamond Hart, was born six years later, on May 18, 1869. She was the seventh child born to the Harts, and was one of eight daughters.

Ursula called herself "Zula" or "Zue Rosamond," and she moved to Mankato, Minnesota, where she was admitted to the Mankato Normal School in September of 1889. She graduated with a degree in elementary teaching on May 31, 1893, and soon thereafter entered the University of Chicago, which at the time was known for its "Oriental Studies" program. Perhaps a course she studied at this university

piqued her interest in travel and in Asia, and she eventually taught about twelve years abroad.

Her "wanderlust" led her to many places far from northeast Iowa. Among countries she visited were Germany, France, Spain, Russia, Japan, the Philippines, India, and China. In China, cities in which she lived, taught and/or visited included Bangkok, Singapore, and Shanghai.

Around 1909, "Aunt Zue" returned to the United States, where she studied for advanced degrees at both the Colorado Teachers' College in Greeley, Colorado, and at the University of California, Berkeley.

In June of 1912, she returned to China to teach. Maud recalls her aunt as being "very stubborn, like me." Before she left for China she refused to be vaccinated for smallpox, which at the time was apparently not required. The following January she became ill with smallpox. She was sick for only four days and realized that she was dying. She requested that

Silver cup inscribed, "Presented to Miss Z. Rosamond Hart—by the Teachers in the Kindergarten—Taining Bangalore—April 1908." Miss Hart was Thomas Hart's Sister.



Silver cup inscribed "Presented to Miss Z. Rosamond Hart—by the Teachers in the Kindergarten—Taining Bangalore—April 1908" Miss Hart was Thomas Hart's sister.

Aunt Zue

(cont.)

she be cremated, as was Maud many years later, and have her ashes scattered on the ocean. Her request was not honored, however, and her ashes were returned to Winnishiek County, Iowa, where they were buried near the small church founded there by her mother.

A letter, dated February 10, 1913, South Gate, Shanghai, was written to Zue's younger brother Stephen Hart by her supervising colleague Mary E. Cogdal. In the letter she asks what should be done with Miss Hart's possessions, which consisted of a "large trunk, a steamer trunk, a suit case, and a shallow wooden box of school charts." She went on to describe in detail the funeral service that was held for Zue Hart, calling it "impressive." Wreaths of white flowers, violets, and maidenhair fern were brought by several who knew her best. Even though Zue Hart taught for only four months at the school in South Gate, Shanghai, she apparently touched the hearts of her students there. Cogdal continued, writing "Even the boys wept when told that of all the people Hart had taught, she loved the Chinese best, and had come back to China because she desired to help the Chinese in their effort for better things."

Miss Hart had shared with Cogdal her love of her brothers and sisters, and their children back in Iowa, and showed her photos she had of her family members. In ending her letter to Stephen Hart she added "In that last talk with me she sent messages of love to all, but most specially (sic) to you."

Sources:

Maud's notes on family; MHL Archives

Mary E. Cogdal letter to Stephen Hart; MHL Archives



Maud's, Minnesota 1850's
 Top row Thomas Hart
 Eva Hart - Miss Unice
 2nd row Mary Hart - Doll Casey
 Flora Hart - Nancy Bander
 Rhoda Hart - Charles Anthony
 Zue Hart
 Minnie Agnes Hart - Charles Garrison
 Missing - Stephen Hart
 Emma Hart - Ruben Leebutt
 Edna Hart - combination 2 9 10
 baby died when her mother died.

We couldn't have done it without you...

To all the Betsy-Tacy Society members, donors, and volunteers over the last 30 years, we couldn't have done it without you. When we as a society look back at our accomplishments, the biggest contributing factor has been your good will and enthusiasm, your support—both financial and emotional, and your friendship.

The Betsy-Tacy series, above all, is a series about friendships. So many friendships have been made during the events of the last 30 years, and so many more friendships will come in the next 30 years. The Betsy-Tacy Society board thanks all of our friends both near and far, and looks forward to the 30 years to come.

Happy 30th Birthday (cont.)

Charter member Doris Berger shares what she remembers of that time:

I don't think I read a Betsy-Tacy story or knew about Maud Hart Lovelace, until my daughters went to the Mankato Library and Shirley Lieske introduced them to the series. On Maud's birthday, Shirley would take flowers out to Glenwood Cemetery to put on Maud's grave. One year I said, "Is that all we are ever going to do for our hometown author?" That started [local people] doing more—going to Lincoln Park, and then giving tours of homes in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. We found others who were great Maud Hart Lovelace fans . . . and so the Society grew!

Lona Falencykowski remembers:

What were we thinking??! We were such a small group. Some of us knew more about Maud and the books than the others, but really we weren't expecting much. We just thought it would be nice to get all the books back in print and to visit the different houses in the neighborhood.

In its first two years, BTS membership was under 200 and predominantly based in Minnesota. This changed dramatically in the summer of 1992, when *Victoria* magazine included the upcoming Betsy-Tacy Convention in their "Events" column—and the floodgates opened! A letter from BTS Corresponding Secretary Michele Franck Blake appeared in the December 1992 issue of *Victoria*:

We were thrilled by the phenomenal response to the piece in July "Events" about the Betsy-Tacy Convention. Membership in the Betsy-Tacy Society has tripled in the last several months. It is heartwarming to know there are so many Maud Hart Lovelace fans still keeping her spirit and memory glowing. Our organization will soon have to give up our unofficial motto of "I thought I was the only one!" Thanks in no small part to *Victoria*, we now know that isn't true.

Keeping the books in print

In the early days of the Society, keeping the books consistently available was an ongoing challenge. The second BTS newsletter included a cry for help!

Word has come from Merian Lovelace Kirchner that the situation is now critical at Harper and Row. Betsy-Tacy hardcover books are going out of print, one right after the other, and some are not even available in paperback! It is time for us to start a letter-writing campaign to save these treasures for ourselves and for generations to come.



The campaign was successful, and HarperCollins reissued the first four Betsy-Tacy titles in 1993 under the leadership of Ginee Seo (whom Merian described as "a delightful person and a real fan"). While the Lois Lenski illustrations were retained inside the books, the publisher chose a new artist to do the covers. As one might expect, the devoted legion of fans had "thoughts" about this. The minutes from the Fall 1994 BTS Board meeting stated the situation very diplomatically:

There was discussion on the reaction to the new cover artwork on the books. Most people have a very strong opinion about it, but we are all very happy to have the books in print again.

HarperCollins reissued the series again in 2000, including the three Deep Valley books, and once again with new covers (the "keyhole covers"). In 2009, HarperCollins editor and devoted fan Jennifer

Happy 30th Birthday

Hart had the books designated as Harper Perennial Modern Classics, and the entire series was reprinted with the original covers restored. The books have been continuously in print ever since.

The Society also continued to promote Maud's non-Betsy-Tacy writings. *Gentleman from England* and *Early Candlelight* were reissued by the Minnesota Historical Society, and *The Black Angels, One Stayed at Welcome*, and *The Tune Is In the Tree* were reissued by Minnesota Heritage Publishing, which also published *The Collected Stories of Maud Hart Lovelace and Delos Lovelace, Volumes One and Two*. All are currently available from the BTS Gift Shop or their publishers.

And in related book news, the Winter 1994–1995 BTS newsletter joyfully announced the publication of *The Betsy-Tacy Companion* by BTS charter member Sharla Scannell Whalen!

Betsy-Tacy Conventions

From its earliest days, the Society planned to commemorate Maud Hart Lovelace's 100th birthday with a Convention held in Mankato, featuring "workshops, the cuisine of the era, history of the era, costumes, and crafts." The first Convention was held in July 1992, with Maud's daughter, Merian Lovelace Kirchner, as the guest of honor. More than 350 attendees participated in a variety of activities, including a Trivia Bee, an excursion to Murmuring Lake, a display of vintage fashions, and a "Tasting Tea" of foods mentioned in the series (including fudge, English Monkey, and Lady Baltimore Cake! Alas, no onion sandwiches).

Subsequent Conventions hosted by the Society took place in 1995, 1997 (with Maud's editor, Elizabeth Riley, giving the keynote address), and 2002. After the 2002 Convention, the BTS Board decided that producing an event of this size and scale was more than they were able to take on, and at that point volunteers stepped in. Volunteer-coordinated Conventions were held in 2009, 2012, and 2018.



Becoming real estate moguls

The front page story of the Spring/Summer 1995 newsletter was headed with a large bold banner crying, "STOP THE PRESSES! LATE-BREAKING NEWS!"

On May 1, 1995, Lona Falencykowski, President of the Betsy-Tacy Society, announced that a bid submitted by the Society for the purchase of the property at 332 Center Street, Mankato, Minnesota [aka Tacy's House!], was accepted.

The BTS purchased Tacy's House for \$39,000. The house, built in 1881, continues to serve as the Society's headquarters and gift shop. (cont. on page 12)

Happy 30th Birthday

(cont.)

And that wasn't the group's final foray into the world of real estate. The 2000–2001 newsletter included a note from President Lona:

I hope I am not putting the cart before my pony here, but the Betsy-Tacy Society is in the process of writing up a purchase agreement for Maud's House at 333 Center Street, better known as Betsy's Hill Street house! The late owner's family supports our effort to preserve this historical landmark. The fact that we are in a position to consider this purchase is due to our members' steadfast support of the BTS. Words cannot adequately express our gratitude to all of you.

Betsy's childhood home was purchased for \$60,000 by the Society in 2001. However, the 1892 structure needed a great deal of renovation. The house was renovated by the BTS board, carpenter Denny Weis, many volunteers, with the assistance of the Minnesota-based PBS show *Hometime* crew, under the leadership of Dean Johnson. Once the important foundational and exterior work was completed (including a new roof and furnace, chimney removal, and window repair), it was time for "beautification"—decorating and furnishing it to look like the home Betsy grew up in. All told, renovations to Betsy's House took more than a decade (and still continue!).

Penny Banwart served as BTS President during "the restoration years," which she remembers well:

We were, in every sense of the word, a working Board. We donned our construction masks (probably N95s!!) and work clothes, and worked alongside the *Hometime* crew. It was a challenging time, but we actually had fun and forged long-lasting friendships.

Penny was also determined that the BTS would pay off the mortgages on the two houses, and she had a brainstorm: the BTS should have a "Burn the Mortgage" fundraiser! Anyone who donated \$100 or more would have their name added to a special plaque, to be unveiled at the mortgage-burning party and thereafter on permanent display at Betsy's house. And it worked! In 2009, the BTS announced that both mortgages were paid off. Says Penny:

We did actually burn the mortgage (at least, several pages of it) at a public event on Tacy's lawn. Much credit goes to all the loyal fans who sent us donations. Things were so much easier financially after we had no mortgage hanging over our heads!

The very next year, both Houses were designated as National Landmarks by the Association of Libraries, Trustees, Advocates, Friends, and Foundations. Says Lona, "None of this could have been done without all the supporters and volunteers over 30 years. We are so grateful to everyone who supported or volunteered with us, through donations or their time."

The newsletter

A key factor uniting the geographically scattered fans was the BTS newsletter, which grew in both size and scope under editor Patty Warhol and graphic designer Marney Wilde. From Summer 1993 through Winter 1999, this team produced *The Betsy-Tacy Society Note Book*, a quarterly 30–40-page journal. Their immense contributions were highlighted in Journal #28:

[Patty and Marney] took a newsletter and truly made it a Journal. Their last issue was their crowning achievement, beautifully designed, lovingly edited, and creatively assembled. Maud Hart Lovelace would have been so pleased with and proud of their work.



Happy 30th Birthday

In 2000, Lona reached out to local historian Julie Schrader, asking if the BTS could include photos from Julie's book *The Heritage of Blue Earth County* on the cover of the newsletter ("And by the way, have you read the Betsy-Tacy books?"). Fast-forward to 2005, when Julie took on the role of Director/Newsletter Editor, a position she held for five years. Under Julie's leadership, the BTS published a more streamlined (and also more frequent) newsletter, titled *The Deep Valley Sun*.

The Betsy-Tacy Society today

Thirty years later, the Society continues to evolve. While the group is still solidly Mankato-based, it has an increasingly global reach through its well-trafficked website and use of social media. The Board comprises a mix of several generations—former presidents Penny and Lona are again members, while Lona's daughter, Emily Falencykowski-Scott, a professional accountant, serves as Board Treasurer, and two young moms, Amber Massaglia (Secretary) and Shandy Weimert (Board member), bring a new energy to planning events their children can attend to promote local interest in Maud Hart Lovelace. Says Lona, "These girls who were just young things when we started—now they have kids of their own, and they're turning them on to the books."

Remembering the women who started it all

Doris Berger served as BTS President through 1992, at which point Lona took on the role. Lona served several terms as President over the past 30 years and remains an active BTS Board member and volunteer. Kelly Reuter served as Recording Secretary until 1996 and then continued on the Board for another 12 years. Sadly, Shirley Lieske, so instrumental in organizing the Society and promoting the books in her role as community librarian, died in 2006.



For all of us who thought we were "the only one," the gratitude we owe these early visionaries is almost too vast to be expressed in words. We raise a glass (or, perhaps, a little glass pitcher!) to Doris, Lona, Kelly, and Shirley, as well to everyone who has ever served on the Board, made a donation, hammered a nail, shopped in the Gift Shop, or in any way helped to foster, and sustain our beloved organization. Happy 30th birthday, Betsy-Tacy Society! And our very best wishes on your next 30 years!

—by Jennifer Davis-Kay, with gratitude to Penny Banwart, Kathryn Hanson, Doris Berger, Michele Blake, Lona Falencykowski, and Emily Falencykowski-Scott for their contributions.

Thirty Years Later (cont.)

I don't remember much from this time. I was 7 years old. I occasionally had opportunities to play Betsy, or sometimes Tib, in local theater productions at the Carnegie Art Center (formerly the Carnegie Library) or at the Hubbard House—another heritage location in Mankato. I was a bit too extroverted to play Tacy.

Now I live in St. Paul. As an accountant, I've been able to use my skills as a steward of the financial assets of the Society, which includes, of course, both Betsy's childhood home, and Tacy's. The Society owns these restored houses mortgage-free, a testament to the stewardship of board members who came before me, over the last 30 years. I'm proud to be able to continue serving an organization that has been a part of my life from childhood to adulthood.

A Betsy-Tacy Cookbook and Recipe

BEYOND DOMESTIC SCIENCE: RECIPES FROM BETSY-TACY

COOKING AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY



Created by Colleen O'Neil and Melody Murray
Designed and Edited by Jennifer Davis-Kay
July 2018

In 2009, Colleen O'Neil and Radhika Breaden had an inspired idea: What if there were a Betsy-Tacy cookbook, comparable to *The Little House Cookbook*, with authentic circa-1900 recipes for every food mentioned in our beloved books, interspersed with personal essays from devoted fans of the series?

Their brainchild has come to fruition! ***Beyond Domestic Science: Recipes from Betsy-Tacy*** is now available for purchase. This 132-page book contains more than 200 recipes, tracked down and transcribed by Melody Murray. A variety of talented authors contributed original essays, and Jennifer Davis-Kay pulled it all together in an elegant and readable design, beautifully illustrated by Lois Lenski and Vera Neville, and peppered with quotes from vintage cookery books and Domestic Science texts.

It's all here: beef birds, meat pie, and onion sandwiches! Mrs. Ray's fried potatoes, and Mrs. Kelly's unfrosted cake! Spinat mit Ei! Rice pudding and lemon pie, as requested by Joe Willard! Emily mother's

frogs legs! *Fudge!!!* And should you want to make 20 Christmas cookies from one batter. . . well, we won't tell Anna, but you can find the recipe on page 36.

Chapters include "Home Cooking in Deep Valley," "Syrian Cooking," "Kitchen Help," "German Cooking," and "Domestic Science at the Turn of the Century." The final chapter is "Recipes from the Great World," including Betsy's favorite sweet on the S.S. Columbic: *Pouding à la St. Cloud*.

The book is spiral-bound with a clear plastic sheet over the front cover and a durable vinyl back cover. It may be purchased for \$19.95 (plus tax and shipping) from the BTS Gift Shop (<https://www.betsy-tacysociety.org/product/beyond-domestic-science-recipes-from-betsy-tacy/>).

Pouding à la St. Cloud

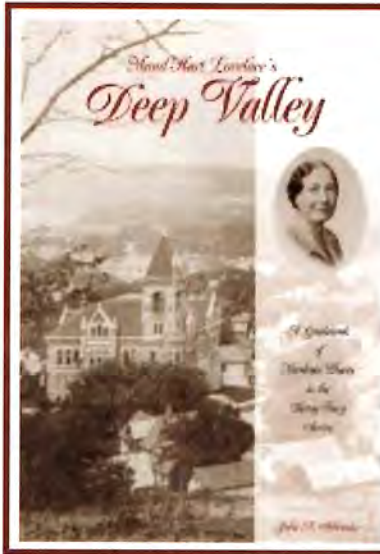
- 1 teaspoon and 1 cup flour, divided
- 1 teaspoon and ½ cup sugar, divided
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon lemon rind
- 4 tablespoons almonds
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 eggs
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 2 cup strong coffee
- 2 tablespoons whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons apricot jam
- 3 tablespoons water



Grease and dust 6-inch cake pan with 1 teaspoon flour and 1 teaspoon sugar. Sift 1 cup flour with salt. Beat eggs and sugar over a pan of hot water until thick and creamy. Fold flour mixture and lemon rind into the egg mixture. Pour into pan and bake 30 minutes in a moderate oven [350°–375°].

Chop almonds coarsely and bake in oven until light brown. Sprinkle lightly into a buttered soufflé dish. Crumble baked sponge cake over the browned almonds. In a separate bowl, beat eggs and sugar together and add warmed coffee. Add cream, and pour into soufflé dish. Cover with buttered paper and steam gently for 1½–2 hours. Cool slightly, then turn out and cool completely. Heat apricot jam and water, mix well, and then cool slightly. Drizzle over pudding. Decorate as desired with glacé cherries, candied angelica, and/or candied pineapple.

Gift Shop Items



***Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley* By Julie Schrader \$25**

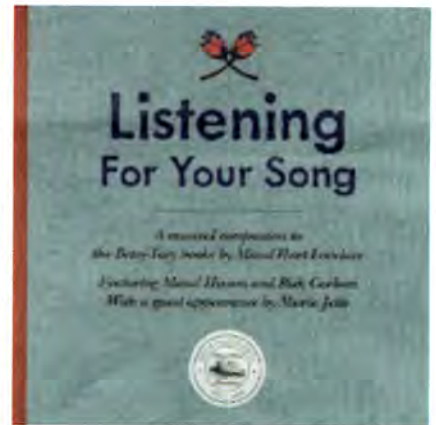
Step into the pages of Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley during the early 1900s. This book details the people and places Maud Hart Lovelace so accurately described when writing the Betsy-Tacy books. Filled with photographs of the real-life characters and places as they looked at the turn of the century as well as current photos. Quotes from the books correspond with each person or place along with a detailed history or biography. This book features 415 photographs and illustrations!

Julie Schrader is a long-time Mankato area resident, author, historian, and owner of Minnesota Heritage Publishing. She also authors the blog, *Betsy-Tacy's Deep Valley*. See more of her books in our online shop on our website.

***Listening for your Song* (CD) By Maud Hixson \$15**

This recording features 20 songs that were referred to in the Betsy-Tacy series, including early hits by Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, as well as The Cat Duet, which characters Betsy and Tacy performed at countless school recitals.

Song titles include: The Merry Widow Waltz, The Cat Duet, Dreaming, Everybody Works But Father, I'm Lonesome For You, In The Good Old Summertime, My Wild Irish Rose, I'm Afraid To Come Home In The Dark, In My Merry Oldsmobile, Same Old Story, Tonight Will Never Come Again, Moonlight Bay, Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay, Alexander's Ragtime Band, Come Josephine In My Flying Machine, Oh, You Beautiful Doll, It's A Long, Long Way To Tipperary, By The Beautiful Sea, You're Here And I'm Here, and There's A Long, Long Trail.



Now, that's an idea...

Here's an idea to accomplish three things in one fell swoop. The three things are: support the Betsy-Tacy Society; spread the Good Word(s) of Maud Hart Lovelace; and be a philanthropist in your own community. The idea is: visit our online gift shop and buy whichever Betsy-Tacy books you love best, and then scatter them like wildflower seeds — to your neighborhood Little Free Libraries, to your actual libraries, to your local women's shelters, to coffee shops, to schools. Know anyone teaching English across the ocean? Send them a book for their students to practice reading! Let us know if you have a great idea of your own!

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



A BETSY • TACY PICNIC



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