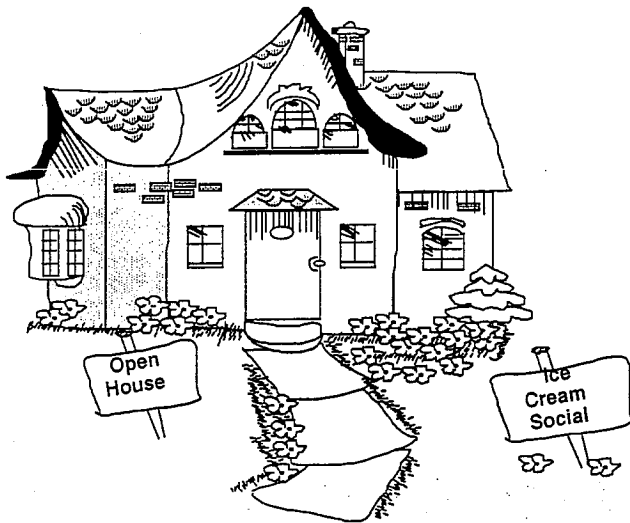




April 1998

Volume XVI

Number 1



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sunday
May 17th
1-4 p.m.

A Connection to the Past

Doug Ohman, acclaimed Minnesota photographer, will be our guest speaker presenting portraits of our Minnesota countryside churches. He has been preserving our country churches through photographic documentation and you will be able to see the results of his efforts in his slide presentation.

Please see attached flyer for more details.

The schedule is as follows:

- Open House and Ice Cream Social 1-4 p.m.
- Doug Ohman's Presentation 2 p.m.

So bring yourself and friends to see a bit of "Heaven on Earth"!



Mark Your Calendars

The Plymouth history Fest will be held on Saturday, August 8th at Parker Lake celebrating the addition of the Old (New) Log Cabin. The event will include:

- Melodrama
- Voyager Encampment
- 1858 Baseball Exhibition
- Antique Cars Show
- Log Cabin Trading Post
- Down on the Farm Petting Zoo
- Farmer's Market
- Plymouth Wood Carvers
- Plymouth Rockers
- Ice Cream Social
- Pig Roast
- Barber Shop Quartet
- Children's Games and Activities

Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Jim Garvey	559-3047
Vice President	Cork Ornborg	475-0930
Secretary	Mable Swanson	545-7705
Treasurer	Harvey Schiebe	545-6127

Meetings

The monthly meetings are normally held on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.



MAILING AND MEMBERSHIP LIST

Attention!! If you have not paid your 1998 membership dues, please send in the form or if you have any questions, please call Alberta Casey, 559-9366.

The annual dues are:

Individual	\$7.50
Family	\$12.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

Donations

The following articles have been donated recently to the Plymouth Historical Society.

<u>Article</u>	<u>Donated by</u>
Parkers Lake Log Cabin Pictures	Carol Creelman
Mary Schiebe & August Klix Pictures	Marilyn Anderson

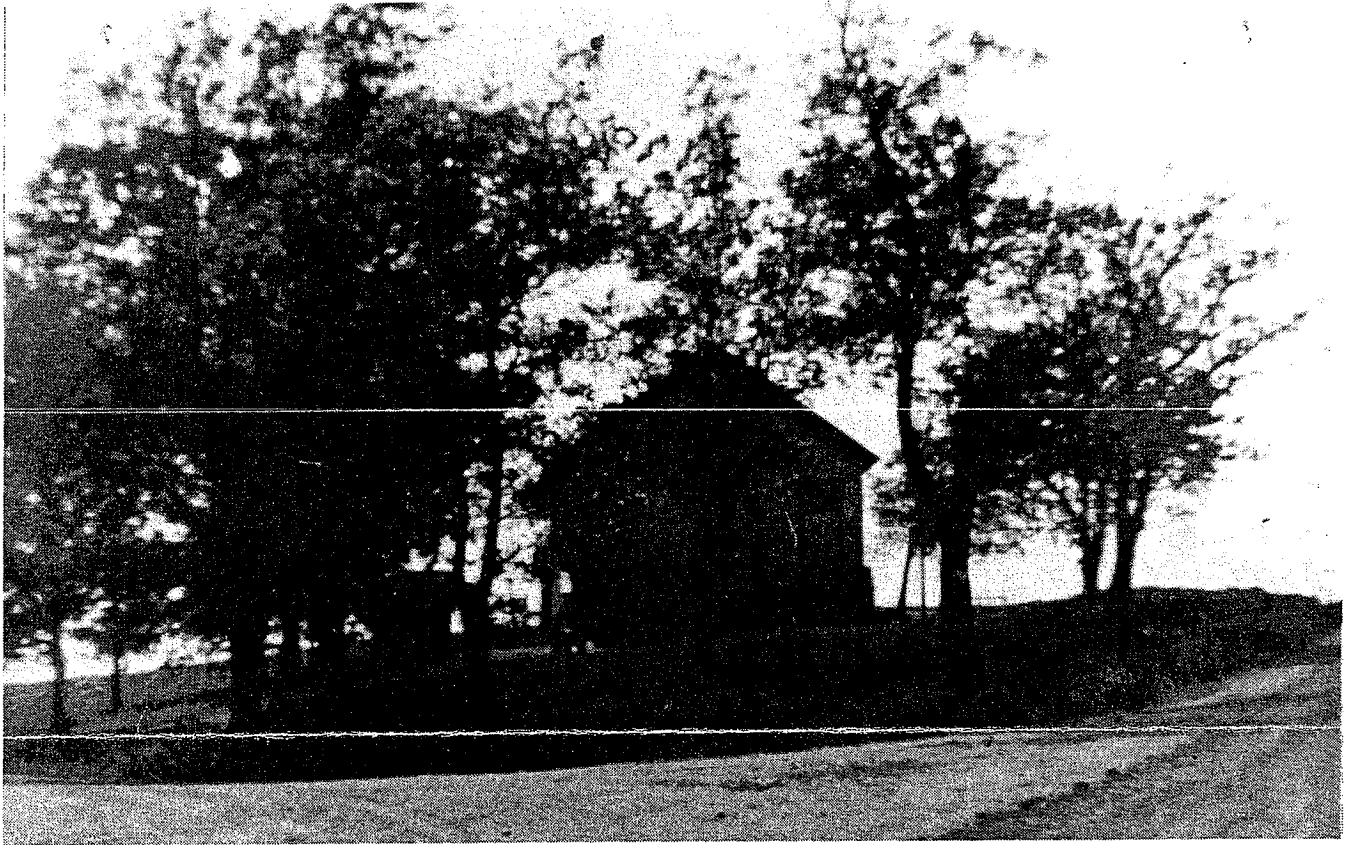
Board of Directors

The following is the present Board of Directors:

Name	Telephone	Term
Kay Bertrand	559-5042	1997-2000
Ben G. Broman	559-5721	1997-2000
Alberta Casey	559-9366	1996-1999
Carol Creelman	545-9698	1996-1999
Vern Dotseth	559-3777	1995-1998
Myrtle Eckes	545-6168	1996-1999
Jim Garvey	559-3047	1997-2000
Joe Morris	535-8756	1996-1999
Joyce McCaughey	557-6948	1996-1999
Cork Ornborg	475-0930	1997-2000
Vern Peterson	559-2317	1995-1998
Gary Schiebe	473-4889	1996-1999
Harvey Schiebe	545-6127	1996-1999
Margerite Schiebe	541-7187	1997-2000
Mable Swanson	545-7705	1997-2000

PLYMOUTH SCHOOLS

Plymouth's early schools were called by their district number such as District 48, 51, 95, 104, etc. The following is a picture of District 104 and a graduating class (date unknown). District 104 was located at the old intersection of County Road 24 and Medina Road at the intersection with Highway 55.



series of Beacon lights which were used to guide air planes to the Minneapolis (Wold Chamberlain) airport. "Heights" also seemed appropriate because the Beacon light tower located nearby was situated on a hill, which has the highest elevation in the area. "Beacon Hill", as it was called, is in the area of the present Plymouth Fire Station #1 and the NWB Telephone Microwave Radar Tower on County Road 6 and provided an opportunity to read the time on the Court House clock in Minneapolis (on a clear day).

District 95 started with a log building located about two blocks northeast of the present Beach Heights building. The log school was 14 to 16 feet square and housed 26 students who were taught the three R's by Miss Lorinda Shaw. Miss Shaw's salary was \$28 per month and the value of the building and land was set at \$200. This school offered instruction for the full elementary structure of Grades 1 through 8 and the students ranged in age from 5 to 19 years.

Our records do not include information about who built the log school, but they do tell us that supplies and furniture were scarce and primitive. The seats were wooden benches and the text books were limited to the bare essentials. There was no well and drinking water was carried from home. The students walked to school from their homes as far away as three miles. Some of the early family names include Bofferding, Cavanagh, Ernst, Taber, Glassing, Ryan, Shreks, Smith Fryer, Howe, Park, Mengelkoch, McGowen, Jondas, Day Eckes, Luby and Schiebe.

During the next 11 years, the school struggled to do its best to survive. Some students continued through 8th grade, others dropped out after completing the 3rd, 4th or 5th grade. The community was growing and many of the older children were needed at home to help clear land or harvest crops, plus the general attitude that if a boy or girl could read and write, there was little reason to waste more time going to school.

In 1869, Gertrude Howe was hired as a teacher. The school board consisted of Jacob Mengelkoch, Clements, Mengelkoch, Nicolas Bofferding and Jonas Howe. In 1869, Jacob Mengelkoch was awarded the fuel contract to supply dry oak wood, cut up to fit the stove for \$3.60 per cord. This was also the year that increased enrollment in school prompted the Board to consider expanding the size of the school building. During the next three years, the School Board met frequently to discuss the future needs of the school system. In 1872, the decision had been made to build a new school and to move to a more favorable location.



In 1872 Clements Mengelkoch was awarded a contract to build a new wood frame schoolhouse on the newly acquired location. The cost was not to exceed \$600. The location was approximately 100 feet east of where the present Beacon Heights School is now and the Board approved a bond issue of \$375 to insure the financing of the project. Other financial transactions during this period included the sale of books to the students for 11 cents for a first grade reader, and as much as 69 cents for higher grade books. The most expensive book was a geography book for \$1. The financial statement for 1869 showed a balance of \$19.53 after Miss Howe's salary of \$133 for four and one-half month's work was taken out. There were other miscellaneous expenses such as a broom for 35 cents, matches and dipper for 40 cents, lawyer fees \$5 and a payment on a note to Nicolas Bofferding for \$36.

1872 was a big year in the history of District 95. It meant getting a new building, which had desks, a well for water and blackboards. Clem Mengelkoch built the structure with the help of many neighbors and it was ready at the start of the school year starting in September. Miss Howe was still the teacher but she was going to get some help. Ella Parker was hired to help with the increased enrollment. The names of Scherer, Gates, Frost and others had been added to the list of permanent residents.

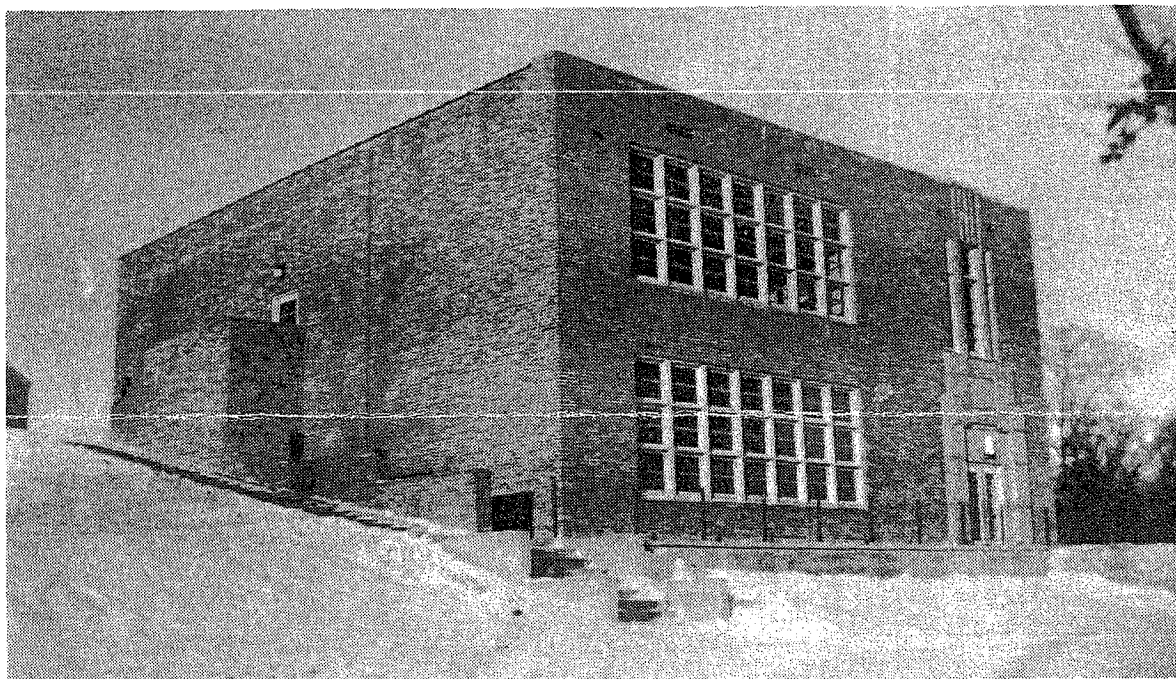
During the next several years, our records show that the following teachers were hired at District 95: Annie Moriarity, R. C. Knapp, Mary Jardine, Bridget McGowan, Adeline Jarvais, Ella Doyle and May McLean. This brings us up to the year 1921. The teacher's salary had increased to \$105 per month.

Primarily the teachers and students performed the janitorial work, however, major jobs like washing windows and scrubbing floors were done for extra pay by local help.

The 1920's were relatively stable years with Miss Margaret Cavanagh and Mr. Osterberg sharing teaching responsibilities. Mr. Osterberg was the first male teacher at District 95 according to our records. Tragedy struck the community in the Spring of 1924. Students, teachers and neighbors still vividly remember the instant death of Leo Cavanagh. The accident happened during lunch hour when Leo took his turn to slide down the schoolhouse hill and over the road at the bottom of the hill. He was on a homemade wooden sled and he hit the front wheel of a car that was traveling on the road. This is the only recorded fatal accident at the school during its 124-year history.

During the 1930's enrollment increased slowly and steadily until the need for additional space could no longer be ignored. In 1939, the Cavanagh brothers were awarded a contract to build a two-room brick school on the same location and adjacent to the wood structure, which had served the community needs since 1872. The 1939-1940 classes had the rare experience of spending part of the year in one schoolhouse and finishing the year in a different one.

The move was made during Christmas vacation and needless to say, everyone involved was delighted and enthusiastic. Ed and Art Schiebe removed the old wood building during the summer of 1940. Thus ending 82 years of history and memories of the one room school, which served so many so well.



The new school had two classrooms, a small auditorium and facilities for serving hot lunches. For the first time in the history of District 95, there was inside plumbing, including toilet facilities. The cost of the new structure was \$30,000 and enrollment at the time of occupancy was 58 students and two teachers – Mr. G. E. Osterberg and Miss Verdell Reilly. Grades 1 through 4 were the classes taught by Miss Reilly and Mr. Osterberg had Grades 5 through 8. Mrs. Frank Baumann was the first cook. School Board members included Steve Gates, Andrew Scherer and Albert Schiebe.

The 1940's were very active years in population growth and educational concept changes. The idea of separating the 7th and 8th grades from the elementary status and calling them Junior High students was gaining popularity and attending High School seemed like the thing to do. So many new problems became major issues. School enrollment was increasing at 15 to 25% each year and the space in the new building would soon be crowded.

In 1946, the Board of District 95 voted to dissolve the district and become part of Wayzata School District 284. Students could then remain in the same system from Kindergarten through grade 12; therefore, the existence of District 95 ended in 1946. From that time until the school closed in 1982, it was known as the "Beacon Heights School"

Continued population growth in the Plymouth area made it necessary to expand the school facilities once again, so in 1949, four more classrooms were added; two up and two down across the front of the existing building. In 1955, still another addition was made. It included seven classrooms and a library on the back of the building and a gymnasium and a kitchen on the west side of the building. This was the final addition and it brought the total number of classrooms to 14 and the teaching staff to 15. Total enrollment from 1955 through 1982 varied between 450 and 500 students in Grades K through 6. The Junior High and Senior High students were transported by bus to other locations within the Wayzata School System. Mrs. Julie Quady, Mr. Weeks and Mr. Benko served as Principals of Beacon Heights prior to its closing in 1982.

Heaven on Earth

Doug Ohman travels the back roads of Minnesota photographing rural churches

Of all the buildings in rural Minnesota, the church speaks to people more than any other building. Farms and barns are wonderful subjects to photograph, too, but they only speak to a particular family or two. The church speaks to generations of hundreds of families. ¶ Wonderful stories accompany almost every building I have photographed. I have had a lot of iced tea and chocolate chip cookies as I have visited with people. I'll just knock on the door at the farmhouse closest to the church, and once people know that I'm not there to sell them something the door is wide open. They tell me wonderful stories that will never be written in any history books: what happened after lightning struck the steeple and how they raised the money to rebuild, or why a certain ethnic group settled in that area. ¶ When I started photographing churches in the early 1980s, my wife would scan the horizon as we drove the back roads of Minnesota. But now I'm smarter. I got the plat maps for every county in Minnesota, and on them is a designator that indicates a church. Three years ago I plotted more than a thousand rural Minnesota churches on my road atlas. So now I can go to McLeod County and plan to hit that church and that church and this church. I have no idea before I get there what the church is going to look like. I'm usually pleasantly surprised. Most of the time, anyway. Sometimes I find that the churches are gone. ¶ I like to shoot in all seasons, all weather. There are a few weeks in mid March when it's real bleak. I do interiors then. Fall is a short season. I really watch the weather. The second week in October is about perfect in Minnesota. Winter can be great, too. The sky seems to be crisper in the winter. ¶ I'm a self-taught photographer. I read a lot and I ask a lot of questions.

I have a good relationship with some of the photo labs in town. They tell me what went wrong and what worked. ¶ Some of my photos are hanging in my office and people often say, "I know where that church is." They don't, but that's what I want my photos to do. They're supposed to evoke a memory of the trip to Grandma and Grandpa's farm: the white clapboard church with the black roof on a country road next to the cornfields. They make people think about the church picnics and the weddings and all the activity that used to surround many of these old churches. ¶ It's a fun hobby because it can be shared with other people.

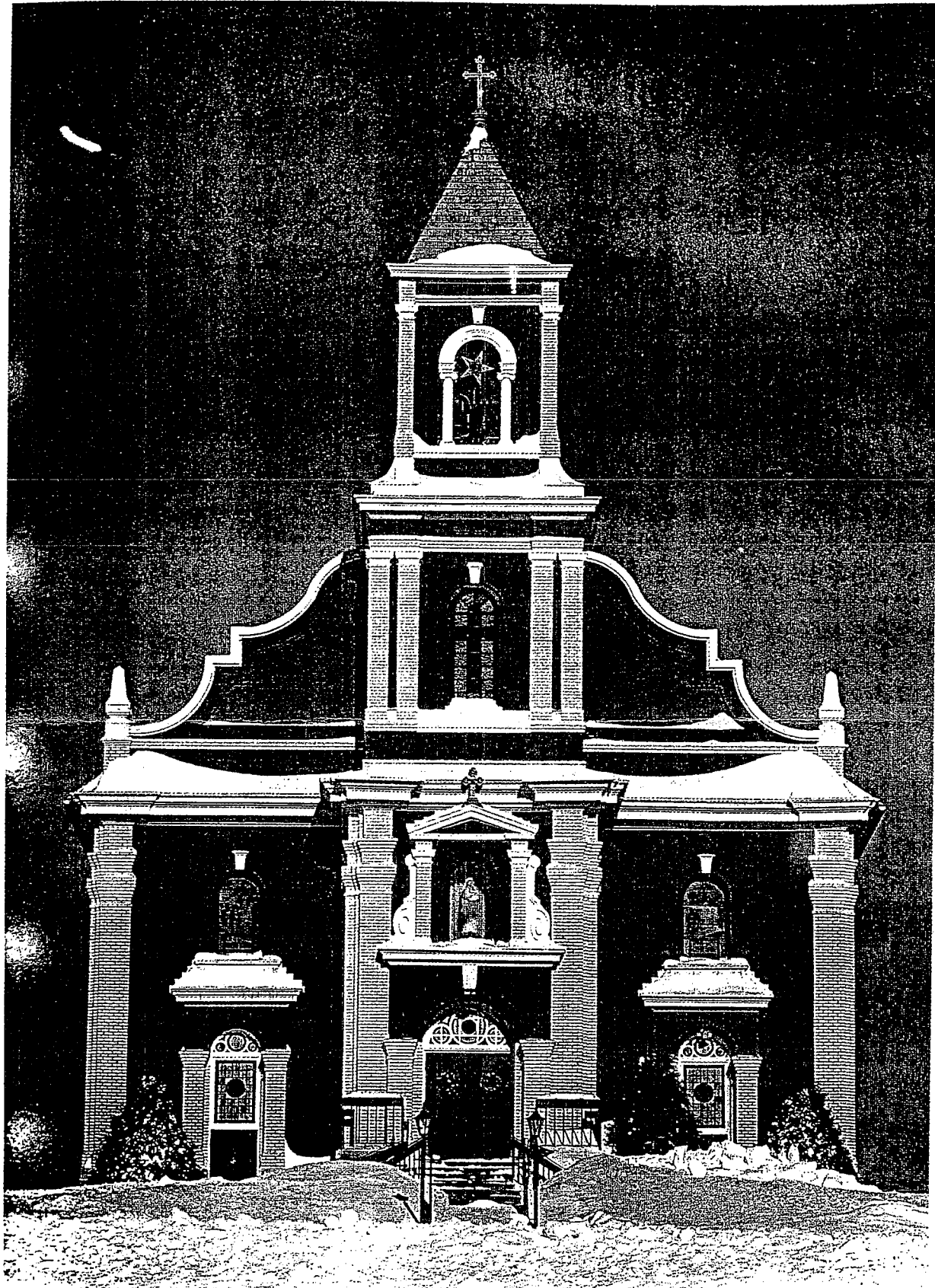


CHANDLER TOMBSTONE.

Martha Chandler died two years after her husband, the Reverend S. P. Chandler, organized St. Paul's Episcopal, one of the oldest Episcopal churches in southern Minnesota. Her grave is behind a deserted frame church in Belle Creek, along with a number of other pre-Civil War monuments.

Photography and text by Doug Ohman

Doug Ohman, '84, is operations supervisor for Camp Snoopy amusement park at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota. He will share his slides and his stories with groups of any size; call Pioneer Photography at 612-531-2106.



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH.

This striking German baroque style church sits high atop St. Mary's hill in the small community of New Trier, Minnesota. St. Mary's was organized in 1856; the current building was built in 1909.

Plymouth Historical Society
OPEN HOUSE

A Connection to the Past
Portraits of our
Minnesota Countryside Churches



Sunday, May 17, 1998 1-4 pm

Program

Schedule: 1 - 4 p.m. Open House & Ice Cream Social
2 pm Doug Ohman, "Countryside Churches"

Location Plymouth Historical Building
3605 Fernbrook Lane N.
Plymouth, MN

Doug Ohman, acclaimed photographer of Minnesota countryside churches will present a slide presentation and talk about his extraordinary collection of photographs.

Museum Open - Refreshments Served