

# St. Michael Historian



Official Newsletter of the St. Michael Historical Society, St. Michael, Minnesota

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## Save Your Photos!

by *Stephen S. Barthel*

Many of us have boxes or albums full of old photos. Often these are rare images of beloved family members. While studio photos may have been duplicated and given away to family and friends, the snapshots are usually one-of-a-kind images. Perhaps nobody has shown any interest in these photos for a long time, but it's funny how grown up kids finally appreciate the family history and wish they had their own copies of these precious photos. Having your old photos scanned and saved as digital files allows you to not only preserve these images, but also allows you to make prints or share the images via email.

In addition to photos, you may also have old or rare documents. These might include diplomas, wedding announcements, newspaper clippings, land documents, letters, or funeral cards. These documents were often printed on paper that had lots of acid in it. As a result, the paper is turning increasingly yellow and brittle. If not handled carefully, these documents will eventually fall apart, especially along any folds. Because our hands have oils on them, the more we handle these documents, the more damage we do, and while one may slow the disintegration process with proper archival techniques, the documents cannot be returned to their original condition. Scanning them means we can better preserve the originals while still being able to handle and share the copies.



*Here's a fun image of Mary (Mrs. Hubert) Barthel taken about 1910. Some of the best images are those that catch our ancestors doing ordinary, and in this case, unusual things. Having a photo like this scanned means it can be shared with the entire family.*



*Left: scanned, faded photo of Max Zahler taken about 1890. Right: the same photo after some easy edits on Picasa 3, a free photo software you can download on your computer.*

With both photos and documents, once they are scanned and saved as digital files, they can be uploaded into computer software like Adobe Photoshop, Picasa 3, or some other similar program. Then, the images can be edited to repair fading, fix the appearance of tears, and sharpen the images. Digital images can also be cropped to focus or center the important part of the photo or resized to fit a special frame.

Between the hours of 9:00 AM to noon on **Saturday, January 14, 2017**, members of our staff will be present to receive your selected historic photos and documents (maximum of 30 items) for scanning. You will be notified when the originals and the digital images are ready for pick up. After we do the scan, the image will be in a file stored on our computer, so you will need to bring a flash drive (sometimes called a thumb drive) to retrieve the scanned items from our comput-

er. Bring your originals and your flash drive to the office of the St. Michael Historical Society during the time and date given above. We are located at 11800 Town Center Drive, St. Michael MN (directly across the hall from the entrance to the St. Michael Library).

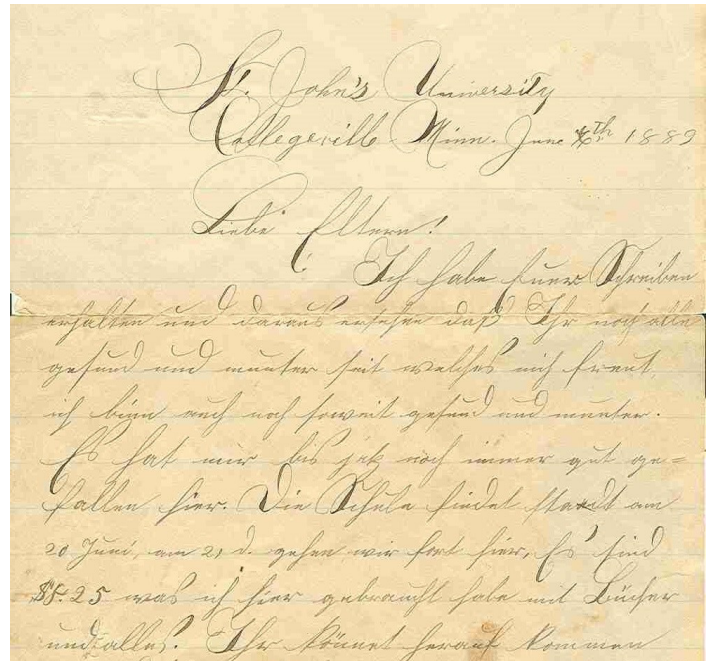
This scanning event is available **at no charge** to current members of the St. Michael Historical Society. If you are not yet a member, you can purchase your \$10 annual membership through our [saintmichaelhistory.org](http://saintmichaelhistory.org) website or at the door. By the way, if you borrowed this newsletter from a friend, your membership will get future copies mailed to you!

Our scanner can handle items that measure 11x17 inches. Items larger will be digitally photographed by Crystal Sayen Photography. Because of the fragile nature of old paper, we will not be responsible for any photo or document that falls apart or might be damaged. As stated previously, years take their toll on photos and documents. You will be asked to sign a note stating we are not responsible for damage. We will, of course, treat your items carefully. We also ask that you remove photos from frames. Sometimes photos stick to the glass and can tear when you attempt to remove them from their frames. Finally, no items that can scratch the scanner bed's glass will be accepted, so please remove any staples or paper clips.

If a portrait was been taken by a commercial photographer that is currently in business, the image is probably protected by copyright. You are responsible for any photographs and documents that might be under copyright, including photos taken by anyone besides yourself. If you took the photos, you are the copyright holder. You can then grant us permission to us to use them. Photos more than 100 years old are probably considered safe from copyright protection, but investigating copyrights is your responsibility.



**Hubert and Math Barthel about 1890. Once scanned, the images can be cropped to draw focus on the subjects.**



**The letter above was written by Hubert G. Barthel when away to school at St. John's in 1889. How precious it is to have something written in an ancestor's own hand (even if you have to translate the German into English).**

With your permission and upon our acceptance, selected scanned historical photos and/or documents may become part of our collection to be used on our website or in our publications. In certain circumstances we might be interested in accepting original photos and documents for our archives, but we lack the space to accept all hard copy photos and documents. In most cases we actually prefer to have the digital image rather than the original so that we can make them available to the public on our website and also to store them more easily.

Now is the time to look over what you might want to have scanned or imaged. Gather the photos and documents and prepare for this service event. This is a great opportunity to become part of our society and to utilize our equipment to preserve your history. That is what we are all about!



## Bells, Waiting Silently *By Bob Zahler*

In the tower of the historic church are three bells that hang in silence. The sounds heard coming from the tower these days are just artificial audio. The original bells, now 125 years old, were purchased brand new on November 21, 1891 from the Henry Stuckstede Bell Foundry Company in St. Louis, Missouri for the historic church during its construction. As noted in the original bill of sale below, the three bells had a total weight of 5,298 pounds. The cost for each bell was 18 cents per pound. A recent inspection of the bells and the bell supports showed that all were in very good condition. The inspector also revealed that each bell was cast with an inscription. Unfortunately, he only took photos of two of the three. One bell has the Latin inscription “Santa Maria Mater Die ora pro nobis” or “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.” The other has “Sancte Joseph assiste nobis in hora mortis nostrae” or “Saint Joseph, assist us in our time of death.” Again, we’re not sure what is on the third bell. In addition to the Latin inscription is the name of the foundry and the year 1891; so we know that they were purchased new for this church.

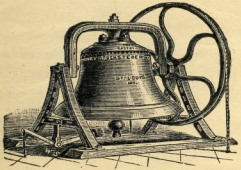
The bells rang proudly for a hundred years. Connected to the clock mechanism, a single “ding dong” chime occurred on the quarter hour, two on the half hour, three at a quarter to the hour, and then four at the hour followed by single “dings” indicating the hour. When someone died, the bells were pealed to announce the death to the community. At the person’s funeral the bells were tolled slowly as the casket was brought into the church. In these ways the bells were both a means of communication and a sign of reverence. When there was no traffic noise, the church bells could be heard more than a mile away from town. During the workweek when many people, including kids, didn’t wear watches for fear they would be damaged during work or play, the church bells were depended upon for letting people know the time of day.

About 25 years ago, probably due to aging mechanisms and the supposed concern that ringing the bells could harm the old tower, an electronic carillon system was installed. While there were more options for sounds and volumes, those of us who remember the deep, resonate sound of the old bells know there is no substitute for the real thing. Now, the bells just wait to have a purpose again.

St. Louis, November 21<sup>st</sup> 1891

*Rev. R. Deusterman*  
For St. Michael Church at St. Michael's Minn.

ESTABLISHED 1855.



Woodward & Tiernan Printing Co., St. Louis.

**THE HY. STUCKSTEDE BELL FOUNDRY CO.**

— MANUFACTURERS OF —

**BELLS**

CHURCH, ACADEMY,  
STEAMBOAT, FACTORY,  
AND SCHOOL-HOUSE.

INCORPORATED 1888.

FIRE ALARM, PLANTATION,  
CHIMES AND PEALS OF  
BELLS

1312 and 1314 South Second St. ST. LOUIS, MO.

Nov 21	To One bell with clapper & Springs 2792 lbs @ 18 cts per lb	502	56		
	Cast Iron Mountings @ 100 lbs @ 50% off	50	00	552	56
"	" One bell with clapper & Springs 1498 lbs @ 18 cts per lb	269	64		
	Cast Iron Mountings @ 70 lbs @ 50% off	35	00	304	64
"	" One bell with clapper & Springs 1008 lbs @ 18 cts per lb	181	44		
	Cast Iron Mountings @ 55 lbs @ 50% off	27	50	208	94
				\$1071	14

Please return freight receipt, we will give you credit for same.

*The bill of sale was made out to Rev. Rudolph Deustermann, pastor of St. Michael at the time. At the bottom of this sheet (not shown) is a handwritten warranty that guarantees the bells against defects for four years. With bell supports the total cost was just \$1,071.14! Today these would sell for between \$8,000 and \$12,000 each!*

## One-fourth of the Way There:

### Time Capsule Buried 25 Years Ago *By Bob Zahler*

In March of 1990 I graduated from St. Cloud State University with a degree in Social Studies Education and no job lined up. Naturally, I moved into my parent's basement. At that time the city and church of St. Michael were planning a joint centennial celebration to commemorate the laying of the corner stone of the historic church and the incorporation of the city. The previous fall I had been living at home while doing my student teaching and was able to attend one or two meetings of the centennial celebration committee. It was then that the idea of a time capsule was brought up. By March other plans were well underway, but nobody had taken action on the time capsule, so I took on the project myself. By the summer of 1990 I had learned that stainless steel was the material to use to best ensure survival of the capsule contents after 100 years. Fortunately for me, one of the best metal fabricators was right in St. Michael: Marksman Metals, which had just relocated to St. Michael. While the capsule was on its way to being made, I still hadn't started collecting objects to go in it. With time running short, the committee and I decided that we would allow people to submit items during the centennial celebration in September and delay the actual burial for a year.

The following year we planned to bury the time capsule in the old cemetery, near the foot of the large crucifix, following the second morning mass on September 29, 1991. Fr. Denny Dempsey blessed the time capsule, which had been pumped with argon gas (to reduce the oxygen) and then quickly sealed. The stainless steel capsule was placed in a concrete septic box and buried about four feet deep. Members of the congregation were invited to help shovel dirt into the hole. The spot is marked with a granite tablet, but in case I'm not around in 2090, please tell your grandchildren where it is. Thank you!

**St. Michael  
Historical Society  
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Phone: 763-416-7967

*We're on the Web!*

See us at:

[www.saintmichaelhistory.org](http://www.saintmichaelhistory.org)

Like us on **Facebook!**

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at the St. Michael City Hall in the Gries and Lenhardt Public Meeting Room adjacent to the library.

*This newsletter is published quarterly for the benefit of the members of the St. Michael Historical Society.*

*Reprints of this or any other newsletter by the Society are not permitted without the express written consent of the St. Michael Historical Society.*

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Editors: Sheldon Barthel  
Stephen S. Barthel



*At left: a much younger Bob Zahler with the time capsule. At right, helping to bury the time capsule, is Harvey Zahler with granddaughter Lauren, and Loel Bertrand. Lauren (Zahler) Peterson now has her own baby daughter.*

## Upcoming Events

PLEASE NOTE!  
January 9, Monday, 7 PM  
January 14, Saturday, 9 AM  
February 13, Monday, 7 PM  
March 13, Monday, 7 PM

No meeting in December.  
Regular monthly board meeting, Library conference room, St. Michael City Hall.  
Photo and document scanning, Historical Society Office, St. Michael City Hall.  
Regular monthly board meeting, Library conference room, St. Michael City Hall.  
Tour of "new" St. Michael Catholic Church. Regular meeting follows in church choir room

Unless you are paid up through 2017, you should find a renewal form with this newsletter. Please take the time to complete the form now and submit it with your dues payment. Those receiving the newsletter via email will see a separate renewal attachment. You can also renew through our website using a credit card and PayPal. Thanks for your ongoing support!