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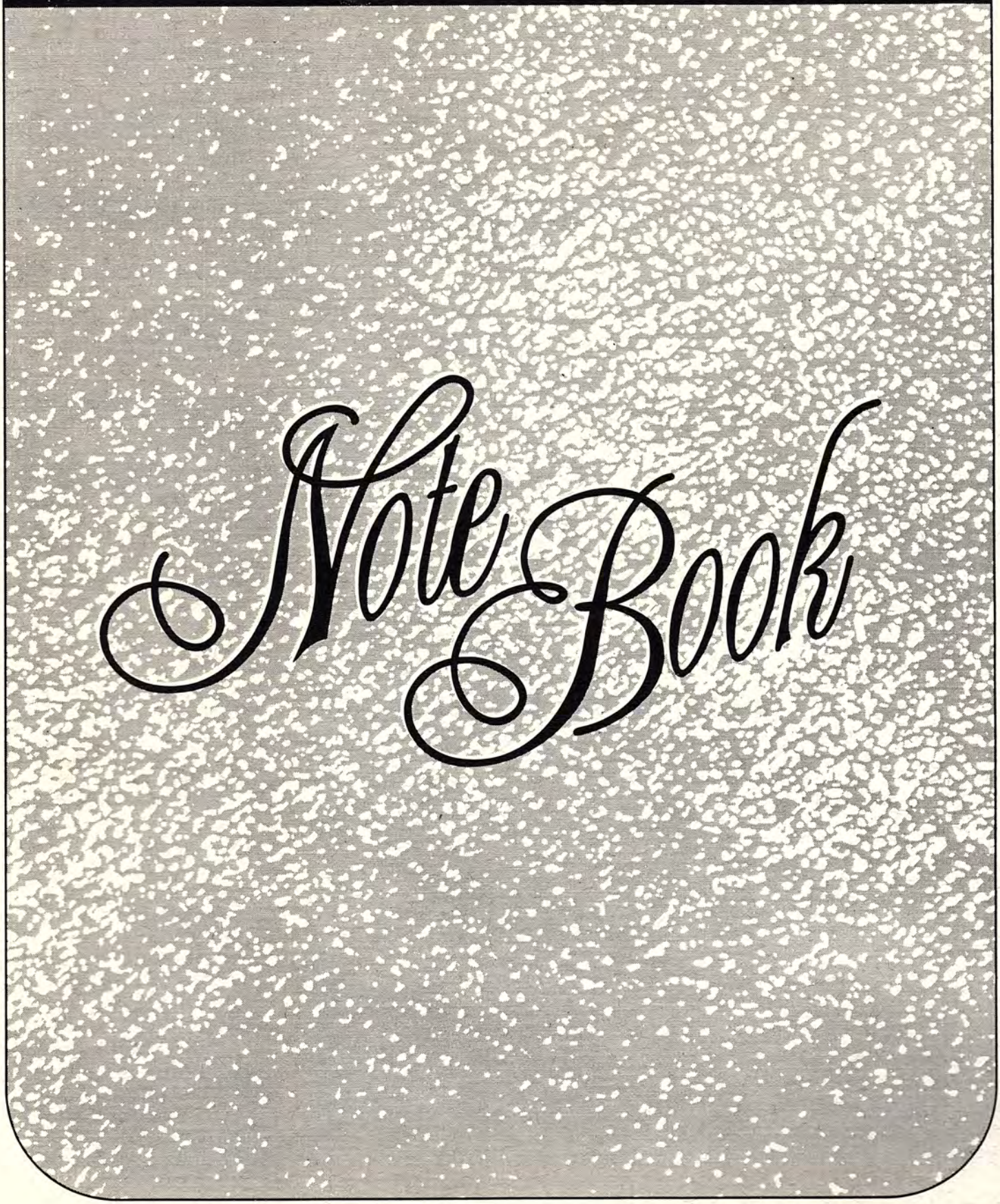
THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY



The Betsy-Tacy Society

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About the Cover

The cover of the *Journal of the Betsy-Tacy Society* may need a little explaining: It's an adaptation of the actual cover of one of Maud Hart Lovelace's personal journals. A copy of the original was provided by Shirley Lieske of Mankato, and the adaptation was done by Trish Hayden of Hayden Design, in Fullerton, California.

Journal deadlines are March 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15 for the spring, summer, fall, and winter issues respectively. Please send news and articles to Patty Warhol, 32228 SeaRaven Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275. ISSN #1091-1081.

The Betsy-Tacy Society was formed in Mankato, Minnesota in April, 1990. Members, now numbering nearly 1,000, receive the *Betsy-Tacy Society Journal,* to which they are invited to contribute articles and information of interest to other members. We are pleased to print excerpts of your letters as space allows, and assume that you will permit us to do so, unless you request otherwise when writing. Illustrations by Lois Lenski and Vera Neville from the original books are used with permission from HarperCollins.

Membership Notes

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season, filled with love and laughter and maybe a few traditions borrowed from the Ray family celebrations. This winter season brings with it a time of renewal, both for our spirits and for many of your memberships. If your mailing label says RENEWAL DUE, please send your check to me at the address on the membership form in the back of the newsletter. You are welcome to copy the form or to send your name, address, and telephone number on a separate sheet of paper. I would greatly appreciate your *not* stapling the check to the form or sending a check without including a note with the pertinent information, as this makes handling and record-keeping more difficult. If your mailing label says EXPIRED, your membership ended with the previous issue, and this is the last journal we will be able to send you. Thank you all so much for your past and present support of the BTS and of Tacy's House!

Michele Blake

Where to Send it!

Anything having to do with the Betsy-Tacy organization, Board meetings, starting new chapters:
Lona Falenczykowski
303 Meadow Wood Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
507/345-8103
email: lona@ic.mankato.mn.us

Membership information:
Michele Blake
Post Office Box 206
North Easton, MA 02356
email: mfranck@delphi.com

Articles, Announcements, Notes and Notices, Features, Drawings, Reports of National and Chapter Meetings:
Patty Warhol
32228 SeaRaven Drive
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275
email: pwarhol@delphi.com

If you are interested in joining a local group, please contact the person listed in the area nearest you:

Greater Chicago Chapter
Elaine Pappas
7548 Colorado Street
Merrillville, IN 46410

Greater New York Chapter
Jeannette Newman
130 Landau Avenue
Floral Park, NY 11001

Southern California Chapter
Suzanne Nezin
22766 Islamare Lane
Lake Forest, CA 92630
email: kckw61b@prodigy.com

Washington, D.C. Chapter
Julie Christian
P. O. Box 2267
Springfield, VA 22152

Arizona Group
Kathleen Waldron
5315 W. Brown Street
Glendale, AZ 85302

New England NEWBETSY's
Janet Hamilton
508/461-0099 or
email: hamilton@al.mos.org

Boulder, Colorado Crowd
Julie Leonard
1534 Marshall Road
Boulder, CO 80303

San Francisco GOUBTBSS
Carla Kozak
415/664-1640 or
email: carlak@sfpl.lib.ca.us

I Remember Mankato

by
Maud Hart Lovelace

This article first appeared in the Thursday, April 10, 1952 issue of the *Mankato Free Press,* and is reprinted here thanks to the generosity of William Edwards, who provided us with a copy.

Editor's Note, 1952: Maud Hart Lovelace, who has gained nationwide fame for her Betsy-Tacy stories, wrote the following article for the "I Remember Mankato" series that is being published in the Free Press *in connection with the city's centennial observance, which will take place with a six-day celebration from June 29 through July 4. Mrs. Lovelace, whose Betsy-Tacy novels are based on her experiences in her childhood days in Mankato, is married to a New York newspaperman, Delos W. Lovelace, a member of the editorial staff of the New York* World-Telegram and Sun. *They have a daughter, Merian. The Lovelace family lives at 63 Wyatt Road, Garden City, NY.*

It is difficult for me to respond to a request for memories of Mankato without being repetitive, for memories of Mankato are in almost every book I have written, or had a share in writing, and these number around twenty now.

My first novel, *The Black Angels,* although fiction, of course, was certainly inspired by the experiences of my uncle, Frank Palmer, who sang with the Andrews Opera Company. And Mankato readers of *Early Candlelight* have recognized, I imagine, the neighborhood of Sibley Park, used as a setting

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Photo from the Thomas Edwards collection

Maud Hart Lovelace, 1948

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for the love scene between Jasper Page and Dee.

One Stayed at Welcome and *Gentlemen From England*, on which I collaborated with my husband, were located in other parts of Minnesota, but they owe many of their descriptions to the hills above our Center Street home where I used to play with Frances Kenney and Marjorie Gerlach and Ruth Williams.

The frankest borrowing belongs to the Betsy-Tacy series for these books are based on my own childhood and youth. They are highly fictionalized, of course; and while some of the characters are real people, who are well aware of being between covers, many others have been invented. Nevertheless, the Deep Valley of the stories is definitely Mankato.

Betsy's home on Hill Street was my old home, 333 Center Street...at least, that was the number in my day. Tacy's house was the Kenney house, just across the street. And Tib's house was the Gerlach house on Byron Street. The first two look much as they used to...except for the fact that our backyard maple is gone, and that homes have been built on what was once the long slope of the Kenney back yard, with its lamp and buggy shed and barn, and the fence on which we used to sit and watch the sunset. The Gerlach house, however, looks different now.

Ruth William's house was also down on Byron Street. It had a wonderful hilly back yard in which to play, and a swing which seemed high, and was, I believe...thrillingly perilous. Beulah Hunt, another friend and schoolmate, lived a few blocks away.

My sisters Kathleen and Helen and I attended Pleasant Grove School as our mother did before us. Like Ed Wise, I always loved that school and wish it could be perpetuated somewhere. Old Cap and General Baker used to visit the various grades on Decoration Day to tell us about the Civil War and the Sioux uprising. I remember Torry's Candy Store near the school with its marshmallow bananas and gum drops and all-day suckers and chocolate men with pennies inside. I remember the beautiful fenced-in garden over the way.

We went to the Baptist Church, where my father was a deacon. George Palmer was superintendent of the Sunday School. There was a birthday box into which we dropped the proper number of pennies on our birthdays. I remember the day Mr. Palmer dropped one coin, a fifty-cent piece, for his birthday. What a joke we thought that was!

Later, my sister Kathleen and I sang in the choir at St. John's Episcopal Church, and finally joined it.

From spring to fall we children picnicked and roamed on the hills; we went coasting down them in winter. We loved to invade Tinkcomville, fascinated by the colorful Syrian colony. There was a rumor which used to enthrall us that one Syrian child was a princess. Many years later in New York I discovered that she was, indeed, a Syrian Emeera. Several of the Betsy-Tacy books, *Emily of Deep Valley*, and even *The Trees Kneel at Christmas*, although that was located in Brooklyn, draw on my vivid childhood impressions of Tinkcomville Valley.

As we grew older we made more trips downtown, pausing to play by the fountain at Lincoln Park, or rest under the big elm there. We loved to pass the majestic Palmer home. (I loved to go there, too, for Sunday suppers and see the inside!) The Patterson house seemed to us the last word in elegance. We hoped to buy and live in it when we grew up. Another house we admired was the Judge Cray house. We didn't know who lived there. Midge Gerlach and I, aged seven or so, once left a bouquet of violets on the doorstep as a tribute.

Speaking of houses, I must not forget the red brick Hickey home back on Center Street. That was not only glamorous, with its round tower-room, but hospitable and child-loving.

Some of us went downtown to take piano lessons...I studied first with the heroic Kate Robb and later with the charming May Brett Taylor. We visited the Camegie Public Library; always a favorite haunt of mine. I remember the children's room with a picture of the Isle of Delos over the mantel. It isn't there any more.

Sometimes, if we were lucky, we went to a matinee at the Opera House; on passes, since Beulah's father was editor of the *Free Press*. We always visited Heinz's Ice Cream Parlor, or Musser's, and usually called on one of our fathers for a ride home behind the family horse.

Like many Mankato families w picnicked a great deal, piling into the surrey to go to Sibley Park or Minneopa Falls or Jones's Ford. The last time I was in Mankato, Tom and Edythe Edwards drove

Maud Hart Lovelace, "Betsy-Tacy" author, says Memories of Mankato are included in all her books; novels based on childhood days in city.

– *Mankato Free Press*, April 10, 1952

Mankato High School, at Fifth and Hickory Streets, burned to the ground in 1941.

Marion Willard Everett and me out to the Ford. (I could see then why it had been such a favorite objective for Sunday excursions.)

Often we picnicked with the Milton Woods. When Ringling Brothers came to town we two families would take a picnic breakfast out to the circus grounds and watch the big red cars unload, see the animals, and the performers eating breakfast in their tents.

Eleanor Wood, now Mrs. Elmer Lippert, was a great friend of my sister Kathleen, and the whole family was dear to us. I remember one Christmas season when I was a little girl, I conceived a mad longing for a chatelaine in Martin and Hoerr's show window. A silver pencil and a pad of paper were attached to a chain which would swing, presumably, from one's belt. I thought it would be just the proper equipment for a little girl who wished to be an author, and plastered my nose against the window admiring it every time I went downtown. Mary Wood (Mrs. Morgan Bowen), probably a high school girl then, bought it and put it in my Christmas stocking.

Dr. and Mrs. Wood belonged to the Hi-Fly Whist Club along with my parents, and the Charlie MacBeths, and the Sam Wilsons, and the Plummer Pitchers and others. They were gay young-marrieds. I can remember how we used to enjoy the lodge dances. The C.N. Andrews family moved to Mankato about that time; they lived opposite the General Bakers. They were a great addition to this merry group as their sons were to the high school crowd.

My father's shoe store had become Wood and Sterling's and he had become County Treasurer. We moved up to Fifth Street to the present Benham home, in order to be nearer the Court House and the high school which Kathleen and I attended. (This is the school which later burned down. I understand that the new one is a model of beauty and efficiency.) Helen attended the Normal School across the street. New neighbors and friends included the Lloyds, the Parkers, another family of Woods, Lois Goodrich, next door...

Looking back on high school days, it seems to me that we had some very fine teachers. No

I Remember Mankato, *continued on page 6*

Photo provided by Merian Kirchner

A 1966 gathering of old friends at the Lovelace home in Claremont, California reunited Grace & Jab Lloyd [Jean and Cab Edwards], Frances (Bick) Kenney Kirch [Tacy Kelly Kerr], Marion (Marney) Willard [Carney Sibley Everett], and Maud Hart Lovelace [Betsy Ray Willard].

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one who ever sat beneath her gaze will forget our principal, Miss Fullerton. The curly-haired mathematics teacher, Emma O'Donnell, was beloved by many generations, and is beloved still. I adored Miss Comstock, who taught history and received great inspiration from an English teacher, Evelyn Fisher. Fannie Pitcher wasn't afraid to give us really great music to sing. If it was somewhat beyond us, at least we learned to love it and have never forgotten it.

Of course, I can't think of Miss Pitcher without thinking of Grandma Pitcher and her stories about the Sioux Rebellion, and Grace Fox and her boys.

No one ever had more fun going through high school than our crowd did! (I suppose other Mankato generations will challenge that statement.) Does the new high school have the Philomathian and Zetamathian Literary societies? I remember the Rhetoricals at which Kathleen used to sing, and dear Dodge Lulsdorff. Tess and Bick Kenney were also famous high school vocalists; and Katherine Jones, and Mildred Oleson, and Paul Ford.

We used to go to dances at Schiller Hall. Sometimes at the holiday season there would be private parties in the ballroom of the Saulpaugh Hotel.

Union Depot in Mankato

But what contributed most to our happiness was the homes...our own and other people's. I remember the W. D. Willard home on Third Street with its broad welcoming porch and lawn. During the Christmas holiday season our crowd of girls used to give progressive dinners, a different course in each house. We would go gaily through the wintry night, singing...to the Willards', Johnsons', Olesons', Kenneys',

The Willard home, showing the sleeping porch in back

Gerlachs', Williams's, our house, and still others in various years. Those were the days of singing around the home piano and dancing in the home back-parlor...with the carpets rolled up.

I don't get back to Mankato as often as I wish I did. I got back oftener when my sisters lived in Minnesota, but they both live in California now. I live in Garden City, a suburb of New York, where my husband is a staff writer on the *World-Telegram and Sun*. Our daughter is a senior at Smith, and our lives...like most people's lives these days...are very busy. But a return is always a delight.

I remember a visit with the Willards on which I had a memorable ride around Mankato seeing the new suburban developments, the Country Club, the air-strip and other things which were not there in my day.

Another time the Tom Edwardses took me to the top of what I call in the Betsy-Tacy books the Big Hill. It was even more beautiful than I had remembered it, although it is much changed ... covered now with charming new homes. But there is still that magnificent valley view.

I remember the Semi-Centennial of 1902. My father owned the volume which was issued in celebration of that affair. As a child I loved its pictures of the bearded pioneers and the views of Mankato in the early days. I loved the stories of hardship and adventure ... the struggles to start the various churches ...the opening of the first school in a warehouse on Walnut Street; it was taught by Marguerite Marsh's grandmother, Mrs. John Q. A. Marsh...the steamboating days...Indian fighting. Many of these stories were included in speeches given on Old Settler's Day, July 3, 1902, at Sibley Park and collected in that volume.

After I was married and in a home of my own I borrowed this book so often that at last, in despair, probably, my father gave it to me. It is always on my desk.

Mankatonians of 1902 were fortunate in having among them people whose memories reached back so far. They even had some of the participants in the drama of the founding. We are lucky, though, to have Thomas Hughes's wonderful history; and the Blue Earth County Historical Society; and a number of people who cherish the past.

This Centennial will be momentous not only for those who are planning and working to bring it about but for the children for whom it will unroll the panorama of Mankato's history. They will remember and look back on it, as so many of us look back on 1902.

Mankato is a wonderful town to grow up in. It is a wonderful town to live in. How fortunate that at intervals we pause to re-tell its story and bring our legends and traditions to fresh life!

An Earlier Recollection

Mankato

by
Maud Palmer Hart
age 10

I want to write a line
About my native place;
For not a spot is dearer
Upon the world's wide face.

In Summer, soft green meadows
Dotted here and there with flowers,
Bright, sparkling and drooping
With Summer showers.

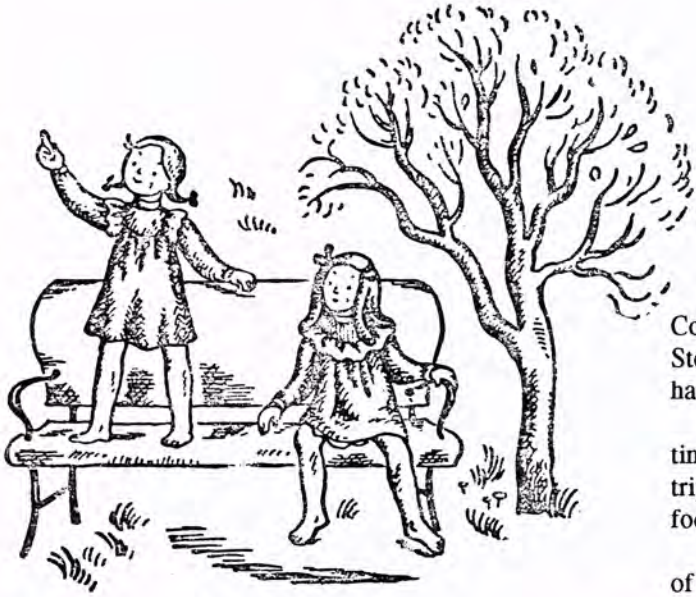
And gazing far beyond you
Are the hills and bluffs so high
Whose dark and jagged peaks
Are reaching to the sky.

And then the clear deep Blue Earth
'Round Sibley Park is flowing
While on its glassy surface,
Are youthful lovers rowing.

But in Winter, still more merry
Are the scenes that greet our eyes
As over the glist'ning ice pond
The merry skater flies –

Now over the ice frosted hilltops
The children merrily glide,
O, watch their ruddy faces
As down the hill they slide.

O, what then now can equal
These fair and gladsome scenes?
Mankato thrice can equal
The land of Kings and Queens.



You're Invited!

The Betsy-Tacy Society Convention

July 10-13, 1997

Come to Deep Valley and Celebrate 100 Years of Friendship!

Journey to Mankato in July, 1997 for the Betsy-Tacy Society's Convention celebrating the centennial of the Betsy-Tacy alliance. Step back in time with us to an era of opulent decor, flower-laden hats, holiday favors, and unconditional friendship.

As usual, our convention will be overflowing with fun, good times, and lots of mementos to carry home and remind you of your trip to 19th century Deep Valley. Be a kid again and join our "party" focusing on *Betsy-Tacy* and happenings in that first momentous book.

Just to tempt you, and put you in the mood, here are some details of the major events:

Friday Night: Easter in Deep Valley

Dress in your Easter finery – and if you'd like, feel free to bring a hat – and tour Deep Valley at Easter time. Hats can be old or new, from any era (after all, we all know Maud was fond of hats her entire life). Pick up your Easter basket and you're on your way. Convention-goers will be provided with "Deep Valley Dollars" that they can use to choose items from replicas of vintage Mankato shops such as Cook's Book Store, Lion Department Store, Deep Valley Toy Shop, and Mrs. Chubbock's Candy Store. Home at the Ray's, put on your apron and color an egg with Betsy and Tacy. You may even want to enjoy your hard-boiled egg with your "Easter dinner" at tables adorned with Spring pastels and special decorations. Participate in our Easter games, including Betsy-Tacy trivia bee, and win more goodies.

Saturday: Betsy's Fifth Birthday Party

We kick off our Betsy's birthday party activities with keynote speaker Elizabeth Riley, Maud's editor for the Betsy-Tacy books. Other events include a special children's program, workshops, bus tours, and free time to wander around Mankato. The evening banquet will celebrate Betsy's birthday and her notorious meeting with Tacy. Please wear your party clothes and be prepared for a big birthday bash – Betsy-style! Convention attendees are encouraged to recreate the rhetoricals (school entertainment) of Betsy's day (see page 191 in Betsy and Joe). The Silver Moon Vintage Dance Ensemble will cap off our evening with their marvelous renditions of turn-of-the-century dances.

Sunday: Bick's Birthday Party

Today is actually Bick's birthday, so we're going to celebrate at the lake with an Irish gala. Be sure to wear green and become Irish for at least a day! Sure 'n the Kenney clan would be so proud!

For those who won't be leaving earlier, come join us for Sunday Night Lunch at the Butler House.

Now that you know what to pack for the special occasions, make your reservations so you don't miss a minute of that wonderful weekend in July, 1897—or was that 1997?

Betsy was given beautiful presents at the fifth birthday party. Besides the little glass pitcher, she got colored cups and saucers, a small silk handkerchief embroidered with forget-me-nots, pencils and puzzles and balls. But the nicest present she received was not the usual kind of present. It was the present of a friend. It was Tacy.

Betsy-Tacy

Nearly one-hundred years ago a birthday party marked the beginning of a life-long friendship between two little girls growing up in Mankato ("Deep Valley") Minnesota. To commemorate that special meeting, the Betsy-Tacy Society Convention cordially invites its members to a convention celebratingf Maud/Betsy's fifth birthday party, from July 10-13, 1997. The itinerary for the Convention is still in the planning stages, so some of the events listed below are tentative. A finalized itinerary will be mailed with your registration materials.

The Schedule (tentative)

July 9 Wednesday (Optional)
•Tour of Twin Cities area Betsy-Tacy sites, hosted by the Maud Hart Lovelace Society

July 10 Thursday (Optional)
•Informal tours of Deep Valley
•Open house at Tacy's House
•Exhibits at the Library, Hubbard House, and Blue Earth County Historical Society

July 11 Friday
•Registration
•Convention Shop open
•Exhibits
•Informal walking tours of Deep Valley
•Ice cream social at Sibley Park (Page Park)
•Buffet Supper
"Easter In Deep Valley"
•Trivia Contest

July 12 Saturday
•Registration
•Breakfast with muffin tasting
•Convention Shop open
•Children's Program
•Keynote Speech
•Workshop sessions – tentative topics include:
Collecting the Betsy-Tacy books
Betsy and the Great World
The Illustrators of Betsy-Tacy
Hairstyles & Fashions of the early 1900s
•1900s Film Festival
•Box Lunch/Free time
•Bus and walking tours of Deep Valley, Exhibits
•Raffle and Awards
•Rhetoricals
•Birthday Party Banquet with entertainment by the Silver Moon Dance Ensemble

July 13 Sunday
•Breakfast
•Convention Shop open
•Open house at Tacy's House
•Lunch at Point Pleasant (Murmuring Lake)
•Free time for more sight-seeing around Deep Valley
•Sunday Night Lunch and Sing-a-long

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn in Mankato, where most activities and meals will take place. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at (507) 345-1234 and requesting the Betsy-Tacy Convention rate. Additional hotel and transportation information will be provided with your registration packet.

Registration materials must be requested by mail – they will not be sent automatically. We've enclosed an envelope with the Journal for this purpose. Space is limited, so please act quickly.

We look forward to seeing you in July!!

Entertaining With the Rays

by Katrine Poe

I grew up in a non-entertaining family; people never visited, parties were never held. In contrast, my adult life seems to be an endless stream of parties and get-togethers, either in my home, or at the homes of friends. Noticing how much all this frivolity adds to the quality of my life, I strive to make time for it no matter how busy my life is (and believe me, *it is).* Perhaps this is why I enjoy the high school books so much: these folks are having *fun* on a regular basis, and, moreover, they certainly know how to make the most of it. This is not to say that there is not entertaining done in the earlier books; there is, from that momentous fifth birthday on. But the high school books offer a look at more (ahem!) adult forms of entertainment, and a look at the entertaining skills of the elder Rays.

For Betsy and Crowd, the gatherings begin in a more casual vein: going riding, picnicking, and making fudge. By the time Carney's Halloween Party rolls around, the Crowd has begun to party in earnest. In all cases, the common denominator is, of course, *food.* In spite of those willowy waists, the girls had some serious appetites working for them. I find myself unable to read the high school books without drooling a little; oh, but if Anna could only be in my kitchen the next time I entertain! My rarebit is less than perfect, and coffee must be imported from other domiciles.

What I have noticed over repeated readings, though, is that the Rays used several handy methods of entertaining that helped to make their celebrations a sure success. Let's take a look at a few of these tips:

1) Keep it simple.

Mr. Ray's Sunday Night Lunch is a symphony of simplicity. He makes his sandwiches from "whatever is on hand" and the meal is rounded out with pickles and cake.

He arranges his ingredients on the bread board to his convenience, and the actual sandwich-making is an element of entertainment for the guests. (Personally, I prefer that everyone KEEP OUT when I am cooking, lest they see the catastrophic layers that would later become the Leaning Tower of Pisa cake and be totally disillusioned.)

2) Know your strengths.

Betsy learns this the hard way after she marries Joe, but there are hints of this maxim in the high school books. Anna knows what cookie recipes are successful for her (and were for the McCloskeys), and isn't tempted away by Betsy's "snoggestion" of modern recipes. Those first day of school muffins were undoubtedly good because of Anna's expertise with muffin-making, but they also helped to make that first day of school a celebration year after year.

3) Maximize your time by having multiple parties.

Mrs. Ray does this in *Heaven to Betsy*, having three parties three days in a row. I always worry about salmonella whenever I read about all that chicken salad made in bulk, but I guess salmonella hadn't been invented yet. Having three parties three days in a row has proved far too daunting a task for me, but I did try having two parties in one day, with great success. By keeping the menu as simple as possible, I was able to hold a Tupperware party (don't ask) in the afternoon, and then have a chili supper in the evening. The house was only disturbed for one day, and I felt like the queen of entertaining. I slept the next day.

4) Keep your cool.

Betsy gets the shock of her life when snooty Phyllis Brandish shows up just when the egg-dying is at its peak; she remembers her mother being interrupted by their pastor's wife in the middle of housecleaning, and rises admirably to the occasion (whether Phyllis thought it admirable or not is not important). It is essential to remember that when entertaining, even when entertaining oneself, THINGS HAPPEN. There is no avoiding catastrophes; the best thing to do is just remember Mrs. Ray and have a cup of tea.

5) Have fun.

It took me a long time to realize that I could actually have fun at my own parties. What a concept! For years I had slaved in the kitchen, hopped up incessantly to check on stuff, bring out the next course, clear away, etc...Well, okay, I still do this. Maybe if I had Anna behind me I could actually begin to relax a little at my own parties.

I guess the main idea here is that the Ray home was one where people felt comfortable, relaxed. Sandwiches were eaten. Fudge was made. And most importantly, a good time was had by all.

"But You Must Remember That Grosspapa Hornik Was a Forty-eighter."

by Sonja Werle

Before Betsy went to Milwaukee she tried to learn about it and found that its prospering was a result of the emigration of many of the so-called "Forty-eighters."

Now what happened in Germany and Austria in 1848? The first half of the 19th century was a period of cultural diversity. It was the period of German classical and romantic literature, the lifetime of many great authors and philosophers. Most intellectuals of that time were part of the Burgertum, the industrious and economic middle class which was excluded from political power.

Up until 1848 more and more groups of the liberal and democratic movement were forming, including students and farmers, demanding participation in state power. They also wanted Germany to be united, as it was divided into many small principalities.

In 1848 a series of revolutions that began in France spread over Europe. In March of 1848 there were revolutions in Berlin and Vienna. The principals had to grant more rights to the people. The Nationalversammlung (a sort of parliament) was formed, and worked at the Paulskirche in Frankfurt for some months on a proposal for a German constitution. While they were discussing the issues, the principals gained strength again and defeated the revolution. So the constitution of the Paulskirche never became law.

But this constitution has nevertheless been important to Germany, as it was the first formulation of constitutional rights that led the way to becoming the German constitution.

Many of the participants of the German and Austrian revolution had to emigrate. Most went to the USA, searching for a society where the rights they had been fighting for at home were already a reality.

Sonja is a member of the Betsy-Tacy Society who lives in Germany.

The King of Spain

by Mary Thiessen

Imagine my surprise! One recent evening I was thumbing through a stack of old postcards handed down to me from my grandmother. The postcards, all Victorian and lovely, are a combination of pastel flowers and cherubic children. Then I unexpectedly stumbled on a picture of a handsome young man. Who was this exotic-looking boy in formal dress? To my astonishment, the printing on the front said "Alfons XIII, Kônig von Spanien." The King of Spain? It couldn't be!

This mysterious postcard, originating from Germany, was sent to a distant cousin of mine, a turn-of-the-century immigrant. The date on the postmark reads November 27, 1905, which was not long after she had arrived in California. I quickly pulled out my copy of *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*, hoping for a clue. Sure enough, the pieces fell into place. There, in black and white, is the letter written by Betsy, Tacy and Tib to the King of Spain on May 19, 1902. The girls wrote it just a few days after his coronation on his sixteenth birthday. That would make the handsome young man in my picture 19 years old. It all fits!

To make it all the more delightful, my dear ancestor was a girl just about Betsy's age. I like to imagine the message, written in German, is from a playmate from home, sharing secrets and ideas about which of them shall marry the King. Will it be the girl with ringlets? She'd look nice in a crown. Or perhaps it should be the one who owned a white accordion-pleated dress. Maybe my cousin and her friend wore red and yellow rosettes on their dresses or pictures of the King pinned to their underwaists. Did they belong to a secret lodge to honor the handsome young monarch? Were they perhaps plotting how to gain his royal attention? But what is most delightful of all is that perhaps another little girl in another land had fallen in love, just like Betsy, for the very first time, too.

Mary Thiessen is a founding member of the Southern California Chapter of the Betsy-Tacy Society, their Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor.

Serendipity in Boulder. . .

. . .and what came of it

Two summers ago, when I was at my son's swimming lesson, I noticed in the pool two adorable, identical little-girl twins, red-haired like Tacy. I began chatting with their mother and discovered that the twin with the two perky braids was named Betsy. I had to ask, "Do you by any chance know the Betsy-Tacy books?" She told me that she did and that, in fact, she was a member of the Betsy-Tacy Society. "So am I!" I squealed. And so began yet another Betsy-Tacy friendship, as Julie and I began talking fast and furious about all our favorite Betsy-Tacy memories. (Julie surpasses me, for every fall when her girls go back to school she treats herself to a morning spent reading *Emily of Deep Valley*, which is available only in the non-circulating rare books collection in the Boulder Public Library.)

Of course we had to organize a Betsy-Tacy celebration for the library, right? Julie's mother, Mary, is also a Betsy-Tacy Society member, so the three of us joined forces to host a Betsy-Tacy tea on May 5 at the local branch of the library. The *Boulder Daily Camera* did a feature on it for their Kids Page, titled "Betsy and Tacy: Grandma's Favorite Books Still Appeal," highlighting Mary Leonard, Julie Leonard, and Betsy and Rose Keith as three generations of Betsy-Tacy lovers. And, most exciting of all, the article attracted the attention of Romie Lindquist, Maud's cousin, to whom *Betsy in Spite of Herself* was dedicated. Romie, who lives right here in Boulder, promised to attend the tea, with family photos and portions of the original manuscript of *Betsy in Spite of Herself*!

On the day of the tea, some thirty beautifully dressed little girls arrived at the library—and my two little boys. Betsy and Rose wore the Betsy-Tacy dresses Julie had made for them; my two boys wore blue jeans and T-shirts. The tea began with several of the older girls reading aloud from Chapter 10 of Betsy-Tacy ("Calling on Mrs. Benson") to small groups of younger children. Then the children enthusiastically made their own calling cards to take home. No Betsy-Tacy gathering would be complete without period music, so Betsy and Rose played a duet of "Long, Long Ago" on the violin (quite surpassing Tom Slade!), joined by two other young Betsy-Tacy fans, Brita and Christiania Christensen, on the flute. The rest of us joined in, singing. Romie, who *did* attend, with the promised treasures for us to pore over, told us afterward that Maud used to sing it at a brisker tempo, but we thought we had done quite well for a first performance! The tea concluded with lemonade and cookies and fond memories for all.

Claudia Mills
Boulder, Colorado

Betsy-Tacy in Cyberspace

Maud Hart Lovelace Discussion List

If you have access to email, we invite you to join the Cyberspace Crowd! To subscribe, send an email to

Maiser@Mercury.MtSac.edu

Maiser does not require a subject heading, but if your internet service won't process your message without one, enter anything you like. Type this in the message space:

SUBSCRIBE MAUD-L

Do not sign your note. You will receive a confirming message very shortly. This Welcome Message will provide all the information you need about reading and posting messages, as well as a list of other commands supported by the service.

The Betsy-Tacy Homepage

Thanks to BTS member Nava Cohen, assisted by other cyberspace members, we have a Homepage! If you have access to the World Wide Web, all you need to do is point your webbrowser to:

http://virtuflex.com/Betsy-Tacy

Nava and friends do keep the Homepage current, so stop by to visit frequently!

In The Naughty Chair . . .

The magazine editor smiled meaningfully at the frail MacTavish. "We might hear a poem that one of our colleagues has just sold . . . ."

"The Naughty Chair! The Naughty Chair" everyone cried at once . . . everyone except Tib who asked wildly, "*Was ist los*? Who's been naughty?"

Marbeth tried to explain. "We call it the Naughty Chair because Jimmy Junior has to sit there when he's naughty."

"But Jimmy Junior has gone to bed!"

"Yes, but when any member [of the Violent Study Club] makes a sale he has to sit in the Naughty Chair."

"*Lieber Gott*! What's naughty about a sale?" Tib laughed until she almost choked

. . . MacTavish was pushed jubilantly into the place of honor.

Betsy's Wedding

Cheryl Harness: *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington*, National Geographic Society ISBN 0-7922-3736-6
Ghosts of the White House, Simon and Shuster (in press).

Sharla Whalen: *Meet the Friends*, Abdo & Daughters; available at bookstores and offered with companion dolls (Heidi Ott's Faithful Friends) at Target Stores nationwide

Keeping Betsy and Tacy Alive

by Kathleen Waldron

I'm sure everyone in the Betsy-Tacy Society is as eager to have Maud's books stay in print as I am. To do that—and to bring *Winona, Emily,* and *Carney* back in print—we really need to see an increase in sales.

I am convinced that sales will not increase unless the books get directly into the hands of a new generation of readers.

About a year ago I donated the entire series to the library at my daughter's school. From time to time I would check on their "checked out" status. Unfortunately, they were never "out," always "in." I soon deduced that merely having the books there on a shelf wasn't working.

I decided then to donate two books to every 2nd through 5th grade teacher at my daughter's school, as well as to the Language Arts teachers for grades 6,7, and 8. (Ultimately, several teachers received more than two books.)

The results have been fantastic! Debbie Wainwright, a 2nd grade teacher, read the first three out loud to her class. She says that her students couldn't believe how much fun Betsy, Tacy, and Tib had without television.

Ramona Twibell, who teaches 3rd grade, gave *Betsy-Tacy and Tib* to one of her avid readers, who soon spread the word and begged for more. Those students particularly enjoyed the variety of adventures and sense of humor depicted in the books.

Susan Watson, a BTS member and a 6th grade teacher at another school, quietly slipped *Betsy-Tacy* to a student named Maria, and then watched as other students clamored to be "next on the list" to read the rest of the series. In fact, when the students were asked to bring in their "all-time favorite book" to share with their classmates, Maria brought in the entire series and said they were *all* her favorite book.

None of the teachers contacted, nor any of their students, had heard of Betsy and Tacy. Had they not been direct recipients of the books, they still would be unaware of the magic of Deep Valley. The key really is getting the books *directly* into the hands of young readers.

In addition to donating copies to classrooms (or grades, to be shared among teachers), consider giving copies to members of a Girl Scout troop or Sunday School class; sponsoring an Essay Contest and offering Maud's books as prizes (the essays could be *about* Maud's books—who is your favorite character, what is your favorite scene, what event did you learn from the most, etc.); offering them as prizes for school contests; and, of course, giving them as gifts for birthdays and holidays.

Please help keep Betsy, Tacy, and Tib and Emily alive for *several* more generations!

Kathleen Waldron is a BTS member who lives in Glendale, Arizona

An Alternative to Venice

"How about going to Venice for your birthday?" My husband surprised me with this one morning. He is better traveled than I, and in our six years together has enjoyed sharing the sights with me—when he's able to get me to go. He has also had a New England farm for years and has hoped there would someday be a woman to love it as much as he. It is beautiful, isolated among hills, and boasts a 200-year-old farm house filled with books and comfortable antiques. I fell in love with the farm. My goal in life is to spend as much time there as possible. I never get my fill. I am his wish come true but there is a catch—I no longer want to travel. "No, my life in and around New York City is dramatic enough. Let's just go to the farm with the dogs and the fires and the books. Anyway, New England is so beautiful in October." I'm not sure if he was disappointed or pleased. My birthday was perfection—blue sky, autumn hills. We sat on the deck and raised our glasses to the cows clustered at the fence and I opened my first gift, *Carney's House Party!* Yes, and mint condition in dust jacket along with the leisure to read it in my mellow reading spot! *An alternative to Venice.*

Kendra Daniel
Park Ridge, NJ

Notes &

The Convention Needs You!

Among the workshops planned for the upcoming convention is one on hairstyles of the period (such as the pompadour and coronet braids). Leaders for this workshop are needed, so if you know any of the styles and would like to share your knowledge with fellow BTS members, please contact Kristin Woizeschke at 507-388-7330; email: palsrae@vaxi.mankato.msus.edu.

If you are interested in participating in rhetoricals – singing, dancing, or speaking pieces of approximately ten minutes in length, either alone or in a group, please contact Convention Chair Kay Hocker, 521 Tenth Street SE, Rochester, MN 55904.

Thank you!

Lenora Mattingly Weber Listserv

For those of you who are Beany Malone fans, to subscribe to the Lenora Mattingly Weber Listserv, send the following message: SUBSCRIBE WEBER-L to majordomo@teleport.com.

Wendy Burton
dymphna@teleport.com

Notes From Dolly

Glass Pitcher Alert

Is there anyone in our reading audience who may have some connection to a manufacturer of glassware that could reproduce the infamous "birthday gift from Tacy?" Anybody who works for or is related to Libby? We know it's a long shot, but Betsy-Tacy fans can accomplish amazing things. Please, if you would have information or suggestions, get in touch with Lona (address/phone/email on inside cover) ASAP! Thank you!

Silent Auction at the Convention

We are accepting items for the silent auction to be held during July 10-13, 1997. A few items we already have are a Beany Malone book, two copies of *The Valentine Box*, and a B-T quilt. We will be acquiring items from local merchants and antique dealers. If you have something you'd like to donate, please contact Lona. Thank you!

P.S. We had a suggestion from a member that may be incorporated with the silent auction. Many of our members are authors and we, as the promoters of good reading, would like to set up an area to display their books and have them for sale. Each author could have one or more of her books included in the silent auction. Authors, what do you think?

Thanks, Teresa Gibson

Teresa has donated the following books to the B-T Society:

The Light Heart
by Elswyth Thane
Beany Malone
by Lenora Mattingly Weber
White Rose of Stuart
by Lillian Del La Torre
and, most importantly,
Two copies of *The Valentine Box*
by Maud Hart Lovelace.

Thank you, Teresa!

More Thank You's

Thank you, Richard McCluhan, owner of the Cafe Camarda (restaurant in Mankato) who made a sizable donation to the Early Childhood and Development program in Mankato. The E.C. & D sponsors an annual "Festival of Trees" held around the Thanksgiving holiday. This year the Betsy-Tacy Society decorated a tree around the theme "The Hart's family Christmas." Mr. McCluhan made his donation for the B-T tree, and displayed it in the banquet room of his restaurant.

We also thank the Early Childhood and Development program for considering us when choosing organizations to sponsor a decorated tree. They provided us with the tree and a budget for decorations. We are delighted to be a part of this worthy effort.

Thank you, Sharon Breeggemann! Sharon has volunteered to put together a quilt for the convention. She is using the B-T squares along with a quilt square she has found called Bettina's Star. Sounds wonderful!

Dolly Blomquist is Vice-President of The Betsy-Tacy Society.

"Girls are Great" Conference

The Betsy-Tacy Society along with the Girl Scouts of America and other local and regional organizations are sponsoring a "Girls are Great" Conference and Sleep-Over. The Conference will be held in Mankato on a weekend in May, 1997. On Friday the keynote address will be presented by Deb Sunderman. Deb played basketball at Mankato State University until a disability ended her college career. She began playing wheel chair basketball and was with the Gold Medal U.S. National Team from 1988-1992 at the Paralympics. Ms. Sunderman was recently named MSU Distinguished Alumna. Following her address the girls will take part in activities that promote self-esteem. On Saturday the girls will take part in a program led by MSU graduate students of the Experiential Education Program. This will involve a group activity obstacle course. Lunch will follow and afternoon breakout discussion groups will be held. A closing program with an awards ceremony will end the Conference at 3:00 pm. If anyone has questions or is interested in doing a similar project in your community, please contact Suzanne Bunkers at 507/388-4020.

Betsy-Tacy Society Catalog

I would like to thank everyone who made purchases from the BTS catalog. Please note the following corrections: *Biography of Maud Hart Lovelace*, by Ken Berg is in paperback.

The large tote bag is black ink on a beige bag.

To request a catalog or to order, contact:
Sandi Kleinschmidt
150 Copper Mountain Drive
Mankato, MN 56001