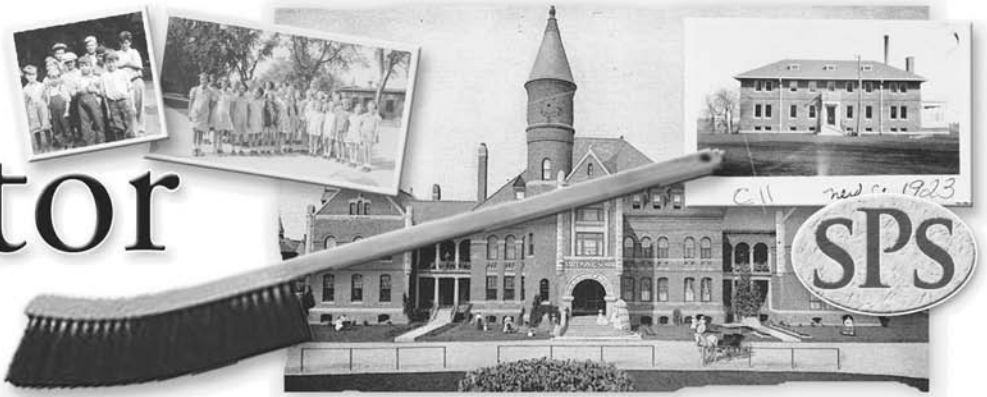


The Radiator Brush



Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum & Historic Cottage 11 Boys' Dormitory
~ Fall 2021 Harvey Ronglien Memorial Edition ~

SAYING GOOD-BYE TO HARVEY RONGLIEN

We knew the time would come, but it is still difficult to say good-bye to such a dear person as Harvey Ronglien. Harvey died on Tuesday, September 21, in his adopted hometown of Owatonna, Minnesota, at the age of 94. When Harvey arrived at the Minnesota State Public School on November 1, 1932, it would be hard to imagine the impact this 5-year-old boy would make as a champion for all the other boys and girls who were placed here.

This issue of *The Radiator Brush* will remember Harvey's life. For our many readers who were not aware of his passing or who were unable to attend his memorial service, we will share some of the tributes that came his way. The State School kid should be proud of his life "remembering the children."



Harvey M. Ronglien
1927 - 2021

OBITUARY

Harvey Melvin Ronglien, 94, of Owatonna, died Tuesday, September 21, 2021, in Owatonna.

He was born May 5, 1927, in Hegbert Township, Swift County near Appleton, Minnesota, the son of Edward and Oline (Bjorklie) Ronglien. He lived at the Owatonna State School from age 5 to 16. Harvey entered the United States Army on June 18, 1945, served in Italy and Germany during WW II, and was honorably discharged on February 5, 1947. Following his return from military service, Harvey graduated from Owatonna High School in 1948.

He was united in marriage to Maxine Grunklee on December 27, 1952, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Havana Township. The couple made their home in Owatonna and Harvey worked as a lineman for the OPU for 35 years, retiring in 1984.

Harvey was very involved in the community, especially

with the Orphanage Museum. He served on the Orphanage Museum Board and the Senior Place Board, was a press contributor to the *Owatonna People's Press*, and was a speaker and tour guide at the State School. His book "A Boy From C-11" is an all-time best seller. Many will remember Harvey as a beloved coach of numerous sports teams in Owatonna.

He is survived by children, Rob (Deb) Ronglien of Eden Prairie and Cheri Ronglien of Minneapolis; granddaughter, Tiffany (Andy) Myers of Bryant, SD; great-grandchildren Callia, Ava, Drew, and Weston; brother-in-law, Norman (Ruth) Grunklee of Red Wing and other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Oline; wife, Maxine Ronglien; a son in infancy; three brothers and four sisters.

Memorials are preferred to the State School Legacy Fund.

This article originally appeared in the September 29 issue of the Steele County Times. Reprinted with permission.

RONGLIEN WORKED TIRELESSLY TOWARD MUSEUM'S CREATION

by: Deb Flemming Editor, Steele County Times

A State Schooler himself, Harvey Ronglien worked tirelessly to ensure that the 10,000-plus children who lived at the State School orphanage in Owatonna between 1886 and 1945 would never be forgotten.

To that end, Ronglien and his late wife, Maxine, successfully spearheaded efforts to establish and expand the Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum in Owatonna.

Ronglien died Tuesday, Sept. 21, at Timberdale Trace in Owatonna. He was 94.

Following Ronglien's funeral service Saturday, a hearse drove Ronglien past the museum en route to his final resting place near Maxine and their infant son at St. John Cemetery in Owatonna.

He wanted one last drive through the grounds, said his daughter, Cheri Ronglien of south Minneapolis. It was a drive she and her father would often make together. "Every week, I would pick up Dad and we would go to

The Kernel to get ice cream....we'd also go to the State School, often watching the video in Cottage 11." According to Cheri, the museum and the myriad related projects undertaken to preserve the memories of life at the State School and the children who lived – and died – were part of what her mother called Harvey's "divine mission."

"Receiving permission from the Owatonna City Council, Harvey took on the task of erecting a monument in front of the Main Administration Building of the former State School. This unveiling of 'State School Kids Memorial' led to the opening of a small museum inside the main building, as well as restoration of the State School Cemetery," according to a 2013 museum newsletter.

Since 1992, the museum has been enlarged in the corridors of the Main Building, the cemetery received a second upgrade, Cottage 11 was restored, a memorial boardwalk now leads to the cemetery and an outdoor audio tour takes you through the grounds.

Continued on the next page.



Following Ronglien's funeral service Saturday, a hearse drove Ronglien past the museum en route to his final resting place near Maxine and their infant son at St. John Cemetery in Owatonna.

"He was so fearful people wouldn't remember the State School," said friend Sandy Dinse, whose mother also lived at the orphanage as a child. Dinse also served on the museum board with Ronglien.

In her eulogy at Harvey's funeral service, Dinse said: "Living at the State School was a test of survival for those kids. Some left with scars that would last them a lifetime. Yet both Harvey and my mom had the same philosophy of the orphanage. They had a place to sleep and something to eat, but there was never any love given those kids.

"He considered it home and he wanted the kids remembered," said Dinse. "I'll miss him because he was a part of my history. The connection, like the one he and Mom had, are gone...are missing."

"Something else missing for Ronglien was his wife", said Dinse. "After Max was gone, he was so lost. He would talk about her and say he felt like a half of a scissors without her." Maxine Ronglien died in 2017, about a month after Harvey's 90th birthday.

Harvey Ronglien arrived at the State School at the age of 5 with his brother Oscar, who was a year older. He stayed until age 16. Following his return from military service, Ronglien graduated from Owatonna High School in 1948, age 21.

He worked as a lineman for Owatonna Public Utilities for 35 years, retiring in 1984. He was a member of the Golden Gloves Boxing Team, AA since 1981, Owatonna VFW and Legion, Eagles Club, Steele County Historical Society, and was honored with the Book of Golden Deeds award in 2004.

In addition to serving on the museum's board of directors, Ronglien served as tour guide until 2019 to the thousands of museum visitors, according to Anne Peterson, who has served as the museum's director since 2013.

Ronglien's book, "A Boy From C-11," is one of 11 books sold in the museum gift shop and remains the No. 1 seller at the museum, said Peterson.

Nicole Wacek, of Owatonna, bought 10 copies of Ronglien's book while touring the museum. She said her grandmother lived on Glendale Street and would check on the cemetery each night. Through the years, Wacek's friendship with Ronglien grew.

"I'm honestly going to remember his smile; he had it up until the end," said Wacek, who regularly visited Ronglien. "He was a legend and I told him that the day before he passed.

"I would like people to remember him for the legend he was. He won't be forgotten."



Harvey's brother-in-law, Norman Grunklee, salutes as "Taps" is played at the cemetery. Harvey was buried with full military honors.

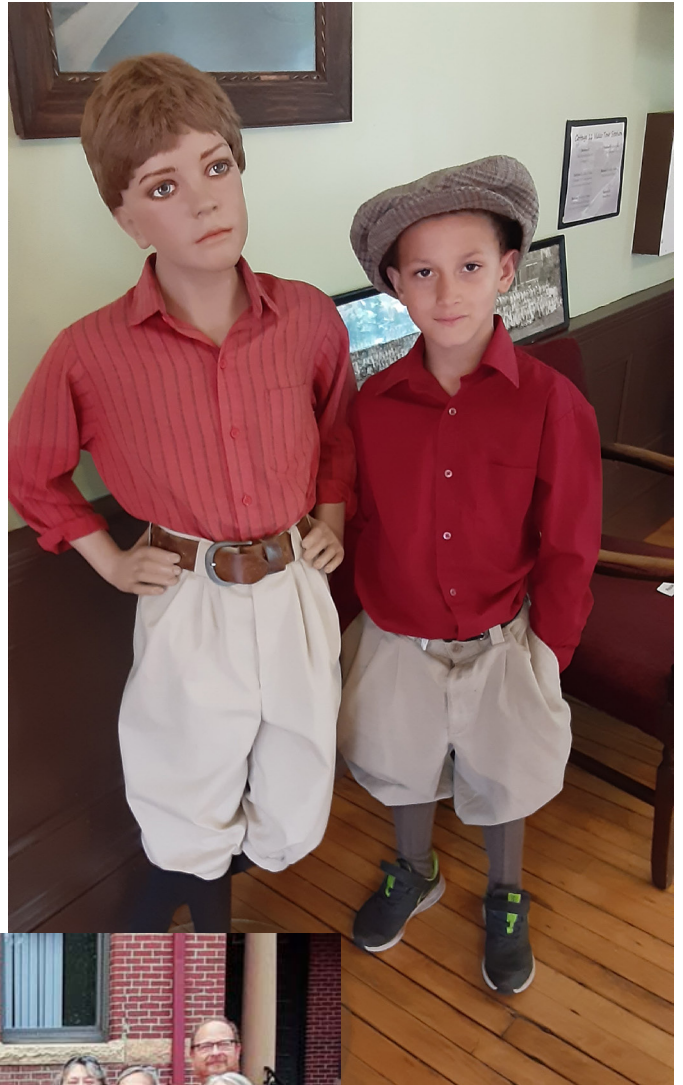
2021 TOURISM BROUGHT MANY VISITORS

Visitors from all over the United States came to the Orphanage Museum once we opened on May 1. People were ready to get out in public again and they found their way to Owatonna.

One thing that stood out was the number of visitors coming who had a personal connection to the State School. People left notes in our guest register telling what family members had been part of the State School system over the years.

Descendants of Cleve Oviatt, who was sent to the State School in 1904 with his three brothers, came for a tour in September. The four ladies on the left in the photo below are his granddaughters, who remember him as a kind, wonderful man. It was great for so many generations to come to learn about life at the State School.

What a legacy Harvey and Maxine created!



Above: Gabe Guy served as an assistant tour guide a couple times this year. He was a real hit.



Left: Descendants of Cleve Oviatt, who was sent to the State School in 1904. Cleve was the same age as Gabe is now when he came.

HARVEY RONGLIEN EULOGY

SANDY DINSE

Thank you for coming to honor and say good-bye to Harvey Ronglien, a legend in Owatonna.

Harvey and I met years ago because of a common bond we had. My mom and Harvey were both State School kids. He and Maxine were helpful in giving me the information I needed to obtain my mother's State School records. That friendship led me to serving on the Museum Board, where I saw firsthand the dedication these two people had in making sure the children of the State School would be remembered. Harvey thought that in a generation or two no one would remember that West Hills was first an orphanage or remember the children who lived there. He and Maxine saw to it that that didn't happen. While Maxine, Harvey, and I were changing seasonal displays in the Museum, nothing made Harvey happier or gave him a bigger smile than if someone recognized him and he could tell them about the State School.

When home life changed for the Ronglien family in 1932, the children were placed on the Swift County courthouse steps in Benson, Minnesota, Harvey age 4 and Oscar age 5. Townspeople were notified that if they would clothe and feed the children, they could take them home. Oscar and Harvey were left there because they were too young to work, thus beginning their stay at the State School for Dependent and Neglected Children in Owatonna. Harvey always wondered why nobody took him because he was so cute.

Living at the State School was a test of survival for those kids. Some left with scars that would last them a lifetime. Yet, both Harvey and my mom had the same philosophy of the orphanage. They had a place to sleep and something to eat, but there was never any love given to those kids. Yet Harvey had a real sense of pride in saying he was a State School kid and considered the place his home.

Those of you who knew Harvey well would, from time to time, hear a little of the King's English when he didn't agree with something, so forgive me for quoting one of those times. The radiator brush was the instrument of choice when handing out punishment. We were discussing the harsh treatment of the kids and Harvey said, "Yea, Sandy, there were a lot of home runs hit on a lot of asses!"

I think the brush was used mostly on the boys because I never remember my mom mentioning ever getting spanked with the brush. The only thing she talked about was her and the girls getting their faces slapped when they cried for their mothers. I always believed that the matrons had to go to "mean school" before they could work there.

The boys enjoyed the trains that went by with bums hanging out the open freight car doors. They would throw apples to them from the orchard, which I suspect the travelers appreciated. Seeing them riding the trains set the boys to dreaming about all the adventures the bums would be having. Harvey said, "So we wanted to be bums; some of us made it and some didn't."

This is a quote from one of Harvey's many great editorials in the *Owatonna People's Press*: Woven in the tapestry of Harvey's life was the night he noticed a young lady with a group of her friends at the Monterey Ballroom in Owatonna. Being young and cocky, he strolled over to her and asked her name. She hesitantly replied, "Maxine." He then bent down and whispered in her ear, "Maxine, from this moment on your life will never be the same," and he was right. And so it is with the tapestry of life. Looking back, we might question some of the weaving, but somehow as we reflect on the past, the patterns seem to say it was meant to be. They were married three years later.



Harvey and Maxine's wedding day

Harvey kept his sense of humor, even through recent changes as his health deteriorated. When meeting with a hospice nurse, she told him, "Harvey, you look good today." He replied, "Yes, I am good looking."

It is with heartfelt gratitude I would like to thank the staff at Timberdale and Heartland Hospice for the wonderful care they gave this precious man.

Harvey always said he felt like half a pair of scissors without Maxine. Now the scissors are a pair again. God bless you, Harvey, and thank you for being my friend.

We are always happy to receive State School memories and stories. The piece below is about Eva Jensen, one of our authors. Her book is appropriately titled "No Tears Allowed" and is for sale in our Gift Shop. If you have a story to share, please send it to museum@ci.owatonna.mn.us.

A SURVIVOR'S HEART - EVA CARLSON JENSEN



My Mom, age 7, came to the State School for Dependent & Neglected Children by train from Northern Minnesota in 1921, along with two of her brothers. The remainder of her family—her mom, sister, and two other brothers—stayed on the train. The door closed and she was never to see them again.

She never got to say goodbye. When she cried for her mom at the State School, her face was slapped and she was told, "there's no crying here."

Mom worked at the State School in the Nursery caring for the babies, in the hospital scrubbing floors, and in the kitchen. While matrons and staff were the only ones who had pancakes for breakfast, Mom would sneak the extras back to her cottage for the other girls. Even dry pancakes tasted good for hungry little kids.

While serving on the Museum Board, Harvey and Maxine gave me the information I needed to obtain my mother's State School records. Much to my surprise, this very large envelope arrived filled with my mom's information. In those papers was a letter my grandma

sent to my mom. Time had passed and my mom and dad were already married. The institution held to their policy of forbidding the kids to have any contact with their families, so they never gave my mother the letter, even after she was no longer at the school. My grandmother could have lived with my parents! And, there was no one left to slap.

Because of the lack of love given to the kids, Mom always had a soft spot in her heart for little ones. Mom had almost anything a little kid would want in her purse—candy, gum. She got to be well known for her purse chuck full of things to make a little kid happy. Mom remembered what that unhappiness felt like and if she could put a smile on a child's face, that was her goal. She would buy a doll at a rummage sale, make a new dress for it, and give it to little girls, remembering the doll she left behind at the State School.

My mom was a survivor of that institution. She made the best of every situation. Mom saw to it that my sister, brother, and I had some of the childhood things she never had.

Mom passed away in 2010 at the age of 95. I will forever feel blessed that she, a State School kid, was my mother.

by Sandy Jensen Dinse

"My friends — Harvey and Maxine—were two beautiful people with beautiful hearts who gave hundreds of children a chance to talk about their childhoods and no longer feel ashamed about the way they grew up. Having had both Harvey and Maxine in my life was truly a gift from God that I always cherished."

Vivian Swan Manthe

DONATIONS

WORD OF DECEASED STATE SCHOOLERS

Elsie Turnmire Freeman Potter

Irja Kangas Miles

James Edwin Chauncey

Harvey Ronglien

Violet L. Glasby



The Children Remembered Orphanage Legacy Trust recently reached a total \$75,817.48.

MEMORIALS

Roger & Corinne Brenke (M) Mother Stella Smith

Marla Ray Finley (M) Clayton Finley

The Museum Board is taking steps to continue the mission of Harvey & Maxine Ronglien, now that they are no longer here to lead the way. More information will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

Donations to the Legacy Trust are always welcome and are tax deductible.

GENERAL FUND

Myrtle Clark Loch

Mary Smith

Shirley Clane

Mike & Marie Miskovich

Scott & Nichole Longaker

DeLoyce Anderson

Cynthia Peterson

Tony & Tracy Dalluge

Anne Huhndorf

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2021 50/50 RAFFLE WINNER

The raffle ticket of Roger Brenke was drawn on Thursday, September 30. We appreciate all the support our sixth 50/50 raffle received. A total of 139 tickets were entered, which raised \$1,390 for the Museum and gave \$1,390 to our winner.

LEGACY TRUST

Michael & Elaine Johnson

Jeanette M Drake (M) Stanley Drake

Fred H. Fritz (M) Alfred Fritz

Sharon Slaybaugh (M) Dorothy G. Brown McNall



Nonprofit Organization

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Owatonna, MN 55060

Return Service Requested

Interested in purchasing "The Children Remember" or brick on the School Plaza? How about purchasing an "apple" for the Apple Giving Tree displayed in C-11? Please fill in and mail to our address the form below. Your support is greatly appreciated! Checks should be written out to: MN State School Orphanage Museum. Donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

☐ I'd like to order a copy of "A Real Treasure" 1930 historic film DVD at \$25.00 plus \$7.00 for shipping/handling.

☐ I'd like to order a copy of "The Children Remember" documentary DVD at \$19.95 plus \$7.00 for shipping/handling.

☐ I'd like to purchase ☐ brick(s) at \$100.00 each. Fill out inscription below.

☐ I'd like to pledge an "apple." (☐ Red (\$1,000+), ☐ Gold (\$500-\$999), ☐ Green (\$250-\$499) ☐ Silver (\$100-\$249)

☐ I'd like to make a tax-deductible donation of _____. (☐ Donation for C-11 ☐ Legacy Trust ☐ Non-specified)

If you wish to purchase a brick, please print clearly the words you wish to have inscribed.
