



The missile in Missile Park is real. It commemorates the base that was stationed in St. Boni from 1959-1971. (Al Lohman/The Patriot)

St. Boni history in spotlight on library's walking tour

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Did you know that St. Bonifacius was an important site in the nation's missile defense system during the Cold War?

That the community once was home to the largest canning factory west of the Mississippi?

That the St. Boni Library started as People's Bank in 1916 before it became a library in 1931?

Learn about these and other interesting local historical facts on Saturday, June 2 when the library and the St. Bonifacius Historical Society host "Trails to the Library." The event begins at 10 a.m. and includes a walking tour of about a dozen nearby historical sites in the community.

Local historians also will be on hand that morning to share their memories and recollections of the village, which once was a thriving business community.

A 1909 edition of the Waconia Patriot reports that St. Boni at the time consisted of a bank, two general stores, a clothing store, two boot and shoe stores, two hotels, three saloons, two stock dealers, a creamery, a plumbing shop, two hardware stores, three implement

dealers, a livery and feed stable, a grain elevator, two coal yards, a Catholic school and a public school, and a Catholic church and Baptist church. Also, Minnetonka Canning Company, which could can upward of 80,000 cans of corn and other vegetables in 12 hours.

Many of those sites and some newer landmarks are highlighted on a walking trail map that was created for the June 2 event. The St. Boni outing is part of a broader series of Trails to the Library events being sponsored this summer by the Hennepin County Library system, including the Maple Plain and Westonka libraries.

Associate librarian Brian Madigan reports that the libraries are launching the campaign to encourage outdoor exploration of the communities and the Dakota Rail regional trails that connect them. Plans are for the St. Boni historical map to be made available to trail users.

One final historical note: The St. Bonifacius Historical Society is located in the basement of the library. The society was founded in 2001 and has thousands of old photos, documents, letters, newspaper articles, diaries, maps and church records.

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