



The Blue Earth County **HISTORIAN**

FALL 2024
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The Blue Earth County
HISTORIAN

Fall 2024
Volume 30, Number 4

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COVER PHOTO:
NOW: Historic Hubbard House Museum at 606 South Broad Street. THEN: R.D. Hubbard Family in front of their home, c. 1900. This photograph is featured on one of the four new benches at the History Center.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Friends of the Blue Earth County Historical Society,

As the holiday season approaches, the Board of Trustees want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support throughout the year. Your generosity has been the cornerstone of our mission to preserve and celebrate the rich history of Blue Earth County.

This year, we've seen tangible expressions of your support. The renovation of our parking lot and the beautiful new paver patio featuring donor-purchased bricks stand as lasting symbols of our community's commitment to BECHS. Each engraved brick tells a story, collectively paving the way for future generations to engage with our shared heritage. If you haven't yet, consider adding your own piece to this lasting legacy.



Ribbon cutting on new patio September 17, 2024

As we look ahead to the upcoming year, the Board will be embarking on a journey to refine the long-term goals of BECHS. We believe it's essential to envision our future thoughtfully, ensuring that we continue to serve our community in meaningful ways. We're excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are committed to enhancing our programs, preserving our historical sites, and expanding our reach.

Your support continues to be more crucial than ever. Contributions enable us to maintain historic sites like the Hubbard House, enhance our archives, and support initiatives that keep the stories of Blue Earth County alive for future generations. By making a donation, you play a vital role in shaping the future of BECHS and preserving the legacy that binds us together.

We also invite you to shop small, and shop locally at our Gift Shop for unique holiday gifts. Every purchase directly supports BECHS and our mission. Your generosity—whether through donations, purchasing a commemorative brick, or participating in our events—makes a significant difference in our community.

We believe that history isn't just about the past; it's about the foundation we build today for tomorrow. By coming together, we ensure that the legacy of Blue Earth County continues to inspire and connect us all.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community. Your support is the gift that keeps our history vibrant and our connections strong. Wishing you a joyous holiday season filled with warmth and cherished memories.

Warm regards,

Nik Proehl
Board of Trustees Chair

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Wow! What a year so far! As I write, we are in post-event mode after another successful Night at the Speakeasy. The annual fundraising event was attended by 160 people and netted \$13,000! Please see event photos on page 12. We are already starting to plan next year's special events. Watch for announcements coming soon.

Now, we are shifting our attention to the last two months of 2024. November and December are filled with special programs, including our annual Anniversary Open House November 8-9 and the annual holiday tradition of Christmas at the Hubbard House. Our History Center Gift Shop is packed with new items, including books, local artisan goods, and a new line of vintage items in partnership with the local shop Vagabond Village. Visit the History Center for all your holiday shopping: there's something for everyone on your list. And the revenue supports preserving local history!

It's also the time of the year when we ask for your financial support to close the gap in our operating budget. It costs BECHS \$300,000 each

year to collect, preserve, and share local history. We have introduced many free programs and admission days to reduce the barrier so all households at all income levels can access our local history. Over 84% of our budget is tied to costs to operate the History Center and to pay our dedicated and professional staff fair wages. Right now, our gap is \$70,000. Over the next two months, we anticipate that to shrink with Gift Shop sales, program revenue, and unrestricted donations. Thank you for all you have already done to support BECHS!

This season of giving, here are some ways you can support local history:

- Shop at the History Center Gift Shop
- Purchase a BECHS Membership for a friend or loved one
- Invite a friend or family member to join you at an upcoming event or to visit the museum. Sharing why you love BECHS.
- Purchase a commemorative brick

On behalf of the Staff and Board of Trustees, Happy Holidays, and thank you for being our History Hero!

THE NEW HISTORY CENTER PARKING LOT IS OPEN

After 10 years, many History Heroes, and great construction partners, the History Center's new parking opened in late August. To celebrate, we held a Parking Lot Party with a ribbon cutting on the new commemorative brick patio on September 17. If you have not purchased your brick yet, there is still plenty of time and room on the patio. All brick purchases from this point will support future capital improvement projects.

What's next? In 2025, we will complete our landscape plan with a new prairie pollinator teaching garden and decorative fence panels. The fence along Warren Street, as seen in the photo, will not only serve as a light barrier for neighboring properties but will also be signage for the History Center. You will also notice a concept to add those same design aesthetics to the façade of the building. We are in the design phase of this project but watch for more details coming soon.

Thank you, History Heroes, who made this project possible! Your value and investment in the future of History has been generous and steadfast. Special thanks to the companies who worked on



this project and for their in-kind support:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ISG | Chambers Excavating |
| Holtmeier Construction | River City Electric |
| Tailwind | Loken Striping |
| W. Lorentz Construction | Traverse des Sioux |
| Nielsen Blacktopping | Garden Center |

CUSTOMIZE AND ORDER YOUR BRICK AT
BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/BECHS

NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

Anniversary Open House

Join BECHS in celebrating 123 years of saving Blue Earth County's rich history at the History Center November 8-9. The Anniversary Open House weekend will include free admission to the History Center Museum, daily door prizes, Gift Shop sale specials, refreshments, and a chance to walk down memory lane with the newest exhibit *TOYS!*.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society was founded on November 7, 1901, with the task to collect, preserve and present the history of Blue Earth County for present and future generations. The Society continues that mission today at the History Center, historic R.D. Hubbard House and throughout Blue Earth County.

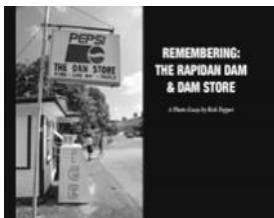
Author Series: Rick Pepper

Remembering the Rapidan Dam

Saturday, November 9, 1 p.m.
Free

Join us at the History Center during the Anniversary Open House

to learn more about the History of the Rapidan Dam. BECHS Staff will start with information on the construction of the Dam found in our book *Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark*. Rick Pepper, local photo historian, will then share his new book showcasing the dam during the flooding. Books are available for sale in the History Center Gift Shop.



American Plains Bison by Tim Pulis

Saturday, November 16, 1 p.m.
\$10/adults, \$5/children 5-17,
Free for BECHS Members

Join Tim Pulis, Minneopa State Park Bison Ambassador, for an introduction to the history and biology of the largest land mammal in North America, the American Plains Bison.

In 2015, Minneopa State Park reintroduced American Plains Bison to

the prairie in South Central Minnesota. Minneopa manages 330-acres of prairie



land for the bison range. Bison roamed this area of Minnesota freely until human migration in the 1800s. According to the journals of French Explorer Pierre Charles LeSueur around 1700, the explorers ate 400 buffalo the first year.

The Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd has been a formal agreement between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at Minneopa State Park and Minnesota Zoo since 2012. These partners work cooperatively to preserve American Plains Bison with healthy genetics and to conserve other prairie wildlife species native to Minnesota.

Tim will share his experience, teachings, and photographs as a Bison Ambassador. This is a great program for all-ages.



Christmas at the Hubbard House *Melodies & Masterpieces*

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is excited to welcome the holiday season with the annual Christmas at the Hubbard House weekends in December.

This year, enjoy "Melodies & Masterpieces." Step back in time to a Victorian Christmas, where the melodious sounds of the holidays and winter-themed art invite visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty of the holiday season. In addition to traditional Victorian Christmas décor, the Hubbard House will feature winter-themed art from local Blue Earth County fine art artists of the past.

"Melodies & Masterpieces" at the Hubbard House will kickoff with Self-guided Holiday Tours December 6-8, featuring a special living history experience and scavenger hunt.

Enjoy Guided Holiday Tours the following two weekends: December 14-15 and 21-22. These two weekends include live music in the Hubbard House and Carriage House and a scavenger hunt for all ages.

Pre-registration is highly encouraged as space is limited. See page 15 for details.

Remembering Marcella: The First Miss Mankato

By Tim Pulis

About the author: "I am a lifelong resident of Mankato and have always had a keen interest in local history. Luckily, we have a great county historical society that really helps with my research. I am a graduate of Mankato High School and Minnesota State University and am active in many areas of the community, especially Minneopa State Park."

My friend Jim Schaffer passed away a few years ago. He had a large variety of jobs during his working career. He was a physical director at the YMCA, restaurant owner, and worm farmer. He taught bartending class at the vo-tech and worked in the sports information department at Mankato State University. His lifelong passion, though, was dealing with estates and buying and selling antique furniture and collectibles.

One day, about 25 years ago, he stopped by my house and gave me two items because he knew I was interested in local history. One was a framed oval-shaped photograph of a young woman in sepia hues. It measured 15 inches wide and 18 inches high. She was sitting in an open window holding a bouquet of a half dozen roses and wearing a stylish dress. She was pretty and wore her hair short. The other item Jim gave me was an old shoe horn from a local shoe store. Jim claimed that the woman in the photograph was the first Miss Mankato. He never told me who she was, and I hung on to the photograph and shoehorn all these years.

Only recently did I discover the identity of the woman, and the shoe horn played a key role in solving this mystery. The following story explains how things came together and how I expanded my search to find out about her life and family. Sometimes, it is a small world. My search used



some of the research tools available in the Research Center at the Blue Earth County Historical Society and Ancestry.com, an online genealogical website.

The newspaper clippings files are located in the Research Center at Blue Earth County Historical Society. There are over 1,500 vertical files each holding newspaper clippings dating as

early as the 1850s. Each file contains a different historical topic. It is a treasure trove for local history buffs. Recently, I had one of the drawers open, looking for a particular topic, when I noticed a different folder. This happens often to me. I get sidetracked and check out a folder that bears no resemblance to my original search. Jessica Potter calls it jumping into a 'rabbit hole.' The title of the folder was "Pageants-Mankato-Beauty." A quick look through the folder told me who the first Miss Mankato was. (At the time it was billed as "Queen of the Carnival"). But was my photograph the same woman? They looked very similar, but I needed more proof. The lady's name was Marcella Fricke, and the name on the shoe horn was Fricke's Shoe Store, her father's business. Bingo! But maybe some more proof would be good.

A phone call to Kathy, Jim's widow, confirmed that the items came from 413 Mulberry Street, where Marcella Fricke lived for 56 years. This fact was obtained from looking through city directories, which the Historical Society has an extensive collection. With my 25-year photo mystery solved, I now wanted to find out more about Marcella and, if possible, what that day she was crowned 'queen' was like 117 years ago.

Marcella appeared in the census in 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950. The following facts



Marcella Fricke, the mysterious woman in the oval picture frame. Photograph has been donated to the BECHS Archives.

can be ascertained from these clues to the past.

- She was born in Minnesota in 1891 to Henry and Bertha Fricke.
- She was an only child, even though her mother actually had two children born. (Another mystery to be solved.)
- Her father, Henry, ran a shoe store and owned it in the same building where they lived at 307 North Front Street.
- Henry was born in Minnesota.
- Her mother Bertha's maiden name was Kron, and she was also born in Minnesota.
- In 1920, Marcella lived at 312 N. 2nd Street and was married to George Laven.
- Her husband George was a car salesman.
- Starting in the 1930 census, her address was 413 Mulberry Street.



Henry and Bertha Fricke, c. 1890s

While Marcella was an only child, she actually had a brother who died of diphtheria three years before she was born. He was six years old. I can imagine his parents were devastated. When Marcella came along, she likely filled a large void in their lives. Her mother's family was well-known in the community. Marcella's uncle Fred Kron owned a large department store that later became Salets' clothing store, a long-time fixture in town. An aunt married the man who built the Stahl House. Another uncle was the first person born to settlers in Mankato in 1855.

An interesting story about her family was in 1937 when her father was in California for the winter and suddenly fell ill. He took the train to Mankato and arrived at 5:20 a.m. one winter morning. Marcella met him at the depot and took him home, where he died three hours later. Their family ties were strong.

Marcella and her husband, George, built a house in 1926 at 413 Mulberry Street. George died in 1969, and Marcella continued to live there until 1982. Just before to that, Marcella started to sell

off her belongings, according to my friend Kathy, who lived near her at the time. Just before she moved to Oak Lawn Health Care Center, all she had in the world was a trunk full of clothes and memories. Marcella died in 1991 at the age of 100.

An interview with Marcella in 1982, when she was 91 years old, formed the basis of an article in the *Mankato Free Press*. She had attended grade school at Saints Peter and Paul's Catholic Church and then attended the Mankato State Normal School for two years. She recalled being 16 years old when she won a contest. She believed that someone from the Hubbard Milling Company, which was across the street from where she lived, must have entered her into the contest. She thought it was in 1908 but wasn't sure of the year. She said there was an ocean of people watching her have a crown placed on her head and a wide sash of pearls around her waist that seemed to weigh ten pounds. The best moment for her was when she was presented with a diamond ring.

Marcella was remembering an event 75 years before that interview, and we all know that memories are fluid. What I really wanted was to find a newspaper article from 1908 about the contest. Or was it 1907 when Marcella was 16 years old? It would be a tedious task to look at microfilm for two years of newspapers. What saved me was utilizing the card catalog in the Research Center. In it, you will find index cards of names in alphabetical order. Each card leads you to sources of information about each person, including obituaries and newspaper articles. Under Marcella Fricke's name was the date of a *Mankato Free Press* article about the contest. It was June 21, 1907. It is a long article, and from it, I will give you a synopsis of a very fascinating day in Mankato's history.

For six days in 1907, the Mankato chapter of Modern Woodmen of America sponsored a large carnival in downtown Mankato. The festivities lasted a week and included a public picnic in North Mankato. Parker Amusements was hired to bring their entertainment to thrill the crowds. This traveling company was known to use 35 railroad cars to get all their equipment to the site. They had their own band and animal acts, including the only horse-riding lion in the world at that time. Rides like a carousel and merry-go-round were also included. Some things were free, and others had admission fees. They provided their own electrical generators to light up the streets at night and power their rides.

The carnival was set up on Second Street, north of Jackson Street. Hundreds of people from out of town ventured to Mankato for the events. The train depot would have been chaotic with people coming and going. The *Free Press* had nothing but good things to say about Parker Amusements. They also mentioned how "gentlemanly" their employees were and how not one of them had to be reprimanded by an officer of the law.

It was against this backdrop of gaiety that the contest for "Queen of the Carnival" took place. It was sponsored by the *Mankato Free Press*, and public voting lasted the entire week. It cost a penny to cast each vote. On the second to last day of

the carnival the vote totals were announced in the newspaper. Marcella Fricke tallied 13,391 votes, and Georgia Cluxton had 12,670 votes. Evidently, there were other candidates, but these were easily the top two. The newspaper noted that it was a friendly contest and the winner should be congratulated on her success. They also stressed that the result does not detract from the popularity of Miss Cluxton. The total number of votes between the two candidates was 26,000. At a penny a vote that is \$260. That's around \$8,000 by today's standard. No one begrudged the Modern Woodman of America, a fraternal organization, for using the money to help pay for the expenses of this big



Marcella Fricke, Queen of the Carnival, June 21, 1907. Photo courtesy *Mankato Free Press* November 1, 1982.

party.

The last night of the carnival was for the crowning of the Queen, Marcella Fricke. She arrived downtown in elegant fashion, riding in a decorated automobile along with four of her maids of honor. They ascended the stage wearing white. The queen "is a very handsome young lady who was so attractive as to win the regards of the big audience from the start." In fact, the immense crowd filled the street for a block in each direction. At 8:30 p.m., C.O. Dailey of the Modern Woodmen of America addressed the crowd and thanked them for participating in the picnic and carnival. He then turned to Marcella and placed a beautiful crown on her head, declaring her the Queen of the Carnival. He also handed her a diamond ring that became hers to keep. After she slipped it on her finger, the

crowd cheered and applauded. Marcella recalled years later, "My knees were shaking like castanets. Someone yelled 'Speech!' and for once, I couldn't open my mouth." And just like that, it was over. A professional photographer took a posed photo of her sitting with her crown, necklaces, and sash of pearls. She then wandered through the carnival for a bit and eventually headed home to have a quiet dinner with friends and family. That was the start and end of her reign.

Marcella possibly never ventured outside a one-mile circle within Mankato her entire life. She was born in town, likely at home. She lived on Front Street until adulthood. She went to grade school and then college, which were all in town. She married and then lived four ten years a block from her parents. She built a house just a block from her church of Saints Peter and Paul and lived there for 56 years. Eventually, she moved into an assisted living facility just up the Main Street hill. Her final resting place is at Calvary Cemetery in Mankato.

You can learn a lot about a person's life 100 years ago with the amazing research tools available. Her short obituary said her husband had preceded her in death by 22 years and that no

THE BIG WOODMEN PICNIC & CARNIVAL
SIX DAYS OF FESTIVITIES

All Roads Will Lead to Mankato Next Week

Parker Amusement Co. to furnish the big Attractions

Biggest Thing in the History of the City

There'll be something doing ALL THE TIME

Don't Miss Seeing The Big Show Come on Monday

Woodmen Picnic Day Wednesday, June the 19th

COME TO MANKATO on MONDAY. STAY FOR THE WEEK

close relatives survived her. She never had children. At 100 years of age, all her longtime friends had passed away. She was alone at the end, except for a memory of that beautiful day in 1907 when she became the first Miss Mankato and throngs of people adored her. It must have been important to her as her short obituary mentioned it twice. I truly hope she went to her grave wearing the diamond ring awarded to her that evening.

Sources:

- Newspaper clipping folders.
- Various city directories.
- United States Census.
- Ancestry.com
- Biography card files.
- Various *Mankato Free Press* articles.



**BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL
COUNTY SOCIETY**
1901 — 123 YEARS — 2024

**ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE
NOVEMBER 8 - 9, 2024**

**Visit the History Center
FREE Museum Admission
Daily Door Prizes
Gift Shop Specials
TOYS! & Main Streets Exhibits**

**Give History
for the Holidays**

*Marian Anderson Art
Unique Gifts · Books
Memberships · Donations
Commemorative Brick*



**CHRISTMAS AT THE
HUBBARD HOUSE**

Melodies & Masterpieces

Step back in time to a Victorian Christmas, where the melodious sounds of the holidays and winter-themed art immerses you in the beauty of the holiday season. In addition to traditional Victorian Christmas décor, the Hubbard House will feature a special exhibition of winter-themed art by Blue Earth County artists of the past.



WEEKENDS IN DECEMBER

606 South Broad Street, Mankato

SELF-GUIDED TOURS

Friday, December 6, 6-9 p.m.

Saturday, December 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday, December 8, 1-4 pm

Enjoy a living history experience

GUIDED HOLIDAY TOURS

December 14 & 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

December 15 & 22, 1-4 p.m.

Enjoy a live music both weekends

\$10/Adult; \$7/BECHS Member;
\$5/Child (5-17)

Advanced tickets on sale
November 15

*Tours begin in the
Carriage House
Holiday Gift Shop*



www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY: HOLIDAY EDITION

By Rachel Walden, Museum Manager

The Holiday season is just around the corner. When thinking of those you're shopping for this year, remember the History Center Gift Shop. We have an eclectic variety of gifts, from handmade to books. We support many local artists and artisans by providing a space for them to sell. When you buy one of their gifts, you're not only helping us, but you're also supporting Blue Earth County talent. The best part is we have gifts for all ages. New this year, we are featuring weekly Gift Shop sales. Be sure to check out the sales schedule below! Please note that sales do not include



consignment items unless otherwise noted.

Explore our collection of vintage-inspired toys, from Jacks to Rubik's Cubes. Our toys are designed to aid in brain development and improve motor skills. They make excellent stocking stuffers. Additionally, we offer a range of children's books by Minnesota authors, including Maud Hart Lovelace's timeless Betsy-Tacy stories, suitable for all ages. Plus, we carry books for older kids written by local authors such as Geoff Herbach, Laurie Wetzell, and J.P. Mackey.

Even though the gardening season is over, it's never too early to start preparing for next year. We have several books on gardening specific to Minnesota, including books on edible and medicinal plants that you can find locally. If you want to jazz up your garden space, we also feature all-weather sculptures from local sculptor Keith Dorn of Dorn's Designs.

There has been a resurgence in the popularity of cookbooks. Celebrate your Midwestern heritage with a cultural staple: cooking! We have plenty of cookbooks, both new and old, featuring classic Midwestern dishes that are perfect for any potluck, family gathering, or just to enjoy at home. Who doesn't love a good tater tot hotdish?

If you need smaller items, we have plenty of those as well. BECHS carries a large variety of sundries. Mankato native Laura Muhm's 'Sota Cracklers features Minnesota soy candles with a crackling wood wick in scents all Minnesotans love, like Backyard Bonfire, Wildflower, Lake

Superior Splash, Front Porch, and the ever-popular Sexy Lumberjack. Local business Rippin' Bark offers one-of-a-kind home goods made from locally gathered diamond willow wood. And think no further than the History Center for unique holiday cards. Aside from our selection of Marian Anderson fine art card packs, we also offer cards and postcards from local photographers Rochelle Koberowski, David Clobes, and Mary Voigt, among others.

Having trouble deciding on a gift? Consider purchasing a BECHS membership or a gift certificate. A

membership is a gift that keeps on giving. Not only does it grant access to the History Center and Hubbard House for a whole year, as well as free and discounted programming, but it also includes a 10% discount on most items in the Gift Shop. You never know what treasures you'll find in our Gift Shop. Pay us a visit to see where your shopping adventure takes you.

HISTORY CENTER GIFT SHOP WEEKLY HOLIDAY SALES

November 5-9
BECHS Publications 20% off

November 12-16
Children's Books and Toys 20% off

November 19-23
Original Hand-painted Hubbard
House Slate Shingles 30% off

November 26-30
Cookbooks 20% off

December 3-7
Marian Anderson Prints, Posters,
Card Packs, and Mugs 20% off

December 10-14
Holiday Décor 20% off

December 17-21
Storewide 25% off



*Sales do NOT include: consignment items, online purchases, and cannot be stacked with member discount.

NEW ART EXHIBITS

The History Center hosts two community artists each quarter with exhibition space on each floor. Both exhibits are free and open to the public until December 21, 2024.

Signs

By Bend of the River Photography Club

Signs are everywhere. Are you looking for a sign? There are no paths without signs. Hoof prints may be signs of deer, and bees may be signs of summer. Should a sign be clearly understood or



open to interpretation? A roadside advertisement with clear intent or something spiritual? A sign can be a large lettered prohibition for the reader to obey or ignore or an

unobtrusive plaque for the curious. It could be a declaration stamped into sheet metal or a plea scrawled onto cardboard. Are you waiting for a sign? Will you follow or ignore it?

Heavy Metal

By Rochelle Koberoski

Find beauty in your everyday surroundings! Often, common things around us that we would normally pass by can yield unexpected beauty and draw us in for close-up examination. An abundance of heavy



equipment nearby caught my eye when I noticed interesting patterns and colors due to the oxidation process. I am drawn to the stark contrast between rust and the original colors of the equipment, the random patterns, and the smaller pieces that stand out against the backdrop of metal. Once I got my camera out, I found much to photograph and am excited to be able to share some of these with you.

Next time you walk around your neighborhood, take a closer look at ordinary objects. Oftentimes, you need not travel far to find an interesting subject for your camera or for discussion!

WELCOME NEW BECHS MEMBERS

July 20 - October 19, 2024

Andy Anderson
Beth Beck
Cimarron Burt
Joyce Gardner
Carol Heemeyer
Susan Kolbinger
Thomas Lee
Kroenke

William McCormack
Rosemary and Marvin
Mock
Candace Norton
Christine Prato
Tom and Charlene
Roberts
Barbara Young

Member dues support BECHS programs, facilities, exhibits, and preservation of Blue Earth County's past for future generations. In exchange for member support, enjoy a variety of benefits for BECHS members-only. Thank you!

BECHS Member Benefits

- Free admission to the History Center and R.D. Hubbard House for one year, plus free or reduced admission to most BECHS events.
- *The Historian*, quarterly publication.
- 10% off most items in the Gift Shop and Marian Anderson Art Gallery, in store and online.
- One 30-minute Research Center search by Staff.

Join or renew online at
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership

BOOK YOUR NEXT SPECIAL EVENT OR MEETING AT THE HISTORY CENTER



The Blue Earth County History Center Meeting Rooms have a number of rental options perfect for your next gathering.

Visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals for more information and rates.
Contact the History Center for availability.

RESEARCH CENTER: LEGACY OF PASS ARCHITECTS

By Bri Krumweide, Archivist

Mankato has been home to many talented and successful architects; one of the most recognizable are two men both named George Pass. George Sr. was born in Pella, Iowa, on July 26, 1848. He worked in Chicago, Burlington, Illinois, New Orleans, and Minneapolis before coming to Mankato in 1878. He established his architectural firm that same year and began gaining notoriety by at least 1881. He partnered with Albert Schippel from 1896-1902. Some of his early buildings in Mankato were the Saulpaugh Hotel (1888) and the Y.M.C.A. (1905).

He was also involved in the community as a member of the city council and organizer and president of the Mankato Mutual Building and Loan Association. He was influential in the organization and was responsible for reducing interest rates. By 1901, the association held almost 200 mortgages.

His son, George Jr., joined the firm in 1909. George Jr. was born in Mankato in 1891 and graduated from Mankato High School and the University of Minnesota. Together, the firm became known for their work with school buildings. In Mankato, they designed Franklin, Lincoln, Union, and Roosevelt schools, all of which are still standing and in use today. Throughout the state, they built around 200 more schools.

Paul T. Rockey joined the firm in 1921. In 1927, the firm was renamed George Pass and Son and P.T. Rockey. Later, it became Pass, Rockey and Church. Throughout the years, the firm designed many other notable buildings in Blue Earth County which are still standing, including the Mankato Clinic (227 Main Street), Masonic Temple (309 S. 2nd Street), Mankato Citizens Telephone Company building (215 Hickory Street), Landkamer's Furniture Store (124-130 Walnut Street), the Free Press building (418 S. 2nd Street), and more.



George Sr. at his drafting desk, circa 1880s. The desk shown here is part of the BECHS collection; in addition, to his scale model of the Blue Earth Courthouse. See drawing of courthouse in background.

George Sr. passed away in 1931, followed by George Jr. in 1959.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is home to the "Kagermeier Architectural Collection". This collection contains modern work completed by Kagermeier architecture firm and is home to Pass's collections. The collection contains blueprints, architectural drawings, specifications, job files, and other records on architectural projects throughout Blue Earth County ranging from 1901 to 2005. These records were created by George Pass, Wick and Stanfield Architects, Kagermeier, and succeeding architecture firms. Locations range from schools, businesses, government buildings, and some residential properties.

Visit our website to learn more about the collection's finding aid or stop by the Research Center to view any of the records.

WINTER BREAK History Center Closed December 22 - January 6

This extended break will allow our hardworking staff extra time away over the holidays. Staff will have occasional access to their email during this time.

**Last day for Gift Shop Holiday Shopping
is Saturday, December 21.**

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Leave your love of local history for future generations by including the Blue Earth County Historical Society in your Estate Planning. Please contact Jessica for information.



INSPIRE. ENGAGE. CONNECT.

BECHS DONORS & SUPPORTERS

July 20 - October 19, 2024

Ron Andersen
 Judy and Daryl Arzdorf
 David Bartholmy
 Dale Benefield*
 Van Tol/Biewen
 Brad Bindig
 Joel Botten*
 Rick and Anita Boyer
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*In Memory of
 Billy Boesch
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 Ken Huntley
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*In Honor of
 Elaine Anderson
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**Monthly Recurring Donors*

Donations supports BECHS mission to collect, preserve and present Blue Earth County's history for present and future generations. Thank You!

A NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

Thank you to our Speakeasy Sponsors, Games of Chance donors, and Attendees who made this year's Speakeasy a night to remember!

SPEAKEASY SPONSORS

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VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

Volunteers are truly the lifeblood of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. No aspect of work done at the History Center or Hubbard House doesn't involve volunteers. **THANK YOU, BECHS Volunteers, for all you do!**

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Kiwanis Holiday Lights BECHS Night in the Park
Seeking 8 people (16+) for BECHS volunteer night at Kiwanis Holiday Lights on December 1 from 4:30 - to 9 PM.

Christmas at the Hubbard House

Seeking individuals or small groups of carolers and/or musicians to perform at Christmas at Hubbard House December 14, 15, 21 and 22.

Rental Host

As needed, after-hours History Center Meeting Room Rental Host to greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the rental, and lock up when done. Typically, one after-hours rental per month. Time and day of the week vary.

Front Desk and Sales

Seeking individuals to greet visitors, answer telephone, and assist customers in the Gift Shop.

Must have excellent customer service skills and willingness to learn store sales system.

Join BECHS'

Board of Trustees

BECHS is seeking Blue Earth County individuals to serve on the Board of Trustees. Applications are due January 31, 2025

for Board terms beginning March 2025. Details at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/About

Processing Assistant

Help organize, catalog, and arrange historical materials for long-term storage. This position requires working with a computer.

Schedules are flexible for all opportunities, and training is provided. If you are interested in these opportunities or volunteering in general, please reach out to Rachel or sign up at

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer.



Board Member Katherine Hughes at the Parking Lot Party

ON DISPLAY AT THE HISTORY CENTER

Take a fun whimsical journey through time, where toys spark imagination, curiosity roams free, and play transcends age bringing generations together.



SHOP LOCAL

Saturday, November 30

10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday, December 1

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Mayo Clinic Health Systems
Event Center**

Be sure to visit BECHS's booth featuring local books and Marian Anderson Fine Art prints.

KIDS CORNER: KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

One fun (and yummy) place to be creative is in the kitchen! There are many ways to be creative with food. You can decorate cookies or cakes, follow a recipe but make some changes to the ingredients, or make up your very own food dish!

Just like anything you might create, you have the chance to make something amazing! And even if a recipe doesn't turn out, the important thing is to keep creating. You never know what yummy food you might make next!



LET'S COOK WITH GAIL

One of the most famous young cooks from Blue Earth County was Gail Palmby. Starting in 1952, when she was 11 years old, Gail was the star of "Let's Cook with Gail." Her recipes and cooking tips were published in *The Farmer* magazine each month. Later, her recipes were made into a book.



Gail started learning to cook when she was seven years old. She started by helping her mom. As she got older, she learned more and more. Soon, she was cooking full meals!

One important tip Gail gives is to read through the whole recipe before you start cooking to make sure you have everything you need.

Gail helped many kids learn how to cook. Some of the recipes she shared with kids were simple. Others were harder to make. She was great at explaining everything.

Today, there are many cookbooks and websites for kids who want to cook!



Gail's brothers, Phillip and Tommy, liked it when she cooked. One of their favorites was her Funny Face Cookies, decorated with chocolate chips and coconut.

YUMMY IN MY TUMMY

Butter Balls

1 cup butter, soft but not melted
6 tablespoons sifted confectioner's sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
2 cups sifted cake flour
1 cup nut meats, ground in food chopper
Sifted confectioner's sugar for rolling cookies

Start the oven at 325 degrees.

Cream butter and sugar. Add vanilla, sifted cake flour, and ground nuts. Mix well, using your hands if you wish.

Pinch off a small amount of dough the size of a date. Roll into round ball and place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake about 12 minutes. Cool on cookie sheets a minute, then remove and roll in sifted confectioner's sugar while still warm. These are very rich, so be sure you make them small and dainty.



Recipe, images, and illustration from *Let's Cook with Gail*, 1954 preserved in the BECHS Archives

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2024 – January 2025

November

- 8-9 **Anniversary Open House**, Free History Center Museum admission, Gift Shop sales, daily door prizes and refreshments.
- 9 **Author Series: Rick Pepper, *Remembering The Rapidan Dam***
1 p.m., Documentary Photographer
- 16 **American Plains Bison by Tim Pulis** 1 p.m., Learn more about the bison at Minneopa State Park, \$
- 28-30 **History Center Closed - *Happy Thanksgiving!***
- 30 **GSR Fine Art Festival**, Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center, visit the BECHS Booth for your holiday shopping.

December

- 1 **GSR Fine Art Festival**, Mayo Clinic Health Systems Event Center, visit the BECHS Booth for your holiday shopping.
- 1 **BECHS Night at Kiwanis Holiday Lights!** Volunteer opportunities available.
- 6-8 **Christmas at the Hubbard House: Melodies & Masterpieces Self-Guided Holiday Tours** with Victorian costumed characters and scavenger hunt.
Friday 6-9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m.
(\$) Advanced tickets encouraged. See page 8 for details.
- 14 **Family Day**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family with Free Museum Admission with crafts and scavenger hunt.
Christmas at Hubbard House: Melodies & Masterpieces Guided Holiday Tours
- 14-15 **Special Music: caroling in the Carriage House**
- 21-22 **Special Music: performed in the Hubbard House**
Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sundays 1-4 p.m.
(\$) Advanced tickets required. See page 8 for details.
- 24- **Winter Break History Center Closed**
Jan. 6 **Happy Holidays!**

January

- 7 **History Center reopens after Winter Break**
- 11 **Family Day**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family with Free Museum Admission with crafts and scavenger hunt.

All programs held at the History Center
and free unless otherwise noted.

For more information, to register or purchase tickets,
visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL
COUNTY SOCIETY

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Membership
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PLAN YOUR VISIT



HISTORY CENTER: MUSEUM, RESEARCH CENTER, GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

424 Warren Street, Mankato
507-345-5566

Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.



R.D. HUBBARD HOUSE

606 S. Broad Street, Mankato
507-345-4154

December 6-9
Fri.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sun. 1-4

December 14-15, 20-21
Sat. & Sun. 1-4 p.m.

ADMISSION

\$10 Adults \$8 Seniors (65+) \$5 Children 5-17
BECHS Members and Children under 5 FREE

VISIT US ONLINE

www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com



SPECIAL EXHIBITS



Signs

By Bend of the River
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TOYS!

Explore decades
of childhood
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