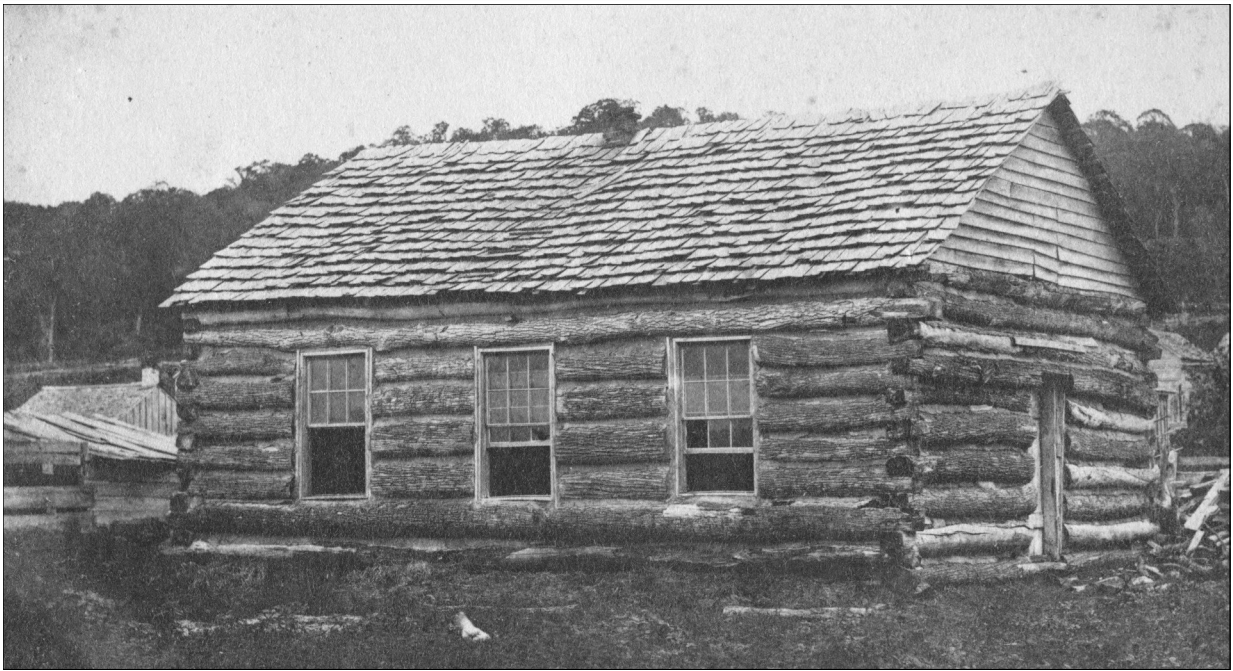


# THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIAN

Winter 2022

A Blue Earth County Historical Society Publication

Vol. XXVIII No. 1



One Room Log Schoolhouse, 1855-1867

## Blue Earth County's First Public School

By Jessica Potter

In 1855, the first Blue Earth County public schoolhouse was a log building erected on the corner of Broad and Mulberry Streets in Mankato. The site for the school was donated by John. S. Hinckley. The typical log schoolhouse was long and narrow, having windows on either side, while a door at one end gave entrance to the one room that the schoolhouse boasted. The stove stood in the center and the desks were placed against the wall in such a position that a pupil writing at his desk sat facing the outside light, with his back to the stove. The teacher's desk was at the end of the room opposite the door. The building was paid for by subscription, which means the families paid for their children to attend. This was often the case with early schools, especially in new communities where there weren't taxes in place to pay for the school building or a teacher's salary.

The log building served as more than just a school. It also was a meeting hall for the community and Father James Thomson, first pastor of the Presbyterian Church, held Sunday services and other church meetings there. The church bell, purchased in 1856, hung on a frame in the school yard until the Presbyterian Church congregation built its own facilities. The bell may or may not have been used for the school, but it was used for the church, town meetings and to signal for

Continued on page 3

### What's Inside

- 2 Director's Notes
- 7 Gift Shop
- 9 Every Object Has a Story
- 10 Research Center
- 12 Hubbard House
- 13 Donors and Members
- 14 Calendar of Events
- 15 Membership

### Board of Trustees

Chair, Steve Jameson, Mankato  
Vice Chair, Nikolas Proehl, Mankato  
Treasurer, Kevin Allen, Madison Lake  
Secretary, Gayle Elston, Mankato

Jo Guck Bailey, Mankato  
Rhonda Dass, North Mankato  
Kristin Fisher, Mankato  
Katherine Hughes, North Mankato  
Kirby Hurd, Mankato  
Erin Kragh, Mankato  
Kelly McBride, Mankato  
Mary Teubner, Amboy  
Ken White, Skyline  
Ken Wilmes, Mankato  
Lisa Wolf, Mankato

### Staff

Jessica Potter, Executive Director  
Director@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

Heather Harren, Communications Manager  
Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

Shelley Harrison, Curator/Archivist  
Archivist@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

### History Center & Museum


424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN  
507-345-5566  
Tuesday—Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Research Center By Appointment

### R.D. Hubbard House

606 South Broad Street, Mankato  
507-345-4154  
CLOSED FOR THE SEASON  
Open Memorial Day-Labor Day

 Facebook.com/BECHShistory

 @BECHShistory (Instagram)

 BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

## The Blue Earth County Historian

Winter 2022

The Blue Earth County Historian is published quarterly for the members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Copyright © 2021 by the Blue Earth County Historical Society. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part of any material from this issue without permission of the publisher is prohibited.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

As I reflect on the past few months and look ahead, the only words that come to mind are “Thank You.”

First off, thank you to Danelle Erickson for eight years of hard work and dedication to the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Danelle was the smiling face and voice when you visited or called the History Center. Danelle has accepted the leadership role at another County Historical Society and will be deeply missed by our small, but mighty staff, our volunteers, supporters and guests.



This change in our staff will have an impact on our services and programming for a little bit. The Research Center is now open by appointment only and our programming schedule is a little lighter than usual. We are taking our time reviewing current positions and staff needs, before determining how to fill Danelle’s vacancy. If you are interested in assisting at the front desk, please reach out.

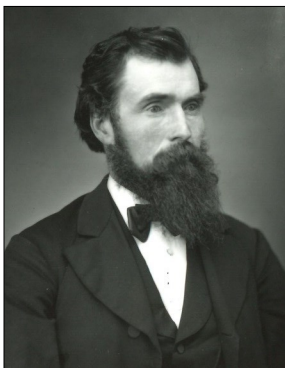
My next words of deep appreciation go out to our incredible History Heroes! We are on day 81 of the BOLD \$240k in 120 Days Campaign and \$134,357 has been raised so far! Wow! It looks like many of you may be as excited about parking lot improvements and future building expansion as I am. If you would like to learn more about the campaign and our BOLD vision, check out page 13.

The campaign wraps up on Sunday, March 6—a day after our Annual Member Meeting. At the meeting we’ll discuss our bold vision for the future of BECHS. We will be eager to hear your thoughts and dreams. In fact, I am starting something new this year in honor of our 120th Anniversary. Join me the first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. at the History Center for Director Chat’s (starting in March). An opportunity for our members to get updates on what’s happening at the History Center, give your thoughts and suggestions on the future of BECHS, ask questions, oh and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and a little something sweet. This time will be for you (our members) to hangout with me and some Board members. Please RSVP the Saturday before each session, so we have enough goodies on hand. See page 14 for more details. If you are unable to join us for scheduled chats, please give me a call, drop me an email or letter—my door is always open and I look forward to chatting.

## SCHOOL Continued from page 1

help in case of fire.

The same year the school was built, the first school district in Mankato and Blue Earth County was organized by three elected trustees; James Thomson, Theron Parsons and A.D. Seward. The trio met at Parsons' home to launch the interview process in hopes of finding a suitable teacher. It



L.G.M Fletcher

didn't take very long for the men to choose the most capable prospect, L.G.M. Fletcher. Fletcher agreed to teach the school for \$35/month, knowing the school's treasury only held a total of \$70. Classes were held most regularly during the winter months when the children were confined indoors. In the spring and fall most children were needed to plant and

harvest crops or hunt game. After the money ran out, Fletcher became increasingly more interested in the school and decided to teach a third month free of charge. At this time, the enrollment had reached 37.

The winter of 1855-56 was the first time a teacher was paid by public taxes and therefore marks the beginning of our public school system.

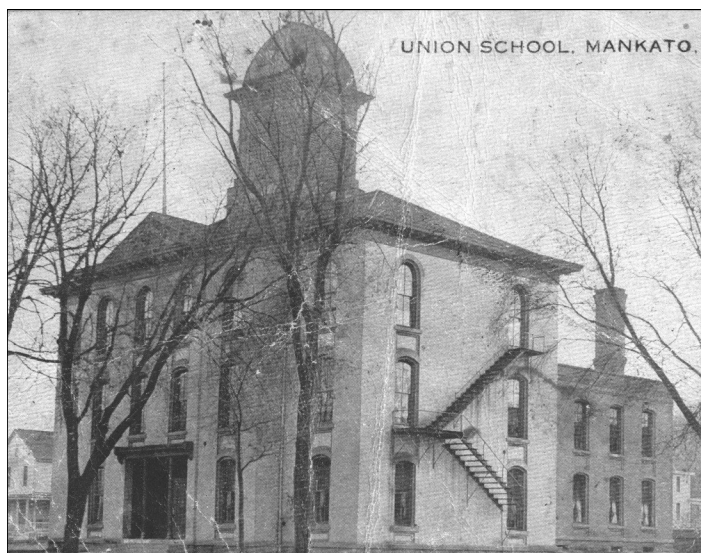
In just one year, Fletcher had increased the school library to 97 books and was teaching courses ranging from a primary class learning their ABC's to a class in civil engineering to a few adults.

By 1858-59 enrollment had grown so that it was necessary to hire an assistant, Mr. Miner. From that time on the attendance kept increasing until they found it necessary to rent additional rooms wherever they could be found.

Within 10 years the increase in enrollment forced the addition of two rooms onto the log structure. Later in the same year, 1867, it was voted to spend \$15,000 for a new school building. The log schoolhouse would be razed and a new stone building would be built on the same lot. The school would be called Union. The origin of the school's name is believed to be after the Army of the North, which had just been victorious over southern forces in the Civil War (which ended just two years before).

## 1868 Union School

By 1868 the Union School on the corner of Broad and Mulberry Streets was completed and a staff of seven teachers was hired. The building had three floors with two classrooms on each floor. This was the first dedicated school building built in the city of Mankato. As you recall, the log building was used as a community gathering space.



Union was the only school in Mankato at this time and supported students primary to high school; in fact, it was the first high school in Southern Minnesota. Mankato graduated its first class of nine students in 1876. However, it wasn't until 1891 that a building used only to house the high school students was constructed on South 5<sup>th</sup> Street near the Blue Earth County Courthouse.

In the 1870s, Mankato's population increased rapidly and within a short time there were three more schoolhouses built. Union was centrally located so the new buildings were built where the community had spread. Pleasant Grove (today known as Lincoln) was constructed in 1871 in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. Franklin was built to support the north end in 1874 and West Mankato (today Roosevelt) was built in 1885.

At the turn of the century, many students of all ages had to learn English in the classroom. There was even night school held at Union teaching reading, writing and civil government to new immigrants.

By the late 1910s, the building was showing its age and was "condemned as unsafe from a fire hazard stand-point and the building itself was not





Teachers on the steps of Union School, 1909

was chosen as recognition of the Union after the Civil War. Petitions were circulated and signed by some 900 old settlers. At the next school board meeting a large delegation appeared before the directors, headed by Judge Lorin Cray (a Civil War veteran and significant figure in the community), requesting the name be changed back to Union. The board took a vote on the question of changing the name back to Union and stood four to three against the change. At a meeting some weeks later, however, the matter was again brought up and the board sought to compromise the matter by renaming the West Mankato School – Roosevelt and renaming the Pleasant Grove School - Lincoln and retained the name Union for the new building.

The new Union school building was designed by Architect George Pass Jr. and General Contractor Eric A. Carlstrom. The old 1868 building was torn down in October 1918 and excavation for a new building by Lundeen Bros. began in December 1918. The cornerstone was placed on May 20, 1919. "It is an unusual coincidence that the first wholly modern school building in the city should be erected on the site where the first school building of any kind ever stood in Mankato," *Mankato Review* May 17, 1919.

safe". At this time, there were 242 students in the building and it was time for a new school.

### 1919 Union School

Due to condition and safety, the three story Union school was slated for demolition and a new building to serve the center of town needed to be constructed. The first bond issue election held to secure funds for the new school building failed. Later, in the fall of 1918, another election was held and the issue of \$100,000 bonds successfully carried. Later a second bond issue of \$60,000 was carried to complete the building and furnish equipment.

One of the most interesting situations which developed with regard to the new building was the question of the building's name. At a school board meeting several directors alluded that they had been requested to name the new school after former President Theodore Roosevelt. There was apparently no opposition to the proposal and the board unanimously voted to name the new building the Roosevelt school. Comment was made at this time that the name Roosevelt would inspire the students of the school with the spirit of true Americanism which always characterized Mr. Roosevelt.

Immediately after the name was chosen opposition developed among the old settlers of the city. It was their contention that the building should retain the old name, which it was claimed



Union School, corner of Broad and Mulberry Streets, 1920

Part of the building was first occupied for school use on January 12, 1920 with 225 students enrolled at that time. The building could accommodate 360 students and featured a large gymnasium/auditorium with stage, locker rooms, auditorium seats that could seat 400 on the main



floor and 100 in the balcony.

Around this same time, Mankato's other 1870s school buildings were also razed and new modern structures were built; Lincoln opened in 1922, Roosevelt in 1927 and Franklin in 1928. An addition was built onto the 1891 High School in 1911.

### **The Next Chapter for a Beloved Building**

Union School was the home to Mankato's downtown students until 1975. At that time, due to declining enrollment Union School was closed by the district as a school, but the building wouldn't sit empty long. By the fall of 1975, the Mankato Area Vocational-Technical Institute (MAVTI) created a "satellite" office at Union to house the adult education offices and their nursing program (close proximity to Immanuel Hospital, which was still near Washington Park). The building also housed the Mankato Area Recreation Council offices and community education classes, as well as some other district offices.

In 1982 it was announced that the three junior high schools (Lincoln, Franklin and North Mankato Junior High School) would be closing and the students would move to East and West High Schools. At this time, it was the school board's recommendation to sell Union and move MAVTI to North Mankato Junior High School, District offices to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Franklin, and Lincoln would become the community center with MARC and community education classes.

In 1983 the Union building was purchased by private developers, who planned to transform the once vibrant school into Union Square, a modern business center. That vision was realized in 1985 and Union Square business complex continues to breathe life into this century old building – the site of the first Mankato, and for that matter Blue Earth County school building.

### Sources:

Blue Earth County Historical Society Subject and Photograph Files

## **Mankato's First Schoolteacher**



Sarah Jane Hanna, c. 1850s

Even though L.G.M. Fletcher was the first teacher for the new district, Sarah Jane Hanna taught the first school in 1853, which was paid through donations. Sarah Jane settled in Mankato in 1853 with her family and the Maxfield family.

Mankato was only a year old at this time, so there weren't many buildings, not to mention houses. Unable to find a home large enough for over 20 family members, Sarah's father bought a partially built warehouse and quickly made it a home.

The Hanna's were a deeply religious family and on June 3, 1853 James Hanna and daughter, Sarah Jane led the first Sunday School in Blue Earth County. In the months and years to follow, the Hanna's continued their religious devotion and were instrumental in founding of the First Presbyterian Church in Mankato.

While the Hanna and Maxfield children may have been the first children in the new town, new settlers quickly followed and soon a school was needed.

James had an addition built onto the side of the warehouse-turned-home and it was here that 19-year-old Sarah Jane became the first schoolteacher in Mankato. While the sources don't completely agree on the finer details, we know Sarah Jane began classes sometime in the late summer/early fall of 1853 and had anywhere from 18-24 students. She was paid by subscription or donation.

Sarah Jane married John Marsh in 1859. Marsh and his brother had opened the first general store in Mankato, coincidentally in the same building where Sarah Jane had first taught school.

While we don't know exactly how many school terms Sarah Jane taught, we do know she was remembered as a leader in society. Her obituary called her a bright, intelligent and attractive girl with education far superior to that of most of the early settlers. She died in 1904.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Nik Proehl BECHS Board Vice Chair

Greetings, fellow historians! I hope this letter finds you surviving and thriving in the depths of our Minnesota winter!

As we embrace this new year, we are excited that our wonderful organization is celebrating 120 years of collecting, protecting, and sharing the history of Blue Earth County. Those 120 years have brought a tremendous amount of change. When the organization was first founded, humans had yet to fly, automobiles were a very rare (and expensive) novelty, and over 30 newspapers were published daily around the county. So much history has been made in the years since and continues to be made every day. Thank you all for continuing to support us in our mission - future generations will thank you.

Looking ahead, our annual membership meeting will be Saturday, March 5, 2022 at 1 p.m. We invite you to join us as we recap the 2021 operating year and share our BOLD vision for the years ahead, say goodbye to our outgoing Board members, and welcome new friends to the Board.

The annual membership meeting also marks the end of our \$240k in 120 days fundraising campaign. The goal of the campaign is to help BECHS take the first steps to expand our History Center and enhance our organization's resources and staffing. The Board chose to take this BOLD step, because we saw the need to better share the history of our county and all of the incredible stories that make us who we are today. If you can, please consider contributing to this effort. If you have already, thank you. You are a History Hero!

If you haven't gotten a chance, stop by the History Center and check the current special exhibit: *Sips, Styles & Stories* before it closes. You will undoubtedly find a little piece of history in the exhibit that connects with your own history or that of your family and friends.

We hope that you are as excited about the upcoming year as we are. History is made every day, and this year will no doubt be filled with historical events, big and small.

## BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1901 — 120 YEARS — 2021

### 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, March 5 at 1:00 p.m.

History Center or Virtual

Annual Member State-of-the-Society Meeting followed by a short program

### FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS A Look Back at 120 Years of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

Presented by Jessica Potter  
BECHS Executive Director



In this COVID-impacted environment, BECHS Annual Meeting will be available both via Zoom and in-person at the History Center.

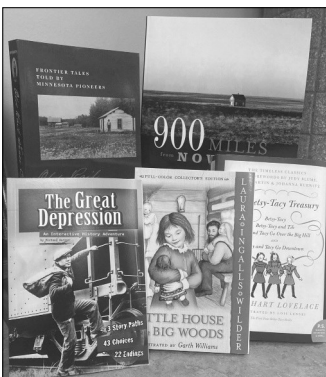
**Registration is required to attend the meeting either in-person or via Zoom. Please RSVP by March 3 to 507-345-5566 or [Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](mailto:Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com).**

*Please note, under the Society's Bylaws, remote voting is not permitted and as a result, the members attending on Zoom will not be able to vote, but can otherwise fully participate.*

# GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

Winter is the perfect time to curl up with a good book. The Blue Earth County History Center Gift Shop has great local options for you!

For the young readers in your life, there is always the *Betsy-Tacy* series or the *Little House on the Prairie* series, but why not a “choose your own history adventure”. These books have numerous endings and can be fun and entertaining for the whole family. (The Great Depression - \$6.95)



Looking for something a little more advanced?

Try *Old Rail Fence*

*Corners* (\$16.95) or *900 Miles from Nowhere* (\$22.95). Both books will take you back in time before modern technology kept us occupied during the winter months.

The Deep Valley Book Festival will hold its 2nd annual “cabin fever” virtual gathering of authors

and readers on March 5 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It’s a great opportunity to visit with local authors. Register now to attend virtually free!

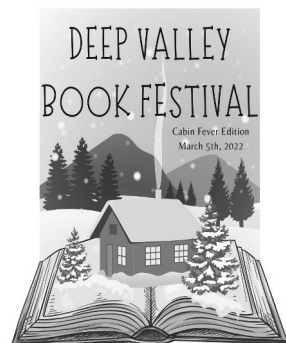
[DeepValleyBookFestival.com](http://DeepValleyBookFestival.com)

Winter is also the perfect time to reorganize and re-

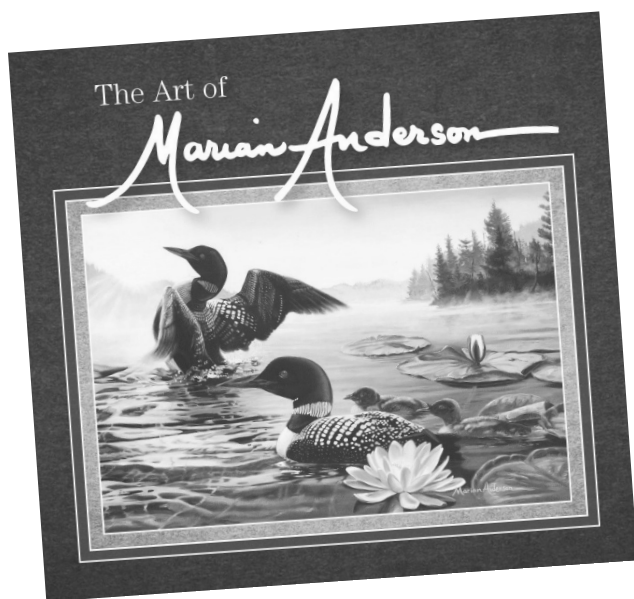
decorate your home.



There is a Marian Anderson print for all seasons. “Silent Signal” showcases a peaceful winter morning. If you are looking for something to brighten your walls and can last through multiple seasons, “Spring Morning” or “Color of Spring” may be just the print for you. All of these books and fine art prints and more are available in the Gift Shop and through our online Gift Shop!



## COMING SOON NEW BOOK RELEASE



The Blue Earth County Historical Society announces the upcoming release of *The Art of Marian Anderson*, a hard cover, full-color, limited edition commemorative book featuring an impressive collection of images by artist Marian Anderson. The book contains published art prints and original paintings from her personal collection never before published. The diversity of Marian’s art subjects spans from wildlife to canine, nostalgic to landscape and Native American to Mountain Man. Included is a biography and some of Marian’s original writings. *The Art of Marian Anderson* is a wonderful keepsake commemorating the life and work of this beloved Minnesota artist.

Retail: \$49.95

Hard cover w/dust jacket, 150+ pp.  
10.5” x 9.75”

Published by Minnesota Heritage Publishing

**Don’t miss this opportunity  
PRE-ORDER TODAY!**

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Online-Store](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Online-Store)

***All proceeds benefit BECHS***



# COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITS

Shelley Harrison, Curator/Archivist

From a letterpress used to start Carlson Craft to the Hamburger Heaven storefront sign, the Blue Earth County Historical Society's collection includes many unique items.

Today BECHS cares for over 56,000 objects, documents, and photographs. While most of our artifacts are in storage for preservation, they also provide core materials for many of our services, including research, presentations, educational programs, and ever-changing exhibits. We are continually seeking a wide variety of

objects and stories to represent all the people, places and events in the County's history.

Since November 7, 1901, the Historical Society has actively collected, preserved and shared the rich history and heritage of this County. That's 120 years of collecting Blue Earth County's history. All of those items are preserved and shared at the R.D. Hubbard House, Carriage House, History Center galleries, and artifact and archives storage.

As you can imagine, preserving and not just storing over 56,000 items takes a lot of space and special resources. About 22,000 three-dimensional artifacts are cataloged and housed in our artifact storage room at the History Center. As the collection continues to grow, our need for more dedicated space has also grown.

Therefore, at the beginning of January, we implemented a plan that had been in the works for many months. Our mission was to create more dedicated space to adequately preserve some of the larger items in the collection. We moved over 50 oversized objects (such as washing machines, a reed organ and George Pass' architectural drafting table) to a room formerly used for the Research Center (near the Cherry Street door). Thanks to some financial gifts, the Society was able to purchase new industrial-grade shelving to hold these large items. Thanks to some strong and dedicated volunteers, we moved the items to their new

location. BIG thank you to Tim and Larry!

There is much more that needs to be done in the coming weeks and months. This was just the first step in a complete reorganization and rehousing project for artifact and archives storage. If you would like to help move boxes or love to organize, please reach out.

As the collection grows, there will always be challenges with collecting, preserving and sharing. We are excited and look forward to our future expansion that

will increase exhibit and preservation space, but we know that won't happen tomorrow, so we do what we can today. To quote our Director, "History never stops, and neither should we". We will actively continue to collect the history of Blue Earth County for future generations!



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Blue Earth County**  
**120 YEARS**  
**STORIES**

The people, places and objects  
that shaped Blue Earth County

March 4 - September 30, 2022  
Blue Earth County History Center  
424 Warren Street, Mankato

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com) 507.345.5566

# EVERY OBJECT HAS A STORY...

## Mankato Commercial College

By Hilda Park

The Historical Society collects and preserves the history of Blue Earth County through many different types of items, each with their own story. Recently a box of Esther Halverson's Mankato Commercial College papers were donated and here is her story.

Esther grew up in a small southern Minnesota town, had taken teacher's training at her local high school and discovered although she liked the children she didn't enjoy teaching. She then applied to the Mankato Commercial College in the fall of 1930. This file includes her acceptance letter, suggesting she begin after the holidays, 1931. Bookkeeping was to be her area of study, although the Commercial College referred to it as the Junior Accounting Course.

Students could begin their course work at any time during the year, as they were taught as if they were in an actual office. There were no textbooks, as in similar trade schools, rather students learned by doing. They also had access to the most up-to-date machines including Comptometers, they were considered a mechanical calculator, essentially an adding machine that could also do subtraction, multiplication and division.

Mankato Commercial College was started in 1891 by J. R. Brandrup with only a handful of students. By 1914 it had its own building on Front Street. However, the building burned in 1915 destroying typewriters, adding machines, all their equipment, as well as the structure. The fire occurred on a Friday, but the school was running again Monday in temporary facilities. The school was rebuilt the following year next to the Saulpaugh Hotel. "One of the finest business college buildings in the country," extols the college catalog, assuring readers that it is fireproof. The new building contained very little

wood. It was four stories tall with its largest classroom holding 400 students, two to a desk.

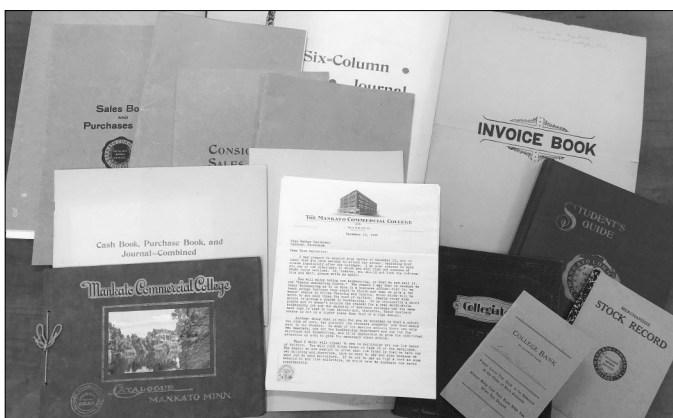
The College Catalog suggested that students would experience "a beautiful city in which to reside," and an environment with "a high moral standard and wholesome influence." As many students came from a distance, the college offered to help them find places to board in Mankato. It also provided extracurricular activities, including an orchestra, drama club and athletic teams for both men and women. From pictures included in the catalog, as many men as women attended the college. Some of the classes offered in the Junior Accounting Course were: Commercial Law, Commercial Arithmetic, Banking, Office Practice, Penmanship, Spelling and Letter Writing. The aspiring students could chose a

Secretarial Course, including shorthand and typing, a higher Accounting Course with classes on auditing and income taxes, or a Comptometer Course.

Among the materials donated to the Historical Society are examples of Esther's work. There is a folder of handwritten letters, which may have been an exercise in proper letter writing. They include a job application letter, a letter ordering merchandise for a store, a request for payment and one that appeared intended as an advertisement for a lamp. The bookkeeping ledgers are carefully written by hand with black and red ink. It would appear that all have been correctly balanced, as a bookkeeper should.

Esther, who had so carefully written these letters and added her ledger columns, was unable to find a job as a bookkeeper after completing the course, as it was in the midst of the Depression. Thus, she returned to teaching.

The Mankato Commercial College closed in 1980. In its 90 years of operation, it had graduated at least 50,000 secretaries, accountants and business administrators.



# RESEARCH & GENEALOGY CENTER

Heather Harren, Communications Manager

Due to limited staffing, the Research Center is open by appointment only Tuesday - Saturday for the foreseeable future.

About a year ago we launched the Online Research Index, making more resources available at your fingertips. What a success it has been! Over 80 people used this online tool to order obituaries and other historical resources last year. There were countless others who used the index before visiting to have a better idea of what they were looking for when they came to do research in-person. While the card catalog is still the starting point in the Research Center, some researchers have found knowing what they will find before visiting helpful. To discover there is more, is an added bonus.



Included in the Online Research Index are:

- Marriage Announcements from the *Mankato Free Press* from 1947 - 2015
- Obituary Books 1-114, as well as obituary index from the *Mankato Free Press* 1946-1962 (Books 115-119 coming as soon as they're indexed!)
- Servicemen's Notes from 1942-1946
- Will Index
- Cemetery Index by cemetery name only
- Social Notes for many of the towns and townships in Blue Earth County (This is still a work in progress and as more get indexed, they will get added online.)

We have also started the process of indexing the card catalog for other newspaper tidbits such as anniversaries and newsworthy articles about individuals that are not in any of the above sources. As we have just started this, it will be a while before this index is ready for the website. Check out [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/indexes](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/indexes) or make an appointment to visit the Research Center for all of your Blue Earth County research.

## IN MEMORIAM

*In Memory of Norma Bergquist  
Mary Deopere*

*In Memory of Bonnie Doering Gallagher  
Audra Nissen Boyer*

*In Memory of Ann Heimark  
Byron and Karen McGregor*

*In Memory of Elaine Larson  
Margaret Schreyer*

*In Memory of Carol More  
Family and Friends*

*In Memory of Dale Rose  
Paul and Terry Kvitek*

*In Memory of Karl Sassenberg  
Family and Friends*

*In Memory of Donna Webb  
Jeanne DeMars*

**Thank You**  
for memorial gifts to the  
Blue Earth County Historical Society

## LOCAL HISTORY PODCAST

*Explore the history that surround us!*



New episodes air Saturdays  
at 11:05 a.m. on KTOE.  
You can find all previous  
episodes on our website at

[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast)

AM 1420 • 102.7 FM  
**KTOE**  
NEWS • SPORTS • TALK

BLUE EARTH  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
INSPIRE. ENGAGE. CONNECT.



## Civil War Symposium

The Friends of the Boy in Blue Civil War Memorial announce the date for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Civil War Symposium. The symposium will be a hybrid event (in-person event with a virtual online component), held on Saturday, March 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Morson-Ario-Strand VFW, 1900 N. Riverfront Drive in Mankato.

The symposium theme is: “*The Terrible Swift*



*Sword: 1862*”. Special guest speaker Dr. Nancy Koster, the author of *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Spiritual Life*, will present *Harriet Beecher Stowe Meets Abraham Lincoln*. There are speakers, costumed interpreters, Civil War era music, exhibits, books and

authors, and panel discussions.

Registration is \$25/adults and \$15/students or virtual. In-person registration includes lunch and must be received before March 22, 2022.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Contact us if you are interested in volunteering or desire more information.

### Front Desk and Gift Shop Assistant

Volunteers are needed to help at the History Center front desk. Duties include greeting visitors, ringing up store sales and providing general assistance. As this may include some downtime, it may be combined with other volunteer tasks such as data entry or archival work. Time commitment: Flexible, but a minimum 3-hour shift on a regular schedule would be preferred; Tuesday - Saturday.

### Research Center Assistants

Seeking people to assist in the Research Center with daily operations such as assisting researchers, fulfilling research requests and keeping the room tidy. Training will be provided and staff will be available to assist. Time commitment: Flexible, but a minimum 3-hour shift on a regular schedule would be preferred; Tuesday - Saturday.

## HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

January-April 2022

Visit the History Center Art Gallery for two special local art exhibitions on display now.

### JERRY BACHMAN

The artwork of Mankato-native Jerry Bachman is on display now through April 30, 2022. Jerry was Mankato's first baby of 1948. He took his first official art class in the fall of 1966 and has been painting ever since. With his work in monochrome, Jerry creates bold, modern, acrylic art with details that pop. A presentation by his friend and exhibit organizer, Edie Schmierbach, on February 16 at Noon.



San Bernard River Boats

## ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

By Bend of the River Photography Club

This exhibit was inspired by one of the Bend of the River Photography Club's monthly assignments: “architectural elements”. Each photographer had to express their own

interpretation of what these words may mean when viewing a structure. The exhibit gives you a new perspective for looking at architecture in Blue Earth County, the world and the details that surround you every day. Partial exhibit has been extended through April.



Details from the Blue Earth County Courthouse by Mary Gitter-Zehnder

---

# BECHS DONORS, MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

October 22, 2021 – January 21, 2022

## DONORS

Kevin and Shelli Allen  
Ron Andersen  
Christian Anderson  
Verna Anderson-Morgan  
Dorothy Anthony  
Anita Baerg-Vatndal  
Chuck & JO Guck Bailey  
Helen Balcome  
Penny Banwart  
Mary Bauer  
Leon Bembenek  
BENCO Electric  
Bill and Chris Bernhagen  
Tom and Michaela Bicek  
Eugene Biewen and  
Noel Van Tol  
Patty Blair  
Darwin Blume  
Faith Borgmeier  
Joel Botten  
Rick and Anita Boyer  
Bob and Susan Brown  
Dan and Kathy Bruss  
Steve & Kathleen Burnett  
Genette Carleton  
LaVern and Carol  
Christianson  
Barbara Church  
David & Carolyn Clause  
Mary Coleman  
Kelly Coleman  
Ogden & Jane Confer  
WEB Construction  
Glenn and Marcia Cotton  
JoLynn Crowe  
Mark and Mary Davis  
Bob Diedrichsen  
Anita Dittrich  
Preston and Judy Doyle  
Brian Duehring  
Delbert and Judy Dunlap  
Nancy Eilola  
John Ellis  
Ben and Gayle Elston  
Carol English  
David and Julie Ewert  
Lona Falencykowski  
Joe Farnham

Susie Farnsworth  
Barbara Fick  
Dennis and Joan  
Fredericksen  
John Frentz  
Sandi and Darrell Garlow  
Laura Garlow  
Audrey Gatchell  
Ted Gates  
Harley and Janet Goff  
Bruce & Renita Goodrich  
Betty Goodrich  
Deborah Goschy  
Tailwind Group  
Jane Griffiths  
Nick Hager  
John and Betty Hallman  
Richard & Nancy Hamer  
Susan Hanus  
Marcella Harren  
Dave and Michel Haugh  
Bernadette Herzog  
Norla Hesse  
Stephen Hodapp  
William & JoAnn Hoehn  
Thomas Hoehn  
Jim and Pat Hoehn  
Dennis and Sue Hood  
Susan Hynes  
Carol Jackson  
Kay and Lyle Jacobson  
Family Fund  
Margaret James  
Mary Ann Jensen  
Jeff Jenson  
Maurine Johnson  
Ellis Jones  
Helen Jones  
Linda Karow  
Pat Kasell  
Wynn and Ginnette  
Kearney  
Grace and Richard Keir  
Robert & Ann Kenward  
Arn and Margaret Kind  
Chuck and Kait Klammer  
Catherine Klugherz  
Brian and Valerie Koch  
Jeffrey Kolnick

Judy Krautbauer  
David Krengel  
Mary Lou Kudela  
John Kunz  
Alex Langsjoen  
William E. Lass  
Alan & Becky Lawrence  
Eloise Layman  
David Ross & Carol Lee  
Marilyn Lehnert  
Kathryn Lerch  
Patty Lloyd  
Kay Lund  
Jean & Larry Lundquist  
Fred and Diane Lutz  
Missy Manderfeld  
Gregg and Sue Marg  
Renee Mathiason  
Mary McComb  
Byron and Karen  
McGregor  
Tom and Theresa  
McLaughlin  
Harlan Mehlhop  
Ron Meyer  
Terri and Warren Michels  
Daardi Mixon  
Rosemary and Marvin  
Mock  
Hal and Marsha Natvig  
Bob Nord  
Roger and Gail Norland  
Richard and Kris Norland  
Meyer and Norland  
Financial Group  
Rebecca Novak  
Mike Oberle  
C&S Supply Co. Inc  
Hilda Parks  
Judith Penhiter  
Jim and Vicki Petersen  
Sheryl Peterson  
Paula Peterson  
Lincoln Township  
Elizabeth Peters  
Paula Peterson  
Sharon Pinney  
Elizabeth Piper-Forman  
Jessica Potter

Brad and Teresa Pratt  
Nikolas Proehl  
Carol Rath  
Bonnie Reak  
Jeri Retzlaff  
Page Jones Richards  
Family Foundation  
Dan and Mary Robinson  
MEI - Total Elevator  
Solutions  
Donna Rose  
Mark and Kathy Rosen  
Linda Ruehle  
Shirley Schaub  
Scheels  
June Schifsky  
Ken and Julie Schrader  
Jim Schramm  
Jo Schultz  
Peter and Lisa  
Schwamberger  
Louis and Rebecca  
Schwartzkopf  
Greg Sebald  
Nancy Shapiro  
Norm Sieling  
Doug Sinclair  
Norbert & Lynette Smith  
Tim Solie  
Evelyn Solo  
William Steil and Nancy  
Zwickey  
Peter and Regina Steiner  
Karen Stevenson  
Ann Stewart  
Roger & Beverly Stoufer  
Judith Strobel  
Nadine Sugden  
Kevin & Jody Swanson  
Jim Swanson  
Marilyn Sween  
Leon Tacheny  
Mark and Rhonda Taylor  
Mary Teubner  
Peter and Michele  
Thompson  
Nancy Thurber  
Terry and Kay Tompkins  
Nicole Trost

Leo and Judy Voss  
 Helen Wagner  
 Dianne Walther  
 Howard and Mary Ward  
 Tom and Bridget Weigt  
 Don and Marti Weisgram  
 Gerry and Kris Wenner  
 Margo Wheeler  
 Ken and Pam White  
 Martha and Michael Wiggam  
 Paul & Rebecca Wigley  
 Richard Williams  
 Jerry and Vee M.G. Williams  
 Shawn Willy  
 Brad Wilmes  
 Ken and Linda Wilmes  
 Randy and Rachel Wood  
 Randy Zellmer

### MONTHLY DONORS

Dale Benefield  
 Joel Botten  
 Carol English  
 David and Julie Ewert  
 James Hummer  
 Steve & Susan Jameson  
 Mike Lagerquist  
 Jack & Diann McGowan  
 Marnie Werner  
 Randy Zellmer  
 Beth Zimmer

### SPONSORSHIP

Mankato Free Press

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Christian Anderson  
 Roger Busch  
 Amanda Davis  
 Richard Fasnacht  
 Mark Gaarder  
 Krista Helgeson  
 Deborah Koenigsfeld  
 Todd Kosovich  
 Tom Markman

*Thank You!*

# BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL COUNTY SOCIETY

1901 — 120 YEARS — 2021

**\$240k | 120 Days | 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

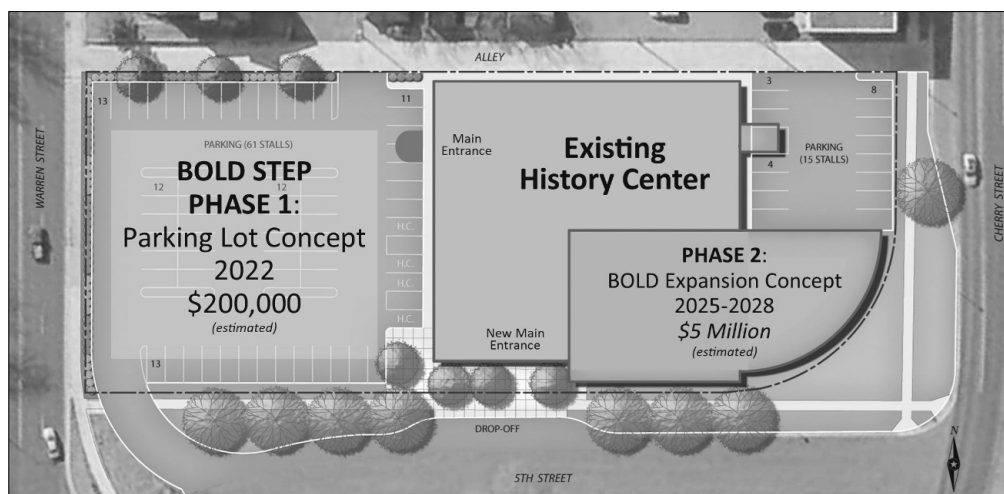
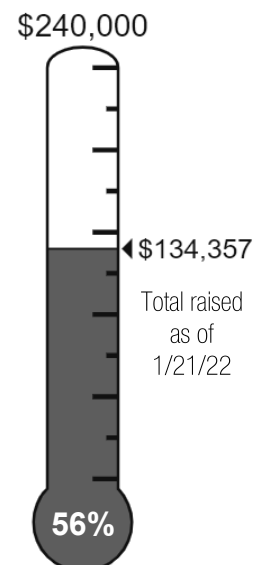
**BOLD VISION, BOLD STEP, BOLD HISTORY HEROES**

Since November 7, 1901, the Blue Earth County Historical Society has actively collected, preserved and shared the rich history and heritage of this county. Now, on our 120th Anniversary, it's time to look to the future of history and to celebrate we launched a **BOLD** campaign.

The BECHS Board and Staff has a **BOLD** vision to expand the History Center in the near future. To realize this **BOLD** vision, we took a **BOLD** first step by committing to raise **\$240,000 in 120 days** for our **120th Anniversary**. We launched the campaign on our Anniversary (November 7, 2021) and will wrap it up on Sunday, March 6, 2022 (the day after the Annual Meeting).

As of today, it will take only \$105,643 in the next 39 days to reach that **BOLD** step! And we need **BOLD** History Heroes to make it happen! If you are already a **BOLD** History Hero—THANK YOU!

**Together, we can do this FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS!**



PHASE 1: 2022 Exterior infrastructure improvements—**BOLD** first step.  
 PHASE 2: **BOLD** expansion will take time and resources to fully develop the vision. This image is concepts only.



---

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February – April 2022

## FEBRUARY

- 14 Happy Valentine's Day! We ♥ our Members, Donors and Volunteers!
- 16 History @ Home: Edie Schmierbach—Jerry Bachman's Art, Hybrid Program, Noon, Attend in-person at the History Center OR register to join via Zoom (either live or watch the recording later). Registration required for virtual attendance. \$7/adults, Free/BECHS Members
- 19 Last day for Sips, Style and Stories! Exhibit closes today at 4 p.m.

## MARCH

- 1 Director Chats History Center, 10 a.m., Free. Please RSVP by February 26.
- 4 *Blue Earth County 120 Years, 120 Stories* Exhibit Opening, History Center, Free.
- 5 Annual Meeting History Center, 1 p.m., Free  
State-of-the-Society Business Meeting followed by a presentation by Jessica Potter, BECHS Executive Director. Hybrid: attend in-person at the History Center OR register to join via Zoom (either live or to watch the recording later). Please RSVP by March 3.
- 6 Final Day for the \$240k | 120 Days | 120th Anniversary BOLD Campaign
- 12 Family Museum Day History Center, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Free museum admission and fun family-friendly interactive history activities throughout the day.
- 16 History @ Home: Shelley Harrison—A Closer Look at Blue Earth County 120 Years, 120 Objects Virtual Program, Noon, Free, registration required for the Zoom Link.
- 24 Author Talk: Dr. Lori Lahlum—Women's History Month, History Center, 6 p.m.  
Hybrid: attend in-person at the History Center OR join via Zoom (either live or watch the recording later). Registration required for virtual attendance, \$10/adults, \$7/BECHS Members

## APRIL

- 5 Director Chats History Center, 10 a.m., Free. Please RSVP by March 26.
- 9 Family Museum Day History Center, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Free museum admission and fun family-friendly interactive history activities throughout the day.
- 20 History @ Home: TBD Noon, History Center, Free
- TBA Special Guided History Tours of the Mankato Post Office  
Details are still under development, more information to be announced on March 1!

For more event information or to register,  
visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Events](https://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Events)

# MEMBERS MATTER

The Blue Earth County Historical Society has been a member-supported, non-profit organization since 1901. Thank you for being a BECHS member! **Your membership matters!**

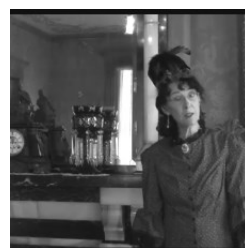
While your membership provides you with some great benefits, you are also benefiting BECHS! Your membership dues support some of BECHS' everyday expenses such as general utilities and the printing and mailing of *The Historian*.

As a member, you are invited to attend the Annual Member's Meeting on Saturday, March 5 at 1 p.m. and the new monthly Director Chats.

Tax-deductible donations are also welcome and support BECHS' general fund, going directly to saving history by preserving artifacts, providing hands-on history activities and telling more stories through exhibits and events.

## BECHS Member Benefits

- Free admission to the History Center, R.D. Hubbard House and Research Center, plus free or reduced admission to most BECHS events
- *The Historian*, quarterly publication, sent to your mailbox or inbox
- 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, a \$15 value
- Annual Member's State-of-the Society meeting held first Sunday in March
- The knowledge that you are supporting the Historical Society and providing for exhibits, programs, preservation and future expansion



## INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Business and Organizational Partnerships also available. Call for details.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Gift for: \_\_\_\_\_

Include name and address

### Annual Membership Levels

- ☐ Senior \$35 1 adult, age 62+
- ☐ Individual \$40 1 adult
- ☐ Senior Household \$55 2 adults, 62+
- ☐ Household \$60 2 adults, kids under 18

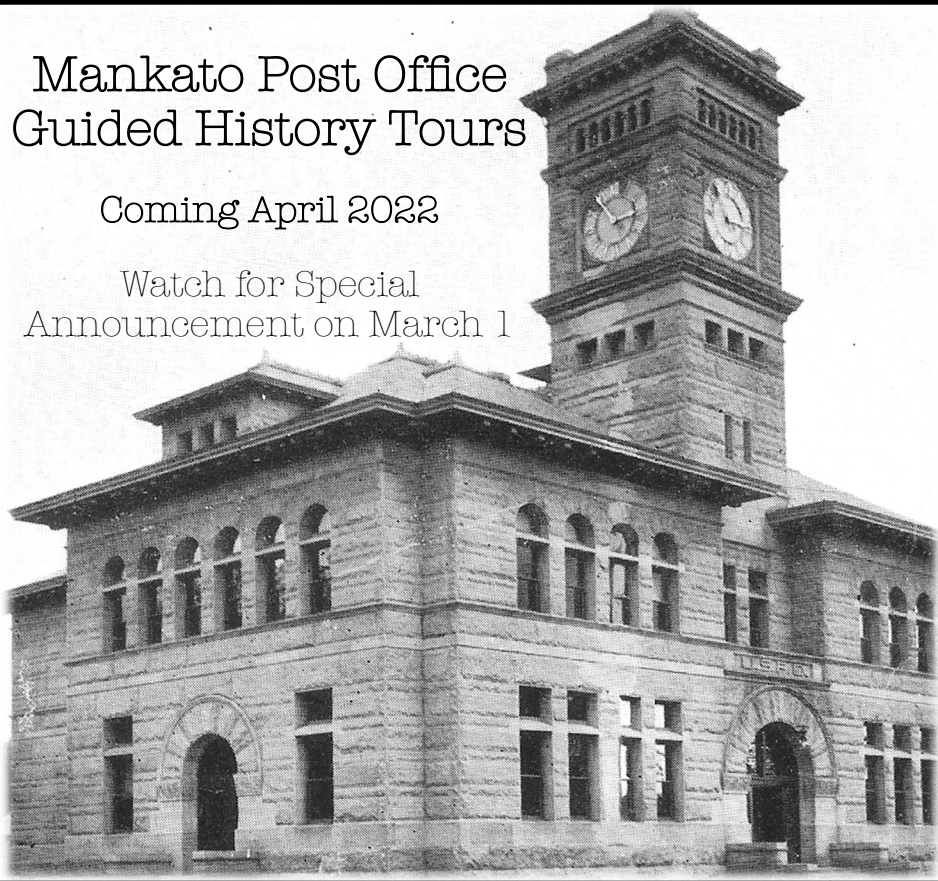
***Membership Expiration dates can be found on your mailing label on the back cover***

Please return this form and payment to: BECHS Membership, 424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN 56001  
You can also join or renew online at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership)

## Mankato Post Office Guided History Tours

Coming April 2022

Watch for Special  
Announcement on March 1



## EXHIBITS

**Sips, Styles and Stories**  
*through February 19, 2022*



**Blue Earth County:**  
**120 Years, 120 Stories**  
*opens March 4, 2022*

**ART GALLERY**  
**Jerry Bachman**  
**&**  
**Architectural Elements by**  
**Bend of the River Photo Club**  
*through April 2022*

**BECHS**  
BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
424 WARREN STREET  
MANKATO, MN 56001

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Mankato MN  
56001  
Permit No. 86

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Membership  
Expiration Date