

# THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIAN

Fall 2020

A Blue Earth County Historical Society Publication

Vol. XXVI No. 4



THE OLD CUMMING'S FERRY - MINNESOTA R.

Old Cumming's Ferry, probably 1870s or 80s, docked on the south bank at the Sibley site with the operator's home on shore.

## THE BEND OF THE RIVER

By Inella Burns

*In connection with BECHS' latest exhibit We Are Water MN, we are excited to re-print this article from the July 1986 issue of The Historian. This article not only shows how important the Minnesota River was to early settlers, but also documents the many changes this stretch of the river has witnessed.*

Early explorers, who came by canoe, consistently praised the scenic and luxurious growth of trees and wild fruits along the great bend of the Minnesota River that marks the north boundary of Blue Earth County. But it was not until 1850 when the *Anthony Wayne*, followed by other excursion boats, proved the river navigable by steamboat, and their passengers became captivated by the beauty of the land that the idea of settlement took hold.

Soon after the Traverse des Sioux Treaty in 1851 opened the Minnesota Valley to settlement, steamboats began bringing settlers and freight to the bend of the river levees. During the summer of 1852, the *Tiger* and the *Black Hawk* in three trips each brought passengers and supplies to Mankato, South Bend and Eureka, a short-lived settlement across the river from Judson. A large Welsh settlement at South Bend vied with Mankato for prominence as a townsite; but the Mankato levee, extending approximately from Main Street to Plum Street and gently sloping to Front Street, proved ideal for loading or

Continued on page 4

## What's Inside

- 2 Director's Notes
- 3 A Night at the Speakeasy
- 6 Gift Shop
- 8 We Are Water MN
- 10 Board of Trustees
- 13 History Heroes
- 14 What's Happening
- 15 Membership



# THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIAN

## Board of Trustees

Chair, Steve Jameson, Mankato  
Vice Chair, Erin Kragh, Mankato  
Treasurer, Kevin Allen, Madison Lake  
Secretary, Kirby Hurd, Mankato

JO Guck Bailey, Mankato  
Gayle Elston, Mankato  
Kristin Fisher, Mankato  
Katherine Hughes, North Mankato  
Jonathan Kemp, Mankato  
Julie Lux, Mapleton  
Nikolas Proehl, Mankato  
Mary Teubner, Amboy  
Dana Truebenbach, Mankato  
Ken White, Skyline  
Ken Wilmes, Mankato  
Lisa Wolf, Mankato

## Staff

Jessica Potter, Executive Director  
Director@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com  
Danelle Erickson, Operations Manager  
Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com  
Heather Harren, Communication & Archives  
Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com  
Shelley Harrison, Curator/Archivist  
Archivist@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

## History Center & Museum

424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN  
507-345-5566  
OPEN Tuesday—Friday  
10 a.m.-4 p.m. By Appointment

## R.D. Hubbard House

606 South Broad Street, Mankato  
507-345-4154  
CLOSED Until Further Notice



Facebook.com/BECHShistory



@BECHShistory (Instagram)



BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

## The Blue Earth County Historian

Fall 2020

The Blue Earth County Historian is published quarterly for the members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Copyright © 2020 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

Happy Fall, um, Winter, I mean Fall. Our odd weather pattern just seems par for the course with 2020, doesn't it? This year will definitely go down in the history books.

Of course, that gets us History Geeks reflecting on past events, wonders and tragedies in which we can see history repeating in one way or another. I think it is so interesting to reflect on the history of the Blue Earth County Historical Society founded in 1901 – 119 years ago this November 7. Wow, think about the local, national and global turning points BECHS has weathered: WWI and II, the Great Depression, 1968, .... We find ourselves in the midst of another turning point and BECHS is determined to not only survive but thrive. Our little piece of the world needs to come together, to remember our past and have hope for the future. Museums, like the Blue Earth County History Center, have the power to create that unity and hope on multiple levels. We provide a sense of community and place by celebrating and honoring our collective story. After all, we are all in this together.

You have played a very important role in BECHS thriving so far this year. We had some very big goals going into 2020 that had to be re-evaluated and shifted to make way for new initiatives we couldn't even imagine seven months ago. We sincerely appreciate each of you for your financial support and encouragement this year. Thank you for what you have made possible so far in 2020:

- Keeping the staff employed and bills paid even though the History Center and Hubbard House were closed due to the pandemic.
- A whole new line-up of virtual programming and special events (*Ghosts from the Past*, *A Night at the Speakeasy*).
- Investment in the History Center to make our dream of an inviting and more modern History Center a reality. This was a project that seemed years off, but we knew the time was right. Please come see the improvements.

There's still time to see BECHS thrive in 2020. I personally invite you to attend our annual fundraising event *A Night at the Speakeasy* on Saturday, November 7. See the next page for details of this can't-miss-event. Also, please consider a donation to our year-end drive to raise \$35,000 by the end of 2020 to close the gap in funding due to COVID closures. Be a History Hero by supporting *35 to Thrive!* See page 12 for more information.

In today's uncertain times, the Blue Earth County Historical Society is dedicated to serve as a trusted anchor in any storm. Together, we will keep making history. Thank you for making this possible!

# A NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

*Intrigue, Spirits and All That Jazz*



Saturday, November 7, 2020

6:30 PM Social Hour | 7 PM Program  
A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

One-of-a-kind virtual event includes Live Music by Stacy K, Nate Boots, The Jazz 10, and Bee Balm Fields plus Prohibition Cocktail Demos, and Online Auction with mysteries and surprises along the way.

TICKETS AND DETAILS AT

[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy) • 507.345.5566

*A Night at the Speakeasy* is a new virtual experience and we're sure you have a lot of questions from tickets to party packs to is this in-person?!

Visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy) for answers to these questions and others:

- **Is this event in-person?**  
*No, the event is virtual using Zoom.*
- **How do I use Zoom?**
- **Is there a way I can test the Zoom call?**
- **What does it mean to host a Speakeasy with a Party Pack?**
- **I'm a party of one, why should I attend?**
- **We are a couple, how many tickets do we purchase?**
- **What are the Intrigue Puzzles?**
- **My company is interested in sponsorship, how can we join?**

## Speakeasy Sponsors

### PRESENTING

Chankaska Creek  
*Ranch, Winery & Distillery*

### ENTERTAINMENT

Purple Porchlight

### INTRIGUE

Ardent Mills  
The Free Press Media  
Brian Koch, RBC Wealth Management

### COCKTAIL

Industrial Fabrication Services

### EVENT

Curiosi-Tea House  
ISG  
Wingert Realty

## BEND OF THE RIVER Continued from page 1

unloading regardless of river level. This and the railroad's later choice of Mankato for a station ended South Bend's hopes.

Once townships were established, steamboats plied the Minnesota in increasing numbers. In 1857 the river's bend welcomed 292 steamboat arrivals with 300 the following year. In 1859 two barges began navigating on the river, including the *Minneopa* which was built in Mankato. In addition to passengers, barges and steamboats carried considerable freight. By mid-summer in 1861, they had carried 62,000 bushels of wheat at five cents a bushel. J.J. Shaubut, the agent for all steamboats, checked off the freight in his Front Street store, then unloaded it in a storehouse next door or in his grain storehouse on the levee.

Mankato began exporting products in 1861, but steamboats had already begun to decline and almost disappeared with the arrival in 1868 of the Minnesota Valley Railway, which had reached Mankato from St. Paul. Railway transportation was year round, consistent and reliable, whereas river navigation was seasonal and dependent on river conditions.

By the mid-1870s only local steamboats traveling short distances and an occasional excursion steamer remained on the river. But ferry boats, first licensed in 1854, operated from landings at South Bend and Eureka, and from two landings in Mankato, one near Sibley Mound and the other near the Hubbard Mill site. These horse-drawn ferries, which operated by means of a heavy cable stretched across the river, were used mostly by farmers in Nicollet County, who brought loads of hay and other farm products to the Mankato market and returned with merchandise from Mankato stores. An account in the *Mankato Free Press* Of February 21, 1951, describes the road from the brow of the North Mankato bluff to the river as little more than a trail. It tested the stamina of pioneer farmers, for occasionally



The iron Main Street Bridge, including the sign warning of fines if one's crossing posed a risk to others.

chains that were used to lock the wagon wheels broke with disastrous results.

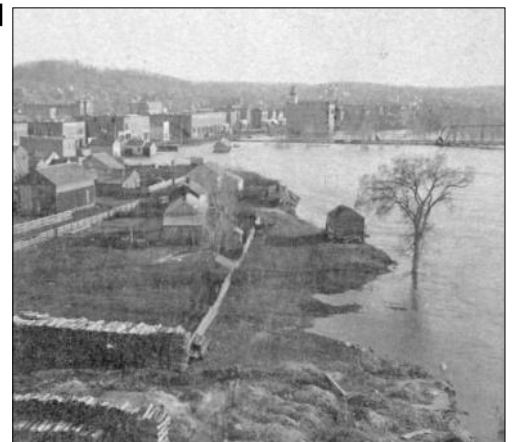
The legislature in 1878 granted the city and county authority to build a bridge across the Minnesota River at Mankato. In spite of a severe crop failure in the county that year, Mankato, Blue Earth County and Belgrade Township voted funds for the construction of the 810-foot iron truss bridge. The cornerstone was laid on the main pier in October 1879; and the three-span bridge, built on hand-

laid stone pillars, was completed the following summer. The bridge had a wooden plank floor and served horse-drawn wagons, pedestrians and livestock. Centered under the span closest to North Mankato was an additional round support topped with a turntable to allow passage of steam boats.

One year after its completion, the new iron bridge proved its strength as the 1881 flood crested at 30-31 feet, the first and worst of a number of floods in the life of the bridge.

As the bend of the river towns grew, increased use of the iron bridge made it unsafe for pedestrians in spite of the traffic warnings posted on the arches at each end: a \$10 fine for riding or driving over the bridge faster than a walk, and a \$100 fine for more than ten head of stock on the bridge at one time.

To further protect pedestrian safety, footbridges were built into the sides of the iron bridge in 1897. Here, notes *The History of North Mankato: A Community Profile*, local youths often



The 1881 flood. Notice the high water line just under the bridge in the upper right.

sat on benches with their friends and watched the river. Some older residents, 'less than pleased with the romantic rendezvous,' wanted spikes put on the benches, while others favored removing the benches entirely. After much discussion, an ordinance was passed to ban "spooning" on the bridge.

The iron bridge proved adequate through the turbulent floods of 1881 and 1897, but was proving inadequate for the increased population of the twin communities. Talk of a new bridge began in 1907, but not until 1915 were bids let for a new steel and concrete bridge to be built adjacent to the iron bridge. The contract went to Widell Construction Company, with a cost estimate of \$95,140.

The Mankato *Free Press* of September 14, 1917 reported the new Main Street Bridge to have a creosoted wooden block roadway 500 feet long and 34 feet wide, with concrete sidewalks at each side. Streetcar tracks were installed on the bridge with ornate light posts serving as trolley poles. It had required 16 months of labor, 445,000 pounds of steel, and 6,500 cubic yards of concrete at a final cost of \$103,000. Upon its completion it was considered to be the largest steel and concrete bridge in Minnesota.



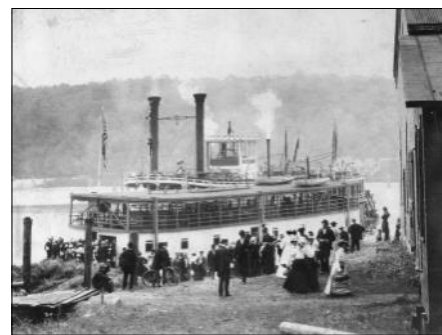
The "new" Main Street Bridge, c. 1917.

As with the iron bridge, the Main Street Bridge stood firm through a number of devastating floods, the most serious being those of 1951, 1965 and 1969. In 1965 a giant sheet of ice lodged against the bridge, damming all but a small section of the river channel. The A.C. Scheurer Construction Company had its crane on the bridge ready to drop a two-ton steel ball into the thick ice when the ice sheet broke of its own accord and passed under the bridge. Crowds of spectators who came to see the ice break up

caused bumper-to-bumper traffic for three hours.

From its earliest settlement to the present, the bend of the river has been a center of activity in Blue Earth County. The whistles of steamboats were met with great cheers. In the spring of 1854, the river was too low for boats to get through. When the *Globe* finally arrived on May 20, 1854 with supplies, it was greeted with great joy by settlers who had been living on fish for weeks. Great crowds also were at the levee in the spring of 1897 to see the *Henrietta*, a 170-foot-long, 300

-passenger, three-deck excursion boat, for by this time the steamboat had become a novelty. In 1863 the first boat on April 3 was met by more than 1,000 cheering people as it carried troops and supplies for the Civil War. In



The *Henrietta* makes the final steamboat voyage to Mankato, 1897.

more modern times, crowds have gathered at the bend of the river to cheer presidential candidates, speaking from the platform of campaign trains.

The bend of the river has had its conflicts, too. Following the US-Dakota War of 1862, it took on national and historical significance as 38 Indians were executed near the levee. In later years, an Indian march across Main Street Bridge protested a marker to that event; still later came protesters of the Vietnam War. And always in flood years came the intense race to sandbag ahead of the rising Minnesota River, to evacuate families, and to keep the anxious watch on the river. All of this witnessed by the Bend of the River.

### Sources

Neill, Edward D and Charles S. Bryant, *History of the Minnesota Valley*, 1882

Hughes, Thomas, *History of Blue Earth County*, 1909

"History of North Mankato: A Community Profile, a community and MSU publication," 1977

Sandon, Donna M., "Main Street Bridge," a commemorative plate brochure, 1985

Zitzmann, Tom, "A History of Main Street Bridge," 1976;

Various articles from the Mankato *Free Press* and *The Review*

# GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

Danelle Erickson, Operations Manager

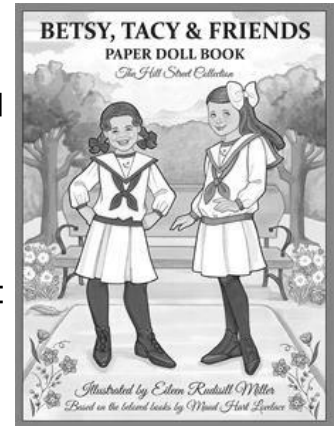
With the holiday season approaching fast, make sure you include BECHS' gift shop on your list of shopping locations! Books can be purchased in-person or online at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/online-store](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/online-store)

## NEW ON THE SHELVES

One of the bonuses to having new exhibits at the History Center is the opportunity to add new books to the Gift Shop. With the *We Are Water MN* exhibit, we've added *For Love of a River: The Minnesota* by Darby Nelson.

The book gives both an expansive and intimate look at one of our state's most important rivers as the author paddled his way from it's source to the Mississippi River.

Another new title in the Gift Shop is *Betsy, Tacy & Friends*, a colorful book of paper dolls featuring the beloved characters created by Mankato's Maud Hart Lovelace. The perfect gift for Betsy-Tacy fans of all ages! \$18.00



**NEW FREE Contactless Pickup at the History Center for Gift Shop and Art Gallery orders. Call or visit our online shop.**

## SHOP SMALL

Businesses in Mankato and North Mankato are joining together for **Shop Small** to promote our small businesses this holiday shopping season.



From **November 20-29**, dozens of small businesses, including BECHS, will be participating in this community promotion. There will be shop specials, prizes and more!

Visit [GreaterMankato.com/shop-small](http://GreaterMankato.com/shop-small) to learn more.

## MANKATO & NORTH MANKATO

NOVEMBER 20 - 29

YOU'LL ♥ OUR  
SMALL BUSINESSES.



## Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints

Artist Marian Anderson is recognized for her diverse subjects that come from a natural ability, not only to create a beautiful painting, but to breathe spirit and soul into her work.



*Passage of Time - Rapidan*  
Original artwork

BECHS is delighted to have on display four original paintings by Marian Anderson, on loan for the winter. Stop by the Marian Anderson Art Gallery at the History Center to see these beautiful paintings in person!

*These originals are not for sale, but prints or posters are available for purchase.*

**[www.MarianAnderson.com](http://www.MarianAnderson.com)**

# HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS FROM THE GIFT SHOP

Visit the Blue Earth County History Center Gift Shop in-person or online this holiday season. You are certain to find the perfect gift for everyone on your list.

## BECHS Publications

BECHS staff and volunteers have written and published a number of books on Blue Earth County history through the years, and they are exclusively available in the Gift Shop. This includes BECHS' newest title, the third volume of *The Historian* featuring articles published 2011-2015. \$14.95

Another popular title is *Blue Earth County Century Farms*, with over 100 local farms and their histories, \$25.00.

Other titles include *The Historian, Vol 1 and 2, Fire!, Meet the Hubbards, The Multifaceted Carp, Rapidan Dam, The Remarkable Men of Garden City* and *Unique Mankato Stories*.

## Dakota History

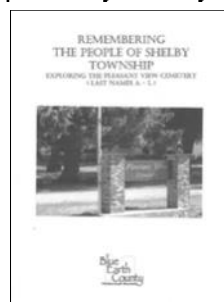
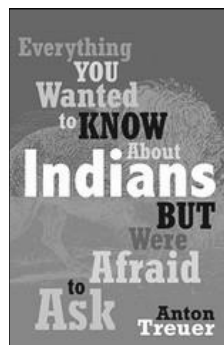
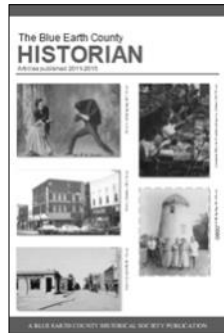
Visit our selection of books on Dakota history and culture. Topics range from historic narratives and events to more contemporary themes. Titles include: *Through Dakota Eyes, Being Dakota, The Dakota War of 1862* and the popular *Everything You Want to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*.

## Cemetery Transcriptions

*Remembering the People* compiled by Corey Hugg. These 9 books include cemetery marker transcriptions plus many obituaries and other biographical information. Great for the family historian! \$49.95 each

## Local History

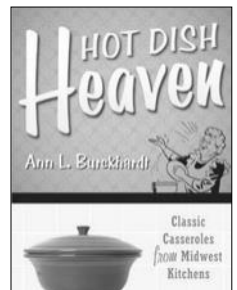
Included on the shelves are many books written about local history by local



authors. Topics including: Red Jacket Valley, Lake Crystal, Mankato Trivia, Mapleton and St. Clair.

## Minnesota Cookbooks

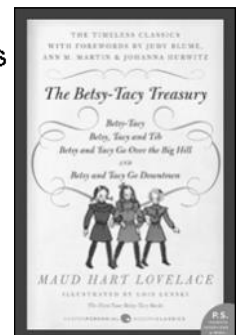
What could be more "Minnesotan" than a cookbook full of hot dishes? Check out *Hot Dish Heaven* along with some other fun cookbooks including *Bundt Cake Bliss, Potluck Paradise* and *A Cook's Tour of Minnesota*. \$16.95-19.95.



## For the Young and Young-at-Heart

The Gift Shop has books for all ages, including **The Betsy-Tacy series** by Mankato author Maud Hart Lovelace. Follow Betsy in her many adventures as she grows up in Deep Valley (based on real-life Mankato), \$14.99-\$15.99.

Another fun series are the **"You Choose"** books with interactive history adventures where the reader decides what happens next in the story, \$6.95.



## Unique Gifts

Vintage-inspired **Christmas ornaments, local art by Marian Anderson, candles, hand-painted slates** from the R.D. Hubbard House and many other unique gifts!



## Give the Gift of History this Holiday Season!

Memberships, Art, Gift Certificates are available at the Blue Earth County History Center and online at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)



# COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS

Shelley Harrison, Curator/Archivist

The Blue Earth County Historical Society presents our newest traveling exhibit *We Are Water MN*. This exhibit uses an interactive story collecting strategy that focuses on individuals' relationships with water and the responsibilities we have with this natural resource.

We are excited to partner with the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato and Le Sueur River Watershed Network in bringing this exhibit to South Central Minnesota.

*We Are Water MN* focuses on the relationship between people and water—how water connects story, history, faith, ethics, the arts and science. There is also a fun scavenger hunt throughout the exhibit.

Water is integral to the development of Blue Earth County as Mankato itself is located at the bend of the Minnesota River and confluence with the Blue Earth River. The exhibit explores water's effect on migration and settlement, and the relationship between water and politics, economics and culture.

We are grateful for this partnership with Minnesota Humanities Center and project's partners, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources. These partners made it possible to broaden our scope and boundaries of the exhibit. The exhibit covers the Greater Blue Earth River Basin which spreads over parts of 14 counties. *We Are Water MN* is funded in part by money from the Arts and

Cultural Heritage Fund and the Clean Water Fund that was created with the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

The exhibit highlights people reflecting on the meaning and experience of water in Minnesota. It shares stories from people in our community and gives space for you to add your own



story. Since *We Are Water MN* began touring in 2016, more than 2,000 water-related stories have been collected and nearly 100 audio clips are available via the project's Story Map. Water stories are a way for visitors to share personal experiences while learning about their neighbors' relationships with water. The range of experiences – from water as a daily part of our lives to personal stories of family, ritual, joy, and loss – along with education materials, compel people to evaluate their relationship with water and engage more deeply in conservation.

While parts of this exhibit are “hands-on” there is also a touchless option using your smart phone.

In conjunction with *We Are Water MN*, BECHS will feature a variety of water related programs including the Bend of the River Photography Club Exhibit: *Exploring Our Blue Earth County Waters*; Virtual History @ Home programs and much more. Please check back for more details. This exhibit is FREE and will be on display at the History Center until December 18, 2020.





# RESEARCH & GENEALOGY CENTER

Heather Harren, Communication & Archives Manager

The Research Center is open once again! It is so nice to have people back digging into local history!

Due to COVID-19, there are a few new rules in place to help protect everyone. First, an appointment must be made. At the moment, these are for two-hour time slots. We are also only allowing two researchers in the room. Each person will be at their own table.

Second, during your visit, like everywhere else in the building, we require masks be worn. We are also having you use hand sanitizer when you arrive and reapply after an hour in the room. As most of what we have is physically accessed by the researcher, we want to make sure we don't have anything linger after your visit or linger from someone else. As usual, all copies will be made by the staff in charge of the room.

We hope these guidelines help you feel comfortable visiting. I can't wait to see you!

Interactive Exhibit

## WE ARE WATER MINNESOTA



Think about what water means to you.

Learn about water quality in MN.

Learn about protecting water.

Read and tell stories about water.

**October 22 - December 18, 2020**  
Blue Earth County History Center  
424 Warren Street, Mankato | FREE  
In partnership with the Water Resource Center.

Minnesota Humanities Center | CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY | WRC | LE SUEUR RIVER | MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com | BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
507-345-5566

# HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

## EXPLORING OUR BLUE EARTH COUNTY WATERS

By Bend of the River Photography Club  
October 20 - December 31, 2020

The Bend of the River Photography Club presents an exhibit of water related images, varying size, shape, color and condition.

Each photographer has their own stories and history with water and this exhibit will showcase those stories. The members of the Bend of the River Photography Club have varied interests, skills and artistic preferences, so there will be a unique blend of styles included in the show.

The exhibit is free and open to the public and is in conjunction with the new traveling exhibit *We Are Water MN* now at the History Center.



*Buffered and Beautiful*  
by Mary Gitter-Zehnder

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Steve Jameson, BECHS Board Chair

These are historic times that we live in. The next eight weeks will bring a lot of history-making news to our nation and our region. A pandemic. A contentious election. A holiday season that will look very different. There's a lot of uncertainty right now, but history can be a guide.

That's why it's both incredible and satisfying that our organization has seen and preserved so much Blue Earth County History. In fact, on November 7 we'll be celebrating our 119-year anniversary. We were here during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1917-18 which looked very similar to the experiences we are having today. We are lucky to have at our fingertips historical records and artifacts as a guide to help us through these times.

November 7 is also the night of our virtual event, *A Night at the Speakeasy*. We had planned this event for April, but it had to be postponed. do

Our brilliant staff and team of volunteers have put together a fun virtual night of music, puzzles, drinks and conversation that should rival any in-person event. They've also secured a lot of great online auction items and many surprises. If you haven't already bought your ticket or party pack, you should! Check out the details on page 3.

That night will also kick-off our year-end giving campaign, *35K to Thrive*. With our History Center and Hubbard House being closed to visitors most of the year, our budget is \$35K short. We'll be looking for your help to get us over the hump and keep our organization thriving into 2021 and beyond. Watch for more details or join us at the Speakeasy.

Finally, you'll be happy to hear that our History Center is NOW OPEN. If you haven't had a chance, I invite you to see all the improvements we made to the main level and check out the new traveling exhibit *We are Water MN*. We hope to see you soon.

## MEET THREE NEW BECHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

BECHS welcomed six new board members in March! We met three in the previous issue of *The Historian*, here are the other three new members.

### What is your occupation?



**Gayle Elston:** McPherson Minn Lake Mutual Insurance Company Manager

**Jonathan Kemp:** Ardent Mills Plant Manager



**Nikolas Proehl:** Sociology Professor at Southwest Minnesota State University

### Favorite thing/place about Blue Earth County

**Gayle:** I enjoy the variety of outdoor activities Blue Earth County has to offer. Minneopa Falls, the Red Jacket Trail, rivers, lakes, and a variety of well-preserved historical landmarks. I feel very fortunate to live in a county

that offers such diverse options for every season.

**Jon:** The Coffee Hag. It's a great escape across the street; and that grilled cheese!

**Nik:** The diversity present in everything here - from farms to forests, small towns to downtown Mankato, and all of the many people who come together in our little patch of the Earth.

### What are you most excited about as a BECHS Board Member?

**Gayle:** I am excited to share the history of Blue Earth County. I feel it is so important to preserve and remember the past and I am excited to be part of an organization dedicated to that mission.

**Jon:** We're in such a transitional period right now in the area and our nation. I'm most excited about becoming a board member during a time period where we so clearly need to preserve the present so we can tell the future about it.

**Nik:** I am most excited about being able to share the wonderful work that BECHS does, and helping to shape how the organization grows and reaches out to our community.

# WELCOME BACK TO HISTORY!

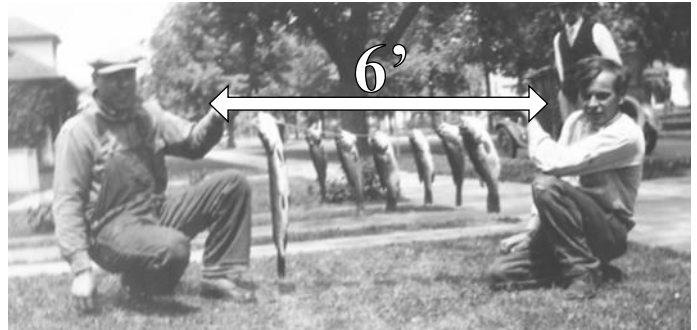
As you come back to the History Center, help prevent the spread of COVID-19 during your visit.



Call ahead or go online to **schedule your visit**. Visitors are **by appointment only**. Scheduling helps manage building capacity and contact tracing.



Face masks are required for the duration of your visit.



Practice **physical distancing**: keep a **minimum of 6 feet** from others



Follow all signage and staff instructions.



Wash and/or sanitize your hands often and thoroughly.

BECHS has been selected for the

## HY-VEE REUSABLE BAG PROGRAM!



Each time a \$2.50 red "My Heart" Reusable Bag is purchased at either Hy-Vee Mankato location during the month of November, BECHS will receive a \$1 donation.

## Let's Get Social!

Even if we can't get together in person, we can still share and celebrate history virtually! The BECHS and Hubbard House Facebook pages have new content daily. Join us!



"Then and Now" photographs are shared every Wednesday on Facebook and available on our website.

Visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com) and the "News" category for more great history content like our blog and podcast. You can join our free weekly e-news to receive updates and bits of history at [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/newsletters](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/newsletters)

# Be A 2020 History Hero

This year, more than any year in recent memory, you can truly say we are all living history.

During this historic year we had to take the difficult action of shutting down our History Center and Hubbard House. This had a major impact on our operating revenue. Normally we make on average \$40,000 per year from visitors learning about our rich history through programs and admissions. This year we've made a fraction of that.

Even with our doors closed, we did everything we could to keep the Blue Earth Historical Society running for

you. In a typical year it takes \$280,000 for BECHS to keep our history safe and to share it with our community. History didn't stop when COVID shut us down, in fact it has been an historic year for BECHS as we:

- Removed asbestos in the lower level of the History Center
- Upgraded technology in our community meeting rooms
- Freshened up the main level with new paint and flooring
- Added new LED lights and drop ceilings to brighten up the place
- Plus, dozens of virtual programs and events served hundreds of history fans across the US

This is all thanks due to our staff, a committed group of volunteers, generous donors like you, and a community that is interested in preserving the past for future generations.

It will take just **\$35,000** in additional donations by **December 31** to close the gap between what we've received and the **REAL** cost of maintaining and **GROWING** our Historical Society into 2021.

While this has been a historically challenging year, we're hoping you'll help us meet that challenge for BECHS to thrive. Join our *35 to Thrive* campaign today and help us preserve this historic moment for generations to come. Let's keep making history.



## 119 YEARS OF HISTORY

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Anniversary Celebration November 10-13, 2020

Visit the History Center for **FREE Gift, door prizes** and Holiday Gift Shop Specials including double **shopping discount** for BECHS Members.

History Center is located at  
424 Warren Street, Mankato

*Give History for the Holidays*  
Marian Anderson Art · Collectibles  
Books · Unique Local Handcrafted Items  
Memberships · Donations

*BECHS Member 20% Discount at History Center Gift Shop this week ONLY. Does NOT include consignment or sale items, online purchases, memberships or to be combined with any other offer.*



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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

### BECHS WISH LIST

A few things BECHS could use, new or used or funds to purchase.

- Laptop, Windows 10, new or slightly used
- Webcams (3)
- New or gently used Bagless Vacuum Cleaner
- Speakers with micro SD slot
- \$10,000 donation to support Meeting Room Technology Upgrade

give TO THE MAX   
Nov. 19, 2020

Join BECHS for  
**Minnesota's Annual Day of Giving**  
at [www.GiveMN.org](http://www.GiveMN.org)!

# BECHS HISTORY HERO DONOR CIRCLE

July 16 – October 15, 2020

## HISTORY HERO CIRCLE

### Partner \$500-999

Mark and Mary Davis  
John Isch  
Nadine Sugden  
Ken and Linda Wilmes

### Friend \$100-249

Mike and Cathy Brennan  
Chuck & JO Guck Bailey  
Patty Blair  
Judith C Davis  
Michael Johnson  
Brady and Julie Lux  
Doug Sinclair  
Vance Stuehrenberg and  
Mary Styndl  
Greg and Donnette  
Wheelock  
Randy Zellmer

### Additional Donors

Norma Bergquist  
Steven and Judy  
Berkeland  
Jane Griffiths  
Chuck and Kait Klammer  
Catherine Klugherz  
Missy Manderfeld  
Judith Strobel  
Kevin and Jody  
Swanson  
Jenny Wagner  
Randy and Rachel Wood

## BUILDING FUND

### \$1000+

Mark and Mary Davis

### \$500-\$999

Fred and Diane Lutz  
Norbert & Lynette Smith

### \$100-\$249

Sandi and Darrell Garlow  
Audrey Gatchell  
Corey and Robert Hugg  
Michael Johnson  
John Kunz  
Lori Lahlum  
Bob Nord  
Jim and Vicki Petersen  
Jerry and Judy Reich  
Jim Schramm  
Karen Stevenson  
Paul and Kristin Vogel

### Additional Donors

Barbara Fick  
Karolyn Hanna  
Margaret James  
Linda Karow  
Mike Lagerquist  
Kristin Matzke  
Catie Owens  
Michael Pulis  
Chris Styndl  
Mark and Kristy Sybilrud

## MONTHLY DONORS

Dale Benefield  
Carol English  
David and Julie Ewert  
James Hummer  
Steve & Susan Jameson  
Mike Lagerquist  
Jack & Diann McGowan  
Nikolas Proehl  
Marnie Werner  
Beth Zimmer

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Tom and Michaela Bicek  
Matt Connolly  
Lori Daley  
Kathy Emmel  
John Hickman  
Julie Holtz  
Christine Karst  
Virginia Kershaw  
Mary Lou Kudela  
Faye Mattison  
Peggy Mueller  
Lisa Wood

## AFFILIATE BOOSTER

Minnesota Welsh  
Association

## In Memoriam & Tribute

*In Memory of  
Robert Heinze*  
Helen Owens

*In Memory of  
Michael Holzapfel*  
Helen Owens

*In Memory of  
Bill James*  
Helen Owens  
Randy Zellmer

*In Memory of  
Harry Lloyd*  
Peter and Regina Steiner

*In Honor of  
Stacy Straka Family*  
Randy Zellmer

*Thank  
You!*

## HISTORY HERO DONOR CIRCLE

History Hero gifts directly support general operations to save Blue Earth County history by preserving artifacts and sharing stories through exhibits and events.

History Hero Donor Circle acknowledges cumulative gifts with museum guest passes for you to use or share, recognition in our annual report and more. History Hero unrestricted donations are tax-deductible.

For full details on levels and benefits, visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/donate](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/donate).



## Connecting Virtually with BECHS

Did you know BECHS is offering weekly online programs? Join us from the safety of your own home as BECHS staff and guest presenters share history with you! Programs are made available using Zoom virtual meeting platform. Attendees can join in with video and audio, or watch from the sidelines. Either way, it's sure to be a good time!

**Registration is required.** Programs held on Thursdays are recorded, so even if you can't join us live, you can still register and watch at a later time.

**Register for programs at  
[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Events](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Events)**

### NOVEMBER

- 5 **Rapidan Dam Video Presentation**, 4 p.m.\*\*
- 7 **A Night at the Speakeasy**, 7 p.m., House Party and Individual tickets on sale now.
- 12 **Old Town Virtual Walking Tour**, 7 p.m., \$10/household
- 14 **Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: Interviewing Your Family**, 11 a.m., Free
- 19 **Quilting Your Family History**, 4 p.m. \*\*

### DECEMBER

- 3 **A Closer Look at *We Are Water MN* exhibit**, 4 p.m.\*\*
- 10 **Christmas at the Hubbard House**, 7 p.m., \$10/household (watch for details!)
- 12 **Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group**, 11 a.m., Free
- 17 **TBA**, 4 p.m.\*\*

\*\*indicates the program is FREE for BECHS members; \$7 for non-members

**Stay tuned for more virtual programs in 2021!**

## A Night at the Speakeasy Online Auction

**BIDDING IS OPEN TO EVERYONE!**

Even if you are unable to attend BECHS' *A Night at the Speakeasy* on November 7, you can still bid on the fabulous auction items!

**[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy)**

The auction opens on November 2 and closes at 10 p.m. on November 7.

### Featured Items

#### 2-Night Stay at Log Cabin on the Blue Earth River

Opening bid: \$100  
Buy Me Now: \$400  
Donated by Curt and Debbie Fisher



#### Bed and Breakfast Stay at Moulin Rouge House

Opening bid: \$75  
Buy Me Now: \$300  
Donated by Moulin Rouge House



#### Kayak Rental for 4 People

Opening bid: \$50  
Buy Me Now: \$225  
Donated by Bent River Outfitter



Additional items include a party pack from Wow! Zone, a night's stay at Hilton Garden Inn Mankato, a private sail boat ride on Lake Pepin, custom apparel, tickets to Mankato Playhouse and MSU Theatre and more!

**NOTE:** You can view the items at any time, but will need to create an account in order to bid.

# MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## Give the gift of history with a BECHS Membership!

Gift memberships can be purchased at the History Center or online (just include the recipient's name in the "comment" box). Then leave the rest to BECHS as we will take care of sending a welcome note and member cards to the recipient. Question? Get in touch 507-345-5566 or [Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](mailto:Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)

If you need to renew your membership, visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership). Annual members can find their current expiration date on the back cover as part of the mailing label.

## BECHS Member Discount NOW ONLINE

Your member discount can be used in our online store as well as in-person. Save 10% on books and Marian Anderson art. Use the code **BECHSmember** at checkout.

[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/online-store](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/online-store)  
[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Marian-Anderson](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Marian-Anderson)



*Closing Time, Mankato* by Marian Anderson. Available for purchase in the online store.



## BECHS Annual Membership

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is a member-supported, non-profit organization. Membership dues make up a growing portion of the annual operating budget. Thank you for your support.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Gift for: \_\_\_\_\_

Include name and address

### Membership Levels

Individual Senior (62+) \$35

Individual \$40

Senior Household (new) \$55

Household \$60

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

Please send this form and check to:

**BECHS Membership**  
424 Warren Street  
Mankato, MN 56001

**OR**

Complete your membership form online at  
[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership)

*Corporate and Organizational levels are also available, call for details.*

# Christmas at the Hubbard House

*A Virtual Twist on a Holiday Tradition*



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Video Premieres**  
**Thursday, December 10**  
**7:00 p.m.**

*More Details to Come*

**\$10/Household**  
Tickets Available  
Starting December 1



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

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## EXHIBITS

**We Are Water MN**  
*through December 18*



**ART GALLERY**  
**Exploring Our Blue Earth County Waters**  
featuring Bend of the River Photography Club  
*through December 31*



With the recent changes to the History Center, the art gallery can now be found in both meeting rooms!

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

**Membership**  
**Expiration Date**