

THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIAN

Summer 2020

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FORT LE HILLIER

By Tim Pulis

Fort Le Hillier Marker unveiling, June 17, 1926. Thomas Hughes (third from the left) along with members of the Anthony Wayne Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The legend of Fort Le Hillier is a well-known story in Blue Earth County history. Pierre Le Sueur's journey to our area in 1700 to mine what he thought was copper, the building of Fort Le Hillier to survive the brutal winter and his relationship with the local Native Americans has an adventurous and captivating feel to it.

I've been fascinated by Le Sueur's journey into our area since first reading about it as a teenager over fifty years ago. In 1973, while pursuing an anthropology degree at Mankato State University, I assisted with an archeology dig on the Blue Earth River. At one point on a glorious spring morning, I took a break and ventured along the hillside downriver from the site. After a few minutes, I happened upon an area that appeared to have been dug out and there in front of me was a ten-inch wide seam of greenish blue clay running horizontally along the side of the cliff. Remembering the story of Le Sueur's mine, I raced back to get two friends who were working at the archeology site. We realized the blue clay's historic importance. We dug out a little of the clay and colored our faces with it as the Dakota had done for centuries as a sign of peace. I had canoed this stretch of the Blue Earth River dozens of times and never realized where on a map I was because of the high and steep bluffs along the river. But with the

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The Blue Earth County Historian

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Steve Jameson, BECHS Board Chair



It's a strange and historic time for all of us. I took over as Chair of the Blue Earth County Historical Society this spring right as the COVID-19 pandemic hit in a big way. We had the Annual Meeting in person at the beginning of March and since then, our Board hasn't been able to meet in person. While that seems strange for me, it must be really weird for our new board members. You'll have an opportunity to

"meet" a few of them on page 6.

As most of you know, our museum has been closed for a few months, but that doesn't mean we've been idle. In fact, the Board and the staff have been busy talking about what we can and should get done during this time. Our priorities included making sure our staff could continue to work safely, and in many cases remotely, that we were still offering programming to our members and the public, and that we address our facilities issues.

A facility issue that moved up on our priority list, since we were closed down anyway, was removing the asbestos in the ceiling of the first floor of the History Center. We knew before we could do any sort of expansion or remodel of the Center we'd have to get rid of that asbestos. At the same time, we are taking the opportunity to upgrade our meeting rooms with new lighting, technology and drop ceilings. It's an exciting project and we're looking forward to when it will be finished. Like all big projects, this one has a big price tag, but we've seen a number of generous donations to help us with our costs. If you are willing to help us with these History Center improvements, your donation would be very much appreciated and make a big difference.

Due to our big construction project and the ongoing challenges of limiting exposure in a pandemic, we will remain closed for now. The staff has been working hard looking at CDC guidance to figure out the best way to open to the public while staying safe. There's a lot of things to consider when you are running a public museum and we want to make sure we get it right. Watch for future announcements.

We are living through an unprecedented time in our community and our world. As members of the historical society, it's important to remember that we need to collect the stories and struggles from this time so that we can share our history with those who look back from the future. I for one am looking forward to the not-too-distant future (knock on wood) when we can all come back together in person and share in our community together. Take care and stay safe!

FORT LE HILLIER Continued from page 1

archeology site being surveyed near the river, I now knew exactly where we were. Later when I discovered Blue Earth County historian Thomas Hughes' map of the location of the Le Sueur's mine site and Fort Le Hillier, I believed the "copper mine" was right where I had stood.

In 1700, Frenchman Pierre Charles Le Sueur led a party up the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers to the Blue Earth River in search of the blue-green clay thought to contain copper ore. Arriving in late September, they decided to wait until spring to mine this ore and proceeded to build a fort for their comfort and safety. This article's purpose is to explore some of the details of this 320 year-old story.

Pierre Le Sueur was born in France in 1657. He came to Canada with the Jesuits to their mission at Sault Sainte Marie, but soon became a *coureur des bois* or fur trader. This required multiple skills in fishing, hunting and snowshoeing to survive the harsh wilderness. He was also fluent in several native languages which was needed for negotiations between tribes. He must have been a good leader of men in order to get 19 Frenchmen to cooperate on a journey that involved trading furs, mining ore, hunting bison and building a structure to survive the cold winter.

In 1695, Le Sueur brought a Dakota chief with him to Montreal to successfully negotiate a treaty with the Chippewa tribe. Unfortunately, this chief died while in Montreal, but the arranged meeting shows Le Sueur was comfortable with various tribes, and they respected him.

Le Sueur was an entrepreneur and out to make a profit. Sometime around 1696 he became aware of blue-tinted clay in what is today Blue Earth County. Whether he actually was here to see the deposits or someone showed him a sample is not known. Le Sueur suspected perhaps it contained copper because of the greenish-blue tint. On one of his trips back to his native France, Le Sueur had it analyzed by chemist Alexandre Le Hillier who declared it (incorrectly) to contain copper.

On his way back to France in 1697, Le Sueur was captured by the English and later released. Then in 1698 he obtained a fur trading permit only to have it revoked the next year. Finally with the help of his wife's relative Iberville (a renowned explorer and soldier), Le Sueur obtained royal permission to undertake an expedition to trade and to exploit mines in Dakota country. Guns and ammunition were often given to the Native Americans in exchange for furs. The weapons

meant some tribes had an advantage over rival tribes. In an attempt to control this side of trade, the French government only let certain people engage in the fur trade.

There may very likely have been other Europeans who ventured into our county centuries ago but they left no trace or journals of their visit. Le Sueur kept a journal and much of it was transcribed by Bénard de le Harpe in "History of Louisiana." This was a lucky break because over the years Le Sueur's own journal was

lost. The other firsthand account was by Le Sueur's shipwright named Jean Penicaut who was with him on this expedition. "The Relation of Penicaut" was dictated by him twenty years after the fact when he was in Paris for treatment for an eye affliction. It remained unpublished for 150 years until discovered in 1869. These are the two sources we have to rely on for deciphering the details of Fort Le Hillier and the mining of the supposed copper ore. Everything written about this historic episode comes from these sources.

Before we examine the next chapter in Le Sueur's life, let's take a historical reality check. It's the year 1700 and you are in a unknown wilderness amongst Native Americans, some of whom do not take kindly to your presence. The winters are far more brutal than what you are used to. If you get hurt or sick there is no emergency room to go to. If you break a tool or need more nails there is no Menards. If you run low on food there is no grocery store. If someone threatens you with violence there is no phone to dial 911. If you miss your family there is no mail service to send them a letter. If you are Pierre Le Sueur you have to be on top of your game every



Present day fort marker near Old Highway 66 "Near this spot stood Fort Le Hillier \ This fort was erected by Pierre Charles Le Sueur who with twenty-seven men here spent the winter of 1700"

day and have the respect of your men so they follow your orders.

In April 1700, Le Sueur and 19 men headed up the Mississippi River from Biloxi, Mississippi in a large boat called a shallop and three canoes. The shallop would have had a sail and/or oars. The vessels carried 20 men, trade goods, tools for mining clay, food, pots and pans for cooking and plenty of guns, ammunition, gunpowder and warm clothes. On September 19 they reached the mouth of the Minnesota River, near present day Fort Snelling. It then took them until September 30 to reach the mouth of the Blue Earth River venturing up it 2 to 3 miles before running into ice. This may seem a little early for winter to be setting in based on our recent local climate history, however, 1500-1850 was scientifically known as the Little Ice Age where the temperatures at times were well below today's average. Le Sueur knew a long and severe winter was very possible and the party went into survival mode. The mining of the blue clay would have to wait until spring.

Half of the party was assigned to hunt bison. This would mean leaving the river valley where the fort was being built to get to the prairie where the bison could be found. Guns, ammunition and gunpowder had to be carried along with knives for butchering. The killing of the bison was extremely dangerous as the bison can go from zero to thirty-five miles per hour in six seconds and had sharp horns and powerful shoulders. After a successful hunt, the bison were skinned, gutted and quartered which is no small task. Carrying the meat back to the fort would be more hard work and would have required many trips of a mile or more from the prairie to the fort lugging freshly killed meat. Once back at the fort the meat was put on drying racks. It was the perfect time of the year to do this with cold temperatures to prevent the meat from going rancid. According to Penicaut, the men killed 400 bison, showing these men were highly competent hunters and possessed great strength and stamina.

Meanwhile the rest of Le Sueur's contingent was busy constructing three log huts and a storehouse for their trade goods all surrounded by a stockade. There was plenty of timber available for this endeavor and to supply firewood to cook and stay warm throughout the winter. Penicaut recalled hearing trees exploding in the bitter cold. A sound that resembled a gunshot. Rivers froze

completely, and there was five feet of snow on the ground by springtime. It would be a winter that lasted for nearly six months. Penicaut observed the cold was more severe than it was in Canada.

While they were building the fort, a delegation of Dakota from the east came to argue that Le Sueur should instead build his fort in their territory to make it easier for them to trade and avoid reprisals from the Dakota of the west and other tribes. These Dakota were very emotional and would lean over Le Sueur's head and let their tears fall on him as they begged him to go elsewhere. But it was late in the year and Le Sueur was intent on mining in the spring. To appease the Dakota, he gave them powder, ammunition, knives and tobacco. A note in Le Sueur's journal indicates how well he knew the different tribes' customs. "The Sioux [Dakota] are all great smokers, but their manner of smoking differs from that of other Indians. There are some Sioux [Dakota] who swallow all the smoke of the tobacco and others who after having kept it in their mouths, cause it to issue from the nose."

One story Penicaut recalls is as they were building the fort, seven French fur traders from Canada sought refuge. They had been robbed and stripped naked by the Dakota. If not for Le Sueur's men having been there, they surely would have succumbed to the elements that winter. It makes one wonder how many unauthorized and undocumented people roamed the area trading for furs that we know nothing about. Le Sueur knew one of the men whose name was D'Eraque. The group was given clothes and invited to stay the winter with them. Also that winter, Le Sueur sent two men to invite two tribes, the lowas and Ottawas, to establish a village near the fort hoping to induce them to work in the mine when spring came but, this did not work out.

As Le Sueur's men settled into Fort Le Hillier for the long winter, they were adjusting to a steady diet of bison stew. For the first two weeks, according to Penicaut, their bodies rebelled against it with diarrhea and fever. But they actually grew to like it and each man eventually ate six pounds of meat a day and drank four bowls of the broth.

For a group of active and able-bodied men who had just paddled all the way from the Gulf of Mexico, built an elaborate fort and killed 400

bison, spending five months in the dead of winter holed up inside the fort must have been excruciatingly dull.

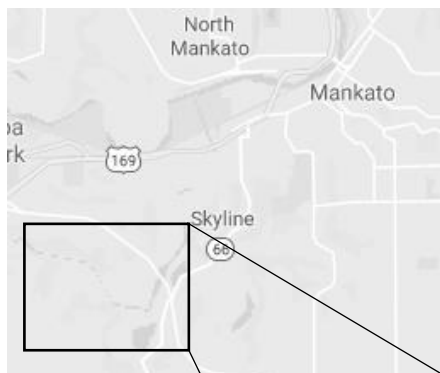
On April 1, 1701, Le Sueur took 12 men and proceeded a mile up the Blue Earth River to the blue clay bed and started mining. They used knives to cut out the clay and after 22 days of digging, the men had amassed a total of 30,000 pounds. They chose 4,000 pounds of the finest clay and took it back to the fort. During this time, the Dakota brought to the fort 400 beaver robes each of which consisted of nine beaver skins sewed together and many other furs which Le Sueur purchased. At this point he divided his group in half. Half of the men accompanied him back down the Mississippi River and the rest stayed at the fort with D'Eraque in charge. He also spoke to the Dakota and told them he expected them to settle down near Fort Le Hillier and remember their commitments to the French.

Finally at the beginning of May 1701, the party loaded three canoes with furs, put two tons of blue clay on the shallop and headed back to Biloxi, Mississippi. Since the people left at the fort were short on ammunitions and powder, Le Sueur promised D'Eraque he would send back supplies.

There is no record about what happened to the blue clay the men hauled down the river. When and how they discovered that it contained no copper is also a mystery.

Meanwhile, according to Penicaut, D'Eraque and his men were attacked by Meskwaki [called "Fox" by the French] who killed three Frenchmen. D'Eraque returned to Mobile, Alabama later with all his men, so it is unclear what Frenchmen were killed. Although the specifics are lost to time, something must have happened to terrify the remaining men. Being short of gunpowder they

The locations of Fort Le Hillier and mine according to Thomas Hughes. (below) This modern topographical maps shows the hill that overlooks the Blue Earth and Le Sueur rivers. Also included is the location of the present day marker.



buried the rest of the trade goods (which have never been found) and fled Fort Le Hillier, heading back downriver. While this was happening, Le Sueur was returning to France. While there, his friend Iberville was appointed to a high position and promised Le Sueur the chance to recruit men for exploratory purposes and pay him for work among the Dakota. Le Sueur was excited to return and to have his wife and children go to Louisiana to live.

It wasn't until Spring 1704 that Le Sueur left France for Louisiana. His ship was carrying nurses and women and it stopped at Havana where Le Sueur contracted yellow fever. After drawing up his will, he died on July 17, 1704, and is buried in San Cristobal, Cuba.

One of the greatest mysteries of Blue Earth County history is where Fort Le Hillier was exactly located. Thomas Hughes, the county historian, wrote a paper in 1904 that states the fort was built on a mound at the confluence of the Le Sueur and Blue Earth rivers. In 1967, archeologist David W. Nystuen did a survey on this parcel of land. A series of test trenches were dug in a random pattern. The next spring an R-29 soil resistivity machine was used on the property. The

results of this showed no evidence of a fort having been there. In fact no evidence of Le Sueur's visit was found anywhere.

The mound Hughes talks about has a lot going for it as the spot for Fort Le Hillier. It is about the distance that the old journals indicate it should be from the Minnesota River. There is a fine spring of running water that in pioneer days never failed summer or winter. At the top of the mound the land is level with a great view of the Blue Earth and Le Sueur river valleys. There would have been ample timber to build the fort. The bed

of blue clay Hughes thought was the famous copper mine is the appropriate distance up the Blue Earth River from the fort that Penicaut described. Some of the early settlers talked about an old excavation found there in the days before it was farmed.

Other theories argue the fort should be on land with easy access to the river for Le Sueur to launch his boats. I think this theory doesn't hold up to the facts. Upon arrival, Le Sueur knew he wouldn't need his boats for at least five months because winter was coming on fast. He preferred the security of having his main means of transportation within the confines of the stockade. While this would mean having to haul the watercraft up a steep hill, with strong, fit and dedicated men this would not have been a major obstacle.

I have canoed and hiked this area for 50 years. I have a folder of papers written on the subject an inch thick and I agree with Thomas Hughes' thinking of the fort's location. Fort Le Hillier was not a long term occupation. It housed the French explorers for only 18 months. Once abandoned, the local tribes may have carried off pieces of the fort to reuse. Any remaining logs would have long rotted away by the time the first European settlers came in 1851. Today the location is a housing development.

In 2015, St. Mary's University, Winona, Minnesota, Department of Resource Analysis conducted a study to find Fort Le Hillier. Using GIS technology and field work based on their reading of Thomas Hughes' account, they came up with different spots for the fort and clay mine. Their theory on the location of the fort is much closer to the Minnesota River than Hughes' theory. As far as the location of the clay mine, the study puts it up the Le Sueur River rather than the Blue Earth River. They admit changes in the course of the rivers, the possibility that few if any artifacts were left by the Frenchmen and 320 years of periodic flooding have likely erased any evidence of the fort.

While physical evidence of Fort Le Hillier may never be found, there are written accounts that in the year 1700, twenty-six Frenchmen journeyed into the heart of the wilderness for the adventure of their lives. It happened. This we know with certainty. I just keep hoping someday, someone will find solid evidence of exactly where the fort

was located.

There is one more fascinating story from our county's past that may have a tie-in with the Fort Le Hillier saga. During the summer of 1907, just a mile north of present day Rapidan, a farmer was digging on his land looking for gravel. He soon was uncovering the bones of 17 headless skeletons. Each body was laid out with legs extended and arms carefully put alongside the body and all aligned in the same orientation.

As word spread of the gruesome find, a great many people ventured out to view the spectacle. One of the bodies was taken to the newspaper's office where it was examined by a medical student who discovered an arrowhead embedded between the bones of the vertebrae. This body was supposedly later taken to the university for further study. Ultimately it was unclear as to whether the skeletons were of Native American or European heritage.

Thomas Hughes, who had an impeccable reputation in the community and was second to none in his knowledge of county history, offered his theory on the tragic events that led to the 17 skeletons and it is the account that has been handed down as the most likely. His theory is a group of Dakota warriors were ambushed by a group of Meskwaki, the two groups being bitter enemies. It was customary to take home either a scalp or head as a trophy. This happened when D'Eraque and his men were residing nearby at Fort Le Hillier. When survivors of the attack fled to the fort to report what had happened, the Frenchmen went into a panic. Since the French had digging tools with them they buried their Dakota friends out of respect before loading their canoes and heading home leaving Fort Le Hillier's physical presence to slowly fade away over the centuries, but its legend to last forever.

Sources

Bear Creek Archeology, Inc., "Using Technology to Reevaluate Historic Locations of the Lost Fort L'Huilier, Mankato, Minnesota"

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Hughes, Thomas, *History of Blue Earth County*

Jones, Evan, *The Minnesota: Forgotten River*

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MEET THREE NEW BECHS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

BECHS is excited to welcome six new board members! Get to know a little about three of them below and in the next issue you will meet Gayle Elston, Jonathan Kemp and Nikolas Proehl.

What is your occupation?



Kristin Fisher: Owner of Restorative Vacations LLC and Birth Doula with Atalanta Journey LLC



Mary Lee Teubner: Bar Manager at Linda's Place, Amboy, MN



Ken Wilmes: Semi-retired and I work part-time at Industrial Fabrication Services, Inc. as an estimator.

Minneopa Park and driving around looking at all of the productive farmland that our ancestors developed to make Mankato/Blue Earth County a center for Ag processing creating many jobs and much of the communities wealth.

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

Kristin: I was raised in downtown Mankato across the street from the historic courthouse and love learning about the history of our community. I also look forward to connecting with and serving the community through BECHS.

Mary: I am looking forward to learning more about the history of Blue Earth County. I have lived here my entire life and I think it's fun to see how the small towns have changed over the years.

Ken: Preserving history as it was written and helping preserve the beautiful buildings like the Historic Courthouse and Post Office and what's left of Mankato's historic downtown and the downtowns of the County's small towns.

Favorite thing/place about Blue Earth County

Kristin: My favorite things in Blue Earth County are the scenic rivers / waterfalls and natural landscape, the friendly and hard-working community and the ease of living and raising a family here.

Mary: Amboy, my hometown. It's just a short drive from Mankato and the Blue Earth River flows nearby, which is great for kayaking.

Ken: My favorite place in Blue Earth County is

GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

Danelle Erickson, Operations Manager

NEW BECHS PUBLICATION



The third volume of *The Historian* featuring articles published 2011-2015, is now available for pre-order. This book is a compilation of the main articles published in *The Historian*, BECHS' quarterly newsletter. It contains twenty articles on a range of historic topics.

The book is due out by late August. Regular price is \$14.95, but if you order by August 15, the price is only \$11.95. By pre-ordering online, you can choose to have the book shipped

directly to you or have it available for our NEW free contactless pickup at the History Center.

Visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/product/historian3 to place your order today or order by mail by sending checks payable to BECHS for the total of \$12.89 for pickup (includes tax), or \$18.23 to have it shipped to you.

BECHS's online Gift Shop features many great books and Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints. Check it out today!

NEW FREE Contactless Pickup at the History Center for all Gift Shop and Art Gallery orders.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

The Blue Earth County History Center closed to the public on March 18 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost immediately staff began to create new ways to inspire, engage and connect you to local history virtually. While we prefer to work with people directly, we are making a sincere effort to develop alternative ways to fulfill our mission to collect, preserve and share the history of Blue Earth County. We are also using this time to reimagine the Blue Earth County Historical Society and our role during this challenging time. BECHS has remained a pillar through many local, national and global crisis since 1901 and we are dedicated to providing hope, historical context and inspiration today.

The History Center will remain closed indefinitely and the R.D. Hubbard House will not open for the 2020 summer season. Our primary focus remains the health and safety of the staff, volunteers, visiting public and the historic objects in our care. We will implement guidelines and policies based on recommendations from the MDH and CDC when conditions are right for reopening the History Center.

The COVID-19 pandemic will severely impact the Society for the foreseeable future. Income through museum admission, gift shop sales, facility rentals and program fees will be limited. We do understand that the financial outlook for individuals and businesses is also unsure. And that is why we are deeply grateful for your

donations and membership renewals. Let's keep making history together!

Since the History Center is currently closed, we felt this was the ideal time to undertake building improvement projects that requires restricted access to the building— asbestos abatement of the main level ceilings. Good news—the asbestos has been abated! We are now moving onto the projects you will surely notice: new drop ceilings with LED lighting, new carpet in the temporary exhibit space and offices, and state-of-the-art audio visual technology in the meeting rooms. The cost of these improvements is approximately \$150,000; \$100,000 is made possible through the Edward McLean Legacy Gift with an additional \$50,000 from individuals and businesses like you. Thank you to those who have already contributed \$17,416 to the Building Fund 34% of our goal (as of 7/15/20). We are so very excited about these improvements and can't wait to show you, until then, here's a sneak peek.



www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Building

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(cont. from pg. 8)

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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.



History @ Home with BECHS

Did you know BECHS is offering weekly, online programs? **Join us from the safety of your 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. The 4 p.m. weekly programs are recorded, so if you can't join us live, you can still register and will receive access to the recording. Most programs** are Free for BECHS Members/\$7 Non-members, unless otherwise noted.

Register for programs at
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/events

AUGUST

- 6 Blue Earth County's Historic Courthouse, 4 p.m. **
- 8 Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: Finding the House, 11 a.m., Free
- 13 Virtual Pub Crawl, Madison Avenue Pubs, 6 p.m., \$10/household
- 20 Potions, Powders and Patent Medicines with Susan Hynes 4 p.m. **
- 27 Seppman Mill with Tim Pulis, 4 p.m. **

SEPTEMBER

- 3 History of Mahkato Wacipi, 4 p.m. **
- 10 Virtual Walking Tour: Silk Stalking Stroll, 7 p.m., \$10/household
- 12 Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: The Clue in the Photograph, 11 a.m., Free
- 17 American Bison with Scott Kudelka, 4 p.m. **
- 24 Lost and Found: The Charlie McCarthy Story with Larry Kortuem, 4 p.m. **

OCTOBER

Stay tuned for more virtual programs, including BECHS' annual *Ghosts from the Past*

Let's Get Social!

Even though 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 including videos, historic photos, virtual tours, Thursday Trivia and much more. Join us!



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

Visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com and look for the "News" category for more great history content like our blog and Surrounded By History podcast. And if you are not already signed up, join our free weekly e-news to receive updates and "bits of history".
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/newsletters
So much fun waiting for you at your fingertips!



MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

BECHS is excited to offer our members a new members-only benefit! Each membership now includes one 30-minute session of BECHS-conducted research using the resources available in the BECHS Archives. So if you would like us to lookup some obituaries or a newspaper article or two, get in touch with the Research Center!

Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

If you need to renew your membership, visit 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

Great news! You can now use your BECHS member discount in our online store as well as in person. Save 10% on books and Marian Anderson art. Just use the code **BECHSmember** at checkout.

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/online-store
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Marian-Anderson



Good Ol' Summertime, 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 \$65

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

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



Share Your COVID-19 Story

BEGHS needs your help documenting today's historic events. What COVID-19 related stories, photos and objects do think should be preserved and remembered for future generations? Please share with BECHS so we can do what we do best—collect and preserve today's history for generations to come.

From everyday photos taken with your cell phone to handmade face masks, **no story is too small!** Join this community project today by visiting:

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Story

Here are some examples of the stories and items you can share

Stories

How has life changed?
How has life stayed the same?
What do you miss the most?
Ways people are working together.

Photos

Working or school work at home
Signs around your neighborhood
Empty store shelves
Masks or other ways you are staying safe

Objects

(please donate once the History Center has reopened to the public)
Handmade masks, Lawn Signs
School projects

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

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**Membership
Expiration Date**