

The Blue Earth County

# HISTORIAN



## Seppmann Mill



A local landmark, Seppmann Mill, celebrates 150 years in 2014. Learn more about the man who built the mill and the Historical Society's role in preserving it in "*Seppmann: The Man and The Mill*" on page 9.

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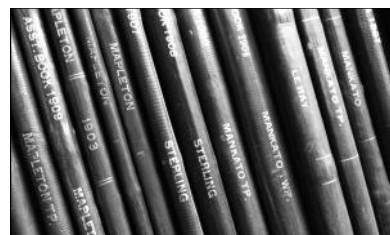
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### New Art Exhibit



"Simplicity" by Sandy Howe,  
see page 7 for details.

### 2013 Annual Report



Expanded issue includes  
2013 Annual Report, pages 19-26.

**BECHS Mission:** To lead in the collecting and promoting of Blue Earth County's history to ensure its preservation for the enrichment and benefit of present and future generations.

## The Blue Earth County Historian



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### Heritage Center

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN  
507-345-5566  
[www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com)  
**Hours - NEW**  
Tuesday and Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### R.D. Hubbard House

606 South Broad Street, Mankato  
507-345-4154  
**Hours**  
May: Saturday and Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.  
June-August:  
Friday & Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

### *The Blue Earth County Historian* Spring 2014

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

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## Director's Notes

Jessica Potter  
Executive Director

The dust is just beginning to settle around the Museum after a very busy March. We kicked off March with the Annual Meeting on March 2. Our special guest and dear BECHS friend, Jack Madsen, shared his insights and images of Blue Earth County's past. We also welcomed three new Board of Trustees members and thanked three outgoing members. If you were unable to attend the Annual Meeting, you will find the 2013 Annual Report starting on page 19 of the newsletter.

Before we had a chance to blink after the Annual Meeting, staff and volunteers were busy finalizing details for our annual fundraiser Surrounded By History which celebrates our past while supporting the future of BECHS. I used a gardening analogy to describe this year's event—the first year a garden sleeps, the second year it creeps, and the third year it leaps. This was the third year for Surrounded By History and it leapt with increased sponsorships and ticket sales and the addition of a live auction. Overall BECHS raised \$20,000 for operations through this single event.

Thank you sincerely to everyone who was involved this year! Check out page 15 for the full list of Surrounded By History sponsors and in-kind supporters. Mark your calendar now for next year; you won't want to miss Surrounded By History: Built in Blue Earth County on Friday, March 20, 2015.

The next big thing on the docket is gearing up for our future expansion plans. The funds raised from Surrounded By History will help with additional operating expenses and building acquisition, but we have a lot of work ahead of us to realize our dream of a bigger, more accessible Blue Earth County Museum. We hope to have a lot more information for you in the coming months. This is a very exciting time for BECHS and we are glad that you are with us at the foundation of our future expansion.



Auctioneer Jay Dailey warmed up the crowd with a lively game of Heads and Tails. These attendees were the last men standing. Photo by Dinsmore Photography

### **New Heritage Center Hours**

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



# Board of Trustees

**Randy Zellmer**  
President, Board of Trustees

As many of you are aware, last June our downstairs neighbor, VINE, announced that it would be leaving the building within a year. This announcement creates the opportunity for the Historical Society to expand our facility and services. Beginning July 1, the Historical Society will occupy the entire building on the corner of 5th and Cherry Streets. While this is very exciting, there is much that needs to be accomplished.

The Board of Trustees and Executive Director, Jessica Potter are assembling a Building Taskforce to determine both short and long-range plans necessary for the building remodeling and potential expansion. One area we are working on is securing funding for the building acquisition. In order to fully own the building, BECHS will need to raise \$287,500 to acquire VINE's interest in the building. The first financial hurdle was cleared, when we received confirmation that the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners will provide BECHS with \$57,500, representing the 20% down payment for the building. This leaves us \$230,000 to raise before the building is officially ours. Now, as in the future, would be a time to consider an extra financial donation to BECHS to fund the building acquisition cost.

Another area the taskforce is working on is a short-term building plan. A determination will be made on how much of the downstairs space will be utilized to alleviate our current space shortage, and how much can be made available to other nonprofit and community groups. We would like to rent some of the downstairs office space, as well as make the larger gathering spaces available to community groups and for events.

There is the long-range planning to determine how best to remodel the building. As an organization, we will explore the future needs of BECHS, and how to develop the space to meet these needs.

As the short and long-term plans come together, we will keep you informed. In the meantime, we

would like to hear from you. Let us know how you would like to see the building improved, and the space utilized. Send your suggestions, dreams, or comments to Jessica the Museum or by email at [bechs@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechs@hickorytech.net). We value your input.

Thank you to Blue Earth County for their continued support and confidence in BECHS. Also, thank you to those that support BECHS through membership and donations. More than ever we need your support not only financially, but also by sharing our good news with others. The bigger our base of supporters, the sooner we can realize the dream of a bigger, more accessible Historical Society.

## Welcome New Board Members

At the Annual Meeting, the following individuals were selected to serve on the BECHS Board of Trustees for 2014-2017. Meet your new Board members:



### **Patrick Baker**

Patrick is the Director of Government and Institutional Affairs for Greater Mankato Growth. He is a native of Blue Earth County.

### **Dale Benefield**

Dale is retired from Taylor Corporation and has been a BECHS volunteer since 2007. She is a native of Blue Earth County.



### **Julie Nelson**

Julie is the Program Manager for the Small Business Development Center. She grew up and has lived in the region her entire life.

Thank you to Paula Marti, Linda Nussbaumer and Leslie Peterson for your past service on the BECHS Board.



# At the Book and Gift Shop

Danelle Erickson, Museum Manager

It's that time of year – those first warm days arrive and we just **have** to get outside. But what to do? It's too early to start the garden and too muddy to visit the parks. Why don't you stop by the Museum Gift Shop and purchase one of our walking tour booklets? Prices range from \$3.95 to \$4.95 and they are the perfect size to fold up and stick in your pocket. Take a stroll along the streets of "old" Mankato and learn what the old buildings used to be and what the new buildings have replaced.

Booklets available include: *Walking Tour of North Front Street* featuring Old Town Mankato, *Fortune and Family Ties* featuring the 100 blocks of South Front and East Walnut Streets, *Rediscovering Front Street* featuring the 400 and 500 blocks of South Front Street and *Hidden Front Street* featuring the 300 and 400 blocks of South Front Street.

*Soft Caller* is my favorite Marian Anderson wildlife painting. Each time I walk by the beautifully



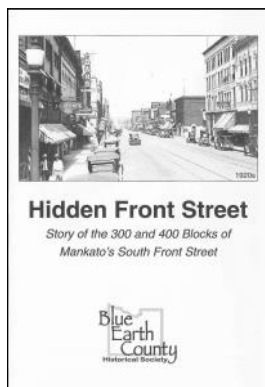
framed print we have on display in the Museum Gift Shop, I have to pause for a moment and look. I love the majestic manner owls express, like an eagle or a hawk, but there is something mysterious about them too. Stop by the gift shop and take a look for yourself, or visit the new and improved Marian

Anderson website at [www.mariananderson.com](http://www.mariananderson.com).

Remember when a trip to the mailbox could make your day? All it took was a letter or a greeting card from a loved one and you could carry that happy feeling with you the rest of your day. In the fast-paced world of today, most of our mailboxes contain only bills and junk mail and any personal

notes are usually in the form of an email. The Gift Shop has a great variety of notecards to help you bring that happy, loved feeling to someone today. Alongside the large selection of cards featuring Marian Anderson artwork, we also have cards that support the Boy in Blue Project, cards that feature Maud Hart Lovelace or the Red Jacket Trail and more.

Do you know an artisan in Blue Earth County looking to expand where their creations are available for purchase? The Museum Gift Shop is seeking quality, locally-crafted gifts to add to our inventory on a consignment basis. Items such as pottery, ceramics, jewelry, candles...the possibilities are endless. If you or someone you know would be interested, have them stop by the gift shop or email [bechsms@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsms@hickorytech.net).



*Marian Anderson*  
**Fine Art Prints**

**You can help BECHS raise funds by purchasing Marian Anderson Art for yourself or as a gift.**

As a living legacy, Marian Anderson donated her entire inventory of fine art prints to the Blue Earth County Historical Society; **100% of all print sales benefit BECHS**. Fine art prints are available to view and purchase at the Heritage Center Book & Gift Shop and online at [www.mariananderson.com](http://www.mariananderson.com).



***Cherished Memories***  
by Marian Anderson

***Thank you for your support!***



# Historic R.D. Hubbard House

The Historic R. D. Hubbard House is getting ready for another great season. The house will open on May 3, and for the month of May, it will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m. Make sure you get your tickets now for the Victorian Tea Party that will be held on May 4. The Tea Party includes a tour of the house and a tea and gift basket silent auction. This is a great event for all ages.



In June, the Hubbard House hours are extended to be open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 1-4 p.m. Story Time at the Hubbard House begins June 6 and continues every Friday morning through



August. The annual Victorian Lawn Party will take place on June 7.

The Hubbard House will be under construction this summer. It's time for a new rubber membrane roof on both the house and Carriage House. Also, the

Carriage House is overdue to be repainted. Both will remain open during the construction. Funding for the project was made possible through the Minnesota State Capital County and Local Preservation Grant and the City of Mankato.

Interested in being a Hubbard House tour guide? School tours fill the house in the month of May. Contact Danelle at 507-345-5566 or [bechsms@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsms@hickorytech.net) for more information. Training is provided.

Looking forward to seeing you this summer at the Historic R.D. Hubbard House!

## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

*Where 1900s History Comes to Life*

**May 4, 1-4 p.m.**

### Opening Weekend & Victorian Tea Party

All ages event includes Living History House Tours with costumed characters every hour, Afternoon Tea and Gift Basket Silent Auction at the Emy Frenz Arts Guild. Reserve tickets today.

**June 6 - August 29, 10:30 a.m.**

### Story Time at the Hubbard House

Join Katherine and Mary Esther Hubbard Friday mornings for a special story time on the Hubbard House lawn. Activities include stories, crafts and games. Story Time is free for all ages.

**June 7, 1-4 p.m.**

### Victorian Lawn Party

Annual lawn party features lawn games, refreshments, dolly tea party and house tours. Free and open to the public; admission charged for house tours.

## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

### Hours of Operation

#### May and September

Saturday, Sunday 1-4 p.m.

#### June - August

Friday, Saturday

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday 1-4 p.m.



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



# Collections and Exhibits...

Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is excited to be hosting five of the Minnesota Historical Society Traveling Exhibits. The MHS Traveling Exhibits Program was started to bring new exhibits to small museums that lack access to exhibitions due to space or cost. These exhibits have inspired and educated visitors on anything and everything possible, from sensational natural disasters to victory gardens, from the Great Depression to New World explorers. Starting in August, we will host five exhibits over 13 months. They will be *Minnesota Disasters*, *Uncle Sam's New Deal*, *Electrifying Minnesota*, *Minnesota Homefront* and *Minnesota on the Map*. We are excited about the chance to bring these great museum exhibits to our area.

The traveling exhibits will be displayed in our newly acquired space at the Historical Society. This new space will give us the opportunity to host these dynamic exhibits and attract new audiences. We will utilize the Minnesota Historical Society's



Exhibit To Go program to help us transform our expanded facility into a space that the public and our membership can imagine as a future gallery or Museum. While the traveling exhibits cover all of MN, BECHS will also create a personal, local experience by showcasing artifacts and stories from around Blue

Earth County. These small exhibits will showcase the local impact of each topic on our communities along with local images and audio visual elements. Also, each new exhibit will be kicked-off with a program or special guest appearance. We want these exhibits to serve as a vehicle for education and outreach. The first traveling exhibit *Minnesota Disasters* will run mid-August through September. Watch for the exact dates in our upcoming newsletters or by checking our website [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com).

Volunteers are needed to assist with this program from research, writing, exhibit set-up and tear-down. If you are interested in volunteering for one or more exhibits, please contact Shelley at [bechsam@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsam@hickorytech.net)

The Minnesota Historical Society Traveling Exhibits Program has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008 and is administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

## Call for Art

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is assembling an art exhibit celebrating the 150th anniversary of Seppman Mill. We are looking for art to showcase Louis Seppman's 1864 stone grinding mill. We are seeking paintings, photographs, and art of all mediums featuring Seppman Mill. The exhibit will be on display at the Museum July - September 2014

If you are interested in participating, please send a .jpeg of your artwork to [bechsam@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsam@hickorytech.net) by June 15, 2014. All pieces must be ready for display by July 1, 2014. For more information please contact Shelley.



Seppman Mill oil on canvas by Ida Martin, 1887. Martin won 1st prize at the 1888 Blue Earth County Fair. Now on display.



# Every object has a story...

The Society's permanent collection includes paintings, textiles, posters, photographs, books, letters and ephemera from the middle of the 19th century through the 21st century. Here is a glimpse into our collection...

## Rollerblades, c. 1990s



Did you know the first Rollerblades were created right here in Minnesota in 1980? They are more like hockey skates than traditional roller skates. This pair, from the early 1990s, was purchased at Scheel's in Mankato for \$150. They were

donated to BECHS with all of the appropriate safety gear - helmet, knee and elbow pads.

## Tupperware, c. 1970s

Tupperware was introduced in 1945 by Earl Tupper. The first Tupperware Home Party was held in the 1950s. This harvest orange toy pitcher is from the Tupperware Mini Serve-It Children's Serving Set, from the late 1970s. It is just like the full-size version right down to the push-button seal lid.



If you are interested in donating a piece of Blue Earth County history past or present, please contact Shelley Harrison, Archives Manager.

## HERITAGE CENTER ART GALLERY FEATURED EXHIBIT

### "Simplicity" by Sandy Howe April - June 2014



"Along County Road 13"

In my photographs, I strive for uncluttered compositions where my subjects are isolated from distracting surroundings. As a result, viewers often see my photography as simplistic and basic. I'm content with those labels.

Through my photography, I share my interpreted view of the world. Perhaps that's one reason why my greatest joy is when I'm behind my camera. I find great satisfaction in capturing photographs of people, nature and life.

*Sandy Howe*

Pictured on the front cover: "Firefox Veronica"

**Next Featured Artist July - September 2014**  
**Open exhibit featuring Seppmann Mill**



# Education & Outreach

*Making Local History Accessible to All Ages*

Heather Harren, Education and Outreach Manager

Spring at BECHS is one of our favorite times of the year because we have the great opportunity to share local history with school children on their annual field trips to the Museum and Hubbard House. How many of you reading this visited the Hubbard House as a third grader or maybe as a field trip chaperone? The trip was a spring tradition for those that grew up in Mankato. Generations of school children have learned about local history through a field trip to the Historical Society.

But there are changes ahead. Did you know that starting next fall local schools will no longer be teaching local history in third grade? Some local history, in particular Native American history, will now be included in sixth grade's Minnesota history. Where does that leave BECHS's school field trips?

Over the past several months I have been working with a group led by School District 77's curriculum office combing through the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies. The standards spell out what each student should learn at specific grade levels. Unfortunately, local history is not identified in the standards. However, the good news is that the Historical Society is working hard with ISD 77 to ensure that local history is still accessible to our kids. We will serve as a resource for the schools in the classroom or on-site with a Hubbard House or museum tour.

The Historical Society will use the next few months to update our school field trip tours for both the Museum and Hubbard House and develop resources that can be used in the classroom. Then in the Fall we plan to share these improved opportunities with all Blue Earth County schools. We have created an Education Taskforce to help with this development. We are in need of elementary school teachers to assist with the development of these tools. If you are interested, please contact me.

For a daily dose of BECHS between newsletters, check us out on Facebook, Twitter and now Instagram. We will occasionally post images from events and our sites on all three social media sites.

## Monthly Educational Opportunities

### **Our History Matters**

Monthly educational series promoting and celebrating local history. Free for BECHS Members, \$5 Non-members.

Doug Brugman presented "If These Walls Could Talk: 313 North Front Street" on March 27. The program tied nicely to our "Remembering Front Street" exhibit.



### Upcoming Programs

**April 24** - History of Seppman Mill by Tim Pulis

**May 22** - History of Bicycling and Bicycling Clothing by Grace and Richard Keir

**June 26** - Genealogy and Research

### **Young Historians**

Hands-on history workshops for kids take place the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. Workshops are free and geared to 3rd - 6th graders. Free.



In March, Young Historians learned about the complicated web of treaties and alliances during World War I.

### Upcoming Workshops

**May 10** - World War II

**June-August** - No workshops, start again in September



# Seppmann: The Man and The Mill

By Tim Pulis

In the 1860s, a German immigrant set his sights on land overlooking the Minnesota River Valley and with determination built a wind-powered grist mill on the prairie. This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of Louis Seppmann's Mill.

This structure, located within the boundaries of Minneopa State Park, dates to the early days of Blue Earth County. The history of the mill can be divided into three periods. The first phase covers its construction in 1862 to its final days of operation in 1890. The deterioration phase lasted from 1890-1929 when the Seppmann family donated the mill to the Blue Earth County Historical Society. The final and current phase includes a period of conflict between the dream of bringing the mill back to its glory days and the reality that the money pot is never full enough. Here is Louis' story and the mill that is his legacy.



Louis Seppmann and his family near the mill, c. 1870s

## 1862-1890: Construction and Operation of the Mill

Louis Seppmann was born in Germany in 1835 and sailed with his father, an older brother and a cousin to New York in early January 1854. He worked as a stone mason in Pennsylvania until 1857. Louis had an itch to head west and ended up in Mankato where he worked for a time. When hearing gold was discovered at Pikes Peak, the young and adventurous Louis moved to Colorado in 1860 to try his luck.

In 1862 Louis returned to Mankato where he helped build some water powered grist mills. After building a mill near what is today Dotson Foundry, he was eager to get out on his own. Taking his saved wages, he decided to build his own mill west of Mankato on a rise of land in South Bend Township that was exposed to the winds that swept up and down the Minnesota River Valley. In the spring of 1862, 12 to 15 water driven mills in the county were damaged by flooding. Early season weather-related damage was par for the course for these water mills. Since Seppmann was a stone mason by trade and had some knowledge of the windmills of his native Germany, a stone windmill made sense to him.

In the summer of 1862, the arduous task of putting together his mill began. Louis had recently worked with three other masons, men he now hired to help him and soon the walls began to rise. When they reached 10 feet tall the work had to cease for the year due to lack of money and the outbreak of the U.S.-Dakota War.

Work continued the next year with the help of a neighbor, Herman Hegley. With no Menards or Home Depots in those days, nearly everything used to build the mill came from Louis' property including the stone for the exterior walls, as well as the white oak and hard maple for the floors, rafters, shafts and gears. Even though Louis was of small stature and never weighed more than 112 pounds, he had a giant work ethic. There was no sawed wood used, but rather he hewed it with a broad ax. The only other tools he used were a hammer, saw, chisel and auger. Wooden pins were used instead of nails.

The circular walls reached a height of 32 feet. They were 2-feet thick at the bottom and 18 inches at the top. The distance apart at the bottom was 30 feet, tapering to 20 feet at the top. As the walls grew higher, with no derrick or scaffolding for lifting, Seppmann built an inclined roadway to the top of the wall from the northwest side. Fifty-five cords of stone were used to build the structure. The only parts of the mill that were not handmade were two large beveled cog wheels and the grist stones, which were brought from St. Louis for

\$600.00.

The entire domed roof could be rotated so the blades could face into the ever-changing wind. To accomplish this, the roof sat on metal rollers. A large triangular wooden frame on the side opposite the blades was used to turn the roof. The rollers and iron pieces connected to the ends of the shafts used to anchor them in place would probably have been manufactured elsewhere.

The four arms, each 35 feet long, were covered with sail cloth. The speed of the wind dictated how much cloth the miller used on the arms. If he covered all of them it is known as full sail. The hub, to which the arms were attached, was 2 feet square making a total spread of 72 feet. This had to have been an incredibly impressive sight, with the mill already sitting on the highest point of land in the vicinity and the roof rising to 44 feet with the top sail towering over it all. Needless to say, the neighbors could hardly wait for the blades to start rotating and the grinding of the wheat to begin.

The mill had five floors including one in the dome. The second and third floor were only four feet apart. As the blades rotated, they turned a two foot wide solid oak vertical shaft and a gear connected to it. This gear meshed with a large gear situated at the top of a two foot wide and 24 foot long vertical shaft

that extended all the way to the second floor. Between the second and third floors, this shaft turned a large 12 foot diameter cog wheel that meshed with an iron cog wheel. As this cog wheel turned it rotated a spindle that extended upward to the third floor and connected with the top millstone and made it turn. When the top

millstone (or runner) rotated, it would grind the wheat as it rubbed wheat against the lower stationary stone (bed stone) and thus the production of flour.

A door was located in the roof on the opposite side of the sails to get to an outside platform which was about four feet wide just above the “tail”. It was here that Seppmann would go to smoke his pipe and gaze out over the landscape. Grain mills have very high explosive levels due to dust created by handling the grain, so any smoking would have to be done outside to prevent a spark. It’s interesting to note that the dust from wheat flour is more explosive than gunpowder whereas the dust from corn and buckwheat is not explosive.

In late summer of 1864 it was time to give the mill a test run. The Civil War raging out east had caused the price of wheat to go to \$2.50 a bushel. Since he was out of money, Seppmann had to borrow a few hundred dollars to get the mill going. Since he knew little of the finer details of the milling process he hired an expert to help him. When the expert arrived there was no wind for four or five weeks so the miller left.

Finally, on a Sunday morning in 1864, the breeze started to pick up, but Seppmann was a religious man and refused to work on the day of the Lord. His partner, Hegley, convinced him to let this one slide because if the Lord made the wind blow on Sunday, it must be to make flour and - thus the adventure began.

The first thing that happened was that the wheat clogged up the millstones. Thinking that more speed would solve this issue, they put up the full sail. This is where things started to really get ugly as the wind had increased and the mill started to run out of control. There was a danger the excess friction could cause a fire. Neighbors seeing and hearing the commotion started to gather around. The oxen and horses were getting skittish from the noise, children were crying and grown men started to get furrowed brows. Panic was setting in. Seppmann threw a piece of logging chain into the gearing, only to see it break apart and send a chunk of metal through his hat. Six inches lower and this whole thing would have gone down in history as “Seppmann’s Folly”. Once they finally got the mill stopped, they had to make a few repairs. They found that the actual problem was that the millstones were not dressed correctly.



Mill model by Ken Sander.  
On display at the museum.

This is a good time for a milling lesson. The two stones that grind the wheat into flour need to be worked on when they get shiny from grinding. This happens after about every 3,000 bushels. The top stone needs to be lifted and flipped over. Then the very laborious task of striking the stones with a hammer to rough them up begins. It could take an experienced person up to 40 hours to dress the pair of stones. There were people who did this full-time and traveled around hiring themselves out. The saying “show your mettle” comes from people asking the millstone dresser to roll up his sleeves and show all the metal embedded in his forearms from the hammer flaking off as proof of his experience. Once the stones were ready to grind, the miller needed to run a full bushel of wheat through the stones before production could begin. This resulting flour would be discarded because no matter how well you cleaned the stones after dressing, there would be some remnants of small stone particles left over.

Once Seppmann had his grindstones properly dressed and a better brake installed on the mill, he ran a fresh batch of wheat which turned out some excellent flour. Word spread and people immediately started coming from many miles around with their produce. People would wait while their wheat was turned into flour, sometimes staying overnight with the Seppmanns. The granary building which was built at the same time as the mill was the family’s home until the early 1870s. It is not known how Seppmann charged for his service. One water powered mill in the county gave the farmer back from his bushel of wheat, 34 pounds of flour, eight pounds of bran and six pounds of shorts. Since there are 60 pounds of wheat in a bushel, this leaves the miller with 12 pounds of flour of differing quality. Another source said that it was a common practice to allow the miller one-eighth of the farmer’s grain.

If they had wheat on hand and a good wind, the mill could process 150 bushels a day. But there were many days of no wind and some days when the wind was too strong. There were days when the mill would be shut down for maintenance and days when people simply could not get to the mill because of winter blizzards or muddy conditions in the spring. A rough guess is that good wind days with product on hand and the mill running smoothly would be

about one in three on average.

In 1866 Louis Seppmann married Augusta Miller and bought out his partner Hegley. He then sold a share in his business to his wife’s father, Martin Miller. His wife’s brother, Charles Miller, became the sole agent to sell the flour. In 1868 Louis and Augusta’s first child Herman was born. Louis was 33 years old and Augusta 17. Son Henry followed in 1871 and daughter Anna in 1872. By 1890 Louis and Augusta had 13 children, losing 4 in infancy.



Seppmann family together in the farm house for Emma’s wedding 1909. Standing (l to r) Charles, Marie, Henry, Anna, Hermann, Clare and Albert. Seated (l to r) are Alfred, Louis, Augusta and Emma. Photo courtesy Seppmann Family

### **The Decline and Preservation of the Mill**

On June 2, 1873, lightning struck two of the mills arms but they were soon replaced. At this time Seppmann may have realized that being a miller was not enough to support a growing family. He started grazing some sheep on his land and tried a little farming. In the summer of 1880 a tornado carried away two of the mill arms. By this time Hubbard Milling Company in Mankato had been built and was using the new roller mills process. Seppmann was losing business to the inevitability of progress. The mill continued to operate with just two arms grinding corn as feed for area farmers until 1890 when a storm blew those last arms off.

Following the loss of all four blades, Seppmann’s attention turned to farming. The farm site was down the hill to the east of the mill. Between working his farm and raising a family of 9 children, there wasn’t the time or money to keep up the mill. Year by year, decade by decade, the elements took their toll on the

mill. When the roof developed large holes, the rain and snow worked its evil ways on the interior and the floors started to give way.

Mill parts were taken to be recycled or discarded. Vandalism and theft also played a roll. In 1913 the old warehouse next to the mill was torn down. Louis unfortunately witnessed some of the decline of his mill before he died on August 28, 1914. Augusta followed him in death in 1918.



Mill in great disrepair, prior to 1929. Photo courtesy Seppmann Family

By 1929, the mill was in danger of collapse. The Seppmann family, proud of the legacy of the mill and realizing that they did not have the resources to repair it, decided the best route would be to donate it to the Blue Earth County Historical Society. On May 11, 1929, it was deeded over along with one and 24/100 acres.

The next year the Historical Society spent between \$300 and \$400 for a new roof and some wall repair.

During the roof repair they omitted the small door in the roof that lead to the outside platform where the miller once sat.

On April 15, 1931, the mill was deeded to the State of Minnesota and Thomas Hughes, secretary of the Minneopa State Park Commission, paid \$130.00 to Bruno Hanel for doors, windows, frames, screens, hardware and paint. This included twenty man hours of labor at fifty cents an hour. In 1932, the State put in new floors and steps but omitted the second and fifth floors. In 1935, the State saw that there were five different layers of mortar that had been applied here and there during the glory days of the mill. Instead of chipping this all off and starting fresh, they decided to apply a layer of mortar over the entire outside and groove it to resemble block work. A concrete floor on the bottom level was also put in.

In 1955 the State put a road side rest stop on Highway 68 by the mill. The only problem was that the trail to the mill from the rest stop was pretty rugged. This rest stop would be taken out in 1972 when the park was expanded.

The cement layer that covered the exterior of the mill was not original and through the years it started to discolor and fall off. In 1959 money was appropriated to deal with this problem. It took until 1967 for the State to find someone capable of doing the job. Leon Snyder was hired to not only chip off this rather ugly layer of plaster, but to tuck point the mortar between every piece of limestone in the mill. This was a time consuming job but after 3 years, the mill once again looks like it once did. In 1972 the roof was shingled and new doors and windows were put in. The granary and warehouse that was the Seppmann's original home was rebuilt in 1974.

In the late 1960s there was a push to get Seppmann Mill back in to running order. To that end some much needed parts were acquired from an old mill in New Hartford, Minnesota. Included in the purchase were a flour bolter, which sifts and grades the flour through silk cloth, a smut mill, which blows dirt from the grain, and an inside mill door with wooden springs. Two dozen pulleys for speed selection and several hoppers were included along with two wooden augers. The effort to re-open the mill failed and today, nearly a half century later, the pieces are in storage gathering dust.

Prior to 1989 the mill was open for people to go in and climb the stairs all the way to the top floor. In 1989, however, a crack developed on the outside wall and the floors looked a little shaky to the State's engineers and it was decided to permanently close the mill to visitors. In 1990, the mill received another new roof, since the roof from 1972 was leaking. New doors and windows were installed in 1992. A scheduled replacement of the floors never happened. It has been nearly a quarter of a century since the mill had any work done on it.



Standing in front of the mill are six of Louis Seppmann's children circa 1950 left to right Charles, Anna Hanel, Marie LeDuc, Clara Dittberner, Emma Grice and Alfred. Photo courtesy Seppman Family

Seppmann's mill played an important role in the early development of the area. We are fortunate to be able to witness the grandeur of this local landmark 150 years after its construction. Perhaps someday restoration efforts will allow the mill to be open to the public, so people can experience every facet of Seppmann's mill.

#### **Sources:**

Blue Earth County Historical Society vertical files and photograph collection

Hughes, Thomas. *History of Minneopa State Park*, 1932

Lundin, Vernard E. *The Hubbard Milling Company*, 1978

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minneopa State Park annual reports 1965-2004

Minnesota Historical Society archives and photograph collection

Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office folder on Seppmann Mill

Minnesota State University Mankato Archives, Thomas Hughes' personal notes on Seppmann Mill

Purfeerst, Charles "Old Seppmann Mill", 1965

Roberts, Phyllis "The Old Seppmann Windmill", 1968

Sander, Ken. Mill model and personal notes on history of mill.

Schrader, Julie. *The Heritage of Blue Earth County*, 1990

Seppmann Family personal papers and photographs

YouTube. Operation of grist mills

**Note:** Louis Seppmann was born and died with "Seppmann" as the spelling of his surname. Over the years, different branches of Louis' family dropped the second 'n'. For this article we chose to use the original spelling.



## **Around the Research Center**

Heather Harren, Education and Outreach Manager

Spring is finally here after what seemed like a long, cold winter. During those cold days, we took time to refresh the Research Center's online indexes by expanding existing indexes and adding new ones.

Our improved "indexes webpage" and menu can be accessed at **[www.bechshistory.com/research](http://www.bechshistory.com/research)**. This menu leads to the most popular indexes on our website.

Check out what we've been up to:

- Cemetery index now has more pages to search and a comprehensive list of each cemetery
- New World War II Servicemen's Notes index
- Added more years to the marriage index
- Added more years to the obituary index
- New index to our popular obituary books
- New list of surname images in our photograph collection

While many researchers may still need to contact the Research Center, these new and improved online

resources will help researchers with the most popular searches.

On a side note, thank you to everyone who took the Research Center Survey. The results are helping us improve how we make the Research Center accessible to everyone and help to make every experience in the Research Center positive.

#### **Here's a little Blue Earth County trivia from the Research Center:**

1. What town in Blue Earth County was known as Jonesville?
2. What year was the Historic Blue Earth County Courthouse completed?
3. What was Lincoln Township formally known as?

Answers can be found on page 27. Like Blue Earth County trivia? More can be found on our website and Facebook page.

# BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen!

In 2013, over 100 BECHS Volunteers donated over 6,000 hours of their time to help BECHS make history happen! National Volunteer Appreciation Week was April 6-12 and our annual Volunteer Appreciation was held on April 8. Thank you to each BECHS volunteer. We value and appreciate you!

At the Volunteer Appreciation, each volunteer received a small token of our appreciation. Stop by and pick yours up if you volunteered in 2013. We also honored the top 10 volunteers based on recorded hours donated in 2013. Here are the individuals and their contributed hours: Ryan Harren 807, Mary McComb 782, Donna Webb 503, Jo-an Lavitschke 407, Corey Hugg 378, Jo Schultz 341, Grace Keir 271, Dale Benefield 215, Larry Kortuem 188, and Susan Hynes 152 totaling over 4,000 hours of recorded time. Many individuals donate many hours of their time. This just reflects those individuals that recorded their time with BECHS.

If you are interested in helping with any of the following opportunities, sign-up for the monthly volunteer e-news or if you would like more information about volunteering with BECHS, please contact Danelle, our volunteer coordinator, at [bechsms@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsms@hickorytech.net) or visit [www.bechshistory.com/volunteer](http://www.bechshistory.com/volunteer).



Volunteers honored for their service in 2013: (back row l to r: Susan Hynes, Grace Keir, and Ryan Harren. (front row l to r) Dale Benefield, Jo-an Lavitschke and Mary McComb.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### **Research Center Assistant**

Looking for individuals to help in the Research Center assisting visitors and fulfilling research requests. Seeking those interested in volunteering a minimum of 6 hours per week on a set schedule and/or on an as-needed basis. In search of someone with research experience; additional training available.

### **Painters and Construction**

In mid-summer, we will be seeking volunteers to help make improvements to our building. Tasks include painting and light construction. Preferably individuals with experience.

### **Gardeners**

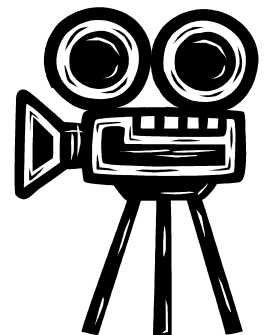
Seeking individuals interested in assisting with the care and maintenance of the Museum's flower beds. Garden Club meets Wednesdays at 9 a.m. and occasionally Fridays at 9 a.m. Come as you are able.

### **Writers and Editors**

Looking for writers and researchers for regular article series and BECHS publications including main *Historian* articles. Upcoming topics include disasters, Great Depression, rural electrification, and home front activities during WWII. Also, looking for individuals strong in editing and proofreading.

## **Wanted: Your Volunteer Story**

You may have seen some of our "Volunteer Story" videos on Facebook or YouTube. We are looking for more volunteers to share their stories. You could tell us why or how you started volunteering at BECHS, what you enjoy the most or maybe you have a specific story to share. The videos are informal and can be as long or short as you would like. If you are interested in sharing your story, please let us know. To view videos already completed visit [www.bechshistory.com/media/volunteer-stories](http://www.bechshistory.com/media/volunteer-stories).





# BECHS Donations

January - March 2014

## Donations

Helen Balcome  
Roberta Bartholdi  
Vail Belgard  
Dale Benefield  
Robert and Mary Ann Bensch  
Brad Brozik  
Kip Bruender  
Marcia Chalgren  
Jerene Clement  
Decoria Township  
Preston Doyle  
Carol English  
Sandi Garlow  
Shannon Gullickson  
Kathryn Hanson  
Lester Hewitt  
Susan Hynes  
Jones Page Jacobson  
Family Foundation  
Kris Kall  
Larry Kortuem  
Kramer's Kountry  
Specialties, LLC  
Ken and Denise Kuehner  
Earl and Sally Lamont  
John Lanphier  
John Larson  
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke  
Marilyn Lehnert  
Lime Township  
Kristine Madsen  
Jack Madsen  
Mary McComb  
Mara and Monty Natrakul  
Julie Nelson  
Andy and Christine Nessler  
Richard & Kristine Norland  
Rebecca Novak  
Steve Olson  
Leslie Peterson  
Mark and Shirley Piepho  
Brad and Jessica Potter  
Will and Paula Purvis  
John and Sue Roise  
Florence Sheppard  
Frank and Deb Steichen

William Steil  
Sterling Township  
George and Nadine Sugden  
Delores & Leon Tacheny  
Clarinda Rew Troemel  
Shane and Jennifer Van Engen  
Donna Webb  
H. Lee Williams  
Charles & Rosie Wingert  
Randy Zellmer  
Nancy Zwickey

## Memorials

*In Memory of*  
*Lyle Hodapp*  
Jane Haala

*In Memory of*  
*Erv Kurth*  
Joel Botten

*In Memory of*  
*Bill Lagerquist*  
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke  
Betty Cords

*In Memory of*  
*Joseph Resner*  
Jane Haala  
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke

## In-Kind

Roberta Bartholdi  
Donna Fostveit  
Sandi Garlow  
Ariane Hawker  
Grace Keir  
Jo-an Lavitschke  
Jack Madsen  
Leigh Pomeroy  
Red Door Creative

**THANK YOU!**

# SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

Banking in Blue Earth County

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

### Presenting Sponsor - \$5,000

Wells Fargo

### Gold Sponsors - \$1,000

Gislason & Hunter, LLP  
Wingert Realty and Land Services

### Silver Sponsor - \$800

MinnStar

### Bronze Sponsors - \$600

Community Bank  
First National Bank of Minnesota  
R&E Enterprises of Mankato  
Stinson Leonard Street LLP

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Becky's Floral  
Ben Marti Trio  
Jay Dailey  
Dinsmore Photography  
Mike Lagerquist  
Morgan Creek Vineyards  
MSU, Mankato Department of History  
Pub 500  
Radio Mankato  
Red Door Creative  
John Roise  
Auction and Wall Donors  
2014 Surrounded By History Attendees

## SAVE THE DATE:

Surrounded By History:  
Built in Blue Earth County  
March 20, 2015

# Membership Makes a Difference

You make local history accessible through your annual membership dues. Your investment connects the present to the past. Thank you!

## Support the Businesses that Support BECHS

Check out our website for more information about the businesses that are members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. As a new benefit to our business members, we are now offering to place the business's website link and other information on our website.

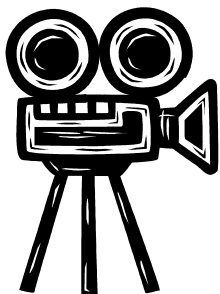
If your business would like more information, please visit [www.bechshistory.com/join](http://www.bechshistory.com/join).



***Moving? Snowbird?  
Please let us know!***

If you are moving to a different address, please let us know. It costs over \$2 for each returned newsletter that cannot be delivered. Please help the Society reserve our funds and assure that you get your copy of the *Historian* by notifying us of your new or winter address or letting us know to suspend mailing your newsletter if you are going to be away for a long period of time.

**Your help is appreciated.**



## WANTED: YOUR MEMBER STORY

We are looking for more of your stories about why you support the Blue Earth County Historical Society or your favorite BECHS memory! On the last Saturday of each month from 2-4 p.m., unless otherwise noted, we will be filming member's stories to add to our collection. To view the videos already completed, visit [www.bechshistory.com/media/member-stories](http://www.bechshistory.com/media/member-stories). If this time does not work for you, but you would still like to contribute to the project, contact Heather at 507-345-5566 or [bechshh@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechshh@hickorytech.net).

## BECHS Membership

**January - March 2014**

### New Members

Patrick Baker  
Pete and Cindi Baker  
Gail and Jim Christensen  
Clifton Larson Allen LLP  
John Frentz  
Kristin Hufnagle  
Larry Kortuem  
Mankato Motor Company  
Aimee Mediger  
Minnesota Valley Federal Credit Union  
Julie and Gene Nelson  
Patty Rono  
Shawn and Denise Simonson  
Daardi Sizemore  
Garrett Steinberg  
Gerry Tostenson  
Tracey Truebenbach  
Donnette Wheelock

### Renewing Business Members

Crystal Valley Co-op  
Guentzel Family Farms, LLC  
I & S Group  
Meyer & Norland Financial Group  
Morgan Creek Vineyards  
Pub 500  
Quality 1-Hr Foto  
Voyager Bank

***To ALL our new and renewing members,  
THANK YOU for your continued support.***



## MANKATO BALTICS 1860s BASE BALL

The Historical Society's Mankato Baltics Base Ball club plays base ball matches using rules adopted in 1860. The game is fundamentally the same as modern baseball although some rules, strategies and equipment differ and are re-created as accurately as possible by the players. And yes, in the 1860s, base ball was two words.

The Mankato Baltics will open their 8th season on May 3 at Erlandson Park in Mankato. The Baltics have matches with other vintage teams across Minnesota and Wisconsin. Many of the matches are free public programs. The Baltics is composed of dedicated individuals that donate their time and talents to bring base ball's past to life.

Thank you to the Baltics 2014 Sponsors: All American Foods, Associated Finishing, Belgard-Hawker Genetics, Collis C Store, Danks Hydro Jetting, Elements Massage & Yoga, Industrial Fabrication Services, Kibble Equipment, Precision Painting, Pub 500, The Free Press, Ullrich Construction, and Welsh Heritage Farms. Sponsor support helps fund equipment, uniforms, advertising,

park rentals and membership with the Vintage Base Ball Association.

Cheer on the club this summer at both home and away matches. Follow the Baltics on Facebook and find rules, roster, stats and pictures online at [www.bechshistory.com/baltics](http://www.bechshistory.com/baltics). Go Baltics!

### Baltics 2014 Schedule

<b>May 3</b>	Striker-to-the-line - Erlandson Park, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.
<b>May 31</b>	Quicksteps @ Columbia Heights
<b>June 15</b>	Double header against the Roosters @ The Landing, Shakopee, Noon - 3 p.m.
<b>June 28</b>	Mankato Baltics Festival - Erlandson Park Noon - 3 p.m.
<b>July 13</b>	North Mankato Fun Days Game, watch for details
<b>August 2</b>	Wisconsin Tournament @ Reedsburg, WI, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
<b>August 17</b>	Pat Tierney Memorial Cup @ Petit Field, St. Croix, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
<b>September 8</b>	Farm America Fall Festival @ Waseca, 1 p.m.
<b>September 13</b>	Grey's Exhibition @ Arlington Park, Arlington
<b>December 6</b>	Arli-dazzle Match @ Arlington Park, Arlington

## WISH LIST

**Cross-cut or Micro-cut Paper Shredder:** New or used in good working condition.

**Gift Baskets for the Victorian Tea Party Silent Auction:** Looking for baskets, items to fill baskets, and completed theme gift baskets. All proceeds of silent auction to benefit Hubbard House Restoration and Programming.

**Perennials:** Full sun, drought tolerant plants for the Heritage Center flower beds.

**Digital Camera** to photograph programs and artifacts, preferably 20 megapixel, point-and-shoot or donation of \$150

**32 GB SD card for video camera**

**Laser Printer:** New or used in good working condition.

**Used Printer Ink Cartridges** to be recycled for Office Max store credit to offset office supply expense. We can earn a credit of up to \$240 a year for supplies thanks to donated cartridges.

**Pioneer Cabin Items** for kids to play with: a plush hen (similar to animal puppets in exhibit) and nest, a water pump, a wooden bucket and a butter churn. Items or financial support to purchase toys or reproduction items.

*If you have an item to donate, please drop it off at the Heritage Center during business hours. If you are interested in fully or partially supporting one of these projects, please indicate your wishes on your check.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

## Around Blue Earth County



RHS is looking forward to another interesting summer! We have several events being planned:

**Memorial Day, May 26, 9 a.m.** - Memorial Service at the park followed by our guest speaker and free-will lunch celebrating yet another wonderful year with RHS.



**Rapidan Chautauqua, June 28** - It will be held in the center of Rapidan town. The day will be filled with lots of entertainment and culture for the whole family, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, old

-time preachers, artists sharing their crafts and fun foods. If you are interested in volunteering for the event, contact either Jane Haala or Liz Madsen.

**Blue Earth County Fair, July 30 –August 2** at Garden City, MN. We will be in Building A with BECHS. RHS will be hosting a Tractorcade on Saturday of the Fair. Watch for details on the Blue Earth County Fair Website.

RHS will be hosting a **National Night Out Neighborhood potluck** on **Tuesday August 5th at 6:30 p.m.** at the township garage in Rapidan, a great opportunity for all interested in coming out and meeting their neighbors. We hope to have several people from local fire and safety there speaking.

Come see the newly painted depot and the work being done on the "Pink" caboose. We will be working on these projects for the next several years as we bring them back to historical status. If you are interested in helping with this or any project, please feel free to contact a current board member or come to one of our monthly meetings held the on third Thursday of each month. Visit [www.rapidandepot.com](http://www.rapidandepot.com) for more information.

Blue Earth County Historical Society is a



**BECHS is one of more than 1,500 museums nationwide to offer FREE Admission to active duty military personnel and their families Memorial Day through Labor Day.**

National Endowment for the Arts Blue Star Museum Program, a collaboration with "Operation Appreciation".

### 2014 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival

DIRECTED BY REV. JOSEPH G. CORBIN

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AT 1:30 P.M.

First Presbyterian Church • 220 East Hickory • Mankato, MN

PERFORMING CHOIR - Southwest Minnesota Men's Chorus

CHECK OUR WEBSITES:

<http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com/> & MinnesotaWelshAssociation (facebook)

**SAVE THE DATE!!!** North American Festival of Wales

Conductor: Meirwyn Walters, Esq., Mass. • Hyatt Regency Hotel, Minneapolis, Minn. • August 28-31, 2014

*Make a Difference  
In the Lives that Follow*



**LEAVE A LEGACY® Mankato Area**

*Sponsored By Minnesota Planned Giving Council*

**Blue Earth County Historical Society is a proud member of Leave A Legacy. Contact BECHS for more information or to pick up a free "Personal Planning Guide".**

Support local nonprofits through Planned Giving.

## BOARD

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Sandi Garlow  
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Mike Lagerquist  
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Leslie Peterson  
William Steil  
Marnie Werner

## STAFF

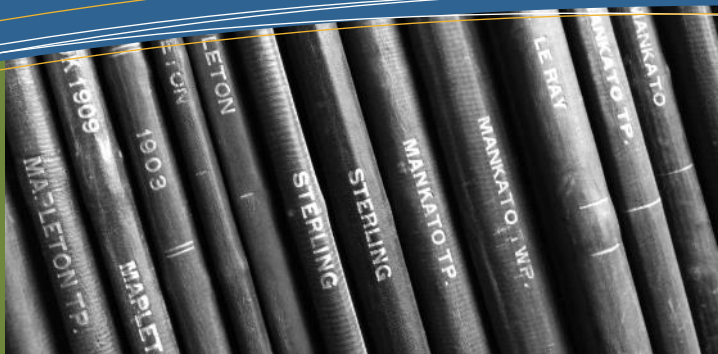
Jessica Potter  
Executive Director

Danelle Erickson  
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Heather Harren  
Education & Outreach  
Manager

Shelley Harrison  
Archives & Collections  
Manager

Ryan Harren &  
Alex Oldenburg  
Hubbard House  
Assistants



Mission: To lead in the collecting and promoting of Blue Earth County's history to ensure its preservation for the enrichment and benefit of present and future generations. Core Values: Collect, Preserve and Present

## Blue Earth County Historical Society 2013 Highlights

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is dedicated to collecting, preserving and presenting the rich history of Blue Earth County. In everything we do, we connect people to the past through a variety of opportunities to learn, discover, experience, support, collaborate, share and grow.

### COLLECT AND PRESERVE

We collect today so that the people of tomorrow can understand their past and can live a richer life knowing their history. This would not be possible without the contribution of objects, photographs, books and papers to our collection. For example, in 2013, a large collection of materials from Farmfest was donated. Farmfest started here in Blue Earth County on a farm just outside of Lake Crystal in 1972. Highlights in the collection include 13 scrapbooks, the Proclamation from President Nixon, commemorative program and plates plus a jacket, all spanning its 18 years in Blue Earth County. This collection will show the history and importance of farming for future generations. We preserve so tomorrow can understand its past.

### PRESENT

This word can be pronounced more than one way and has multiple meanings, yet it is a perfect word for our third core value. BECHS strives to *present* an exchange of information to connect the past and the *present*. In 2013, we hosted over 70 educational programs, assisted over 500 family and local history researchers, and met with countless individuals who shared their story. Like the 88 year-old World War II veteran that visited recently searching for the name of the fair held in Mankato. His question was followed with sharing stories of growing up in Mankato and his experiences during the war. This was not only an opportunity for the staff to learn about the past, but also a way for him to share his story and know that his history matters.

This past year marked 112 years for the Blue Earth County Historical Society, the 75<sup>th</sup> year of the R.D. Hubbard House and the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the Heritage Center Museum. It is pretty incredible to think about the history that surrounds us and the stories that have been collected for over a century by this organization. The Blue Earth County Historical Society would not have the privilege to serve as the one organization dedicated to our local history if it weren't for you—our generous donors, members, volunteers and friends. Thank you for helping BECHS connect people to the past.



## 2013 DONORS

### \$10,000-\$5,000

John Jay Hubbard  
Grace and Richard Keir

### \$1,000-\$4,999

Centerpoint Energy  
CHS  
Crystal Valley Cooperative  
Dupont Pioneer  
Gislason & Hunter LLP  
Lyle and Kay Jacobson  
Leonard, Street and Deinard  
Tom and Theresa McLaughlin  
Minnesota Welsh Association  
Piper Family Fund  
Scheels  
Wingert Realty/Land Services

### \$500-\$999

AgStar Financial Services  
Roberta Bartholdi  
Patrick Carroll  
Ogden Confer  
General Mills Foundation  
Shirley Higginbotham  
Tim Huebsch  
Ann Johnson  
Michael and Jane Kearney  
Nu Star Realty of Mankato  
R & E Enterprises of Mankato  
Valley News Company  
Randy Zellmer

### \$250-\$499

Ballman Roofing and Coating  
Shirley Grundmeier  
Kathryn Hanson  
Wynn and Ginnette Kearney  
Denise M Kunkel  
Medo Township  
MEI Total Elevator Solutions  
MinnStar Bank N.A.  
Jerry and Linda Nussbaumer  
Leslie Peterson  
Marlene Pommerenke  
George and Nadine Sugden  
Brett and Gretchen Taylor  
Vernon Center Township  
Beth Zimmer

### \$100-\$249

Beauford Township  
William and Marilyn Bessler  
Joel Botten  
Patrick Bowen  
Rosemary Brekke  
Brennan Properties  
Robert and Suzanne Browne  
Marilyn Buscher  
Drew and Dawn Campbell  
Barbara Church  
Collis C Store  
Decoria Township

## Thank you to all that make local history accessible through your generous financial support.

**29%**

The percent of BECHS's annual operating revenue made possible through annual membership dues and donations.

At the foundation of the Blue Earth County Historical Society stands the many individuals, groups and businesses that support BECHS financially through annual membership dues and donations.

In 2013, BECHS was supported by 511 members composed of 452 individuals and households, 27 affiliates which included each Blue Earth County Township, and 32 Blue Earth County businesses. This is an increase of almost 60 members over 2012. Beginning in July 2013, BECHS included a short member survey with each monthly membership renewal reminder. We received over 40 responses. We discovered that our members enjoy the main article in the quarterly newsletter, complimented the displays, resources and staff, and are excited about a larger facility. The main reason they support BECHS is they see the value of preserving history and making it accessible.

Financial support of unrestricted gifts, memorials or special project funding was given by 328 giving units in 2013. The majority of our donors give with no designation or restriction. However, 157 donations were made as memorials or honorariums in recognition of 17 people. This is a wonderful way for the legacy of an individual or a couple to support their community.

Thank you to all that make local history accessible through your generous financial support. The Blue Earth County Historical Society would not be able to collect, preserve and present the rich heritage of Blue Earth County without you.

## Annual Membership Appreciation "Night at the Museum"

Our members and supporters mean the world to us and to show our appreciation, BECHS hosted the 2nd Annual Membership Appreciation event on Friday, September 27. Members were delighted with a Night

at the Museum which included behind-the-scenes tours of the Heritage Center lead by BECHS Board of

Trustees members. Dinner was served and members also had the opportunity to share their story about why they support BECHS. These stories are available online at [www.bechshistory.com/join/member-stories](http://www.bechshistory.com/join/member-stories).



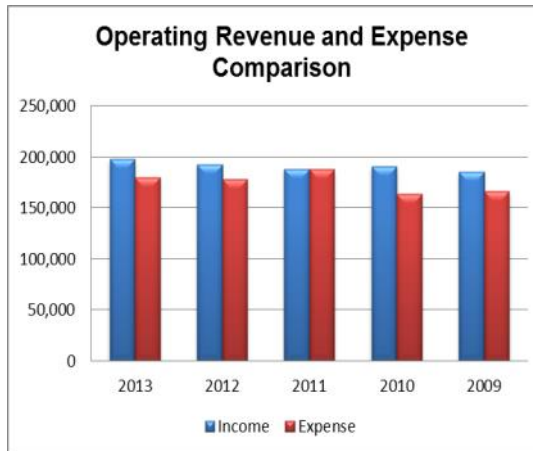
Drew Campbell, Mankato resident, Blue Earth County Commissioner and BECHS member said this when asked why he supports BECHS. *"They keep so many different archives and things here for us and for others to view and there are a lot of memories involved with that. And it tells us where we've been, where we're going. And so, I think it is a wonderful, a wonderful organization."*



## 2013 FINANCIAL REVIEW

“Conservative spending” and “financial stability” are two phrases that accurately portray the Society’s fiscal year. Operating revenue and expenses remained consistent with that of prior years as seen in the 5-year comparison chart to the right.

Overall revenue and expenses for general operations are available below. The allocation from Blue Earth County is 48% of the revenue with our members and donors contributing 30%. Our annual fundraiser Surrounded By History and educational programs contributed 11% to the overall revenue. On the expense side, personnel and building management are the largest expenses. In 2013, BECHS employed four full-time and two seasonal part-time staff.

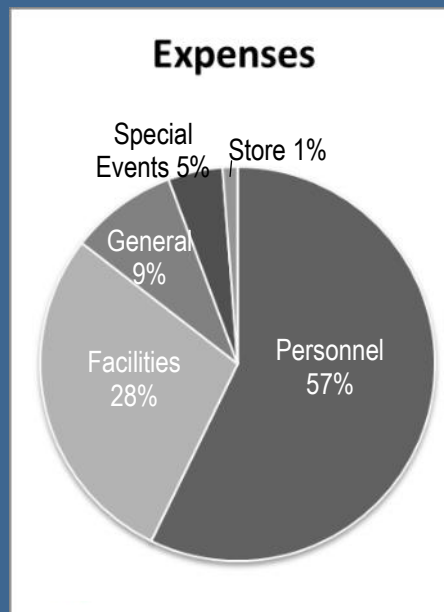
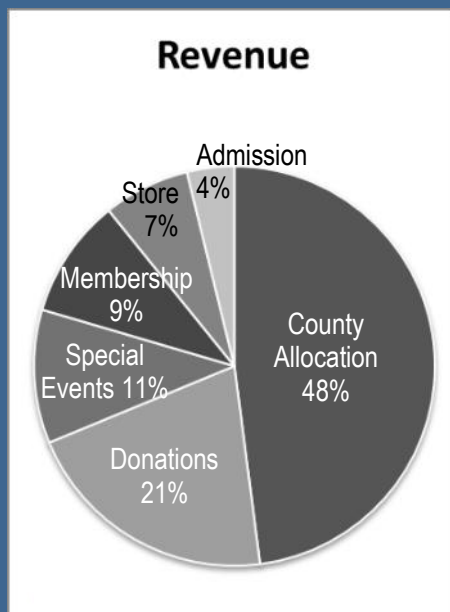


One of the areas we saw the biggest increase was with our Museum Store and the sale of Marian Anderson fine art prints. In 2010, local artist Marian Anderson donated her collection of prints to the Historical Society as a way to raise funds. In 2013, \$6,000 was generated from the sale of prints. In the past four years, nearly \$16,000 has been raised. This is a huge opportunity for increased future revenue.

Endowment investments continue to grow with small amounts of interest earned being added for use in operations. At year end, the Endowment Investments was valued at \$528,695; a 5.9% increase over 2012.

Going forward in 2014, BECHS plans to incur greater expenses associated with full ownership of the facility. These additional costs have been budgeted accordingly.

### 2013 Operating Revenue and Expenses



Full financials are available upon request by contacting the office at 507.345.5666 or [bechs@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechs@hickorytech.net). Society’s IRS Form 990 is available at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

### \$100-\$249, cont.

Harlan and Sheryl Dobie  
 Preston Doyle State Farm  
 John Ellis  
 Erma Erikson  
 Tony Filipovitch  
 Shirley Fitzloff  
 Brand Frentz  
 Darrell and Sandi Garlow  
 Harley and Janet Goff  
 Goodrich Construction, Inc.  
 Gary Hachfeld  
 Nancy Hamer  
 Alice Hollingsworth  
 Don Howard  
 Robert and Corey Hugg  
 Paul and Mary Jo Hustoles  
 Mary Ann Jensen  
 Douglas Johnson  
 Ellis Jones  
 Judson Township  
 Linda Karow  
 Arn and Meg Kind  
 Mike Lagerquist  
 Dean and Jo-an Lavitschke  
 Bud and Shirley Lawrence  
 Robert and Eloise Layman  
 Mary McComb  
 Jack and Diann McGowan  
 Byron and Karen McGregor  
 Mankato Free Press  
 Mary Mortier  
 Oliver and Patricia Mulford  
 Richard and Kristine Norland  
 Matthew Norland  
 Susan Olson  
 Marsha Othoudt  
 Helen Owens  
 Katherine Payton  
 Mark and Shirley Piepho  
 John Piper  
 Brad and Jessica Potter  
 PUB 500  
 Rapidan Township  
 John Rezmerski  
 Marcia Richards  
 Elaine Lilly and Joan Roca  
 Tom and Cindy Salsbery  
 Eunice Sassenberg  
 Georgia Schultz  
 Richard and Ramona Steele  
 Leon and Delores Tacheny  
 Ullrich Construction  
 Tom Warner  
 Marnie Werner  
 Kenneth and Linda Wilmes

To see the full list of  
 2013 contributors, visit  
[www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com)

## PROGRAMS

In 2013, BECHS experienced a slight decrease in attendance over 2012. This was due to the overwhelming response BECHS received in 2012 during the 150th Anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. However, in 2013 regular programs were retained with growth in the annual fundraiser "Surrounded By History." Here is a list of our 2013 educational programs and special events:

Anniversary Open House  
Artist Reception featuring a local artist each quarter  
Big Magic Medicine Show  
Blue Earth County Fair  
Christmas at the Hubbard House  
Fingerprints and Footnotes  
Ghosts from the Past  
Historic Pub Crawl  
Independence Day Celebration  
Mankato Baltics  
Member Appreciation Night at the Museum  
Piper & Warner Family Reunion  
Story Time at the Hubbard House  
Victorian Lawn Party  
Victorian Tea Party  
Young Historians

## CONNECTING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

The Blue Earth County Historical Society makes local history accessible through an exchange of information to connect the past and the present. This exchange happens when people visit the Heritage Center Museum and Historic R.D. Hubbard House or attend one of our educational programs or special events.

### MUSEUM

In 2013, over 1,500 people visited the Heritage Center Museum to discover the rich history of Blue Earth County and to browse our well-stocked book and gift shop. 2013 marks 25 years for BECHS in our current location.



### HUBBARD HOUSE

The Historic R.D. Hubbard House opened for the 75<sup>th</sup> season for individual and group tours. In 2013, 900 people visited the historic R.D. Hubbard House including 160 school children from five different Blue Earth County schools. Special programs at the Hubbard House included the Victorian Tea Party, Victorian Lawn Party, Independence Day Celebration, Big Magic Medicine Show and Christmas at the Hubbard House. Guests are delighted by living history players are these events.

**7,000**

Approximate number of 2013 visitors BECHS welcomed to the museum, Hubbard House and special events.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2013, over 4,000 people attended a BECHS program. Many programs were held at the Heritage Center and Hubbard House. BECHS was able to speak to various groups throughout the year. Two special events in 2013 included the annual fundraiser "Surrounded By History" and a "Remarkable Men" family reunion.

In March, "Surrounded By History," the annual special event to raise funds for BECHS, spotlighted our agricultural heritage. This successful event has increased the financial stability of the organization by raising over \$20,000 in two years.

The "Remarkable Men" family reunion was composed of the Piper and Warner families originally from Garden City. Check out our book "The Remarkable Men of Garden City" to learn more. BECHS hosted 60 family members and lead them on a bus tour of Garden City. Family came from across the United States including Matthew Piper from California who noted this about the visit. *"Thank you to all at BECHS for giving our family reunion an unexpected boost after our long bus ride,*



*and such a delightful presentation of some historical facts I knew nothing about. All the information regarding not only the Pipers and Warners but Blue Earth County as well. I so enjoyed our visit and am excited to learn more."*

**BECHS Connects People to the Past Everyday.**

## COLLABORATIONS

BECHS is a community nonprofit organization and prides itself on collaborating with other community groups and businesses. In 2013, BECHS collaborated with over 40 community groups and events including the Kiwanis Holiday Lights, Arts by the River, Blue Earth County Fair, Betsy-Tacy Society, Boy in Blue Project, Minnesota DNR, CityArt Sculpture Tour and the Mankato Fine Arts Youth Dance Theatre.

BECHS helped the Youth Dance Theatre with their production "A North Woods Nutcracker." Their historical adaptation of the traditional holiday Nutcracker production was set in 1920s Mankato. It included a historic cast of characters including the Hubbard family and Maud Hart Lovelace. BECHS assisted with photographs, storyline, costumes and volunteers. The production was well-attended by the community and BECHS was very proud to be part of it. Collaborating with local groups is a great way to not only share our message, but also put a new twist on how people see our modern day past.



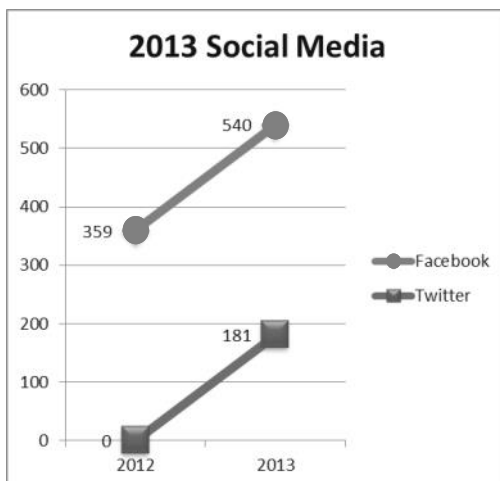
**40** The estimated number of community partners BECHS collaborated with in 2013.

## CONNECTING ONLINE

How the world seeks information and connects is changing and BECHS is doing our best to meet the needs of today's visitor. In 2013, BECHS staff worked very hard to update our online presence from launching a new online shopping cart, to reaching new audiences through Twitter and Facebook, and connecting to our supporters through monthly e-newsletters. The Society maintains two websites: [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com) and

**3,000** The increased number of people using the BECHS website over 2012. Our website experienced 22,000 unique visits in 2013.

[www.mariananderson.com](http://www.mariananderson.com) as well as the following social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube. All of these sites are managed and updated by BECHS staff. A monthly favorite on Facebook was a post of a historic Blue Earth County photograph with the question "Where is it?" Our followers enjoy connecting to the past through photographs and sharing memories.



Visit us online at  
[www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com)

## Sharing Our Passion for History with Students

BECHS staff and volunteers make local history fun and accessible to school children through field trips, classroom visits and traveling history-to-go kits. In 2013, Executive Director Jessica Potter shared her passion for history with a 4th Grade Monroe Elementary School class. The students were studying Pioneer Life. Potter shared how pioneers traveled, what their houses were like and why they moved. The learning experience wrapped up with packing their wagon for the long trip. The students each represented an item and a wagon was outlined on the floor. In a thank you letter to Potter, one child wrote "thank you for coming to teach us about the pioneers. IT WAS SO FUN!!! Our favorite part was when we got to be something in the wagon." And the 4th grade teacher wrote "thank you for providing my students with an exceptional pioneer experience! They were engaged throughout your presentation and loved the wagon activity! Your passion shows and carries over to my students."



The opportunity to connect school children to their local history is a gift made possible by our generous supporters and dedicated volunteers.



## VOLUNTEERS

Arch, Holly  
Arch, Marta  
Battern, Ky  
Belgard, Hugh  
Belgard, Vail  
Benefield, Dale  
Bergemann, Melissa  
Beyer, Jessica  
Braveheart, Ambry  
Braveheart, Cyrus  
Brugman, Doug  
Bunde, Margo  
Burkhalter, Harris  
Coleman, Mary  
Cords, Betty Lou  
Dauer, Perry  
Dinsmore, Daniel  
Dinsmore, Emily



Doyle, Judy  
Doyle, Preston  
Duffey, Danielle  
Frisch, Carlienne  
Garlow, Laura  
Garlow, Sandi  
Gatchell, Audrey  
Goff, Harley  
Grabau, Ezra  
Gratz, Alyssa  
Greiner, Wendy  
Griffiths, Jane  
Grundmeier, Shirley  
Gullickson, Jim  
Haala, Jane  
Hanson, Kathryn  
Harren, Ryan  
Hawker, Arianne  
Hawker, Brad  
Helmets, Jessica  
Hoban, Betty  
Hrdlicka Family  
Hugg, Bob  
Hugg, Corey  
Hundstad, Patrice  
Hynes, Susan  
Jaspers, Jeremy  
Johnson, Jacob  
Johnson, Mary  
Keir, Grace  
Keir, Richard  
Korteum, Patricia (Trixie)

## VOLUNTEERS

The people who volunteer with BECHS are truly indispensable. Not only do they assist with the fundamental functions of the Society, like preservation and cataloging, but they also make the Society a unique and culturally rich entity for our visitors and community.

### 6,000 Hours

The recorded time contributed by 105 volunteers in 2013.

Volunteers serve on committees, coordinate and assist with special events and programs, clip newspapers and serve as tour guides at the Hubbard House and Heritage Center—plus so much more.

Audrey Gatchell began volunteering for BECHS in 2012 at the Victorian Tea Party. Here is why she enjoys being a BECHS volunteer: *“Since then I’ve been on the outreach committee and I’ve helped out whenever and wherever I can. I enjoy the variety of activities from the teas, the Pub Crawls, the Baltics, gardening, and helping at the Hubbard House. The best part is watching the young people become involved and knowing they enjoy it.”*

Check out more Volunteer Stories online at [www.bechshistory.com/volunteer/volunteer-stories](http://www.bechshistory.com/volunteer/volunteer-stories)

## BECHS VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

BECHS volunteers help with a variety of tasks as seen below. Clockwise: representing BECHS at community events, serving on committees, data entry, costumed characters for programs, and serving food or taking tickets at events.



# PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

## COLLECT AND PRESERVE

Collecting and preserving the history of Blue Earth County is the core of the work BECHS does. We collect today so that the people of tomorrow can

**1194**

The number of items: objects, books, photos donated by 124 people to be preserved by BECHS.

understand their past and can live a richer life knowing their history. Our collection of photographs, books, papers and objects continues to grow. Without the support of the community through their financial support

and donations of local history, BECHS would not be able to make local history accessible to generations of people. Visit the Museum, Hubbard House and Research Center to explore local Blue Earth County history.

## Every Object Has a Story

In 2013 two historic vehicles owned by Paul Radichel were donated to BECHS. They are a 1925 Ford Model T and a 1928 Star R6. Both vehicles have been restored and cared for by Paul and his brother William since 1960.

The Star is a green six-cylinder four-door sedan. Perhaps one of



## YEAH US!

Digital Public Library of America and the Minnesota Digital Library combined forces in 2013 to make photographs and documents available across the country via the internet.



To announce their national collaboration, images representing different partner institutions were used including an image from BECHS. This is a photo of G.A. Dahl and the Keene Studio, c1900.

the last Star automobiles made, since production under that name ended in 1928. Paul and William enjoyed the cars and every year for their birthdays they could be seen driving around town.

The vehicles were donated by Paul's son Bill as a way to honor the legacy of his father. Both vehicles will be on display in the summer of 2014.

Cheri Guentzel, lifelong Blue Earth County resident and BECHS member uses the resources available at BECHS to connect to her family's rich history in Lime Township. Cheri says the Historical Society has *"been a valuable research tool for me and I feel that by coming down here and putting my family history together and giving back to the generations that will be, I am sort of paying it forward because generations to come will be able to understand what Blue Earth County was like from the very beginning. ... They have so many resources here that I would recommend it to anyone to come down here just to find out, see what they all have here. It's a great place."*

Kortuem, Larry  
Kotvlski, Breigha  
Koupla, Lenny  
Kremer, Gary  
Ladd, Robyn  
Lagerquist, Mike  
Larson, John  
Laukkonen, Alice  
Lavitschke, Jo-an  
Leonard, Toby  
Lippert, Olivia  
Lundin, Gary  
Madsen, Jack  
Marti, Paula  
Massen, Alisha  
Matson, Lisa  
Matzke, Kristin  
McComb, Mary  
McConville, Wess  
McLaughlin, Theresa  
Mehlretter, Kim  
Nielsen, Donna  
Nienow, Dick  
Nienow, Patricia  
Noah, Corbin  
Nussbaumer, Linda  
O'Hara, Morgan  
Ohlenkamp, Ora  
Oldenburg, Alex  
Oldenburg, Chris  
Peterson, Leslie  
Pettis, Dean  
Piepho, Mark  
Piepho, Shirley  
Pieschke, Renee  
Pietka, Artur  
Puchta, Steve  
Rezmerski, John  
Rodgers, Meghan  
Schaub, Shirley  
Schultz, Jo  
Shortall, Christina  
Sinn, Gunter  
Sonnek, Callie  
Starcher, Sarah  
Steil, William  
Twilight Garden Club  
Webb, Donna  
Webb, Jerry  
Weisgram, Marti  
Werner, Marnie  
Youngerberg, Lucas  
Youngerberg, Brooklyn  
Zellmer, Randy  
Zimmer, Beth  
Zoet, Zach

**Thank you to all those who so generously give their time and talents for BECHS.**



## SUPPORT BECHS

Membership

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Stay Informed

*The Historian*  
Quarterly

Monthly e-news

Daily posts on  
Facebook and  
Twitter

Visit our website

Attend a program

Explore the  
Museum or  
Hubbard House

Shop in our Gift  
Store

Invite someone to  
check us out

Buy Marian  
Anderson Fine Art  
Prints

Spread the news  
about what we are  
doing

**These are all ways  
to ensure that  
local history will  
be accessible to  
the next  
generation.**

## A LOOK AHEAD TO 2014

In June 2013, an opportunity for BECHS to grow came with the 12-month notice that our neighbor VINE would be leaving the building. BECHS has an option to purchase and own the entire building. In 1988, when the Society moved into the Heritage Center, the Board thought this would be a temporary 5-year solution to the space crunch at the Hubbard House. Now 25 years later, the space crunch has hit the Heritage Center. The opportunity to expand of our facility and services will become a reality in the near future. The acquisition of VINE's interest in the building will be the first step in a long, exciting road ahead. We hope you will be with us every step of the way.

**1** The organizations that connect Blue Earth County's present to its past. Local history is accessible to generations today and tomorrow through the Blue Earth County Historical Society. You make this possible with your donations, membership, volunteer time and contributions of history to be preserved.

## 2014 SPECIAL EVENTS

### March

2 Annual Meeting  
21 Surrounded By History Fundraiser

### April

21 Annual Volunteer Appreciation

### May

3 Hubbard House Opening Day  
3 Mankato Baltics Season Opener  
4 Victorian Tea Party

### June

7 Victorian Lawn Party  
28 Mankato Baltics Tournament

### July

5 Hubbard House Living History

### August

16 Hubbard House Living History  
Traveling Exhibit Opening

### September

26 Member Appreciation

### October

3-4 Ghosts from the Past

### November

14-15 BECHS Open House  
Traveling Exhibit Opening

### December

6-7 Hubbard House Christmas

## Blue Earth County Historical Society

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN 56001  
507-345-5566 bechs@hickorytech.net



# Calendar of Events April - July 2014

## APRIL

- 17 Artist Reception for Sandy Howe**, 5-7 p.m., Heritage Center
- 23 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town (Note date change)
- 24 Our History Matters: History of Seppmann Mill by Tim Pulis**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, BECHS members free

## MAY

- 3 Hubbard House Opening Weekend**, open for tours 1-4 p.m.
- 3 Mankato Baltics Striker-to-the-Line Season Opener**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Erlandson Park, Mankato
- 4 Annual Victorian Tea Party**, 1-4 p.m., R.D. Hubbard House. Tickets on sale now.
- 8 Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission History of Mankato Parks Bus Tour**, 4 p.m., to register call 387-8638.
- 10 Young Historians: World War II**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, Pre-registration required.
- 22 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS update on Talk of the Town
- 22 Our History Matters: History of Bicycling and Bicycling Clothing by Grace and Richard Keir**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, members free
- 24 Heritage Center Closed, Hubbard House Open Happy Memorial Day**
- 31 Mankato Baltics @ Columbia Heights**

## JUNE

- 6 Story Time at Hubbard House**, 10:30 a.m. every Friday morning through August, Hubbard House
- 7 Tweed Ride by the Mankato Bike Walk Advocates**, 10 a.m. watch for details.
- 7 Victorian Lawn Party**, 1-4 p.m., R.D. Hubbard House
- 15 Mankato Baltics @ The Landing in Shakopee**, Noon-3 p.m.
- 26 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS update on Talk of the Town



- 26 Our History Matters: Genealogy and Research**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, members free

- 28 Mankato Baltics 1860s Base Ball Festival**, 12-3 p.m., Erlandson Park, Mankato

- 28 Rapidan's Chautauqua Revival**



[www.rapidandepot.com](http://www.rapidandepot.com) for details.

- 28-July 2 Deep Valley Homecoming**, visit [www.betsy-tacysociety.org](http://www.betsy-tacysociety.org) for details.

## JULY

- 1 Boy in Blue Patriotic Band Concert** 7:30 p.m. Lincoln Park, visit [www.boyinblue.org](http://www.boyinblue.org) for details
- 4 Heritage Center Closed Happy 4th of July**
- 5 Old-fashioned Independence Day Celebration**, 1-4 p.m., R.D. Hubbard House
- 13 Baltics Scrimmage at North Mankato Fun Days**, watch for details
- 17 Artist Reception for Seppman Mill exhibit**, 5-7 p.m., Heritage Center
- 24 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS update on Talk of the Town
- 24 Our History Matters** 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, members free
- 31-August 2 Blue Earth County Fair**

### Three easy ways to stay up-to-date:

- Check out [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com) for full event details and updates!
- Sign-up for our free monthly e-news to receive updates between *Historian* issues
- Follow BECHS on Facebook and Twitter.

### Electronic Version of The Historian Now Available

If you would like to receive *The Historian* via email rather than traditional mail, please contact Danelle at [bechsms@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsms@hickorytech.net) or 345-5566.

### Answers to Blue Earth County Trivia on page 13:

- 1. Lake Crystal      2. 1889 – 125 years ago
- 3. Richfield from 1857-1858; Fox Lake from 1858-1865

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Membership Levels**

Individual Senior (62+) \$20

Individual \$25

Household \$35

Contributor \$50

Supporter\* \$100

Booster\* \$250

Advocate\* \$500

Benefactor\* \$1000

\*denotes Business Member levels

Please send this form and check to:

BECHS Membership

415 Cherry Street

Mankato, MN 56001

**OR**

Complete your membership form

online at [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com)

*Affiliate Membership levels available for Groups or Organizations, call for details.*



## **Blue Earth County Historical Society**

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Mankato, MN 56001

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**Membership  
Expiration**

**Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901**