

The Blue Earth County

# HISTORIAN



## A Look at Local Disasters



BECHS will host "Minnesota Disasters" traveling exhibit opening August 16. Check out Collections & Exhibits on page 6 for exhibit details. For a look back at how Blue Earth County prepared for disasters, read "Protecting, Predicting and Preparing for Disasters" on page 9. Photo above: Mankato High School Fire, July 19, 1941.

### New Art Exhibit



Artist perspective of the historic Seppman Mill, page 7.

### See You at the Fair!



Blue Earth County Fair  
July 31 - August 2, 2014

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**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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Hubbard House Assistants

### Museum & History Center

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN  
507-345-5566  
www.bechshistory.com  
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**  
June-August: Friday & Saturday 10 a.m.  
- 4 p.m.; Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.  
September: Saturday & Sunday 1-4 p.m.

### *The Blue Earth County Historian* Summer 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 Building Expansion Update

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

In 1988, the Historical Society moved into the building on the corner of Fifth and Cherry Streets to create a center for people to explore and discover Blue Earth County history through research, exhibits and programs. Now, twenty-six years later, we are setting out to create a bigger, more accessible, more interactive History Center.

BECHS officially became the owner of our building in July. Through a generous donation from Blue Earth County, our down payment for the building acquisition was covered. We still need to raise \$230,000 to own the building debt free, but it's a start. We will make quarterly payments of \$4,000 over the next two years with a balloon payment of the balance in July 2016.

Now that we have expanded by 6,000 square feet, we are excited to spread out and slowly move into the space. This will give us time to determine what works and what doesn't before we embark on any major renovations and repairs. We are looking at asbestos abatement on both levels, updating mechanical, electrical and restrooms, as well as general building improvements like paint, flooring and lighting.

Until financial resources are available, we are exploring low cost improvements and doable building use plans as our first step, so we can start using the additional space immediately. The first project will be to re-open the stairwell that was closed in 1988 to limit access between the two levels. This will immediately improve building flow. We are developing plans to relocate the main History Center entrance to the Warren Street side of the building, which has a larger parking lot, handicap accessible entrance and larger and more welcoming gathering area. This will become the new home for the Gift Shop, Reception Area, Marian

Anderson Art Gallery and new traveling and temporary exhibits. On the upper level, we plan to relocate the Research Center down the hall to its original 1988 location. The biggest change will be a new doorway with



Warren Street Entrance—In the future this could be a welcoming plaza to great guests and serve as easy access for bus tours.



View of the future traveling and temporary exhibits gallery and reception area.

glass to allow for better visibility and accessibility. We will also move the main Museum entrance as well as enhance museum

exhibits over time. Soon we will have drawings available for everyone to see our vision.

The “to do” list for this first phase includes paint, flooring and lighting, minimal construction and then physically moving everything. We hope to fulfill as much of this first phase of improvements as we can in time for our Annual Member Appreciation Open House on Saturday, September 27.

Easy or challenging, all of these projects will cost money, take time and will need people like you. Now, more than ever, BECHS needs your support. You can help by renewing your membership, considering a financial donation to the general building fund or a specific project (see Building Wish List to the right), and/or donating your time and talents. We need volunteers now to help with everything from light construction to moving, see page 14 for more information. If you are interested, please contact us.

And one of the easiest ways you can help is to spread the word about this exciting time for BECHS and invite your friends and family to check us out. Stay connected with our progress through the following ways:

- Sign-up for our free monthly e-news
- Check out **#buildBECHS** online and on social media
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and our blog at **[www.bechshistory.com/blog](http://www.bechshistory.com/blog)**
- Stop by and see what we are up to

If you have any questions or suggestions about our expansion, please contact me at 507-345-5566, [bechs@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechs@hickorytech.net) or stop in the History Center.

## BUILDING EXPANSION WISH LIST

Want to make your mark on history? Consider a donation to the BECHS Building Fund or support a specific project detailed below.

\$500 to purchase hanging art display panels for the new Marian Anderson Art Gallery

\$1,000 to purchase compact textile hanging racks; *available for limited time only - store closing soon*

\$3,000 to purchase two compact shelving unit for collections storage

\$4,000 covers one of seven quarterly building acquisition payments

\$5,000 to construct the new interior entrance for the soon-to-be relocated Research Center

\$10,500 for Facility Conditions Assessment, Feasibility Study and Schematic Drawings. This will help us prioritize and evaluate necessary repairs.

\$25,000 to replace flooring and carpeting on lower level. Existing carpet is heavily stained and worn.

\$1 Million to fully realize our vision of the new Blue Earth County History Center.

Check out **[www.bechshistory.com/blog](http://www.bechshistory.com/blog)** for regular updates and items added to the wish list.

**GIVETODAY.  
MAKEHISTORY.**

**Blue Earth County  
Historical Society  
Monthly Giving  
Program**

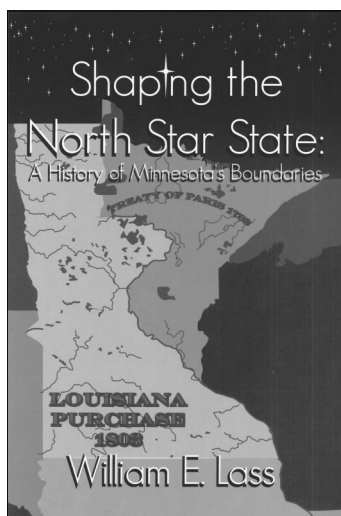
NEW Monthly Giving Program is an easy way you can help provide steady support for the ongoing work of BECHS. Enroll online or at the History Center, and your credit or debit card will be charged automatically each month. Visit **[www.bechshistory.com/monthly-donations](http://www.bechshistory.com/monthly-donations)** for more information.



# At the Book and Gift Shop

Danelle Erickson, Museum Manager

One of the newest books in the Museum Gift Shop is *Shaping the North Star State: A History of Minnesota's Boundaries* by Dr. William E. Lass. The book examines the many proposed, and often disputed, borders that led to the creation of Minnesota's unique shape. Did you know a portion of Blue Earth County was almost part of Iowa? Or that some people thought Minnesota should be an "east-west" state with the western boundary extending well into present day South Dakota and the northern boundary being just north of St. Paul? Discover these facts and lots more! Come and hear Dr. Lass speak at BECHS on Thursday, September 25 at 6 p.m. as part of the "Our History Matters" educational series. Dr. Lass is Professor of History Emeritus at Minnesota State University, Mankato and *Shaping the North Star State* is the most recent book he has written about Minnesota history. It is available now in the Gift Shop and online for \$16.95. Through a generous donation by Dr. Lass, all proceeds from the sales in the Gift Shop will benefit BECHS.



Included in that exhibit is the beautiful painting of the mill by Al Waggie. This

painting has been made into prints which are now available in the Gift Shop. Prints are \$50, and BECHS and the Friends of Minneopa both benefit from print sales.

Learn more about Seppman Mill and Minneopa State Park in *Minneinneopa: 150 Year History, Minneopa State Park* by Gordon H. Herbst. The book contains many great photographs including historic images and full color pictures of what the park looks like today. You can also read about a number of topics including the Minneopa Hotel, passenger pigeons and the geology of the falls, just to name a few. This book can be purchased for \$19.95 at the Gift Shop or through our online store at [www.bechshistory.com/shop](http://www.bechshistory.com/shop).

*Marian Anderson*  
**Fine Art Prints**

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



*Northern Awakening* by Marian Anderson

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).



# Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Ezra Grabau and Ryan Harren, Hubbard House Assistants

This has been a wonderful season for the Hubbard House so far. Not a day has gone by without a tour. We have had over 500 visitors from around the globe including a writer from Explore Minnesota. Look for an article to appear in the *Star Tribune* in August featuring National Register of Historic Places sites (Minnesota River Valley). Our great living history events have brought many people to the Hubbard House, many for the first time. We kicked-off the season with the Victorian Tea Party in May. Guests enjoyed historical vignettes in the house and refreshments at the Emy Frentz Arts Guild. We've also welcomed many groups including school field trips and the T-Totalers, a group of Model-T enthusiasts. The Victorian Lawn Party in



June was even more exciting than usual this year since the Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates hosted their annual Tweed Ride that day. They began and finished their Tweed Ride at the Hubbard House and displayed their historic

bicycles in the Carriage House.

Every Friday morning in the summer, Story Time is a great way for families to experience the Hubbard House with a story and craft. This free family program at 10:30 a.m. is led by *Katherine* and *Mary Esther Hubbard* and runs through August.

This year we hosted an Old-Fashioned Independence Day Celebration on July 5. We celebrated Independence Day with picnics on the grounds and an ice cream social. On August 16 the Hubbard House will be hosting the annual Medicine Show featuring the infamous Violet McNeal and Far Eastern medicinal remedies from the turn-of-the-century. The re-enactment will be followed by a debunking of the medicines and methods used in the show.

Whether you want to enjoy the park, the gardens, or take a tour, we encourage you to visit the Hubbard House this summer.

## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

*Where 1900s History Comes to Life*

**Fridays at 10:30 a.m. thru August 29**

### Story Time at the Hubbard House

Join Katherine and Mary Esther Hubbard Friday mornings for story time with crafts and games on the Hubbard House lawn. Free for all ages.

**August 16, 1-4 p.m.**

### Far Eastern Medicine Show:

### Remedies of the Realm Revealed

Traveling medicine show of the early 1900s is back with emphasis on Far Eastern Remedies. Medicine show is FREE; House tours available with paid admission. Medicine Show Times: 1 p.m., 2 p.m., or 3 p.m.

**September 20, 2 p.m.**

### Hubbard Girls' Birthday Celebration

Join Katherine and Mary Esther Hubbard for a special children's Victorian birthday party at the Hubbard House lawn and party. Guests will enjoy free lawn games and special birthday treats. Tours of the house available 1-4 p.m. with paid admission.

## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

### Hours of Operation

#### 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 & Exhibits

## "Minnesota Disasters" Coming to Blue Earth County

Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is excited to host five Minnesota State Historical Society traveling exhibits scheduled over the next two years. The first exhibit "Minnesota Disasters: Stories of Strength and Survival" opens in August. This exhibit features dramatic photographs, original accounts of survivors, memorabilia and artifacts from Minnesota and Blue Earth County. This exhibit will be displayed in our newly acquired space on the lower level which will allow us to experiment with different types of displays in this new space.

"Minnesota Disasters" offers a historical overview of disasters throughout Minnesota history from the 1870s grasshopper plagues to the 2007 I-35W Mississippi River bridge collapse. In dramatic photos, it chronicles past decades of disasters in Minnesota and right here in Blue Earth County. Visitors will take a journey through earthquakes, fires, storms, floods and blizzards. In addition to the traveling exhibit



panels, BECHS will use this opportunity to display original archival materials from our collection featuring local disasters, including photographs, maps and manuscripts. With the newly expanded space we are now able to display larger artifacts from our collection that haven't recently been on display including the 1866 hand-cranked water pump used by the Mankato Hook and Ladder Company.

This object will help tell the stories of the Blue Earth County fires like the Eagle Lake Fire of 1890 that engulfed several city blocks and caused massive destruction. Besides floods, we will also explore the



127 Lamm Street, Mankato during devastating 1965 Minnesota River flood.

Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940 and the 1946 Green Gables tornado. Not all disasters are caused by nature; this exhibit also features man-made disasters such as the

1963 Honeymead oil spill in Mankato and the 2007 I-35W bridge collapse.

Disasters often are referred to as great equalizers; everyone has experienced at least one. They create a collective memory; we all remember where we were and what we did to survive. This exhibit tells these tales through images captured by everyday people who survived; giving a personal look at the impact these disasters had on our communities. In association with the exhibit on August 28, "Our History Matters" will feature author, survivor and former journalist Garrett Ebling presenting his book: *Collapsed: A Survivor's Climb from the Wreckage of the I-35W Bridge*.

"Minnesota Disasters: Stories of Strength and Survival" opens on August 16 and from 10 a.m. to noon there will be giveaways, store specials, refreshments and kid's activities. The exhibit runs through October 4, 2014.

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.

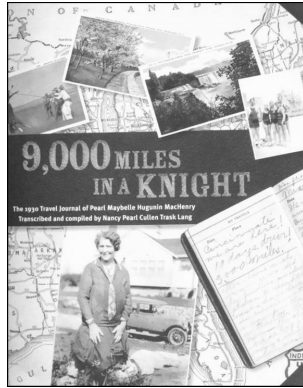
**Next Traveling Exhibit:**  
**"Uncle Sam's New Deal"**  
**November – December 2014**

# Every object has a story...

The Historical Society's permanent collection includes paintings, textiles, photographs, books, letters and ephemera from the middle of the 19th century through the 21st century. Summer is a time for travel; here are a few travel related items from our collection.

## Personal Travel Journal

Travel journals have always been popular. Like diaries, these books document a traveler's experiences usually describing people and places along the journey. In 1930, Pearl MacHenry, her husband and their four youngest children took a 9,000 mile road trip from Seattle, WA, across the United States, into Canada and back home again in their Willys-Knight touring car. One of their many stops was right here in Mankato visiting family. Her travel journal was



recently turned into this book: *9,000 Miles In A Knight: The 1930 Travel Journal of Pearl Maybelle Huggins MacHenry*.

## Tote-Brush

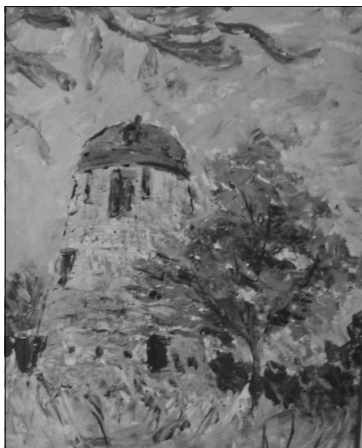
This travel toothbrush claimed to be the only full-size folding toothbrush in 1957. It comes in a convenient "cigarette pack" case which is able to fit into your purse or pocket. It only cost \$1.00.



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

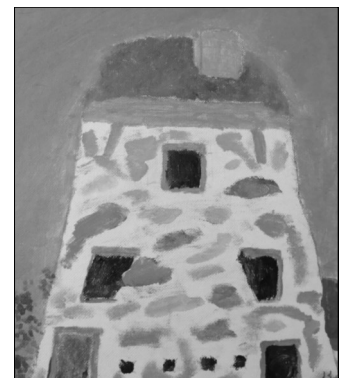
## HERITAGE CENTER ART GALLERY FEATURED EXHIBIT

### An Artist's Perspective of Seppman Mill: 1887 to 2014



Mary Ann Morness, c. 1970

Seppman Mill is celebrating its 150th Anniversary! To help commemorate this milestone BECHS will feature over a dozen local artists' perspective of Louis Seppman's 1864 stone grinding mill. Come and see work of art that capture the beauty of Seppman Mill and the timeless landscape that surrounds it. The art ranges from work completed in 1887 to 2014, by people of all ages. Exhibit runs thru September 2014.



Keith Olson, 1989

Cover image by Tom S., 1971

### Opening Exhibit Reception and Special Encore Presentation

"History of Seppman Mill"

by Tim Pulis and Scott Kudelka

Tuesday, July 22

Reception 5-7 p.m., Presentation 6 p.m.



# Education & Outreach

*Making Local History Accessible to All Ages*

Heather Harren, Education and Outreach Manager

Last issue I shared with you the changes in the Minnesota State Education Standards regarding the cutting of local history from the Social Studies curriculum. I have continued to meet with the Mankato School District and am excited to share that they are eager to work with us to see what BECHS can do to help bring Social Studies and History into the classroom. This will include continuing field trips to the Hubbard House as well as adding field trips to the Museum and History Center.

One of the areas I have been developing is making our Hubbard House school tours more kid friendly. The current tour is taught in a more traditional way with many historical facts and dates. Unfortunately, this is not the best way to reach today's kids. The updated tour will still include dates in relation to the history of the Hubbard House and the life of the family, but it will be more interactive by incorporating questions and hands-on components as learning tools about the past. We cannot wait to start giving these tours later this summer for all kids groups visiting the Hubbard House; not just for school tours. The next tour to be enhanced will be a kid's Museum tour.

We still have a lot to do to develop classroom and field trip tools for the teachers, our volunteers

and the students. If you would be interested in helping with our Education Taskforce, becoming a classroom volunteer or tour guide, please contact me.

## Monthly Educational Opportunities

### **Our History Matters**

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



Grace and Richard Keir presented "The History of Bicycling and Bicycle Clothing" at the May program. May was Minnesota Bike Month.

### Upcoming Programs

**July 22** - History of Seppman Mill encore presentation by Tim Pulis and Scott Kudelka

**August 28** - *Collapsed: A Survivor's Climb From the Wreckage of the I-35W Bridge* presented by Garrett Ebling

**September 25** - *Shaping the North Star State* presented by William E. Lass

## **Young Historians**



Arn Kind at the WWII Young Historians workshop

Young Historians, hands-on history workshops for school age children, begins again on September 13, 2014. This year's schedule will begin with the Progressive Era and technology of the 1870s-1910s and will end with technology of the 1950s to present. In between, we will explore Ellis Island, World War I, Great Depression and World War II. Many of the topics will coincide with traveling exhibits from the Minnesota Historical Society. The full 2014-2015 schedule can be found online at [www.bechshistory.com/events/programs/young-historians](http://www.bechshistory.com/events/programs/young-historians).

Young Historians takes place the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, September thru May, from 10 a.m. to noon. The workshops are free and geared to 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders. We look forward to seeing all the kids once again in September!

### Upcoming Workshops

**September 13** – Progressive Era and Technology, 1870s - 1910s

**October 11** – Immigration and Ellis Island



# Protecting, Predicting and Preparing

## *A Look Back at How Blue Earth County Prepared for Disasters*

By Harris Burkhalter and Danelle Erickson

This summer the Blue Earth County Historical Society is welcoming the Minnesota Historical Society's traveling exhibit: "Minnesota Disasters: Stories of Strength and Survival." While there is nothing we as humans can do to change the weather or prevent bad things from happening altogether, we still strive to do what we can to lessen the impact of disasters. Protecting from fire, predicting weather and preparing for fallout are some ways the citizens of Blue Earth County have sought to meet disasters head on.

### Protecting from Fire

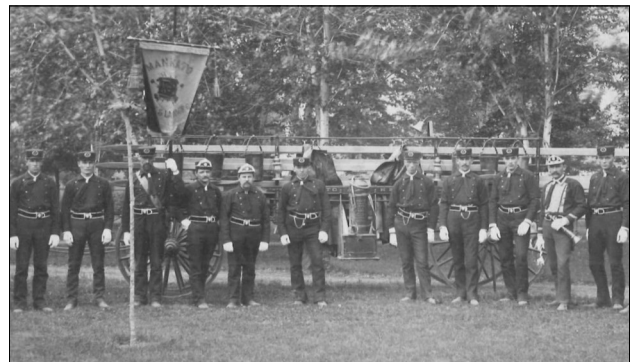
In the days of the early settlers, a destructive fire was a dreaded occurrence. Yes, fires can still cause great damage and heartache today, but in the early years of most towns' histories there wasn't a fire department to call upon for help. Sometimes the beginning of a fire department as a whole was in response to a large fire. In Lake Crystal, for example, the fire department was started in April 1885, just one month after a general store was destroyed by fire. In Mapleton, the appointing of the first fire warden was the beginning of their fire department. This position started in 1878 was a direct reaction to a large fire. The warden was to perform building and chimney inspections in hopes of preventing further fires.

In those early firefighting days, once a building caught on fire it often was considered lost, and the focus was on saving the surrounding buildings. Water was sprayed on adjoining buildings and sparks were watched carefully as they would often cause additional fires, sometimes blocks away. Often firefighting was considered a success if no other structures were destroyed.

The effectiveness of the fire crew would often depend on the water supply. Before a town developed central waterworks, cisterns, rivers and lakes were used as the water source for fire fighting and could often be unreliable. Even after water mains were installed, the size of the pipes and amount of water pressure could significantly affect the outcome of a fire. As time passed, the mains improved and fire hydrants were added, greatly assisting the firemen in gaining access to water quickly.



Gamewell Fire Alarm box used in Mankato; item from BECHS Collection



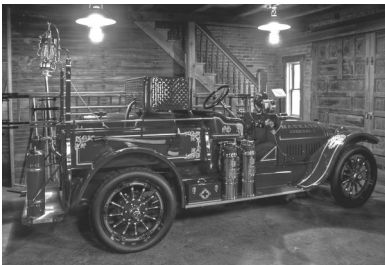
Mankato Hook and Ladder Club, c. 1860s

When the Gamewell Fire Alarm System was first installed in Mankato in 1894, it suddenly became much easier to notify the local fire department of a fire. Before such systems were used, people used bells and whistles or had to run and alert the department directly. The Gamewell System was a system of red boxes that were strategically placed on street corners. When an alarm was rung the firefighters were alerted to the fire's location. Some of these boxes were still in their original working condition when they were removed after 80 years of service.

The history of the fire equipment used by local fire departments, including the Mankato Fire Department, is well documented at the Historical Society. The equipment serves as a great visual reminder of the evolution of firefighting from hand-pumper carts to motorized engines. Upon forming in 1860, the Mankato Fire Department used water pumps, powered by either hand or steam. These pumps, along with fire hooks, ladders, buckets and hoses would have been pulled to the

fire by hand. It wasn't until 1895 that the Mankato Fire Department purchased horses to haul their equipment.

In 1894, the Mankato Fire Department added a chemical tank followed by the first motorized apparatus in 1914. A second motorized vehicle joined the fleet in 1916 with the purchase of a 1916



Restored 1916 Buick Fire Truck at the Hubbard House

Buick chassis. Turning this touring car into a fire engine was the job of the department. The men set out to customize the new machine, using new and existing equipment, including the 1894 chemical

tank. The end result was Chemical Engine No. 1. This engine was fully restored in 1998 and is on display at the Carriage House, next to the R.D. Hubbard House, Mankato. By 1920 the department purchased an aerial ladder truck and all of the horses were sold. The Mankato Fire Department had entered the modern mechanical era.

While fires do still happen, years of bigger and better engines and equipment, better means of construction, along with the 911 emergency system, alarm systems and cell phones, Blue Earth County has come a long way in fire protection.

## Predicting Weather

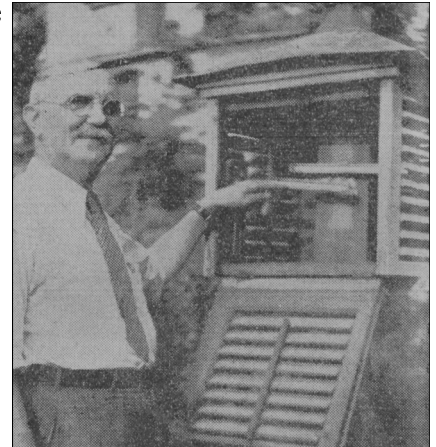
Weather can be unpredictable to say the least, but think about what forecasting was like before today's technology. For over 100 years, weather observers in Blue Earth County have recorded daily temperatures, precipitation and river conditions. While these "weathermen" didn't forecast the weather, their daily reports were sent to state and national organizations, all for little or no pay. Once reported, the data collection from across the nation was used to track weather patterns and oddities and have no doubt played an important role in predicting storms and dangerous conditions that affect us today.

Stored in BECHS collection, and soon to be on display as part of the "Minnesota Disasters" exhibit, is a large wooden box with a door and slots for air flow. Used until 1987, this weather instrument

shelter isn't much different from the one pictured here, with Weather Observer John J. Pihale in 1937.

Inside the shelter are two thermometers. Each day the weather observer read the temperatures, once around 7 a.m. and again around 6 p.m. The data was recorded and the thermometers were reset for the next day.

Along with temperature



John Pihale and the weather station, 1937.

readings, climate observers were responsible for recording precipitation in each 24-hour period. The location of the instrument shelter and rain gauge needed to fit certain parameters. For example, they couldn't be located too close to structures or trees and the shelter door had to face north so when it was opened, the sun didn't shine on the thermometer. Additional instructions were provided to the observer to ensure the recorded data remained consistent.

Blue Earth County had a number of weather observers through the years, but the careers of John Pihale and Warren Heiser stand out from the rest.

John Pihale officially began as a weather observer in 1920, but he had been recording the daily weather conditions since 1902, simply as a hobby. For over 40 years, Pihale meticulously recorded the temperature each morning and night. He also measured the rain and when it snowed, he recorded the amount of snow and then melted it to measure the amount of moisture. Each day, Pihale visited a measuring device located on Main Street Bridge in Mankato to read the height of the Minnesota River.

Pihale soon became known around town as the person to call if you wanted to know the weather conditions. In 1929, he said he would often receive 25 phone calls a day, but soon more and more people were calling and by 1933, Pihale and his wife would answer close to 150 calls a day! Pihale continued recording weather conditions until the early 1950s.

Warren Heiser became Mankato's observer in October 1961 at the age of 57 and served until May

1984. As the official National Weather Service Observer, Heiser's position was unpaid, although he did receive a little money from his daily weather reports sent to the *Mankato Free Press* and local radio stations. Along with his temperature and precipitation readings, Heiser also visited the Minnesota River, sometimes as often as 12 times a day, to record the river levels and take water samples. In the winter, this meant drilling through the ice to measure its thickness. His recorded data and samples were passed along to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and for his efforts, Heiser received \$1.50 per water sample and \$13.00 a month.

Men like John Pihale and Warren Heiser played an important role in recording local weather conditions, information that, in turn, has helped to develop the weather tracking systems we all rely on today.

## Preparing for Fallout

Looking around Mankato and communities across Blue Earth County and beyond, you might spot a small metal sign bearing a circle with three downward facing triangles. Often found on older government, commercial and school buildings including Old Main at Bethany Lutheran College or hidden away at Minnesota State University, Mankato's campus, these signs are the symbol for a fallout shelter. During the Cold War, as the atomic arsenals of the USA and the USSR threatened devastating atomic war, Americans were confronted by images and fears of imminent destruction, but these fallout shelters offered the public a place to find food, water and supplies in the event of a nuclear attack.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower began the National Policy on Shelters and encouraged citizens to construct fallout shelters in their homes or on their properties. Citizens were provided with information and civil defense courses were given throughout the country. A course given in Mankato used a publication titled *Personal Preparedness in*

*the Nuclear Age*. This student manual states that fallout shelters have "a great potential for the saving of life," and that history shows "a nation can prevent war only when it is thoroughly prepared for war."

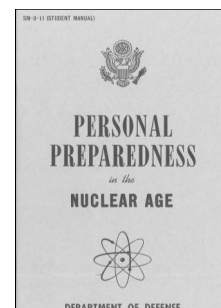
A copy of this manual is part of the archives collection at BECHS.

On the back cover of this small booklet, a previous owner had written a checklist of items to include in a fallout shelter. Perhaps it was written at one of the civil defense classes. The list includes: seven gallons of water per person, food for two weeks, radio, blanket, flashlight, first aid kit, can opener, newspaper, paper plates and cups, clock, calendar, hard candy, gum, matches and, if possible, a telephone.

In 1961, the Kennedy administration announced a "National Fallout Shelter Survey and Marking Program" in response to the growing concern for the need of fallout shelters. By December 1961, fallout shelters were a popular topic in the newspapers. An article in the *Free Press*, published December 2, 1961, included the thoughts of Edward Johnson, director of civil defense in Mankato public schools. He thought that all school personnel had a responsibility to be prepared for any emergency. He also stated, "Today, the instruments of war are the newest and the most destructive of all the man-made causes of disaster. We must learn to understand and live with them – or perish." Three days later, the editor of the *Free Press* wrote about an approaching fallout shelter survey and believed using public schools was a good, logical solution. The editor also stressed the importance of a recreation space in these shelters, saying exercise and activities would help "break the monotony" of the suggested two week confinement.

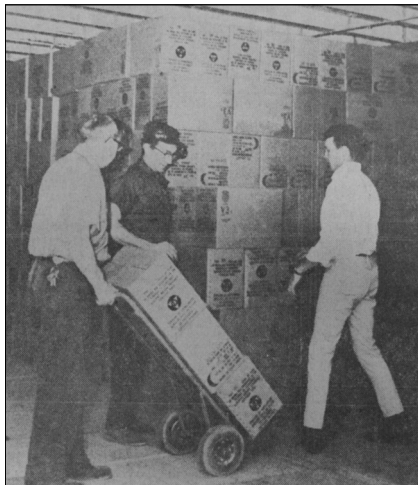
Mankato State College planned to conduct their own survey over the 1961 Christmas break. A committee, which included science professors, the student housing director, food service manager and nursing instructor, was set to designate locations on both upper and lower campuses as fallout shelters.

By September 1967, Blue Earth County had 11,213 licensed fallout shelters, more than any other county in the area. While the federal government



provided the supplies in the shelters, it was the responsibility of the local community to maintain the shelters. Supplies were calculated to last two weeks. Each meal consisted of biscuits, wafers or crackers and candy that was classified as a “carbohydrate supplement.” Each shelter had two trained managers and two people to operate the radiological survey instruments.

On December 19, 1968, the *Free Press* reported that seven semi-truck loads of supplies were delivered to the fallout shelter on Mankato State College’s Highland Campus. This shelter held enough food and water for 41,369 individuals. Robert Shaw, Blue Earth County Civil



Civil Defense Supplies at Mankato State College, 1968.

Defense Director, said the shipment was part of “one of the larger projects in the state right now as far as putting supplies into fallout shelters.” This latest shipment meant there were enough supplies for 81,652 individuals in various shelters throughout the county.

While the Civil Defense was surveying and preparing shelters around the county throughout the 1960s, the number of private shelters didn’t seem to be increasing at the same rate. In 1967, several Mankato contractors were contacted and only one had built a new home that had included a fallout shelter in the past five or six years.

Later still, while the threat of nuclear war still made the nightly news, the *Free Press* reported on August 14, 1980, that many shelters had since been emptied of their supplies. Homeowners were reclaiming the once designated spaces for everyday uses such as rec rooms and saunas. Instead of promoting fallout shelters, the civil defense officers worked to develop a crisis relocation program. This program identified possible targets and determined how and where local residents would be moved to in light of a possible attack.

After the end of the Cold War, fallout shelters

were forgotten and neglected. There was never a concerted effort to decommission or otherwise dismantle any of the public fallout shelters throughout the country on a federal level. Some were destroyed when the buildings they were housed in were demolished or remodeled, though others have been simply ignored, signs rusted and supplies long since discarded. If readers know of current locations of any surviving fallout shelters or shelter signs in the Blue Earth County area, please share the information.

These are just some examples of how the residents of Blue Earth County have worked to make a better life. Bad things will happen, but with some protecting, predicting and preparing, perhaps the disasters will be easier to take.

More information about Blue Earth County and Minnesota Disasters can be explored through the traveling exhibit of Minnesota disasters, on display at the Blue Earth County Historical Society History Center from August 16 until October 4, 2014.

#### **Sources:**

Blue Earth County Historical Society vertical files including *Mankato Free Press*

Geerhard, Bill. “An Indelible Cold War Symbol: History of the Fallout Shelter Sign,” 2011, <http://conelrad.blogspot.com/2011/06/indelible-cold-war-symbol-complete.html>

Goff, Janet. “The Little Engine That Couldn’t – Quit,” *Blue Earth County Historian*, Fall 1998

Goff, Janet. “Early Days of Fire Fighting in Mankato,” *Blue Earth County Historical Society*, 1998

Hollingsworth, Alice. “A Century of Fire Fighting,” 1985 a History of the Lake Crystal Volunteer Fire Department formerly know as Lake Crystal Hose Company No. 1

National Weather Service Observing Handbook No. 2, Cooperative Stations Observations, July 1989

Newell, Ronald. *Where the Winding Maple Flows*, 2002

U.S. Department of Defense, *Personal Preparedness in the Nuclear Age*, 1961



# Around the Research Center

Heather Harren, Education and Outreach Manager

Summer is a great time to do family research. Several people have stopped in the Research Center during their vacations to find more information about their family history.

For June's "Our History Matters", Archives Manager Shelley Harrison and I discussed the resources available in the Research Center for beginner family historians. The program included a tour of our online indexes page at [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com) and our in-house database for finding books and photographs. After the walk-through, the group participated in an activity to discover information about people in a particular photograph just by using the resources available in the Research Center. This is a pretty common activity for family historians. From that one photograph, the group was able to determine when the people were born, married, how many children they had and when they died. There was also additional information about where the couple farmed and when they moved to a town.

Photographs can be a great tool to help you discover more about your family history. But are even more valuable when the photograph is properly

identified. So, next time you look through family photographs of your grandparents, or great aunts and uncles, think about the information or lack of information on the back of the photograph. Think about what you can add for the next generation, and about where that information may lead you in your family history search.

If you need help with your family history, either where to start or how to break through a brick wall, please reach out to us. We have many resources that may be able to help you.

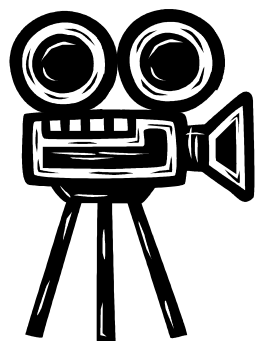
## Here's a little Blue Earth County trivia from the Research Center:

1. What year was the first Blue Earth County Fair?
2. What was the name of the first newspaper in Blue Earth County?
3. How many Blue Earth County men served in World War I?

Answers can be found on page 19. Like Blue Earth County trivia? More can be found on our website and Facebook page.

## Wanted: Your BECHS Story

You may have seen some of our "Volunteer Story" or "Member Story" videos on Facebook or YouTube. We are looking for more people to share their stories. Tell us why or how you started volunteering at BECHS, what you enjoy the most about BECHS or maybe you have a specific story



or memory to share. The videos are informal and can be as long or short as you would like. If you are interested in sharing your BECHS story, please contact Heather. To view our videos visit [www.bechshistory.com/media](http://www.bechshistory.com/media).

## *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.



# BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen

BECHS volunteers are the heart of our organization by donating their time and talents every day. Want to join our team? We are looking for people interested in helping with the following volunteer opportunities. Interested individuals can contact Danelle, our volunteer coordinator, at [bechsms@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsms@hickorytech.net) or visit [www.bechshistory.com/volunteer](http://www.bechshistory.com/volunteer).

## Volunteer Opportunities

### **County Fair Volunteers**

BECHS needs volunteers to work shifts at the Blue Earth County Fair, July 31-August 2. Contact Danelle to sign-up for a 3 hour timeslot.

### **Building Projects**

Seeking individuals to assist with a variety of small and large projects as part of our building expansion. Projects include light construction, heavy lifting/moving, "handyman" projects and cleaning.

### **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 as needed. Research experience preferred; additional training available as needed.

### **Writers and Editors**

In search of writers and researchers for regular history article series and BECHS publications including main *Historian* articles. Also, seeking individuals strong in editing and proofreading. Schedule is flexible and some work can be done from home.

### **Gardeners Needed!**

In light of the upcoming expansion, BECHS is now responsible for the gardens on the south side of the building, near the Warren Street entrance, as well as those in front of BECHS. Volunteers meet every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. to tend to the gardens, but schedule is flexible.

### **Data Entry - Photograph Collection**

Seeking an individual interested in data entry of photograph collection.

### **Scanning Project**

Looking for someone interested in assisting with a long-term scanning project of photos, slides, negatives and documents. Must be comfortable working with computers and scanning equipment.

### **"This Day in Blue Earth County" Researcher**

Looking for someone to research past Blue Earth County newspapers, looking for interesting tidbits that BECHS can share on social media and/or future articles.

### **Tour Guides**

Seeking individuals interested in leading group tours at the Hubbard House and/or Museum. Training provided.

## **Annual BECHS Volunteer Meeting Thursday, September 11, 6 p.m. History Center**

Join us for dinner followed by a short meeting with updates about the building, volunteer opportunities and changes in the BECHS Volunteer Program.

All BECHS Volunteers invited and encouraged to attend.

*Please RSVP by 9/6/14 if you plan to attend.*

# BECHS Donations

April - June 2014

Beauford Township  
Mary Louise Bishop  
Patrick Carroll  
Bernie Davey  
Shirley Fitzloff  
Garden City Township  
General Mills  
Foundation  
Char Hiniker  
William & JoAnn Hoehn  
David & Colleen Jackson  
Judson Township  
Karl and Bonnie Klein  
Lori Lahlum  
Leray Township  
Jack Madsen  
Theresa McLaughlin  
Medo Township  
Richard & Kris Norland  
Rebecca Novak  
Pleasant Mound  
Township  
Rapidan Township  
Marcia Jones Richards  
Barbara Saba  
Karl Sassenberg  
Joan Schmitz  
Sigvald Svendsen  
Wells Fargo  
Christine Marie Williams  
Randy Zellmer

## Monthly Donors

Dale Benefield  
Joel Botten  
Carol English  
Carlienne Frisch  
Shirley Grundmeier  
Jack & Diann McGowan

## Tribute

*In Honor of Elizabeth  
and Larry O'Toole  
Janet Hotchkiss-Lewis*

## Memorials

*In Memory of Elizabeth  
"Deaf" Allen  
Randy Zellmer*

*In Memory of David L.  
Hanson*

Kathryn Hanson  
Eileen A. Hintzen  
Eloise & Robert Layman  
Lois Mathews  
Dolores Warren

*In Memory of Lydia  
Krueger Fields  
Sally and Earl Lamont*

*In Memory of Bill  
Lagerquist  
Randy Zellmer*

## In-Kind

William Lass  
Jo-an Lavitschke  
Barbara Lee-Priem  
Midwest Electric

## Baltics Sponsorship

All American Foods, Inc.  
Associated Finishing Inc.  
Belgard-Hawker  
Genetics  
Collis "C" Store  
Danks Hydro-Jetting,  
LLC  
Earl Johnson Furniture/  
Town & Country  
Interiors  
Precision Painting LLC  
Pub 500  
Welsh Heritage Farms

# BLUE EARTH COUNTY FAIR

**July 31 - August 2, 2014**

**Blue Earth County  
Fairgrounds  
Garden City, MN**

Visit the BECHS at the Annual Blue Earth County Fair. You will find us once again in Building A. See historic Blue Earth County Fair photographs, Farm Fest exhibit and a small exhibit featuring our upcoming traveling exhibit, *Minnesota Disasters*. There will also be a display of historic vehicles from our collection and Blue Earth County residents. Fair goers can discover popular displays from the Rapidan Heritage Society and Madison Lake Area Historical Society. Activities and fun for children of all ages.

## See you at the Fair!

*Volunteers are needed, contact Danelle to sign-up. Thank you to all the volunteers that represent BECHS at this County event. We couldn't do it without you!*



Blue Earth County Fair, Garden City, 1932.  
Photo courtesy of Jack Madsen.

# Membership Makes a Difference



When leaders of member-supported non-profits get together, one question they may be asked is, "How many members do you have?" By asking this question, what is really being asked is "How many people love

what you are doing and believe in your mission? How many people support you?"

To current BECHS Members – THANK YOU! We truly feel your support and interest each time we receive your membership dues or read the notes of encouragement you send us.

As a member of the Blue Earth County Historical Society, not only are you receiving some great benefits, but more importantly, you are supporting the one organization that collects, preserves and presents the history of this county.

Not a BECHS Member? We would love you to join us! Benefits of BECHS Membership:

- Knowledge that you are supporting the one organization dedicated to Blue Earth County's history
- Free annual pass to the Heritage Center Museum, Research Center, R.D. Hubbard House and more
- 10% off most items in the Museum Gift Shop
- *The Historian* in your mailbox or inbox four times a year

Do you know someone who loves history? Someone who grew up in Blue Earth County, but no longer lives here? Someone who has a passion for preserving and presenting history for future generations? Tell them about BECHS and invite them to join us!

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

## BECHS Membership

**April - June 2014**

### **New Members**

Ida Birr  
Bill and Ginny Edwards  
William and Beverly Huettl  
Karl and Bonnie Klein  
Lori Lahlum  
Jane Lawther  
David McCarl  
Marti Weisgram  
Martha Wiggam  
Brandon Winters

### **Renewing Business Members**

Piepho Moving & Storage

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

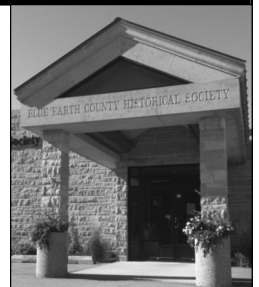
## BECHS Member Appreciation & Community Open House

**Saturday, September 27  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
History Center**

**Lunch 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
Free for BECHS members

### **Open House features**

- Free Museum Admission
- Store Specials including Member's receive 15% off most items
- Hourly door prize drawings
- Guided behind-the-scenes building tours
- Q&A with Staff and Board 11 a.m.-1 p.m.



**BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Visit [www.bechshistory.com](http://www.bechshistory.com) or call 507-345-5566.



# MANKATO BALTICS 1860s BASE BALL CLUB

Brad and Ariane Hawker, Mankato Baltics

The Mankato Baltics vintage base ball club is in the thick of the 2014 season and is having a grand time! The weather has been amazing for our home events and we enjoy seeing new spectators. Doc E's BBQ has provided delicious concessions as well. We had a great time in the North Mankato Fun Days parade and at our double header at Fun Days when we hosted the Rum River Rovers from Anoka County.

We have a 4-5 record and have several events coming up including traveling to Reedsburg, WI the first weekend in August to join three Wisconsin clubs and one Minnesota club for a full day of matches. On the way home we will make a stop in Rochester to play a team from Chicago and the Roosters of Olmsted County during their festival. The Pat Tierney Memorial Cup (hosted by the Afton Red Socks) is usually a hot one at Lake St. Croix Beach on August 17, but it is a favorite festival of ours. The next match is closer to home on Sunday, September 7 at Farm America in Waseca. We close out the season in Arlington on Saturday, September 13. The bonus game of the year is our annual "Snow-Ball" match on December 6 during Arlington's Arli-dazzle celebration, after which we officially hang up the cleats for 2014.

We are grateful to our sponsors, spectators and

Blue Earth County Historical Society for supporting our club so we can spread our passion for vintage base ball! Huzzah huzzah huzzah!



2014 Mankato Baltics

## Baltics 2014 Schedule

<b>August 2</b>	Wisconsin Tournament @ Reedsburg, WI, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
<b>August 3</b>	Rooster's Festival @ Rochester, MN, 12 p.m.
<b>August 17</b>	Pat Tierney Memorial Cup @ Petit Field, St. Croix, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
<b>September 7</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

**28" or 32" Flat Panel TV with built-in DVD player** for new exhibits, new or used in good condition; or donation of \$250 to purchase.

**Digital Camera** to photograph programs and artifacts, preferably 20 megapixel, point-and-shoot with video capability; or donation of \$150 to purchase.

**32 GB SD card for video camera**

**Small 1.7 cu. ft. Fridge** to use at the Hubbard House by seasonal staff, new or used in good 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.

*If you have an item to donate, please drop it off at the History 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



Rapidan Heritage Society

Agriculture was and still is a major part of the Rapidan area livelihood. Horses and scythes have been replaced with tractors and combines, skill in guiding the horses and tractor to plant a straight row has been replaced with GPS programmed to the tractor's route. Times have changed, but, have they really?

The agriculture theme was recently highlighted in Rapidan, first with a "drive your tractor to church" Sunday in June (lawn and pedal tractors included) and secondly with a Chautauqua. For Rapidan's Chautauqua Revival held in late June, Al Batt and Gordon Frederickson told stories that brought back



Adam Lindquist portraying Teddy Roosevelt

farm memories of the 1950-1960s. In the olden days, one of the purposes of a Chautauqua was to go out to the rural areas to provide education and entertainment to the rural population. This year President Teddy Roosevelt spoke on the difficult times of his era. He

was quoted as saying the Chautauqua is "the most American thing in America."

Farm families once congregated at the county fair to socialize and show their farm produce and their skills in canning, baking and needlework. This year the Blue Earth County Fair will be July 31 – August 2 in Garden City. Wander thru the buildings and see these skills still in evidence. RHS will be at the Fair with some special events:

- August 1, 9:30 a.m. presentation on the Blue Earth County Poor Farm
- August 2, RHS will sponsor a tractor ride; antique, classic and modern tractors welcome – minimal travel speed of 15 mph. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jane Haala at 507-995-1185.

Join RHS for our annual National Night Out Potluck on Tuesday, August 5, 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Rapidan Town Garage. Please bring a dish to pass.

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

## Support BECHS on AmazonSmile

You can support BECHS by shopping through AmazonSmile when you do your Amazon Shopping. Visit [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com), login to your Amazon account and enter "Blue Earth County Historical Society" as your charity of choice to get started! It's that simple—next time you shop, you will be supporting BECHS.



## Moving? New Address? Please let us know!

It costs over \$2 for each returned newsletter that cannot be delivered. Please help the Society reserve funds and assure that you get your *Historian* by notifying us of your new or seasonal address.



# Calendar of Events July - October 2014

## JULY

- 22 Artist Reception for Seppman Mill Exhibit,**  
5-7 p.m., History Center, Free
- 22 Our History Matters: History of Seppman Mill**  
**by Tim Pulis,** 6 p.m., History Center, \$5  
Adults, Members Free
- 24 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS  
update on Talk of the Town
- 25 Story Time at the Hubbard House,** 10:30 a.m.  
every Friday morning through August, Hubbard  
House
- 31 Blue Earth County Fair at Garden City, MN**

## AUGUST

- 1-2 Blue Earth County Fair at Garden City, MN**  
See you there!
- 2 Mankato Baltics at Reedsburg, WI**
- 3 Mankato Baltics at Rochester, MN**
- 16 "Minnesota Disasters" Exhibit Opening**  
**Celebration,** 10 a.m.-noon, History Center
- 16 Far Eastern Medicine**  
**Show: Remedies of**  
**the Realm Revealed,**  
1-4 p.m., Hubbard  
House
- 17 Mankato Baltics at**  
**St. Croix**
- 28 Tune in to KTOE**  
**1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for  
BECHS update on  
Talk of the Town
- 28 Our History Matters: *Collapsed: A Survivor's***  
***Climb From the Wreckage of the I-35W Bridge***  
presented by Garrett Ebling, 6 p.m., History  
Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 30 Heritage Center Closed,** Happy Labor Day



2013 Medicine Show

## SEPTEMBER

- 8 Mankato Baltics at Waseca, MN - 1 p.m.**
- 13 Young Historians: Progressive Era and**  
**Technology 1870s-1910s,** 10 a.m., History  
Center, RSVP by 9/10/14 to 345-5566
- 13 Mankato Baltics at Arlington, MN**
- 20 Hubbard Girls' Birthday Celebration,** 2 p.m.,  
Hubbard House
- 25 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS  
update on Talk of the Town
- 25 Our History Matters: *Shaping the North Star***  
***State*** presented by William E. Lass, 6 p.m.,  
History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free

- 27 BECHS Member Appreciation and**  
**Community Open House,** 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Free  
Museum Admission, Gift Shop Specials,  
Refreshments, Free and Open to the Public.  
More Details to Come.

## OCTOBER

- 3-4 Ghosts from the Past: Law, Lore and Lady**  
**Justice,** Blue Earth County Courthouse.

In honor of the  
125th Anniversary  
of the Historic Blue  
Earth County  
Courthouse.

Tickets will be on  
sale 9/15/14.



- 11 Young Historians:**  
**Immigration and Ellis Island,** 10 a.m., History  
Center, RSVP by 10/8/14 to 345-5566
- 23 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS  
update on Talk of the Town
- 23 Our History Matters,** to be announced, 6 p.m.,  
History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free

## SAVE THE DATE

**November 14-15 Holiday Open House**

**December 6-7 Christmas at Hubbard House**

## 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. 1859      2. *Mankato Independent*      3. 1,357 men

# 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**

415 Cherry Street

Mankato, MN 56001

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### **Non-Profit Org.**

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**Membership  
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**Connecting Today to the Past Since 1901**