

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Director's Notes
- 3 President's Report
- 4 Education & Outreach
- 6 Collections & Exhibits
- 7 Every Object Has a Story
- 8 Gift Shop & Art Gallery
- 9 "For Future Generations: The Legacy of Blue Earth County Historical Society's Founders"
- 13 Research Center
- 15 Volunteer Opportunities
- 17 Around Blue Earth County
- 18 Calendar of Events

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Featured Artist:

Ornamental Writing

By Michelle Johnson
on display now through
June 30, 2016

Exhibits:

*A Stitch in Time: Blue
Earth County Quilts*
now through
April 30, 2016

*When Home Won't Let
You Stay: Stories of
Refugees*
May 7-July 30, 2016



Mankato Bazaar, February 1-3, 1916 at the Mankato Armory

Celebrating Our Heritage

Historical Society: a group of people who work to preserve history of a place

Collect: to get from different places and bring them together

Preserve: to keep safe from harm or loss

Share: to have or use with others

Many times at the Historical Society, we are so busy collecting, preserving and sharing the history of the people, places and businesses from around the county that we overlook the long history of this organization. Founded in 1901 and incorporated in 1916, the Blue Earth County Historical Society was the dream of individuals who saw the importance of local history. Turn to page 9 to read about the founding members of the Society in "For Future Generations."

Prominent individuals, such as Daniel Buck and Lorin Cray, had a great vision for what the Historical Society might become, but could they have imagined everything this organization is today? With two physical locations, professional staff, educational programming and new events and exhibits throughout the year, the Historical Society is a far cry from a time when membership dues were 25¢ and events centered around Saturday picnics.

Even with all of the changes, one thing remains, the Historical Society continues to collect, preserve and share the history of Blue Earth County.

The Blue Earth County Historian



Board of Trustees

President, Shirley Piepho, Skyline
Vice President, Dana Truebenbach, Good Thunder
Secretary, Julie Lux, Mapleton
Treasurer, Tom Solseth, Mankato
Kevin Allen, Madison Lake
Patrick Baker, Mankato
Dale Benefield, Lake Crystal
Jessica Beyer, Mankato
Dan Bruss, Mankato
Randy Dinsmore, Mankato
Preston Doyle, Mankato
Joe Farnham, Mankato
Sandi Garlow, Mapleton
William Steil, Mankato
Marnie Werner, Mankato
Ken White, Skyline

Staff

Jessica Potter, Executive Director
Director@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
Danelle Erickson, Development Manager
Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
Heather Harren, Communications Manager
Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Mgr.
Archivist@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
Beth Johnson, Education & Outreach
Coordinator
Education@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

History Center & Museum

424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN
507-345-5566
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
Tuesday - 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
May: Saturday - 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 2016

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

Copyright: *Historian* copyright 2016 by the Blue Earth County Historical Society. All rights reserved. Reproduction of any material from this issue is expressly forbidden without permission of the publisher.

Director's Notes

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Spring has sprung at the History Center and Hubbard House. From the spring bulbs blooming in the gardens and our annual spring cleaning at the Hubbard House to the hustle and bustle of people around the History Center, you can feel the excitement of a new season in the air.

As you will read throughout this issue, we are getting excited for our annual fundraiser *Surrounded By History* on April 29, 2016 at 6 p.m. Please accept this as a personal invitation to join us for a fun-filled evening celebrating education and supporting BECHS. Tickets can be purchased on our website or at the History Center. I can't wait to see you there!

While we are putting the finishing touches on *Surrounded By History*, we are also looking ahead at another season at the Hubbard House. We first opened the Hubbard House as the Museum in September 1938. When we moved into the History Center, the House was restored. This year will mark the 20th season the house has been open as a Historic House Museum featuring life in the early 1900s. Stay tuned for some great new ways to experience the House this summer.

Spring also means school field trips at the History Center and Hubbard House. Last May, we welcomed nearly 1,000 students at the two locations. Let me take this moment to thank all of our tour guides and tour volunteers. We could not do this without you. If you are interested in helping with tours or would like to work at the Hubbard House for the summer, please reach out to either myself or Danelle for more information.



Speaking of volunteers, April 10-16, 2016 is National Volunteer Appreciation week. I can't begin to put into words how fortunate this organization is to have the number and variety of individuals who share their time and talents everyday. The Blue Earth County Historical Society is what it is today because of the thousands of dedicated, passionate people who have volunteered over the past century. THANK YOU!

Yes, I said "past century." The Historical Society was founded in 1901 and incorporated in 1916—two milestone anniversaries this year. I don't know about you, but I am proud to be a member of one of the oldest community nonprofits in Blue Earth County, an organization that is growing, expanding and making new dreams each day. Thank you for your continued support as a member, volunteer, donor, cheerleader, participant and advocate!

Board of Trustees



Shirley Piepho
President, Board of Trustees

As the newly elected President of BECHS, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our former President Randy Zellmer for the steadfast leadership, vision and guidance he gave to this organization. Randy was responsible for championing many initiatives that have helped BECHS flourish. I also want to thank outgoing Board member Jim Gullickson for his solid guidance and support of BECHS. Both of these gentlemen were always willing to contribute their time, talent and treasure. I am certain that they will continue to support BECHS' mission. We are very fortunate that the following four individuals have joined our board: Kevin Allen, Dan Bruss, Randy Dinsmore and Ken White.

Education will continue to play an important role for BECHS in 2016. From the opening of the new Discovery Lab at the History Center to this year's *Surrounded By History: Educated in Blue Earth County*. This major fundraiser will be on April 29, 2016 at the Minnesota State Centennial Student Ballroom. We want to thank Minnesota State University, Mankato for their presenting sponsorship which makes this annual fundraiser possible.

Surrounded By History is a fun-filled evening filled with dinner, auctions, wine raffle, live music and entertainment. The program will feature a series of four humorous living history vignettes recounting the changing classroom from the 1850s to today.

Tickets are on sale now. I encourage both businesses and individuals to consider sponsoring an educator by inviting former, present and future educator to be your guest as a "thank you" for their educational contributions. All proceeds from this year's event will be used to further the Society's efforts to make local history accessible to more people. With your support, kids will connect to local history with new and expanded field trips and classroom visits; high school and college students have opportunities to learn through volunteering and internships; and individuals and families will experience history through hands-on activities and living history events at the History Center and Hubbard House. Buy your tickets today!

Welcome to Our New Board Members

At the Annual Meeting in March, the following individuals were elected to serve on the BECHS Board of Trustees for 2016-2019. Meet your new Board members in their own words:

Kevin Allen

I am a lifelong resident of Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties. I am married to Shelli and have two children who attended Mankato West High School: Becki and Jared. I

currently work at Condux International in the areas of finance and business development. I love researching genealogy (mine as well as others) and also like reading and researching historical topics.



Kevin Allen and Randy Dinsmore at the Annual Meeting.

Dan Bruss

I am recently retired after thirteen years as President of Bethany Lutheran College. I now have the luxury to take advantage of travel with minimal scheduling. My wife Kathy and I have two grown children and two young granddaughters.

Randy Dinsmore

At just short of 55, I have been renovating homes in the Mankato area for 30+ years. It has been my pleasure to be involved in many challenging restoration projects on historic homes. I have always been fascinated by the techniques and materials, the whys and the wherefores of how our homes are created and modified. Joining with BECHS to share and preserve our history will be an exciting new chapter.

Ken White

I am a Mankato attorney, practicing in the areas of appellate practice, personal injury, employment law and civil litigation for over 30 years. My love of history developed at an early age, with a fascination for the American Civil War. I look forward to working with the other Board members to continue the development of the Historical Society.

Thank you to Jim Gullickson and Randy Zellmer for your past service on the Board.



Education & Outreach

Making Local History Accessible to All Ages

By Beth Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator

The new History Center Discovery Lab is now open! It officially opened on March 11 with a program that explored electricity. Our young attendees had fun learning about how the past was lived in Blue Earth County without the modern convenience of electricity. They had a chance to learn about the past and compare it with their experience of the present through multiple hands-on experiences like the Mystery Box, Time Travel Kits, the Selfie Station, experiments and scavenger hunts.

The Mystery Box encourages participants to put their hand in the box and by touch “see” if they can identify the object. The objects in the box were things we find in everyday living, except these versions were pre-electricity. The Mystery Box will be a changing component of the Discovery Lab featuring different objects for people to explore.

Another great hands-on experience is the Time Travel Kits. We currently have four kits for people to unpack and explore a time period from the last

century. There is a mix of objects, photos and books that make up each kit. The 1980s and 1950s kits were quite popular on opening day.

After the program, one little boy and his grandma were having so much fun, they decided to extend their visit at the History Center and stayed for three hours exploring the History Center. I had a great time showing them around and he had fun with all of the historic outfits.



Young man dressed in a uniform found in the World War I Time Traveler Kit.

If you haven’t seen our new hands-on activity space, come on by! We will give you a tour. If you have already been to the Discovery Lab, come see us again as this will be an ever changing part of the Museum. Visitors of all ages are welcome to come, play and explore in the Lab. Examine our buffalo and wildlife hides or have fun with our hands-on tools; a favorite is the typewriter!

If you would be interested donating to or assisting in the Lab, please contact me for more information.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Presented by Old Main Village
A Fundraiser for the
Blue Earth County Historical Society

Food, Cash Bar and Prizes!

Friday, May 20
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
at Old Main Village

OLD MAIN
VILLAGE

www.OldMainVillage.com



www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

\$25 per person (\$200 for table of 8)
\$20 per person for BECHS members

Tickets available at the History Center or online
at www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

On sale now through Wednesday, May 18

Join us for an evening of fun!

Monthly Educational Opportunities at the History Center

Remember When Coffee Club

Love history? Love to swap stories of the good old days? Looking for a place to connect with other history enthusiasts? **Come to the History Center the first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. for BECHS' *Remember When Coffee Club*.** This is an



informal opportunity to share memories and photos with fellow local history enthusiasts at the History Center.

Attendance and rich conversation continue to grow. There is no formal program, just a conversation topic to get the group started. Coffee, tea and light refreshments are provided. Free.

Upcoming Topics:

May 3 - Clothing Styles

June 7 - School's Out

July 5 - Gone Fishing

History Bits & Bites

NEW monthly learning series the **last Wednesday of each month during the noon hour at the Blue Earth County History Center**. Bring your lunch for a bite while learning a bit of history! Since the program debuted in January, over 100 people have enjoyed a bit of history in this monthly program. Come see what you have been missing.

Free for BECHS Members, \$5 Non-members. Lunch is NOT provided, but beverages will be available.



Susan Hynes and Ambry Brave Heart entertained the crowd at March's program exploring Victorian era women's beauty secrets.

Upcoming Programs

April 27 – “Stitch in Time” by Grace Keir

May 25 – “Preserving Your Family Treasures” by Shelley Harrison

June 29 – “Stories of Refugees” by Jim Bowey

Young Historians

Young Historians is a free, monthly, hands-on history workshop for school-age children. It meets the 2nd Saturday of each month, September through May from 10 a.m. to Noon.

This year, *Young Historians* has explored the traditions and customs of the ethnic groups that called Blue Earth County home, from the Dakota to our modern day immigrant groups. In May, *Young Historians* will end this journey by examining their own family tree and learning where their ancestors came from. Their final project will be a presentation of their ethnic heritage at the Family Heritage Fair on May 14 at 11 a.m. The Fair is open to the public. Support this great program by coming to the Fair.

Young Historians is made possible through the generous support of the Grace Jefferson Educational Fund.

Upcoming Workshops

May 14 - Family Heritage Fair



Fardousa Jama and her friend helped the *Young Historians* explore Somali heritage from food, clothing, language and games.



Collections & Exhibits

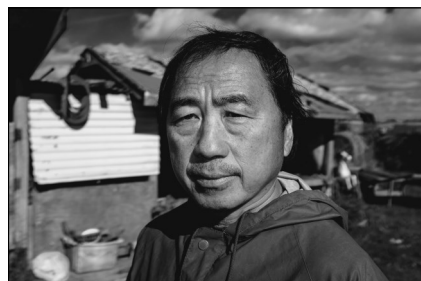
When Home Won't Let You Stay Opening Soon

Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

The Blue Earth County Historical Society in partnership with the Minnesota Council of Churches is pleased to announce a new traveling exhibit by James Bowey titled *When Home Won't Let You Stay: Stories of Refugees*, opening Saturday, May 7 at the History Center.

The statewide traveling exhibit will debut at the Blue Earth County History Center and will highlight voices of resilience, strength, contribution and integration from

refugees who call Minnesota home. The exhibit will include individuals from the Mankato area and around Minnesota. The project will be presented in a set of



Leng, 2015

distributed storytelling elements that create different audience engagements with the refugee experience and opportunities for dialogue to build awareness and understanding for refugees across our state.

Bowey states, "The project is born of a deep understanding of the power of story. When a person really knows someone else's story, it is very difficult to cast them as other. Stories connect us to our shared human experience and this human connection is the perspective the project intends to provide to our consideration of refugees. It is a means of giving voice to the voiceless and bridging the divides among people."

James Bowey is a documentary photographer who explores issues of human rights and social connection. He was an assistant professor of photography and digital imaging at Winona State University and has spent his career covering a wide range of global and national stories from the war in Bosnia to Hurricane Katrina. He has an extensive publication and exhibition record and has been awarded numerous photography and journalism awards.

Visit www.whenhomewontletyoustay.org to learn more about this project. New stories will be

appearing on the website over the coming weeks and months. Sign-up for the project's newsletter to stay up-to-date on the project and stories. You can also join the community conversation on Facebook. Search for "When Home Won't Let You Stay" and "like" the page.

BECHS and the Minnesota Council of Churches are partnering with the Greater Mankato Diversity Council to host a community conversation with the goal of raising awareness of the plights of refugees and internationally displaced persons in our community on Saturday, May 21, 1 p.m. at the History Center.

When Home Won't Let You Stay: Stories of Refugees will be on display at the History Center from May 7 – July 30, 2016.

When Home Won't Let You Stay: Stories of Refugees

An Exhibition by James Bowey



Neng, 2015

May 7 - July 30, 2016

Blue Earth County History Center
424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN

www.WhenHomeWontLetYouStay.org

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.

Quilts tell the history of everyday people and in some cases, are the only legacy left behind by an individual. While early quilts were often simple and functional, quilts were also used to display skills, pass the time or as part of social gatherings. The Historical Society's collection has a number of quilts ranging from the late 1850s to today. Here are some examples:

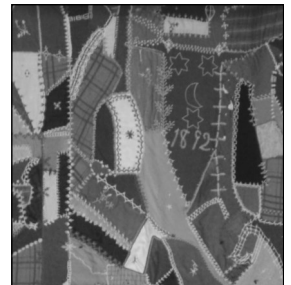
Basket Quilt made by the Deep Valley Quilters Guild of Mankato in 1989.



This quilt features 20 different basket pattern blocks sewn by different quilters. The blocks were made by the original members of the Deep Valley Quilters.

Crazy Quilt made by Kathryn McComb Quinn of St. Clair in the 1890s.

Crazy quilts were often created to show the sewing and embroidery skills of unmarried woman and are usually made of silks, satins and velvets, and are characterized by elaborate embroidery and adornment.



These quilts and 19 others are included in the Historical Society's newest temporary exhibit *Stitch in Time: Blue Earth County Quilts*, now on display through April 30. The exhibit features different styles of quilts made or used in Blue Earth County. All of the quilts are part of the Society's permanent collection.

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

HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

Ornamental Writing

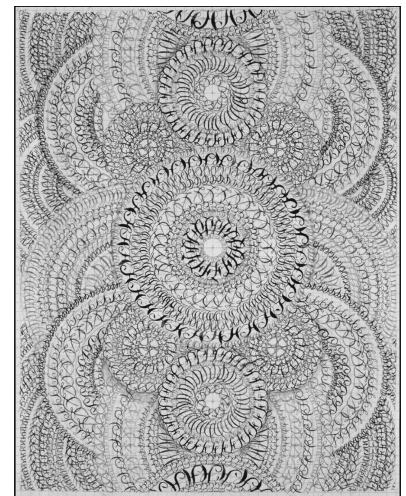
By Michelle Johnson

April - June 2016

"My recent work has become increasingly concerned with the calligraphic mark and inscription. Calligraphic script is a medium that has the capacity to transcend its utilitarian function to assume an aesthetic and social significance."

"Inscription has increasingly informed the process of my artwork. Utilizing letters in a system of repetitive, meandering, overlapping patterns, the identity of the letter as a tool of language is distorted and a new aesthetic identity is created. The transformative nature of script, in social, cultural and aesthetic contexts, makes it a medium relevant for further examination."

Johnson's precise and colorful collection is on display at the History Center now through June 2016.



Multi Variation 1 Series 4

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Now accepting proposals from local artists to be featured in the History Center Art Gallery. Exhibits run for three months. All art mediums will be considered: photography, wall sculpture, fabric, mixed media, painting and drawing (oil, acrylic, pastel, ink, graphite, etc.). Work must be able to be hung and must be family-friendly to be considered. For more information or an application, please contact Shelley.

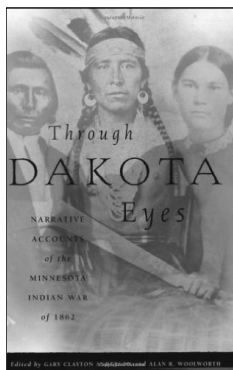


Gift Shop & Art Gallery News

Danelle Erickson, Development Manager

For people researching their ancestors and relatives, it can be pretty exciting when you find their names in a history book. But let's face it, not many of us have famous, or infamous, relatives, but that doesn't mean you can't gain some insight into the lives of your family members from a book. Though they may not be mentioned by name, the events, actions and feelings recorded probably impacted your family members as well.

One obvious example is the events of the summer of 1862. If you had ancestors living in Minnesota at the time, whether young or old, pioneers or Native American, they would have been affected by the U.S. Dakota War. The need to protect their traditions or to defend what they worked to build would have been felt by all. Books like *The Dakota War of 1862*, \$24.95, and *Through Dakota Eyes*, \$18.95, can give you insight into what Minnesota residents may have felt or experienced.



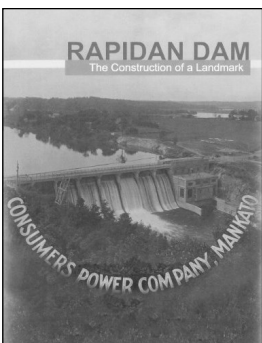
the *Betsy-Tacy Treasury*, \$15.99, and picture your parents or grandparents growing up before the days of Barbies, Legos and video games.



The History Center Gift Shop also has some great one-of-a-kind handcrafted items, including mini-quilt blocks created by BECHS volunteer and textile and clothing historian Grace

Keir. There is a variety to choose from including reproduction Civil War fabrics or a felted design of the Seppman Mill or an old country school house.

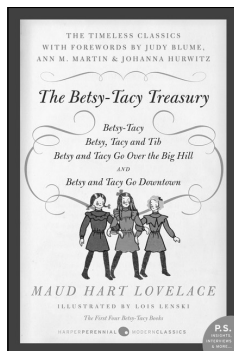
Whether your Blue Earth County roots go back generations or are just beginning, you are sure to find something familiar to your own family stories and situations in the books at the History Center Gift Shop. As the saying goes, "History repeats itself" and there are few places on earth that haven't been touched by struggle and progress and a little imagination. Check out these books and much more at the History Center Gift Shop.



From start to finish, the Rapidan Dam was covered extensively by the local newspapers. You can be sure it was the talk at many supper tables and social gatherings. "How about that dam?" was probably repeated countless times by local residents, maybe even your own relatives. Pick up a copy of *Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark*,

\$12.95, and read the same words reported in the *Mankato Free Press* and *The Daily Review* newspapers over 100 years ago.

There are few little boys and girls who haven't passed away the hours by creating imaginary worlds around them. Author Maud Hart Lovelace's Betsy and friends were no exception. Take a read through



Marian Anderson
Fine Art Prints



Available exclusively at the History Center or online at www.MarianAnderson.com.

View the diverse work of this talented Mankato artist. 100% of all sales benefit the Historical Society. Fine Art Prints and note cards are available.



Mankato Semi-Centennial Celebration, July 1902. Thomas Hughes is seated on the right.

By BECHS Staff

In October 1901, a group of dedicated individuals gathered to discuss the forming of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. The purpose of this group was to gather records, photos and memories of the people and events of the past “for future generations.”

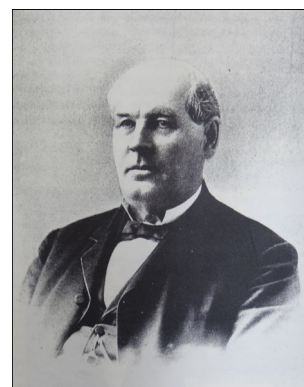
On November 7, 1901, with the signing of the constitution, the Blue Earth County Historical Society officially began. The thirty-three people who signed this document were ensuring the preservation of local history for generations to come. According to the constitution, the Historical Society would “collect, arrange and preserve a library of books, pamphlets, maps, manuscript, prints, papers...” and also “rescue from oblivion the memory of its early pioneers and to obtain narratives of their exploits, perils and adventures, together with their portraits and personal histories.”

The Society was formed in a time when many of the early settlers were passing away, hence there was a desire to preserve the early history of the county before it was too late. This was the same time that both Blue Earth County and Mankato were approaching their 50th anniversaries – the perfect time to reflect on the past and look to the future. The Historical Society founders and members would go on to play an important role in the five-day

celebration remembering the settling of Mankato.

It’s interesting to discover how and why the Historical Society got started, but what about the people who made it happen? Who were those charter members? Those first officers for the Society? What inspired them to come together and begin to “collect, arrange and preserve” the history of Blue Earth County? Here is a look at a few individuals who at the turn of a new century were focused on preserving the past for the future.

Judge Daniel Buck was the driving force behind the new organization and hosted the early meetings. He also served as the Society’s first president and his daughter Laura Buck Abbott was among five women who signed the Constitution. He was born in 1829 in New York and arrived in Blue Earth County in 1857. He



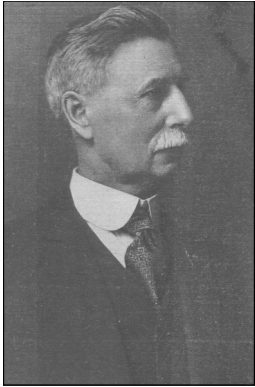
Daniel Buck

practiced law and was also a member of the State Legislature. In 1866, he was instrumental in securing the legislation that allowed for the State Normal School to be located in Mankato. The school opened in 1868 and is known today as Minnesota State

University, Mankato.

By the time he retired in 1899, Buck's résumé included a number of local positions including County Attorney, Blue Earth County Agricultural Society member, Mankato National Bank President and a member of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Judge Buck was also a member of the Territorial Old Settlers' Society and wrote about the early history of the county, including a book on the US-Dakota War of 1862. Buck died in 1905 at the age of 75.

Thomas Hughes was another community leader at those first meetings and went on to serve as the Society's first secretary. Hughes was also an attorney and was acclaimed as Blue Earth County's historian having written several local histories including *The History of Blue Earth County*, *Mankato: Its First 50 Years*, *History of the Welsh in Minnesota* and *History of Minneopa State Park*. Born



Thomas Hughes

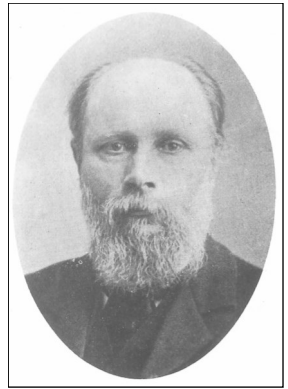
in 1854 in Ohio, Hughes came to Cambria Township a year later with his family. He went on to get his law degree and began working with Myron G. Willard in Mankato. Later, Hughes and his brother, Evan Hughes, formed their own law firm. Hughes was elected as the County Attorney in 1897. During the time he was secretary for the Society, he was the attorney for Mankato Mutual Building and

Loan which later became the Mankato Savings and Building Association.

The regard Hughes held for history and the local community are evident from his many civic activities. Hughes served for many years on the BECHS' board, was highly involved with the Minnesota Historical Society, a member of the Mankato Cemetery Association for almost 30 years and sat on the Minneopa State Park Board. Not only did Hughes sign BECHS' Constitution in 1901, but he was also present in 1916 when the Society filed its Articles of Incorporation. Hughes was the only person who signed both documents and remained active in the Society until his death in 1934. His son E. Raymond Hughes followed in his father's footsteps and served on the Society's board as secretary beginning in 1927.

Charles A. Chapman was one of two vice-presidents selected by the Historical Society in 1901.

A Harvard graduate, Chapman arrived in Mankato in 1857. He opened a surveying company with A.D. McSweeney and together they surveyed much of today's downtown Mankato. Chapman was auditor for Blue Earth County, the first city engineer, and was heavily involved with the Mankato Board of Trade, Mankato Cemetery Association and Territorial Old Settlers' Association. He played organ at the Presbyterian Church in Mankato and was known as an expert in Masonic lore. Chapman could always be counted on for a story of early days and events. He was remembered in his 1920 obituary as "one of the last remaining links which connect the past with the present."



Charles Chapman

The other vice-president selected was Herbert C. Hotaling. Unlike many of the Society's founders, Hotaling was born in Blue Earth County in 1865 to parents who were early pioneers. His early days were spent in Mankato and he then moved to Mapleton in 1888. Two years later he started the newspaper *Mapleton Enterprise*, later called the *Blue Earth County Enterprise*. From the beginning of his newspaper career, he played a prominent role in the affairs of his home city, county and state. Hotaling served on the Mapleton School Board for many years and was instrumental in getting a Carnegie Library in the community. In 1917, Hotaling was elected the 33rd president of the National Editorial Association, a position he held until his retirement in 1932. Hotaling passed away in 1938 after almost fifty years of bringing the news to Blue Earth County.

Phillip Mueller was the Society's first treasurer. Born in Germany in 1829, Mueller immigrated to the United States in 1853, and arrived in Lime Township in 1856. Mueller farmed until 1890, when he and his family moved to Mankato where he remained until his death in 1906. Mueller was a founding member of the local chapter of the Ancient Order of United Workmen, a fraternal benefits organization which provided social and financial support after the Civil War.

Following the Semi-Centennial celebration in 1902, the Blue Earth County Historical Society saw little activity for over a decade. By 1916, however, history and preservation were on the minds of many.

This was a prolific time for publications written about the history of the state and county. The Minnesota Historical Society and state historians put a call out to counties to begin to actively collect and preserve their history and maintain the historic records in central locations. This was especially important for organizations generating records related to the war effort – World War I.

With a renewed vigor and purpose, a group of interested community members, led by Judge Lorin Cray, filed the Blue Earth County Historical Society's Articles of Incorporation on May 30, 1916, Memorial Day. The purpose of the Society was "the collection, preservation and publication of materials relating to the history of Blue Earth County." Thirteen individuals signed that document and thus became charter members of the renewed organization. They also served as the first Board of Trustees, they were: Helen Hughes Hielscher, Lorin Cray, William Pay, Charles Wise, John Noe, John Andrews, John Hancock, Carolyn Robbins, James McConnell, Thomas Hughes, George Palmer, Horace Perrin and Felix Meagher.

Like the efforts in 1901, there were also a few community events in Mankato in 1916 that may have spurred the renewed interest for the Blue Earth County Historical Society. The Mankato Bazaar was held February 1-3, 1916 to raise money for the Red Cross and the war effort. Different booths displayed historic relics and a historical re-enactment was part of the event. Later that summer on July 4, 1916, the Mankato Historic Pageant was held to re-enact the history and development of Mankato. Many of the members of the Historical Society served on committees, wrote scripts or played different roles in the pageant. Over 500 people participated in the pageant that was viewed by over 15,000 people in Sibley Park.

Again, it's interesting to see how and why the organization had a rebirth, but who made it possible? Here are the people that came together in 1916 to file the Articles of Incorporation and play key roles in

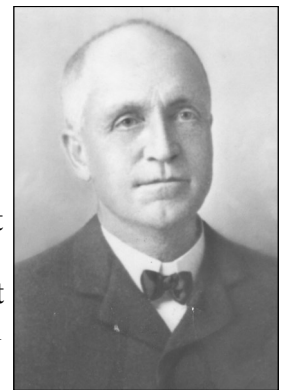


Mankato Historical Pageant, 1916

the organization. Judge Lorin Cray led the 1916 reorganization and was elected president. Born in 1844 in New York, Cray came to Blue Earth County in 1859 with his family settling in Pleasant Mound Township. Cray served in the Civil War before a wound to his shoulder brought him back

home. He opened a law office in Lake Crystal in 1875 and continued business there until 1887, when he moved to Mankato. During his time in Mankato, Cray was the attorney for two different railroads and National Citizen's Bank. From 1900 to 1908, Cray served as a Judge for the Sixth Judicial Courts. He was elected in 1908 to be the president of National Citizen's Bank.

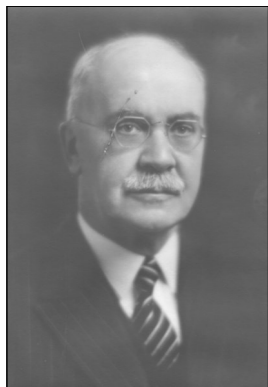
At the Society's first official meeting on Memorial Day, the Board and members discussed where to keep the archives and relics that were collected. James McConnell offered space at the Normal School and it became the Society's first collections storage. At that same meeting, President Cray "hoped the day was not far distant when the association would command a membership that would enable them to have a home of their own, where the many treasures that he felt sure would soon be assembled might form an educational center for all southern Minnesota, and that the names and deeds of the men and women who turned the tangled wilderness of this beautiful valley into smiling fields, and who laid the foundation of our schools and churches that are now our pride, may not pass into oblivion."



Lorin Cray

Cray was active in the Territorial Old Settler's Association, as well as the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Upon his death, Cray left money to the Historical Society to acquire a permanent home. Cray's obituary in 1927, says it was his "firm desire to see the erection of a memorial building here

to house historical relics. He took occasion in two or three public speeches to speak for such a project and offered an initial sum for the starting of it.” In 1938, the Historical Society purchased the Hubbard House for \$11,500 to serve as the organization’s first permanent home. The purchase was almost



James McConnell

completely funded by Cray’s bequest. Coincidentally, the Hubbard House is a direct neighbor to the long-time home of Judge Cray.

The Historical Society’s vice-president in 1916 was James McConnell. Born in Pennsylvania in 1868 and an educator by trade, McConnell moved to Mankato in 1904

where he served as Superintendent of Public

Schools. He went on to be a professor of American History and Government at the Mankato Teachers College from 1909-1919. McConnell was then appointed the Minnesota Commissioner of Education, serving for 14 years, until his death in 1933. At the Memorial Day meeting, McConnell spoke of preserving memories and events that “are the roots of the culture by which we project ourselves into a fuller and better appreciation of the day in which we live.”

Dr. Helen Hughes Hielscher was elected secretary in 1916. Helen Hughes was born in 1863 at Belford, Prince Edward Island, now a province of Canada. She received her medical degree from the University of Minnesota in 1896 and had her first medical practice in the city of Blue Earth. In 1900, Hughes Hielscher relocated to Mankato, where she and her sister Jane Hughes established the first maternity hospital. This hospital operated until St. Joseph’s Hospital incorporated a maternity department in its service.

Hughes Hielscher was the first female surgeon in Mankato and one of the first in Minnesota. In 1910 she married Dr. J.A. Hielscher and continued her practice until 1920, when she devoted her time to



Helen Hughes Hielscher

rehabilitation of returning WWI soldiers by organizing and shaping the American Legion Auxiliary. She established the Blue Earth County Welfare Association and was the first woman to occupy a position on the Minnesota Board of Health. Hughes Hielscher served as secretary of the Historical Society until 1927, when she was elected vice-president, a position she held until her death in 1935.

The first treasurer of the newly incorporated Historical Society was Felix K. Meagher. Meagher was born in Mankato in 1874 and attended Mankato High School. After school, Meagher worked as a cashier at National Citizen’s Bank; a place where his father was one of the founders. Meagher served as a cashier for 15 years before moving into higher management. While at National Citizen’s Bank, Meagher started Citizen’s Loan and Trust Company.

Outside of banking, Meagher was highly involved in the community being a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus and playing an active role in his church. Upon his death in 1925, many of the tributes about Meagher mentioned how personable he was and how dedicated he was to Mankato. “He was progressive and directly interested in all matters of a civic nature and a liberal contributor to enterprises that had their purpose of the up-building of his home community.”

At its inception, the purpose and goal of the Blue Earth County Historical Society was to collect and preserve local history “for future generations.” That means over 100 years ago the founders of the Society were thinking of us because, after all, we are all part of the “future generations.” Today, Society members and supporters proudly continue the mission and advancements of this long-standing organization.

Sources

Blue Earth County Historical Society Subject Files and Photographs

Blue Earth County Historical Society Constitution, Articles of Incorporation and Board meeting minutes
Blue Earth County Enterprise various articles
Hughes, Thomas, *The History of Blue Earth County*, 1909.

Mankato Free Press various articles

Mankato Review various articles



Around the Research Center

Heather Harren, Communications Manager

Wills are a wonderful resource for genealogists. Not only do they often include the names of family members, property and assets, but they can also provide clues to help discover the truth behind family stories or mysteries.

Researcher Linda had heard about BECHS' will collection and came hoping to learn about her and her husband's families. She looked through our will index and told me which wills she would like to see. The wills were brought to her and she quickly dug in. Before too long, I heard Linda chuckle. This is always a good sign in the Research Center, because it means the researcher found some good family information. Linda was chuckling because she had found confirmation to a family story.

With the information in the wills, Linda was able to confirm stories from her husband's family, including stories of strange vacation trips and people missing from family photos. As I copied the wills, Linda excitedly shared her findings with me. As she was leaving, Linda told us she may have to forgo the

rest of her errands that afternoon and instead hurry home to show her husband what she had found.

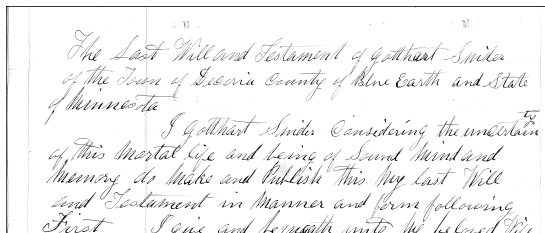
After Blue Earth County microfilmed the wills dated 1858 through 1973, the originals were donated to the Historical Society. That means, when you visit the

Research Center, you can look at the actual probate will and touch a piece of history – sometimes with misspellings and ink smudges! To help in your search, a full list of the wills can be found in the Research Center or online at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/research/indexes. If you are unable to visit, will requests can also be made by mail or email.

Blue Earth County Trivia

1. When was the only time the cannon in Lincoln Park was fired?
2. Where was BECHS' first "museum"?
3. What was the name of the first hotel in Good Thunder?

Answers can be found on page 18.



WISH LIST

Here are a few items we could use. New or used; item or cash to purchase:

Industrial Strength Metal Shelving for collections storage

New 60w Incandescent Lightbulbs

Used Printer Ink Cartridges to be recycled for Office Depot credit

2 new or used MP3 Players and/or Docking Stations

Keurig K-Cups Any flavor. For use with the Keurig 2.0 in the public coffee nook.

Cookies or Bars for programs and events

Invite your friends and family to check out BECHS!

Thank you for your support!



Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Where 1900s History Comes to Life

The Historic R.D. Hubbard House will open for its 20th season as a Historic House Museum. The House will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m., starting May 7 and 8. The Historical Society is currently seeking two part-time employees for the upcoming season. For more information, see the opposite page.

This season at the Hubbard House will be filled with walk-in, guided tours and new and returning favorite living history programs. Mark your calendar for the special programs below and watch for more to be announced.

June 3 - August 26, 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 4, 1-4 p.m.

Victorian Lawn Party

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



June 15, 7 p.m.

Hubbard House Gaslight Series "Lives of the Servants"

Spend an evening at the Hubbard House and discover everything that was done to ensure such a home was smoothly run. Hear from costumed characters about the daily life of servants in a Victorian era home.



The Hubbard House Gaslight

Series, an after-hours opportunity, will continue on July 13 with "Votes & Bicycling: Freedom for Women". Stay tuned for more details.

June 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Hubbard House Paint Out

Enjoy watching art happen as the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota stop at the Hubbard House to capture the beauty of nature at the House. Lawn games, activities and house tours available throughout the day.

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.



**THRIVENT
FINANCIAL®**

**BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A
THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS®
ENROLLED ORGANIZATION**

Moving? New Address? Please let us know!

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

BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen

Once again the Historical Society had a wonderful time celebrating and recognizing our volunteers at the annual Volunteer Appreciation on April 11. We celebrated with an egg-themed brunch and thanked the volunteers for all of their “egg-tra” hard work and for sharing their “egg-traordinary” talents with BECHS. Thank you to the 130 people who donated over 7,000 hours to BECHS last year.

Below you will find some volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in helping with any of these opportunities or would like more information about volunteering with BECHS, please contact Danelle or visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/volunteer. BECHS also currently has a two paid positions open, see details below.



At BECHS' annual volunteer appreciation, we took a few minutes to recognize our volunteers, who each donated over 200 hours of their time in 2015.

Volunteer and Employment Opportunities

Education/Classroom Activities

Enjoy helping kids explore history? We are looking for individuals to assist with classroom visits and kids activities at the History Center and Hubbard House from on-site educators to living history characters. Also, seeking individuals for the research and planning of activities. Schedule varies.

Tour Guides

Tour guides are needed this spring and summer for school and other tour groups. Please contact us if you are interested in helping lead tours at the History Center and/or Hubbard House.

History Center Gardeners

The History Center has a number of flower beds, all of which are cared for by our volunteers. Whether you have been gardening for years, wanting to learn or somewhere in between, new volunteers are always welcome and much needed. Schedule is flexible.

Technology Assistance

Looking for a volunteer 10-20 hours per week to help at the History Center with computer maintenance and problem solving. Experience with PC hardware and software, Windows 7 and 10 is preferred. Experience with Windows Server 2012 would be useful.

Video Production Team

Seeking creative individuals to assist with the development of a history interview video series. Volunteers needed immediately.

Receptionist/Gift Shop Assistant

Seeking individuals interested in greeting visitors, answering basic questions about BECHS and ringing up sales in the gift shop. Must be comfortable with computers. Training is provided.

Research Center Assistant

Do you enjoy researching family or local history? We are looking for people to help in the Research Center, assisting visitors and fulfilling research requests. Training is provided, however, previous research experience is preferred.

Photo Processing and Data Entry

Seeking detail-orientated individuals with good handwriting and computer skills. Must be willing to commit to a minimum of 2 hours per week.

Now Hiring: Hubbard House Staff

Two part-time employees to operate the Hubbard House for the 2016 season. Positions begin on or before May 1. For more information or to apply, contact the History Center at 345-5566.

BECHS Donations & Membership

January - March 2016

Donations

BENCO Electric
Patrick Bowen
Dan Bruss
Ceresco Township
CHS, Inc
Frentz & Frentz
Nate and Lori Gardner
Tim Huebsch
Jones Page Jacobson
Family Foundation
Linda Karow
Denny Kemp
Kiwanis Holiday Lights
Mary Ann Lancaster
John Larson
Lime Township
Catherine Owens
Dean Peterson
Leslie and Glen Peterson
Patti Ruskey
Marti Weisgram
Donnette and Greg
Wheelock

Recurring Donors

Dale Benefield
Joel Botten
Carol English
Carlienne & Robert
Frisch
Shirley Grundmeier
Christopher Larson
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke
Jack & Diann McGowan
Judie Neitge
Tom Solseth
Donna & Gerald Webb

Marnie Werner
Randy Zellmer
Beth Zimmer

Donor Matching Programs

The GE Foundation
General Mills
Foundation
Thrivent Financial's
Thrivent Choice

Honorarium

*In Memory of Donna
Aga Anderson*
Helenrachel Swenson

In Memory of George Sugden

Ron Higginbotham
Jessica and Brad Potter

In Memory of James Weir

Willow Brook Senior
Cooperative

In Memory of Ivaleen Wendlandt

Helen Owens

In-Kind

Marcia Chalgren
Barbara Church
Hy-Vee
Larry & Trixie Kortuem
Liz & Tim Madsen

New Members

Kevin Allen
Dan Bruss
Deb Fitzloff
Karl & LuAnn
Friedrichs
Gloria Mack
Shirley & Joe Massop
MSU,M, University
Advancement
Dan Pesonen
Michael Pulis
Jerry & Sheila Swan
Kay & Terry Tompkins

Renewing Giving Members

Booster levels and higher
Minnesota Welsh
Association

Renewing Business Members

Community Bank
Goodrich Construction
Paape Companies, Inc.
Piepho Moving &
Storage

Surrounded By History Sponsors

As of 4/10/2016

Presenting

Minnesota State
University, Mankato

Gold

ISG
Free Press Media

US Bank

Silver

MinnStar Bank N.A.
Wells Fargo

Bronze

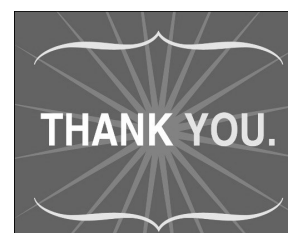
Industrial Fabrication
Services
Stinson Leonard Street

Discovery Lab

Contributors

Thank you to the
following people for
your in-kind and
financial contributions to
the new Discovery Lab.

Capstone Press and
Coughlan Companies
Audrey Gatchell
Jane Griffins
Jane Haala
Corey Hugg
Susan Hynes
John Just
Larry Kortuem
John Larson
Mapleton Chamber
Sophia Potter



GIVETODAY.
MAKEHISTORY.

Blue Earth County Historical Society Monthly Giving Program

The 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.
Your credit or debit card will be charged automatically each month.

www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/monthly-donations.

Around Blue Earth County

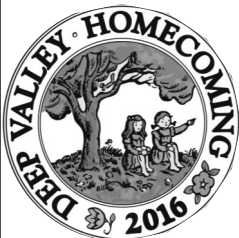


By Coleen Lindemann

On June 11, 2016 the Maple River Heritage Center will celebrate its one year anniversary. Over the past year, Maple River Heritage has also had displays at the Blue Earth County Fair and Mapleton's Burns Night. Maple River Heritage's membership has grown and members receive a quarterly newsletter featuring new display updates, historical stories and feature articles. In ten months, Maple River Heritage Center has had 309 visitors come through the door and we look forward to what the next year will bring.

Maple River Heritage Center is located in downtown Mapleton and is open 9 a.m. to Noon on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Visit www.MapletonTownAndCountryDays.com for more information about the Heritage Center and Town and Country Days, June 9-12, 2016.

Deep Valley Homecoming June 24 - 27, 2016



Visit www.betsy-tacysociety.org for a complete schedule of events and registration form. Advance registration encouraged as limited space available for some programs.

**SURROUNDED
BY HISTORY**

April 29, 2016
Tickets Now Available!

See back cover for details

Visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com for a sneak peek of the great *Surrounded By History* Silent Auction items including: Carolyn Pollack jewelry, Vikings memorabilia and more!



Blue Earth County Historical Society's 1860s BASE BALL

The Mankato Baltics season will soon be underway. The team will be playing games throughout the summer. Stop by Erlandson Park in Mankato on June 4 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. for the *Mankato Baltics Festival*. Their next local match will be on July 10 in North Mankato. For the Baltics full 2016 schedule, follow them on Facebook or visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Baltics



Field of Dreams

Thank to the 2016 Baltics Sponsors* for making this season possible!

Associated Finishing Inc.	The Free Press
Belgard-Hawker	Industrial Fabrication
Genetics	Services
Collis C Store & Bakery	New York Life
Community Bank	Pub 500
	(*Sponsors as of 4/10/16)

Need a Space for a Meeting or Special Gathering?



The Blue Earth County History Center has a number of rental options for your next business meeting or special gathering.

BECHS offers three different meeting rooms with 1/2 or full day rental possibilities.

Options include kitchen access, media equipment and after-hours rental.

Visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/visit/rentals for more information on rates or contact the History Center for availability.

Calendar of Events April - July 2016

APRIL

- 27 History Bits and Bites: Stitch in Time: A History of Quilts** by Grace Keir, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 28 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 29 Surrounded By History: Educated in Blue Earth County**, 6 p.m. Tickets on sale through April 20
- 30 A Stitch in Time** quilt exhibit closes, History Center

MAY

- 3 Remember When Coffee Club: Clothing Styles**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 3 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 7 When Home Won't Let You Stay Exhibit Opening**, 10 a.m.-Noon, History Center
- 7 Hubbard House Opens for the Season**, open weekends in May 1-4 p.m.
- 12 Old Town Walking Tour** with the Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission, 4-7 p.m., contact 311 or 507-387-8600 for more information. Bus reservations available, call 311
- 14 Young Historians: Family Heritage Fair**, 11 a.m.-Noon, open to the public, History Center, *Young Historians workshop begins at regular time 10 a.m.*
- 20 Trivia Night**, a fundraiser for BECHS, Old Main Village, 7-9 p.m. Tickets \$25/person or \$20/BECHS member.
- 25 History Bits and Bites: Preserving Your Family Treasures**, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 26 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 28 History Center Closed**; Memorial Day Holiday Weekend; Hubbard House Open
- 30 This Day in History: BECHS files its Articles of Incorporation on May 30, 1916.**

JUNE

- 3 Story Time at the Hubbard House**, 10:30 a.m., every Friday morning until August 26. Extended hours at the Hubbard House begin: Fridays and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays 1-4 p.m.
- 4 Mankato Baltics Festival**, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Erlandson Park, Mankato, Free
- 4 Victorian Lawn Party**, 1-4 p.m., Hubbard House Lawn, Free

- 7 Remember When Coffee Club: School's Out**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 7 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 15 Hubbard House Gaslight Series: Lives of the Servants**, 7:00 p.m., Hubbard House, more details to come
- 16 "The Ku Klux Klan in Minnesota" with author Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle** at 6 p.m., History Center. In partnership with Lifelong Learners. \$10 Adults, BECHS and/or pre-registered Lifelong Learners members Free.
- 23 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 25 "Paint Out" at the Hubbard House with the Outdoor Painters of Minnesota**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Watch artists capture the beauty found in nature and enjoy fun activities.
- 29 History Bits and Bites: Stories of Refugees**, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free

JULY

- 2 History Center Closed**; Independence Day Holiday Weekend; Hubbard House open
- 5 Remember When Coffee Club: Gone Fishin'**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 5 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 10 Mankato Baltics**, 1:00 p.m., North Mankato Fun Days
- 13 Hubbard House Gaslight Series: Votes and Bicycling: Freedom for Women**, 7:00 p.m., Hubbard House

Three easy ways to stay up-to-date:

- Check out www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.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 museum@blueearthcountyhistory.com or 345-5566.

Answers to Blue Earth County Trivia on page 12:

1. July 3, 1909
2. B.D. Pay & Sons Livery Barn
3. Graham Hotel

Membership Makes a Difference

For history enthusiasts, there is often something exciting about being a part of something that is over 100 years old. You might feel a connection with your turn-of-the-century home; a sense of pride for your business that has been serving the community for generations; a feeling of awe when you enter your place of worship and think of the thousands of people who had done the same through the years.



In the same way, the members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society are a part of something that has stood the test of time. Since the very beginning in 1901, the Historical Society has been a member supported organization. Your member support has made it possible for the Society to grow. Thank you for being a part of our history!

Current members can find their membership expiration date on the back of this issue of *The Historian*. To renew or to become a member, visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join or see the information below.

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

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS!

Did you know BECHS has business memberships? Benefits include recognition on BECHS website and social media, free admission passes to share with your employees, and more! Join below or visit our website for more information.

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+) \$30

Individual \$35

Household \$50

Contributor \$75

Supporter* \$100

Booster* \$250

Advocate* \$500

Benefactor* \$1,000

**Business memberships also available*

Please send this form and check to:

BECHS Membership
424 Warren Street
Mankato, MN 56001

OR

Complete your membership form online at
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join

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

SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

Educated in Blue Earth County
From School Slates to Cyberspace

DINNER • PROGRAM • LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2015

6:00 p.m.

Centennial Student Union Ballroom
Minnesota State University, Mankato

\$50 per person (\$30 of each ticket is a tax deductible donation.)



For reservations, please call
507-345-5566.

Purchase tickets online at
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com



Blue Earth County Historical Society

424 Warren Street
Mankato, MN 56001

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage
PAID

Mankato MN
56001

Permit No. 86

**Membership
Expiration Date**