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## SPECIAL EXHIBITS



*Mushroom Hunters*

### ***A Witch Bows to No Man***

By Rachel James  
January 21-March 31,  
2017

### ***Winter Wonderland: Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County***

January 21-April 1, 2017



Toboggan slide built on Main Street, Mankato for the Winter Carnival, 1920

## The History Center has the cure for cabin fever

Did you know the phrase "cabin fever," referencing the need to get out and about, was first recorded in 1918? Are the long, cold, dark days of winter causing you to dream of an escape? If so, the History Center is the place for you! This issue of *The Historian* will give you something to do just about every week to chase away the winter blues. Start your winter fun with two new temporary exhibits at the History Center that both open on January 21. *Winter Wonderland* features frozen-fun artifacts and photographs from the BECHS collection. In the art gallery, *A Witch Bows to No Man* is a collection of whimsical illustrations by local artist Rachel James. Both exhibits will be on display through March. The fun continues with three monthly programs: *Remember When Coffee Club* (1st Tuesday), *Young Historians* (2nd Saturday) and *History Bits & Bites* (3rd Thursday). Check out the great line-up of exciting topics and presentations on pages 5 and 18 and check out the genealogy classes that will be offered in March on page 13. We also have two annual events coming our way, the Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 5 at 2 p.m. and *Surrounded By History* on Friday, April 28. Can't make it to the History Center? Check out our website and Facebook page for updates and tidbits.

## The Blue Earth County Historian



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### 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  
Closed for Season

### *The Blue Earth County Historian* Winter 2017

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

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# Board of Trustees



Shirley Piepho  
President, Board of Trustees

As we say goodbye to 2016, everyone at the Blue Earth County Historical Society wishes to thank our business supporters, individual members and donors and countless volunteers who continued to support our mission to promote preservation, education and dissemination of history related to Blue Earth County.

Please remember to join us for a program or event which educates and informs us about Blue Earth County's rich history and please encourage others to join you. We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting on March 5 and *Surrounded By History* on April 28. There are many great programs and events planned for 2017, you won't want to miss even one.

Volunteers are always a welcomed addition, so please consider sharing your time and talent with us. We currently have openings on our Board of Trustees. If you have an interest in helping BECHS grow, please apply. More information is available on page 3.

Last, but not least, please consider becoming a member or making a donation to BECHS. Any support you can give will make a lasting impact and assist us in telling the stories that preserve our past, inform our present and inspire our future.

THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
INVITES YOU TO THE

## 2017 Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 5, 2017 @ 2:00 p.m.

**BECHS History Center**

424 Warren Street, Mankato

**State-of-the-Society Business Meeting**

**A Look at Winter**

By Sara Knox & Tom Clements,  
KEYC Meteorologists

**History Center & Museum opens at 1 p.m.**

Please RSVP by March 1 to 507-345-5566  
or Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

# Director's Notes

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Happy 2017! It's hard to believe another year is in the record books. 2016 was BECHS' 115th anniversary and we celebrated with the opening of the History Center Discovery Lab, five temporary exhibits featuring objects and photos from the BECHS collections and new programs including *History Bits & Bites* and the summer Gaslight series at the Hubbard House. Once again, we had an incredibly dedicated and hardworking volunteer corps and staff to make it all happen.

I'm excited to share with you all we have planned for 2017. Our annual fundraising event *Surrounded By History* will take place on Friday, April 28. This year we will celebrate transportation with *Blue Earth County On the Move: From Wagon Trains to Four Lanes*. Tickets will go on sale March 1; you won't want to miss this fun annual event. Speaking of programs, we have a diverse slate of monthly programs with great speakers and exciting topics so check out the calendar on page 18 for a full listing. Shelley is busy working on five temporary exhibits at the History Center in 2017. The first one titled *Winter Wonderland: Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County* opens January 21! Don't forget when it's cold outside, it's nice and warm at the History Center! Visit the museum, temporary exhibits and community art gallery (which changes quarterly), take in a program and explore the Discovery Lab—all great ways to take a break from cabin fever.

Speaking of exhibits, we are gearing up for an improvement project to replace all of the History Center's florescent lights to LED. When the project is complete, we will have eliminated destructive UV and IR light from the museum and public spaces, creating a more stable environment for the long-term preservation of the art and artifacts on display. In addition, energy savings will contribute to our financial sustainability and superior lighting will enhance the visitor experience. This project has been partially funded by donations from the Schmidt Foundation and Mapleton Chamber of Commerce. If you would like to contribute to this project or volunteer to replace light bulbs, please contact me.

I feel like I say this every year and every year it's true—another exciting year is ahead for the Blue Earth County Historical Society!

## BECHS Board of Trustees Applications Now Being Accepted

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is now accepting applications for 3 to 6 candidates to fill



vacant seats on the Board of Trustees beginning March 2017. Monthly board meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. All openings are for a three-year term ending March 2020.



This is a very exciting time of growth for BECHS and we are seeking people who want to take an active role in this growth and change. The Board consists of members representing Blue Earth County and is currently seeking individuals strong in fundraising and development, facility development and nonprofit management. In addition, the Board is seeking candidates in greater Blue Earth County, in particular representatives from the areas around Amboy, Vernon

Center, Lake Crystal, Garden City, Cambria, Madison Lake, Eagle Lake or St. Clair. Previous non-profit board experience is preferred, but not required. Applications accepted until **January 31, 2017**. For an application contact Jessica at [Director@blueearthcountyhistory.com](mailto:Director@blueearthcountyhistory.com) or 345-5566 or please visit [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com).

## You can help make *Surrounded By History* a Success!

**Now accepting items for the live and silent auctions and wine raffle.**

- Popular auction items include gift certificates, tickets, gift baskets and unique items or experiences.
- Bottles of wine - can be red or white and valued at \$10 or more.

*Items can be dropped off at the History Center during regular business hours until April 15th. Donations may be considered tax-deductible.*

**Questions? Call 507-345-5566**



# Education & Outreach

## *Making Local History Accessible to All Ages*

*By Beth Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator*

As we enter another year of Education and Outreach at the Blue Earth County Historical Society, I think about all our members, donors, volunteers and staff have accomplished over the last year. With our school tours and visits, Community Education programs, *Young Historians*, Discovery Lab and special activities we have encouraged over a thousand children to think about history!

### **Young Historians is Fun!**

Throughout this school year *Young Historians* has been exploring Blue Earth County's natural history by looking at how the land helped us become who we are. Here's a question for you: How do you build a city with a piece of paper? This is a question our



Young Historians were asked to solve in October and they did! From learning to map the terrain for multiple uses, to buying and selling land from

catalogues, to creating towns and laws, students built a city in two hours and learned a lot!

November and December brought special guest speakers. November's volunteer presenter was Dale Ehlenfeldt, one of our very own Young Historians! In December, Dr. Henry Quade and Geoff Gray spoke about Rocks, Glaciers and Geology. Over the coming months we will to explore history as archeologists, scientists, park rangers and farmers. Join us if you can!

### **In the Schools**

Last year, BECHS was invited by Prairie Winds Middle School to present on Minnesota's indigenous cultures and their interaction with fur traders. We spent two days at the school working with over 200 sixth grade students. BECHS brought artifacts from our study collection including stone tools, objects reflective of the indigenous culture and our fur collection. The kids were all eyes, ears and hands as they explored the artifacts.

We hope for more of these energetic classroom visits as we continue to connect with local schools and teachers.

The History Center and Hubbard House will also be welcoming field trips this spring. If you are interested in being a tour guide or helping with these tours, please contact the History Center. See page 12 for more information.



Volunteer Larry Kortuem shares an artifact with a young student

We have partnered with Mankato's Community Education to provide afterschool enrichment classes for grades K-5 this spring. We are also working on history summer camps for kids in 2017—watch for upcoming information!

### **BECHS Outreach**

It has been a busy few months for Outreach. In conjunction with the opening of *Fur Trade in Minnesota* exhibit, local historian and naturalist Larry Richie presented his stone tool collection and handmade dugout canoe. Larry also presented an evening program about his collection with a lively discussion following.

In October, photographer Terri DeGezelle offered a fun, free class on hand-tinted photography. If you were unable to come to Terri's class, don't worry, additional classes will be scheduled this year.

We are planning more involvement for adults, including some possible "fix-it clinics," so stay tuned! If you would like to teach a class or present on a topic please contact us at the History Center.

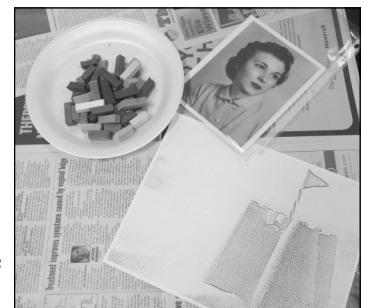


Photo tinting materials supplied by Terri DeGezelle for her class

# 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, lively 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

**February 7** - Winter Clothing & Equipment

**March 7** - Grandparents

**April 4** - School Dances

**May 2** - Wedding Preparations

## History Bits & Bites

*History Bits & Bites* is moving! This monthly learning series is now held the **third Thursday 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! Come see what you have been missing.

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



October *Bits and Bites*: Japanese American experience during WWII

### Upcoming Programs

**January 19** – “Restoring Mankato’s Stone House” with Caleb Wunderlich

**February 16** – “Victory Drive Memorial Highway” with MnDOT’s Robert Jones and Candace Amberg

**March 16** – “Staying Warm and Fashionable in the Winter” with textile historian Grace Keir

## 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, 10 a.m. to Noon.**

This year, *Young Historians* is exploring how important our natural resources are to the development of Blue Earth County. Our students have been busy uncovering new ways to look at our natural history this year!

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

### Upcoming Workshops

**February 11** - Digging for History

**March 11** - Soil! Trees! Plants!

**April 8** - Parks and Recreation

**May 13** - Ag Life (Last meeting of the school year)



Dr. Henry Quade and Geoff Gray present to our Young Historians in December. Here Gray discusses his rock collection currently on display at the History Center.





# Collections & Exhibits

## *Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County*

Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

For generations, those who have called Blue Earth County home have had to contend with winter. Although winter can be harsh and frustrating at times, it can also be exciting and a lot of fun! The Historical Society is thrilled to present our new temporary exhibit: *Winter Wonderland: Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County* that runs January 21 - April 1, 2017.



This new winter exhibit showcases wintry artifacts, photographs and memorabilia from the Historical Society's

collections. From ice skating and fishing to snowmobiling and skiing, we have frozen fun down cold!

This exhibit chronicles how our landscape is transformed each winter. Most of us have memories of at least one blizzard or winter storm. In generations past, it may have been the Blizzard of 1881. For people today, memories turn to the 1940 Armistice Day Blizzard or the Halloween Blizzard in 1991. Step back in time and discover the challenges of surviving the cold and see how we continue to learn how to adapt to our wintry environment.

The exhibit also invites visitors to see ways people have embraced all kinds of winter sports past and present. From the Mankato Ice Skating Club started in the 1920s to the 1938 opening of Ski Haven (now Mount Kato), toboggan



sliding at Sibley Curved blade ice skates, c. 1880 Park and the longstanding tradition of curling in Mapleton and Mankato — these all continue to hold a place in our winter play. Whatever your winter activity of choice, the arrival of snow and chilly temperatures means the start of a season of outdoor

fun.

Highlighted in the exhibit will be the 1920 Mankato Winter Carnival, including our own “ice” palace. Turn to page 9 to learn more about this fantastic winter celebration that warmed up the hearts of revelers from all over the state.

Winter fashions will also be highlighted throughout the exhibit including furs, snowsuits, boots, warm and waterproof clothes and high-performance ski suits. To learn more about winter fashion, join us on March 16 at noon for *History Bits & Bites* “Staying Warm and Fashionable in the Winter” with textile historian Grace Keir.



Jeanne Audrey Powers, 1936



Eleanor Thayer, c. 1900

*Winter Wonderland* will also include a variety of family fun activities for children of all ages. You can also help add to the exhibit by sharing some snowy memories.

Join us January 21 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. for a special exhibit opening with activities, refreshments and much more.

## **Winter Wonderland**

### ***Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County***



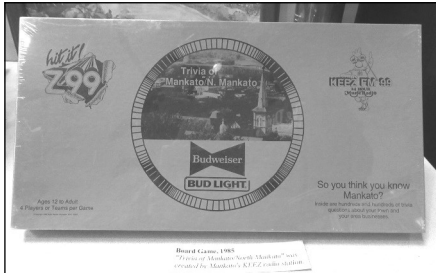
The weather outside may be frightful, but inside a look at winter's past is so delightful. Explore local winter sports and fashions and take a special look back at the 1920 Mankato Winter Carnival.

**JANUARY 21 - APRIL 1, 2017**  
**Blue Earth County History Center**

# Every object has a story...

In the Blue Earth County Historical Society's Museum we showcase objects that tell the stories of Blue Earth County's past. With only about ten percent of the total collection on display at any given time, sometimes it's hard to decide what stories to tell!

**Let's take a closer look at items currently on display in the Museum**



## **Mankato Trivia Board Game, 1985**

Created by Mankato KEEZ Radio Station, this game resembles the popular board game Trivial Pursuit. The questions, however, are all about Mankato and North Mankato. There are more than 200 questions and answers from various categories and the game board includes many historical dates and facts.

## **Sewing Machine, 1860s**

This small black machine has a painted floral design on front. It would create a single chain stitch using the hand crank. It was brought from Vermont to Garden City by T.N. Boynton in 1860. Boynton was one of the wealthiest people in Garden City. He owned a large amount of land and was proprietor of a general store. His son Carlos is one of the men featured in the book *The Remarkable Men of Garden City*. You can read the amazing story of ten men from the small hamlet of Garden City in the BECHS publication available in the Gift Shop.



Now the next time you take a spin through the Museum, you'll know a little more of the story.

## **HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY**

### **"A Witch Bows to No Man"**

**By Rachel James**

**January 21 - March 31, 2017**



Cave

Rachel James is an artist and illustrator living in Mankato, MN, originally from rural Southeast Kansas. She received bachelor's degree in 2007 from the University of Kansas and her Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Minnesota in 2011. She works in traditional print media, zines, drawing, and painting.

James' work looks at the "intersection of botanical knowledge and its link to women's work during the Middle Ages and the present." Her research on the history of plants and women's work is paired with a visual exploration of traditional categories including printmaking, drawing, painting and comic book art. These fanciful, colorful images are reminiscent of old fairytales which speak to all ages.

*This show is made possible by an Artist Grant provided by the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council with funds provided by the McKnight Foundation.*



# Gift Shop & Art Gallery News

Danelle Erickson, Development Manager

Nothing beats the cold like a good book. The Blue Earth County History Center Gift Shop has a great selection to choose from and several of our titles are only available at BECHS!

Dreaming of warmer weather outside?

*Minneinneopa: 150 Year History, Minneopa State Park* by Gordon H. Herbst is a cure for the winter blues. Discover the history and geology of the park alongside dozens of terrific photographs. \$19.95.

People around the world have read the stories of Betsy Ray as a little girl in Deep Valley (the fictional Mankato) in Maud Hart Lovelace's beloved stories. But have you read the whole Deep Valley story? Stop by the Gift Shop for the entire book series. Follow Betsy through high school, as she travels the world and falls in love. There are also stories about more Deep Valley characters including Emily, Carney and Winona. \$12.99-\$15.99.

Warm up the oven and kitchen and bake a cozy supper or delicious dessert with recipes from *Hot Dish Heaven*, *Bundt Cake Bliss* or from one of our other cookbooks. Doesn't Tater Tot Hot Dish and an Apple Butter Bundt Cake sound good right now? \$16.95.

With snow on the ground, a trip to the cemetery to visit the graves of deceased family and acquaintances isn't easy. The Historical Society's *Remembering the People* book series can help. Inside each book, you will not only find the names

of those buried in each cemetery, but also obituaries and census information for many of the individuals. \$49.95 each.

Available books include:

**Beauford:** Morrow and Oak Hill Cemeteries

**Butternut Valley:** Butternut Valley Cemetery

**Cambria:** Cambria Cemetery

**Ceresco:** Ceresco Zion Lutheran and St. John's Lutheran North Cemeteries

**Decoria:** Decoria Cemetery

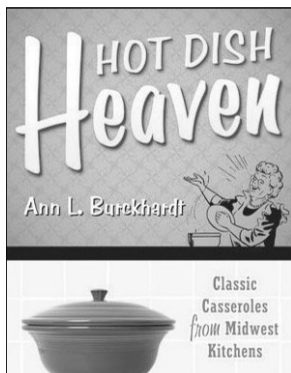
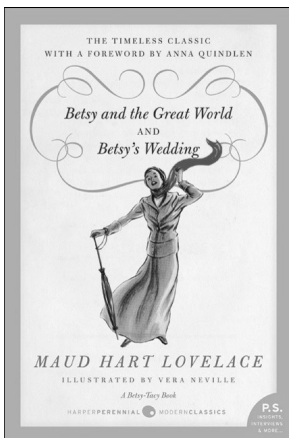
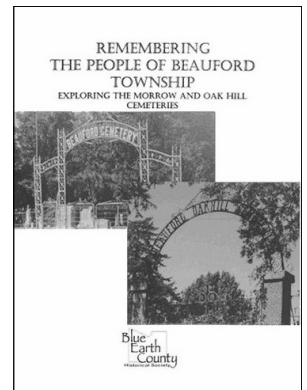
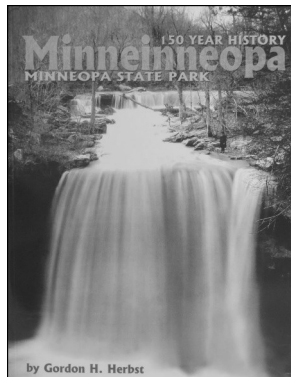
**Lincoln:** Lincoln Baptist and Lincoln Lutheran Cemeteries

**Shelby:** Pleasant View Cemetery (2 volumes)

**Shelby:** St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran and Willow Creek Pioneer Cemeteries

If you are looking for information on Blue Earth County cemeteries not listed here, our Research Center may be able to help.

Happy reading!



*Marian Anderson*  
Fine Art Prints

Fine art prints are available exclusively at the History Center and online at **MarianAnderson.com**. **100% of all sales benefit the Historical Society.** Artist Marian Anderson is recognized for her diverse subjects that come from a natural ability not only to create a beautiful painting, but to breathe spirit and soul into her work.



*Open Boundaries*





By Mattie Berg

The single most thrilling winter extravaganza to ever take place in Blue Earth County was the Mankato Winter Carnival in 1920. The excitement surrounding the festivities was so strong, it attracted thousands of people from all around the country. Everyone was encouraged to “forget their cares and worries and join in the general spirit of ‘Just for Fun.’”

“Just for Fun” was the slogan for the 5-day fete, which took place January 19 through 24, 1920. Preparations began the year before with at least ten committees and dozens of booster clubs working to plan and spread the word about the carnival.

The first of these booster clubs formed was made up of the employees of George E. Brett Department Store. The club was formed in November 1919 and boasted 54 members when it first began. Before long, the members would

Winter Carnival Ice Palace and Royal Court

be sporting the “natty carnival suits” they would wear until the carnival was over. More clubs were formed and men and women in carnival suits soon became the norm around town. “Wear your carnival uniform and help advertise the big fete,” encouraged *The Free Press*.

In December 1919, King Ferdinand Rex (a.k.a. Ferd Hoerr) of the Mankato Booster Club sent an invitation to L.W. Hill, one of the driving forces behind the St. Paul Winter Carnival. In response, Hill sent a telegram “expressing the sincere wish of St. Paul that the Mankato carnival may be a success.” St. Paul had opted not to hold its own carnival that year and Hill promised a number of Twin City booster members would attend the Mankato festivities.

There was also much excitement from clubs around Blue Earth County in preparation for the event. In the early part of January, many booster clubs, along with musicians and performers, traveled by train to “spread the spirit of enthusiasm for the big winter fete to be held in Mankato.” Stops were made in Minneopa, Lake Crystal, Garden City, Vernon Center, Amboy, Winnebago, Blue Earth and Fairmont. “Pep and spirit predominated among the carnival boosters and the towns were ablaze with enthusiasm as they marched through the different



Sample Shoe Store club shows off their carnival costumes.

downtown districts, tooting their horns, blowing whistles and yelling. Such a happy throng of people.” These elaborate marketing journeys paid off as many of the visited towns formed their own clubs and would soon travel to Mankato aboard trains scheduled just for the carnival.

While many went out on these massive campaigns, some stayed in Mankato and built up the city. The streets and businesses were brought up in brilliant lights and booster clubs and unions joined together to create multiple structures to prepare for the week’s events and contests.

The Mankato Fire Department helped create skating rinks and ponds along Front Street. A toboggan run was built running down Main Street. In Mankato’s “Tinkcomville,” a ski jump was constructed. The Bricklayers Union constructed an ice palace with ice provided by the Miller Ice Co.

The Mankato Winter Carnival officially began at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, January 19, 1920 with the Grand Parade. While the parade as a whole was spectacular, the main attraction was most certainly the mayor’s float. The float was twenty-foot long and pulled by nearly one hundred decorated horses. It took more than three weeks to create and “was decorated with gaily colored bunting, streamers, and imitation snow and thrown tinsel overall until it reflected the rays of the myriad lights. The float fairly dazzled the eyes.” The mayor, E.V. Watters, was seated on a large throne at the front of the float surrounded by city officials and councilmen.



Floats and booster clubs take part in one of several parades during the Winter Carnival.

The entire town was alive with winter cheer as the parade continued. King Ferdinand Rex and his royal court presided over their own decorated float. Many of the booster clubs, all in their colorful costumes, had crowned their own queens who led them down the street. Drum corps, jazz bands, sleighs and decorated automobiles all added to the festivities.

After the parade, there was a grand ceremony at the ice palace. Here, King Ferdinand was given the key to the city as his royal court gathered around him. “The scene was one rivalling the royal pomp of court scenes of ye olden days.” In true royal fashion, the king extended numerous titles to those around him. These fictitious titles included “Prince of the Pie Eaters,” “Valet to the Royal Cow” and “Maharaja of Kato.” Later in the week, Miss Pauline Koke joined the royal court when she was crowned Queen of the Carnival. Almost one million ballots were cast in the queen competition!



King Ferdinand Rex and carnival queens

The next four days were filled with activities which brought people from near and far as both spectators and participants. The speed skating competition was considered southern Minnesota’s largest amateur ice skater’s contest of the year. They had eighth mile, half mile, one mile and two mile races. Professional skaters also participated including well-known speed skater Adeline Schauer. One of the biggest hits of the week was the figure skating

exhibition, or “fancy skating,” as they called it at the time. The exhibition was given by world famous skaters including Lillian Egan, Anna Munkholm, Henie Brock and Harry Shipstad.

The ski jumping competition also drew some famous names to the Mankato Winter Carnival. The National Ski Association declared Mankato “the best for the ski jump to be constructed where there is a splendid hill for the purpose.” Andres Haugen, a world champion ski jumper, won first place in the professional ski contests. World record holders Lars Haugen, Hans Hanson, A.G. Olson and Oscar Olson also competed. There were also amateur competitions for ski jumping. They brought crowds and competitors from all over Minnesota. These were not easy competitions. Participants were judged on grace, height of the jump and ability to stick the landing. “You were assured of a real spectacular show!”

One of the more unique events was a dog sled race through Mankato streets. Racers from the Yukon and Alaska arrived in town. Dressed in Yukon fashion and with fourteen dogs, the men were quite the spectacle. The sled dogs were reported to be part wolf, part husky, born and bred for dog sled racing. A reporter for *The Free Press* wrote, “the dogs here are reputed to be some of the fastest teams in all of Alaska.”

Kid Goyne, a veteran dog team driver from the Yukon, was so confident in his canine team, he boasted to a reporter, “there is a purse of \$2000 up for any team in Alaska that will beat my dogs.” Aside from races up and down Front Street, Goyne also had a little fun hauling locals around town in a dog-led sleigh. While the dogs could be great fun, they also caused a ruckus with some of the local pets. Attendees were strongly encouraged to keep their dogs at home, or to keep a “wide birth, because the huskies display a most unfriendly disposition toward all strangers.”

The carnival spirit spread through town and many Mankato businesses opted to close shop in the



Ski Jumping near present-day Stadium Hill

afternoon, allowing their employees and patrons time to watch and participate. The skating rinks and tobogganing hill were popular activities for everyone. Curling events, an exhibition by the fire department, trick aviation demonstrations and additional parades were also part of the five day celebration.

These winter activities weren’t the only festivities to be had in Mankato. “Just for Fun” was in full swing with musical entertainment and dances at the Saulpaugh Hotel, Armory and Elks Club throughout the duration of the carnival.

On the last day of the fete, a “carnival special” train arrived in Mankato carrying more than 150 people from the Twin Cities. Rotary, Kiwanis and Elks Clubs were represented as well as the St. Paul Winter Carnival and several prominent businesses. This merry group was welcomed to the city and paraded up and down the streets, joined by many of Mankato’s booster clubs. After the day’s festivities, the group returned to the Twin Cities, having been given a royal farewell by King Ferdinand and company.

This grand, one-time event was one of the shining stars in Blue Earth County history. Not only did it bring people from around the state and beyond to Mankato, but it showed what a community that works together could accomplish. In the coldest time of the year, a spirit of joy was created and shared - *Just for Fun*.



#### Sources:

Blue Earth County Historical Society Subject Files and Photographs

*Mankato Free Press*, various articles

# BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen

Looking for something new for the New Year? Why not volunteer at the Historical Society.

We are always looking for more volunteers. Schedules are flexible and set by the individual. Some people come every week for several hours, while others help for an hour or two as their family or work schedule allows.

Take a look at the list below for some of our current volunteer opportunities. Have a talent or skill not listed below that could benefit BECHS? Let us know!

Email, call or visit with Danelle about how you can help.



BECHS Volunteers work in the History Center gardens, give tours, work in the Research Center, help with programs and events and much more.

## Volunteer and Employment Opportunities

### **Speakers Bureau**

Enjoy sharing history with groups of people? Consider joining our Speakers Bureau to present historical information to a variety of groups. Use one of our topics or develop your own. Some training provided. Schedule varies.

### **Technology Assistance**

Looking for an individual(s) 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.

### **Education/Classroom Activities**

Enjoy helping kids explore history? We are looking for individuals to assist with classroom visits and kids activities and tours 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.

### **Hubbard House Tour Guides**

Tour guides are needed this spring and summer at the Hubbard House. New guides are welcome! Contact Danelle for more information. Tour Guide training will be held in April. Watch for details.

### **History Center Receptionist/Gift Shop Attendant**

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.

### **Event Planning**

Love helping to plan and host parties or events? BECHS could use your help planning our signature events including *Surrounded By History*.

### **Rental Facilitator**

Volunteer needed to assist with after hours rentals of the History Center Meeting Rooms. Volunteer will greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the event and lock-up when done. On an as-needed basis.

**There are countless ways you can become involved with the Historical Society. Other opportunities include:**

Board Service  
Committee Service  
Exhibit Research and Design  
Gardening  
Graphic Design  
Light Construction

Living History Events  
Marketing and Communications  
Office Work  
Photography  
Tour Guide  
Writing and Research





# Around the Research Center

Heather Harren, Communications Manager

Another year has come and gone. Thank you to everyone who stopped by last year to look-up your family history or learn more about Blue Earth County. I always enjoy seeing how excited people are when they find the information they are looking for or the surprised look when they discover a new person in their family that was not mentioned anywhere else. If it wasn't for these reactions, this job would not be as enjoyable!

We are excited to announce that we will be presenting genealogy classes in March! There will be three different courses offered ranging from the beginning genealogist to those who have been doing genealogy for decades. The course will be held in the Research Center. While many of the resources shown will be related to this county, the tips and tricks shared will be applicable everywhere. Classes will be held the first three Saturdays in March from 2 -4 p.m. The first hour of each session will be instructional followed by time for questions, discussion and your own research.

The first class, March 4, is designed for people just starting out in their family research. During the class, we will discuss common documents and where to find them, tips on how to handle "misspelled"

names and hard-to-read handwriting, and how to properly cite your findings.

The second class, March 11, will go beyond the basics and will extend to materials such as wills, land records and newspaper accounts. We will again cover proper citations with these documents.

In the final course, March 18, we will look beyond local resources and delve into online resources such as Ancestry and Family Search and will discuss what to search for and what to beware of when researching your family.

Classes cost \$8/session or \$20 for all three. BECHS members pay \$5/session or \$12 for all three. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Call 507-345-5566 or email [Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](mailto:Research@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com) to reserve your spot today!

## Blue Earth County Trivia

1. Who was the first recorded physician in Blue Earth County?
  2. What year did Bierbauer Brewery begin?
  3. The first automobile came to Mankato in 1897.  
What was the model of this "horseless carriage?"
- Answers can be found on page 18.

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

- Used Printer Ink Cartridges**  
to be recycled to offset cost of office supplies; please no Epson cartridges
- Keurig K Cups**  
Any flavor of coffee for our Coffee Nook, used by guests, staff and volunteers.
- Industrial Strength Metal Shelving** for collections storage, call for more info.
- Laser Printer**  
Gently used, working condition.
- MP3 Players and/or Docking Stations**  
for background music in the Museum.
- Bison Hide**  
The bison hide lent to the Discovery Lab has been returned. In 2016, over 500 children explored the history of Native American life with the bison hide. Seeking a replacement hide.



# Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Special thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make *Christmas*

at the Hubbard House a sparkling success. Almost 300 people tried their hand at solving the "Mystery of the Missing Violin." They met and interacted with the Hubbard family, guests and servants throughout the house to see if they could guess who was guilty. In case you missed it, Mrs. Hubbard was the thief, but the violin has since been returned!

Thank you to the following people for their help decorating and cleaning the Hubbard House and for the actors and musicians for sharing their talents: Janet Adams, Marta Arch, Halle Blais, Trulie Bolton, Chad Brancamp, Ambry Brave Heart, Stevan Colakovic, Randy Danielson, Perry Dauer, Carlienne Frisch, Audrey Gatchelle, Laura Garlow, Sandi Garlow, Ryan Harren, Patrice Hundstad, Susan Hynes, Marilyn Johnson, Linda Karow, Tim Koehler, Jolene Leighton, Alex Oldenburg, Megan Poehler and Grace Webb.



## **BE A HISTORY HERO! SAVE HISTORY!**

History Heroes are people just like you who help save and preserve our past through financial support. With a donation today you will ensure the continuation of engaging exhibits, high-quality educational programs for all ages and preservation of our irreplaceable artifacts. **You can be a History Hero by:**

- Making a financial contribution
- Signing-up for the Monthly Giving Program and your automatic donation will provide support throughout the year.
- Becoming a BECHS Member

**Together we can save history!**

## **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](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/visit/rentals) for more information on rates or contact the History Center for availability.



# Around Blue Earth County

## Rapidan Heritage Society

As the snowfall brings 2016 to a close, I'd like to say "Thank You" to everyone who supported the Rapidan Heritage Society.

We appreciate your support by coming to annual events we sponsor: Memorial Day Service, National Night Out, Halloween and Santa in the Depot.

We appreciate your monetary support – just like you, RHS has heat and light bills to pay!

We appreciate your artifact donations. The RHS mission is to preserve the history of the Rapidan Area. Thanks to your help, we are doing that. Here are a few new donations:

- A 1920s threshing picture is a snapshot in time of farm life – neighbors and family proudly standing by their steam engine, thresher and horse-drawn wagons.
- Photos of WWII era women working in Charlie Nelson's garage contributing to defense work.
- A book telling of the Strand origins in Norway.
- Land records to the Rapidan Hall.
- A plate celebrating the centennial of Calvary Church.
- A program booklet for the 1957 Junior-Senior Banquet with autographs.
- A school basketball uniform and red letter "R."
- A shirt from the community baseball team with sponsor "Flo Lumber" embroidered on the back.
- A number of railroad items including a signal lantern, Milwaukee Road timetables, Milwaukee Road/Rapidan track chart, CMSTP&P car seals and date nails from the 1930s. (A date nail has the date stamped on its head. It is driven into railroad ties for record-keeping purposes)

We also have a piece of 2016 history, courtesy of Blue Earth County – a "66" sign from State Hwy 66, now County Road 1. This road has been and continues to be a vital link to other communities.

People, farm, business, community, church, school and transportation– this is what makes up the community of Rapidan!



## DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW FOR WINTER FUN

*Excerpt from the BECHS two-page history spread in the January/February issue of Kid-oh! magazine.*

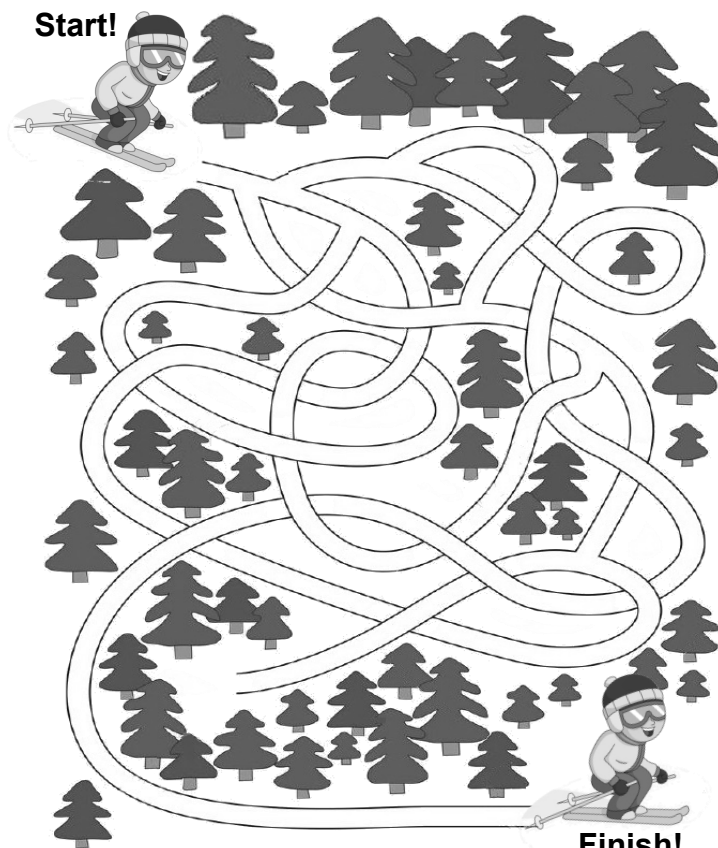
### Curling in Blue Earth County

Outdoor activities have changed over time—but not much! Ice skating, skiing, sledding and playing outdoor sports are still a popular way to spend the winter months in Minnesota. Did you know the first curling game west of Chicago was played in Mapleton, MN in 1856? The Scottish game is still played today by both young and old at two curling rinks in Blue Earth County: the Heather Curling Club in Mapleton and the Mankato Curling Club.

### Down the slopes...

Harvey and Pauline Andersen opened and operated Ski Haven in Mankato in 1937. Ski Haven was very popular and continued to grow over the years, adding more hills and ski lifts. Today this winter sports facility is known as Mount Kato where you can ski, tube, bike or snowboard down 19 trails! Now help our skier get to the bottom of the hill. Which trail will be the fastest?

Start!



# BECHS Donations & Membership

October - December 2016

## Donations

Kevin and Shelli Allen  
Dorothy Anthony  
Patrick Baker  
Helen Balcome  
William Bassett  
Dale Benefield  
Barb Bergman  
Bill and Chris Bernhagen  
Darwin Blume  
Bob and Susan Brown  
Dan and Kathy Bruss  
CHS, Inc  
Barbara Church  
Mary Coleman  
Community Bank  
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David Cowan  
Crystal Valley Co-op  
Mark and Mary Davis  
The Dietz Family Fund  
Charlton Dietz  
Delbert and Judy Dunlap  
Donna Dunlop  
John Ellis  
David and Julie Ewert  
Joe and Malda Farnham  
Doug and Lori Faust  
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Aaron & Jessica Hatanpa  
Norla Hesse  
William Hinrichs  
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Bob and Geri Howieson  
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Sally Lamont  
Christopher Larson  
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke  
Robert & Eloise Layman  
Marilyn Lehnert  
Coleen and Jeff  
Lindemann  
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Fred and Diane Lutz  
Mankato Scheels  
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McGregor  
Harlan Mehlhop  
Minnesota Elevator, Inc.  
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Robert Morris  
Patricia Morrow  
Mary Mortier  
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Marla Higginbotham  
Brett & Gretchen Taylor  
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Terry and Kay Tompkins  
Allen & Jane Torgerson  
Valley News Company  
Suzann Voss  
Richard & Lynne Weber  
Marti Weisgram  
Marnie Werner  
Donnette and Greg  
Wheelock  
Jerry and Vee M.G.  
Williams  
Brad Wilmes  
Ken and Linda Wilmes  
Randy Zellmer

## Recurring Donors

Dale Benefield  
Joel Botten  
Carol English  
Carlienne & Robert  
Frisch  
Christopher Larson  
Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke  
Judie Neitge

Tom Solseth  
Donna & Gerald Webb  
Marnie Werner  
Beth Zimmer

## Donor Matching Programs

GE Foundation  
General Mills

## New Members

Phil Bachman  
Tricia Bleck  
Dan Caven  
Al Fack  
John C. Hallman  
Pam and Larry Harbo  
Dolores Jones  
Anita Kreutzer Boyer  
Corey Leiferman  
Tom and Diane Lentz  
Shannon Messer  
Robert Morris  
Matt and Emma Norland  
Elizabeth Peters  
Tad and Cindy Piper  
Jim and Julie Powell  
Georgia Rettmer  
Kim and Shawn  
Showcatally  
Norm Sieling  
Heather Streeter  
Richard & Lynne Weber

## Renewing Business Members

Insty-Prints of Mankato

## Giving Level Members

*Booster members and above*  
Gordon Awsumb  
Mike and Denise Kunkel  
Dr. William E. Lass

## In-Kind

Jane Griffiths

## Honorarium

The Blue Earth County Historical Society was saddened by the passing of John Rezmerski on November 5, 2016. John was a long-time Historical Society volunteer, serving on the Board of Trustees for seven years and was the leading force behind the annual *Cambria Eisteddfod*. John's gentle spirit will always be remembered.



### ***In Memory of John Rezmerski***

Roberta Bartholdi  
Ruth Berman  
Chris Bollig  
Gerald and Marie Crawford  
Bob and Judy Douglas  
Kay Herbst Helms  
Eileen Holz  
Susan Hynes  
David & Jane Leitzman  
James Lundgren  
Dick and Tricia Nienow  
Brad and Jessica Potter

Janet Prehn  
Cathy Rezmerski  
Hilary Rezmerski  
Jo Schultz  
Darlene Sigurdson  
Hayley, Brett, Kylie and Carly Smith  
Peter and Regina Steiner

### ***In Memory of Frank and Dorothy Klugherz***

### ***In Memory of Kitty Litig***

Char Hiniker

## ***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.



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



# ***THANK YOU HISTORY HEROES!***

Thank you to **everyone** for making 2016 an amazing year for the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

**To our Donors and Members:** Your financial gifts provide the foundation that makes everything possible. From heat and electricity to new exhibits and programs, your contributions mean the Society can focus on preserving and presenting Blue Earth County history.



**To our Volunteers:** The number of things you do each year is staggering. Over 140 of you donated 6,000+ hours in 2016. Researching, cataloging artifacts, creating colorful characters, baking cookies for events and so much more - you do it all!

**To our Visitors:** History is about people - past and present - and watching you connect and discover the past at the History Center and Hubbard House reminds BECHS Staff and Volunteers why we love doing what we do.



***THANK YOU!***

# Calendar of Events January - April 2017

## JANUARY

- 19 History Bits & Bites: Restoring Mankato's Stone House** with Caleb Wunderlich, Noon-1 p.m., History Center, *3rd Thursday*
- 21 Winter Wonderland: Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County exhibit opens**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., History Center
- 21 Art Gallery exhibit *A Witch Bows to No Man*** by Rachel James, open through March 31, 2017
- 26 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*

## FEBRUARY

- 7 Remember When Coffee Club: Favorite Winter Clothes and Equipment**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free, *1st Tuesday*
- 7 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 11 Young Historians: Digging for History**, 10 a.m.-Noon, History Center; Please pre-register by 2/9/17
- 16 History Bits & Bites: Victory Drive Memorial Highway**, Noon-1 p.m., History Center, *3rd Thursday*. Hear from MnDOT representatives as they present on the upcoming changes to the Memorial Highway and what it means for the 600 trees planted in memory of local veterans. Join the discussion and learn how you can get involved.
- 16 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*

## MARCH

- 4 Genealogy Class – Beginner's Family History Research**, 2-4 p.m., Research Center, See page 13 for details
- 5 BECHS Annual Meeting**, 2 p.m., History Center. History Center opens at 1 p.m. for tours.
- 7 Remember When Coffee Club: Grandparents**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free, *1st Tuesday*
- 7 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 11 Young Historians: Soil! Trees! Plants!**, 10 a.m.-Noon, History Center; Please pre-register by 3/9/17
- 11 Genealogy Class – Beyond the Basics**, 2-4 p.m., Research Center, See page 13 for details
- 16 History Bits & Bites: Staying Warm and Fashionable in the Winter** with Grace Keir, Noon-1 p.m., History Center, *3rd Thursday*

- 16 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 18 Genealogy Class – Online Family History Research**, 2-4 p.m., Research Center, See page 13 for details

## APRIL

- 1 Winter Wonderland: Frozen Fun in Blue Earth County exhibit closes**
- 4 Remember When Coffee Club: School Dances**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 4 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 8 Young Historians: Parks and Recreation**, 10 a.m.-Noon, History Center, Please pre-register by 4/6/17
- 20 History Bits & Bites**, Topic to be announced. Noon-1 p.m., History Center *3rd Thursday*
- 27 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 28 Surrounded By History: Blue Earth County On the Move**, 6 p.m., MSU,M Centennial Student Union Ballroom, annual fundraiser for BECHS. Tickets on sale March 1, 2017.



Surrounded By History

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

- Check out [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://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.

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

1. Dr. Moses R. Wickersham      2. 1857  
3. Stanley Steamer

# Membership Makes a Difference

Members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society are some of our biggest fans and advocates. Some live locally and regularly visit the Society. Some are far away and “visit” by following us on social media and reading this newsletter. Whether



near or far, BECHS members are members because they have a connection to Blue Earth County and its history.

If you aren't already a members, please consider joining. BECHS has dozens of programs

throughout the year and most of them are free for members. Membership benefits also include free, annual admission to the History Center Museum, Research Center and Hubbard House, making membership to the Historical Society a great bargain!

Annual membership starts at \$35 for individuals or \$50 for households. Join today!

To renew or to become a member, visit [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join) or see the information below.

## Attention Business Owners and Managers

BECHS Business Membership provides annual support to the Historical Society and some great benefits for your business. Join today and receive recognition on our website and social media as well as admission passes to share with your employees and a window sticker to show your support of BECHS. Fill out the information below or visit our website.

## 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 or Business \$250

Advocate \$500

Benefactor \$1,000

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](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join)**

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



# SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

**Blue Earth County on the Move**  
*From Wagon Trains to Four Lanes*

**DINNER • PROGRAM • LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2017**

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.



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)



**Blue Earth County Historical Society**

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