

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Director's Notes
- 3 Board of Trustees
- 4 Education & Outreach
- 6 Collections & Exhibits
- 7 Every Object Has a Story
- 8 Gift Shop & Art Gallery
- 9 "Writing Home: WWI Letters to 'Dear Old Kato'"
- 12 Volunteer Opportunities
- 13 Research Center
- 14 Hubbard House
- 18 Calendar of Events

SPECIAL EXHIBITS



I'm a Mess

Since 2006

Rachel Compart-Gemlo through September 27, 2018

1918: Home and Abroad

July 7 through November 24, 2018



Company H marches down present-day North Riverfront Drive, Mankato in 1917.

A Closer Look

During the first half of 2018, the Blue Earth County Historical Society looked back 50 years ago with the popular exhibit *Coming of Age: The 1968 Generation*. Thank you to the many visitors who came and remembered.

Now BECHS is looking back another 50 years—to 1918. Our newest exhibit *1918: Home and Abroad* was designed and created by BECHS staff and volunteers and is made up entirely from our collections. It is a wonderful way to showcase artifacts not usually on display.

Each new exhibit also brings BECHS a reason to take a closer look at local history. Let's take local Company H for example (pictured above). BECHS knew Company H served in World War I, but not many specific details. *1918: Home and Abroad* helped us take a closer look. The company was mostly made up of Blue Earth County men and was part of the 2nd Regiment of the Minnesota National Guard. In January 1917, they returned to Mankato after serving along the Mexican Border.

Once home, and with the threat of war looming, many of the men chose to re-enlist in Company H. After war was officially declared, the company was ordered to stand guard at Hubbard Mill and elevators. On September 28, 1917, with a grand sendoff, the company left Mankato for Camp Cody, New Mexico. From there the men went separate ways with many of them serving overseas by 1918.

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
June-August:
Friday-Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.
September: Saturday - Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

The Blue Earth County Historian Summer 2018

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

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Director's Notes

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Summer is here, the flowers are in full bloom, the Hubbard House is open for another season and visitors from near and far are checking out all that the Blue Earth County Historical Society has to offer. I encourage you to pay us a visit and see the new exhibit *1918: Home and Abroad*—it's fantastic! Our staff and volunteers really outdid themselves.

No summer would be complete without a trip to the Blue Earth County Fair. We have a bunch of fun things planned for the Heritage Building and encourage you to stop by. We are also in need of volunteers to work a shift greeting and assisting guests. We would love to have you join our volunteer team.

As you may already know, BECHS has a small staff and a good sized volunteer team, but there are always more things we would love to get done. In fact, we really need help with our History Center gardens. We only have a couple of dedicated ladies that work on maintaining those gardens and they urgently need help—the weeds are almost out of control! Please consider adopting a section of the garden to weed and care for. We are also looking for interested and experienced individuals to serve on our Facilities Committee or Development Committee. If you are interested in serving or have questions, please contact me.

Finally, I would like to personally invite you to join us for our annual Member Appreciation on Friday, August 24, from 5-7 p.m. This is our opportunity to show our appreciation for your support. Without you, our members and donors, we wouldn't have the financial resources and support to collect, preserve and present the rich history of Blue Earth County. Thank you!

When you visit the History Center this summer, please stop by my office and say "hi." I love chatting with our friends and love it when you are in the building. Enjoy all the summer season has to offer and thank you for your continued support.

History Center Now Available for Your Next Meeting or Special Event



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

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

Board of Trustees

Dale Benefield, Board of Trustees

Everyone has a story. Tell yours now, before it's too late.

My mother died in 2004, making me the oldest in the immediate family and keeper of our family history.

I grew up next door to my grandparents. I can remember relatives coming to visit the farm throughout the 1960s and 70s. I was introduced to them, but never gave it much thought. I certainly wasn't interested in their history.

Fast forward to 2006, when I inherited all of my grandparents' and parents' pictures. When I started going through them, I recognized some people who visited when I was younger and some pictures of people I knew. These photos were obviously important to my mother and I wanted to know more about these relatives.

I started doing research at BECHS and found lots of fascinating information. Several branches of my family tree came to Blue Earth County in the 1850s from Germany. One of the family farms is still in the family. Coming here that early means we probably are connected to everyone in the Eagle Lake and Madison Lake areas that has been here for any length of time. My granddaughter's great-great grandfather and my great grandfather were neighbors back in the early 1900s and we are distantly related at least three different ways, a couple of them through marriage.

Don't just assume the history of our ancestors is lost. Somewhere there is evidence of their lives - we just have to find it!

Passing stories on by word of mouth is great, but it's important to also document first person narratives and reminiscences. This is especially true for female/maternal lines or for the less affluent who may have left fewer official records behind.

It's too late for me to ask my parents or grandparents about our history. I have talked to aunts, uncles and cousins and found out more information, but it's not the same. Talk about history with family members before it's too late and they are gone. You'll learn a lot and have an enjoyable experience with relatives.



My grandmother, Ivalue Hilger (left) and unknown friend

BLUE EARTH COUNTY FAIR

July 26 - 29, 2018
Blue Earth County
Fairgrounds
Garden City, MN

Visit BECHS at the annual Blue Earth County Fair. You will find us in the Heritage Building next to the Free Stage. See historic Blue Earth County Fair photographs, highlights from our *1918: Home and Abroad* exhibit, hands-on history fun activities for all ages, demonstrations of historic woodworking tools and techniques and much more!

See you at the Fair!

Volunteers are needed in the Heritage Building. Contact the History Center to sign-up. Thanks to all the volunteers who represent BECHS at this County event. We couldn't do it without you!



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



Education & Outreach

By Beth Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Like our summer weather, education is hot at the Blue Earth County History Center! Kids are having fun at summer camps, families are vacationing and here at the History Center we are excited to talk to our visitors about history. More and more families are seeing the value in family vacations that include experiencing the past. Summer is a perfect time to explore the History Center, Discovery Lab and Hubbard House or attend an event, workshop or class presented by the Blue Earth County Historical Society! Check our calendar for things to do and see this summer.

Out of School

Students may have finished with regular classes for the summer, but that doesn't mean they can't learn about history. The History Center has been bustling with student groups from near and far.



Dress-up in the Discovery Lab is fun at any age!

St. Peter High School made their annual visit to tour both the History Center and the Hubbard House. We were also honored to have visits from two very special groups: students from Minnesota State University, Mankato's American Indian High School Camp and students from Little Priest Tribal College in Nebraska who came on a class trip to retrace the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago removal.

We are currently busy preparing for our "Awesome Women in History" Day Camp. This new venture will take place August 7-10. Campers will learn about some amazing women through stories, activities, food and more.

In September, we will be gearing up for K-5th grade school tours. If you know of a teacher who may be interested in visiting the History Center or Hubbard House or scheduling a classroom visit, have them give us a call. We love our students and look forward to reaching out to all students in Blue Earth County!

BECHS Outreach

But history isn't just for the youth—it's for all ages! That's why we provide educational talks and

history events for every age group. From *History Bits & Bites* noon-time programs, to our Hubbard House Gaslight Series to special events like our recent Minnesota Florals or Tie Dye events, there is something for everyone. Special thanks to our volunteers as they make history fun and engaging.



Getting groovy with tie dye

In the coming weeks and months, BECHS will be on the road! At the end of July, stop in to see us in the Heritage Building at the Blue Earth County Fair. In September we will be in the Education Tent at the Mahkato Wacipi Pow Wow. On September 30, we will be part of "History and Painting at the Falls: Plein Air Day at Minneopa State Park." Learn about the park, painting and Robert Duncanson, a free black painter who painted Minneopa Falls in the 1860s and the mystery of his connection to an unidentified painting hanging in the Historic R.D. Hubbard House.

We are looking forward to the next few months of 2018 and have added many family-friendly activities. From school tours to adult history events, we aim to serve our entire community through education of the past.

AWESOME WOMEN IN HISTORY

Blue Earth County Historical Society
Kid's History Day Camp

August 7-10, 2018

9:30 a.m. - Noon each day

Blue Earth County History Center, 424 Warren Street, Mankato

Discover some of the awesome women who shaped American history at the BECHS Kid's History Day Camp for Grades 2-5!

- Learn something new each day about these women through stories, food and hands-on history activities.
- Plus explore the History Center Museum and much more.



Amelia Bloomer,
Zitkala Sa, Susan B. Anthony

Sign-up today! \$55/Child

Pre-registration open now through August 3. Camp size limited to 15.

Exploring History for All Ages

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

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 1st Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. for BECHS' Remember When Coffee Club.** There



Tourtellotte Park

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

Upcoming Topics

August 7 - My Favorite Park

September 4 - Scary Storms

October 2 - My First Job

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 we will explore Minnesota's Native Americans. Over the months we will learn about the historical, practical, political, cultural and economic highlights of the Dakota and Anishinaabe.



A dancer at the Mahkato Wacipi Pow Wow

Upcoming Topics

September 8 - The American Indians' Wacipi Celebrations

October 13 - The American Indians' Winter Survival

Special thanks to MinnStar Bank N.A. for their support of Children's Programming in 2018.

History Bits & Bites

History Bits & Bites is a monthly learning series held the **3rd 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! Free for BECHS Members, \$7 non-members. Lunch is NOT provided, but beverages will be available.



Upcoming Topics

July 19 - "The Vietnam Experience," Artist Al Smith will present his drawings of Vietnam.

August 16 - "YWCA Mankato: 90+ Years of Impact in Greater Mankato" with YWCA Executive Director, Barb Dorn

September 20 - Michael McLaughlin will speak about WWI and the History of Blue Earth County Veterans Service

October 18 - "Service Dogs and Their History"

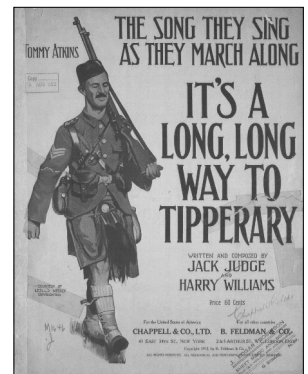
SPECIAL EVENT

1918: Home and Abroad, Readings and Song
Friday, September 14, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m. Social, 7:00 p.m. Program
History Center

Adults \$10 Members \$7 Children 5-17 \$3

Dress your best and join us in an engaging evening of remembrance through songs and readings from 1918, the era of World War I, the Spanish Flu, Women's Suffrage, Prohibition and many other changes in American life.



Turn to page 18 for the full calendar of events



Collections & Exhibits

1918: Home and Abroad

By Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

Join the Blue Earth County Historical Society as we step back in time with our new temporary exhibit, *1918: Home and Abroad*, open July 7-November 24, 2018. The exhibit shares the stories of our county in the First World War from the home front to the front lines. On view are selected World War I artifacts including posters, photographs and objects.

1918: Home and Abroad chronicles the end of World War I, the flu pandemic, women striving for the right to vote and the lead up to prohibition. 1918 was a year filled with milestone events that were turning points in our history. 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of “The war to end all wars.”

Over 1,300 men and women from Blue Earth County served in the Armed Forces and as Red Cross Nurses during World War I. Private Glenn Campbell of St. Clair was the first Blue Earth County soldier to die in action on February 27, 1918. Twenty-two others were killed in action. Over 50 Blue Earth County soldiers were wounded or gassed in battle. In addition, 35 died from the influenza epidemic. Artifacts from the war are on display including uniforms, mess tins and other pieces of field equipment.

While people from the Boy Scouts to the Red Cross joined the war efforts at home, there was also tension caused by overzealous loyalty and anti-immigration hysteria. In February 1918, the Minnesota Commission on Public Safety passed the Alien Registration Act that ordered all Minnesotans who were not U.S. citizens to register with the state. On display is the registration card of Johanna Oldenburg of Good Thunder. The document includes a photograph and a fingerprint. The Registration Forms for Blue Earth County can be found in the Research Center.

Also on display are medical instruments belonging to Dr. Helen Hughes Hielscher. She ran her own medical practice and was one of the few doctors in Mankato during the 1918 influenza epidemic. Dr. Hielscher was a very active and

passionate worker in social welfare and women’s equality in an era when the “woman’s place was in the home.” Dr. Hielscher led the American Legion Auxiliary and created the Memorial Buddy Poppies as a way to fund and advocate for the care of the Great War’s sick and disabled. Dr. Hielscher also was vice president of the Blue Earth County Historical Society!

The exhibit also includes interactive components. You can help the cause by knitting for the Red Cross, create poppies or become an ace fighter pilot with the Army Air Service. In association with the exhibit, Mankato YWCA Executive Director, Barb Dorn, will speak about the transforming role of women through the historical lens of the YWCA at August’s *History Bits & Bites*.

1918: Home and Abroad is free and open until November 24, 2018. We invite you to transport yourselves back to 1918, a turning point in history.



One of several Liberty Loan posters on display.



Members of Mankato High School's Junior Red Cross



1918: HOME and ABROAD

In 1918 the newspaper headlines were consumed with the Great War and an epidemic, but so much more was happening at home and abroad.

**Blue Earth County
History Center**

July 7 - Nov. 24

Free

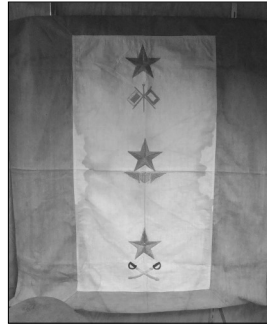


Every object has a story...

At the Blue Earth County History Center, the objects showcased tell the varied stories of Blue Earth County's past. Every object has a different story—who owned it, how it was made, where it came from. Here is a closer look at some items currently on display in the new exhibit, *1918: Home and Abroad*.

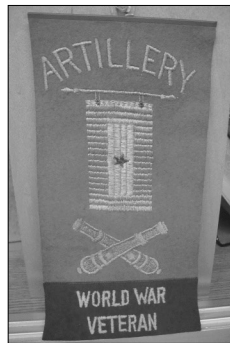
Blue Star Flag, 1918

Belonged to Benjamin F. Edmondson, Blue Earth County's first Veterans Service Officer. The Blue Star Flag was designed and patented by WWI Army Captain Robert L. Queisser of the 5th Ohio Infantry who had two sons serving on the front line in 1917. Blue Stars were displayed in the homes of people who had family serving in the military.



U.S. Service Flag

Donated by the American Legion Lorentz Post 11. This small felt Service Flag is a variation of a Blue Star Flag. It is a World War I Veteran's window banner. Note the crossed cannons representing the field artillery.



Mess Kit, 1918

Belonged to Paul H. Thew of Vernon Center. Corporal Paul Thew was in the 28th Infantry Band. The detailed decoration on his mess kit is an example of trench art, which is art made from ordnance or military equipment from the Great War. The pieces were made as personal souvenirs for family members back home on a soldier's down time. It is engraved with his name "P. H. Thew" and "28" Inf. Band."



For a closer look at these items and more, take a spin around the History Center and discover a little more of the story.

HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

Since 2006

By Rachel Compart-Gemlo
July 7 - September 27, 2018



Owl Family

Through works in paint and on paper, artist Rachel Compart-Gemlo, tells the story of the unfolding life of an artist, working woman, wife and mother. Photographs along with multi-media color works on wood and paper show choices made as life changes.

Rachel is a young mother, wife, preschool teacher and artist. Her exhibit looks back over the last 12 years, examining where her attentions have been, her experimentation with styles and materials, and what she considers success through the multiple changes in her life from student to mother and educator. These days, Rachel finds herself making art at home with all her boys and at work with her students!



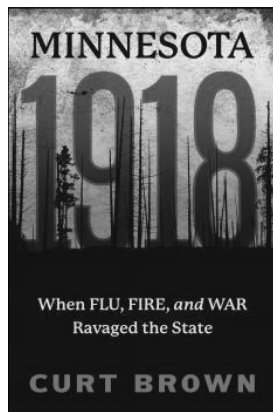
Gift Shop & Art Gallery News

By Danelle Erickson, Development Manager

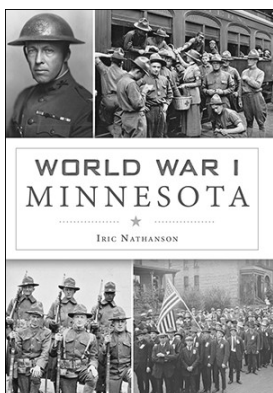
Minnesota in 1918

To accompany the current exhibit *1918: Home and Abroad*, the Gift Shop has some great 1918 titles:

Minnesota, 1918: When Flu, Fire and War Ravaged the State by Curt Brown. The *Flu* was the influenza epidemic which killed over 10,000 Minnesotans alone. *Fire* destroyed thousands of acres in the northeastern part of the state. *War* saw over 100,000 men and women from Minnesota in service, almost 4,000 who did not return. A remarkable story of survival and loss. Hardcover, \$24.95.



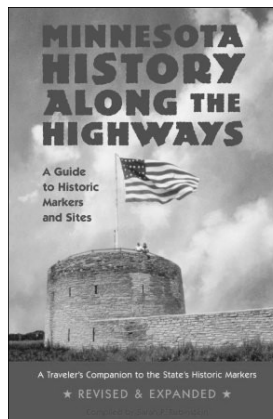
Food Will Win the War: Minnesota Crops, Cooks, and Conservation During World War I takes a close look at the efforts Minnesotans made at home as they did their part in helping the war effort. Paperback, \$19.95



World War I Minnesota by Iric Nathanson includes conflicted loyalties, politics, industries and more. Paperback, \$21.99.

Hitting the Road

Planning a Minnesota road trip this summer? Stop by the Gift Shop before you go for some fun travel guides. Ever wonder what all of those roadside historic markers say, but don't have time to stop at every one of them? Then *Minnesota History Along the Highways* is the book for you! Plan your route, read about the people and events along the way and plan a stop or two to see the markers and monuments of particular interest to you.



Or maybe you are looking for something a little deeper—six feet deep to be exact! *Six Feet Under: A Graveyard Guide to Minnesota* includes not only the burial places for 375 notable Minnesotans, but also some interesting facts about each individual.

Other Gift Shop travel titles include: *Pocket Guide to Minnesota Place Names* and *Minnesota Open House*. Paperback, \$11.95-17.95.

On the Map

The Gift Shop currently has available a number of individual historic Blue Earth County township maps. Multiple and good condition copies of these map books are preserved in the BECHS Archives. The pages in the Gift Shop come from books in poor condition and with the approval of the donor. These individual pages can be a great family history resource and also look great framed on the wall. Select 1914 and 1929 pages are currently available for \$9.95-14.95. To reference the full plat map, visit the Research Center.



Cambria township, 1929

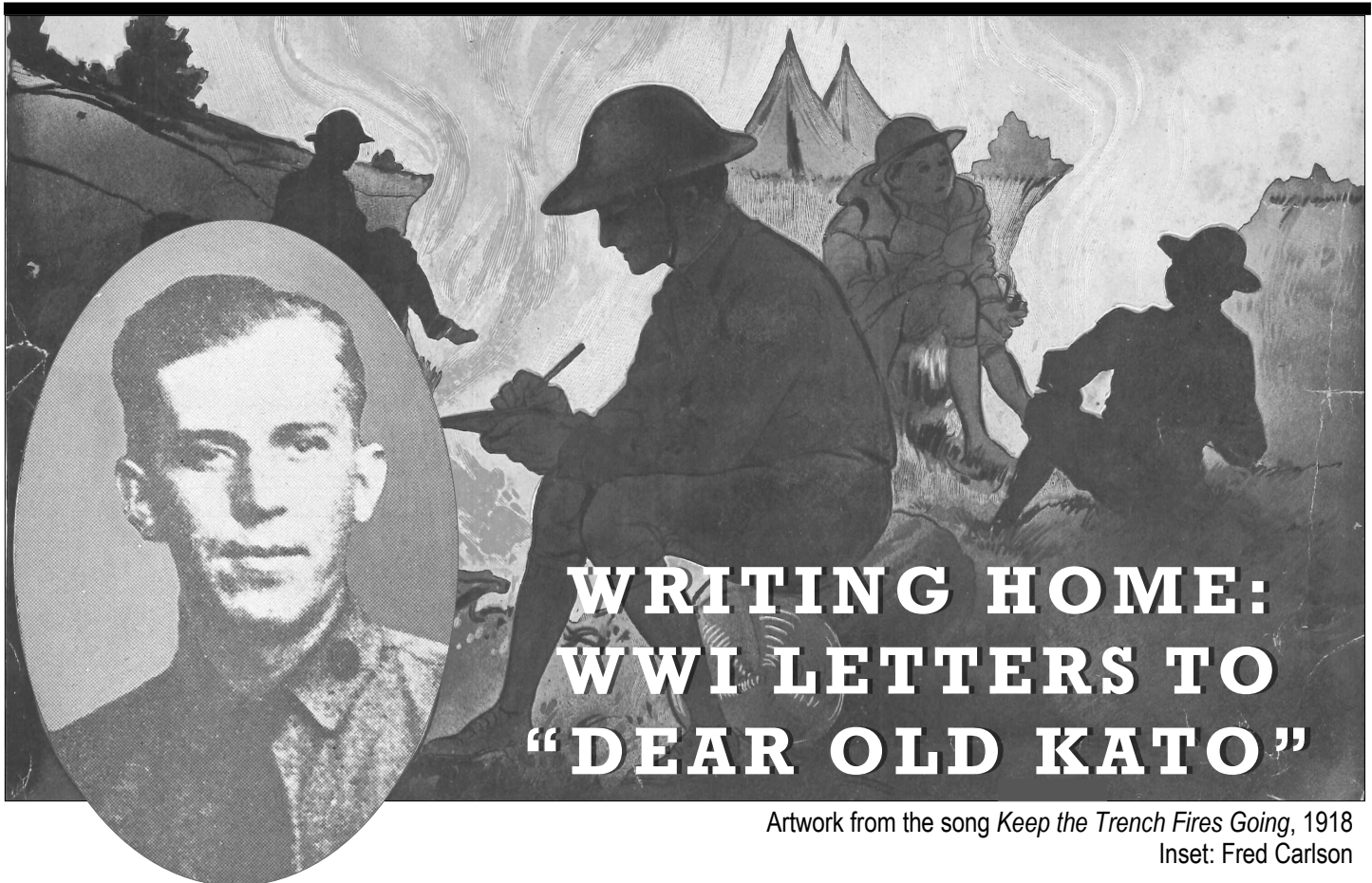
Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints



Misty Gray

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. Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints are available exclusively at the History Center and online at MarianAnderson.com.

**100% of All Sales
Benefit the Historical Society**



WRITING HOME: WWI LETTERS TO “DEAR OLD KATO”

Artwork from the song *Keep the Trench Fires Going*, 1918
Inset: Fred Carlson

By Danelle Erickson

Of the many millions of letters mailed by soldiers during World War I, only a relative few are preserved in the Archives of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Of those letters, about 125 of them were written by Fred Carlson to his parents and sister in Mankato. In these letters is found a young man, eager to do his part in the war while missing his family and “dear old Kato.”

Fred U. Carlson was born in Mankato, Minnesota on March 15, 1894 to Swedish immigrants Charles and Matilda Carlson. He had one younger sister, Helen, and a brother, Albert, who died as a toddler. In his letters home, Fred reassured his mother he was getting along well and in good health. He urged (and at times scolded and even threatened) his father to quit drinking. He encouraged his sister to better herself and take care of Mama.

Most of Fred’s letters were addressed to his sister, knowing she would share them at home. Since their parents’ first language was Swedish, they may have preferred having the English letters read to them. Much of Fred’s spelling was phonetic and included some mixed-up sayings. In several letters, Fred wrote he was feeling “fin” (fine) and “first straight” (first rate). [For easier reading, direct quotes have been edited for spelling.]

In the spring of 1917, Fred enlisted in the Coast Artillery Corps (C.A.C.). He left Mankato on the evening of May 2, 1917. “Never will I forget the sorrowful look on mamma’s face when the train pulled out,” he wrote a year later. While he was proud he enlisted, he sometimes felt overshadowed by the other Mankato boys. “I volunteered” he wrote, and yet the enlisted men didn’t receive anywhere near the attention that was given to the men who were later drafted.

He first went to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri where he was sworn into the United States Army on May 5. The week spent there, training in mud and rain, was “like hell.” He was then sent to Fort Dade, Florida, arriving on May 12. For the next fourteen months, Fred was stationed there, first as part of Company 3 and later Battery B 64 Regiment C.A.C., as part of Florida’s coastal defense.

Fort Dade was on a 2-mile-long island near the mouth of Tampa Bay. The fort was constructed during the Spanish-American War, expanded during World War I and used by the United States Military until 1923. During World War I, Fred and as many as 600 men at any given time called it home. Today, little of the fort remains and the island is part of Egmont Key State Park.

Throughout his service, Fred often asked for things from home. His first request was for \$5 to \$10 as he wouldn't get paid for another few weeks. Other things he asked for were cigars, handkerchiefs, towels, BVD underwear and a watch to replace his that was stolen at Jefferson Barracks. In addition to these requests, Fred was also often sent candy, something he and his bunkmates greatly enjoyed.

While the fort received some of the national newspapers, to Fred there was nothing "like the old Free Press" and he asked his family to send him the paper. Between the papers and countless letters he received from family and friends, Fred was up on all the "Kato" happenings. He remarked on the new bridge and street car, Mr. Salet purchasing the Kron department store and road work on Glenwood Avenue. He knew what local boys were serving and where, who was getting married and other local gossip. He was saddened to learn of the death of Glenn Campbell, the first Blue Earth County soldier to die in the war. Fred and Glenn had become friends during the few days they shared at Jefferson Barracks.

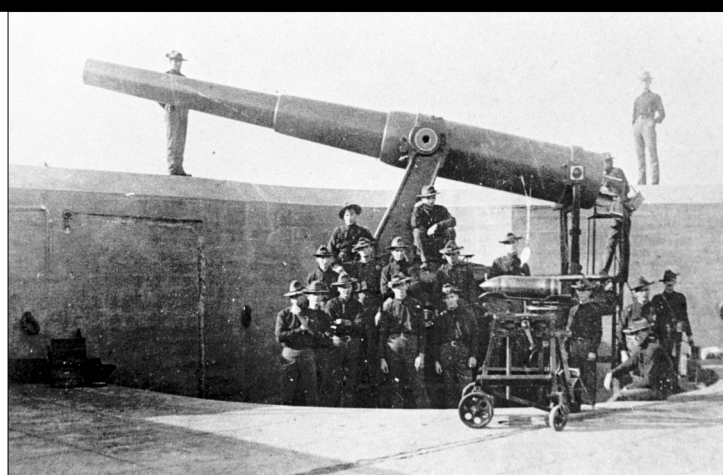
Fred left a sweetheart back in Minnesota named Esther. It may not have been a very serious relationship, but Fred enjoyed her letters and said she was definitely his girl. However, if Fred didn't hear from Esther for a while, he would shrug it off and declare there were "plenty of fish." When his sister scolded him for seeing a girl in Florida and forgetting about Esther, Fred replied that one couldn't blame him for having a good time with a local "swamp girl." Or maybe, he joked, he would find himself a "pretty little doll" to marry if he was ever sent to France.

Ray Chesser was the one other "Kato boy" at Fort Dade. At first, Fred didn't care much for Ray. He thought he was odd and was upset that Ray had never repaid a small debt owed to him when they were in Mankato. But before long, Fred came to forgive and forget his misgivings towards Ray. They often spent free time together and hoped to serve together for a while.

By August 1917, Fred and Ray were working in the Fort Dade Post Exchange. Selling goods, keeping records and taking inventory kept the two men busy. Fred's sergeant said he was one of the best he



Ray Chesser



Battery McIntosh and gun crew, Fort Dade. Courtesy of Manatee County Public Library Historical Digital Collections

had ever worked with in the exchange. Before enlisting, Fred worked as a carpenter and mason and helped his father move houses. Once a common laborer with little hope of change, Fred recognized the benefits his military experience was giving him. "What did I know about clerking in a store when I was home?" he wrote. He worked there until January 1918 when he was transferred to a new company, Battery B 64th Artillery.

Fred was happy to report home on various pay increases, passing his gunner exam and working to improve his marksmanship. One day at inspection, the battery commander called Fred "a perfect soldier" and had him step out in front of the men to show the proper way to wear their hats.

No letter home would be complete without a comment on the weather. The heat and rain on the island was a constant complaint for Fred, although swimming in February and not having to deal with snow was a definite positive. But there was nothing good about the Florida mosquitoes. They were the biggest he had ever seen and as bad as any regiment of men!

Another common topic was his health. In many of the letters, he assured his family he was in great health. Minor ailments such as skin irritation from the sand, headaches from the sun and occasional boils were mentioned. In August 1917, an order was made that all the men should have their tonsils removed. But Fred was a "lucky bird" because he didn't have any tonsils! His friend Ray, on the other hand, was in the hospital for at least a week after having his removed.

Fred seemed to enjoy the food at the fort and would sometimes include the menu in his letters home. One Sunday meal included vegetable soup, sweet potatoes, sweet corn, steak, gravy, bread,

butter and lemon pie. He ate too much, he wrote, but figured after a cigar and some football with Ray, all would be well. Not everything was to Fred's taste, however, especially beans which the men called "light artillery."

Almost since the time Fred arrived at Fort Dade, there were rumors the men would soon be sent to France. But weeks and months went by, with little to do but daily drills and occasional guard duty. Fred feared the war would end, he would return home and have nothing more to tell about his war experience than sitting at Fort Dade.

After almost a year at the fort, Fred admitted he had trouble writing home. He could easily write letters to friends and extended family with little trouble because he could fill the lines with "bull." But in writing to his parents and sister, there wasn't much new to write and he didn't want to cause them worry and pain with talk of the war.

Finally, by June 1918 it was looking like the company would soon leave Florida. They had begun overseas preparation with first aid and artillery training. In one of his most detailed letters, Fred wrote in length about the three different gases the Germans were using and the effects each had on their victims—a letter that probably did nothing to lessen the worry felt at home.

By June 20, 1918, it was certain Fred and his fellow soldiers would be leaving Fort Dade. Their footlockers were packed, their mail was being censored and daily health inspections had begun. About two weeks later, Fred and the 64th Artillery C.A.C. were on their way to Camp Upton, NY and on July 14, Private 1st Class Fred Carlson was aboard the ship *Khyber*. The troops were in England at the end of July and by mid-August they were "somewhere in France" with the American Expeditionary Forces.

While in France, Fred stayed in an old stone

house and, as a former mason and house mover, he was impressed with the old building. He found the locals were kind and wished he could speak French. The soldiers found they were especially popular with the children who hoped for a share of the Americans' cigarettes. Everyone smokes, Fred observed, even the 3- and 4-year-olds.

Even in France, Fred wanted to stay connected to news about his fellow soldier boys from home, asking his family if they had updates on various friends and relatives. When he happened to meet up with Mankato's Harold Jorgensen, who had been serving on the front, they greeted each other with an excitement usually reserved for family.

In a letter written September 1, Fred once again remarked on his health saying, "I couldn't feel any better than I am at present time, being everything seems to go in my favor such as having good health." Unfortunately, this good health wouldn't last.

Fred's final letter in the BECHS Archives is dated September 8, 1918. He had considered going into town, but decided to write home instead. This may have been the last letter he wrote home. He contracted pneumonia and died on September 27, 1918. After the war, Fred's remains were the first of Mankato's fallen to return home for burial. He was buried on September 26, 1920 in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Mankato. Ray Chesser was one of his pallbearers.

One can only imagine the pain his family felt over losing their son and brother, but hopefully they could look back and find comfort in the words he sent home. On March 15, 1918, Fred's 24th birthday, he found himself wondering what the next year would bring. He wrote that for his next birthday he might be "somewhere in France or gone forever out of this world. If it is to be, I guess it's the way I am supposed to meet my last days on this earth by doing my little part for our country, not only me but thousands and millions doing the same for the next generation after us for liberty and freedom."

Sources:

Ancestry.com "U.S., Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939"

Blue Earth County, Minnesota in the World War, 1920.

Letters from Blue Earth County Historical Society Archives

Photograph courtesy of Manatee County Public Library Historical Digital Collections

Various articles from the *Mankato Free Press*.



Fred Carlson

BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen

Blue Earth County Historical Society volunteers help in many different ways: gardening, giving tours, cataloging photographs, just to name a few. One of the more unique tasks, however, was recently taken on by a couple volunteers who offered to literally be the arms and legs of the *1918: Home and Abroad* exhibit. Using plastic wrap and packing tape, they created make-shift body forms for World War I soldiers. Stop by the 1918 exhibit and see their hard work in creating the soldier in the trench.

Volunteers creating a
World War I trench



Volunteer Opportunities

BECHS at the County Fair

The Blue Earth County Fair at the fairgrounds in Garden City will be held July 26-29. BECHS volunteers are needed to greet visitors, help with displays and activities and promote the Historical Society. Also needed are volunteers who have experience with old hand tools and building techniques to assist with hands-on activities. 2- or 3-hour shifts available throughout the fair. Sign-up at the History Center or visit signup.com/go/VKrMcQn

Gardeners

The gardens around the History Center are growing fast! Volunteers are urgently needed to help with cleaning flower beds, weeding and general upkeep. Flexible schedule. All gardeners are welcome.

Education Support Committee

Looking for volunteers to join an Education Support Committee that will work to evaluate and implement new K-6 opportunities and to coordinate and conduct focus groups with K-6 teachers. We are looking for teaching backgrounds or experience in education.

Education/Classroom Activities

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

Development Committee

Oversees public understanding of our mission and acquires financial support for its programs with a focus on annual fundraising drive, membership drive, and member and donor cultivation. Committee will meet regularly beginning soon.

Facilities Committee

Looking for individuals interested in developing three-year building maintenance and improvement plans for the History Center and Hubbard House. Committee will meet regularly beginning soon.

History Center Receptionist/Gift Shop Attendant

Seeking individual(s) 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.

Technology Assistance

Looking for individual(s) 5-15 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, and Windows Server 2016 is preferred.

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 can be provided. Schedule varies.

Rental Facilitator

Volunteer(s) needed to assist with after-hour rentals of the History Center Meeting Rooms. Volunteer(s) will greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the event and lock-up when done. As-needed basis.

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

Exhibit Research and Design	Marketing Office Work
Graphic Design	Photography
Light Construction	Research
Living History Events	Writing



Around the Research & Genealogy Center

Heather Harren, Communications Manager

Summer is a great time to spend with family. Whether you gather for an annual reunion or meet at the lake once a month, it can be fun to share memories with your family. And think of the stories that are told! Are you writing these stories down or is someone in your family recording them? These stories, once lost, will never be told the same way again.

Oral histories are just as important to a family's story as are vital statistics such as birth and death dates. These stories shine a light on what a person's life was like. Did you have a relative that lived through Prohibition or the Great Depression? What was happening in your life when Elvis died? Are these stories you have heard or maybe have told yourself when anyone would listen?



Photographs and scrapbooks can be great for getting oral histories started. Just open an album and wait for the stories to begin.

Recording them is a great way to pass these stories to the next generation. You can also purchase a memory book to write your own memories to share with your children or grandchildren. Or sit down with a family member and an audio recorder (with their permission) and just talk about what it was like growing up. If you are feeling brave, use a video recorder to also preserve what they looked like at that moment when talking about their life.

If you are unsure what sort of questions to ask, the Research Center has several ideas to help you get the conversation started. We also have audio recorders you may borrow and use to capture the stories. However you need help with oral histories, we are here for you! If the stories relate to Blue Earth County and you feel comfortable sharing them, you can always donate a copy to the History Center for future generations to know what it was like to grow up here!

So as you head out to spend time with family, don't forget the camera, family history or recording device and capture those family memories before it's too late.

WISH LIST

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

Blue Earth County High School Yearbooks
Specifically, all Mankato East or from any school, years 1980 and newer for BECHS archives.

Solid White or Black Cotton Sheets to use for covering historic objects in storage

DVD Player in working condition to use in the Museum

Animal Pelts and Bones for hands-on activities in the Discovery Lab

Keurig K Cups
Any flavor of coffee for our Coffee Nook, used by guests, staff and volunteers.

Garden Tools
New or slightly used trowels, small rakes, garden clippers, weed whip, etc. for volunteer gardeners at the History Center. Gardeners also needed.

Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Where 1900s History Comes to Life

It's that time of year again! The Historic R.D. Hubbard House is open for tours and this summer's Hubbard House assistants, Patti and Kaylee, are eager to take you back in time to the Victorian Era!

Patti Lilienthal just received her B.A. in History from Bethany Lutheran College with minors in Art History and Theatre. The Hubbard House is a perfect place for her to learn more about material culture and the Victorian Era - two of her favorite topics! She will be traveling to China in August for an internship. Patti is excited to take what she has learned at the Hubbard House and apply it to the History Club she plans to start while in China.

Kaylee Mischke just finished her junior year at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where she is majoring in economics with a double-minor in accounting and business administration. With past experience working at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum and Tourist Center in Walnut Grove, MN, Kaylee is excited to explore more of the history of Blue Earth County and learn about those who helped shape it.

Come by for a tour this summer and experience the Victorian lifestyle. All ages are welcome to learn more about the Hubbard family and the impact that they had on our local history. You won't regret taking part in this fun and educational opportunity, so stop on in!



Hubbard House Staff Patti Lilienthal and Kaylee Mischke

See the Hubbard House in a different light with the **Hubbard House Gaslight Series:**

Nooks and Crannies Tour

August 8, 7 p.m.

\$10/adult, \$7/member, \$5/child (5-17)

Enjoy a guided tour of the Hubbard House focused on the fine architectural details and extensive restoration efforts of this 16-room Victorian mansion, considered one of the best examples of Victorian architecture in Minnesota.

6th Annual Medicine Show: Charlatans and Shenanigans

August 18, 1-4 p.m.

Visit the Hubbard House to see what this unique cast of characters is up to this year! Dubious fortune tellers, sly pickpockets and suspicious sales people might be on hand. Discover the colorful schemes they have dreamed up as they entertain you and try and trick you out of your money! Activities take place throughout the afternoon with short performances at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. **FREE**

Save the Date for Christmas at the Hubbard House, December 1 and 2

Hours of Operation

June - August

Friday, Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday 1-4 p.m.

September

Saturday &

Sunday 1-4 p.m.



For Hubbard House updates and tidbits, follow "Hubbard House, Mankato" on Facebook



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***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.

Around Blue Earth County



Rapidan Heritage Society

Visit RHS in the Garberg Cabin at the Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City, July 26-29. The cabin has deep ties to Rapidan Township. Tollov and Johanna Garberg were among the early pioneers to Blue Earth County. They settled in Rapidan Township by the LeSueur River south of Mankato. Using an ox team, they cleared the land and built a log cabin on the banks of the river.

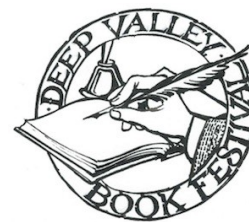
Trained in orthopedic medicine, Tollov spent fall and winter in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin logging camps. Johanna remained at the cabin tending the livestock. They had one daughter, Anna. She married Lars Tronvold. In 1915, Anna gave birth to twin girls weighing under 2 pounds, Eleanor weighed 1.5 pounds and Helen about 2 pounds.

Grandpa Garberg took charge. The cook stove was still warm in the kitchen, so two bread pans were lined with cotton and placed on the open oven door. The babies were made snug in their improvised incubators. Grandpa tended to them unceasingly, turning the pans as necessary to keep the heat even. Eleanor and Helen survived! And so does the cabin. Please stop by when you are at the Fair.

A potluck celebrating National Night Out in Rapidan will be held August 7 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Rapidan Township garage. Bring a dish to pass. All are welcome.

September 8 the Good Thunder Fire Department will host their annual Pork Feed in the Rapidan Township garage from 4-8 p.m. RHS will sell desserts as a fundraiser for caboose repairs.

Deep Valley Book Festival



Are you a book lover? Then you MUST mark your calendar for two great Deep Valley Book Festival events on October 12 and 13, 2018.

Authors & Appetizers Gala, October 12, 5:30 p.m., Mankato Event Center (located in Mankato Mall, free parking in the Cherry Street Ramp).

Join us for an evening of appetizers, wine and tea tastings, music by The Frye, and a live sketch done by award winning artist/illustrator David Geister to be auctioned at the end of the evening. To top off the evening, headline author, Lorna Landvik, performs "Let it Fly," an improvisational comedy show.

Tickets: \$35, pre-sale; limited tickets at the door for \$40. Tickets available at the Blue Earth County History Center or DeepValleyBookFestival.com. Proceeds help keep booth fees low and the book festival free for attendees.

Deep Valley Book Festival - October 13, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mankato Event Center (located in Mankato Mall, free parking in the Cherry Street Ramp). FREE

The festival features dozens of authors, illustrators, literary organizations and publishers. Besides shopping for new books, there will be author talks, prizes, raffle, used book sale, children's activities, snack bar and more!

Booth space is still available for book sellers. Visit the website for information. Register by August 31, 2018 to reserve your booth.

The Deep Valley Book Festival gets its name from the setting of the beloved children's books (*Betsy-Tacy*) written by Mankato-born author Maud Hart Lovelace. The festival connects readers and writers in a celebration of literature and literacy.

For information, including event details, attending authors and illustrators and more, visit www.DeepValleyBookFestival.com.

The Deep Valley Book Festival is sponsored by Minnesota Heritage Publishing with the *Mankato Free Press* as Media Sponsor. Participating non-profits, the Blue Earth County Historical Society and the Carnegie Art Center will receive all raffle proceeds.

Make room for new books with a donation to the used book sale! Books can be dropped off at the Blue Earth County History Center. Raffle items, such as event tickets, gift cards and service certificates, are also being sought.



Singing of Welsh Hymns

(English and Welsh in 4-part congregational singing)

2018 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival

Sunday, September 23rd at 1:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church, 200 East Hickory, Mankato MN

VISITING CONDUCTOR **PERFORMING CHOIR**
Mari Morgan Southwest Minnesota Men's Chorus

Free Admission and Te Bach (Refreshments) after hymn sing.
For more information about this and other Welsh events, check the website <http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com> and www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation

BECHS Donors, Members & Sponsors

April - June 2018

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A HISTORY HERO!**

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www.LeaveALegacyMankato.org

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

Support local nonprofits through planned giving.
Talk to your attorney or financial advisor about
estate planning and legacy gifts.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society was saddened to have recently lost two very dear friends, Jo-an Lavitschke and Shirley Grundmeier. Not only were both women generous supporters of the Historical Society, but more importantly, they shared their time, talents and hearts with BECHS.

They will be dearly missed.

Thank you to everyone who made donations in their memory and in memoriam and tribute to the other individuals listed on the following page.

Another great lost to BECHS was that of Jim Olson. Jim worked for the Historical Society for over 10 years. We miss his daily visits, with his stories and laughs, as he tended to various things around the History Center.

In Memoriam and Tribute

In Memory of Jim Ario
Patricia Zumwalt

In Memory of Bill Bartell
Darrell & Sandi Garlow

In Memory of Shirley Grundmeier
Wayne and Mavis Anderson
Tim and Lois Berg
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Craig Shirk
Stammtisch Deutsch
Amerikanischer Club
Roger & Beverly Stoufer
Janine and Randy Turbes
Willard Vetter
Beth Zimmer

In Memory of Jo-an Lavitschke
Danny & Pat Anderson
Wayne and Mavis Anderson
Bernard and Marilyn Bastian

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Jo Schultz
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Judy Shkolnick
Stammtisch Deutsch
Amerikanischer Club
Donna Strand
Reyna Taylor
Cindy Thompson
Lindsay Vaughan

In Memory of Tim Royce
Darrell & Sandi Garlow

In Memory of Howard Vetter
Harlan Mehlhop

In Honor of Katherine Hughes
Rebecca Novak
Steve and Steph Stoffel

In Honor of Ellis Jones
Minnesota Welsh Association

Thank you for memorial and tribute gifts to the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

Celebrating the Swinging Sixties

BY SURROUNDED
HISTORY

Surrounded By History, the Historical Society's 7th annual fundraiser was held on April 27. It was a celebration of the 1960s and we had a groovy time!

Guests enjoyed the 1968 traveling exhibit and 1960s photographs, wine wall, silent auction, raffle, photo booth, dinner and dessert. After dinner, XYZ Live entertained us with music from the 60s!

With over \$28,000 raised at the event and over \$150,000 in seven years, *Surrounded By History* continues to raise significant funds for BECHS' special projects.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made the evening memorable. A special thanks to those who came in 1960s attire. You looked fabulous and added something very special to the evening!

Mark your calendar now for *Surrounded By History* 2019 on Saturday, April 27!

Thank you to our Event Sponsors

Gold: Free Press Media, ISG, Neubau Holdings, Wells Fargo Advisors/Wells Fargo Bank, Wingert Realty and Land Services.

Silver: True Facade Pictures

Bronze: Dinsmore Photography, Pub 500, Stinson Leonard Street.



Thank you, XYZ Live, for sharing your talents with us and bringing us the music of the 1960s.

Calendar of Events July - October 2018

JULY

- 19 History Bits & Bites: Al Smith, Vietnam Experience in Drawings** Noon, History Center. *3rd Thursday* \$
- 26 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 26-29 Blue Earth County Fair** Garden City fairgrounds. Visit BECHS at the fair for fun history exhibits and hands-on activities.

AUGUST

- 2 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for "Throwback Thursday"
- 7-10 Kid's History Day Camp: Awesome Women in History**, 9:30 a.m. - Noon each day, History Center \$ See page 4 for details.
- 7 Remember When Coffee Club: My Favorite Park** 10 a.m. History Center, *First Tuesday*.
- 8 Hubbard House Gaslight Series, Nooks and Crannies Tour**, 7 p.m., Hubbard House \$
- 11 Kids Stained Glass Workshop**, 12:30 p.m., Discovery Lab. Ongoing art project, free hands-on activity with Museum admission.
- 16 History Bits & Bites: YWCA Mankato: 90+ Years of Impact in Greater Mankato with Barb Dorn**, Noon, History Center. *3rd Thursday* \$
- 18 Medicine Show: Charlatans and Shenanigans**, 1-4 p.m. with short performances at 1, 2 and 3 p.m., Hubbard House, Free
- 21 Watch KEYC News 12 This Morning** at 6:45 a.m. for a closer look at an artifact from BECHS
- 23 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 24 BECHS Annual Member Appreciation**, 5-7 p.m., History Center. RSVP by August 21.



Have your fortune read at the Medicine Show, August 18, Hubbard House

SEPTEMBER

- 1 History Center Closed**; Labor Day Holiday Weekend; Hubbard House Open
- 4 Remember When Coffee Club: Scary Storms** 10 a.m. History Center, *First Tuesday*.
- 6 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for "Throwback Thursday"
- 8 Young Historians: The American Indians' Wacipi Celebrations**, 10 a.m.-Noon. Free.

- 8 Kids Stained Glass Workshop**, 12:30 p.m., Discovery Lab. Ongoing art project, free hands-on activity with Museum admission.
- 14 1918: Home and Abroad, Readings and Song**, 7 p.m. History Center. \$
- 18 Watch KEYC News 12 This Morning** at 6:45 a.m. for a closer look at an artifact from BECHS
- 20 History Bits & Bites: Michael McLaughlin and the History of Blue Earth County Veterans Service**, Noon, History Center. *3rd Thursday* \$
- 21-23 Mahkato Wacipi Pow Wow**, visit BECHS in the Education Tent; visit www.mahkatowacipi.org for more information
- 27 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 30 History and Painting at the Falls: Plein Air Day** at Minneopa State Park, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m.
- 30 Hubbard House closes for the season**

OCTOBER

- 2 Remember When Coffee Club: My First Job** 10 a.m. History Center, *First Tuesday*.
- 4 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for "Throwback Thursday"
- 13 Young Historians: The American Indians' Winter Survival**, 10 a.m.-Noon. Free.
- 13 Kids Stained Glass Workshop**, 12:30 p.m., Discovery Lab. Ongoing art project, free hands-on activity with Museum admission.
- 13 Deep Valley Book Festival**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Mankato Event Center.
- 17 History Book Club**, 7-8 p.m. History Center. *3rd Wednesday*
- 18 History Bits & Bites: Service Dogs and Their History** Noon, History Center. *3rd Thursday* \$
- 25 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
- 25-26 Ghosts from the Past: Victorian Stranger Things**, 6-8 p.m. Hubbard House. Performances start every 15 minutes with the last one beginning at 8 p.m. Tickets on sale October 16.

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 at www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Connect
- Follow BECHS on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

\$=Admission Charged

Membership Makes a Difference

The BECHS Annual Member Appreciation is always a great evening at the History Center. It is a chance for the Historical Society to celebrate and honor some of our favorite people - Our Members!

The evening will include a return of the popular History Center scavenger hunt, a fun way to take a different look at this organization and the history you help save and share. And you won't want to miss the new *1918: Home and Abroad* exhibit. It is an exhibit completely created by BECHS and our collection, meaning it gives us a chance to show artifacts not usually on display—artifacts you help preserve!

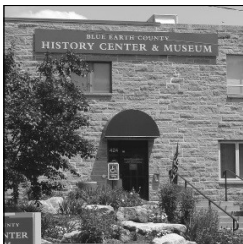
Please RSVP by August 21. Light supper is included.

Not a BECHS member? Join today!

Member Referral Program—NEW!

One of the best ways members help BECHS grow is by telling family, friends and neighbors about the Historical Society. Now, when current members refer a new member, you will both automatically receive 2 extra months added to your annual membership!

Share a copy of *The Historian* or bring someone to an event and personally invite them to become a member. All they need to do is include the name of who referred them and you both get 2 additional months of membership.



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 _____

☐ I'm a new member referred by _____

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

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

Annual BECHS Member Appreciation

**Friday, August 24
5-7 p.m.
History Center**

Join us for:

- *Appreciation meal*
- *Door prizes*
- *An unique journey around the History Center to discover what your membership support makes possible*
- *Member-only specials in Gift Shop*
- *1918: Home and Abroad exhibit*



Together We're Making History!

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com or call 507-345-5566.

SAVE THE DATE Ghosts From the Past

Victorian Stranger Things



The morbid, eerie
and bizarre
customs of the
Victorian Era

**October 25
and 26, 2018
6 - 8 p.m.
Hubbard House**

Tickets go on sale October 16.
Visit www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com
for details.



Blue Earth County Historical Society

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