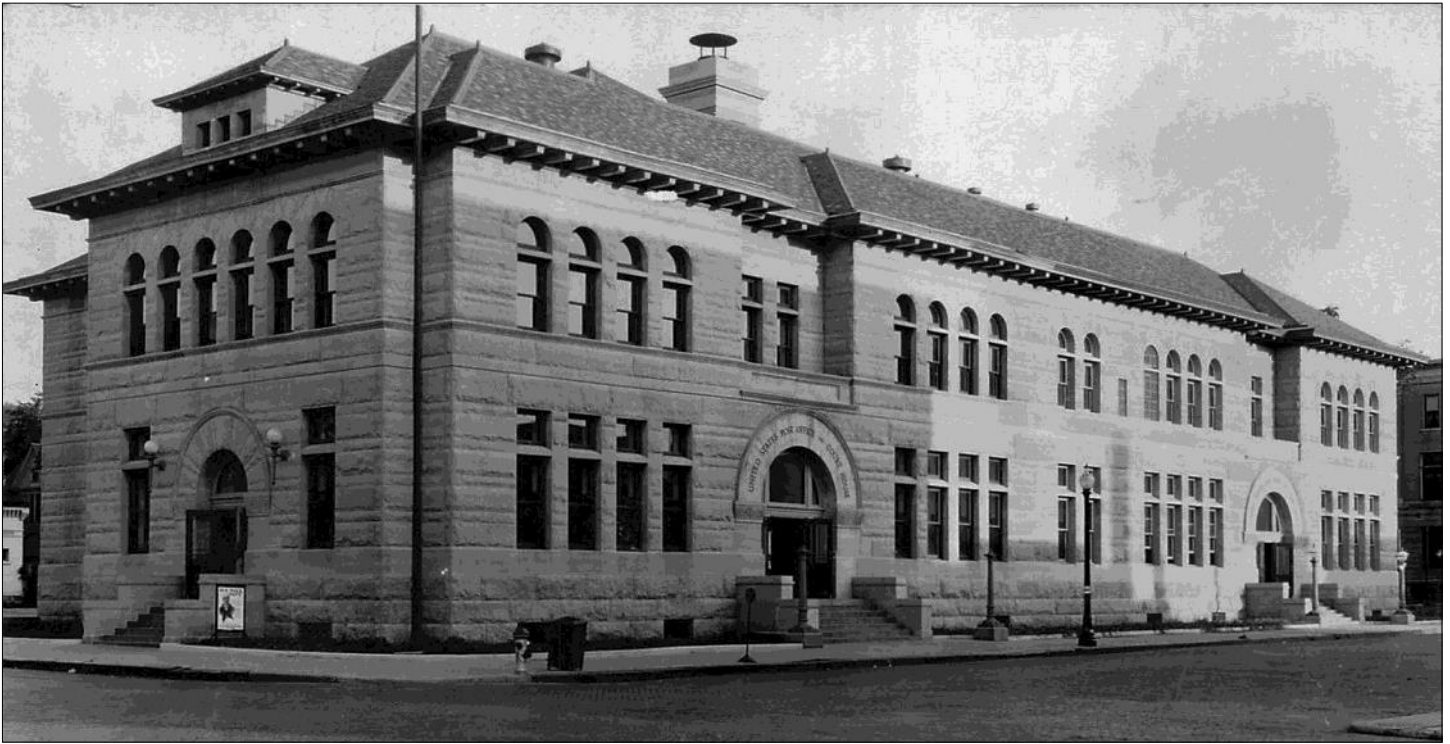


THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIAN

Summer 2019

A Blue Earth County Historical Society Publication

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Mankato Post Office and Federal Courthouse, c. 1935

History of a Local Landmark: The Mankato Post Office and Federal Courthouse

By Tim Pulis

The Mankato Post Office and Federal Courthouse building is at the top of the list in Blue Earth County for being a historic and architecturally significant structure. Its importance in our everyday lives, however, is starting to dwindle. In this era of email, texting and online bill pay the post office is, instead, starting to gain a sense of nostalgia. Perhaps you felt the same sadness I did when it was announced three years ago the post office building in Mankato was for sale. In case you didn't get the memo, \$1.6 million dollars is the asking price and it appears to be a firm amount. The good news is that it is on the National Register of Historic Places. The bad news is it doesn't require the buyer to maintain the historical integrity of the building.

As I thought of the slow demise of the post office building, I started to develop a curiosity about the history and the town's connection to the 124-year-old building. When I decided to write an article about it, the first thing I needed was to get to know the building first-hand. It took some doing, including permission from the higher-ups, but in February

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Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
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606 South Broad Street, Mankato
507-345-4154
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The Blue Earth County Historian

Summer 2019

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

Greetings from the History Center. It has been a busy and exciting summer with many changes around the History Center. As many of you are aware, we have undertaken a major construction project—a new roof. This is one of the largest investments in the building in over 25 years. It's not super glamorous or flashy, but will have a lasting impact on the future of history. The new roof will not only make the building water-tight, but also more energy efficient. A tapered insulation system was also added and vacated skylights and vents have been removed. Sorry, no roof tours to see what's been done!

This project was also very exciting in the financial support from both private and public donations. Half of the project cost was funded through the Edward McLean Legacy Fund, \$80,000 from the City of Mankato and \$40,000 raised from individuals and businesses. Thank you to everyone who supported this capital improvement project and helped us reach our goal. If you would like to learn about additional building projects and financial needs, please reach out any time, I would love to chat.

The next time you visit the History Center, you will notice a new reception area. Thanks to our friends at Drummer Companies we have a new-to-us receptionist desk. We have been looking for a solution for this space since 2014, so it was nice when the opportunity to fulfill this wish came along. And special thanks to Randy Dinsmore, Ward Bros. Construction, Larry Kortuem and Tom Loeffler for moving the desk.

Like I said, it's been a busy and exciting summer so far, but there's more to come. Looking for a unique way to spend a summer evening? The Mankato Brewery will be releasing a new beer inspired by Prohibition and the shady lady from South Bend. Join us on Saturday, August 24 for The Shady Lady Speakeasy at the Museum beer release party. The evening will include the new brew (one sample with ticket), cash bar, music, appetizers and another great reason to wear your 20s best! And who knows, maybe the shady lady will stop by too.

Also, check out the calendar of events on page 14 for all of the great things planned for the upcoming months. So much to do, so much to see! Be a tourist in your own backyard this summer and visit the History Center and Hubbard House! There's always something new around every corner.

POST OFFICE Continued from page 1

2019, Shelley Harrison (BECHS Archivist) and I met maintenance supervisor, Robert Miller, in the post office lobby for a private tour.

The two-hour tour was beyond our wildest expectations as we went into virtually every corner of the building, from the basement to the attic.

Miller was amazing in his knowledge of the building and the changes that had occurred throughout its existence.

What was missing during our tour, of course, was people. It was like a ghost town, especially the second floor, with very few workers there and none of the public. I had already done some research at the Blue Earth County Historical Society and this helped me to imagine what a work day at the post office during the 1950s, for example, might have been like. With the many activities that entail running a post office, things would have been humming all day. Each morning, city and rural mail carriers sorted their mail routes in the basement. Clerks filled hundreds of mail boxes with letters and bills or helped the public at the four service windows. There was a bustling of patrons in the lobby getting their mail and stopping to pass along some hot gossip. In the northwest corner of the lobby, a blind man sold cigars, newspapers and candy.

Moving upstairs, there were two federal courtrooms and many federal offices. If there were cases tried in both courtrooms, it would mean a judge, jury, defendant, defense attorney, prosecutor, U.S. marshal, court reporter, clerk of court, viewing public and whoever else was necessary for a trial in each courtroom. The federal offices located on the second and third floors would include recruiters for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, as well as the Selective Service, Farm Credit Administration, Farm Security Administration, IRS Agent, IRS Collector,



Present day courtroom, used for bankruptcy hearings. Photo courtesy of Shelley Harrison.

Post Office Inspector, Social Security Administration, Treasury Department Investigator and the 113th CIC Detachment Field Office. The latter was a division of the United States Army called the Counter Intelligence Corps. What they were doing in Mankato is a topic of some future research. During the 1950s, there was just one stairway and no elevator. One can only imagine the foot traffic that would have gone on throughout the day.

There were three major building projects in the life of the post office building. In 1896 the original building was completed along with its prominent clock tower. In 1932 the size of the original building was more than doubled and the clock tower taken down. In 1965 the work area and loading dock on the back side of the building was greatly expanded. We will look into each of these areas in detail. In any historical research I try to find people living today with ties to the past to add some interest. For this project, I found that person in Willard Vetter. He is 92 years old and was the owner of Vetter Stone Company for many years. When he found out I was researching the history of the post office building, he gave me a call and told me to pick him up for a ride.

Even though Willard is legally blind, he wanted to give me a tour of the exterior of the Post Office. Through the years, he had given this tour many times to architects, showing them what a great building material Kasota stone is. Willard is intimately tied through his family to all three phases of the building. Willard's grandfather, Bernard Vetter, was the production supervisor for Breen and Young Co. which supplied the stone for the original building in 1896. When the post office had its big expansion in 1932, Willard's father, Paul Vetter, Sr., supervised the production of the stone for the same company. In 1954 Willard along with his three brothers and father formed the Vetter Stone Company. It was this company that supplied the stone for the 1965 building expansion on the back side. What is noteworthy about the expansion project is that the old and new stone matched perfectly.

From its beginnings, Mankato had a post office. As the City grew, the post office was moved to different locations. By 1890 the City's population growth justified building a larger structure for its post office. Congress was petitioned and it approved money on March 26,

1891. Nearly a year later on February 13, 1892, land was purchased fronting the northwest 140 feet on Second Street and the northeast 158 feet on Jackson Street bounded on the east by a 15-foot alley. The reason it took so long was that there were three properties in contention. Another eight months would go by before the contract to build was awarded on November 19, 1892.

Construction 1893-1896

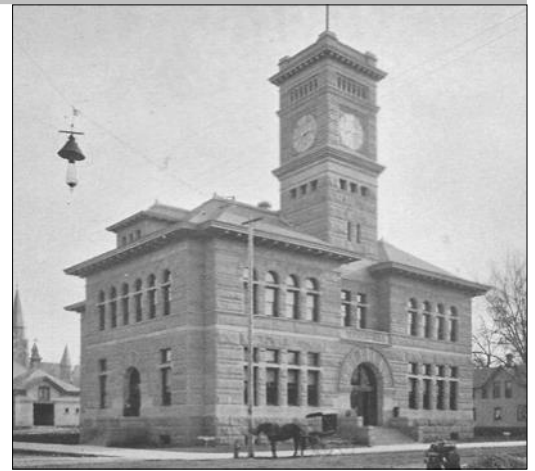
A photo at the Historical Society from June 1893 shows the basement excavation was dug, but tall weeds were taking over the soil indicating work was slow to start. By January 1894, another photo shows the walls were built to only six feet above ground level and the stairs to the front and side doors were set, but things were covered for the winter. Work progressed the next summer but was delayed due to a change of plans to add a clock tower, with further delays over the decision whether to secure the use of Kasota stone for construction of the tower. This building project was definitely not on the fast track.



Excavation and construction, June 30, 1893.

Even as the post office was being built people said it was a mistake that the building was not designed to be much larger. From the time Congress gave the okay for Mankato to build a post office until employees moved in on April 1, 1896, over five years had passed. Despite the lengthy period of construction and doubt about its size, the final product was a handsome stone building built in the Richardsonian Romanesque design. While it was close to the center of the business district, the post office was partially surrounded by houses with one to the south, one

across Jackson Street and three homes across the alley behind the building. With the central clock tower rising to a height of 88



Post Office with its clock tower, c. 1910.

building created a dominant image. There were two main entrances, one on Second Street and the other facing Jackson Street. The basement was ten feet high and the first and second floors were both fourteen feet, four inches high. The first level was entirely devoted to the post office activities, while the second floor had a 48 by 44-foot courtroom and rooms for the judge, clerk of court, marshal, district attorney, grand jury and petit jury.

What made this original building unique was the clock tower rising well above even the upper most roof line. From the center of the top of the tower a flagpole rose to an even greater height. There was a large clock face on all four sides and the timing mechanism was run by water power. At first there were 24 gas jets illuminating all four faces for night viewing. However, after only a week of operation, this was discontinued as the dirty manufactured gas used was drying out the inside woodwork, creating a fire danger and blackening the inside of the dials. It was retrofitted with electricity. Throughout its life span, the clock tower's timing mechanism often needed to be fixed. This required a visit from a repair man from Milwaukee and the ordering of new parts.

Second Phase: 1932-33

Just 30 years after completion of the building, the people of Mankato lobbied their congressional representatives for a bigger post office. This went on for two years until finally Congress passed a \$300,000 appropriation for an expanded post office. Plans were finalized in January 1932 and the contract was awarded to C.H. Peterson and Company of Minneapolis. Mankato's Lundin Co. started excavation on May 13 and by November

there was a roof over the new building. Work progressed rapidly and by late spring 1933, the building was ready for the post office and court to move back, having relocated during the expansion.

A lot was accomplished with this major expansion project. The post office work room doubled in size to 7,700 square feet. There was a full basement under both the old and new sections, which included storage rooms, two new boilers for heating and a new ventilation system for the second-floor courtrooms and corridors. The lobby for the post office was doubled in size and new offices for the postmaster, assistant postmaster, collector of internal revenue, revenue agent and postal inspector were on the first floor.

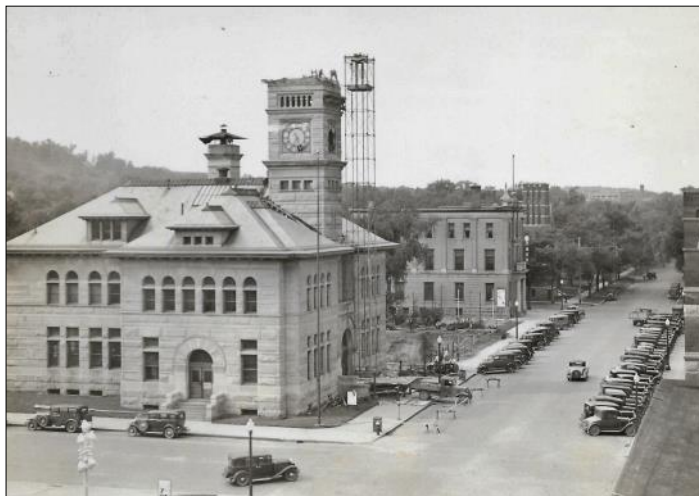
The second floor had another courtroom built and like the existing courtroom, had accompanying judges suites, clerk's office, district attorney's office, two witness rooms, consultation room and two jury rooms. One interesting room was the detention room within the marshal's office. When you look at the front of the building today, it's uniform with the left and right sides matching equally with placement and size of the doors and windows. However, on the second floor, just right of center, is a lone small window (see photo on page 1). When I looked closely at older photos and zoomed in on this window, I noticed that it and the room next to it had bars on them. This was to detain prisoners on trial when their presence was not needed in the courtroom. I stood across the street one day with binoculars and could see evidence on the side of the windows where the bars had formerly been.

Besides all the rooms for courtroom activities, the second floor had a long hallway lined with beautiful mahogany wainscoting. On each side of the hallway were several offices. These were for federal agencies ranging from military recruiters to civil service examiners. More offices were on the third floor. With such a large building, it's hard to believe there was only one stairway between the floors. An elevator was added in 1985.

Security was a common theme for the post office at this time. At various places in the work room were four vaults for storing stamps, money order blanks and other valuables. A locked cage for COD parcels and a cage at the stamp window kept out potential thieves. An enclosed catwalk, suspended above the work room was used by

postal inspectors to watch and make sure post office employees were not stealing any mail. This seven-foot-high enclosure was painted black on the inside and had cork flooring so nobody knew if someone was inside. Foot long slits at regular intervals allowed the inspectors to see every corner of the work space. At some point, those slits were replaced by one-way mirrors.

When the first addition was done in 1933, the goal was that unless you knew where the original 1896 building ended, you couldn't tell where the new construction started. This was achieved by using stone of similar color and using the old techniques to finish it with. Also, the stonework was staggered at the junction. Finally, the old part of the building was washed with steam to make it look new. The late Howard Vetter was quoted as saying, "I defy anyone to know where the original building and the 1930's building started and ended. That's a fine example of the quality of the stone."



Post office expansion and removal of the clock tower, 1932-33.

Third Phase: 1965

The third major renovation was completed in 1965. This was the least dramatic addition and is basically unseen by the casual public and adds nothing of an architectural note. It is on the east side (back) and expanded the work area by 6,000 square feet on the first floor and an equal addition to the basement for storage. The loading docks were expanded to have thirteen places, each with its own overhead door. New boilers and air-conditioning were added. Three wood and brick houses with garages and other buildings fronting

Continued on page 7

BECHS PROGRAMS

Remember When Coffee Club

First Tuesday, 10 a.m., History Center
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 for Remember When Coffee Club.** There is no formal program, just a conversation topic to get the group started. Coffee, tea and light refreshments are provided. Free.

Upcoming Topics

- August 6 - Favorite Restaurants
- September 3 - Favorite Teacher
- October 1 - Big Fires Around Town

Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group

First Saturday, 10 a.m., History Center
Genealogy is a great hobby, but sometimes it helps to talk with others and share successes, tips or brick walls. **Come to the History Center for Talking Ancestors.** There is no formal program, just general topics. Free.


Upcoming Topics

- August 3 - Who is in this photo?
- September 7 - The Genealogy Brick Wall
- October 5- How do I translate this?

Behind the Scenes:
Historic R.D. Hubbard House
Wednesday, August 14, 6 p.m.

Take a unique tour of the Historic R.D. Hubbard House with Curator/Archivist Shelley Harrison exploring the history and restoration of the historic home. Space is limited. BECHS Members \$20/person. Call 507.345.5566 to reserve your spot today.

Save the Date: Behind the Scenes: Textiles, September 17, 6 p.m.



Young Historians

Second Saturday, September – May
10 a.m.-Noon, History Center
Young Historians is a free, monthly, hands-on history workshop for school-age children. This year's theme is "The Story of U.S." Young Historians will explore the founding of the United States traveling through history to present day. This program is geared toward first through sixth grade, but all school-aged children are welcome. Free.

Upcoming Topics

- September 14 - 1700s-1850
- October 12 - 1850s-1900

Special thanks to MinnStar Bank N.A. and Xcel Energy for their support of Children's Programming in 2019

THE SHADY LADY SPEAKEASY
Mankato Brewery Release Party at the Museum

Saturday, August 24, 2019
7 p.m. | History Center
424 Warren Street, Mankato

\$30 | Adults
\$25 | BECHS Members

Shady Lady Saloon Lager Release Party, Appetizers, Music and Cash Bar

1920s Dress is Encouraged!

Sponsored by Tow Distributing

Space is limited. Get your tickets at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com or by calling 507.345.5566



Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Where 1900s History Comes to Life

The Historic R.D. Hubbard House is open for its 23rd season as a Historic House Museum. Stop by the Hubbard House for a guided one-hour tour of the 16-room mansion or attend a special event.

Old Fashioned Medicine Show

August 17, 1-4 p.m.

Step right up to the Medicine Show! Have your fortune read, play a game or two and take in the colorful antics of our cast of fun-loving characters. Activities run throughout the afternoon with special Medicine Show performances at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Free.

Historic R.D. Hubbard House Hours of Operation

June - August

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

Sunday 1-4 p.m.

May & September

Saturday, Sunday

1-4 p.m.



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

POST OFFICE Continued from page 5

Broad Street, east of the post office, were removed and the alley separating them from the post office was abandoned by the City. The area from the back of the post office to Broad Street became a concrete parking lot.

The Future

Although the future of the building is uncertain, the Mankato Post Office and Federal Courthouse continues to be an impressive sight in downtown. Whatever may come, I hope this great structure continues to be a memorable and important part of our community.

Some interesting tidbits about the building:

- In 1930, the 60-foot flag pole, which is still there today, was installed in front of the northwest corner of the building. Before this janitors had to climb a 50-foot ladder from the top of the old clock tower twice a day, even in the dead of winter, to change the flag.
- The original stairway to the second floor was inside the Jackson Street entrance, to the left. In the 1932 construction this became the Postmaster's office. After the removal of this room in 1965, this became an entrance for the handicap ramp built in 1992.
- Sometime prior to 1965, the larger and original courtroom was divided into several offices.
- In 1977, green awnings were placed over the three public entrances.
- The post office building was placed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1980.
- The federal courtroom, on the second floor, has bankruptcy hearings two Wednesdays a month and this is the only time this portion of the building is open to the public.

Sources

Various articles from the *Mankato Free Press*

United States Postal Service Postal Historic Structure Report 11/2014

Oral Interviews with Earl Holmes, Postmaster 1972-1982; James Kirschbaum, Postmaster 1988-2005; and Willard Vetter

Personal notes from private tour of building 02/2019

Singing of Welsh Hymns
(English and Welsh in 4-part congregational singing)
2019 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival
Sunday, September 22nd at 1:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church, 220 East Hickory, Mankato MN

VISITING CONDUCTOR
John Good

PERFORMING CHOIR
Windom Chordhustlers

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

COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS

Shelley Harrison, Curator/Archivist

When it rains, it pours! For several years the History Center, which houses many of the County's one-of-a-kind artifacts, has had a leaky roof here and there, now and then. While none of the leaks have been major, we never knew where the next one might spring up. There was a leak in the book collection room last spring. Luckily, it wasn't above a shelf of books. Then there were a couple spots in the Museum. Again, we were fortunate that only the carpet got wet and not any of the exhibit displays. Leaks were patched and we would breathe a sigh of relief that no real damage was done to any artifacts. But every time there was a heavy rain or rapid snow melt, we would be ready with buckets and tarps. What we really needed was a new roof. This summer, we got just that!

Schwicker's started construction on the new roof in May and then we had a spring rain, not a lot but just enough to cause us panic. We started searching for wet spots. Unfortunately we found one! This time it was in Collections Storage and a quilt box was the victim. It appeared water had found its way in through a crack by a light fixture and had slowly dripped and pooled on the box lid. The box lid had a definite dip in it. The lid absorbed most of the water so we did not hear a pinging water drip or see water on the floor.

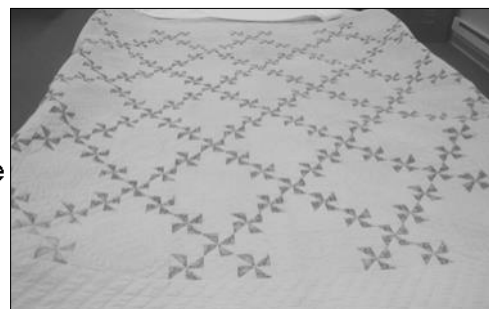
We discovered the damaged box almost by accident. My heart sank. How many quilts in the box were damaged? What history have we lost? We opened the box to find only the top quilt was slightly damaged. There were three other quilts stored within the box, all separated by their own layer of tissue paper.

We examined the damaged quilt, finding three water stains in each of the folded sections of the quilt. With help from our textile expert, Grace Keir, we worked to carefully, slowly and delicately remove the water stain. It took a lot of man-hours, but the stains have been almost completely removed. Yay!

It could have been a lot worse. We consider

ourselves lucky it was only one box and it was a cotton quilt and not the silk ribbon crazy quilt. These objects are irreplaceable and without them, the stories would be gone forever. Most of our 22,600 objects are stored in boxes, as well as photographs, archives and books. If you have any questions about how we store our artifacts, or if you would like to make a donation to replace damaged boxes, please get in touch.

I would like to thank those who graciously donated money for the roof. By doing so you are helping preserve these objects and save our history.



The damaged quilt belonged to Dr. Lida Osborn. Read more on this remarkable woman below.

Dr. Lida Osborn

Dr. Lida Osborn was born in Mankato and graduated from Mankato High School in 1894. She attended the University of Minnesota and came back to Mankato to start her medical practice in 1900. She was one of the founding physicians who organized the first Clinic in Mankato.

Her quilt, now part of BECHS collection, was pieced together in 1900 and quilted in 1918 by Methodist Women of Princeton. This bed-size quilt has pinwheel blocks in red and white cotton with medallions quilted in plain squares. It was given to Dr. Lida Osborn by her godmother, Lida Warfield, for whom she was named.

If you would like to see the Osborn Quilt, stop in and we would be happy to show you just one of the many objects we store under our new roof.

EVERY OBJECT HAS A STORY...

In the Blue Earth County Historical Society's collections, we have objects that tell the stories of Blue Earth County's past. While these objects are quite diverse, only about ten percent of the collection is on display at any given time. Sometimes it's hard to know what stories to tell! Here is just a glimpse into the gallery and postal service objects on display:

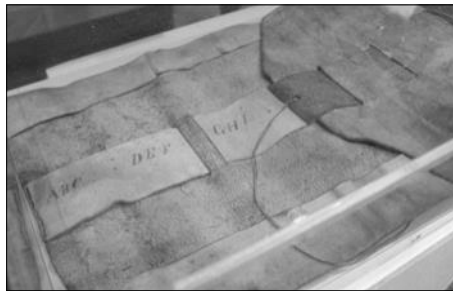
Slant-Top Desk, 1880s

This walnut desk was made and used by the Danville Township Postmaster John C. Laurisch from 1879 to 1887.



Mail Portfolio, 1894

This leather portfolio with ties and slots to sort the mail alphabetically. It belonged to Parson King Johnson, the first Mankato Postmaster and one of the founders of Mankato.



Mail Slot Cubby cabinet, 1920s

This hotel lobby mail box is from the Burton Hotel, located on North Second St. in Mankato. Hotel guest room keys, as well as telegrams and mail could be found in these "pigeon holes" for those guests who stayed more than one night.



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

HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

A FOURTH GENERATION QUILTER

by Grace Keir

July 6 - September 28, 2019

The History Center is excited to showcase the artistry of local quilter and BECHS textile volunteer Grace Keir titled: *A Fourth Generation Quilter*. Keir explains, "My mother, grandmother and great grandmother were all quilters. I have an example of their quilts. Although they made bed quilts, I prefer to make small quilted projects using new techniques and non-traditional patterns. As a member of the Deep Valley Quilters, I am inspired by the skills of the members."

This colorful collection can be found on display at the History Center now through September.



Red Kaleidoscope

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April–June 2019

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In Memory of
Allen Torgerson
Michael Frederick

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

SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

A NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

Cheers to everyone
who made the
7th Annual
Surrounded By
History a night to
remember!



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Thank to the BECHS donors who supported our new roof!

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Gary Garlick
Audrey Gatchell
Jane Griffiths
Jane Haala
John & Betty Hallman
Kathryn T. Hanson
Marcella Harren
Michael Heavener
Jim & Pat Hoehn
William Hoehn
Corey & Robert Hugg
Katherine Hughes
Sue Hytjan
John Isch
Lyle & Kay Jacobson
Steve & Kimie Jansen
Maurine Johnson
Ellis Jones
Helen Jones
Ann Kalvig
Wynn & Ginnette Kearney
Chuck & Kait Klammer
Catherine Klugherz
Denise & Mike Kunkel
Sally Lamont
Chris Larson & Michelle May
William E. Lass
Bob & Eloise Layman



Celebrating the completion of the roof and keeping history safe!

Maggie Maes
Mary McCom b
Byron & Karen McGregor
Harlan Mehlhop
Rosemary Mock
Patricia Morrow
Catherine Neitge
Richard & Kristine Norland
Rebecca Novak
Neil Nurre & Dr. Janet Cherrington
Linda & Jerry Nussbaumer
Mike Oberle
Patricia F. Orne
Chuck & Kathy Piehl
Shirley Piepho
Margaret Preska
William D. Radichel Foundation
Carol Rath
Jerry & Judy Reich
Richard Reisdorf
Eunice Sassenberg
Karl Sassenberg
Joan Schmitz
Jim Schramm
Richard Schulz
Peter & Lisa Schwamberger
Florence Sheppard
Evelyn Solo
Karen Spangler
Roger & Beverly Stoufer
Judith Strobel
Nadine Sugden
Betsy Sundquist
Leon Tacheny
Brett & Gretchen Taylor
Terry & Kay Tompkins
Dana Truebenbach
Paul & Kristin Vogel
Leo & Judy Voss
Greg & Donnette Wheelock
Vee Williams
Ken & Linda Wilmes
Mark Wood
Randy Zellmer

VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for something new to do? Consider volunteering with BECHS! There are many ways you can get involved; below are just a few. Call or visit the History Center to learn more or to get started, sign-up online at www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/volunteer

- **Hubbard House Tour Guides and Assistants** are needed this summer to give tours and/or assist in the Carriage House. New guides are welcome! Training is provided.
- **Adopt a Garden!** BECHS has 7 garden spaces available for "adoption" at the History Center. Pick a garden and throughout the season it will be yours to tend to. Gardens vary in size and work needed. Great for individuals or families.
- **History Writers** to research and write articles on local history. Resources are available in the Research Center and topics are often left open to the writer.
- **Archives Processor** to catalog and number items such as photographs. Must have small, precise handwriting. While the hours are flexible, BECHS asks you commit to a minimum of 2 hours a week, for at least six months.
- **Rental Hosts** to assist meeting room evening and weekend rentals, stay on-site during the event and lock-up when done. Schedule varies.
- **Visitor Services Attendant** to tend the front reception desk, greeting visitors and answering general questions. Training is provided.
- **Committee Members:** Now accepting new members for the Development Committee and Special Events Committee.

RESEARCH & GENEALOGY CENTER

Heather Harren, Communication & Archives Manager

I recently learned the vital records usually available at the Blue Earth County Government Center won't be accessible until Fall 2020, due to remodeling at the government center. For those looking for official birth, death and marriage documents, this could be a challenge.

While the Research Center can't provide the official documents you may need if applying to a lineage society, for example, we do have resources that can provide much of the same information—and more! Many obituaries list birth, marriage and death dates and can be easily found through the Research Center's card catalog and obituary books. If an older obituary doesn't list all that information, we can turn to census records for approximate birth years and places.

While dates and places are essential for genealogists, it is the stories that make a person. Many family stories can be found in obituaries or in the Research Center's surname files. These files contain articles about personal achievements, accomplishments as well as

business history. What great information about the people in your family!

Another great resource are marriage announcements. BECHS' volunteers are compiling a list of marriages from the *Mankato Free Press*. Some announcements didn't appear in the newspaper until over a month after the wedding as couples waited to get their photographs back. This can present a challenge for researchers, but this index will make it much easier to locate marriage announcements.

Next time you think about your relatives and want to know more about them, stop by the Research Center!



Marriage announcements might include photos, guest lists and detailed descriptions of the decorations, food and the wedding attire of the bride and groom.

THANK YOU.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LOCAL MEDIA PARTNERS

Watch KEYC News 12 at Noon the first Thursday for "Throwback Thursday" and at 6:30 a.m. the third Tuesday for "History To Go"

Listen to KTOE 1420 AM Talk of the Town with Lisa Kaye the 4th Thursday

Check out The Free Press for regular updates including Sunday's *Glimpses of the Past*.

100 YEARS & A MILLION STORIES A History of the American Legion Honoring the Veterans of Blue Earth County and Lorentz Post 11



Free Exhibit
Through August 30, 2019
Blue Earth County
History Center
424 Warren Street, Mankato

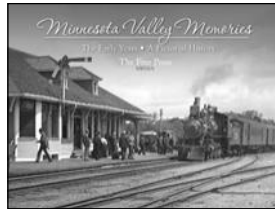
BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

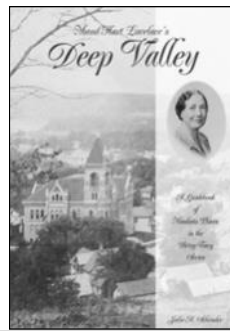
Danelle Erickson, Operations Manager

We've all heard the phrase, "A picture's worth a thousand words." If that's true, then the books in the History Center Gift Shop are worth millions of words! Here are a few of the Gift Shop's books that let the photos do the talking.

Minnesota Valley Memories, volumes 1 & 2, are full of photos from years gone by. These books are published by the Free Press Media, are comprised of photos submitted by the public and local organizations, including BECHS. Hardcover, \$44.95 each.



For fans of Maud Hart Lovelace, there is a jackpot of photos in *Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley* by Julie Schrader. The book is full of pictures of the people and places that were brought to life by Lovelace in her beloved Betsy-Tacy books. Softcover, \$25.00.



Other books full of pictures include: *Images of America: Blue Earth County, Minnesota*, *A Post Card History of Mapleton* and *From Normal School to University*. Stop by the Gift Shop and see for yourself!

Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints

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 at the History Center and online. All sales benefit BECHS. www.MarianAnderson.com

Rapidan: A Passage of Time

Celebrating Minnesota Authors and Books

Deep Valley Book Festival

October 5, 2019 • 10am - 4pm

Loose Moose Saloon & Conference Center

119 S Front Street, Mankato

FREE PARKING in the ramp



Keynote Author
Jacqueline West



Return appearance
Allen Eskens



Keynote Illustrator
Derek Anderson

- Meet Authors, Illustrators & Publishers
- Book Sales & Signings • Speakers and Programs
- Children's Activities, Drawings & Food • Young Writer & Illustrator Contest Awards

The Festival is FREE

Where readers and authors meet

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Art Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

Fun For All Ages!

For more information www.deepvalleybookfestival.com



BECHS WISH LIST

A few things BECHS could use, new or used or funds to purchase.

- Laptop, Windows 10, new or slightly used
- Canister Vacuum, newer model such as Eureka NEN200C
- Speakers with micro SD slot
- Fiberglass step ladder, 6-8 feet tall
- Blue Earth County School Yearbooks for BECHS archives—specifically all Mankato East, or 1980 and newer from any school

CALL FOR ARTISTS

BECHS has openings for local artists to be featured at the History Center Art Gallery. All mediums are welcome. Work must be able to be hung on a wall and be family-friendly.

Contact Shelley at 507-345-5566 or Archivist@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July-October 2019

JULY

- 25 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
25-28 Blue Earth County Fair, Garden City Fairgrounds. Visit BECHS in the Heritage Building

AUGUST

- 1 Watch KEYC News 12 at Noon for "Throwback Thursday"
3 Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: **Who is in This Photo?** 10 a.m. History Center, Free. *First Saturday.*
6 Remember When Coffee Club: **Favorite Restaurants** 10 a.m., History Center, Free. *First Tuesday*
10 Rehab Lab: **Rotted Wood Workshop** with Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., History Center. Visit <http://www.mnpreservation.org/services> to register. \$
14 Behind the Scenes: **Hubbard House** 6 p.m. History Center, BECHS Members only. \$
17 Old-Fashioned Medicine Show 1-4 p.m. Hubbard House, Free
20 Watch KEYC News 12 This Morning at 6:30 a.m. for "History To Go"
22 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
24 The Shady Lady Speakeasy: **Mankato Brewery Release Party at the Museum** 7 p.m. \$
31 History Center Closed for Labor Day weekend; Hubbard House open

SEPTEMBER

- 3 Remember When Coffee Club: **Favorite Teachers** 10 a.m., History Center, Free. *First Tuesday*
5 Watch KEYC News 12 at Noon for "Throwback Thursday"
7 Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: **The Challenge of the Brick Wall** 10 a.m. History Center, Free. *First Saturday.*
13 Annual BECHS Member Appreciation and Exhibit Opening, 5-7 p.m. History Center
14 Exhibit Opening: **Blue Earth County's Believe It or Not: Our Strange and Curious Collection** 10-1 p.m., History Center
14 Young Historians: **Early US History, 1700s-1850s** 10-noon
17 Watch KEYC News 12 This Morning at 6:30 a.m. for "History To Go"
17 Behind the Scenes: **Textiles** 6 p.m. History Center, BECHS Members only. \$
26 Tune to KTOE 1420-AM at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on *Talk of the Town*
30 Last day of the Hubbard House for the Season

OCTOBER

- 1 Remember When Coffee Club: **Big Fires Around Town** 10 a.m., History Center, Free
5 Talking Ancestors Genealogy Group: **How Do I Translate This?** 10 a.m., History Center, Free. *First Saturday.*
5 Deep Valley Book Festival
12 Young Historians: **1850-1900** 10 a.m.-noon,
24-25 **Ghosts from the Past: Believe It or Not**, 6-8 p.m. each night, History Center \$

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/Contact
 - Follow BECHS on Facebook and Instagram \$=Admission Charged

MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Each year, BECHS is honored to host our Member Appreciation. For the past few years, we've have nametags for those in attendance. It may seem like a little thing, but members have said how nice it is to be able to put names with faces of their fellow members. We also use the nametags to give extra recognition to volunteers, board members and donors.

Join us for the annual Member Appreciation on September 13, 5-7 p.m. Please RSVP and we will have your nametag waiting for you!

Not a member? See below and join today!

Member Referral Program - 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*, bring someone to an event or personally invite them to become a member. All they need to do is include the name of who referred them and you both get two 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
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/membership

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

Annual BECHS Member Appreciation

Friday, September 13
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



- Members-only specials in Gift Shop
- Members-only Exhibit Opening

INSPIRE. ENGAGE. CONNECT.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com | 507-345-5566

BECHS
BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
424 WARREN STREET
MANKATO, MN 56001

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

EXHIBITS

100 Years & 1 Million Stories: A History of The American Legion *through August 30*

Blue Earth County's Believe It or Not: Our Strange and Curious Collection *Opens September 14*

ART GALLERY

A Fourth Generation Quilter *through September 28*

SAVE THE DATE

Ghosts From the Past

Believe It or Not

October 24 & 25, 6 - 8 p.m.

History Center

Tickets available October 15

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mankato MN
56001
Permit No. 86

Membership
Expiration Date