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## SPECIAL EXHIBITS



### Featured Artist:

*A Quiet Faith*

By Leona Roth

on display now through  
March 30, 2016

### Traveling Exhibit:

*Electrifying Minnesota*

on display now through  
March 26, 2016



Mankato State Normal School kindergarten students, 1885

## Surrounded By Education

Education in Blue Earth County began in 1853 in a room attached to a warehouse. Today the county has over 20 public school locations, numerous private schools and four institutions of higher learning. Thousands, perhaps millions, of students have gone through our schools. Thousands of teachers have been trained in our institutions of higher education and carried that experience around the globe. For over 160 years Blue Earth County has been surrounded by education. This calls for a celebration!

Each year, the Blue Earth County Historical Society hosts the annual community event *Surrounded By History*, a celebration of our county's rich heritage. In the past the event has paid tribute to the county's role in the history of agriculture, banking and industry. This year we will celebrate education in the county, from the three R's in the one-room schoolhouse to today's world-recognized, high-tech learning environments with *Educated in Blue Earth County: From School Slates to Cyberspace*. Mark your calendars now for April 29, 2016—you won't want to miss the celebration. Until then, check out the article on page 9, "Dorm Sweet Dorm: A Look at Student Housing in Blue Earth County," about residential life for the thousands of students who have called Blue Earth County home, even if only for a short time.

## The Blue Earth County Historian



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### History Center & Museum

424 Warren Street, Mankato, MN  
507-345-5566  
www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com  
Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### R.D. Hubbard House

606 South Broad Street, Mankato  
507-345-4154  
Closed for the Season

### *The Blue Earth County Historian* Winter 2016

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

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# Board of Trustees

Randy Zellmer  
President, Board of Trustees

As we enter 2016 we look forward to the continuing growth of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. We just completed our 2015 Holiday Giving Campaign raising over \$25,000. I would like to thank each of you who donated. With your generous gift, as an organization we do not only preserve our history, but bring it alive through our displays, programs and educational presentations.

Education will play an important role for BECHS in 2016 as *Surrounded by History's* theme is education in Blue Earth County. The event is scheduled for April 29, 2016 at the Minnesota State Centennial Student Ballroom. The event will be filled with pictures and memorabilia covering one-room schoolhouses to Mankato State Teachers College now known as Minnesota State University, Mankato. *Surrounded By History* is an opportunity to share your stories and history of the county with fellow BECHS members and friends. Business sponsors are currently being sought as well as items for the auction. Please plan to join us for the evening and consider donating an item to the auction.

As we approach our annual meeting, held on March 6, it is time to elect new Board Members. BECHS is in need of new Board candidates who are willing to share their time and talent. As a Board member you will attend our monthly meeting and join a Board Committee. There are opportunities to match your talent and expertise, whether it is in development, finance, building task force, collections or programming. Please consider serving a term on the BECHS Board. For more information see page 14 or contact a Board Member or Jessica.

I wish you the best in 2016.

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

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

- Popular auction items include gift certificates, tickets, gift baskets, unique items or experiences.
- Wine can be red or white; must be valued at \$10 or more.

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

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

# Director's Notes

Jessica Potter, Executive Director

As a self-proclaimed history geek, I love this time of the year...time to reflect on the previous year and time to look ahead at what is yet to come. I also have the good fortune to have spent 14 years with the Historical Society and can look back at all of our progress since 2001 with a huge smile.

## Remembering 2015

- Building improvements continued with the renovation and relocation of the Research Center. Also, a Legacy Grant and private donations made it possible for us to purchase two new digital microfilm readers.
- BECHS was featured in two local television station programs—KEYC's *Remembering the 1965 Flood* and KMSQ's *Off 90*. In addition, we started a monthly informational spot on KEYC's noon broadcast and continued a monthly informational spot on KTOE's *Talk of the Town*.
- We hosted another successful *Surrounded By History* in March—raising over \$25,000 for the organization.
- The History Center hosted four traveling exhibits in 2015, including a special exhibit celebrating 50 years of Vikings Training Camp in Mankato.
- For the first time, we welcomed all Mankato ISD #77 6th graders to the History Center for their spring field trip. We are looking forward to this becoming an annual visit. Interested in helping? Let Danelle know.
- Speaking of education, we took another big step in the fall with the expansion of our staff. The Board shifted duties around and hired Beth Johnson to be our Education and Outreach Coordinator. Check out what she has planned on the next page.
- Overall attendance for the History Center, Hubbard House and programs jumped almost 30% over 2014. Thank you to everyone who participated.

## Looking ahead to 2016

- 5th Annual *Surrounded By History* is moving to April this year—mark your calendar now for April 29, you won't want to miss it! More information available on the back page.

- May 30, 1916 BECHS filed its Articles of Incorporation. We were founded in 1901, but legally organized in 1916. Happy Anniversary!
- The History Center Discovery Lab is under development and will open for museum visitors to explore this winter.
- New monthly series called *History Bits and Bites* will replace *Our History Matters*. The series will take place the last Wednesday of the month over the noon hour. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch. BECHS will provide a beverage.
- Popular programs like *Young Historians* and the *Remember When Coffee Club* will continue. Watch for new programming at the Hubbard House over the summer.
- The 30th Annual *Ghosts from the Past* is coming in October. Do you remember the first one at Williams Nature Center?

So many exciting things to be looking forward to in 2016. But none of this would be possible without you—our members, donors, visitors and volunteers! Thank you for all you do!

THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY INVITES YOU TO THE

## 2016 Annual Meeting

**Sunday, March 6, 2016 @ 2:00 p.m.**

**BECHS History Center**

424 Warren Street, Mankato

**State-of-the-Society  
Member's Business Meeting**

**How Electricity Changed Agriculture  
and Rural Communities**

By Garfield Eckberg

*BENCO Board Member*

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

Please RSVP by March 1 to 507-345-5566  
or [Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](mailto:Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)

Preserve Our Past, Protect Our Future



## Education & Outreach

### *Making Local History Accessible to All Ages*

*By Beth Johnson, Education and Outreach Coordinator*

As we move into the new year of 2016, I am excited to be a part of the Blue Earth County Historical Society as the Education and Outreach Coordinator. I have been a volunteer educator for programs with varying age groups in and around Mankato for a number of years, as well as an adjunct instructor at MSU, Mankato. I look forward to creating programming focused on K-6 education initiatives, planning and implementing an experiential discovery lab in tandem with the museum and developing more opportunities to involve our community, like our new Wednesday lunch series, *History Bits and Bites*.

This past December, I developed a classroom program for second graders on bison and the Dakota. Our Education Task Force was instrumental in helping to launch this project. The program was presented to seventy-eight

Eagle Lake second graders on December 21. Students learned about the importance of the bison to the Dakota and also participated in a live winter count activity. What fun!

Going forward I will continue to develop programs for students that will give them a sense of place in Blue Earth County from classroom visits to *Young Historians* and new programs to accompany our exhibits. Additionally, planning has already begun for our new History Center Discovery Lab located on the upper level of the History Center.

As BECHS grows we always welcome people who would like to be involved in planning, implementing and helping with these activities. If you would be interested in serving on the Education Task Force or assisting with classroom or field trip activities, please e-mail me or give me a call. All the best to you in the New Year!



## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

Special thanks go to all of the volunteers who

helped make *Christmas at the Hubbard House* a sparkling success with over 170 people enjoying the two-day annual event. Thank you to the following people for sharing their beautiful holiday decorations and clock collections as well as the many talents actors who helped to capture the ambience of Christmas in the early 1900s: Perry Dauer, Joe Owens, Susan Hynes, Audrey Gatchell, Marta Arch, Halle Blais, Ambry Brave Heart, Carlienne Frisch, Laura Garlow, Sandi Garlow, Wendy Greiner, Patrice Hundstad, Dale Koehler, Tim Koehler, Alex Oldenburg, Leslie Peterson, Jo Schultz and Grace Webb.



Photos courtesy of Michael Huerkamp

# Monthly Educational Opportunities at the History Center

## Remember When Coffee Club

Love history? Love to swap stories of the good old days? Looking for a place to connect with other history enthusiasts? **Come to the History Center the first Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. for BECHS' *Remember When Coffee Club*.** This is an informal opportunity to share memories and photos with fellow local history enthusiasts at the History Center. Attendance and rich conversation continue to grow. There is no formal program, just a conversation topic to get the group started. Coffee, tea and light refreshments are provided.

Join us for these

### Upcoming Topics:

**February 2** - Electricity

**March 1** - Pets

**April 5** - Spring Planting



## History Bits & Bites

**NEW** monthly learning series the **last Wednesday of each month during the noon hour at the Blue Earth County History Center.** Bring your lunch for a bite while learning a bit of history! Free for BECHS Members, \$5 Non-members. Lunch is NOT provided, but beverages will be available.

### Upcoming Programs

**January 27** – “Life in a Pioneer Cabin” by Larry Kortuem

**February 24** – “Historic Blizzards in Southern Minnesota” by Heather Harren

**March 30** – “Potions, Powders & Patent Medicine: Women’s Health and Beauty Secrets from the Past” by Susan Hynes

## Young Historians



Above, Marcia Richards helped the *Young Historians* explore Welsh heritage. Below, Ken Ziegler with *Young Historians* in January discovering German traditions.



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

This year, *Young Historians* is exploring the traditions and customs of the ethnic groups that called Blue Earth County home, from the Dakota to our modern day immigrant groups. Participants of *Young Historians* will end their year in May by examining their own family tree and learning where their ancestors came from. Their final project will be a presentation of their ethnic heritage.

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

### Upcoming Workshops

**February 13** - Irish

**March 12** - Hispanic

**April 9** - Somalis

**May 14** - Family History Projects

Pre-registration for workshops is encouraged; contact Beth for more information and to register. If you are interested in sharing your ethnic history and traditions with our *Young Historians*, please contact Beth.



# Collections & Exhibits

## History Center Discovery Lab Coming Soon

Shelley Harrison, Archives & Collections Manager

Soon there will be a new place to explore history at the History Center Museum. A destination for visitors of all ages to do history! The new History Center Discovery Lab will offer an incredible collection of hands-on, family-friendly exhibits and activities for everyone.

Kids can draw a picture of their favorite thing in the museum and hang it up on our kids' gallery wall, read a book, or put on a costume and share their historic or whimsical look on social media. There is room to enjoy our new time traveling kits, watch a family-friendly movie or embark on a treasure hunt throughout the museum.

This "please touch" space will be located in the upper level of the Museum, in the former Gift Shop location and will introduce visitors to a wide range of topics and encourage play-based learning. Included in Museum admission, this unique Discovery Lab welcomes all visitors including the young and young-at-heart!

The space is just beginning its transformation and we still have a number of things to accomplish and create. BECHS is looking for some handy volunteers to help develop the space through light construction and painting projects. In addition, there will be quite a few sewing projects for costumes and theatre curtains. Also, our new time traveling kits are still just an idea and need volunteers to help create. If you have specialized skills like construction or sewing, are a creative thinker and/or are interested in developing this great hands-on place, please contact Danelle. We need your help to make this happen.

Of course, our dreams are big and financial assistance or in-kind donations would be much appreciated. Here are a few things we are hoping to buy or have donated:

- A comfy chair for an adult and child to sit and read a book. Must be clean and in excellent condition. *Please send us a picture or give us a*



Future home of the new History Center Discovery Lab to open this winter.

*call before bringing in.*

- Track lighting (3 sections)
- 40 inch Smart TV
- Funds for a custom map/floor covering
- 2-3 Heavy-duty two-step stepstools

In the future, we plan to have family activities on Saturdays and scheduled "no school" days. Join us March 11 from 10:00 a.m. - Noon for our

first Discovery Lab activity day with more to come. Watch our website and social media for details. We will need volunteers to help on these special days with the hands-on activities and living history stations. Again, let us know if you are at all interested in volunteering to create or staff the new Discovery Lab. Make sure to stop in over the next few months to see our progress and mark your calendars for March 11 to see the new Discovery Lab and Do History Here!

## Electrifying Minnesota

A traveling exhibit from the Minnesota History Center and The Bakken Museum.


IMAGINE LIGHTING YOUR HOME at the flick of a switch—for the first time! Through film, photography and interactive activities, this exhibit illuminates the amazing ways electricity has shaped life in Minnesota.




Don't miss it—

Blue Earth County History Center

On Display Now - March 27, 2016

FREE





# Every object has a story...

The Society's permanent collection includes paintings, textiles, posters, photographs, books, letters and ephemera from the middle of the 19th century through the 21st century.

Books, for most of us, are part of our everyday lives, but they are also an important piece of Blue Earth County history. They help us preserve the stories of our shared heritage, they establish a record of organizations within the county and they are used extensively by students, writers and other patrons as valuable research tools.

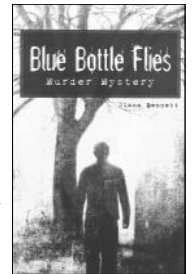
Here is a glimpse into our collection:

- *Mankato, Minnesota: Growing up in the '30s and '40s* by Clayton Lagerquist  
An autobiography, with reminisces about when life was so much simpler...this book documents life in Mankato the 1930s and 1940s.



- *4-H Recipes*  
This book not only contains delicious recipes, but also an important history of 4-H clubs throughout Blue Earth County. Written and assembled in 2003.

- *Blue Bottle Flies* by Diana Bennett  
This work of fiction is based on the historical events surrounding the Ledbeter murder in Blue Earth County in 1909.



Please contact the Research Center if you are interested in viewing these or other titles in our book collection.

If you are interested in donating a book to enhance BECHS' collection or any piece of Blue Earth County history, please contact Shelley Harrison, Archives and Collection Manager.

## HISTORY CENTER ART GALLERY

### *A Quiet Faith*

By Leona Roth

January - March 2016



God's Handiwork

Front cover image: *The Light of the World*

The quiet faith of Leona Roth has guided her throughout her life. After growing up in rural Iowa, Leona moved to California where she met Victor Roth in 1945. Two months later, the couple married. After the war, Victor heard God's call to the ministry. Leona and Victor were blessed with four children and 35 years of ministry in Roseau, Waterville and Mankato, MN. Victor went home to heaven in 2014. Leona now lives in North Mankato.

Leona's quiet faith has sustained her over her 89 years as shown in her paint-by-number work as each painting displays an aspect of her love for her Savior. "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Proverbs 16:9

## CALL FOR ARTISTS

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

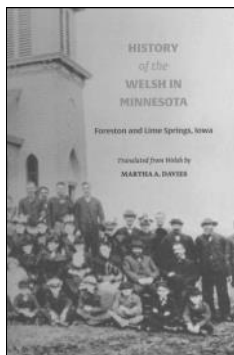


# Gift Shop & Art Gallery News

Danelle Erickson, Development Manager

Few things tell the thoughts and feelings of people throughout history better than first person accounts. Whether through personal recollections, letters or diaries - to learn from the voices of the past is to hear from the people themselves.

One of the newest books in the History Center Gift Shop is *History of the Welsh in Minnesota*, \$29.95, translated from Welsh by Martha A. Davies. In 1895, a Welsh history, *Hanes Cymry Minnesota*, was written. The book was part Welsh and part English. For years, people assumed the two parts contained the same stories, just different translations. It wasn't until recently that Davies realized the Welsh text included completely different, firsthand stories from early Welsh settlers! That Welsh text with those "new" stories translated is included in this book.



*Old Rail Fence Corners*, \$16.95, is a popular title in the Gift Shop. As the book's introduction explains, "In these reminiscences, the old settlers offer concrete details about the houses they built, the foods they ate, the gardens they planted, the illnesses they suffered, and the home remedies they administered." With accounts from over 150 of Minnesota's early settlers, this book is sure to open your eyes to the lives of those who came

before us, not to mention give you a greater appreciation for modern day conveniences!

Letters were the primary source of news to and from home during the Civil War. Brothers Thomas and William Christie, members of the First Minnesota Light Artillery, broke the news of their enlistment in a letter to their father. "You have taught me to hate Slavery, and to love my County," Thomas writes, and yet admits patriotism isn't his only reasons for enlisting. "I do want to 'see the

world,' to get out of the narrow circle in which I have always lived, to 'make a man of myself,' and to have it to say in days to come that I, too, had a part in this great struggle." Read over 200 letters the Christie brothers wrote home in *Brother of Mine*, \$19.95.

Of all personal accounts, journals and diaries often give the reader the most honest look into everyday life. *Orange Blossoms Everywhere*, \$10.00, includes excerpts from the diary of Maud Hart Lovelace when she lived in California and *A Country Doctor Goes to War* tells the ups and downs of Dr. Ellsworth Thayer's service during World War II.

Other firsthand account books include: Civil War letter collections *Go if You Think it Your Duty*, \$32.95, and *Letters of Bernt Olmanson*, \$15.95; *Those Barracks Babies*, \$8.00, with memories of life in the Mankato veteran's housing after WWII; and recollections from both sides of the U.S. Dakota War in *Through Dakota Eyes*, \$18.95.

In the same way letters and journals give insight into the author's thoughts, paintings can also show what the artist holds dear. When Marian

Anderson painted *Circle of Hope*, she did so

as "a reminder of the importance of diversity." The faces of students Marian met in Southern Minnesota classrooms are joined with the eagle, symbolizing Marian's hopes for unity on earth. *Circle of Hope* is available for purchase in the Marian Anderson Art Gallery in fine art prints, note cards and other formats.

Stop in at the History Center Gift Shop and Marian Anderson Art Gallery for these selections and much more!



*Circle of Hope*  
by Marian Anderson





## *A Look at Student Housing in Blue Earth County*

By Mike Lagerquist

Dorm life at Bethany Ladies College, 1913.  
Photo courtesy of Danelle Erickson

It was in the autumn of 1855 when the first two school houses were constructed in burgeoning southern Minnesota's Blue Earth County. Lacking a school tax, these buildings—one in Mankato and the other at South Bend—were constructed with voluntary contributions. Everything from land to materials and expertise was donated. Although it was first suggested that school could be held during the week in a structure built as a church, the majority of people preferred construction of a school house. Such was the dedication to formal education in Blue Earth County.

The history of education in Blue Earth County contains stories of failures as well as successes, but the evolution and continuation of private and public schools at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels, proves that residents here wanted to be surrounded by schools that would provide a good, complete education to their children and beyond.

The county's educational facilities grew in line with education in other parts of the country. One of

the more interesting aspects is how the county—with Mankato as its largest town and county seat—became the home to institutions that drew students from both near and far. As such, boarding facilities were established early and have evolved through the years to accommodate changing student numbers, rising and falling interest in living at the institution and, most recently, to adapt to changing expectations of students attending post-secondary institutions.

Today, Minnesota State University, Mankato and Bethany Lutheran College are the primary post-secondary institutions in the county, followed by South Central College and Rasmussen College. The first two have residence halls among their facilities. But throughout the county's educational history, they were not the only ones.

Father James Thomson came to Mankato with plans much bigger than his small Woodland Seminary. In 1854, he first traveled to Mankato with plans to purchase an entire township to use in the development of his dream: The University of Southern Minnesota. Disappointed there wasn't land

available, Thomson decided to remain in Mankato and in 1855 he started the First Presbyterian church of Mankato. Not ready to give up his dream of an educational institution, Thomson started the Woodland Seminary in 1864. The school was located in the home he had built on the brow of a high bluff overlooking the city. Enrollment was about 40 students, 25 of whom were boarding students who brought their own food and were required to do one hour's work each day.

Thomson was called "a Puritan of the Puritans," rising at 3:30 a.m. throughout the year and requiring all students to rise by 5:30. The seminary closed within 18 months, due to lack of funds and the failing health of Thomson's wife. It's uncertain from reports how the expectations placed on students affected enrollment numbers. Although his plans for higher education didn't meet his hopes, Thomson's efforts made a lasting impact in Blue Earth County.

One hundred years later, in the fall of 1964, the aging Saulpaugh Hotel, on the corner of Front and Main streets in Mankato, discontinued its commercial operations. Instead, the top three stories, which



Mankato Commercial College apartment, 1977 *Mankato Free Press*

included 90 rooms, were transformed by the adjacent Mankato Commercial College into a dormitory for about 200 of its out-of-town

students seeking housing. Cost was expected to be \$25 per month. The hotel's local ownership group had declared bankruptcy in January 1964, so this partnership was beneficial to both parties.

Previously, the Commercial College operated apartments on Belgrade Avenue, which accommodated about 20 female students and a house mother. Plans were for two to eight students to be housed in each room or group of rooms in the hotel, with space for cooking facilities and a house mother on each floor. At that time, freshman enrollment was limited to 400 students, but the addition of these housing facilities prompted the raising of those limits.

In the mid-1970s, the college moved to 402 South

Front Street. This storefront location included classrooms, offices and student lounges as well as fifteen three-bedroom apartments the college used for female student housing. Although the college only had female housing available, the school worked to find downtown apartments for the male students. The Mankato Commercial College closed in 1980.

Last September, the School Sisters of Notre Dame celebrated their 150<sup>th</sup> year of service in Mankato. Starting in 1912, they staffed and operated Our Lady of Good Counsel Academy, which not only took in day students from the surrounding area, but also had a boarding component for students from distant cities and surrounding states. The separate education center was constructed beginning in 1963, and rooms were designed to accommodate 220 girls in groups of two or four in a residence area. This area included music practice rooms, two large study areas, conference rooms and offices, recreation rooms, a canteen, laundry rooms and several small parlors and lounges.

The school closed in 1980, but that wasn't the end of the dormitory from housing students. The rooms were converted to double-occupancy and divided by an island closet. There was room for 58 women at a rate of \$41.50 per week, which included breakfast and supper. This "alternative style of residence for quieter, more studious" women targeted students at the state university and vocational-technical school.

Interestingly, Mankato Normal School (predecessor to the current Minnesota State University, Mankato) was the last of the five normal schools in Minnesota to have dormitories constructed even though it emerged quickly as one of the most popular statewide. In fact, when approval was granted for the first dormitory in Mankato in 1912, the normal schools in Duluth, St. Cloud and Moorhead had two dormitories each and Winona had one. The main reason? The other schools were not centrally located in their towns, meaning nearby rentals in homes were not as plentiful.

The first Mankato dormitory, built in 1913, cost \$75,000 to build and could accommodate 80-90 women. It was named Daniel Buck Hall in honor of the legislator credited with passage of the bill in 1863 that gained Mankato a normal school. Buck moved to Blue Earth County in 1857 where he practiced law, first in South Bend, then in Mankato.

He also held a number of important positions throughout his life including County Attorney, State Senator, State Supreme Court Judge and founding President

of the Blue Earth County Historical Society in 1901.

Daniel Buck Hall is located on



Daniel Buck Hall on the campus of Mankato Normal School (Minnesota State University, Mankato), c. 1920s

Ramsey Street and now serves as the Colonial Square Apartments. This is the only residence hall in the history of the University not named after a former Principal or President.

The second dormitory was built in 1921 and was named Cooper Hall after President Charles H. Cooper. It was another women's dormitory and housed 42 students when it opened. In the mid-1950s it was connected to Buck Hall. The first men's dormitory was added in 1952 and was named for former President Edward Searing who died suddenly and unexpectedly in October 1898 while in office. It was a residence for the growing number of men attending teachers colleges at the time. Searing Center, now Cherry Ridge Apartments, stands in the triangle created between Glenwood Avenue, 5th Street and Warren Street.

Today, residence communities at Minnesota State University, Mankato include traditional dormitory living in Crawford, McElroy and Preska Halls; apartment living in the nearby Stadium Heights; and semi-suites in both Preska and Julia Sears Residence Communities. Sears was the first female principal of the Mankato Normal School. In 1873, she was unceremoniously dismissed from her position, much to the dismay of many students and the community. In 2013, the twelve story Gage Towers were decommissioned and then imploded. They were replaced by the Julia A. Sears and Margaret R. Preska Residence Communities.

Bethany Ladies' College, now Bethany Lutheran College, was dedicated in June 1913. The seminary consisted of a five-story administration building connected by a corridor on all floors to a five-story

dining hall and dormitory. The dormitories were described as "well ventilated" with "every convenience of neat lavatories, baths, flowing drinking fountains, and above all, the absolute safety from fire."

Today, Bethany Lutheran College has a variety of residence options. Anderson Hall is located in the top three floors of Old Main. Likewise, the top three floors of Teigen Hall are also home to students. Larson Hall and Gullixson Hall were built in the 1990s and Edgewood Place, the newest residence hall on campus, was completed in 2005.

Through the years, thousands of students from near and far have come to Blue Earth County to expand and continue their education. For many of these new scholars, their first dorm room was the first time they ventured out on their own, ready to meet the world. While some students may move on after a few short years, others have adopted Mankato and Blue Earth County as their new "hometown," sharing and contributing to the community around them.

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### **SURROUNDED BY HISTORY**

***Educated in Blue Earth County: From School Slates to Cyberspace*** is the theme of the annual *Surrounded By History* fundraising event planned for April 29 at Minnesota State University, Mankato's Centennial Student Union ballroom. One evening is not enough time to recount 160 years of the history of education in Blue Earth County. If you have stories, a written history or images of Blue Earth County's education at any level that you would like to share for this event, please contact Shelley Harrison, BECHS' Archives Manager.



# Around the Research Center

Heather Harren, Communications Manager

2015 was a great year for the Research Center. In April we moved to our new location with our new, welcoming entrance. In May, two new microfilm readers arrived. Unlike the old machines, these new readers give the option to produce digital images as well as print. In the past year, we had people in from across the United States, as well as visitors from Canada and Germany, stop by to find their family history.

The saying “A picture’s worth a thousand words” is certainly true in the Research Center. Images can share so much for people. Old photographs can introduce you to your great-grandparents for the first time or show what the house you grew up in was like in the past. Pictures can also document the roots or highlights of our communities. BECHS has an extensive collection of images that have been donated throughout the years. These images are now used by genealogists and historians to make family trees and placed in community spaces to show how times have changed.



Hilton Hotel, Eagle Lake c. 1890s

Many people don’t realize the Research Center can reproduce images in our collection for your family history, images to hang on the wall or to display in your business. With over 13,000 images in our collection, there is certain to be something for you to discover.

To give you a peek at some of our photograph collection, BECHS has contributed images to the Minnesota Digital Library’s “Minnesota Reflections” webpage. If you aren’t sure what you are looking for, call or visit the Research Center. I’d be happy to help!

## Blue Earth County Trivia

1. When was the town of Amboy established?
2. What year was the Rapidan Dam completed?
3. Who is Warren Street in Mankato named for?

Answers can be found on page 18. Like Blue Earth County trivia? More can be found on our website and Facebook page.

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

**Industrial Strength Metal Shelving** for collections storage

**2-3 MP3 Players and/or Docking Stations**

**Used Printer Ink Cartridges** to be recycled for Office Depot credit

**New 60w Incandescent Lightbulbs**

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

**Auction Items for Surrounded By History**  
See page 2 for ideas

**Cookies or Bars** for programs and events

**Invite your friends and family to check out BECHS!**

**Thank you for your support!**



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# BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen

Thank you BECHS volunteers for your incredible work. Over 130 volunteers donated over 6,000 hours of their time to the Historical Society in 2015! Our volunteers do it all: researching, gardening, photo scanning, giving tours, acting, writing, painting, etc. The list goes on and on.

Are you interested in joining the generous and dedicated crew of BECHS volunteers? We would love to have you!

Below you will find some volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in helping with any of these opportunities or would like more information about volunteering with BECHS, please contact Danelle or visit [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/volunteer](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/volunteer).



BECHS Staff and Volunteers had a great time at our Annual Potluck. The only problem was our plates and stomachs were too small for all the great food!

## Volunteer Opportunities

### **Board of Trustees**

BECHS is seeking people interested in joining our Board of Trustees. Applications are due January 31, 2016. See page 14 for more information.

### **Discovery Lab**

Volunteers are needed for the creation of the new History Center Discovery Lab: painting, light construction, sewing, exhibit development and Time Traveling Kit creation. See page 6 for more information. Volunteers needed immediately.

### **Education/Classroom Activities**

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

### **Tour Guides**

Tour guides are needed this spring and summer for school and other tour groups. Please contact us if you are interested in helping lead tours at the History Center and/or Hubbard House. Annual tour guide training will be held April 5 or 7. Watch BECHS monthly e-news and Facebook for more details.

### **Video Production Team**

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

### **Receptionist/Gift Shop Assistant**

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

### **Building Projects**

There are countless projects at the History Center needing volunteer support, from painting to handyman projects to moving furniture.

### **Research Center Assistant**

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

### **Photo Processing and Data Entry**

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

## BECHS Board of Trustees Applications Now Being Accepted

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is now accepting applications for four open seats on the



Board of Trustees beginning March 2016. Monthly board meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. All openings are for a three-year term ending March 2019.



This is a very exciting time for BECHS with our current building expansion and future capital campaign. We need people who want to be an active part of this growth and change. The Board consists of members representing Blue Earth County and is currently seeking individuals strong in one or more of the following areas: financial management, business management, development, fundraising and facility development. Previous non-profit board experience preferred, but not required.



Applications accepted until **January 31, 2016**. For an application, please visit **[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)** or contact Jessica at [bechs@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechs@hickorytech.net) or 345-5566.

## Support BECHS on AmazonSmile

You can support BECHS while shopping on Amazon.com by joining **AmazonSmile**. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (**[smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)**), simply select a charity (BECHS) to receive donations from purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your preferred charity and will make a donation for each eligible Amazon purchase you make.

**amazon**smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.



## Blue Earth County Historical Society's 1860s BASE BALL CLUB

The Blue Earth County Historical Society's vintage base ball team, the Mankato Baltics, makes history alive on the field. The team uses vintage uniforms and equipment and play by 1860s base ball rules.



Field of Dreams



The Baltics had a memorable 2015. Highlights included a trip to the "Field of Dreams" in Iowa and *finally* defeating the Arlington Greys in December as part of the Arli-Dazzle celebration. Stop by the History Center to see the beautiful, hand-crafted travelling trophy and other Baltics items.

For the Baltics 2016 schedule, follow them on Facebook or visit **[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Baltics](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Baltics)**

## Need a Space for a Meeting or Special Gathering?



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

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

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

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



# Around Blue Earth County



By Jane Haala, RHS Secretary/Treasurer

Rapidan Township will see some road changes in 2016. State Highway 66 from Mankato to Good Thunder is a scenic drive, but a narrow road. Road construction crews will work to update this highway and it will be turned over to Blue Earth County. You may have already noticed stakes in the fields along the road, indicating where the road will be widened and sharp curves made gentler.

The original builders of these roads would marvel at the machines now used. Years ago it was not machines, but men who built and maintained them the roads.

Road overseers were appointed by the township supervisors, and it was their responsibility to monitor the roads in their sections. Farmers who lived along the roads were required to spend hours working to maintain the roads - this was done by horses and hand labor. Work was done in winter months. Gravel would be mined from nearby farmers' hillsides. "Mining" meant loading the gravel onto wagons with shovels, hauling it on the roads with horse-drawn wagons and then spreading the gravel by shoveling it off the wagon. The January 11, 1917 *Good Thunder Herald* reported in the Rapidan social notes: "Ten gravel teams are used in depositing gravel on our roads. The gravel is being taken from the pits of Edw. Tarjeson and August Weikel. There was a big cave-in at the Tarjeson pit on Friday last. Nobody was hurt but a few useful shovels were amongst the missing. Travelers over our roads may expect them pretty good in the future. What do horses think of some roads?"

Payment for this back-breaking work? Rapidan Township supervisors voted at the March 18, 1921 meeting to pay \$6 per day for a man and team, \$3.50 per day for a man, \$2.50 per day for an extra team. Payment for gravel was 15 cents a load.

I want to thank everyone who supported RHS during 2015 with a monetary or artifact donation or attending the events sponsored by RHS. Your support and sharing of memories like the above are important to us!

## Madison Lake Area Historical Society 2015 Annual Report

By Michael Frederick



2015 was a great year at the Madison Lake Area Historical Society. Our monthly meetings welcomed a variety of speakers and topics throughout the year. We started 2015 meeting Teddy Roosevelt, portrayed by Adam Lindquist. In February, Dave Vaverich talked about the early cities of North America and Larry Kortuem told us about the history of religion in March.

In April we learned about early American artifacts with Jason Reichel and Jim Sohler and had a wild rice tasting. May saw the return of Del Begalka and his Colt .45 and in June, Larry Kortuem was back, this time to tell us about the history of women.

We were on the road for July and August with a trip to the Blue Earth County Historical Society and a potluck at North Shore

Park in Madison Lake where Joe Breckner told us plans for the new



MLAHS at the History Center

memorial at the park. In September we welcomed Scott Kudelka as he talked about the bison that can now be seen at Minneopa State Park.

In October Olga Carlson shared what life was like growing up in distant Luxembourg and in November the Ulman family shared stories of living along Minneopa State Park. Our year concluded as forty-five people gathered to share a meal and hear Larry Kortuem share Christmas history.

The group consists of about 65 members. Regular meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at All Saints Church's Scheid Hall. Annual \$10 dues are collected in January. Current club officers are President Mike Peters, Secretary Mary Buschkowsky and Treasurer Corrine Sprague. Board members are Bob Lamont, Laura Busch, Jim Cervin and Michael Frederick.

# BECHS Donations & Membership

October - December 2015

## Donations

Patrick Baker  
Pete and Cindi Baker  
Helen Balcome  
Penny Banwart  
Roberta G. Bartholdi  
Dale Benefield  
Bill and Chris Bernhagen  
William and Marilyn Bessler  
Jessie Beyer and Kurt Klinder  
Darwin Blume  
Viva E. Bowen  
Michael and Catherine Brennan  
Susan and Bob Brown  
Pat Brunner and Joan Busch  
David Christensen and Jill Evans  
Barbara Church  
Crystal Valley Co-op  
Mark E. and Mary A. Davis Foundation  
Mary Dooley  
Duane and Carol Dubke  
Shirley Eckart  
Bill and Ginny Edwards  
David and Julie Ewert  
Joe and Malda Farnham  
Doug and Lori Faust  
Curt Fisher  
Tom and Carol Frederick  
Sandy and Darrell Garlow  
Audrey Gatchell  
Gislason & Hunter LLP

Shirley Grundmeier  
Jim and Shannon Gullickson  
Jane Haala  
Tom Hagen  
Nancy and Richard Hamer  
Elizabeth Hanke  
Michelle Hargrave  
Heather & Ryan Harren  
Karen Havelka  
Norla Hesse  
Char Hiniker  
William Hinrichs  
Pat and Jim Hoehn  
William Hoehn  
Don Howard  
Bob and Geri Howieson  
Tim Huebsch  
Katherine Hughes  
Ken & Mary Huntley  
Susan Hynes  
David and Colleen Jackson  
Bill and Margaret James  
Mary Ann Jensen  
Dolores Jones  
Ellis Jones  
Linda Karow  
Grace and Richard Keir  
Brian Koch  
Gary & Laurel Kratzke  
Lucinda Krosch  
Denise & Mike Kunkel  
Earl and Sally Lamont  
Dr. William Lass  
Louis "Bud" and

Shirley Lawrence  
Coleen Lindemann  
Robert and Sherry Lorentz  
Roger & Carolyn Lovik  
Julie and Brady Lux  
Jack Madsen  
Jim and Kathy Malcolm  
Olga Polly Marshall  
Paula Marti  
Renee Mathiason  
Kristin Matzke  
Mary McComb  
Marge Meredith  
Dennis Miller  
Mary Mortier  
Bill and Mary Nelson  
Mary Nimmerfroh  
Dick and Kris Norland  
Beth Norman  
Michael Oberle  
Ora Ohlenkamp  
Susan and Robert Olson  
James Pengra  
Leslie & Glen Peterson  
Shirley & Mark Piepho  
Tad and Cindy Piper  
Jessica and Brad Potter  
Margaret and Daniel Preska  
Richard Reisdorf  
Carol Ries  
Mary Jane Rosenberg  
Karl Sassenberg  
Shirley Schaub  
Scheels, Mankato  
Julie and Ken Schrader

James Schramm  
Jo Schultz  
Daardi Sizemore  
Brad & Alysha Smook  
Evelyn Solo  
William Steil and Nancy Zwickey  
Scott and Laura Stevens  
Rick and Stacey Straka  
Mary Studer  
Mary Jo Surprenant  
Leon Tacheny  
Brett & Gretchen Taylor  
Joanne Thomas  
Ken & Irene Thompson  
Thursday Reading Club  
Allen & Jane Torgerson  
Dana and Todd Truebenbach  
Valley News Company  
Willard Vetter  
Howard and Mary Ward  
Tom and Barbara Warner  
Richard & Lynne Weber  
Marti Weisgram  
Ken and Pam White  
Brad Wilmes  
Ken & Linda Wilmes

## Recurring Donors

Dale Benefield  
Joel Botten  
Carol English  
Carlienne and Robert Frisch  
Shirley Grundmeier  
Christopher Larson



## Blue Earth County Historical Society Monthly Giving Program

The Monthly Giving Program is an easy way you can help provide steady support for the ongoing work of BECHS. Enroll online or at the History Center.

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

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/monthly-donations](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/monthly-donations).

Jo-an & Dean Lavitschke  
 Jack & Diann McGowan  
 Judie Neitge  
 Tom Solseth  
 Donna and Gerald Webb  
 Marnie Werner  
 Randy Zellmer  
 Beth Zimmer

### **Donor Matching Programs**

General Mills  
 Foundation  
 Microsoft Workplace  
 Giving Program  
 Thrivent Financial's  
 Thrivent Choice

### **Honorarium**

#### ***In Memory of Robert Browne***

Pat Brunner and Joan  
 Busch

#### ***In Memory of LaVerne Greenough***

Marcia Richards

#### ***In Memory of Marlene Cutkosky Pommerenke***

Dorothy Anthony

#### ***In Honor of Allen Torgerson***

Christine Williams

### **In-Kind**

Karen Havelka  
 John Larson  
 Mankato Refrigeration  
 Shirley Piepho  
 Radio Mankato  
 Ken & Irene Thompson  
 White Fox Fur & Feather  
 Co.

### **New Members**

Gordon Awsumb  
 Dottie and Al Beckwith

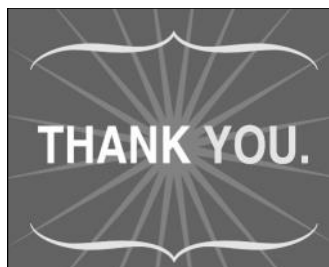
Suzanne Bowe  
 Ambry Brave Heart  
 Don and Pat Buchanan  
 Luana Clark  
 Jason and Katie Dick  
 Lorraine and Richard  
 Griffin  
 Ted & Diane Gullixson  
 Aaron Hatanpa  
 Bruce T. Hering  
 Dr. William Lass  
 Harlan Mehlhop  
 Robert Neal  
 Marlon Rudolph  
 Eugene and Bonnie  
 Sellner  
 Mary Stenzel  
 Paul and Deborah  
 Sutton  
 First National Bank  
 Minnesota  
 Liz Vermeersch  
 Jane Weir  
 Nancy Willis  
 Mike Wirig  
 Karen Wolters  
 Randy & Rachel Wood

### **Renewing Giving Members**

*Booster levels and higher*  
 William Fasnacht  
 Denise & Mike Kunkel  
 Norbert and Lynette  
 Smith

### **Renewing Business Members**

Burkhardt & Burkhardt  
 Community Bank  
 Kato Moving &  
 Storage



## **You Made the 2015 Annual Campaign a Success!**

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2015 Annual Campaign. Our campaign goal was to raise \$28,000. We came close, raising \$25,430!

Your financial gifts not only make it possible to continue everyday operations, but to dream big as we look forward to exciting changes and additions like the new History Center Discovery Lab.

Donations to the Blue Earth County Historical Society are appreciated year-round and can be made online at [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com), by mail or in person at the History Center.

Interested in learning about BECHS and our upcoming plans? We would love to visit with you and show you around the History Center. Stop on by!

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

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



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FINANCIAL®**

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

# Calendar of Events January - April 2016

## JANUARY

### **NEW PROGRAM**

- 27 History Bits and Bites: Life in a Pioneer Cabin** by Larry Kortuem, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 28 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town

## FEBRUARY

- 2 Remember When Coffee Club: Electricity**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 2 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 13 Young Historians: Irish**, 10 a.m., History Center, Pre-registration encouraged
- 24 History Bits and Bites: Blizzards** by Heather Harren, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 25 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town

## MARCH

- 1 Remember When Coffee Club: Pets**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 1 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update
- 6 BECHS Annual Meeting**, 2 p.m., History Center. History Center opens at 1 p.m. for tours.
- 11 Discovery Lab Program**, 10 a.m. - Noon, History Center (ISD #77 no school day) Pre-register for program or drop-in for self-guided fun. Free. More information to come.
- 12 Young Historians: Hispanic**, 10 a.m., History Center, Pre-registration encouraged
- 24 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 26 Electrifying Minnesota exhibit closes**, History Center, free admission
- 30 History Bits and Bites: Potions, Powders and Patent Medicine** by Susan Hynes, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free

## APRIL

- 2 Quilt Exhibit Opening**, History Center, 10 a.m.-Noon
- 5 or 7 Annual Tour Guide Training**, 5 p.m., History Center, More information on page 13.
- 5 Remember When Coffee Club: Planting Time**, 10 a.m., History Center, Free
- 5 Watch KEYC News 12** at Noon for monthly BECHS Update

- 9 Young Historians: Somalis**, 10 a.m., History Center, Pre-registration encouraged
- 9 Special Event: presentation of KEYC's *Remembering the Flood of 1965* with special appearance by KEYC Meteorologist Mitch Keegan**, 2 p.m., \$5 Adults, \$2 Children 5-17, Members & Kids under 5 Free
- 12 Annual Volunteer Appreciation**, 7:30 a.m., History Center, watch for more information coming soon.
- 27 History Bits and Bites: Quilt History** by Grace Keir, Noon, History Center, \$5 Adults, Members Free
- 28 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 29 Surrounded By History: Educated in Blue Earth County**, 6 p.m. Tickets on Sale March 1.



Surrounded By History

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

- Check out [www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com) for full event details and updates!
- Sign-up for our free monthly e-news to receive updates between *Historian* issues
- Follow BECHS on Facebook and Twitter.

### **Electronic Version of *The Historian* Now Available**

If you would like to receive *The Historian* via email rather than traditional mail, please contact Danelle at [museum@blueearthcountyhistory.com](mailto:museum@blueearthcountyhistory.com) or 345-5566.

### **Answers to Blue Earth County Trivia on page 12:**

1. 1879 2. 1911 3. Dr. Thomas D. Warren, one of the early settlers to Mankato

# Membership Makes a Difference

You may notice that there has been a slight increase in our membership dues. It was a tough decision, but it was a change the BECHS Board felt was needed. There have been a lot of developments since the last increase in

membership dues over 10 years ago. Staff, facilities and programs have all changed and expanded, giving BECHS better opportunities to share history with everyone! This minimal dues increase will assist in further development of the Historical Society.

An annual BECHS membership still remains a great value and provides our members with free admission, gift shop discounts, *The Historian* and more. Not to mention, your annual dues make it possible for area residents and visitors to discover the story of Blue Earth County.



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

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

## ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS!

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

---

## BECHS Annual Membership

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is a member supported non-profit organization. Membership dues make up a growing portion of the annual operating budget. Thank you for your support.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Levels

Individual Senior (62+) \$30

Individual \$35

Household \$50

Contributor \$75

Supporter/Business 1 \$100

Booster/Business 2 \$250

Advocate/Business 3 \$500

Benefactor/Business 4 \$1,000

Please send this form and check to:

**BECHS Membership**  
**424 Warren Street**  
**Mankato, MN 56001**

**OR**

Complete your membership form online at  
**[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/join)**

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

# SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

**Educated in Blue Earth County**  
*From School Slates to Cyberspace*

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

**FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2015**

6:00 p.m.

Centennial Student Union Ballroom  
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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



For reservations, please call  
507-345-5566.



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



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