

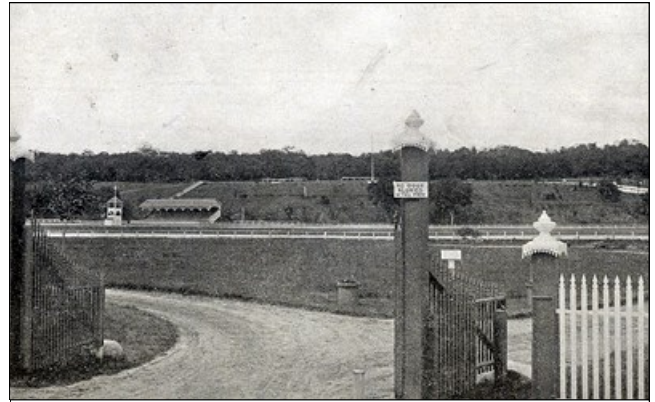
The Blue Earth County

HISTORIAN

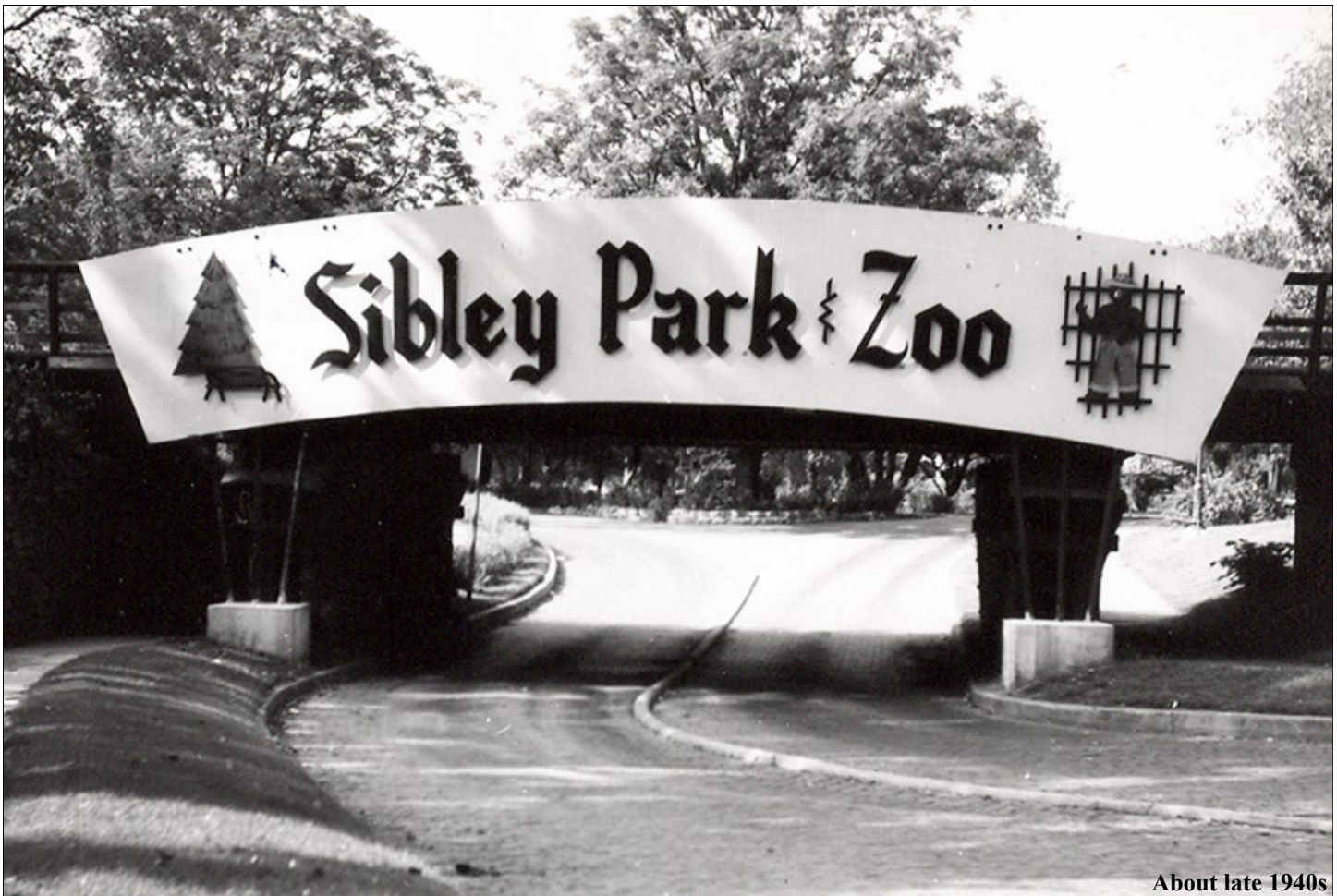


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Sibley Park entrance with race track and grandstand.
Reprinted from the *Sibley Park Souvenir Book*, 1899.



About late 1940s

Our Mission: To collect, preserve, and promote the history of Blue Earth County for present and future generations.

Historian



Blue Earth County Historical Society

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN
507-345-5566
www.bechshistory.com

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The Blue Earth County Historian

Fall 2010

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

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Board of Trustees

Mike Lagerquist
Board of Trustees President

In this busy world where attentions are always turned toward the future out of necessity, sometimes it's nice — and important, and wise — to stop and take a look in the mirror. Not in a narcissistic, self-important way, but in a contemplative, refocusing effort.

That's what the Blue Earth County Historical Society is embarking on. With the assistance of a marketing class at Minnesota State University Mankato, BECHS is preparing a survey we hope will give us a snapshot of where we are now and help us determine ways to improve ourselves in the future. We will try to look at everything to evaluate what we're doing, how we're doing it, what we are missing and how we can make ourselves better. Although we'll be doing a self-evaluation, what we're really seeking is YOUR feedback and suggestions to make tomorrow better than today.

This survey will not be the end of our collaboration with MSU's marketing classes. Beginning in January, another class will step in to help us take what we learned from that survey and put it into practice. Too often, organizations look at survey results and then set them on the shelf. We plan to take those results and turn them into reality so, as one Board of Trustees member likes to say, we can work smarter and not harder.

Among the specifics we'll be asking about:

- Are there additional services and activities you'd like to see us providing?
- Do we need to do a better job communicating with you? If so, what methods work best for our members and others in the communities we serve?
- Has your involvement with BECHS decreased? If so, what can we do to re-engage you?
- How can we better work with schools to provide young people with an understanding of where they live?

History may be our business, but we have to do it in ways that meet today's expectations and look toward tomorrow's realities. For those reasons, we hope that when you receive your survey you'll take the time to tell us what you think so we can continue to protect and preserve the history of Blue Earth County.

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

Please consider the BECHS Endowment Fund or a legacy gift, also known as a planned or estate gift. To learn more about giving opportunities, contact Jessica Potter, Executive Director, at 507-345-5566.

Director's Notes



Jessica Potter
Executive Director

***Change is inevitable.
Growth is optional.***

I think that sums up the state of the Blue Earth County Historical Society in six simple words. It's a frightening but exciting statement.

In early October, our building partners, VINE Faith in Action, announced plans to redevelop the Nichols Office Building. They also plan to consolidate their services, which includes moving the Summit Center. So, what does that mean for BECHS? *Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.*

Our reality today is that we are running out of space for our services. In particular Collections and Archives Storage are hitting maximum capacity and a larger museum gallery space is needed to tell a broader story of Blue Earth County's past. What are we doing about it? Currently a Building Taskforce meets monthly to evaluate our facility options, which could include a new building, a new-to-us building or expanding at our current location. They meet the third Monday of each month and would enjoy the addition of new members.


Another way we are choosing growth is by holding a Strategic Planning Session on Thursday, October 28 at 6 p.m. The last Strategic Plan was developed in 2008 to serve as a three-year plan. So now is the time to update the plan and develop new goals for the upcoming three to five years. This planning session is open to anyone interested in long-range planning for the Society. Please RSVP to me if you are interested in participating.

In addition, we have created a new partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato Marketing Department as you may have read in the President's column. The class will be creating a series of surveys that will help us discover the community's awareness and support for BECHS. One of these surveys will be to our current membership, which will appear in the upcoming year-end campaign letter. Please take the time to complete the survey

and help us gather the necessary information to move forward. Your opinions are valuable to us!

Another exciting area of growth is a new partnership venture with local artist and BECHS friend, Marian Anderson. A new 800-square-foot gallery space featuring Marian's 55 years as an artist will soon open at 1560 Adams Street in Mankato. The space is owned and has been generously developed by Rod Meyer of Meyer Financial and Consulting. BECHS will be involved with the staffing and sales portion of the gallery with 100% of the proceeds benefiting BECHS (not including the sale of originals). In 2011, BECHS will also become the sole outlet for Marian Anderson art with all proceeds benefiting BECHS. This is an incredible gift and opportunity. Thank you, Marian! Join us on Friday, December 3 from 5-8 p.m. and Saturday, December 4 from 1-5 p.m. for the Marian Anderson Art Gallery Holiday Open House.

As 2010 comes to a close and the Society gears up for new projects and annual community events, we hope you will continue to support BECHS with your generous year-end donations. The money raised at the end of the year not only helps us achieve our financial goals for 2010, but also helps as we plan ahead to 2011. In the beginning of November, the annual campaign letter will arrive in mailboxes. Please consider a financial gift for a special project, the Endowment Fund or general operating expenses. Nearly 50% of our annual operating budget is based on the money BECHS raises through memberships, donations and services every year. Growth (*additional staff, expanded facilities, and enhanced programs*) is inevitable, if we can raise more funds.

	<p>Help the Blue Earth County Historical Society continue to collect, preserve, protect and present the history of Blue Earth County. The GiveMN.org website makes donating easy and quick. Check it out today.</p>
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Museum Store

JoLynn Crowe Museum Assistant

After a rather soggy start, the fall weather has improved immensely!

The fantastic fall colors once again did not disappoint and the weather couldn't have been nicer for the Fall Pub Crawl on October 1, 2010. Those of you who attended received the new booklet *Fortune and Family Ties*, which is now available in the Museum Store.

With all of the earlier rainfall the Rapidan Dam was roaring and tumbling with immense power. This year marked the centennial of the Rapidan Dam. If you would like to learn more about the Rapidan Dam, the Museum Store has the book *Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark* for \$12.95 and a DVD titled *Rapidan Dam: A Living Landmark* for \$5.00. Both are very well put together and full of information and if you go out to see the Dam, don't forget to stop by and have a piece of pie at the Dam Store.

Speaking of food, the Museum Store has great recipe books including the newest edition of *The Land Vol. III*. Come in and have a browse through our recipe books. Betcha' can't leave without one! Yum! And to carry all the wonderful items home that you have purchased, BECHS now has for sale a tote bag that is dark blue with a white BECHS logo on it for \$9.95. Another new addition is an aluminum water bottle with a screw top cap and clip with the BECHS logo, selling for \$9.95. Both are a great way to visually spread the word about BECHS.

BECHS will be hosting the Holiday Book Fair on November 6, 2010, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. with authors here from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Once again we will have authors here to sign their books and this year we will be having book readings from some of the authors, plus the fantastic used book sale. We are now accepting donations of books for the used book sale. Just drop them off at the Heritage Center.

Also in November, the Fingerprints and Footnotes

Club will have a guest speaker about Minnesotans enlisting in the Civil War. The Museum Store has a great selection of Civil War books: *Minnesota in the Civil War* \$19.95, *Pale Horse at Plum Run* \$17.95, *The Last Full Measure* \$17.95 and *Go If You Think It Your Duty* (Hardbound) \$32.95.

Soon enough we will have to change our attire for some warmer clothing and probably spend more time indoors than out. Oh, to be young again and not mind the cold! If you are a fan of the author Peg Meier, we have two of her books for sale in the Museum Store: *Bring Warm Clothes* and *Wishing for a Snow Day*. Both are fun books that take a nostalgic look back on life and times the way it used to be.

Please feel free to stop by and say "Hi" and then browse through the nice selection of books the Museum Store has on hand. We have a wide variety of beautiful prints from Marian Anderson and John Cross to choose from when thinking ahead for Christmas. The store also has a marvelous collection of Marian Anderson note cards, some with wonderful winter scenes. Don't forget that members receive a 10% discount on all purchases except consignment. Something to keep in mind is the convenience of online shopping on our website at www.bechshistory.com.

Volunteer Help Needed

Gift Shop Attendant

Duties include: cash register operation, a warm welcoming smile and customer service
Hours and location will vary between the Heritage Center, Hubbard House and Marian Anderson Art Gallery

Call JoLynn or Jessica for more details 345-5566



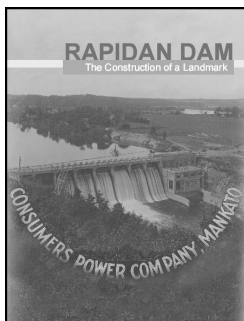
Heritage Center Museum and Store Hours: Tue. 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Wed. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Closed Sunday & Monday

Museum Admission: \$5 adults, \$2 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members and children under 5 Free

Members receive a 10% discount on most items available in the Store.

Featured Museum Store Items

Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark



The Rapidan Dam was constructed in 1910-1911 by the Ambursen Hydraulic Construction Company of Boston contracted by the Consumer's Power Company of Chicago. The Dam was built to service Blue Earth County and surrounding southern Minnesota residents with "cheap power", as stated in *The Daily Review* in March 1911. The dam's

construction was an engineering and construction marvel for southern Minnesota and is presented in this book as chronicled by local newspapers and photographers \$12.95.

Marian Anderson Art Note Cards



For sending an extra special note to a favorite someone, the Museum Store carries a selection of note cards from the Historic Homes series by Marian Anderson, as well as some of her other featured prints. Many different designs are available to fit every

occasion. \$1.50 each, sold in packets of six for \$9.

BECHS Tote Bag and Aluminum Water Bottle

The tote bag is dark blue with a white BECHS logo, a great multi-purpose bag for carrying things from books to groceries while being ecologically mindful. \$9.95



The aluminum water bottle is brilliant blue with a white BECHS logo and has a screw off cap with a clip. \$9.95



John Cross Photography



Some of John Cross's favorite photographs taken during his 35 years at the *Mankato Free Press* are available for purchase in an 8x10" format. A portion of the proceeds will be donated back to the Historical Society thanks to

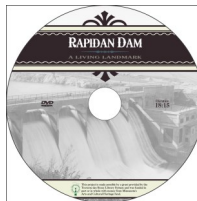
the generosity of Brian Fowler of the Artisan Gallery, Mankato. \$49.00

Marian Anderson Historic Home Series



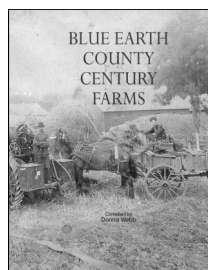
Marian Anderson prints of the beautiful Hubbard House, Cray Mansion and Schmidt House will capture for all time the way they were in years gone by. \$150.00 Artist Proof \$75.00 Main Edition

Rapidan Dam: A Living Landmark



This video is a great way to learn about the historical significance of the Rapidan Dam, how it shaped industrial development in our area and to see how the landmark operates today! \$5.00

Blue Earth County Century Farms



The story of the development of agriculture in this county through the eyes of the farm families who lived it. Between 1876 and 2004, 178 farms in our county became registered Century Farms. These farms have been owned and operated by members of the same family for at least 100 years, some of them for 150 or more years. Through

the pages of this book, meet these families, read their stories, learn about their lives and farms, and about their successes and failures, joys and sorrows. Hardbound, \$39.95

Shop online at www.bechshistory.com

BECHS accepts the following credit cards for store purchases, membership dues or donations.





Research Center

Marsha Heinze
Archives Aide

The Vertical Files in the Research Center are a treasure trove of stories about Blue Earth County people and events clipped and organized by a crew of dedicated volunteers. These news stories were gathering from several local newspapers including: the *Blue Earth County Enterprise*, the *Lake Region Times*, the *Good Thunder Herald*, the *Mankato Review* and the *Free Press*. They cover the time period from 1857 to the present. In amongst the “big” news of fires and floods, wars and weather, you’ll find stories of the everyday lives of our county’s people and communities.

Recently, while searching for information about the “Old Alley Gang” in response to a research request, I came across an article titled “Old Alley Gang Holds Reunion” in the *Mankato Free Press* of October 13, 1936. The “Old Alley Gang” was a group of 23 young men who, as boys, had played in the alley of the 400 block on South Broad Street.

In 1931, Mrs. Lillian Atcherson wrote a play, which was presented by the “Alley Gang” as a plea for better playground facilities. The boys rapidly grew into young men and planned to meet every five years to compare notes. Their 1936 meeting was held at the American Beauty Café on South Front on a Sunday afternoon. Here they renewed old acquaintances and compared notes on their individual activities during the past five years.

Members of the “Alley Gang” included: Donald Williamson, Lyle Roberts, Luverne Winters, John Zotalis, Eros Zotalis, Cleanthes (Cly) Zotalis, Edmund Donahue, Dean Call, Clayton Call, Robert

Owens, Douglas Jensen, John Humphrey, Dennis Haynes, Bruce Ellis, Junior Snarr, Robert Roberts, Lloyd Theiman, Neil Carlson, Charles Call, Clayton Mosher, Dale Skow, William Cords and Delbert Best. Are any of you “boys” or your families still around? Do you still meet? If so, please get in touch. We’d love to hear the “rest of the story.”

As for the rest of you, whether you have some specific questions about people, places or events or are just curious about life in Blue Earth County over the last 150 years, come on in and browse through the files. I’m confident you’ll find something that interests you and which you might want to pursue further. We would be glad to help you with that.

Volunteer Help Needed

Research Center Aide

Duties include:

Assisting researchers with archival materials,
answering research requests, and customer service.
8 hours per week.

Contact Shelley for more details 345-5566



BECHS On the Air

Listen to KTOE 1420 AM the 2nd and 4th
Tuesday of each month 4:10-4:40 p.m.
BECHS update with Trish.



Research Center Hours:

Tue. 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Wed. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.,
Closed Sunday & Monday

Admission: \$5 adults, \$1 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members Free

Genealogy Day 4th Saturday of each month - Free Admission

Research Fees: Copies 25¢, Contracted Research \$15/half hour



Collections & Exhibits

Shelley Harrison
Archives Manager

I'm not sure you know this or not, but we're working on our next BIG exhibit: the Front Street Project!

What is the Front Street Project? It is a multi-layered community project. Which means it's going to take all of us to tell and preserve the stories of our favorite street. This was the core downtown business district, and there are stories to share. Hopefully, you've read the *Free Press* articles or heard us on the radio. If not, we are collecting the stories of Front Street and we want yours! These memories will be developed into a book, an audio CD and an interactive three-dimensional exhibit. Creating an exhibit with all these overlapping components requires teamwork.

We need your ideas, suggestions and most importantly your memories. We are looking for committee members to help with everything from planning and installation of the exhibit, to help in researching and writing. We know there are some very creative people in our community and we want you!

Preparing for an exhibit like this means we have

to diagram the exhibit space, decide what groupings might be interesting and pull items from BECHS' permanent collection. This could be a sign from the Grand Theater, a matchbook cover from the Hurdy Gurdy saloon or a photograph from the Jessup Storage Company.

You might be able to help us with an audio tour that guests can listen to on MP3 players or find music to help set the tone and mood of the Front Street Project. There is a lot that goes into creating an exhibit, much more than just physical layout of the items in the gallery. You could help us create programs for children's activities and other interactive opportunities or help us research the more in-depth information for the book that will accompany the exhibit.

So we have a lot to do before our exhibit opening in the spring of 2011. We really need your help to make this BIG project happen. There is still time to add your memories. Stop by and pick up a Memory Form or find it on our website. Watch for new exciting things about this upcoming exhibit on our website, Facebook page and upcoming issues of the Historian.

Heritage Center Landscaping Project

Come by and see our new look.

Special Thanks To
City of Mankato
Drummer's Garden Center
Terri Jensen – Planning and Planting
Cheri Miller – Tree
Susan and Robert Olson – Funding

Volunteer Help Wanted

Front Street Exhibit Coordinator

Duties include: oversee exhibit design, coordination with staff, volunteers and vendors
To start December 2010
Contact Jessica for more details 345-5566

Garden Goods, Gifts, Fresh Floral



281 St. Andrews Drive, Mankato

507-388-4877

www.drummersgardencenter.com



R.D. Hubbard House

The Hubbards are rejoicing because their furniture, purchased by R.D., has come home. The

parlor set which includes a settee, man's chair and woman's chair has been donated by the Estate of Jack Burk. Burk acquired the pieces in Mankato from the Willard family and moved them to his home - the historic Osbeck house in Lake Benton, MN. The Willards had purchased the pieces at the 1938 Hubbard family auction. Sincere thanks to Carl Burk for the generous Hubbard House donation.



A Mankato Holiday Tradition

Christmas at the Hubbard House

Hubbard Family Christmas Eve

**Sunday, December 5, 1-4 p.m.
Monday, December 6, 5-8 p.m.**

*Turn of the Century Costumed Guides
Holiday Gift Shop ~ Refreshments*

**Adults \$7.50 Children 5-17 \$3
BECHS Members and under 5 FREE**

R.D. Hubbard House is located at
606 South Broad Street, Mankato.
Call 345-5566 or www.bechshistory.com
for more information.

Volunteer Help Needed

Hubbard House Assistant

Duties include: tour guide, gift shop attendant,
historic house museum maintenance
Weekends in December 2010.
Contact JoLynn for more details 345-5566



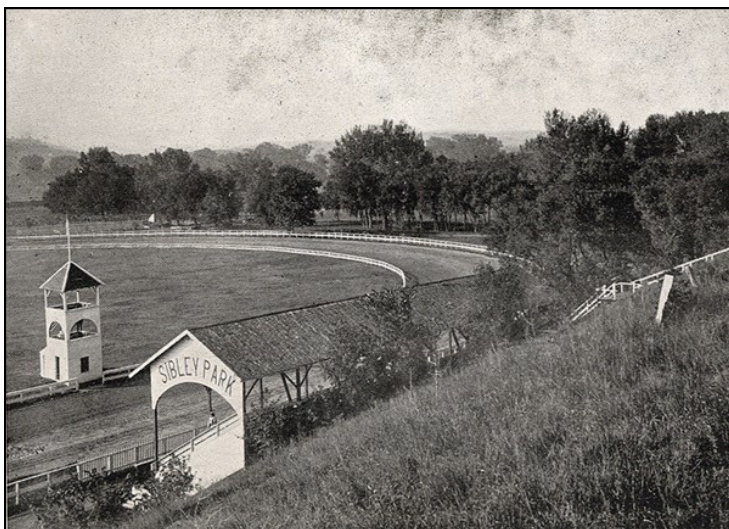
Hubbard House and Carriage House Gift Shop Hours:

Closed for the Season, will reopen May 2011

Holiday Hours: Special Event December 5, 1-4 p.m.- and 6, 5-8 p.m.

Regular Tours December 11, 12, 18 and 19 open 1-4 p.m.

Admission: \$5 adults, \$2 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members and children under 5 Free



Racetrack and grandstand at Sibley Park including stairs up the mound. Reprinted from the *Sibley Park Souvenir Book*, 1899.

Sibley Park

Lions and racetracks and floods, oh my!

By Grace Webb

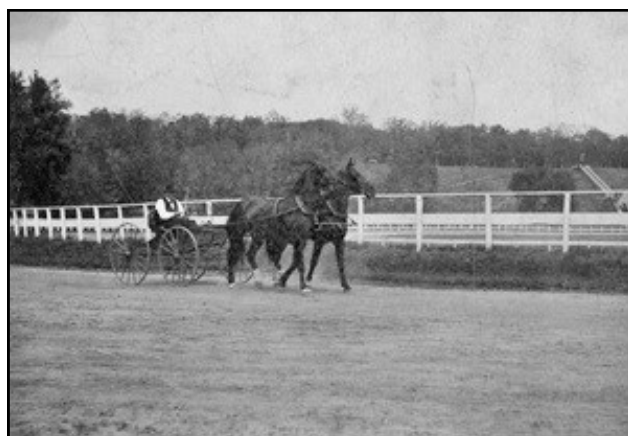
Beautiful Sibley Park has had a long and varied history, providing the Mankato area with a place of culture and beauty for years. Today, it is probably best known for its beautiful flower beds and intricate landscaping. But what many people may not realize is that Sibley Park has offered a lot more over the past 120 years—the park has hosted countless fairs, had a racetrack, and even boasted a zoo! Sibley Park's story is filled with rich history and classic Minnesota values and resourcefulness. Let's take a look at what wild entertainment this passively beautiful park has offered in the past.

The park was named after General H. H. Sibley, who established a trading post on Sibley Mound in the 1840s or 1850s. Sibley, who became Minnesota's first governor, called his post "Sibley's Mound." Later, after two brothers-in-law from Virginia, Henry Jackson and Parsons King Johnson, started the settlement that would later grow into the city of Mankato, the park area became a popular farm settlement with incoming families. From the very beginning, however, the land was regarded as a potential site for a beautiful city park.

Though it is known for its beauty now, it was also involved with some terrible and grisly events. In 1862, it is believed that Sibley Park was home to Camp Lincoln, where 303 Dakota warriors were housed prior to their trials by a military tribunal in Mankato. This was at the end of the Dakota Conflict, and though Lincoln pardoned 264 of the Native Americans, another 38 were executed. Though the executions that followed did not take place at Sibley Mound, the sentenced warriors were confined there for some time before being transferred to a location closer to the execution site. This execution was the largest mass-execution in the history of the United States.

This history did not deter families from continuing to settle and thrive in the Sibley area. As Mankato blossomed, so did Sibley Park, and as more people gathered across the land, more public gatherings took place. A major part of Sibley Park's early history was the fairs that were held there. Fairs were actually held at the park before it was a city park; in 1884, the Southern Minnesota Livestock and Fair Association set up a fair at Sibley Mound. Frank Metill, Ed Weaver, Martin Joran, Henry Himmelman, Jr., P.H. Carney, C.E. Wise, and George Pond were the fair's chief promoters. This first fair was called "the best ever held in Minnesota" by *The Mankato Free Press* and had a grandstand specially built, a livestock building, and a floral hall, besides horse races at the horse track. It also had many artful items on display, including a quilt created by Mrs. R.D. Hubbard and wood carvings by Miss Clara Piper. In 1885, another fair was put on with even more exhibits by Mankato area business and industry leaders.

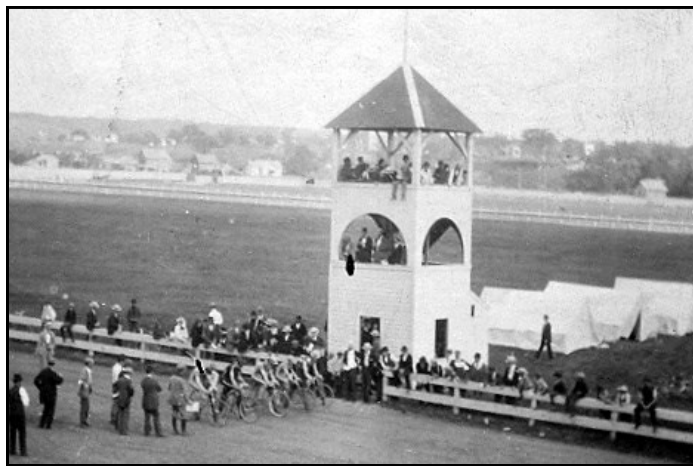
Sibley Park became a true city park in July of 1887, when town officials bought about 120 acres of land from the Givens family for \$13,088. Later that year, the city also bought the Southern Minnesota Stock and Fairgrounds, which were close to Sibley Park. This fairground included a racing track and a grandstand.



N. P. Lee driving on the Sibley Park race track.

The racetrack was an extremely popular addition to the park in a time when Mankato citizens desired something to entertain themselves. Sibley Park's horserace track was created in 1887 in response to another popular horseracing site, "Mankato Driving Park." Mankato businessmen and farmers were training horses on this starkly simple track, but people started advocating for a better area to train (and test) the steeds. Perhaps the greatest advocates were European immigrants who came from countries with horseracing traditions. Thus, Sibley Park made full use of its newly-purchased racing track. Its site had a canopied wooden grandstand, a starter-judging tower at the finish line, and a rail-line dirt track.

There were many types of races that occurred—and not all of them involved horses. There were traditional neck-and-neck horse races, which usually involved locally-owned, locally-ridden horses. There were weekend sweepstake races spring through autumn, and there were also sometimes "ice harness" events in the winter. Besides just horses, though, there were also bicycle races.



Bicycle race, 1892

The Sibley Park racetrack remained popular well into the 1910s, but then started to lose its loyal following. The track itself was getting old and worn. New pastimes such as baseball and golf had become popular. In addition, even the track's old fans were starting to advocate for a different use of park space, since the racetrack took up so much of the land. Plans for small changes such as an animal exhibit spiraled into a full-fledged zoo, necessitating more available land. The final horserace was probably in 1915, the last event of a tradition that went out with a

whimper instead of a ringing shot of the starter pistol.

About the same time the horserace track was dying out, Sibley Park was getting a new star: its zoo. The zoo started in 1907 with one bear in a cage. Over the years, it grew into a sprawling wild life menagerie featuring monkeys, goats, African pigs, prairie dogs, timber wolves, minks, llamas, deer, elk, bison, rabbits, ducks, chickens, a dog, and even a lion. Perhaps the most interesting animals in the zoo were Mutt and Jeff, the lion-and-dog best friend pair who lived at Sibley Zoo in the 1930s. Mutt was the lion and Jeff was the dog and the two were inseparable until Mutt had to be put to sleep because of a painful hernia.



Mutt and Jeff

The zoo was not without its share of controversy and incidents. There were many reports in the newspaper of zoo visitors being bitten by bears, though none of the incidents were fatal. In 1911, during a particularly hard financial dry spell, a group of hunters and even some city officials slaughtered six of the zoo's deer. The reason for this slaughter was the thought that the deer were "a heavy drain on the city funds."

While Sibley Park's horserace track went out gradually and quietly, the Sibley Park Zoo was not as fortunate; it went out with a roar—and a lethal one. Sibley Park was long known for its dangerously low ground, which is why original settlers chose not to build there. Over the years, the park and its facilities flooded a few times. Usually, the park and the zoo could weather the storm, but one major storm finally overcame it.

There are records of flooding in the Sibley Mound area as early as 1881. In the current era, major floods occurred in 1951, 1961 and 1965. A *Mankato Free Press* article in 1961 told how Sibley Park “still bears the scars of its battle with the Blue Earth river.” Flower beds were swamped, roads were destroyed, and trees were littered with debris. This time, the zoo and its animals survived, though not all of them; a timber wolf and some small animals were trapped in their cages and died. Other animals were safe but stuck behind inches of hard mud that prevented their cages from opening. Volunteers and workers cleaned for more than five days picking up all the garbage. “Water ran two-and-a-half feet deep through the park museum,” the article said, “[Park Superintendent] Lowry estimates 40 wheelbarrows of mud were later carried out.”



Animal cages under water in the 1965 flood. Reprinted from *Is This the Picture Story of the Last Great Flood?* Minnesota River Valley 1965.

This certainly wasn't the only flood Sibley Park and its zoo faced; a *Minneapolis Star* article talks about surprise flood waters forcing zoo workers to store rabbits and skunks in garbage cans and lock geese and ducks in the Highland Park Pavilion kitchen. “The pheasants have been placed in various restrooms on park property, separated as much as possible to keep the cocks from fighting each other,” the article stated. “Rabbits, skunks, raccoons, badgers and bobcats are in the basement of the bathhouse of the municipal swimming pool, all safely enclosed in tall garbage cans and oil drums.”

Workers had to rush to construct raised platforms for lions and bears. Still, in the end, everyone was all right.

Unfortunately, in 1965, a flood washed over Sibley Park Zoo that outdid all the others. When a dike broke and sent thousands of gallons of water rushing over the park, there was simply no time to save the animals. The only caged animals that were said to have survived the flood were four monkeys, two alligators, and a coati mundi (South American raccoon). Buffalo and elk were saved when workers in boats drove them from their shelters past the swept-away fences to higher ground. A cow elk escaped by swimming across the Minnesota River. While workers tried frantically to open the cages of smaller, less-dangerous animals, most animals still drowned, including foxes, a lynx, two timber wolves, a collared peccary (South American pig), and a skunk.

The zoo ruins lay dormant for some time before the Mankato Area Zoological Society began to petition a new zoo in the 1970s. However, it never again reached the scope of the old zoo. Now, there is a petting zoo available for young animal lovers (or old ones), no longer featuring lions and wolves but goats and miniature horses.

Sibley Park has undergone several large changes since the 1960s, but that is a story for another time. It is sufficient to say that the park weathered some hard storms and, with a little resourcefulness and a lot of Minnesota hard work, still came out clean on the other side. Its peaceful flower gardens today might make it hard to believe it had a colorful history, but Sibley Park certainly did have its share of excitement, whether it was fairs, bicycle races or lions. It is a wonderful part of our Mankato heritage, both past and present, and it is sure to bring grace and beauty to this fair city for years to come.

Resources:

BECHS Vertical Files
Good Thunder Herald
Home Magazine
Mankato City News
Mankato Free Press
Minneapolis Star
The Review



History's Mysteries

When looking over an article in the *Mankato Free Press* of July 13, 1949, titled "Welsh Choirs Trained Long," I started to wonder... when was the first Welsh Choir started in Blue Earth County?

Anyone who has information about this, please contact Marsha at (507) 345-5566 or email her at bechsrc@hickorytech.net

Follow-up on last issue's mystery: Where was the DeCoster Surgical Hospital?

Thank you to the many who contacted us as well as those who brought in information and pictures. A special thanks goes out to Fred A. Muellerleile. The answer to the question of where DeCoster Surgical Hospital was located is, at the corner of 5th and Cherry Street, next to the home of Maude Hart Lovelace.



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Wish List

Items or cash donations will be gratefully accepted.

- Office Max or Que Computers Gift Cards
- Archival supplies for collections storage (ongoing preservation expenses)
- Front Street Project exhibit and book funds
- PastPerfect 5.0 Upgrade (need \$200)
- Kik-Step Library stool (new \$60—or used)

Wishes fulfilled:

Website Enhancement - thanks to Win and Shirley Grundmeier and an anonymous donor

New Heritage Center Landscaping (see page 7)

THANK YOU!



Fingerprints and Footnotes

Footnotes and Fingerprints, the History and Genealogy Club, is always growing and newcomers are always welcome. In August, we had an exciting adventure with John Cross and Tim Krohn as they talked about canoeing down the Minnesota River.

In September, Steve Ulmen, author of *Blood on the Prairie - A Novel of the Sioux Uprising*, presented the 1993 film *The Dakota Conflict*. We had a great crowd.

This month we invited everyone to the historic R. D. Hubbard House at night and discussed what really scared the Victorians! These and many interesting tidbits can be had at any of our meetings. If you have any ideas for topics or tours or if you have any interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know.

Future Meetings:

- November 4 (*note the date change*) – 150th Anniversary of Minnesota entering into the Civil War presented by John "Johnny K" Kvasnicka – rescheduled
- December 9 (*note the date change*) - Sips of Beer – The History of Breweries in Mankato
- January 4, 2011 – Identifying Family Photographs hosted by Grace Keir

Footnote in History

December 23, 1910 – 100 years ago

“Fire Demon Sweeps Madison Lake”

Fire of unknown origin broke out late in the night of December 22, 1910 and spread rapidly ahead of a brisk northwest wind. Consumed was the entire business district of Madison Lake. Early destruction of the telephone office prevented alerting the local fire department, though eventually aid came from Mankato, Elysian and Waterville. Frequent blasts from gasoline, gun powder and other accelerants struck terror in every heart and did nothing to quell the fire.

-Paraphrased from the *Madison Lake Tribune*, December 28, 1910



"Blessed Are the Hands That Have Served"

The intention of this exhibit is to learn how some of the retired School Sisters of Notre Dame used their hands throughout their lives and to tell their stories through words and photographs.

By Photographer Kay Helms
On display at the BECHS Heritage Center
November 2 – December 30, 2010
Opening Reception
Saturday, November 13 at 2 p.m.

BECHS Artifacts & Archives Donations

July – September 2010

Anonymous	Jones, Ellis
Bartholdi, Roberta	Karow, Linda
BEC Highway Dept.	Lamson, Barbara
Broughten, Carol	Larvick, Geraldine
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Buchanan, Don	Lovett, Jean
Colakovic, Kenneth	Lund, Rick and Renee
Cottonwood CHS	Mattson, Tracy
Winkleman, Myrna Daby	McLaughlin, Theresa
Dooley, Patrick	McLeod CHS
Drake, Laurie	Nelson, William
Erlandson, Marcus	Penhiter, Judith
Fleming, Barbara	Pomerence, Kathryn
Frederick, Mike	Potter, Jessica
Grundmeier, Win	Resner, Donna
Heinze, Marsha	Richards, Marcia
Heller, Barbara	Rowe, Janet
Hendley, Carolyn	Smith, Kathy
HickoryTech	Smith, Lynette
Hottinger, Rev. Ted	Tarjeson, Jane
Hurry, Dennis	Vee, Harlan
Itasca CHS	Webb, Donna
Johnson, Glenn	

Blue Earth County Historical Society

Holiday Book Fair

Saturday, November 6

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Meet Local Authors

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Museum Store Specials

Refreshments

Used Book Sale

*Book donations accepted now until
November 1st*

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Purchase a coupon booklet for Herberger's Community Day Saturday, November 13, 2010



**100% of the \$5 coupon booklet price
directly supports BECHS!**

We appreciate your support!

Booklets available at the Heritage Center

BECHS Donations

July - September 2010

Up to \$25

Freiberg, Kenneth
Hottinger, Rev. Ted J.
Leeman, Harold
Lutes, Duncan
Pulis, Tim
Ries, Chuck and Carol
Voss, Judy and Leo

\$26-\$50

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Boubel, John and Karen
Burns, Inella
Cariveau, Yvonne
Owens, Catherine

\$51-\$100

Casella, Donna
Hustuft, Carol and Dean
McLaughlin, James
Miller, Julie
Peterson, Glen and Leslie
Roscoe, Don
Torgerson, Allen and Jane

\$101-\$499

Nienow, Richard and Patricia

Special Projects

Anonymous - *Website Enhancements*
Grundmeier, Win and Shirley—*Website enhancements and collections*
Jackson, Colleen and David - *Programs*
Lagerquist, Mike - *PastPerfect Upgrade*

Memorials

In Memory of Eric Jacobson
Zellmer, Randy and Sandy

In Memory of Loretta Buker
Wingen, Carol

In Memory of Marcella Bienapfl Hillegas
Richards, Marcia

In Memory of Orville Jensen
Smoley, John

In Memory of Teresa Erlandson
Abdo, J. M.
Barnes, Myrl and Jeannine
Brennan, Diane
Chalgren, Dr. William and Marcia
Compart, Richard and Bonita
Eichers, A. J. and Joan
Erlandson, Robert and Virginia
Frost, Antoinette A
Galli, Joseph and Victoria
Gens, Kenneth and Donna
Herbranson, Thomas and Marlene
Johnson, Walter and Maurine
Laue, Patricia M.
Lutz, Diane L.
McLean, Beatrice A.
McLean, Edward
Moss, Terry
Norberg, Harlow and Marlene
Richards, Marcia
Schull, Armin and Jeanette
Swenson, Helen Rachel
Volk Transfer

In-Kind

Red Door Creative
Resner, Donna

Grants

Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grant
funding to update BECHS microfilm
holdings



Volunteer Help Needed

Special Events Coordinator

Duties include: Marketing, promotion
and program details

Hours vary based on program/event

Contact Jessica for more details 345-5566

BECHS Volunteers

July - September 2010

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Baures, Lisa	Klinder, Kurt
Beiswanger, Joshua	Krassin, Sara
Belgard, Hugh	Ladd, Robyn
Belgard, Vail	Lagerquist, Mike
Benefield, Dale	Lavitschke, Dean
Beyer, Jessica	Lavitschke, Jo-an
Bouma, Jana	Madsen, Jack
Brown, Joan	Madsen, Liz
Brugman, Doug	Madsen, Timothy
Bunde, Margo	McComb, Mary
Burns, Inella	McLaughlin, Teresa
Cords, Betty	McLaughlin, Tom
Coleman, Mary	Nienow, Tricia
Crowe, Jody	Nussbaumer, Linda
Doyle, Preston	Ohlenkamp, Ora
Fairchild, Cheryl	Oldenburg, Alex
Frisch, Carlienne	Peterson, Leslie
Garlow, Laura	Piepho, Mark
Garlow, Sandi	Potter, Brad
Goff, Harley	Quade, Henry
Grundmeier, Shirley	Rezmerski, John
Grundmeier, Win	Rodriguez, Gabriela
Gullickson, Jim	Sassenburg, Eunice
Hanson, Kathryn	Schaub, Shirley
Havelka, Karen	Schevers, Paula
Heller, Barb	Schultz, Jo
Herbst, Gordon	Shortall, Christina
Hird, David	Sizemore, Daardi
Hugg, Bob	Starcher, Sarah
Hugg, Corey	Straka, Stacey
Humphrey, Mary	Stromswold, Todd
Hundstad, Patrice	Tarjeson, Jane
Hustuft, Carol	Webb, Grace
Hynes, Susan	Webb, Donna
Johnson, Mary H.	Zellmer, Randy
Keir, Grace	Ziegler, Ken

BECHS Web Resources

New Look for the BECHS Website!

Because of technology, our world is constantly changing. By the time you receive this newsletter, the home page of bechshistory.com will look very different as well! A change for the better, the new updated look offers more space on each page and has some new features too – a new search engine, a frequently updated feature article, a favorites slider and a full site map (all pages available within the site) listed at the bottom of each page.

Having a hard time getting around the new design? Not to worry – there are 2 new options to help!

1. **Sitemap on every page:** Scroll down to the bottom of the page to see each page on the site listed by its title in outline format. Click on the text to visit that page
2. **A New Search Engine:** Every night, the new search engine visits every page in the site, keeps track of each word on each page (including pdf documents) and enters those words into an index so that visitors can find what they are looking for quickly and easily. Looking for a specific word? Search for it! Looking for information about an event? Search for it! Just type the text into the white search box and click on the search icon to the right. A list will load so any visitor can choose from the pages listed.

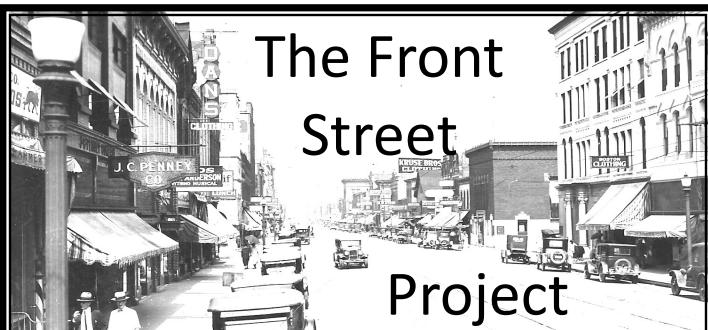
Make sure to visit the website at least every couple of weeks to view the **new feature article!** Located right below the green bar, check back here often for new information, ideas, stories and featured products!

And finally – take a few minutes to watch the new favorites slider! Every 7 seconds, a new picture appears with new information about an upcoming event or current project! Click on the picture to visit that event's page for more information or to sign-up for the event. The numbers in the right hand corner of the slider will allow the visitor to scroll through the pictures faster. The numbers also tell the visitor how many pictures are available.

Enjoy visiting the new design!

Wendy Greiner
Website Committee Chair

**10th Annual
South Central MN Genealogy Expo
Saturday, October 30th
MSU Centennial Student Union
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m..**



The Front Street

Project

The Front Street Project has a simple goal: to capture, preserve, and present the stories of Front Street from the early beginnings as a core downtown business district in Mankato-to urban renewal-to present day revitalization.

The Front Street Project is a collection of oral and written stories that will be used to develop a book, with and audio CD, by the Blue Earth County Historical Society and also an interactive exhibit at the Society's Heritage Center to open in 2011.

How can you be a part of the Front Street Project?

- Donate Front Street artifacts to BECHS (from photos to matchbooks to old movies)
- Write a story about Front Street
- Record a Front Street memory by calling the project phone line at 507-389-5537
- Encourage your friends and family to participate in the project
- Volunteer to help with exhibit planning and construction or writing for the book.

Volunteers are needed for the Front Street Project Exhibit Committee and Front Street Project Book Committee. Please contact Jessica at 507-345-5566 or bechs@hickorytech.net if you are interested in being a part of this community project. We are currently collecting written memories, memorabilia and photographs. Watch www.bechshistory.com and the *Free Press* for updates.

YOUNG HISTORIANS

Our new Young Historians year started on September 11th. This year we are watching the History Channel's series "America: The Story of US". Each hands-on workshop will include watching the 45 minute video, a snack representing the time period and a craft or activity. Our group has grown to over 30 kids in grades K-12 this year.

At our first club meeting we elected our new co-Presidents, Kali Goettl and Connor Oldenburg. This year members submitted design ideas for our club t-shirts; congratulations to Lucas Youngerberg for having the winning design! Our club project this year will again be doing History Day projects. Our reception night last May was wonderful! We hope you will join us this year to see our new projects in May 2011!

As a community service project, the Young Historians have decided to do different fundraisers in 2010 and 2011 to raise \$4500 for new meeting room tables and chairs. Our fundraising effort is titled "Young Historians Take a Stand for History." Our first fundraising event was a Book Fair at Barnes & Noble on September 17th where we raised \$150. We are planning many more fundraising events like selling Herberger's Community Day coupon booklets and participating in the Madison East Holiday Gift and Bake Sale. Watch for other upcoming events led by Young Historians.

Young Historians Take a Stand for History Money to be raised \$4500

- \$125 Buy a table (need 6)
- \$50 Buy a chair (need 75)

Raised so far \$45 donation + \$150 from the Barnes and Noble Bookfair = \$195

How can I help?

- Make a donation at GiveMN.org or send to BECHS
- Buy a Herberger's Community Day booklet sold by a Young Historian
- Donate or buy an item at the Madison East Holiday Gift and Bake Sale

Laura Garlow

10th Grade, Maple River High School

BECHS Membership

July-September 2010

New Members

Avila, Nancy
Begin, Deborah
Berg, Tom & Nichole
Brunner, Pat & Joan Busch
Buesing, Orville & Karen
Erlandson, Marcus
Evans, Dave and Judi
Fletcher, Wayne B.
Gullickson, James & Shannon
Huntley, Mary
Lanphier, John
Mortvedt, Roxanne
Osborne, Linda
Polich, Fred & Linda
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Schroeder, Cynthia
Smook, Brad & Alysha
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Anderson, Marian
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Barber, James & Edith
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Bartsch, Janet

Bartsch, Nancy
Belgard, Hugh & Vail
Bellig, Daniel
Benefield, Dale
Bessler, Bill & Marilyn
Bishop, Mary Louise
Blankers, Sietze & Aisha
Blume, Darwin
Bomier, Robert & Angie
Boubel, John & Karen
Bradshaw, Louise
Brandel, Ruth
Braun, Steve
Browne, Robert & Suzanne
Brugman, Douglas & Valerie
Bunde, Margo
Burns, Inella
Bursaw, Iona
Cariveau, Yvonne
Carlson, Bruce & Carla
Casella, Donna
Clause, David & Carolyn
Coleman, Mary
Cotton, Glenn & Marcia
Crane, Donald & Sue
Davis, Don and Lois
Dobie, Dr. Joseph
Dubke, Duane & Carol
Dunlop, David & Donna
Ehmke, Judy
Engstrom, Mary
Erickson, Helen
Evans, Brian
Ewert, Dave & Julie
Farnham, Joseph & Malda
Farnsworth, Susan
Frederick, Michael
Frederick, Tom & Carol
Fredericksen, Dennis & Joan
Freiberg, Kenneth
Frey, John & Anne
Freyberg, Lynette
Friday, Mona
Frisch, Robert & Carlienne
Frost, Bob & Linda
Gage, Kelton & Dorothy
Garlow, Darrell and Sandi
Genealogical Society of Utah
Goettl, Terry
Goodrich, Bruce & Renita
Griffiths, Jane
Guentzel, Cheri
Habein, Harold & Jeanne
Halstead, Sharon
Hamborg, Daphne

Hansen, Norma
Harmer, William
Hess, Dominic
Higginbotham, Jack & Shirley
Hillegas, Marcella
Hiniker, Char
Hinrichs, William
Hodapp, Frank
Hoehn, Jim & Pat
Hoehn, William
Hottinger, Theodore
Howieson, Bob & Geri
Huebsch, Tim
Hugg, Robert & Corey
Humphrey, Mary
Hustuft, Dean & Carol
Hynes, Susan
Ireland, Lawrence & Patricia
Jackson, David & Colleen
Jacobson, Lyle & Kay
Jansen, Steve
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Johnson, David and Linda
Johnson, Marlyss
Johnson, Shirley A.
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Jones, Ellis & Janet
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Lutes, Duncan
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Madsen, Timothy & Liz
Maker, Bob and Mary

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 Masberg, Rita
 Mathiason, Renee
 Meyer, Pete & Sharon
 Miller, Jo
 Miller, Ted & Julie
 Moravec, Marilyn
 Mortier, Mary
 Mosher, Clayton
 Muellerleile, Fred and Dixie
 Nelson, Dr. William & Mary
 Neumiller, Robert
 Nienow, Richard & Patricia
 Nordgren, Lee and Donna
 Nuessle, Ruth
 Nussbaumer, Linda
 Oehler, Maurice
 Ohlenkamp, Ora
 Olson, Susan
 Owens, Catherine
 Owens, Helen
 Parks, Sandra
 Penhiter, Judith
 Peterson, Glen & Leslie
 Peterson, Elizabeth
 Peterson, Harriet
 Phelps, Dean
 Phelps, Robert
 Piehl, Chuck & Kathy
 Pinney, Sharon
 Pommerenke, Marlene
 Poncin, Herbert & Louise
 Pulis, Tim
 Quade, Henry & Ann
 Rasmussen, Howard
 Reich, Jerry & Judy
 Ries, Chuck & Carol
 Roberts, Craig
 Roscoe, Donald
 Rose, Robert & Luella
 Rottunda, John
 Ruble, Bruce & Shirlee

Saffert, Ken
 Salsbery, Tom & Cindy
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 Schulte, Pat
 Schulz, Richard
 Schutt, Donna
 Siebrass, Grace
 Simonett, James & Patricia
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 Thompson, Kenneth & Irene
 Thompson, Mary
 Tire Associates
 Torgerson, Allen & Jane
 Ulmen, Steve & Ida
 Veroeven, Richard
 Vetter, Willard
 VINE Faith in Action
 Vogel, Paul & Kristin
 Voss, Leo & Judy
 Voss, Suzann
 Webb, Gerald & Donna
 Wendt, Bob & Ann
 Whalen, Kathy
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Around Blue Earth County



Rapidan Heritage Society

Thank you to everyone who came out to the Rapidan Dam Park on August 14th and helped celebrate the centennial of the Dam! A huge thank you to all the volunteers and businesses who helped make this happen – and to everyone who came out to enjoy the entertainment, contests, canoe rides, vendors and who supported RHS by having a pork sandwich or bought a Dam t-shirt or pitcher. RHS appreciates your patronage, as this is what helped pay for this event including the fantastic fireworks that ended the evening. Special thanks to Kwik Trip – who served “birthday cake” to over 560 people!

This fall has presented an unusual site at the Rapidan Dam with the record amounts of rain that has fallen in the area in September. The volume of water going over the dam has been exciting. If you are out driving and looking at the changing leaf colors, stop at the Dam and enjoy the spectacle – and maybe catch a rainbow created by the mist.

Ghosts in the depot and goblins in the caboose? No, it is just an RHS member having a little fun decorating the depot for Halloween. The depot will be a haven for anyone to stop for a cup of hot cider and a cookie on Sunday, October 31st, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Treats for the little visitors also.

RHS will again be participating in the Madison East Craft and Bake Sale on November 20th. Tim & Liz will again be baking their fabulous homemade breads; canned goods and sweets will also be available. This year we will also be selling hand-crocheted doilies (just like grandma used to make), perfect for Christmas gifts.

Santa will be stopping at the depot Friday evening, December 3rd, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Bundle up the kids and stop in for a special visit with Santa, and enjoy refreshments in the town hall. Everyone is welcome, young and young at heart.

The depot will be closing for the season in October.

Jane Tarjeson
RHS Secretary

Lake Crystal Area Historical Society

The Lake Crystal Fire Department celebrated their 125th anniversary with an all day celebration in Marston Park and two adjoining buildings on August 14. At noon there was a grand parade with many, many fire trucks and members who came from the surrounding area to join the parade. The trucks were then parked all around Marston Park so that spectators could view them.

A memorial service for all the deceased fireman over the past years was held at 2 p.m. Past fire chiefs were honored and a Memorial Pipe Band from St. Paul performed as part of the service.

The old fire hall across the street had Larry Brandenburg's extensive collection of fire memorabilia on display, as well as many pictures of firemen who had served over the years.

The Lake Crystal Area Historical Society sponsored an art display in the D and K Tire Store's display room. We were most gratified to have so many artists display so many different kinds of work. There was a large pottery display, many oil and water color paintings, needlework, quilts, and hand-carved ducks. Cindy Jacques gave spinning demonstrations during the day and displayed some of her woven work. We are most grateful to all of those artists who took the time to set up and display their work.

Sylvia Kubicek

New @ the Heritage Center

Now accepting proposals for featured artists in the Heritage Center Meeting Room Gallery. New exhibits will open January, April, July and October 2011. Exhibits must be two-dimensional, ready to hang, family friendly subjects. For more information or to submit a proposal, contact Jessica at 345-5566 or bechs@hickorytech.net.



Blue Earth County Historical Society
415 Cherry Street
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Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901

The Blue Earth County Historical Society's
Heritage Center Gallery, Museum Store and
Research Center are open

Tuesday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday through Saturday
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Hubbard House and
Carriage House Gift Shop

Closed for the Season, will reopen in May 2011

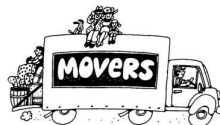
Special Event December 5, 1-4 p.m. and 6, 5-8 p.m.
Regular Tours December 11, 12, 18 and 19
Open 1-4 p.m.

Top 5 Holiday Gift Ideas

5. BECHS Gift Membership
4. Marian Anderson Art featured in fine art prints and note cards
3. Autographed BECHS Book
(have book signed at the Holiday Book Fair on November 6th)
2. Reproduced historic photograph
(check out BECHS' images on our website www.bechshistory.com)



1. Unique item from the BECHS Museum Store using your 10% member discount



***Moving? Snowbird?
Please let us know!***

If you are moving to a different address, please let us know. It costs over \$1 for each returned newsletter that can not be delivered. Please help the Society reserve our funds for educational exhibits and programs and assure that you get your copy of the *Historian* by notifying us of your new or winter address or letting us know to suspend mailing your newsletter if you are going to be away for a long period.

Your help is appreciated.