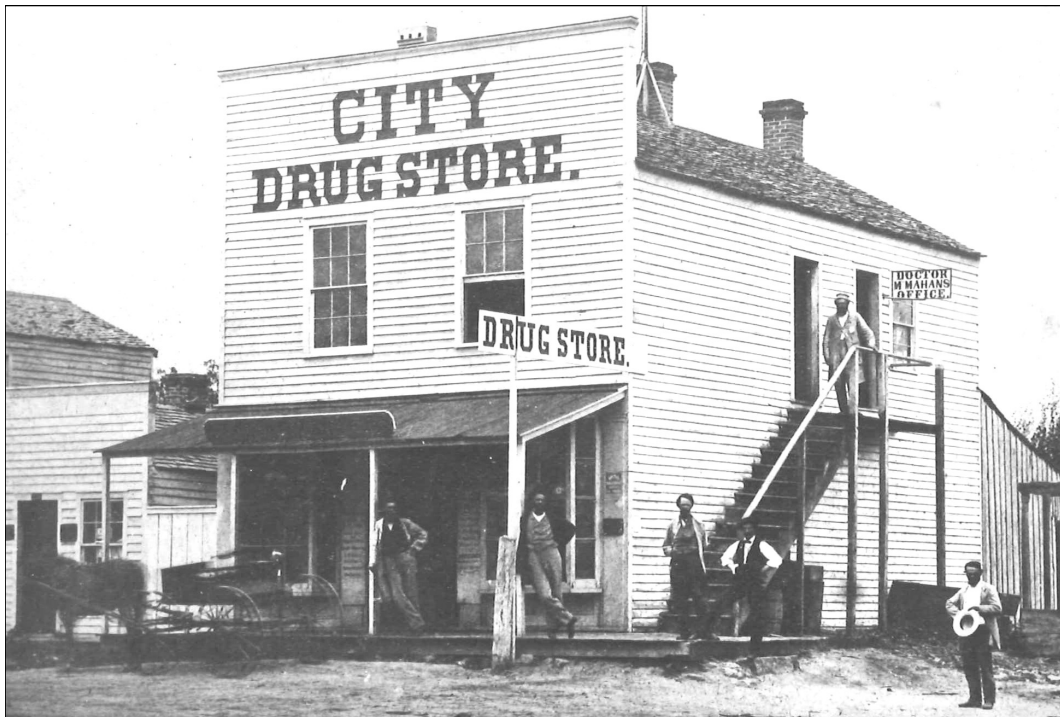


The Blue Earth County

HISTORIAN



Stories from the Slough



History surrounds us. Check out what the City Drug Store located on Mankato's Front Street has to do with the area of town known as the slough on page 9.

Surrounded By History



SAVE THE DATE

Friday, March 21, 2014, 6 p.m.
Reserve your tickets today!

New Art Exhibit



Peek into the Blue Earth County Historical Society's Art Collection, see page 17 for details.

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BECHS Mission: To lead in the collecting and promoting of Blue Earth County's history to ensure its preservation for the enrichment and benefit of present and future generations.

The Blue Earth County Historian



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Heritage Center

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN
507-345-5566
www.bechshistory.com
Hours
Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Wednesday, Friday and Saturday
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

R.D. Hubbard House

606 South Broad Street, Mankato
507-345-4154
Hours
Closed for the season.

The Blue Earth County Historian Winter 2014

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

Surrounded By History provides the Blue Earth County Historical Society the opportunity to recognize industries and businesses that have played a prominent and significant role in the growth of Blue Earth County. This year the spotlight is on the history and legacy of banking and financial institutions in Blue Earth County.

Surrounded By History: Banking in Blue Earth County is scheduled for March 21, 2014, to take place at Minnesota State University Mankato, Centennial Student Union Ballroom. The event will be filled with historical images and memorabilia from the financial industry. Our presenting event sponsor this year is Wells Fargo. The program will feature John Roise, owner of Lindsay Windows and former President of Norwest Bank (now Wells Fargo). He will lead a program celebrating the role of banking in the development of Blue Earth County which will include a multi-media presentation of several long-time bankers from the region.

Surrounded By History is a great opportunity to celebrate history with friends and colleagues. Please join us at the annual fundraising event that supports the future growth of BECHS. Ticket information will be mailed or emailed soon. Business, corporate and table sponsorships are still available. We are now accepting donations for the live and silent auction and bottles of wine for the wine raffle. Watch our website for developing details and reserve your tickets today.

SURROUNDED BY HISTORY

Banking in Blue Earth County

DINNER • PROGRAM • LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2014

6:00 p.m.
Centennial Student Union Ballroom
Minnesota State University,
Mankato

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

Presenting Sponsor:
Wells Fargo



For reservations,
please call
507-345-5566.



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
www.bechshistory.com



Director's Notes

Jessica Potter
Executive Director

“Historical organizations are future-focused.” That statement may seem like a contradiction, but it’s true. We collect today so that the people of tomorrow can understand their past and can live a richer life knowing their history.”

This may sound familiar. It was the opening paragraph to our 2013 year-end letter in November. At the beginning of a new year, I both reflect on the past year’s success and challenges and plan for the year ahead. The statement above is all about reflection and planning and reminds me how important the work we do at BECHS truly is. We make Blue Earth County’s history accessible for generations of people every day.

Your future-focused historical organization faces an exciting opportunity in 2014 to make history more accessible through an expanded, reimagined facility. Beginning July 2014, BECHS will expand its facility and services by purchasing VINE’s interest in our current location. This will mean an additional 6,000 square feet for future exhibits, programs and storage. We are excited to announce that beginning in August, BECHS will be hosting two years of traveling exhibits from the Minnesota Historical Society. This is possible due to that additional space.

There is a lot of work ahead to determine the overall scope and expense of the expanded, reimagined facility. We do know the amount needed to purchase VINE’s interest and we will begin the predesign phase in early 2014 to help us visualize our reimagined facility and put cost estimates to the vision. We will keep you posted along the way, but if you have ideas of what you would like to see in an improved Heritage Center, please feel free to drop me a note. Or better yet, consider joining our Facilities Committee as we work through the large project. We plan to have more to report at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 2, so mark your calendars.

In the midst of all this reflection and planning, I am once again humbled, honored and grateful to be part of this organization made up of donors, members, volunteers, advocates and staff. Each of

you make local history accessible to all ages through your donations, membership dues and time. Did you know that 27% of our annual operating income comes from donations and membership dues? And over 100 people donated over 7,000 hours of their time in 2013. Look at the impact you have!

Please plan to support BECHS in 2014 by renewing your membership, shopping in our gift shop or pledging a donation. A new feature for BECHS is recurring donations or pledges. You can now pledge your 2014 donation to automatically come out of your account monthly, quarterly, biannually or once a year. Just give Danelle a call at 345-5566 to set it up.

On behalf of the BECHS Board of Trustees and the staff, thank you for your support and commitment to local history. Together we will realize the dream of a bigger, better Blue Earth County Historical Society. Happy 2014!

BECHS Board of Trustees Applications Now Being Accepted

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Blue Earth County Historical Society, a member supported, non-profit organization. Applications for Board member candidates are being accepted until **January 31, 2014**.

The Board is composed of 12 to 20 community members with a variety of backgrounds and expertise. Board terms begin in March 2014 and run until March 2017. The Board is seeking candidates strong in fundraising, financial management, business, human resources, and/or facilities. Candidates representing different areas of Blue Earth County are being sought. This is a very exciting time to be involved with the decision and policy making branch of BECHS as the organization looks ahead to facility and service expansion. For an application, please visit www.bechshistory.com or contact Jessica at bechs@hickorytech.net or 345-5566.

At the Book and Gift Shop

Danelle Erickson
Museum & Administrative Manager

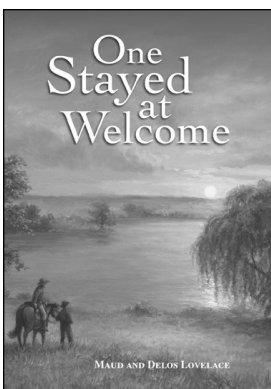
It was a great holiday season in the Museum Gift Shop! Thanks to everyone who stopped in whether it was to do some holiday shopping, buy something for yourself or just to browse.

Besides selling items at the Heritage Center and R.D. Hubbard House, we've also done some traveling in the past few months. We had tables at the Madison East Bake and Craft Sale and the Lake Crystal Craft Sale. We brought along a selection of our publications and gift items from the store. Our volunteers were a great help with making crafts and baked items to sell. If you know of any similar events in the county, let us know. We would like to continue traveling around Blue Earth County.

The past couple months have seen some changes to our online presence. Our online store has been updated and new items have been added. You can now order books and other items as well as make donations and pay for your new or renewing membership dues, all online! Interested in purchasing Marian Anderson prints or note cards? You can purchase these items online as well. Keep a look-out for a revised Marian Anderson website – coming Winter 2014.

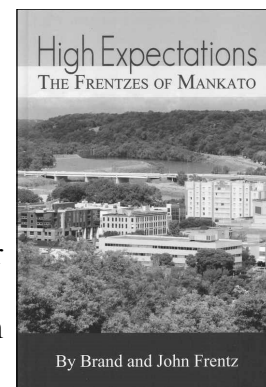
Maud Hart Lovelace fans will be happy to hear we have two additional books on our shelves relating to Maud and her husband, Delos Lovelace. *One Stayed at Welcome* is written by the couple and is about the settling and founding of Welcome, Minnesota. It's a story about friendship and pioneering spirit, about love and sacrifice. Local author Julie Schrader wrote the afterword. \$14.00, 333 pages, paperback.

The other Lovelace book is *Orange Blossoms Everywhere: The Story of Maud and Delos Lovelace in California, 1953-1980* reprinted by The Southern California Chapter of the Betsy-Tacy Society. Alongside the stories and photos, this book also contains many entries from Maud's diary. Read



about her writing ups and downs as well as everyday observances and happenings. Such entries include: "A good morning at the typewriter," "I did a poor job of Chapter 13," and "Are there no individualists among ducks? Our four are always together." \$10.00, 52 pages, paperback.

Another new title in the gift shop is *High Expectations: The Frentzes of Mankato*. Authors and brothers Brand and John Frentz write about their forefathers and descendants, a history that covers 200 years of the Frentz family, including over 150 years in the Mankato area. The book, however, is more than just a family history as the book summary points out: "There are pioneers in covered wagons, soldiers at war, love stories and bitter disagreements, moments of triumph and despair, and everyday humdrum too. This book tells it all." \$19.95, 238 pages, hardcover.



Looking for a unique valentine to give to your loved ones this Valentine's Day? The Gift Shop has received a variety of vintage cards that were originally given in the 1920s! These cards could be used to decorate your Valentine's Day table or use them to make cards of your own. Prices start at \$1 each.

*I made a little valentine
All lovely lace and colors fine,
I thought of you to send it to;
Sweetheart, will you be mine?*



Historic Hubbard House

Another Christmas season has come and gone at the Hubbard House. We had over 70 people visit at the Hubbard House on December 7 and 8, and another 30 people visited the next two weekends. Thank you to everyone who came to help make Christmas at the Hubbard House great.

If you were not able to make it, here is what you missed. Characters portraying Mrs. George Palmer and her daughter Ruth who stopped by to visit Mrs. Hubbard. They were entertained in the parlor by Katherine Hubbard on the piano. Jay and Minnie Hubbard were spotted in the office. Jay was finishing some business work before heading to celebrate Christmas with the family.

The Historic R. D. Hubbard House is now closed until May 3. Join us opening weekend on May 4 for our 5th Annual Victorian Tea Party. Also, we are currently looking for volunteers to lead tours at the Hubbard House for spring school field trips. Training will be provided. Please contact Danelle if you are interested.



Grace Webb as Ruth Palmer and Alex Oldenburg as Katherine Hubbard in the parlor.



Alyssa Gratz and Ezra Grabau as Minnie and Jay Hubbard. Ezra was an intern from Bethany Lutheran College this fall.

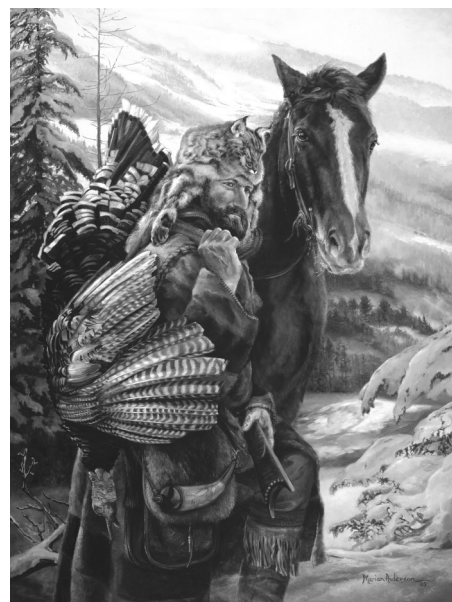
Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints

You can help BECHS raise funds by purchasing Marian Anderson Art for yourself or as a gift.

As a living legacy, Marian Anderson donated her entire inventory of fine art prints to the Blue Earth County Historical Society; **100% of all print sales benefit BECHS.**

Fine art prints are available to view and purchase at the Heritage Center Book & Gift Shop and online at www.mariananderson.com.

Thank you for your support!



Timeless Moment
by Marian Anderson

Collections and Exhibits...

Shelley Harrison, Archives Manager

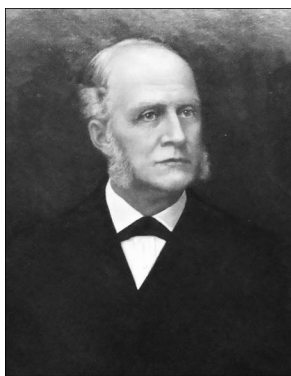
The Blue Earth County Historical Society's fine art collection consists of over 300 works of art in a variety of medium such as paintings, drawings, lithographs, tapestries and hair art. The collection by local artists, both past and present, focuses on the people, places and events that shaped Blue Earth County.

Of particular importance are the lithographs, drawings and block prints by local artist Gilbert Fletcher. His large lithograph "Ship and Three Fish" is currently on display in the exhibit gallery. Another work by Fletcher in the collection is "The Old Snake Fence", framed by a notable artist in his own right, Joseph Manderfeld. Original works by other local artists include A.A. Anderson, Emma Miller John Turner and Margaret Snow, wife of local photographer J.R. Snow.



"The Old Snake Fence"

BECHS art collection includes many portraits. Many of the Society's portraits are of well-known county figures, including Sir Henry Wellcome and Mrs. Henry Jackson and Mrs. P.K. Johnson, whose husbands were the founders of the city of Mankato. This stunning oil on canvas portrait of early settler and prominent businessman John Willard was donated in 2013.



John A. Willard

Cityscapes and landscapes form a small but important subject matter in the collection. It may not surprise you to learn that especially popular landscape topics for our artists are Minneopa Falls and Seppman Mill. Views of Hubbard Milling Company and old North Front Street are two of the better known examples in our cityscape collection.

Other works of art in the collection include busts, shadow boxes, hair art and carvings. Also included in BECHS art collection are textiles, including samplers, needlepoint work and wall hangings from mid-19th century to present. Many of the works in the collection came as donations from the artist's personal or family collections.



Floral Wreath

Our fine art collection is widely exhibited throughout the exhibit gallery, research center and corridors. Some of these works are on display at the R. D. Hubbard House, such as the painting "Minneopa Falls" by John Hearst.

For information or if you have questions about the museum's collections, including inquiries regarding donations, please contact Shelley. A selection of the Society's works of art will be on display in the Meeting Room this winter.

**GIVETODAY.
MAKEHISTORY.**

Thank you to all of the individuals, families and businesses that made history by donating to the 2013 Year-End Drive.

A total of \$21,115 was raised between November 1 – December 31, 2013.

These donations are an investment in the future of BECHS!

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Education & Outreach

Our History Matters

Heather Harren
Education and Outreach Manager

With the start of a new year, BECHS is starting a new program. This new monthly educational series is called Our History Matters. The program will be led each month by a different BECHS staff member, depending on the topic for the evening. If the program is related to collections or exhibits, Shelley will be the person leading the program. For programs pertaining to the store, such as author book signings, Danelle will provide introductions. Any topics related to education or general outreach will be led by myself or Jessica. All of the programs in this series will promote the Blue Earth County Historical Society's services, resources or holdings in one way or another.

For anyone familiar with Fingerprints and Footnotes, this program is similar in nature and format. Our History Matters will take place on the 4th Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. The program will always take place on this day except for November and December when the program will move a week earlier due to the holidays. Admission for the program will be \$5/adults, \$2/school age children and free for BECHS members.

The first program of the Our History Matters series is "BECHS and Social Media" on Thursday, January 23. I will explain to the group which social media sites the Blue Earth County Historical Society utilizes. I will also highlight tips and tricks I have learned by working with social media. Bring your questions, I look forward to seeing you!

THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INVITES YOU TO THE

2014 Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 2, 2014 @ 2:00 p.m.

BECHS Heritage Center

415 Cherry Street, Mankato

**State-of-the-Society followed by
"Reflections of the Past"
presented by Jack Madsen**

*"There is no such thing as 'dead history.' History is **not** dead, it is very much alive! It is what we are experiencing right now, this very moment. The things we collect here at BECHS are merely the tokens that mark our passing. They are the toys of older children left scattered about when they have gone upstairs to bed for their eternal rest."*

— Jack Madsen

Jack Madsen will share his experiences "in story and song" of growing up in Blue Earth County, gleanings of his observations on its epochal events, and photos of some of the people and places he has known and loved during his lifetime.

**Museum opens at 1 p.m. with
behind-the-scenes Heritage Center tours.**

*Please RSVP by February 28
to 507-345-5566 or bechsms@hickorytech.net*

Preserve Our Past, Protect Our Future

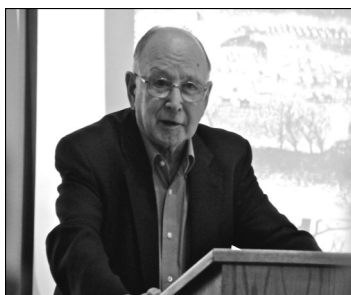
WANTED: YOUR MEMBER STORY

We are looking for more of your stories about why you support the Blue Earth County Historical Society or your favorite BECHS memory! On the last Saturday of each month from 2-4 p.m., unless otherwise noted, we will be filming member's stories to add to our collection. To view the videos already completed, visit www.bechshistory.com/media/member-stories. If this time does not work for you, but you would still like to contribute to the project, contact Heather at 507-345-5566 or bechshh@hickorytech.net.

Fingerprints and Footnotes

Fingerprints and Footnotes had a busy and lively fall. In November Larry Kortuem presented the history of the Madison Lake/Marysburg area. We learned that the little hamlet was once a booming stop on the Dubuque Trail and was one of the many reasons so many Irish and Germans called that spot home.

In December we re-discovered Camp Lincoln with Dr. William Lass. He looked at the important consequences of the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 in the surrounding area.



Dr. William Lass

As always the meetings were entertaining as well as educational. After eight years, Fingerprints and Footnotes is taking a break. A new series called Our History Matters will be taking it's place on our schedule as a monthly educational series. Check out more information below and on page 7. Thank you to all the people who have attended, presented and helped with Fingerprints and Footnotes over the years.

WISH LIST

Used Printer Ink Cartridges to be recycled for Office Max store credit to offset office supply expense. We can earn a credit of up to \$240 a year for supplies, thanks to donated cartridges.

Cross-cut or Micro-cut Paper Shredder new or used in good working condition.

Pioneer Cabin Items for kids to play with: a plush hen (similar to animal puppets in exhibit) and nest, a water pump, a wooden bucket and a butter churn. Items or financial support to purchase toys or reproduction items.

Digital Camera to photograph programs and artifacts. Preferably 16 megapixel, point-and-shoot or donation of \$150.

Laser Printer new or used in good working condition.

If you have an item to donate, please drop it off at the Heritage Center during business hours. If you are interested in fully or partially supporting one of these projects, please indicate your wishes on your check.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Our History Matters

MONTHLY EDUCATIONAL SERIES

BECHS and Social Media

presented by Heather Harren,
BECHS Education and Outreach Manager

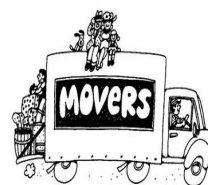
Thursday, January 23, 2014, 6:00 p.m.
415 Cherry Street, Mankato

Do you use Facebook? Write tweets for fun? Love to repin images? Have no idea what any of that is? Come learn about the different social media sites the Blue Earth County Historical Society uses and learn some tips and tools on how you can use social media sites.

ADMISSION

Adults: \$5 Children 5-17: \$2 BECHS Members: Free

Visit www.bechshistory.com for more information.



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

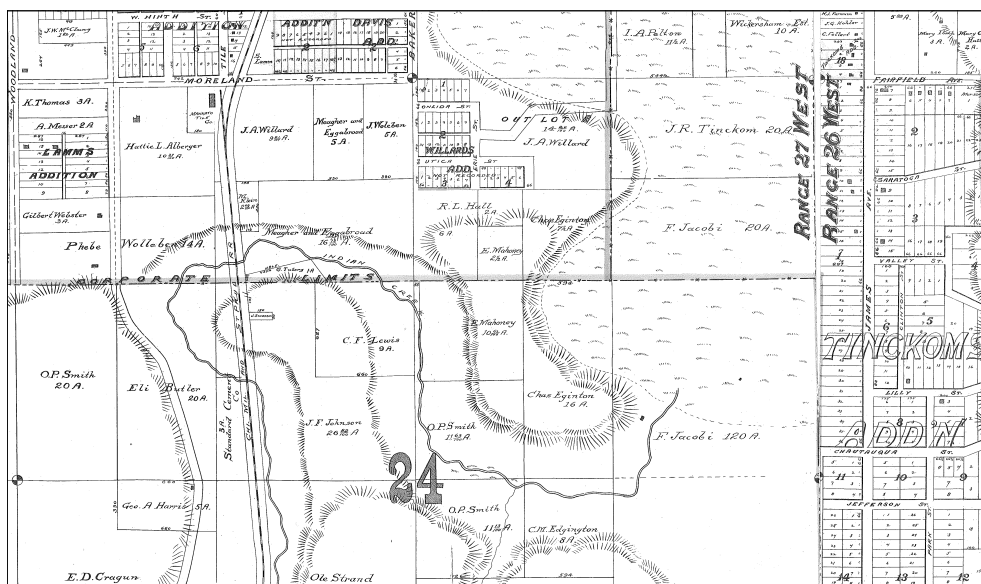
If you are moving to a different address, please let us know. It costs over \$2 for each returned newsletter that can not be delivered. Please help the Society reserve our funds for educational exhibits and programs and assure that you get your copy of the *Historian* by notifying us of your new or winter 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.

Stories from the Slough

By Jo Schulz

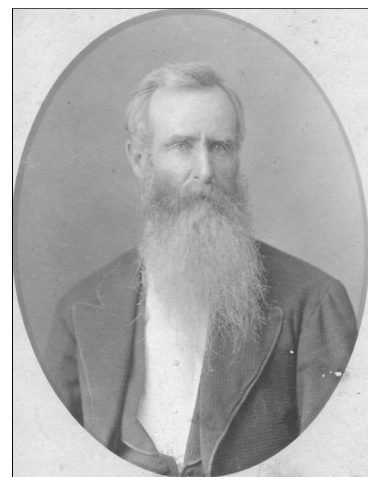
In the early development of Mankato, the area simply known as “the slough” produced several interesting stories and characters. The big slough on the south end of the early town was partly formed by Indian Creek running through the area. It also was frequently flooded in those early years by high water from backups in the Minnesota River. Besides the challenges with water, this area was developed. Here are a few stories from the slough.



Map of Mankato, 1893. Left side of map is West Mankato, middle is slough, right is James Avenue

Tinkcomville

Because of the often wet conditions, this area was ignored until James R. Tinkcom moved his family here in 1857. He had a pharmaceutical background which he used at the City Drug he ran in partnership with Dr. Jason F. Wickersham. Tinkcom was also interested in real estate and was fascinated by the large tract of land on the south side of town. In 1873, he purchased most of the land along the north bluff and laid out Tinkcom’s Addition to Mankato. He platted 240 residential lots averaging a sale price of \$300 each. This area was heavily wooded and on the bluff it overlooked the big slough. Due to economic conditions and the depression of the 1880s, his lots didn’t sell. So he built several small homes along James Avenue to sell or rent. He built a nice house surrounded by an 8 foot fence at 204 James Avenue for his family. Tinkcom died at the ripe old age of 88 in 1908 after living through the first 50 years of Mankato’s history. In later years, people referred to this area along James Avenue as “Tinkcomville.”



James Tinkcom

Lebanese Community

Around the 1890s, an influx of immigrants from Lebanon and Syria arrived in Mankato. During the early years of the Ottoman Empire, the countries of Lebanon and Syria were joined together and called Syria. Lebanon had been settled early in history and the Phoenicians were responsible for giving them a written language and a good culture. When the disciples of Christianity went out to preach the Word, one of the first countries they entered was Lebanon. This resulted in Lebanon becoming primarily a Christian country and it was these Christians who fled to the United States for a better life as early as the 1890s. The little houses built by Tinkcom appealed to these poor immigrants. Lebanese immigrants living in Mankato primarily settled on James Avenue and North Fourth and Fifth Streets.

Many of the immigrants were peddlers using their large gardens for their produce. A few of the families went on to operate dry goods or grocery stores over time. These included the Ramy, Mocol and Abdo families.

One of these Tinkcomville families were the Abdos. Naiff Abdo had come to this country with his brother in 1892 and first settled in Iowa. He earned money by sweeping out a pool hall, money he saved to buy a horse and buggy so he could peddle

goods. He heard farmers in Mankato were richer, so he moved here where other immigrants from his country had

also settled. Abdo bought a lot at 127 James Avenue where he built his own house and eventually added a grocery store to the front. He operated the store until his death in 1956, then it was operated by his second wife Fahdwa (Anna) Saba, until 1980. Fadwa was affectionately called "Granny" in the neighborhood.

By the 1950s, the James Avenue neighborhood was changing. A new public school opened in 1961 followed by the college moving on top of the hill. The small Tinkcomville homes were quickly replaced with apartment buildings.

Orphanage

On the hill overlooking the slough to the southwest was an orphanage. In 1879, the Sisters of the Carmelite Order established a home for orphans in Ionna, Minnesota in Murray County. Sister Mary Joseph Crehan worked there with Father Martin McDonnell. Both were from New York and both came from well-to-do families. They had seen many orphans from immigrant families roaming the streets in New York and later saw a need in the Mankato area. Together, they raised money to start a home in Mankato.

In July of 1908, for the price of \$1650, a 13-acre plot of land was purchased in West Mankato on Sunset Boulevard. This land, that stretched down the hill to the slough, was where the Sacred Heart Home was born. The cost of the original 28-room building was \$12,000 and it measured 30 x 70 feet with a



Abdo House and store on James Avenue, 1992.

wing of 12 x 16 feet. The orphanage opened in 1909.

During the life of the home, about 85 children resided there ranging in age from 3 to 18. The children who lived there were trained to work in industry, child care, domestic science and farming. Produce from a large garden helped to feed everyone. Children also learned bee keeping and how to care for fowl and cattle. An orchard containing 200 apple trees was also established.

Sadly, Father McDonnell died in 1911. Additional mortgages had to be taken out and donations from the surrounding communities were not forthcoming. Sister Mary Crehan became ill and on May 10, 1914 at the age of 65, died of peritonitis. She is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Mankato and an angel statue is on her grave. In 1915 the orphanage was foreclosed, abandoned, and eventually sold to various owners. In 1919, part of the orphanage was torn down to build the home that still stands on the site at the very top of Oak Knoll hill.

Recreational Site

Over the years several ideas were put forth to develop the slough. In 1924, a civic project was put forth for the 168.8 acres around Pleasant Street to include park land, walk areas, trees, athletic field and upper and lower lakes. This project never caught fire and was eventually abandoned. Another project called Memorial Field was proposed in March of 1928. It would contain playgrounds, a nine-hole, 3,000 yard golf course, two baseball diamonds and a Roque court. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s laid waste to those plans.

During the Great Depression, the WPA (Works Project Administration) was created to put people to work. Municipalities looked for areas in their towns that could be developed to supply jobs for the many men that were out of work. One booster of developing the slough



Thomas C. Edwards

was Thomas C. Edwards. He was better known as “Willie Putt,” a nickname from his cronies, as he was an avid golfer. He was a booster for a Mankato Municipal Golf Course and proposed it become a WPA project. City Engineer, Al Kircher, surveyed the tract of land around the slough and determined that the area could be raised and drained for about \$3,000. A proposal for a large clubhouse containing 500 to 1,000 lockers and other amenities could be built for \$10,000 to \$12,000. If the city charged 25 cents for a round of golf and a rental charge for a locker, the project would easily pay for itself.

By March of 1941, the WPA began working in the slough between Front and Pleasant Streets to build the nine-hole golf course. The tee for the first hole was to be near the corner of Front and Willard Streets with the green near the end of the slough on Front Street. The WPA completed the widening of a ditch which drained much of the slough area in March 1941. Sod for the fairways was cut in long rolls from the infield at the Mankato fairground to be transplanted later onto the golf course. It was stored temporarily on park property and on the night of April 23, 1941 someone stole all the grass. A year later, the course was somewhat complete so the City Council authorized the purchase of equipment for the course. In 1942, a manager was appointed and the course was opened.

Although the 1930s were very dry, the beginning of the 1940s brought average or better moisture. Reports began to come in by the fall of 1942 of wet, soggy ground. Also, the Minnesota River had flooded over some of the area. The first golfers who tried the course reported teeing off, only to find their balls had sunk so deep in the muck they couldn't find them. The Park Commissioner in charge of maintaining the grounds claimed they had done all they could, but the large watershed draining into the field was responsible for the condition. The tractor used to clean and mow bogged down and three of the greens had been drowned out. Some of the greens had spoiled. No club house had been built and fees were collected out of an old shed. By the end of 1943, the golf course was abandoned.

Who could have predicted that West High School would later be built on the same site only eight years later?

Rasmussen Woods

Through all of the challenges, not everyone was ready to give up on the big slough. Much of the land from the long-gone Sacred Heart Orphanage and farm had been bought in 1939 by Robert Rasmussen. On his property, Rasmussen built his home at 235 Sunset Boulevard. The Rasmussen family had horses and used their land for riding the trails and a small track on their property.

In 1971, the City of Mankato purchased 53-acres of land from the estate of Robert Rasmussen for almost \$200,000. Federal and state grants were used for the purchase of the site. The Rasmussen family has been using the wooded hillside for decades and now wanted to make them available to the public. Chester Rasmussen, son of Robert, wanted the woods to be minimally improved and maintained as a nature area and thus Rasmussen Woods was created.

The first major donation for Rasmussen Woods came from the family of Dr.

H. Bradley Troost in 1973 for the construction of nature trails, markers, benches and wildlife feeders. Later a 3-acre lake in the slough would be named after Troost.

In the early 1980s, the City of Mankato's Parks Department outlined their plan for Rasmussen Woods which included minimal upkeep of the trails, leaving the meadows mostly untouched and having Stoltzman Road serve as the main entrance. After the City acquired an additional 50 acres of land from the Jakobe family, improvements were made to the land. In 1985, Rasmussen Woods/Indian Creek Slough Nature Area opened as a City park and nature center. The new City park included three miles of trails with two floating trails over the swampy areas, a pavilion for an interpretive center, benches and trail markers.

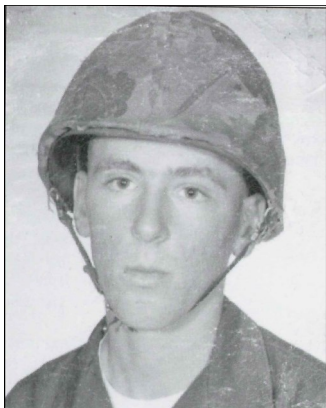
The park was not used much until the Mankato Elks Club donated \$42,000 to help complete the \$80,000 nature center project. The Elks Nature Center opened in 1990. The center has relied on University students and volunteers for operation and maintenance.



Dr. H. Bradley Troost

Stoltzman Road

Bordering the slough on the East is Stoltzman Road. There is an interesting story behind the naming of the road. Due to increased traffic on James Avenue because of the relocation of the State College at the top of the hill, it became evident a better street was needed in that area. Local homeowners fought against the expansion from Pike Street to the southern edge of the city until 1968 when Stoltzman Road was created.



George Stoltzman

So why name it Stoltzman Road? George Stoltzman was the first American soldier from Blue Earth County killed in the Vietnam Conflict. He had once lived with his parents Rudolph and Crystal Stoltzman on an unimproved two lane gravel and dirt service road at 219 James Avenue. George came from a family of 15 children, ten girls and five boys. His father worked for the City of Mankato in the Streets Department for many years.

George didn't finish high school but instead left to join the Marines. He had to talk his mother into signing for him so he could enlist. This was just when the American involvement in Vietnam was intensifying. He was home on leave in the spring of 1965 when Mankato was in the middle of a big Minnesota River flood. He volunteered to work on the dikes and his family barely saw him before it was time for him to leave town again. Ann Stoltzman, George's aunt, recalled in 2013 that George was a good kid who was always willing to help others.

In service, he soon rose to the rank of Corporal. He was sent to Vietnam where he was wounded and received a Purple Heart. He had barely recovered from his wounds, when he was ordered to return to active duty. George was killed when he stepped on a land mine on November 29, 1965. His family has always been proud of his service and the sacrifice he made.

Vietnam War Memorial

In early 1987, Tom McLaughlin, a former

Marine and member of the Vietnam Veterans of Southern Minnesota and Jack Drganc lead efforts for a memorial to the 29 men from Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties who died in the Vietnam War. Appropriately, the memorial was erected just off of Stoltzman Road. The memorial was dedicated on November 11, 1988. It was designed by artist Kevin McLaughlin and features a 4' x 3' piece of Kasota stone. On it is carved an American flag with the words: "To Those Who Served and Those Who Died. This Memorial Is a Special Thanks to Those Who Died While Serving Their Country in the Vietnam War." It is surrounded by 29 stones each bearing the name of one of the 29 men killed.

As you can see, we are surrounded by history everywhere we look. From how our streets got their names, to the ethnic groups that settled in neighborhoods, to the development of our parks. Celebrate the history that surrounds you!

Note: This was the topic for the 2013 Ghosts from the Past: Slough Full of Stories in October 2013. Mark your calendars for Ghost from the Past October 3-4, 2014.

Sources:

- Blue Earth County Historical Society vertical and obituary files
- Blue Earth County Historical Society photograph collection

We Need Your Opinion

Have you used the Research Center or the online resources? If so, we would like to hear from you. We currently have an online survey available on our website at www.bechshistory.com/research-center-survey to help us know what resources you find most useful both in the Research Center and online. We will use the results to help improve the Research Center. Paper versions of the survey are available in the Research Center. Survey ends February 1, 2014

BECHS Donations

October - December 2013

Janice Ahlness
 Roberta Graham Bartholdi
 Vail Belgard
 Joel Botten
 Patrick Bowen
 Rosemary Brekke
 Brennan Companies
 Susan and Bob Brown
 Pat Brunner
 Marilyn Buscher
 Benjamin Jerome Carey
 Barbara Church
 Mary Coleman
 Harlan & Nancy Compton
 Ogden Confer
 Crystal Valley Co-op
 Sheryl and Harlan Dobie
 John and Kathleen Dorn
 Danelle Erickson
 Tony Filipovitch
 Joan & Dennis
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 Susan Olson
 Helen Owens
 James Pengra
 Leslie Peterson

John and Tracy Piper
 Elizabeth Piper-Forman
 Piper Family Fund
 Leigh Pomeroy
 Marlene Pommerenke
 Brad and Jessica Potter
 Rapidan Township
 Richard Reisdorf
 John Rezmerski
 Carol Ries
 Joan Roca
 Victor Roth
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 Eunice Sassenberg
 Shirley Schaub
 Scheels, Mankato
 Mary Schorer
 Julie Schrader
 Jo Schultz
 Daardi Sizemore
 Marilyn & Robert Small
 Leola Sontag
 Richard and Ramona
 Steele
 Peter and Regina Steiner
 Christine Stokesbary
 George and Nadine
 Sugden
 Sigvald Svendsen
 Delores & Leon Tacheny
 Brett & Gretchen Taylor
 Clayton H Tiede
 C Robert Utermohlen
 Valley News Company
 Daniel Vance
 Vernon Center Township
 Mary Ward
 Tom and Barbara Warner
 Marti Weisgram
 Marnie Werner
 Kenneth Wilmes
 Wingert Realty and Land
 Services
 Randy Zellmer
 Beth Zimmer
 Jessica Zimmerman

Special Gifts

*In Honor of Dean and
 Jo-an Lavitschke's 50th
 Wedding Anniversary*
 Dean and Jo-an
 Lavitschke
 Brad and Jessica Potter

Memorials

*In Memory of Laurina
 Bunde*
 Pat Brunner

*In Memory of Winston
 Grundmeier*
 John Ellis

*In Memory of Wally
 Haefner*
 Randy Zellmer

*In Memory of Harold
 Johnson*
 Ann Johnson

*In Memory of Frank and
 Dorothy Klugherz*
 Catherine Klugherz

*In Memory of Charles
 Ries*
 Randy Zellmer

In Kind

Corey Hugg
 Mark Piepho
 Red Door Creative

BECHS Volunteers Make History Happen!

THANK YOU to our many volunteers who have helped at the Heritage Center, the Hubbard House and at events throughout the year. 2013 was a great year and we are excited to begin a new year. Remember to continue recording your volunteer hours in the “volunteer” binder in the Gift Shop. Below you will find some volunteer opportunities. To keep informed about volunteer opportunities check out our website or see the new monthly volunteer e-news.

If you are interested in helping with any of these opportunities, sign-up for the monthly volunteer e-news or would like more information about volunteering with BECHS, please contact Danelle, our volunteer coordinator, at bechsms@hickorytech.net or visit www.bechshistory.com/volunteer.

Volunteer Opportunities

BECHS Board of Trustee Members

Looking for representatives from throughout the county to join the BECHS Board of Trustees.

The Board is looking for people strong in fundraising, human resources, facilities, business and finance. The term runs from March 2014 to March 2017. Applications can be found on our website or at the Heritage Center and the application deadline is January 31, 2014. Please contact Jessica for more information at 345-5566 or bechs@hickorytech.net.

Monthly Program Volunteer

Volunteer needed to assist with BECHS’s new monthly education series, Our History Matters.

The program will meet every fourth Thursday of the month starting at 6 pm. BECHS is looking for a volunteer from 5:30-6:15 pm to collect admissions and assist the event attendees. The first program will be held January 23, 2014.

Building Committee

Looking for individuals to assist with short and long-range facilities planning and improvements. Individuals must have experience with design and construction projects.

Writers and Editors

Looking for writers and researchers for regular article series and BECHS publications including main *Historian* articles. Also, looking for individuals strong in editing and proofreading.

Video Recording

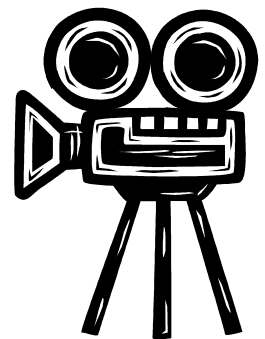
Looking for people interested in operating our video camera at various BECHS events and programs.

Experience is preferred but not necessary.

Recording will be on an as need basis and could potentially be needed on short notice.

Wanted: Your Volunteer Story

You may have seen some of our “Volunteer Story” videos on Facebook or YouTube. We are looking for more volunteers to share their stories. You could tell us why or how you started volunteering at BECHS, what you enjoy the most or maybe you have a specific story to share. The videos are informal and can be as long or short as you would like. If you are interested in sharing your story, please let us know. To view videos already completed visit www.bechshistory.com/media/volunteer-stories.



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. Here is a glimpse into our collection.



Mural "America the Beautiful"

This mural is made of three separate paintings; *Indian and the Lily* by DeForest Brush, *The River* by Daniel Garber, and *Trout Ripples* by Eanger Irving Couse. It was given to Mankato State Teachers College by the classes of 1924 and 1928. It hung in Old Main until the 1970s, when it was donated to BECHS. You may also remember it from the Heritage Room in the Centennial Student Union where it was on loan for many years. This is a very popular mural and is a copy of the original mural in the Minnesota State Capitol Senate Chambers.

Collage in Research Center

This collage which is made up of images and scenes from Mankato and Blue Earth County can be found in the Research Center. It was created by students at Mankato High School and hung in the school until it was discarded in the 1970s. It was saved by one of the school's custodians and then later donated to BECHS.



If you are interested in donating a piece of art work or a piece of Blue Earth County history, please contact Shelley Harrison, Archives Manager.

The Boy in Blue Memorial Committee presents
CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM
"1864...This Mighty Scourge of War..."

Saturday, March 15, 2014, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Summit Center, 518 South 5th St., Mankato, MN

Presentations, costumed interpreters, storytelling and interactive exhibits, panel discussion, Civil War era music, books and authors, gift shop, and lunch.

Registration form and schedule available at www.boyinblue.org

The first 50 people to register receive a free gift!



Around the Research Center

Heather Harren
Education and Outreach Manager

Another year has gone by. There were researchers in from across the United States and e-mail requests from around the world looking for information on relatives that were once in Blue Earth County. It was great to see all the people who came to the Research Center, and it was rewarding for me to see people leave happy with new branches of their family to explore.

Did you visit the Research Center in 2013? If you did, we would like to hear from you. We currently have an online survey available on our website at www.bechshistory.com/research-center-survey that you can take to let us know what resources you find most helpful both in the Research Center and online. We will be using the results to help you have a better experience the next time you visit. If you do not like to complete online surveys, but would still like to contribute your thoughts, paper forms are available in the Research Center. This survey will run through February 1, 2014, so don't delay.

In 2014 we will begin utilizing our museum management software PastPerfect more in the Research Center to find books and photographs. As more of the manuscript collection is entered this will become searchable here. Don't worry, we are not getting rid of the card catalog system, but in the past 10 years no new book cards have been added to this system. The book collection in PastPerfect is more up-to-date than the card catalog and it contains more of the family histories that have been recently donated. Research Center staff will be able to help you search this database and there will be written instructions as well to help if you have questions.

Whether you are a beginning genealogist or have researched several generations of your family's history, the Research Center has something for you.

BECHS Membership

October - December 2013

New Members

Sidonia Balke
Ky Battern
Diane Brekke
Loren Burkel
Tara and Eric Garbes
Garret Malvin
Dallas McColley
Jamieson McGrath
Carol More
Mary and Chuck Norgaard
Elizabeth Piper-Forman
Berneda Smith
Jane Thom
Stephan and Lisa Thome

New and Renewing Business Members

Brennan Companies
The Free Press
Oleson + Hobbie Architects
Piepho Moving & Storage
R & E Enterprises of Mankato
Red Door Creative

*To ALL our new and renewing members,
THANK YOU for your continued support.*

Support the Businesses that Support BECHS

Check out our website for more information about the businesses that are members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. As a new benefit to our business members, we are now offering to place the business's website link and other information on our website.

If your business would like more information, please contact Danelle or visit www.bechshistory.com/join.



YOUNG HISTORIANS



Hi, my name is Dale Ehlenfeldt, I am 8 years old and in second grade. I like to learn about history. I have been in Young Historians for 2 years. This year we have learned about Native Americans, the Revolutionary War, Pioneer Life and the Civil War.

I have given presentations on George Washington and Abigail Adams. We don't have to give presentations but I like to read books and talk about what I have read. We have made pouches for our special rocks, made butter and yarn dolls, learned that they didn't have enough room in the wagons for everything they wanted to take west and about Abraham Lincoln.

We have snacks from the time period that we are studying about. I don't like hard tack, I'm afraid it might knock my teeth out. This year we are keeping journals and writing down what we like and learn about at each month's presentation.

Young Historians, hands-on history workshops for kids, takes place the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10 a.m.

Workshops are free and geared to 3rd - 6th graders.

Upcoming Workshops

February 8 - Industrial Revolution

March 8 - World War I

April 12 - Great Depression

May 10 - World War II

Check out www.bechshistory.com/events/programs/young-historians for schedule, updates and handouts.



Civil War with Arn Kind

HERITAGE CENTER ART GALLERY FEATURED EXHIBIT

"Blue Earth County Art and Artists" January - March 2014



Watercolor street scene by Rachel Wigley

The Blue Earth County Historical Society's Art Collection is home to more than 300 art related objects spanning from the late 19th century to the present. This exhibit provides an account of Blue Earth County history through the Society's unique collection of showpieces and lesser-known works by local artists. It brings together a diverse group of paintings, photographs, drawings and prints from the collection.

BECHS's Art Collection has grown significantly over the years. With this exhibit we will celebrate this growth and highlight some of the new additions to our collection as well as showcasing some of our favorite pieces. We hope you enjoy this peek into our collection.

Pictured on the front cover: 100 Block of North Front Street by Emma Miller

**Next Featured Artist: April - June 2014
"Simplicity" by Sandy Howe**

Around Blue Earth County

Rapidan Heritage Society

The Rapidan Depot was privileged to host a special guest the evening of December 6. Santa visited with friends in the Depot, and after receiving a bag of peanuts and candy from Santa, the guests went to the town hall to enjoy a cup of cocoa while



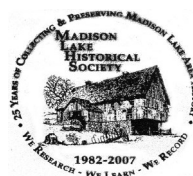
their picture taken with Santa was printed. The weather outside was cold and frosty, but the smiles and laughter inside warmed the hearts of all the volunteers helping that evening. Special thanks to Little's Tree Farm for providing a locally grown Christmas tree for the Depot.

New in the Depot were a long cabinet of drawers and a unit of book shelving. Did anyone recognize them?

When the Rapidan School was built in 1922, these shelves lined the walls of the library and were in use until the school was closed in 1992. In 1922 the new school boasted of having 1,200 books on the library shelves, and another 100 books (mostly fiction) were added in 1923!

As we look back with satisfaction on our accomplishments in 2013, we eagerly look forward to 2014 and new adventures and events. On June 28, RHS will host a Chautauqua – right here in Rapidan! RHS will also organize a Tractor Ride to take place during the Blue Earth County Fair.

But favorite events will not be overlooked: Memorial Day will mark the opening of the Depot with programs at the park and Depot. Friends and neighbors are invited to gather for the National Night Out Potluck on August 5. Ghosts will be stirred up in the Depot for Halloween and Santa will visit again for Christmas. 2014 will be a good year!



Madison Lake Area Historical Society 2013 Happenings

We celebrated the organization's 31st year with many fun events.

January - Gary and Suzie Zahradka, from the metro area, gave a history of paints and paintings.

February - Kathy Lamont, Mary Kate and Karen Wolters told about refugees from Africa in the United States, learning our language and coping with the details of living in a new land with a new language.

March - John Rezmerski demonstrated the food and cooking utensils used by pioneers in their daily living.

April - Merrill Frydendall talked about his birding hobby and presented a slide show about birds.

May - Steve Alinder, antique shop owner, showed some of his antiques.

June - Scot Ziegfried had a slide show and discussed prairie restoration.

July - We traveled to the Blue Earth County Heritage Center at Mankato to learn about the Research Center.

August - Annual potluck at the Gegan Cabin which had been reconstructed by Kortuem brothers.

September - The World War II Holocaust was a topic presented by Gustavus Adolphus College professor Dr. Derold Jodock.

October - Larry Kortuem shared his Vietnam War experiences. Marsha Stapleton told of reactions at home in the U.S. during the war.

November - Howard Vetter shared sail boating experiences and Carl Brainerd, retired from the NASA space program, showed a slideshow of a space shuttle.

December - During the year, due to growth, club meetings were moved from Madison Lake Community Center to Scheid Hall at All Saints Church.

In Memoriam, we remember Ted Roemer, former postmaster, local historian, and First President of the MLAHS who passed away at the age of 102 years on April 1, 2013 at Marion, Iowa.

Madison Lake Area Historical Society consists of about sixty-five members. Regular meetings of the Madison Lake Area Historical Society are held at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month, usually at Scheid Hall. All are welcome to join. Annual dues are \$10 and payable in January. Current officers of the club are Mike Peters, President; Mary Buschkowsky, Secretary; and Corrine Sprague, Treasurer.

Calendar of Events January - April 2014

JANUARY

- 23 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 23 Our History Matters: BECHS and Social Media**, new monthly educational series, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, BECHS members free.

FEBRUARY

- 8 Young Historians: Industrial Revolution**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, pre-registration required.
- 27 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 27 Our History Matters: Arn Kind, Gettysburg 150th Anniversary**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, BECHS members free

MARCH

- 2 BECHS Annual Meeting** featuring "Reflections of the Past" by Jack Madsen, 2 p.m., Heritage Center, Behind-the-scenes tours begin at 1 p.m.
- 8 Young Historians: World War I**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, Pre-registration required.
- 21 Surrounded By History**, 6 p.m., MSU, M Centennial Student Union, Annual BECHS Fundraiser, Reserve your tickets today!
- 27 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 27 Our History Matters: If These Walls Could Talk by Doug Brugman**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, BECHS members free



and awards. Please RSVP by 4/18/14 to 345-5566.

- 24 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 24 Our History Matters: History of Seppman Mill**, 6 p.m., Heritage Center, \$5 adults, BECHS members free

MAY

- 3 Hubbard House Opening Weekend**, open for tours 1-4 p.m.
- 3 Baltics Striker-to-the-Line Season Opener**, Erlandson Park, Mankato



Visit www.bechshistory.com/baltics for schedule.

- 4 Annual Victorian Tea Party**, 1-4 p.m., R.D. Hubbard House. Tickets will be on sale 4/1/14.
- 10 Young Historians: World War II**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, Pre-registration required.
- 22 Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town

Three easy way to stay up-to-date:

- Check out www.bechshistory.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.

APRIL

- 12 Young Historians: Great Depression**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, Pre-registration required.
- 17 Artist Reception for Sandy Howe**, 5-7 p.m., Heritage Center
- 21 Annual Volunteer Appreciation**, 5:30 p.m., Heritage Center. BECHS volunteers will be honored for their time and talents with dinner

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 bechsms@hickorytech.net or 345-5566. She will make note of the change in your membership record. The next issue of *The Historian* will arrive in mail and inboxes in April.

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+) \$20

Individual \$25

Household \$35

Contributor \$50

Supporter* \$100

Booster* \$250

Advocate* \$500

Benefactor* \$1000

*denotes Business Member levels

Please send this form and check to:

BECHS Membership

415 Cherry Street

Mankato, MN 56001

OR

Complete your membership form

online at www.bechshistory.com

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



Blue Earth County Historical Society

415 Cherry Street

Mankato, MN 56001

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