

The Blue Earth County

HISTORIAN



REMEMBERING FRONT STREET



Visit the new "Remembering Front Street" exhibit now open. Here is a view of the 300 Block of South Front Street looking North in the 1920s. Notice the bank building, now incorporated into the Verizon Wireless Civic Center.

"Roller Coaster Magic"

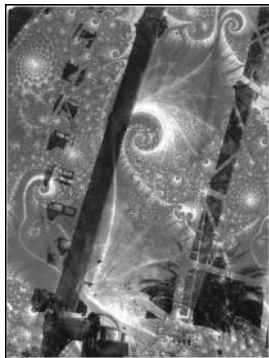


Exhibit featuring Liz Madsen's work on display now, see page 17.

Meet Us At The Fair!



Join us at the Blue Earth County Fair July 26-29 in Garden City, see page 12 for details.

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Our 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

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

The Blue Earth County Historian Summer 2012

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Board of Trustees



Mike Lagerquist
Board of Trustees President

Most 21st century residents of Blue Earth County have a relationship with agriculture that's no stronger than a weekly trip to the farmers' market during the summer, roadside pumpkin stands in October or wondering if the corn will be "knee high by the Fourth of July." But the county's establishment was based on agriculture and even today—perhaps hidden behind a landscape of medical services, education and retail—is an agricultural base that still fuels the local economy and feeds the world.

For its second "Surrounded by History" event in March 2013, the Blue Earth County Historical Society will be turning its attentions toward agriculture, its role in our past and its continuing role today. We can gather relevant statistics, but in order to do the project justice, we're asking for your help.

We're interested in collecting personal stories, photographs, movies, and interviews about the important role of agriculture to Blue Earth County so we can share them at "Surrounded by History." Specifically, we'd love to have you tell us about any of the following:

- Your family's farm life (both today and in the past)
- Your involvement and what you've gained from such organizations as FFA and 4-H
- Personal stories and information about ag-related businesses such as implement dealers, banks, and elevators
- What it has meant to you and your family to be located in one of the top agricultural counties in Minnesota ... and the nation!

If you're interested, please contact me by e-mail at bechsprez@charter.net or call and leave your name and contact information at BECHS: 345-5566. We'd love to look through what you've got and make arrangements with you to expand our collection so we can make next year's "Surrounded by History" event a bountiful harvest of agricultural stories!



Scherer and Day threshing crew, 1890s



Director's Notes

Jessica Potter
Executive Director

In the last issue, we requested your help by completing an online survey about what BECHS means to you and over 70 of you answered the call. We received some great feedback about things we do well as well as suggestions for improvement. We look forward to incorporating these ideas into our Strategic Plan, which the Board and staff have been engaged in since January. Greater Mankato Growth CEO, Jonathan Zierdt has been leading the process. We are grateful for his time, the time of those who answered the survey or met with Board members, and the time committed by our Board and staff to complete this process. We hope to present the plan in an upcoming issue of *The Historian*.

Have you visited the Heritage Center Museum lately? There has been a lot of activity these past few months. In February, Goodrich Construction moved the pioneer cabin from the basement of the Hubbard House to the Museum. My three-year-old daughter loves the addition and would be happy to give anyone a tour of the “new things in the cabin.” We have watched many children be engaged in history in this space – very exciting. And we are finishing the last details on the long awaited Front Street exhibit. I hope, as you stroll along Front Street, it will trigger some great memories of a time and place in the past. Join us on September 28-29 for the Front Street exhibit opening weekend celebration.

I would be remiss if I did not give you an update on the timber in the BECHS Collection. I am aware that this has been a controversial issue and will continue to be until we are able to fully understand and verify the history of this item. Once we accomplish this, the Board will need to determine the next steps. We have received overwhelming support through memberships, donations and cards and letters of support. Thank you. Now, here is an update of what we know and why we are being so cautious.

In 1881, John F. Meagher removed a large timber from his building on Front Street and sent that timber to the University of Minnesota with the story that it was used in the gallows in 1862. That same timber

was returned to Mankato in 1927 and has since been part of the BECHS collection. This may seem like a cut and dry story; however, there are some questions about the history of the timber prior to 1881 and that is what we are researching and evaluating.

Newspaper accounts after 1881 corroborate Meagher's story stating that he purchased the timbers at public auction in the winter of 1863 and used them in the construction of a building and then in 1881 he sent one of those timbers to the U of M. Yes, he operated his hardware business from 1864-1881 in a building on Front Street which was built in 1856. However, in the August 27, 1864 *Mankato Record* it states that the “Sale of Government Property” was last Wednesday and “the gallows is badly racked, and sold for \$33.50” and “Dr. Brown was the purchaser.” So, this is a question that needs more research – how did Meagher come in possession of the timbers if he did not purchase them at the auction and the auction was not in 1863? Did he buy them from Dr. Brown? When did he make improvements to the 1856 building where the timber came from, etc.? So, we continue to dig through the newspapers to look for some clarity.

In the meantime, we (a team of BECHS staff, volunteers, and outside researchers) are also looking at the object itself to see how it matches descriptions of the scaffold in 1862 (there are written accounts of the construction) and also looking at the various alterations that have been made to the timber and how they relate to the stories of its reuse. This may seem like a lot of work over one object, but this object, if proven to be from the scaffold, represents a significant event in Minnesota's history. We don't take that lightly or without caution. As information comes to light, we will continue to update our website and do our best to keep everyone up-to-date on this. Thank you for your support and patience as we diligently work through this research.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and don't miss our great upcoming events.

At the Book and Gift Shop

Emily Green, Museum Assistant



New things are happening at BECHS and, well... I guess I'm one of them. For those of you who have not been in recently to notice an unfamiliar face behind the front desk, I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Emily Green, a recent History graduate from MSU, Mankato and I have lived in the Mankato area all my life. I have been interested in

local history since grade school and I am elated to be here (although sad to say goodbye to JoLynn). I look forward to meeting all of you history enthusiasts!

Getting back to the matter at hand, it's hard to ignore the reality that those cool spring days have been replaced by constant sunshine. This means it's time to shed some layers and get out and explore the world around you. Check out the places that have inspired some of the items in our gift shop, such as the Hubbard

House, the Rapidan Dam, Minneopa Falls, Seppman Mill, and the Red Jacket Bridge. With the 150-year



anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, Reconciliation Park would be another great place to explore.

Here in the gift shop we take pride in offering the artwork of those who have explored our lovely county. We sell Marian Anderson items inspired by historical locations such as those mentioned above, and these include note cards, collectibles, and framed and unframed Anderson prints. We are also fortunate to have John Cross photos available for purchase. Cross has captured several beautiful scenic shots from our area, as well as candid shots of local residents.

You can learn about an important piece of our local history by purchasing some of the reading materials that we offer on the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. This summer marks the sesquicentennial of those events that shape Blue Earth County's and our nation's histories.

Warm weather also ushers in outdoor sporting events. Take some time to check out a Baltics vintage base ball game and show your team spirit and support by purchasing a Baltics t-shirt here at the shop. We offer a variety of sizes in both black and white.

Remember that the Blue Earth County Fair is around the corner, July 26th - 29th. This is a wonderful place to get acquainted with your local heritage. Items from the gift shop can be purchased at the fair as well as at the Carriage House which resides next to the Hubbard House. If you prefer to stay out of the heat you can visit us at www.bechshistory.com. I look forward to meeting everyone!

2012 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival

1:30 p.m., Sunday, September 23
First Presbyterian Church
Mankato, Minnesota



For more information:
www.minnesotawelsh.org

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R.D. Hubbard House

The Hubbard House has opened once again and this year we have made several changes and added new items to the house, along with the addition of two new seasonal staff members. This year's Hubbard House staff members are Ryan Harren and Alex Oldenburg.



Ryan Harren and Alex Oldenburg

Ryan is from Rice, Minnesota and recently graduated with a master's degree in History from MSU, Mankato. He began volunteering at BECHS in December and also works at the Steele County Historical Society in Owatonna. Alex just finished her junior year of high school and freshman year of college at Bethany Lutheran College, where she plans to major in Biology. She's volunteered with the Historical Society for almost ten years.



Kids enjoy crafts with the Hubbard Girls after story time.

This year we have made substantial changes to the Carriage House, moving the store to the front of the building so we can greet visitors as they enter. Bishop Whipple's gig and the surrey were moved to the back of the building so each vehicle would have more space and could receive the attention it deserves. In addition, we have placed text stands next to the vehicles to make the signs describing them more accessible and convenient for visitors to read.

The Hubbard House has changed as well. Last year several pieces of original Hubbard furniture were added, including the girls' bedroom set. Other

artifacts such as hats and hat boxes, a purse used by Katherine Hubbard in the girls' room, and clothing in Jay's room, have also been incorporated, making it feel like you have stepped back in time to the Victorian era to call on the Hubbard family.

During the spring, several school groups toured the house and learned about the Victorian lifestyle. Even more visitors came in June to enjoy the Dakota games and Victorian lawn party where costumed characters played instruments, rode unicycles, performed yo-yo tricks, held tea parties and gave tours of the house. Recently, the Hubbard House received a new sandwich sign that we place out front when the house is open, and hopefully this will help attract even more visitors.

This summer's events include a living history program about medicine shows, flim-flam artists and pick pockets, on August 18. Every Friday from June thru August Katherine and Mary Esther Hubbard and friends (Alex Oldenburg, Laura Garlow, and Alana and Therese Klages) host Story Time with the Hubbard Girls at 10:30 a.m.. The girls read several stories on the lawn and then help the kids with a fun craft.

Historic R.D. Hubbard House presents

Flim-Flam, Snake Oil and Ballyhoo

Saturday, August 18, 2012 @ 1 to 4 p.m.
606 South Broad Street, Mankato

Costumed interpreters introduce visitors to the colorful world of Medicine Show hucksters, Riverboat gamblers and other charlatans of a bygone era. Fun for the whole family! Program Free, Admission to Hubbard House charged.




BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Visit www.bechshistory.com for more details

Discover the Dakota Culture and Heritage Series

In order to understand a culture you must experience the lifestyle, learn about the beliefs, and get to know its people. The 12-part series, Discover the Dakota Culture & Heritage, was designed as an educational and interactive experience for all ages, bringing together the Dakota people and the community at-large to develop an understanding of the past and strengthening partnerships for the future. It also recognizes the 150th Anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

The series began in January and will continue through December 2012. Past programs included Dakota Language with a focus on Dakota lessons and morals, Dakota games, experiencing a tipi, and coming together to dance. In July, the National Eagle Center visited the Hubbard House with an incredible nose-to-beak experience for all ages where



they learned about the eagle and its importance to the Dakota people. Upcoming Discover the Dakota programs include:

Dakota Poetry on August 4 at 10 a.m. at the Heritage Center. We'll look at and listen to some of the many varieties of verse by Dakota writers and talk about why Dakota poets aren't better known among Dakota people as well as in schools and bookstores. Where can you find their work, and what makes it distinctive?

Wacipi Etiquette on September 8 at 10 a.m. at the Heritage Center will feature the history and traditions of the Mahkato Wacipi, celebrating its 40th Anniversary September 21-23.

Preparing for Winter on October 6 at 10 a.m. at the Heritage Center will talk about Dakota foods and preparing foods for winter, as well as details about moving to a winter camp. Visitors will have the opportunity to make pemmican - ground dried meat and berries.

The Dakota culture is a way of life. The traditions that have been passed on for centuries circle around what has been learned from Mother Earth and all living things. This series is co-organized by the Blue Earth County Historical Society and Elders of the Dakota Nation. This project has been made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



Discover the Dakota Culture & Heritage

*A Monthly Educational Series
Celebrating the Dakota People*

In recognition of the U.S. - Dakota War of 1862 Sesquicentennial

**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
January - December 2012
Free • Open to All Ages**

SERIES SCHEDULE*:

January 7

The Tradition of Storytelling

February 4

Film: "Return to Shetek: The Courage of the Fool Soldiers"

March 3

Dakota Arts and Crafts Festival

April 7 at Ostrander Auditorium, MSUM Campus
Maza Kute Drum Group and Dancers

May 5

Language: Spoken and Sign

June 2 at R.D. Hubbard House

Dakota Games

July 14 at R.D. Hubbard House

National Eagle Center Traveling Program

August 4

Dakota Poetry

September 8

Pow Wow Etiquette and Reconciliation

October 6

Preparing for Winter

November 3

Film "Dakota War of 1862"

December 1-31

"Commemorating Controversy" Traveling Exhibit

All events will be located at the Heritage Center,
415 Cherry Street, Mankato unless otherwise noted.

* Schedule and topics are subject to change.



This project has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. Administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Visit www.bechshistory.com for more details or call 507-345-5566.



The Mankato Baltics kicked off the season on a brisk April evening with our first "Striker-to-the-Line" event complete with an 1860s match, food and prize drawings and we have been going full force

ever since. Our club has played 11 matches including road trips to La Crescent, Afton, Columbia Heights, and Shakopee where we challenged our fine adversaries La Crescent Apple Jacks, Minneapolis Quicksteps, St. Croix, Denmark Township Demons & Rochester Roosters. We are proud of our 9-2 record, but tip our hats "Huzzah!" to our fellow vintage clubs we greatly respect. The Mankato Baltics is a tight group of gentlemen who continue to improve their vintage base ball skills and are eager for each match. This truly is a game for any age as we have ballists from 19 to 66 years of age sprinkled with some 20, 30, 40 and 50 somethings.

Four of the Mankato Baltics and their wives participated in the Blue Earth County Historical Society Pub Crawl and thoroughly enjoyed spreading the word about vintage base ball but most importantly connecting with everyone involved. The extra bonus was seeing many of the "crawlers" turn into "cranks" (fans) who stopped by our tournament.



The Baltics finishing a game.

On a very warm 30th of June, the Baltics had the honor of hosting 3 vintage base ball clubs: Arlington Greys, La Crescent Apple Jacks and Rochester

Roosters at Land of Memories Park. We lost the first match to the Arlington Greys who dominated the day taking a 3-0 record and the traveling trophy. We won our next 2 matches while the Roosters went 1-2 and La Crescent finished 0-3, but all clubs made tremendous plays & struck well. Doc E's BBQ & Caroline's Sweet Treats did a fantastic job of filling the bellies of the ballists and cranks.

The match in Vernon Center on July 4th was cancelled due to extreme heat but the Mankato Baltics had fun walking in the parade despite the



The Baltics in the North Mankato Fun Days parade.

temperatures. We also had the privilege of walking in the North Mankato Fun Days parade on July 7th and were able to use the 1916 fire truck that belongs to BECHS. The ballists and families had a wonderful time handing out team and player baseball cards, as well as coupons and candy. It was wonderful exposure for BECHS, the Mankato Baltics and our sponsors. We love our loyal cranks and are excited to see people interested in this game...the way it was meant to be played! Huzzah to our gracious sponsors for such great support: Kato Roofing, Inc., Ullrich Construction, Pub 500, Colis C Store, All American Foods, Hilltop Florist and Welsh Heritage Farms.

Next up is a festival in Rochester on July 28th with 5 other vintage teams. Then we travel to La Crescent on August 4th, Afton on August 26th and Arlington on September 15th.

Visit our website to see pictures, read game recaps or "Like" us on Facebook to see what's next for the Mankato Baltics!

BECHS Donations

April—June 2012

All American Foods
Anderson, Wayne and Mavis
Beauford Township
Bishop, Mary Louise
Buscher, Robert and Marilyn
Crowe, JoLynn
Decoria Township
English, Carol
Goff, Harley and Janet
Gunnick, Mildred
Hanson, Kathryn
Kato Community Club
Lincoln Township
McGowen, Jack and Diann
Neitge, Catherine

Norland, Dick and Kris
Nussbaumer, Linda
Schmitz, Joan
Schultz, Georgia
Welsh Heritage Farms
Zellmer, Randy

MEMORIALS

In Memory of Julie Miller
Hanson, Kathryn

In Memory of Edith Hopman
Grundmeier, Win and Shirley
Stouffer, Roger and Beverly

MATCHING GIFTS

General Mills Foundation

IN-KIND

Colby, Cathy
Goff, Harley and Janet
Green, Emily
Lavitschke, Jo-an
Mankato Tent and Awning
Red Door Creative

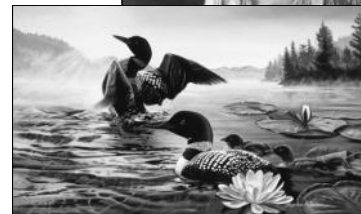
Marian Anderson Fine Art Prints

As a living legacy, Marian Anderson has donated her entire inventory of fine art prints to the Blue Earth County Historical Society; 100% of all print sales benefits BECHS. Fine art prints are available to view and purchase at the Heritage Center Book & Gift Shop and online at www.mariananderson.com.

Marian's paintings are not just an illustrated subject but within each a story is told. With each brush stroke a breath of life sets her art apart. As you immerse yourself in the depths of her painting, you will see the beauty of a lifetime of experience. The subjects featured in Marian's work include Canine, Native American, Nostalgia, Diversity & Landscape, Wildlife and Mountain Men.

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

Pictured here: "Sacagewa" available in main edition prints (\$125), "Northern Awakening" available in main edition prints (\$95) and note cards, and "Timeless Moment" available in artist proof prints (\$200).



A Trip Down Memory Lane

Shopping on Front Street

By Heather Harren

For almost 150 years people have enjoyed shopping on Mankato's Front Street. Some of the most popular stores were on the 300 and 400 blocks of South Front Street, and these were intermixed with Five and Dime stores. North Front Street boasted a large department store and also several smaller shops. This article is just a glimpse into the places that were available to shoppers on Front Street.

Brett's Department Store was A Family Affair on Front Street

George Brett came to Minnesota in 1863 from Maine, and in 1868 he moved to Mankato to open his own store. He opened Brett's Department Store in 1863 on the corner of South Front and Jackson Streets.

In 1893, R. D. Hubbard sold the Northeast corner of the street to Brett for \$11,000. The purchase by Brett was in anticipation of expansion that eventually took place in the 1910s and 1920s. Between 1895, when Brett's occupied the first floor of the Northeast corner of Front and Jackson Streets building, and 1915, when they purchased the building, Brett's expanded onto the other two floors in the building. In 1926, the store added basement departments. These basement departments were similar to the bargain basement at Filene's Department Store in Boston and were another area where Brett's could sell more merchandise.

Brett's was a family-run store for the duration of the business. George Brett eventually handed over operations of the store to his son Edward in 1915. The store then passed to Brett Taylor, Edward Brett's nephew, in 1958. His son, Brett Taylor Jr., became the president of Brett's in 1971 and ran the store until 1990, when his son, Scott Taylor took over the company. Brett's was always a family-run business, and a Brett or Taylor could always be found around the Mankato store. Seeing the president of the company in the early years of the store was a unique experience for customers when they came to Brett's.

After Scott Taylor became president of Brett's in 1990, he purchased Ehler's Apparel, a retail chain store in Minnesota. There were eleven of these stores throughout Minnesota, and Brett's intended to keep them all operational. The purchase of Ehler's allowed Brett's to expand to other areas of Minnesota, since Ehler's had stores throughout the state.

In 1991, Brett's changed its name from Brett's Department Store to Brett's Specialty Store. The specialty store dropped several departments that did not sell well, such as housewares and home products. Taylor stated that he wanted to prepare the store for the 1990s. This was unusual for a department store since department stores often started as specialty stores and evolved into department stores, but did not normally do the reverse and become a specialty store after being a department store.



Brett's Department Store—1970s

Also in 1991, Brett's started offering a new charge card. Brett's had used charge accounts and cards for a long time, but this new card collaborated with a major credit card company and a bank. Brett's was one of the first retail stores in the nation to try cards like these. The charge cards had Brett's name across the top of the card, the bank name that was helping them, and the Visa logo. This card could be used anywhere that Visa was accepted. Brett's new charge card was similar to a credit card because customers could use it not only at Brett's, but at other stores as well.

After Scott Taylor operated the department store for two years, he announced that the Mankato and New Ulm stores were to close. The 1991 holiday season was hard on the store, and they did not make a profit during that

time. There was also a recession happening in the United States, which negatively affected the store. It also did not help that the River Hills Mall had opened in Mankato, and Brett's did not move there, like many of the other stores on Front Street had. Brett's did not move because of the cost of rent at the mall. The River Hills Mall led to a shift in the shopping center of Mankato. Before the mall opened, many people still shopped on Front Street. However, soon after the Mankato and New Ulm stores closed, Brett's also closed its Owatonna store. Shortly before the Owatonna store closed, Taylor announced that all the Brett's and Ehler's stores were going to close. Taylor, in an announcement about the closing stated, "We're losing money."

Moving On With Montgomery Ward

There were more places at which to shop in Mankato than just Brett's. The Montgomery Ward Department Store was located at 413 South Front Street. Montgomery Ward began as a mail order service in 1872. It was not until 1926 that Montgomery Ward opened its first building for people in which to shop. The Mankato location was opened in 1929 and Donald Longpre was the first manager for that particular store. In 1932, the Mankato location had a great fire that put the store out of commission until the next year. After the rebuilding, the rear of the first floor was known for its automobile department, which serviced cars, and the second floor was the furniture department.

In 1962, Montgomery Ward moved to 505 South Front Street, and then to 1223 Caledonia Street in 1979. By 1984, Montgomery Ward moved again, this time to 1705 East Madison Avenue. The last year that Montgomery Ward appeared in the city directory was 1985. The entire chain went defunct in 2001.

James Cash Penney opened the first J.C. Penney's in America in 1902 in Kemmerer, Wyoming. In 1916, just one block north of Montgomery Ward J.C. Penney and Company opened its first store in the area, renting a building from Frank Busch at 117 Jackson Street. The first manager of the J.C. Penney store in Mankato was William Burkhart.

In 1922, the Mankato location of J.C. Penney moved to 314 South Front Street and was eventually remodeled in 1951. Following trends across the nation, J.C. Penney had its first credit card in 1959.

In 1978, Penney's moved into the Mankato Mall, which was built during Urban Renewal. In 1992, the store then moved into the River Hills Mall, where it is still in operation today.

South Front Street Shopping Continues

Another place to shop on South Front Street was S & L Company which opened at 402 South Front Street in 1932. Before S & L Company moved into the building, the block was known as "The Glass Block," not to be confused with Donaldson's Glass Block in Minneapolis. This building on South Front Street caught fire in March 1905 and the building was rebuilt by the Richard Brothers, who owned JB & D Richards Dry Goods store. Like many of the dry goods and department stores of the time, there were other attractions in the store. JB & D Richards had doctors, insurance agents, a barbershop, and a Mormon Church office in the building. The first S & L Company store was opened in Elkton, South Dakota in 1921. This



400 Block of Front Street—1950s

store was operated by Max Katz, who ran the Mankato store for many years. The building was remodeled in 1937, adding a second and third floor to the building, plus a basement. The second and third floors of the building were used as office spaces, and the basement was remodeled to house new and expanded departments. Some of these departments included shoes, bath towels and bedding. By 1945, the Richards block was now being called and known by many people as the S & L Company block. After 41 years of operation in Mankato, S & L Company closed in 1973.

Just down the block from S & L Company was the Sears Roebuck Store. Sears Roebuck opened at 421 South Front Street in 1939. When the store was built, there was an automotive department in the back of the store that offered free tire and battery service. This was a one-story building with a basement. The store manager, C. D. Johnson came to

Mankato to work after having previous experience as the manager at a Sears Roebuck store in Kentucky. In 1968, Sears Roebuck moved into the new Madison East Mall. In 1997, Sears Roebuck moved into the River Hills Mall. And is still in operation today.

In contrast, North Front Street only had a few department stores where people could shop. One of them was called L. Salet and Son, which was opened in



Salets in early 1970s

1896 by Leon Salet. Leon Salet emigrated from Russia to Minnesota in 1892 with his wife and two sons. Salet initially sold goods off a cart pulled by a horse from farm to farm. He then opened a permanent residence for his business in 1896. This store was located on Front Street near East Main Street in Mankato and only sold men's wear. Leon's son Louis Salet joined the business in 1914. In 1917 Salet's added another store, which was Salet's Department Store. The stores were next door to each other, which made it convenient for customers who wanted to shop at both establishments.

After many years of doing business in Mankato, Salet's began to branch out into other locations. The first store that opened outside Mankato was in Owatonna in 1929. The Owatonna store was a department store and not a specialty shop like the first business that Leon Salet opened. Salet opened a third department store in Winona in the 1930s, and by the 1940s, Salet's had stores in Mankato, Owatonna, Winona, Rochester, New Ulm, and South St. Paul. Although Salet's was primarily a southern Minnesota store, it did expand into the southern metro area.

In 1935 Salet's remodeled their buildings. The company installed new display tables and new clothing racks on both floors of the store. They also updated the lighting in the building so people had more light to see the items they were going to

purchase. It was common for early department stores to have basements where customers could shop. Brett's had added their basement department ten years prior, and Salet's continued the trend by expanding theirs in the 1930s.

In 1950 Leon Salet left the company, and Louis Salet became the owner of the store. Continuing the tradition of the store being operated by father and son, Richard Salet joined the business. Louis and Richard ran the store together until 1963, when Louis died. Richard then managed the store from 1963 until 1973 when the store closed. Like Brett's Department Store, Salet's was also a family-owned and operated business.

Starting in the 1960s, Salet's began closing its stores. By 1973, when the Mankato store closed, all of the other stores Salet's owned had closed. Urban Renewal began in Mankato during the 1970s, which helped some of the businesses in the downtown area. Unfortunately, Salet's was one of the businesses negatively affected by Urban Renewal. Richard Salet announced in 1973 that the store would not be moving and would close. One of his reasons for closing the store was that many employees were retiring and Richard did not want to hire new people. Another reason was that he would have had to build a new building, which was too much of an investment for the store. In 1974, a year after the store closed, the building Salet's had occupied was torn down to make room for progress.

The Five and Dimes of South Front Street

In contrast to the department stores, there were Five and Dime shops on the 300 block of South Front Street. The three stores that were near one another on that block were H. L. Green Company, Woolworths, and S. S. Kresge Company. These buildings were located at 309, 313, and 319 South Front Street respectively. These stores eventually became known as variety stores.

F. W. Woolworth opened the first Woolworths in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1879. Woolworths has been said to be one of the original Five and Dime stores in America. The first Woolworths opened in Mankato in 1910 at 313 South Front Street, and from there it moved to the Madison East Mall in 1968. The Mankato Woolworths closed in January 1993,

Continued from page 11...

and the entire company went defunct in July 1997, 118 years after the store began.

Kresge stores began in 1899 by Sebastian S. Kresge in Memphis, Tennessee. Sebastian Kresge started his work with Five and Dime stores in 1897 when he worked with James McCrory who started his own five and dime store. S. S. Kresge Company stores began to spread, and the store in Mankato opened in 1927. Kresge Company became the parent company for Kmart stores when the first Kmart store opened in 1962. In 1977, the Kresge holdings changed to Kmart Holdings, which then changed to Sears Holding Corporation. The Mankato location of Kresge changed its name in 1968 to Jupiter Discount Store, which closed in 1969. Kmart later came to Mankato in 1980 and was located in the Madison East Mall, later moving east of the River Hills Mall. Kmart closed in the early 2000s.

The last Five and Dime store on the 300 block of South Front Street was H. L. Green Company. This store began at 309 South Front Street as F. W. Grand and Silver Store in 1930. In 1931, F. W. Grand and Silver caught fire and they had to rebuild their store. H. L. Green Company was formed in 1932, but by 1935 had taken over F. W. Grand and Silver Stores across the country. In 1938, the Mankato store of F. W. Grand and Silver had changed its name to be H.L. Green. In 1972, H. L. Green Company no longer appeared in the Mankato Polk City Directory. This was also the time when H. L. Green stores across America were renamed McCrory stores. All of the McCrory stores closed in the 1990s.

Memories of Front Street

This is just a small sampling of the different places that people shopped on Front Street. Many other stores came and went over the years that were favorites of many people. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of information available on these stores. We can do little more than look through city directories to find information about when the store first appeared or disappeared, or examine newspaper articles.

We are still looking for more information about every business on Front Street. There is a form in the Research Center that can be filled out with your memories of businesses and events on Front Street. Now is a great time to fill out this sheet to help preserve the memories of what was once there, but is now gone.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY FAIR

July 26 - 29
Blue Earth County
Fairgrounds
Garden City

Historical Society Building

Browse our Gift Shop and be sure to see the historical Blue Earth County Fair photograph exhibit, a display of historical county maps, *Down on the Farm* traveling exhibit, and Historical Vehicles Show featuring the 1916 Buick Mankato Fire Truck, a turn of the century Mail Cart and a Doctor's buggy from the late 1800's. There will also be activities for children.

Schoolhouse

School will be in session daily.

Thank you to all the volunteers that represent BECHS at this four day County event. We couldn't do it without you!



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

Join the Fun! Join the Team! Make History Happen!

Volunteer Opportunities

Data Entry

Entering information into museum management databases. Must be detail-oriented.

Collections Aide

Assist with small hand-sewing, interest in antiques, including military history.

Research Center Aide

Assist with the daily operation of the Research Center helping researchers and answering research inquiries.

Gardening

Help care and maintain Heritage Center flower beds.
They need some TLC.

Audio/Visual

Assist with conversion and editing of audio and video files for Discover the Dakota series.

Exhibit Development

Looking for creative individuals to assist with researching and designing museum exhibits.

Writer

Looking for writers and researchers for regular article series and BECHS publications.

To Volunteer, stop by the Heritage Center or go online at bechshistory.com to complete a volunteer application.

Employment Opportunity

Administrative Assistant—Part-time, Tuesday-Saturday position available September 1, 2012 to assist with the daily operation of the Heritage Center.

Duties include visitor services and reception, managing donor and member databases, and operating the Heritage Center Gift Shop.

Send resumes to Jessica at BECHS, 415 Cherry Street, Mankato or visit bechshistory.com for details.

Research Center

Heather Harren, Archives Assistant

It's summer once again. If you are looking for something fun to do as a family, which is also educational, check out the Research Center and start looking into your family's history. I can guess what you are thinking, how can researching your family be fun?

After working at the Blue Earth County Historical Society for almost a year, I can tell you that all families have interesting stories to be told. If you have not discovered your family story yet, now is the perfect time to come in and do the research. This would also be a great time to start showing your children or grandchildren how to do family research, so the stories can be passed on to different generations.

Now is also a great time to check out BECHS online (search for Blue Earth County



Historical Society to find us on Facebook, or visit www.bechshistory.com). Each week on Facebook we will be promoting something from the gift shop, as well as sharing historic photographs. This is just another way that BECHS is working to bring history to you.

One new feature to check out is Bits and Pieces of Blue Earth County History, which is located on our website under the "Education" tab. This feature article will connect to a question and photograph on our Facebook page. Look for these each week to see what new information you can learn.

A great part of Facebook is that it allows us to make events for our upcoming programs. At the top of the page, under the cover photograph, there is a box marked events. Check these out to get more information about the events that you would like to attend. Feel free to join the event, and spread the word to your friends. Visit Facebook each day to see what new things are happening!

BECHS Membership

April-June 2012

New Members

Burd, Kathy
Couri, Randy
Crowe, JoLynn
Curtis, Linda and Guy
Dezuani, Barbara
Dobie, Sheryl
Hurley, Kathleen
Johnson, Marsha
Lightfoot, Keith
Lonneman, Carrie
Natvig, Hal and Marsha
Nieburh, Gustav
Raddle, Beverly
Roberts, Barbara
Werner, Marnie
Zeman, Carrie

New Business Members

Guentzel Family Farms, LLC, Jonathan Guentzel
Inspired Aging, LLC, Caroline Wood

Renewing Business Members

Mankato City Center Hotel

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

Welsh Organization Changes Name

The Minnesota Gymanfa Ganu Association changed the official name of the organization to The Minnesota Welsh Association, Inc. and changed the name of the September Minnesota Gymanfa Ganu to The Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival. In 2007, the MGGA unanimously passed a motion “to designate the Blue Earth County Historical Society as the repository for Welsh archives and artifacts.” Since that time, items have been donated to the collection and an exhibit was created in the Heritage Center Museum featuring Welsh history.

YOUNG HISTORIANS

The final Young Historians of the 2011/2012 season ended with a showcase of local family history. Young Historians members had been spending the year learning about the various ethnic groups that are parts of their families.



Olivia Madsen presented information about her Swedish family history and even had lefse to share with guests!

Their projects culminated in them presenting the knowledge they had gathered and opening up their research to the public. Here are just a few examples of their family research projects.

The 2012-13 season will begin on September 8.

Young Historians hands-on history workshops are geared for school age children and meet the 2nd Saturday of each month (September—May). For more information, contact Jessica at bechs@hickorytech.net.



Aidan Oldenburg pictured among 4 generations of his family. He was able to trace back 15 generations on his family tree, and even found out he was related to one of the guests who attended!

Luke Lehne presented his family tree, which included his discovery that some of his relatives had invented one of the first limousines.





Fingerprints and Footnotes

Fingerprints and Footnotes had an amazing spring. In May we discovered how to find all the secrets that live with us while researching our home's history. In June, we skipped our regular meeting to join in the fun with the Minnesota Genealogical Society summer Family History Conference right in our own backyard. For a hobby that revolves around dead people, genealogy is remarkably trendy.

Due to the record setting temperatures on the 4th of July, our trip to Vernon Center and the 1860s Civil War Era base ball game were canceled. With a whopping temp of 101 degrees (it shattered the old record set in 1949) we know that this 4th of July we made history. You can still catch games of the Baltics and follow them at <http://www.bechshistory.com/events/MankatoBaltics.php>.

If you have any ideas for discussion topics or an interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know and, as always, newcomers are welcome.

Future Meetings:

August 1 at 7:00 P.M. (note date and time change) Adventures with Madison Lake Historical Society in Madison Lake

September 4 Dr. William E. Lass presents "The Histories of the Dakota War of 1862"

October 2 Keep Up to Speed: The History of the BECHS' vehicles at the R. D. Hubbard Carriage House with Larry Kortuem

Footnote in History

Did you know that the 1940 census asked married women if they had been married more than once, and if so their ages at their first marriages and the number of children born to them?

WISH LIST

Video Camcorder with tripod - \$200

A digital camcorder could be used by BECHS to record events or speakers and then make presentations available online.

Farm Toys

Gently used or new farm puzzles, toy tractors, farm animals, etc. needed for our kids' corner in the museum. Also, looking for hands-on components or toys for pioneer cabin.

Landscaping

Need additional drought tolerant plants for the Heritage Center Landscaping. Can be new or transplanted.

Ink Cartridges

Recycle your printer ink cartridges in the packaging with us and we can turn them in for store credit at Office Max.

Working Flat Panel Computer Monitors

Update: Thanks to donations from individuals and the hard work of our Young Historians, we have raised enough money to purchase new tables and chairs for the Heritage Center Meeting Room. Thank you to everyone who made this project possible! Also, thank you to Harley and Janet Goff for the 1940 Census on microfilm.

These special projects and items are not within BECHS's annual operating budget. If you are interested in fully or partially supporting one of these projects, please indicate your wishes on your check. Please contact Jessica at 345-5566 with any questions about these projects or other opportunities.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Collections and Exhibits...

Shelley Harrison, Archives Manager

We've recreated the essence of urban life in Mankato—roughly the 1900s to just prior to Urban Renewal. Join us in exploring Front Street through shared stories and pictures about all of these places in our lives. Many of our stories are about places where we grew up, fell in love, got caught by the cops, or just cruised by on Friday nights. It's these

places that anchor our lives - where we live, eat, work and have fun.

"Remembering Front Street" transports you back to the beginning of the 20th Century and allows you to see what Mankato looked like in years past. As you stroll along the streets of the exhibit, you'll encounter old-fashioned storefronts and businesses like the Saulpaugh Hotel or Stan A.



Windows to the Past

Smith jewelry store, Swanson's Paint Store, and Mandarin Café. The history of Front Street is intimately connected to its role as a transportation hub. Photographs from the late 1870s to the present show all aspects of transportation from early ferries,

street cars, bicycles, road paving, and service vehicles depicting the various ways to travel on Front Street.

You can discover Mankato's rich historical and cultural heritage, as the town played a part in several key roles in history, emerging as a

center for industrial development from

1880 to 1930. Local industries like Hubbard Milling Company, Kato Engineering, and T.R. Coughlan Co. are some of Mankato's 19th-century industries that have grown into modern companies. You can go window shopping and admire the fashions of yesteryear at LaVouge clothing store, Brett's, or Bee Hive. You may even see some familiar Mankato names as you pass by Demeray Electric, Mettler's, Miller Motors, and Joseph. Manderfeld Co. Travel back through time to neighborhoods with their own unique characters and those who made their homes above the shops and stores on Front Street.



Front Street Recreated

In addition to the artifacts from BECHS's

collection, the exhibit contains extensive materials generously donated by the community. As important as the buildings themselves are, they become more meaningful places through their stories and memories. Visitors are encouraged to share their stories of Front Street, as this common ownership is what inspired us. Rediscover Front Street today.

Special thanks to our sponsors who made this exhibit possible: Marlene Cutkosky Pommerenke (in honor of her father Harry J. Cutkosky), Mankato Area Foundation, and Hickory Tech Foundation.

Remembering Front Street

Rediscover Mankato's Hidden Street from the 1920s-1960s

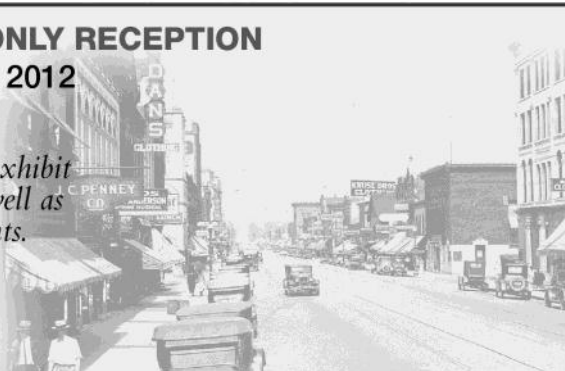
BECHS MEMBERS ONLY RECEPTION

Friday, September 28, 2012

4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Join us to view our latest exhibit featuring Front Street as well as other museum enhancements.

Drive-In Fare Provided
RSVP by September 20th
to bechs@hickorytech.net



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

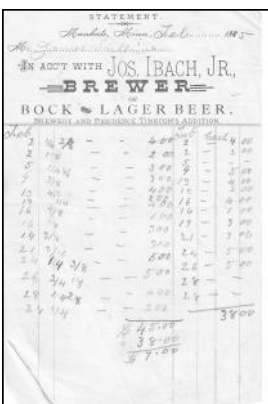
Visit www.bechshistory.com for more details or call 507-345-5566.

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 just a glimpse into our collections.

Wooden Shipping Crate

Wooden shipping crate from Mankato Brewing Co. that reads, "BEERS Mankato Brewing Co. Mankato Minn". Mankato Brewing Co. remodeled the old Bierbauer Brewery in 1933, the same year prohibition was repealed.



Kato Beer was their most popular brand, but the brewery only gained about 10% of their profits locally, forcing the business to close in 1967.

Statement Page

Statement page from Joseph Ibach Brewery in Tinkcom's Addition dated February 1885. Ibach bought the brewery in 1878 called Blue Earth Brewery. The brewery was located where Jefferson Elementary now stands; the high bluffs were ideal for cooling and storing. He operated the brewery until 1887 when it was destroyed by fire.

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

HERITAGE CENTER ART GALLERY FEATURED ARTIST

Liz Madsen, Mélange
Image Transfer Monoprints

On display at the Heritage Center through September 2012

The purpose of this collection was to study the combining of digital media technology with traditional printmaking processes. I examined a variety of the image transfer techniques used in printmaking with the influence from computer-generated graphics as a way to integrate traditional art practices with new technologies.

There is a lot of preparation involved for printmaking, but after working with traditional printmaking, I find that there is a strong connection between these processes and myself. I am able to convey even more feeling and emotion through the process of image transfer. My pieces express an unexplained space where different scales and perspectives exist, but represent metaphors for various conditions experienced using several botanical, biological, and inanimate objects around and within my environment.



~ Liz Madsen

"Roller Coaster Magic"

Are you a photographer or visual artist?
Are you interested in a 3-month show at the Heritage Center?
If so, please contact Shelley to learn more about this opportunity.

Around Blue Earth County



It was a beautiful day for Memorial Services in the park. Thanks to the North Mankato Post 518 for providing the color guard and speaker. Coffee and donut holes were provided by St. John's Church, followed by Jane Tarjeson speaking about "The Aftermath of 1862 and how Rapidan was affected." This was followed with a lunch and conversation.

The Rapidan Heritage Society was fortunate to have received a paint grant from Valspar thru the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Paint is being provided for the exterior of the depot, staining the ramp, and for the interior of the caboose.

Just arrived - the Red Wing Pottery sugar & creamer featuring the wood frame St. John's and Calvary Churches. These may be purchased at the Depot! Both churches have played vital roles in the development of Rapidan.

St. John's Lutheran was organized in 1870 with services held in various homes and the Just School. A wood frame church was built in 1897 in Rapidan. The church faced west. The last service in the old church was held April 8, 1951; two weeks later groundbreaking for the new church began. The new brick church was dedicated on June 8, 1952. Worship service in German was discontinued in 1955. The church cemetery is located 1½ miles south of Rapidan on county road 126.

The Calvary Lutheran Church was organized in 1874 with services held in various homes. The original wood frame church was built on the site of the Calvary Cemetery, above the Rapidan Dam in 1880. The Secretary's reports were first written in English in 1929; Norwegian worship service was discontinued in the early 1940's. Land was purchased in Rapidan in 1960 and a new brick church was built in 1964. The Calvary Church Records are on microfilm at BECHS.

On July 28 the tractorcade from the Blue Earth County Fair will be stopping at the Depot about 9 a.m. Green, red, grey, orange – the tractor line-up!

RHS is sponsoring a National Night Out on August 7th, with a potluck supper. Plan on gathering

at the Township garage in Rapidan at 6:30 p.m. – it's a great time to visit with your neighbors! The Rapidan Depot is now open Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for visitors until Labor Day.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

GOOD THUNDER

Historic Pub Crawl

Walking Tour with a Twist

Saturday, October 13, 2012, 5:00 p.m.

\$10 for Historical Society Members • \$15 for Non-Members

Ticket price does not include the cost of drinks. Drink purchases are not required to participate. Attendees must be over 21 and show photo I.D.

Participating Locations and Details to be Announced.



Visit www.bechshistory.com for more details.



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Calendar of Events August - October 2012

AUGUST

- 1 **Fingerprints and Footnotes: Adventures with Madison Lake Area Historical Society**, Madison Lake, 7 p.m. Call Shelley for details.
- 3 **Story Time with the Hubbard Girls @ Historic Hubbard House**
Friday mornings @ 10:30 a.m. thru August



- 4 **Discover the Dakota: Poetry**, Heritage Center, 10 a.m.
- 4 **Mankato Baltics @ LaCrescent**
- 16 **Third Thursday Art Walk**, 5-7 p.m., Heritage Center Art Gallery
- 18 **Flim-Flam, Snake Oil and Ballyhoo**, 1-4 p.m., R.D. Hubbard House (see page 5 for details)
- 23 **Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 26 **Mankato Baltics @ Afton**

SEPTEMBER

- 1 **Hubbard Center Closed; Hubbard House open Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m. thru September**
- 4 **Fingerprints and Footnotes: "The Histories of the Dakota War of 1862" by Dr. William E. Lass**, Heritage Center, 6 p.m.
- 8 **Young Historians and Discover the Dakota: Mahkato Wacipi Etiquette**, Heritage Center, 10 a.m.
- 15 **Mankato Baltics @ Arlington**
- 20 **Third Thursday Art Walk**, 5-7 p.m. Heritage Center Art Gallery

- 21-23 **40th Annual Mahkato Wacipi**, visit www.mahkatowacipi.org for details.
- 27 **Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. for BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 28-29 **Remembering Front Street Opening Weekend**, daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Join us for free admission to the museum and special events.
- 28 **Remembering Front Street Exhibit BECHS Members Event**, Heritage Center, 4-7 p.m., See page 16 for details.

OCTOBER

- 2 **Fingerprints and Footnotes: Keep Up the Speed** featuring Larry Kortuem, Hubbard House Carriage House, 6 p.m.
- 6 **Discover the Dakota: Preparing for Winter**, Heritage Center, 10 a.m.
- 13 **Young Historians**, 10 a.m., Heritage Center, series details to be announced
- 13 **Good Thunder Historic Pub Crawl**, 5 p.m. Tickets on sale in September
- 19 **Third Thursday Gallery Walk Artist Reception**, Heritage Center Art Gallery, 5-7 p.m.
- 25 **Tune in to KTOE 1420-AM** at 1 p.m. BECHS Update on Talk of the Town
- 26-27 **Ghosts from the Past: Prohibition in Blue Earth County**, details to be announced.



Ghosts from the Past 2011

Check out www.bechshistory.com for full event details and updates!

Sign-up for our new monthly e-news to receive updates between *Historian* issues!

Follow BECHS on Facebook and Twitter.



Blue Earth County Historical Society

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Mankato, MN 56001

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Membership
Expiration

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

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

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901