

Program Update

Linda Henry

The Heritage Center Gallery will host a collection of music boxes on loan to the Society from Karen Volling of Pemberton. Karen has a collection of approximately 50 different music boxes. Be sure not to miss this beautiful collection, as we are certain it will be an enjoyable time.



Holiday Open House

Plan to attend the Holiday Open House at the Hubbard House on Sunday, December 1st, 1 - 5 pm. See the Hubbard House decorated in holiday finery, enjoy entertainment, and a visit with Santa. If you have hand-made holiday craft items you would like



We would like to thank everyone who registered for a one year family membership at the River Hills Mall. The following are the winning families:

Chvala Reynolds
Jane Maas
Sister Harriet Horwath
Karen Wahlstrom
Mrs Darrell Schubbe

Setting Pretty

The YWCA is hosting the 11th annual "Setting Pretty" from Nov 8th -10th and the Society will display an antique table setting. Make plans to stop by the YWCA and vote for your favorite tables.

At our Gift Shops...

The 1991 Sandon Plate will be available the first week of November. This year's scene is the Hungry Hollow Bridge. Purchase a part of the Past -old newspapers are available for purchase in the Heritage Center Gift Shop.

\$1.00 per single issue
\$3.00 per bundle

Membership News

Donations

Thanks to the following for donations this past month:

St Paul Book & Stationery
Maverick Book Store
J & R Enterprises
Mankato Business Products
Evangeline Shaeffer

Members

Thank you to the following members:

J. R. Starkey
Evelyn Mikkelson
Judge & Mrs Charles Johnson
Stelter's Sewing Service
Evelyn Hill
Bruce Larson
Leon & Delores Tacheny
Kathy Trauger
Mr & Mrs Verle Salsbery
Rickway Inc.
Patricia Pond
Norma Brown
John Fitzloff
Rick Hanna
Stephen Schmidt
Judge & Mrs James Harten

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

November 1991

Calendar of Events

- Nov 10 Office closed--Veterans Day
- Nov 16 Young Historians--What town was once called Wakuntchapinka? Come to the Heritage Center from 2:00-3:00 p.m. for the answer to this trival question. Call 345-5566 to register for the November Young Historians.
- Nov 28 & 29 Office closed --for Thanksgiving

BECHS Notes

Linda Henry

The month of November is upon us and soon it will be the beginning of the Holiday Season. On behalf of the Society, I would like you to open your hearts and remember the less fortunate. During the month of November and December, BECHS will have a box at the Heritage Center Gift Shop for food supplies to the Echo Food Shelf. Cash donations will also be accepted. The hours of collection will be from 1-5 p.m. on Tuesday - Sunday. Please remember the best gift anyone can receive or give is a gift of love.

Happy Thanksgiving from the BECHS Staff

OLD MAIN

from Mankato Normal School to Old Main Village

In 1864 the only teacher training institution, or *normal school*, in Minnesota was located at Winona. That year a survey was conducted to ascertain the number of teachers and their qualifications. Out of 1888 teachers only 372 were qualified. That is, they were 18 years of age and had completed two years of normal instruction beyond the eighth grade.

Because of the results of this survey, the legislature decided to add two more normal schools -- one at St. Cloud, one at Mankato. Each was to raise \$5000.00 which would be matched by the state.

Judge Daniel Buck and other interested Mankato citizens raised the necessary funds. Even though the Normal School building had not been constructed, the first classes met in the Methodist Episcopal Church in October, 1868 with twenty-eight students and three faculty members including Professor Gage, principal.

By November the student body had grown to forty-eight, another faculty member was added, and larger quarters were needed. The Normal School was moved to the second floor of the Shaubut Store across from the Saulpaugh Hotel. The facility was composed of four rooms -- two for classrooms and two to house the model classes. **The Normal School remained there until 1870 when forty-two Normal School students and forty pupils of the model school proudly moved to the newly completed Normal School building on Fifth Street -- the first Old Main.** The building was constructed of brick, 126 x 116 feet, three stories above the basement, and embellished with two tall towers.

Professor Gage resigned as principal in 1872 and Miss Julie Sears, who had been assistant principal, was promoted to principal. In spite of petitions by Mankato residents and walk-outs by students, she was dismissed without written cause after one year of service. Mr. C.W.G. Hyde, who had been assis-

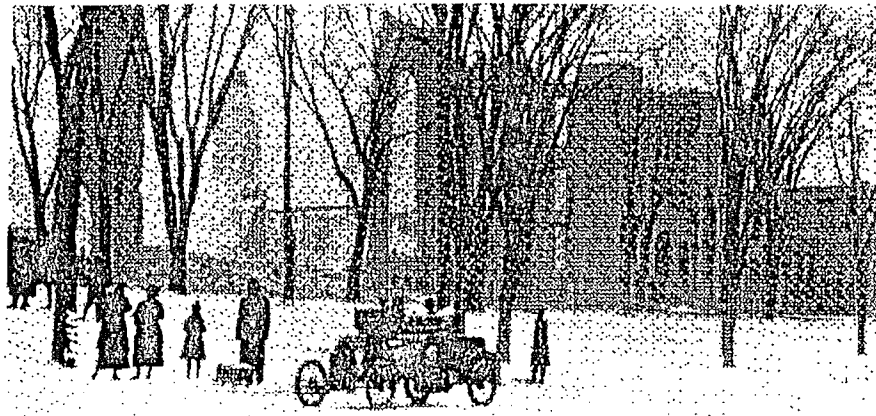
tant principal, became principal for one year.

Professor Edward Searing served as principal from 1880 - 1898. By 1891, the enrollment had grown to five hundred. Many of them were men training to accept positions as superintendents in city schools or county superintendents of schools. In 1893, the building became too small and the legislature appropriated monies to build wings on two sides of the building. By 1898, a student could complete two years of high school plus two years of normal training.

Charles H. Cooper served as president from 1899 - 1931. Once again the building became overcrowded in the early 1900's. Funds were appropriated by the legislature to build a three floor annex at the south end of Old Main. This was completed in 1909 and the model school was moved into this annex where it remained until 1957 when it was moved to upper campus.

In 1921 the Mankato Normal School's name was changed to Mankato Teachers College and with it came a four year training program which earned a Bachelor of Education degree.

On February 5, 1922, Mankato Teachers College suffered a severe set-back. Fire of unknown origin destroyed Old Main in a matter of hours. The firemen saved the annex by placing sheets of asbestos over the windows. Despite the loss, classes were resumed in three days in area churches, dormitory



The aftermath of the fire which destroyed the first Old Main, Feb. 5, 1922.

parlors, and other donated space. **In 1923, a new Old Main was erected on the same site and stands there yet today.**

In 1932, Dr. Frank McElroy became president. Under his direction the curriculum was broadened from 135 to 270 courses by 1946. The number of staff members rose to 87 and the student enrollment reached 800. A new physical education plant was built in 1937 which, with its athletic field, was ranked best in the state.

When Dr. McElroy retired in 1946, Dr. Clarence Crawford became president. He has been given credit for the college's tremendous growth. He expanded lower campus to its limit and gained funds to develop upper campus. On lower campus the first men's dormitory was built in 1952. On upper campus Wilson Campus School was built in 1957. A women's dormitory named Crawford Center opened in 1959 and another dormitory, McElroy Center, in 1961. Highland Arena and Blakeslee Stadium became part of upper campus in 1963. The student body grew from 800 in 1946 to more than 12,000 when Dr. McElroy retired in 1965.

Dr. James Nickerson began his duties as president in September 1966. During his tenure more buildings were constructed on Upper Campus: Gage Center A&B in 1965 and 1967; Armstrong Hall, the Performing Arts Building and Memorial Library in 1965; A.B. Morris Hall in 1968; and the Centennial Union and Trafton Center in 1972.

When Dr. Douglas Moore became president in January 1974, he faced several problems: declining enrollment, over-supply of college graduates, too many staff members, tightening of money from the legislature and a divided cam-

pus. He had one office in Old Main and one in the Centennial Union. This arrangement made him less accessible than he desired to be. He became a strong proponent for the entire college activities being moved to Upper Campus. **By 1978 Lower Campus was closed.**

As the years went by Nichols Hall and Lincoln Library became office buildings and the physical education plant was demolished. Old Main sat empty and deserted, deteriorating rapidly from lack of occupancy and stripped of its remaining treasures even to the

copper that adorned its towers. Mankato city officials, interested groups and individuals weighed the decision to demolish or to renovate.

Through the efforts of Old Main Limited Partnership the State Review Board of Minnesota considered the nomination of Old Main to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 10, 1983 meeting. It was added to the Register in 1984.

Renovating Old Main into a unique and beautiful 85 unit retirement community began in 1987. It was aptly named

Old Main Village. Its first residents arrived in June 1988. Old Main lives again!

Gail Palmer

From a talk given at Old Main Village by Ms. Palmer, a MTC graduate & former MSC/MSU faculty member.

