

## Curation Notes

Jeff Kroke, Collections Manager

This month has been an exciting and active month. The progress I have made learning about the collection would not have been possible without the help of Dorothy Fischer, Ken Knutson, Orv Jensen, Jo Schultz, Winston Grundmeier, Betty Hoban, and Edith Hopman.

I would like to extend an invitation to any member who would like to volunteer in the collections area of the museum. I have developed a few projects which might be of interest to you. The projects include: accessioning artifacts, photographs, slides, and negatives; the cemetery project, indexing the newspaper, and cataloging our book collection.

The remainder of the Fire Department records were received and we now have records to the departments beginning in the 1860's. We have also received an addressograph from the Chamber of Commerce and a clothing collection from the Brewer Estates. Finally, I would like to invite any of the members to stop in and get acquainted. Have a safe Labor Day.

**CEMETERY PROJECT** - Volunteers will be needed to index the Glenwood Cemetery **Wednesday August 21st**. Those interested should meet at the **Heritage Center parking lot at 9:00 a.m.** A short training session will be held at the cemetery for new volunteers.

## Young Historians

Young Historians will meet at the Heritage Center on Saturday, August 24th, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. This month's lesson will be basket weaving by Margaret Schwankl. The participants will have the opportunity to see how containers were made from natural materials.

To register for the August Young Historians, call the Heritage Center at 345-5566 during business hours.

## Membership News

Welcome to the following new and renewing members

Kay & Randall Lamb	Mary Ellen How
John & Patricia Norris	Jane Van Sickle
Jerome & Bernita Cumiskey	Walter Jones
George & Mary Smith	Julie Schrader
David & Joan Besser	Lorraine Wright
Katherine Hughes	Patricia Will
Harry & Marjorie Barnard	Edith Hopman
Lorraine VanStelten	John Palmer
John & Shirley Scheidel	Linda Henry
Mr & Mrs Herbert Hanel	Scott Family
Betty Anne Carroll	Damis Epple
Ken Gertjensn	Keisha Swanson
Loretta Johnson	Paul Schumann
Willard & Doris Vetter	Erwin Jones
Mr & Mrs R J Lloyd	Jeff Kolnick
Bob & Terri DeGezelle	Jim Weikum
Carl M Peterson	Sharla Whalen
Wm Montag	

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## HERITAGE MONTH

*The month of August is Heritage Month at both Hubbard House and the Heritage Center. Please come visit and learn about your history. Admission to Hubbard House and Heritage Center is free the entire month of August. Hope to see you soon!*

### Memorials

In memory of Roland Marshall, given by  
Teresa Erlandson

Blue Earth County Historical Society  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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## AUGUST 1991 Calendar of Events

August 1-4	Blue Earth County Fair at Garden City
August 21	Cemetery Project
August 24	Young Historians
August 27	Neighborhood Tour and Tea
<b>Heritage Center Hours:</b>	
<i>Exhibit Gallery</i>	1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday
<i>Research Archives</i>	1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Tuesday - Friday
<b>Hubbard House Hours:</b>	1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday

## BECHS NOTES

Tom Weigt

August has been a month of changes, as you know Kathy Kremer has completed her term as Interim Executive Director. We appreciate what Kathy has done for us and wish her the very best in her new endeavors.

## BECHS MEMBERS -

Due to the complexity of the financial position of the Capital Fund Drive and the operating budgets, we feel additional time is necessary to properly prepare the information. Therefore the meeting date will be changed to September 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Heritage Center. This meeting will be open to all members and we urge you to attend. Thank you for your continued patience in this matter.

Tom Weigt, Acting President  
BECHS Board of Trustees

## SAVE THE RED JACKET BRIDGE

The Mankato Area Foundation is attempting to save the Red Jacket Bridge from demolition. The foundation has developed a plan for alternative use of the bridge as a bike trail. They are asking for support from the community to save this valuable landmark. If the plan does not come through in all likelihood the bridge will be torn down. As we all know, there have been many articles published in this newsletter and in many area newspapers detailing the colorful and unique history of this local landmark. There will be a hearing on August 20th at 9:00 a.m. at the Blue Earth County Courthouse. We encourage you to attend this meeting. For further information call John Kanyusik at 388-2989 or 345-3270

## FOURTH OF JULY, 1909

### The Blast That Shook the Town!

All was peaceful and quiet in Mankato at midnight on Sunday morning on July 4, 1909. At 12:30 a.m. all this changed with a gigantic explosion that suddenly aroused-startled and alarmed residents from their slumber. The explosion seemed to shake the bedrock under Mankato causing homes to tremble on their foundations and the noise like great claps of thunder resounded back and forth between the bluffs on either side of the Minnesota River penetrating each and every part of town.

People scrambled out of their beds and into the street speculating the source and wondering if the town had been visited by an earthquake. Only those near the source of the explosion realized what had happened. Some expected with morning light to find that half the town had been demolished.

With daybreak many citizens discovered cracked and broken windows, lights, whatnots on shelves knocked from their places, pictures fallen from walls with frames and glass broken, cracked plaster, and other havoc to their property.

Upon further investigation it was ascertained that the explosion had taken place in the vicinity of Lincoln Park and that the eight inch Civil War motar gun in the park had been brought into service, charged and fired during the night. It was felt that it was done by persons unknown to commemorate the 133rd anniversary of our nation's independence.

This was not the first time this old Civil War relic had been fired in former years. To avoid its being put into service again the vent was supposed to have been securely plugged and the motar put out of commission.

It was soon found who the parties were who had fired the gun. It seems that ten young men between the ages of 18 and 20 years had made careful plans for the event. They had bought a quantity of giant powders and a fuse to set off the charge which they stored for easy access.

When the time for executing their exciting plan arrived seven of the young men came to Lincoln Park, the other three had conveniently left town. The seven set to work putting a charge of 12-18 pounds of giant powder into the muzzle. The powder was wadded with grease, paper, an old flour sack and an old umbrella. All these were tightly tampered filling the muzzle. A five foot fuse was inserted into the muzzle and lighted. The young men hastened to places of safety and waited for the explosion. They did not realize the extent of the damage when they retired to

their homes. They had arranged to leave Mankato at 6:25 a.m. on the Great Western train for Madison lake where they spent Sunday.

One of the indications of the force of the explosion was in which it had treated the motar gun. The total weight of the gun and the carriage on which it rested was about 300 pounds. The recoil of the explosion lifted the gun and carriage and deposited it seventeen feet to the rear of its former position where it plowed a deep furrow as it struck the ground. Amazingly no great damage was done to the gun or the carriage.

When the young men learned of the damage that had been done, they and their fathers went from house to house arranging to reimburse the residents for all damage as within their power to do so. Hundreds of windows had been cracked or broken. One house had as many as twenty seven which had to be replaced.

Everyone in the area had escaped serious injury. A narrow escape had taken place at the Reverend F.B. Cowgill residence just across the street from Lincoln Park. Reverend Cowgill's son was sleeping on a cot in a screened porch in front of a large plate glass window. The explosion shattered the glass into fragments which fell all over the sleeping boy. Fortunately he was well covered over most of his body and his head lay just far enough to one side of the window to escape being hit by the glass. And most remarkable the boy was not awakened by the explosion or the crashing of the broken glass.

Because the young men who had planned and executed the firing of the old Civil War motar gun readily revealed their identity and expressed their willingness to remunearte those whose home had suffered damage, no charges were brought against them. They convinced the citizens of Mankato that the act was not motivated by malicious intent but by the desire to celebrate the Fourth of July in a unique and exciting way.

Major Source : Mankato Daily Review - July 6, 1909

Submitted by Gail Palmer

## PROGRAM NEWS

Linda Henry

It's the time of year to think of Fall cleaning, so don't throw out those gems, donate them to BECHS for our **SILK STOCKING SALE** on **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st FROM 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** Call 345-5566 for information on the hours we will be accepting donations.

In the short time I have been working at BECHS I am amazed at how warm and willing the volunteers are to help. Your Society will continue to grow with your support.

**THANK YOU BECHS VOLUNTEERS!**

## "Neighborhood Tour & Tea"

Residents of Old Main Village and members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society are invited to tour the museum and view the new items in the gift shop on **Tuesday, August 27th at 2:00 p.m.** Following the tour the residents cordially welcome the members to join them for a tea at **Old Main Village.**

Reservations can be made by calling the Blue Earth County Historical Society office at 345-5566. Please come, **"It is just the neighborly thing to do!"**