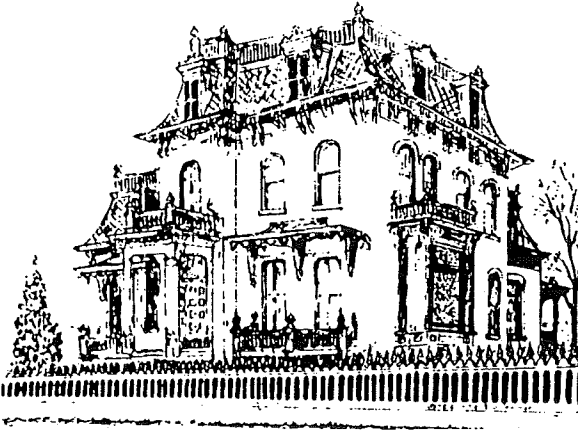


## Program Update

Linda Henry

As you all know, it's almost time for "Ghosts." Tickets for Saturday are almost sold out and Sunday tickets are selling quickly! I will have an update on the profit etc. in next month's newsletter.

The Minnesota State Historical Society will be having their Grand Opening and parade on Saturday, October 17. The parade starts at the State Capital at 10:00 a.m. and will end at the History Center at approximately 11:30 a.m. The Blue Earth County Historical Society will have a banner carried in the parade by Bryce Stenzel and guest.



### Craft & Bake Sale at the Victorian Hubbard House

The Society will be hosting a Craft and Bake Sale on Saturday, November 7, from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Hubbard House.

**Wanted:** Craft items and baked goods. Popular items are tree ornaments, embroidered dish towels and pillowcases, breads, cakes, bars, candy, and cookies. Please bring craft items to the Heritage Center by November 4; baked items by Nov. 6.

Volunteers are needed to work at the sale from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Be sure to call Linda at the Heritage Center (345-5566) if you can help!

## Membership News

Thank you to the new and renewing members.

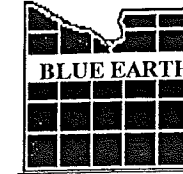
Craig Natvig  
 LeAnn Rudenick  
 Alvis & Carol More  
 Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Townsend  
 Richard & Tricia Nienow  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Barnard  
 Verona Roberts  
 Norma Hansen  
 George Anderson  
 Margaret Jenkins  
 Mr. & Mrs. Eldon Jones  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dave Hageman  
 Beverly Stroebel  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Kenney  
 Alma Severson  
 Dr. & Mrs. David Clause  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schweppe  
 John Rice  
 Lona Falencykowski  
 Harry & Marjorie Barnard  
 Janet Schubbe  
 Laura Linde  
 The Family Bank  
 Robert W. Carlstrom Co., Inc.  
 Clarence and Olga Vaubel  
 LeAnn Rudenick  
 Craig Natvig  
 Tire Associates  
 L G Barrott  
 Jim Mead  
 Richard Cogley  
 Fyrne Haugen  
 Robert & Gail Ihrig  
 Jane Tarjeson  
 Mr & Mrs Sylvan Thiesse  
 Gislason, Dosland, Hunter & Malecki  
 Michael & Cheryl Eigen  
 Glen & Helen Erikson  
 Grandma's Store  
 Paul & Mary Jo Hustoles  
 Mary Mortier  
 Survey Services Inc  
 Vee Williams

Blue Earth County Historical Society  
 415 Cherry Street  
 Mankato, Minnesota 56001  
 (507)345-5566

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

## October 1992 Calendar of Events

- Oct 3 & 4 "Ghosts from the Past" Williams  
 Nature Center, Hwy 68, Mankato
- Oct 12 Columbus Day -Office Closed
- Oct 17 Minnesota State Historical Society  
 Grand Opening & Parade -St Paul,  
 Minnesota
- Oct 24 Young Historians- Pumpkin  
 Painting 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the  
 Heritage Center. Pumpkins and  
 paints will be provided by the  
 Society. Participants will also  
 receive a small bag of treats to take  
 home.
- Heritage Center**  
 415 Cherry St., Mankato **Hours:**
- Exhibit Gallery** 1:00-4:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday-Sunday
- Research Center** 1:00 -4:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday-Friday
- Hubbard House**  
 606 S Broad St., Mankato **Hours**  
 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
 Sat and Sun Only

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# Steamboats Frequent On Minnesota River From 1852 to 1868

Because of its vital importance to the founders and pioneers of Mankato, a story of the Minnesota River seems fitting to relate, especially at this time of Mankato's 140th anniversary.

The French explorers named the river "St. Pierre" after a French general. Later and up to 1854 the name was changed to St. Peter. At the request of the state legislature, congress rechristened the river "Minnesota" after a Sioux Indian, name meaning sky-tinted water.

Many steamboats plied the river from the years 1850 to 1868, up to the advent of the Minnesota Valley Railway, now the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad, which was completed to Mankato, October 3, 1868. The first train arriving October 8, carried passengers and freight for Mankato and vicinity. The first locomotive was named "Mankato."

Two-hundred barrels of flour were shipped from the Red Jacket Mills on the return trip, October 12. Passenger fare to St. Paul was \$4.

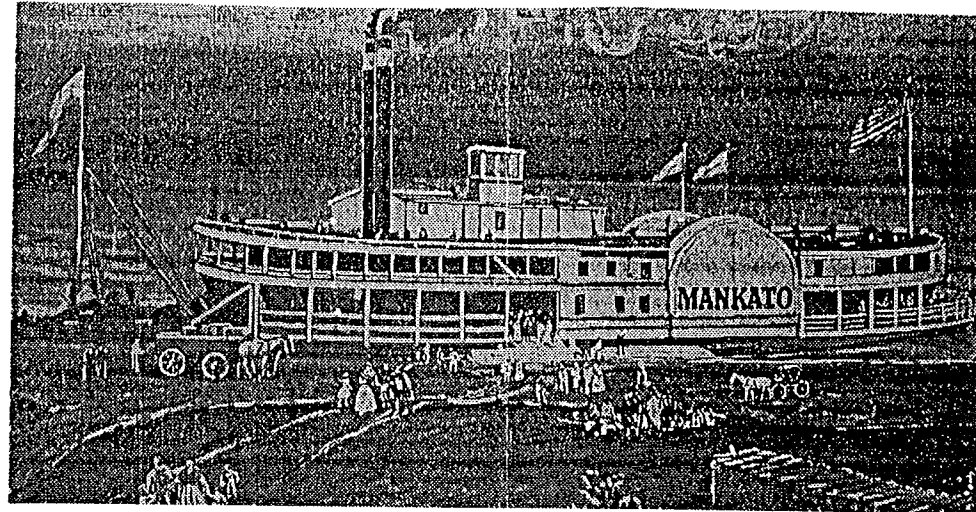
The telegraph also came with the railroad.

For about 16 years steamboats had the monopoly of the river. Transportation from St. Paul to the new settlements along the river consisted mainly of steamboats that carried the mail and frequently included passengers.

The rapidly increasing traffic brought dozens of steamboats into the river, some

were built especially for the Minnesota River. Many were stern wheelers, others were side wheelers. The larger boats often carried 300 passengers beside freight.

The "Favorite" made trips from St. Paul to Mankato in 19 hours, taking 12 hours to return to St. Paul. The boats were of course limited to summer traffic and at times were restricted by low water of the river.



The sonorous whistles of the steamboats on arrival could be heard in a three mile radius. The entire populus on hearing the whistle, turned out at the landing wharf on the levee. From every shanty and wigwam came the motely crew in all excitement and flurry to meet the passengers, all sharing a common feeling in the environments of the strange new settlement.

A natural levee extended from the rear of present city hall to about Plum Street,

the upper bank or levee was then close to Front Street. It has been said that one could cast a stone across the river from the Saulpaugh hotel corner at Front Street. All the ground of the railroad yards has been filled and piling was put in under the foundation of the Saulpaugh.

The captains of the steamboats had various difficulties especially at low stages of the river. The boat "Laura" struck a

snag and sank at a point two miles below Mankato, passengers were brought safely to town. The cargo was saved and parts of the boat were salvaged. For a number of years afterword the skeleton of this boat could be seen at low water, in the sandbar. Other boats tangled with overhanging tree branches.

Previous to the transportation of the first settlers who came here to establish permanent homes were the French explorers, who arrived to explore the region

of the upper Mississippi River Valley. Some were sponsored by France, others by the United States government. LeHillier, Nicollet, Fremont, Carver and others made canoe trips up the Minnesota River as far as Big Stone Lake, from there north on the Red River of the North. All of these adventurous explorers who have written of their trips write with one accord: praising the scenic and luxurious growth of trees and wild fruits along the river at Mankato and the Blue Earth River.

For the purpose of improving the Minnesota River the U.S. government engaged Captain Davis to survey the river from Yellow Medicine to the mouth of the Blue Earth River. The drop of the river between the two points was found to be 28 feet in the distance of 70 miles. The Blue Earth River showed an average fall of five feet for one mile.

The question might be asked how did the water level of the steamboat times compare with the average water level of the river today?

Reports are not on hand, but it can be safely assumed from records of steamboat traffic, that there was more water in the river during that year than now. Some seasons like last spring caused overflowing but other years there was barely enough water for steamboating.

Source: Mankato Free Press Feb. 11, 1952.