

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January/February 1994

Blue Earth County Historian

He Made the Army His Career

The Civil War's Other George Mead(e)

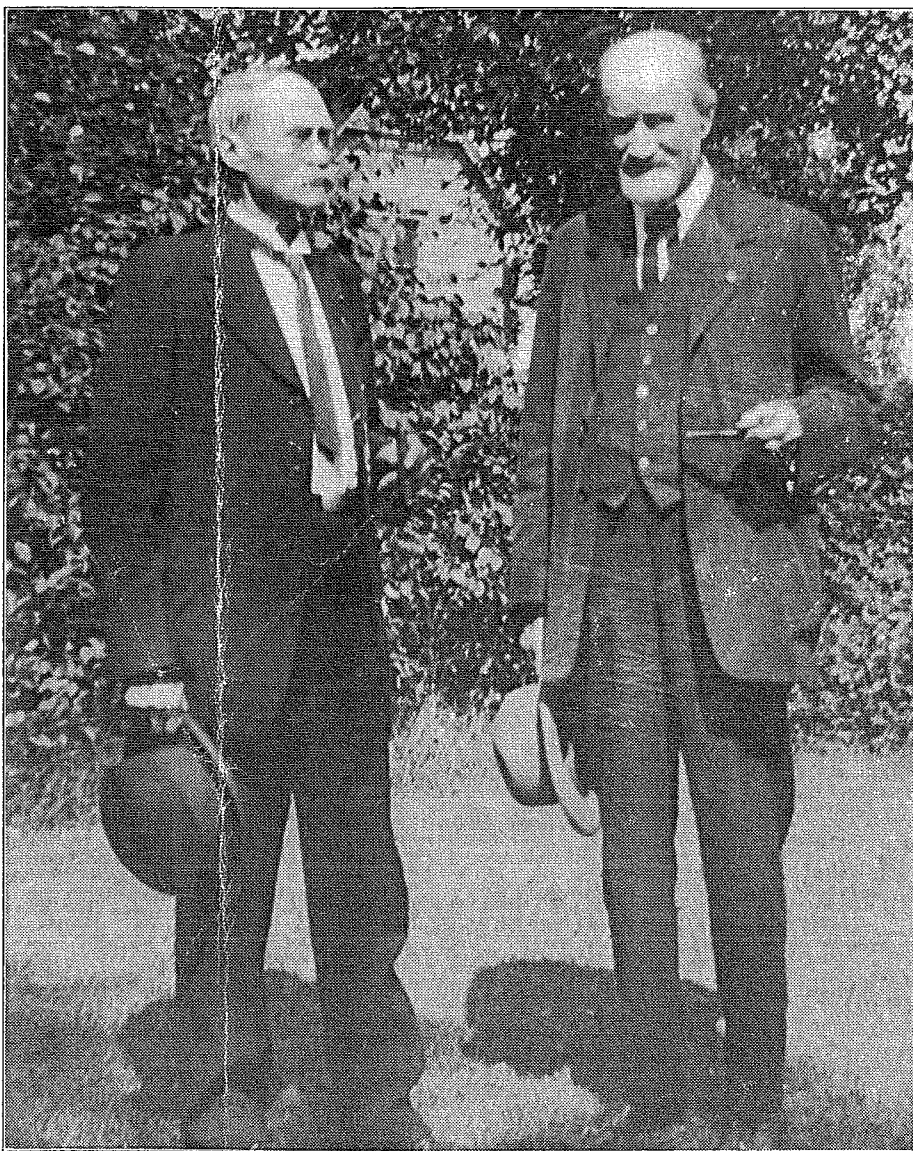
Shirley Grundmeier

Gen. George G. Meade is best known as commander of the Union's Army of the Potomac during the Battle of Gettysburg. In early July, 1863, Meade led Union forces to victory at Gettysburg, in a battle that marked the turning point of the Civil War.

Meade was born in 1815 and graduated from West Point at the age of 20. He served a year in Florida fighting against the Seminole Indians, then resigned from the service to become a civil engineer and surveyor. By 1842 Meade was back in the military. He served as a topographical engineer during the war with Mexico in 1848.

Meade quickly rose through the ranks. He was in command of the 2nd Brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves--Army of the Potomac--at the beginning of the Civil War and was wounded in action in Virginia. At Gettysburg he was commissioned Brigadier General in the Regular Army, and later became Major General. Meade remained in command of military divisions until his death in 1872.

Col. George W. Mead was born in Ohio in 1845. Like Meade, he



Dr Wakefield, left and George Mead pause for their portrait on a sunny afternoon. The undated photo gives no information as to location or date but one would guess it was taken during or shortly after World War I in or around Mankato.
(Blue Earth County Historical Society Collection)



Blue Earth County Historian

The *Blue Earth County Historian* is published bimonthly by the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is a non-profit organization and has been collecting and preserving artifacts of historical value to the people of south central Minnesota since 1901.

BECHS is the only organization or institution entirely dedicated to the collection, preservation and exhibition of Blue Earth County History.

Blue Earth County Historian Staff

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(Mankato State University Intern)

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Lucille Fitzsimmons
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Please direct any inquiries or submissions to the Newsletter Committee:

Blue Earth County Historical Society
Heritage Center
415 Cherry St.
Mankato, MN 56001

BECHS also operates the historic R. D. Hubbard House. Built in 1871 by Rensselaer D. Hubbard, founder of Hubbard Milling Company, the elegant mansion and nearby brick carriage house contain many displays and artifacts which are open to the public.

The Hubbard House is owned by the city of Mankato and has been operated by BECHS since 1938.

The Hubbard House is being readied for restoration and is listed on the State Historical Record, as well as the National Register of Historic Places.

Hubbard House
606 S. Broad St.
Mankato, MN
1-4 p.m.

Tuesday - Sunday

felt an early call to the military and was torn between military service and a civilian career. Both served their country in three conflicts and were wounded in action. Whether Col. Mead ever met Gen. Meade is uncertain, but more than likely the Colonel was aware of the General's accomplishments and probably enjoyed the similarity of their names.

George W. Mead came to Minnesota in 1857, when his father settled in Garden City. Mead later remarked, "Many of the boys who went out from there have made their marks in world affairs." Among them would be Sir Henry Wellcome and George M. Palmer.

Mead was only 16-years-old when the Civil War broke out. He tried to enlist but was turned down. The following year he was welcomed into the 9th Minnesota Regiment-Sioux Indians had attacked New Ulm and nearby villages and "every boy old enough to carry a gun was needed."

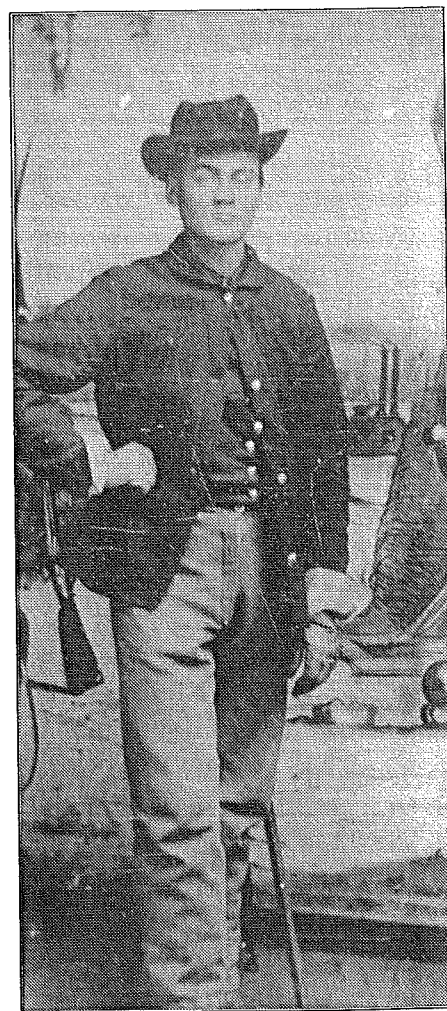
Mead's duties with the 9th Minnesota mainly consisted of rescuing refugees and fugitive settlers all the way from New Ulm west to Lake Shetek. He also fought against the Sioux until they were beaten at the Battle of Wood Lake. Mead stood on guard with his regiment the day of execution in Mankato, Dec. 26, 1862.

Mead was a sergeant in the 9th Minnesota when it was ordered south. It fought in several skirmishes and battles including the siege of Mobile, where Mead was wounded and promoted for bravery on the field. The 9th Minne-

sota also fought at Memphis and was instrumental in a decisive victory at Nashville.

Mead was mustered out in August 1865, after three years in service. He returned to Garden City and worked as a carpenter by day while reading law by night. He came to Mankato in 1874 and was soon appointed deputy clerk of the Blue Earth County District Court.

Mead entered politics on his own and was elected Judge of the Probate Court. He held the post



A young George Mead posed for his portrait at the close of the Civil War in 1865. Mead was mustered out of the regular army in August 1865.
(Blue Earth County Historical Society)

for five successive terms and later two more. The call of the military was still strong to Mead. He took a prominent part in organizing the Mankato Militia Company, serving as its Captain until the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898.

Mead resigned his judicial post to become Lt. Colonel of the 12th Minnesota Volunteer Regiment. He hoped to be sent to Cuba or the Philippines, but the farthest the regiment got was Chikamauga, where it learned military objectives had already been attained. Mead noted, "The 13th was the lucky regiment. They were sent into the field."

When the 12th Minnesota was finally mustered out in September 1898, Mead was told he was "too old for military service." He returned to Mankato, but had lost his taste for public office. For the rest of his life he "dabbled in law, real estate and insurance." However, he took an active part in anything having to do with the military. He was a member of the Alexander Wilkin Post, Grand Army of the Republic and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mead was often called on to give speeches and lead local parades on horseback. His words while speaking to the 9th Minnesota at an 1899 meeting in St. Paul are an example of the sense of chivalry and fairness Mead possessed.

Old Glory, the emblem of freedom, has marched around the globe. As the sun travels in its westward course and again makes its

appearance on the eastern horizon, so has the old starry emblem of liberty and equal rights encircled the world.

He referred to the "peace that was now reigning supreme in this land of ours," and continued:

The contact of my regiment with the 1st South Carolina--during the Spanish-American War--was of the most friendly nature. Bonds of friendship and union between Minnesota and South Carolina were so strongly cemented that I believe they can never be broken, but will continue throughout the ages to come...To see them following and cheering the Old Flag was an inspiration and cementing.

While it might seem Mead was a bachelor, he had an apparently happy and lengthy married life. He married Antoinette "Nettie" Cram in 1868 while living in Garden City. In the 1890s, according to a letter written by Nettie's niece in 1978, George and Nettie were living with their two daughters in "a nice home on Center Street."

The Meads lived just a few doors down the hill from the Tom Hart family--whose three daughters included Maude Hart (Love-lace). According to Janet Daniels Tanner, Nettie's niece, Nettie and her daughters were well educated, their home was tastefully furnished, Aunt Net was always busy in civic, club and church work,

and was an excellent cook. Tanner said the family enjoyed many holidays together.

Effie, the Mead's older daughter was unmarried and died in 1933 at her sister's home in Minneapolis. The Mead's second daughter Jessie, married William Sloan; their son Billie was born sometime before Col. Mead's death in 1928.



Antoinette "Nettie" Cram married George Mead in 1868. This portrait of Nettie was taken in 1865.

(Blue Earth County Historical Society)

In 1917, Mead made one more attempt to serve his country. When the United States entered World War I, he petitioned the War Department three times with applications to enlist, even though he was 72-years-old. "Perhaps they are right," Mead said. "War is a stern game that demands youth in the playing. But it seems to me

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they might have found a place for a man who had been more than 30 years in military service.”

Sept. 11, 1926, the St Paul Dispatch ran an article lauding the life and achievements of Col. George W. Mead.

Sometimes there are men of this modern age who live in the days of chivalry. Like the knights of old, the trum-

pet call is sweetest music to their ears. Mankato boasts a man like this. His townsmen speak his name with pride and tell of his achievements in times of peace, for, like the perfect knight of other days, Colonel George W. Mead has been a leader of his city's civic life. But the men who know him best dwell on tales that

illustrate the man who all his life, has followed in his heart the call to arms. His country's refusal to accept his application, due to age, was the keenest disappointment of the old warrior's life, his friends assert.

Mead died at his home at 321 Warren St. in Mankato, July 30, 1928. His funeral was held at the First Baptist Church on Aug. 1, with Reverend John R. Pennington (father of Charles W. Pennington) officiating the religious service. The VFW was in charge of the military service.

Honorary pallbearers were selected from the Glen Campbell Post Spanish-American War veterans, and the Walter H. Strand Post 950 VFW. The honor guards were members of Lorentz Post No. 11 American Legion. George M. Palmer was one of the honorary pallbearers while Frank Cords was one of the active pallbearers.

As Col. George W. Mead was laid to rest at Glenwood Cemetery, it's fitting to imagine that the sound of taps being played by the bugler was music to his ears.



Undated portrait of George Mead while he served as a Lt. Colonel in the 12th Minnesota. Mead was a commander in the 12th Minnesota during the Spanish-American war. His Unit was mustered out in September 1898. Mead was told by the Army he was getting too old for military service.
(Blue Earth County Historical Society)



From the Desk of BECHS Director

Linda Henry

It's finally getting underway! Ron Goodrich Construction started work on the Hubbard House second floor restoration Dec. 13.

Goodrich Construction underbid three other contractors for the project with its bid of \$41,900.

Kunkel Electric and A-Plus Security were also selected to upgrade the building's security

system and other electrical work at an estimated cost of \$5,650.

The architect's drawing below illustrates the various work to be done during the project. Walls that have been added over the years will be removed and missing ones will be replaced. Much of the millwork will be replaced or restored. Replicas of original wallpaper will be hung where appropriate and ceilings will be repaired and restored to original appearance.

Goodrich expects the work (started Dec.

13) to be finished sometime in February.

The next phase of the project is expected to start in February and be completed by May. Restoration of woodwork will continue as well as cleaning and polishing the windows. Any glass or glazing that needs repair will be fixed or replaced.

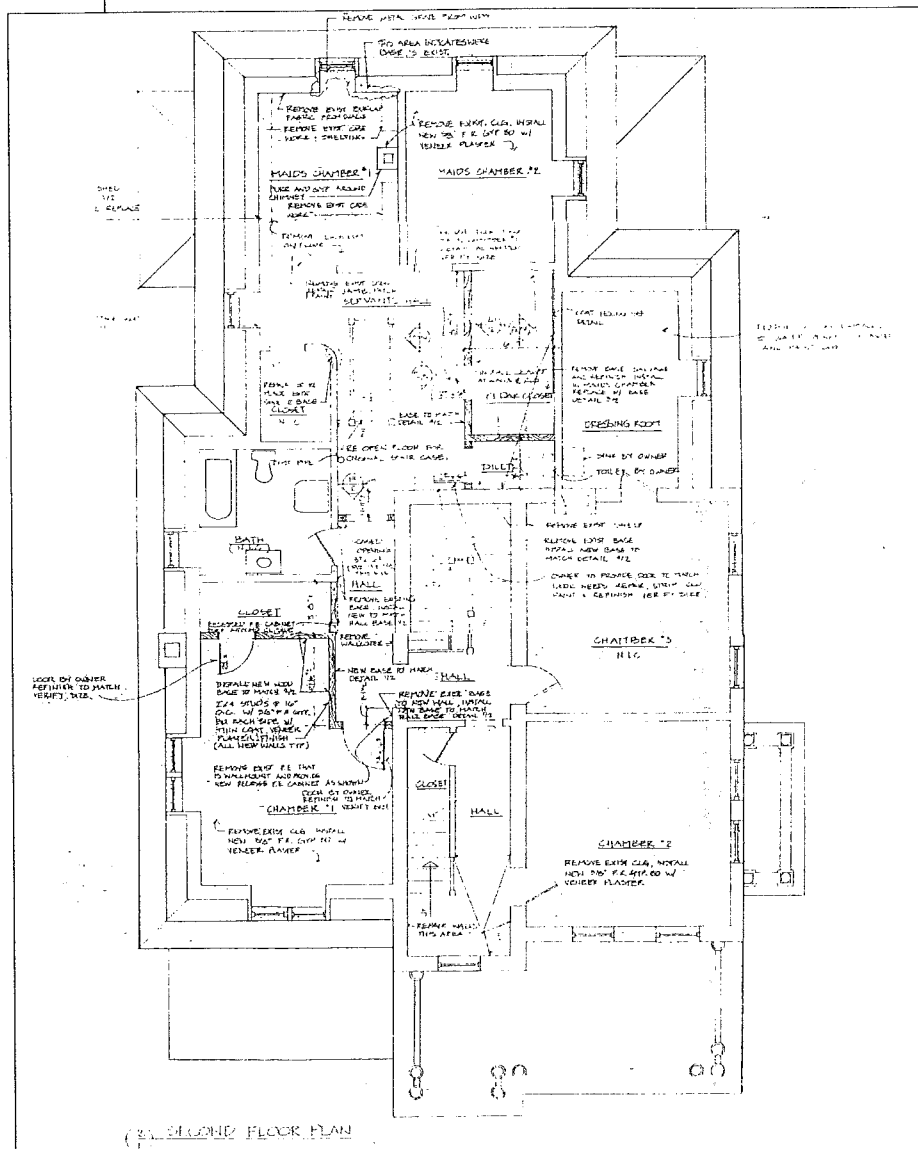
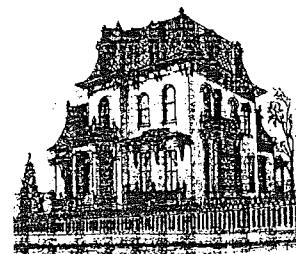
During the summer, exterior window and door trim as well as brickwork will be repaired and painted. Exterior work should be done by August.

The last phase of the project is expected to be done by October. The finishing work will include interior wall covering, restoration of light fixtures, floor refinishing and window dressings.

Expect a holiday open house in November or December to celebrate completion of the restoration project.

Earlier in 1993, several other things were done to enhance the building's structure including new roof covering and repairs to the outside porches. An airconditioning system was also installed.

It will be exciting to watch the progress of the restoration project and see the end result this fall. Watch future issues of the Blue Earth County Historian for updates on restoration progress.



BECHS News Briefs

• *Family Research Classes*

Are you working on a family history? Maybe you've always wanted to but didn't know where to start.

Pamela Brunfelt will give a presentation on documenting a family genealogy, Jan. 18, between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Heritage Center.

Brunfelt will give a second presentation Jan. 25, on the preservation of family documents and photos.

Both classes will be held between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Heritage Center. Cost is \$10 per class. Payment must be made in advance. Last day to accept registrations will be Jan. 14.

Brunfelt is an experienced historian. She graduated from Mankato State University in 1979 with a degree in history. Brunfelt also minored in mass communication and political science.

Brunfelt spent 10 years as an archivist and historian for the Ottertail County Historical Society. During her time there, she taught county history to school groups and adult organizations.

Among many other projects, Brunfelt also did research for major exhibits and set up a newspaper indexing system.

Between 1989 and 1992, Brun-

felt served as executive director of the Crow Wing County Historical Society. At Crow Wing she expanded on her previous experiences as well as creating a working partnership with four other historical agencies in the county. Brunfelt was also successful in obtaining several grants for Crow Wing County Historical Society.

Brunfelt is currently a graduate student at MSU majoring in Minnesota history, with a minor in American literature.

She has made scores of presentations--similar to the two she will present to BECHS in January--to various historical society and academic groups. She has also testified before various Minnesota House of Representatives committees on behalf of history and humanities related topics.

Brunfelt's presentation should be informative to anyone interested, whether they're a serious historian or novice. BECHS hopes to see you all there!

• *Holiday Craft and Bake Sale*

Although attendance was down, the November craft and bake sale was still a successful event.

BECHS earned \$700 in sales

on craft and baked goods. A hearty thanks goes out to everyone for their donation of craft and baked items:

Mr. & Mrs. Sylvan Thiesse
Margaret Schwankl
Tom Salsbery Family
Mrs. Garnet Nelson
Jo Schultz
Barb Maher
Gloria Femrite
Susie Wilson

There were also many items dropped off at the last minute. Unfortunately we missed the names of those people. We don't want to forget you folks so even though we don't have your names, thank you for your generosity. Thanks also to everyone who helped make this event a success for BECHS.

• *Christmas Open House*

Hubbard House was beautifully decorated for the Christmas season. A large number of visitors enjoyed sharing the holiday spirit and samples of Christmas goodies. Santa was also available for children's photos.

This was the last chance to see Hubbard House before its closing for restoration.

Thanks to everyone who helped with the Christmas Open House

including; Dick Chambers and Elmer Goodrich (Santa Pictures), and Shirley Grundmeier and her group of carolers.

Hubbard House is now officially closed until restoration is complete.

• *New Micro-film Copier*

Thanks to the donation of \$10,000 by the Mary S. Gray Trust Fund, BECHS was able to purchase a new micro-film copier for the Heritage Center.

The new Minolta micro-film copier is a long time dream finally realized. It will be a valuable addition to the research library.

Thanks again to the Mary S. Gray Trust Fund for its generous donation.

• *Ojibwe Family Tradition*

American Family traditions and values are constantly changing. Thursday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Rosemary Ackley Christensen will be at the Heritage Center.

Christensen's presentation, "Ojibwe Family: seasons of tradition and Change," focuses on the ways in which Ojibwe family traditions and values have been affected by contact with other cultures different than their own.

Christensen is from Duluth. This promises to be an interesting discussion. Hope to see you all there.

Admission is free.

Membership News

Thank you to the new and renewing members.

Mr. & Mrs. Verle Salsbery
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L. H. Ireland
Nacy Wicker
Ora Ohlenkamp
John & Carolyn Kanyusik
Mr. & Mrs. Vern Cartensen
John Palmer
Stelter's Inc.
Hal & Joanne Walberg
Evelyn Delke Mikkleson
Winston & Shirley Grundmeier
Perry & Jolene Brown
Judge & Mrs. Charles Johnson
Gus & JoAnn Johnson
Edward Frost
Orville & Mary Ann Jensen
Linda Nussbaumer
Quintin & Karen Pettigrew
Leon & Delores Tacheny
Mr. & Mrs. E. D. McLean
Robert & Carlienne Frisch
Mary Honetschlager
William Buethe
Sheila Cunningham
Crysteel Distributing Inc.
Robinson Appraisal Co.
The Family Bank
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Gregg & Gwen Griffin
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Carol Oney	Archives Aide
Bryce Stenzel	Museum Aide
Betty Henry	Museum Aide

Calendar of Events January/February 1994

January 18

**Pamela Brunfelt -- Family
Geneology Class**

7-9 p.m. at the Heritage Center

Cost -- \$10

January 25

**Pamela Brunfelt -- Preserving
Family Documents Class**

7-9 p.m. at the Heritage Center

Cost -- \$10

February 10

**Rosemary Ackley
Christensen**

**Ojibwe Family--Seasons of
Tradition and Change**

7 p.m. at the Heritage Center

Free Admission

Heritage Center

415 Cherry St., Mankato

Exhibit Gallery 1-4 p.m.

Tuesday - Friday

Research Center 1-4 p.m.

Tuesday - Friday

Hubbard House

606 S Broad St., Mankato

Closed for Restoration

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

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