

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January/February 1995

Blue Earth County Historian

A Step Back in Time

Celebrating Lake Crystal's 125 Years



Making Cement Sidewalks in Lake Crystal

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The back of this picture contains two words: hard job. Even though laying cement is difficult work in any era, these men did not have the luxury of a cement mixer in the summer of 1905!

We dedicate this edition of the *Blue Earth County Historian*

to these cement layers and to all of the people who have worked to make Lake Crystal the town that it is today. As you browse through this edition, we hope that you will enjoy this journey to the past as much as we have. Happy anniversary, Lake Crystal!



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

Editor **Michelle Maack Friederichs**
(Mankato State University Intern)

Newsletter Committee:

Dr. Bert & Inella Burns
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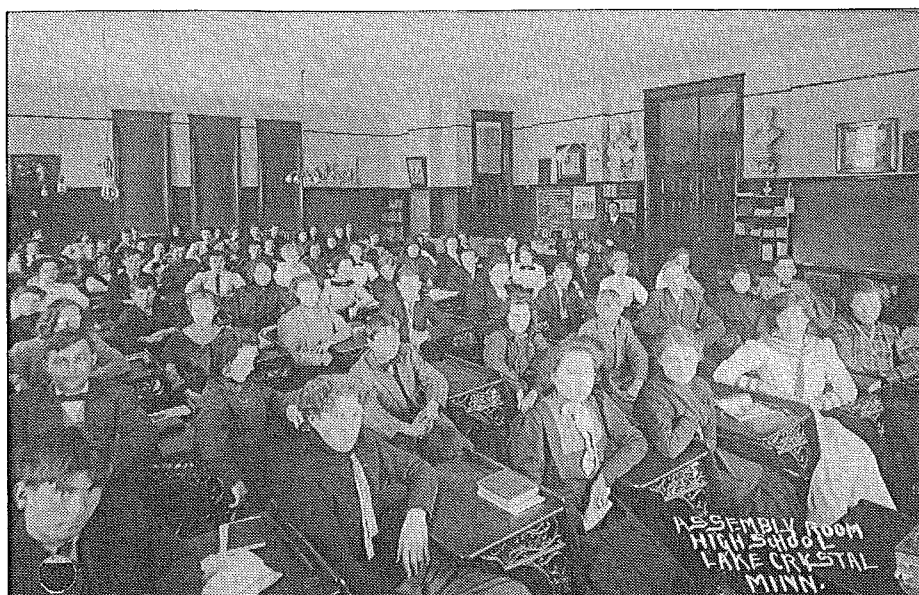
Blue Earth County Historical Society
Heritage Center
415 Cherry St.
Mankato, MN 56001

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 restored. It is listed on the State Historical Record, as well as the National Register of Historic Places.

Hubbard House
606 S. Broad St.
Mankato, MN
Closed for restoration



Assembly Room - ca. 1902

In 1902, Lake Crystal passed a bond issue and built a new brick structure which cost \$22,000. School enrollment at that time was 333 students.



First National Bank - ca. 1903

In May of 1902, J.J. McGuire arrived in Lake Crystal from Iowa. After canvassing the city, he received enough support from the citizens to organize this bank.

Remembering the Early Citizens of Lake Crystal



Life in Lake Crystal - date unknown

Lake Crystal Post Office Crew at
the Corners of Main and Prince
Streets - 1910

Left to right are David E. (Nickel)
Davis, carrier; Peter Granlund,
carrier; Peter Christensen,
postmaster; Maud (Robinson)
Olson, assistant postmaster; Owen
S. Hughes, carrier; Charlie Davis,
carrier; and Hugh Pritchard,
carrier.



A Progressive Community

Taken from the October 14, 1904 edition of the Free Press.

Picturesquely situated in a rolling district of Blue Earth County, between Lily and Crystal lakes, lies the village of

Lake Crystal, one of the most thriving and progressive communities in this part of the state, comprising fifteen

hundred wide-awake, spirited, apprehensive and ambitious people. This region furnishes an ideal summer resort. The tourist finds health and recreation on the lakes and among the hills, and the village can secure all the necessities for the comfortable maintenance of life and the pursuit of rural pleasures. The residents are all alive to the fact that Lake Crystal can be made a center of interest to overworked rest seekers in all the country



Pavilion on Crystal Lake - July 1893
(Photo from Blue Earth County Historical Society)

In June of 1893, the boat club built a pavilion on the southeast shore of Crystal

Lake. Under the floor, it had room to house twelve boats. This was very exciting for Lake

Crystal and led them to hope that it would become a leading summer resort. To add to the summer fun, a croquet ground was leveled off and swings and benches were put up in various places in Robinson's Grove.

One month later, in July of 1893, a steamer called the New Era was brought from Ledyard, Iowa. It took six yoke of oxen and two traction engines to haul it to Crystal Lake. The steamer carried twenty-five people around the lake for twenty-five minute trips. It is believed that the New Era eventually sank near Crystal Lake's south shore.

around, and no pains are being spared to advertise the place as such. Lily and Crystal lakes and Loon lake, a little to the southeast of Crystal, form a combination that will satisfy the

Students often go directly from the Lake Crystal high school to the state university.

devotee of the oar, the fisherman and the hunter; while the student and the artist can rest their eyes on a beautifully varied scene that to the cultured mind is teeming with suggestion. Lake Crystal village is itself well worthy of the beauties of nature surrounding it. Cleanliness is one of the most striking characteristics of the little settlement. It is equipped with an electric lighting plant, satisfactory in every way. An abundant supply of lake water, fit for household

one of the most thriving and progressive communities in this part of the state

purposes, is pumped through a system of mains, reaching practically every quarter of the village. On the shore of Lily lake has been laid out a cosy little park, amply equipped with benches, tables and all the customary paraphernalia, including boat houses on the

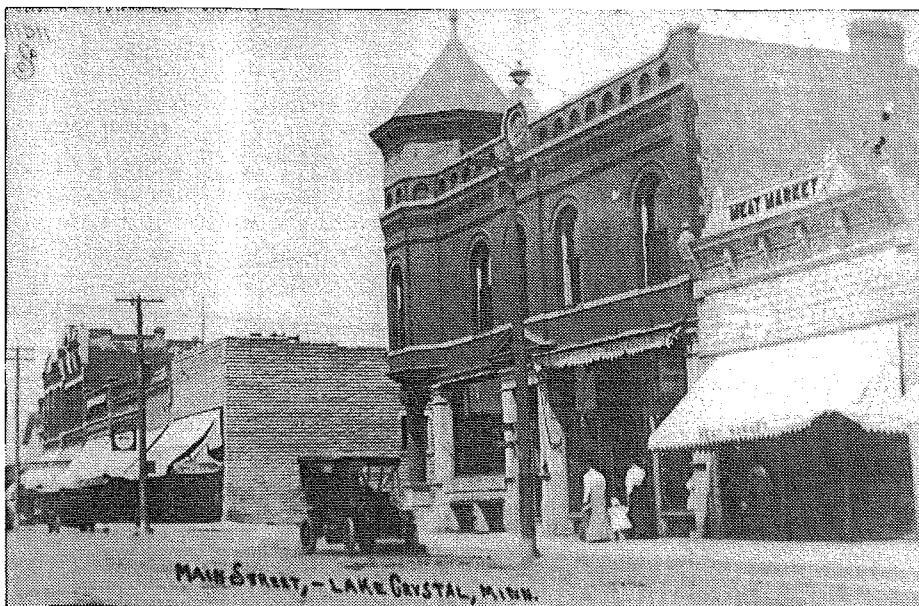


Humphrey Street - ca. 1905
(Photo from *The Heritage of Blue Earth County, MN*, 1990)

lake, and boats to let.

What concerted effort has been made by the inhabitants on behalf of the village is due in large measures to the local board of trade, a real live board

of trade, one whose committees actually do the work that is assigned to them, and do not, as such committees are too often prone to do, put off meeting
"Progressive" cont. on page 6



Main Street - ca. 1910
(Photo from *The Heritage of Blue Earth County, MN*, 1990)

Dark Days in the Life of a Nation

April 1995 marks the 130th anniversary of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Since 1995 calendar days are the same as in 1865, the anniversary of Lincoln's Good Friday death will occur on Good Friday.

Community Services and the Blue Earth County Historical Society are sponsoring a three part series on the events that lead up to the assassination and the aftermath of this tragic event. Bryce Stenzel, a historian with the Blue Earth County Historical Society, will present these sessions. Mr. Stenzel is a specialist in the life and time of Abraham Lincoln.

Each session costs \$5.00 per



Bryce Stenzel

person. To register, call the Community Services Office at 387-5501, stop by the office, or mail your name, address, session number, and fee to the Community Services Office at 110 Fulton Street, Mankato, MN 56001.

COURSES

Black Shadows: The Conspiracy to Assassinate Abraham Lincoln

Monday, February 27

7:00-9:00 p.m.

MN Valley Regional Library

Course #: 003

Black Friday: The Events of April 14, 1865

Monday, March 13

7:00-9:00 p.m.

BE County Heritage Center

Course #: 004

Black Pageant: The Aftermath of Lincoln's Assassination

Monday, April 3

7:00-9:00 p.m.

BE County Heritage Center

Course #: 005

"Progressive" cont. from page 5 and working from day to day until the very existence of the project and the committee themselves have been forgotten.

Lake Crystal is justly proud of its graded school, which is indeed a first class institution of its kind. Together in a good sized brick buiding are quartered both the common school and the high school classes. Students often go directly from the Lake Crystal high school to the state university.

The village lies on the St. P. & S.C. division of the Omaha railroad at the junction of the Elmore branch of the same road. A new union depot is to be erected soon, near the site of the old.

The village has eight churches, two hotels, a private and a national bank, three grain elevators, a flour mill, a creamery, a feed mill and other lines of business. Shipments of wheat, oats, corn, flour, flax, cattle and other produce are consigned to all parts of the world. A prominent feature

among the industries of the town is the weekly newspaper, *The Lake Crystal Union*, owned and edited by Col. Geo. W. Neff. There are two local telephone companies operating an exchange and connected up with other telephone systems, giving the people a chance to talk with all the world. The Northwestern system also has a branch office here. Branch stations are established here by the Western Union Telegraph and the American Express companies. David J. Price is the postmaster.

Antiques International

Travel around the world and back in time with Arnold Gruter, Ph.D., and his unique collection of arts and artifacts dating back to 300 B.C.

The Minnesota Academy of Fine Arts
1615 Mankato Place
Sunday, March 5, 1995
2:00-4:00 p.m.
and

Dr. Gruter's home - date to be announced
Cost - \$20.00
Call Barb or Pat at 625-9011 for registration or further information.

Blue Earth County Historical Society

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Membership News

Thank you to the new and returning members.

Phyllis Abbott
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Joyce Schoettler
Carlyn Severson
Geri Skarphol
Louisa A. Smith
Dr. & Mrs. Harry Smith
TCF Bank Savings
John L. Thro
Clarence & Olga Vaubel
Elizabeth J. Vosbeck
Judy Voss
Tom & Bridget Weight
Marie Weimern
Mrs. Wayne Wells
Joyce Wenner
Jim & Betsy Winn
Mr. & Mrs. John Wittrock
Lorraine Wolverton



Heritage Center

415 Cherry St., Mankato
(507) 345-5566

Exhibit Gallery

Tuesday-Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Research Center

Tuesday-Saturday, 1-4 p.m.

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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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Lake Crystal's 125th Anniversary Events

Saturday, June 24

Horseshoe Tournament
9:00 a.m. - Jones Park
\$1.00 registration; prizes

Sand Volleyball
9:00 a.m. - Jones Park

Turtle Races
Morning

Hog Roast
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 25

All-Church Potluck
12:30 p.m. - Robinson Park or
L.C. Elementary School

Interfaith Choir
Marsden Park or
L.C. Elementary School

Monday, June 26

Amateur Night
LCWM High School

Tuesday, June 27

Beard Growing Contest

Adult Tug of War

Old-Time Style Show

Wednesday, June 28

Band Concert & Ice Cream
Social
Marsden Park

Thursday, June 29

Historical Theatre Production
8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Friday, June 30

Carnival
Marsden Park

Dunk Tank

Beer Garden
4:30 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.
downtown

Kiddie Parade
6:00 p.m.

King/Queen Coronation
7:00 p.m.

Historical Theatre Production
8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Street Dance
9:00 p.m.

Saturday, July 1

Carnival
Marsden Park

Dunk Tank

Horse Show
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Rocky Top Arena

Beer Garden
12:00-12:30 p.m. - downtown

Water Ski Show

1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Crystal Lake

Boat Parade

3:00 p.m. - Crystal Lake

Historical Theatre Production

8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Street Dance

9:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 2

Carnival
Marsden Park

Dunk Tank

Beer Garden

12:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Street Parade

1:00 p.m.

Karaoke or Band

6:30 p.m.

All events are subject to future revision.

*Community groups will have fund raising
"feeds" throughout the nine day celebration.*

Published bimonthly by the Blue Earth County Historical
Society.
Design and layout by Michelle Maack Friederichs
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