



COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May/June 1995

Blue Earth County Historian

The Fountain in the Park

by Roger A. Norland

Mankato area Civil War veterans first started talking about erecting a monument to the memory of soldiers of the rebellion who had served from Blue Earth County in 1885. The most suitable site was a little triangle in the south part of the city, owned by Mr. W.H. Shepard. Although desirable, the price was one thousand dollars. Just a few months later, property owners in the vicinity had subscribed sufficient funds to purchase the land.

Various plans for the monument were presented, including one to be sculpted from Kasota stone, but funding sufficient to cover the cost was an ongoing problem. The idea of changing the monument to a memorial

fountain was proposed in mid-1891, as being a less expensive alternative.

A monument committee, composed of Grand Army of the Republic Alexander Wilkin Post No. #19 members, reported in May 1892 that a fountain could be erected for a cost of less than one thousand dollars. The proposed fountain was described as having a basin of sixteen to eighteen feet in diameter, with a

Soldier's Monument in Lincoln Park, circa 1909

The large tree, the fountain and the "Boy in Blue" made an imposing sight and graced the park for a number of years.

Photo from The Heritage of Blue Earth County (1990).



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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.

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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 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

central pedestal six or eight feet high. Stone vases were to be located at each corner, and upon the pedestal would stand a representation of a private soldier at "parade rest." This statue would be eight feet high and made of bronze or white zinc. The water would flow out from the base or possibly be thrown up if it was shown that the statue wouldn't be discolored. The proposal was accepted and the exact location was staked out in late August.

The memorial fountain was erected during the fall of 1892 and substantially completed by mid-December. The bronze figure of the soldier faced toward Broad Street, and from its slight elevation, was shown off to good advantage to those who passed by. Unfortunately, but often typical, cost overruns had forced overall expenses up to twelve hundred dollars, and citizens were asked to subscribe for the balance. The decision was made to dedicate the fountain and turn on the water on Memorial Day, 1893.

Memorial Day turned out to be a perfect Minnesota day in every respect. A clear sky and warm sun were just sufficient to make the shade comfortable. A parade formed at 9:00 a.m. under "Marshal" George W. Mead, and the line of march was taken to Lincoln Park. In the long column were many of the two hundred members of the GAR Post, other GAR men from Eagle Lake, the local

militia unit--Company F, members of the Sons of Vetrans, the fire companies, school children, a drum corps, and the Concordia Band.

Exercises at the fountain commenced at 10:15 a.m. with music, and then William J. Plymat extended a welcome and thanks to all present for honoring the principles of patriotism, heroism, and liberty. This old veteran asked the living to so conduct themselves always on this day that it may be a day of coronation for our dead. The national flag was unfurled in front of the fountain with the high school chorus singing the "Star Spangled Banner." The GAR's Women's Relief Corps scattered flowers in the empty basin while a ladies double quartet sang "Come Them over with Beautiful Flowers." Chaplain Wakefield offered a prayer, which was followed by the high school chorus singing, "Tenting Tonight."

Mankato's war hero, General E.M. Pope, was then introduced and gave an eloquent address:

Mr. Mayor: In behalf of Alexander Wilkin Post 19 GAR, I formally transfer to you as the honored representative or our fair city this gem which decks its breast. It is a tribute from the fraternity of a grand army and the loyalty of a grand community to virtues which lie at the foundation

of all just governments. We are glad to be permitted to place it now in your hands for the Grand Army of the Republic can never renew its memberships and our comrades are swiftly passing in review. We humbly pray that this municipality may endure, while the grass grows

and the water runs, and we trust that through her fostering care the words now carved in the stone may become vitalized and the principles of patriotism, bravery and liberty be instilled into the hearts of succeeding generations of her citizens until in fulness of time, we all shall come to be citizens of a city whose builder and ruler is God.

Mayor Weaver replied that he had the pleasure on behalf of the city to accept the beautiful fountain. The band played "America" and the audience joined in while the water was turned on. The water

shot up from the edge of the pedestal four feet or more and also shot out of the mouths of

off the rams' heads. Over the next few months, further destructive acts entirely

wrecked the statue.

Members of the GAR met in December and decided to take the funds required to replace the statue and use it toward a home for GAR meetings. The proposition suggested



Lincoln Park, circa 1915

This photograph of Lincoln Park shows the Lincoln Elm Tree, the Soldiers' Monument and Fountain, and the cannon.
Photo from The Heritage of Blue Earth County (1990).

the rams' heads around the rim. This ended the exercise.

Years passed and residents in the vicinity of Lincoln Park took great pride in the fountain with the statue of the Civil War soldier holding a musket in his hand. However, during the summer of 1911, vandals broke the bronze musket loose and damaged the statue. The city offered a reward of one hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of the guilty party. The Parks Commissioner reported in late August of the same year that the fountain had been turned off, due to a stone being lodged in the overflow pipe and the ears being broken

that Lincoln Park be used as the site of a new armory building with a room set aside for the GAR. Although nothing came of this plan, the remains of the fountain were apparently removed.

Years later, listed among the spring of 1928 Park Program agenda of projects was the erection of a new marker to replace the old soldier memorial fountain. This barrel shaped monument remains today as a lasting reminder to the honorable service of the many Civil War veterans buried in Blue Earth County.

Mini-Genealogy Seminar

What do genealogists need the most? Help with their research problems. This is Ron Bremer's specialty! He will be at the BECHS Heritage Center on Monday, June 26, at 7:00 p.m., to give you research advice and to help you with your research concerns.

Born and raised in southern California, Mr. Bremer now has an office near the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. He is the author of *The Compendium of Historical Sources*. Mr. Bremer has personally visited the major genealogical record centers in every state and province in North America!

Mr. Bremer averages five seminars a week and travels about sixty-thousand miles a year. He is presently one of the most popular and sought after genealogical speakers in the

country. His ability to answer questions from the audience makes his seminars more personal, and frequently he is able to help each individual in attendance. He seldom uses a microphone and is in constant demand as a motivational speaker. His lectures are not only informative, but also very entertaining.

His seminar will contain information for both the beginning and advanced researcher. Topics will include:

- * introduction and organization
- * speeding up your genealogy
- * little-known sources
- * research by correspondence
- * solving stone-wall problems
- * contacting collateral



Ron Bremer

- cousins
- * courthouse to the outhouse
- * attic archeology
- * questions and answers

All attending are encouraged to come prepared to discuss their genealogical research problems. In addition, audio and video recordings are welcome.

Admission is free. Refreshments will be served. The public is welcome. Seating is limited, so call 345-5566 for reservations.

Blue Earth County Historical Society Presents

Grandma's Bake Sale

Motor on over to the Madison East Mall on Saturday, June 24, between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Cash donations and baked goods accepted.

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

**L.C. Ambulance Service
Benefit Auction**
10:00 a.m. - Emergency
Services Building

Hog Roast Fund Raiser
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
L.C. Health Care Center

10K Fun Run
Two mile walk/run
1:00 p.m. - City Hall

Turtle Races
2:00 p.m. - Jones Park

Sunday, June 25
All-Church Potluck
12:30 p.m. - Robinson Park or
L.C. Elementary School
(if rain)

Interfaith Choir
Marston Park or
L.C. Elementary School
(if rain)

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

Restaurants will offer "specials."

Tuesday, June 27

Beard Growing Contest
6:30 p.m. - Marston Park

Old-Time Style Show
7:30 p.m. - Marston Park

Wednesday, June 28
**Band Concert & Ice Cream
Social**
Marston Park

Thursday, June 29
Historical Pageant
8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Friday, June 30
Carnival
Marston Park

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

Kiddie Parade
6:00 p.m.

Essay Contest Winners
7:00 p.m.

Historical Pageant
8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Street Dance
8:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
East Side Pharoahs

Saturday, July 1

Carnival
Marston Park

Flea Market/Craft Show
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
L.C. Elementary School

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

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

Water Ski Show
1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Crystal Lake

Historical Pageant
8:00 p.m. - LCWM High School

Street Dance
8:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.
Brown Mountain Boys

Sunday, July 2
Carnival
Marston Park

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

Street Parade
1:00 p.m.

Karoake
6:30 p.m.



News from the Betsy-Tacy Society

We have exciting news! On May 1, 1995, the Betsy-Tacy Society submitted a bid of \$39,000 for the purchase of 332 Center Street in Mankato (Deep Valley). To all Betsy-Tacy fans, this property is better known as Tacy's house. Looking out the living room bay window, you can see the Little Hill where Betsy and Tacy took their dinner plates and built the friendship that inspires us today.

The house is currently owned by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It needs considerable renovation and we do not want it to fall into uncaring hands. In case you are wondering, we also

hope to eventually acquire Betsy's house across the street. However, the owner of 333 Center Street does not expect to put it on the market anytime soon.

To our great delight, HUD accepted our bid. If we make a 25-30% down payment and arrange financing for the balance by June 30th, the house will be ours.

In addition to the down payment and mortgage payments thereafter, we estimate that we will have to spend about \$5,000 right away for urgently needed repairs that will make the house rentable for the short term. Then we'll start planning major renovations, like restoring the

original ceiling and porches to transform the house into the showplace (museum, tea room, or bed and breakfast) that we would all like it to be. That will cost thousands of dollars more, but we figure we are better off than Betsy and Joe were when they bought Canoe Place.

From the earliest days of the Society, a fund has existed to seize an opportunity such as this. However, that fund is relatively small. If you are interested in making a tax deductible contribution, please send it to: The Betsy-Tacy Society, c/o The Heritage Center, Blue Earth County Historical Society, 415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN 56001-3741.



The Betsy-Tacy Society cordially invites you and your family to come to Deep Valley, July 7-9, 1995, for a weekend of friendship and fun. The weekend will include events for adults and for children, with ample time available to explore the community Betsy/Maud loved. For convention information and fees, contact Lona Falenczykowski, President, at 345-8103. Call soon, for space is limited.

HELP WANTED

Volunteer receptionists are needed at the BECHS Heritage Center, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays.

Duties include answering the telephone, light photocopying, and folding brochures.

We are looking for as many volunteers as possible in order to have a rotating work schedule. For more information, call Linda Henry at 345-5566.

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Membership News

Thank you to the new and returning members.

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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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