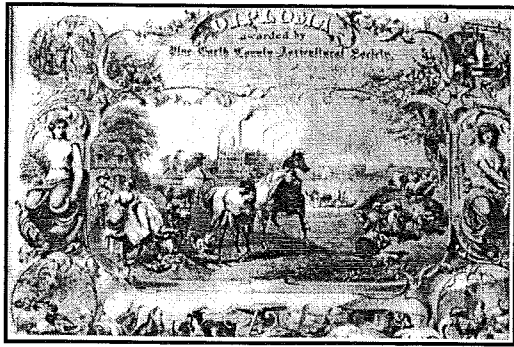


The Blue Earth County Historian

Blue Earth County Historical Society. Summer 2000



Diploma Award From one of the First Fairs
Original in BECHS Collections

HEIGH HO! COME TO THE FAIR!

By Shirley Grundmeier

The *Mankato Free Press* issue of April 21, 2000 featured an article written by staff writer Jody Sailor. Entitled "Fair Hopes to Boost Attendance"; the article discussed the pros and cons of the Blue Earth County Fair, Minnesota's oldest county fair, and now preparing for the 141st annual outing.

Fair Board members pointed out the biggest problems: attracting people to the fair, especially returnees, with new and ongoing attractions, funding the operations and increasing grandstand capacity. Jan Roelofs, board vice president, pointed out that visitors should also see and learn more of the county's history in the late 1880's.

A major concern is attracting urban fair-goers: Val Belgard, board treasurer, noted that "We don't draw from the urban areas." While the Minnesota State Fair continues to draw record-breaking crowds each year, county fair-goers are mainly from rural areas.

But today there seems to be a back-lash, a nostalgic return to a way of life far removed from the fast-moving urban sprawl, where super-highways continue to gobble up more and more farm land, and even city residences, each year. This trend is seen in the choices people make while on vacation: visiting pioneer sites, recreating historical events, searching out ancestors. Life seemed simpler then, although it was no less difficult.

So the question is, how can a county fair attract those seeking nostalgia, especially city dwellers, when the fair site is close at home but not down the street? This is not a new problem: throughout its history, the Blue Earth County Fair at Garden City has faced this issue, and yet it survives. Why? Let's go back to the beginnings.

The fair was organized in 1859 and held at the Miner Porter farm that October. Then it moved to Garden City for a year and to South Bend in 1861. Because of the

Dakota Conflict, no fairs were held for the next two years, but in 1864, Garden City became its permanent home. In all of its homes, the fair featured exhibits, speakers, ball games and foot races, horseshoe pitching contests, and lots of music from local town bands. Livestock and agricultural exhibits were plentiful, as well as displays of domestic arts. Fairgoers were fed delicious meals by various churches and groups: in 1885, the ladies of Garden City served meals that were "highly appreciated by the hungry, who dined sumptuously for a quarter."

There were prizes too: both working oxen and pretty babies won premiums at the 1861 fair, as did home-made furniture, leather ware, cheeses, barrels of vinegar and needlecraft. At one of the first fairs, the best machinery exhibit was a horse-powered threshing machine that could thresh two bushels of wheat a minute and required 15 to 20 horses to pull, each of whom had to be fed and watered three times a day.

In 1881, prizes were given for items unfamiliar today: the best breaking plow, best fanning mills, best ox yoke. There were prizes for best milk pans and brooms made in the county, homemade overcoats, flannel drawers and best penmanship.

Divisions for competition included both the "fine arts" and "domestic arts". Fine arts drew contestants in penmanship, painting, drawing and sculpture, photography, printing, framing, and architectural drawing. In BECHS' museum is a fine painting by Miss Ida Martin, entitled "Seppman Mill in 1887", which took first prize at the 1888 fair. Her mother won first place for pickles and second for butter. They were "Mankato People", living at 306 Willard Street.

A writer for the *Free Press* noted in 1891 that the name "Garden City Fair" was incorrect, and that every part of the county should "take pride and pleasure in it, entering exhibits and attending it at least one day." The writer stressed that, at the "Blue Earth County Fair", city people could "obtain a needed breath of ozone and mingle in pleasant social intercourse with their country cousins".

The 1897 fair found the roads in poor condition due to heavy rains, but at five o'clock on the first day, Prof. W. E. Taylor of Minneapolis made an ascension with balloon and parachute. The *Free Press* noted that "Taylor came to earth after rising a quarter of a mile, but the balloon sailed out four miles from town, where it was rescued by a farmer who speedily removed the top and ropes. He was arrested by the committee and will doubtless be less hasty in the future."

Fair Continued on page 3

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Summer 2000

The Blue Earth County Historian is published quarterly for the members of BECHS. BECHS has the mission of collecting, preserving and publishing material relating to the history of Blue Earth County.

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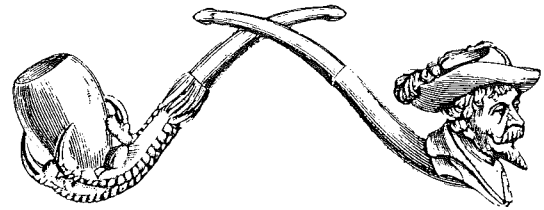
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Thank You All Very Much!



From the Executive Director

The summer has been very busy at BECHS. We have many exciting projects underway and look forward to seeing the results of the hard work of our staff and Volunteers.

One of these projects is a book of historical photos from throughout Blue Earth County. We have been seeking out previously unpublished photos from the 1850s to the 1920s. The book will be finished this summer and should be back from the printers in time for holiday gift giving.

Our research center is always busiest during the summer travel season. This year is no different. As we look to the future, we see the research center continuing to grow as more people take up family genealogy as a hobby. To better serve these researchers, we are developing a plan for a computer network. When it becomes operational, this network will allow people to do faster searches of our holdings and allow us to keep up to date on new additions and the locations of our resources.

The Young Historians program is being brought back. We have a committee working on youth programs to be offered on a regular basis. More information will be available in the near future.

As always, we need the help of our volunteers and members to fulfill our mission of preserving the history of Blue Earth County.

James C. Lundgren

Fair Continued from page 1

While the *Free Press* made no comment about the setting of the fair, a reporter for the *Mankato Review* did. He bemoaned the fact that "Mankato is the only prominent city in Minnesota at which an agricultural fair is not held annually," and that "Mankato is the natural and logical place for such a fair". Surely, he felt, "the results will approach, if they do not equal, the annual state fairs.

Apparently, no one else climbed on his bandwagon, and in 1905, another anonymous reporter for the *Mankato Review* wrote at length of his day at the fair: "A visit to the fair is a day well spent, and your Review man was fortunate with many others from our city to spend one of the prettiest days of the fall taking in the sights at the fair. . . We landed there shortly after noon and of course, our first inquiry was for the dining hall. We met Sam Wilson wearing a self-satisfied smile. He silently pointed to the pavilion conducted by the ladies of the Christian Church. We noticed Judge Lorin Cray and Lester Patterson and their wives emerging; knowing they were connoisseurs of good things to eat, we were satisfied we were on the right track. A chicken pie dinner of the good old-fashioned kind was the attraction and it was worth all it cost.

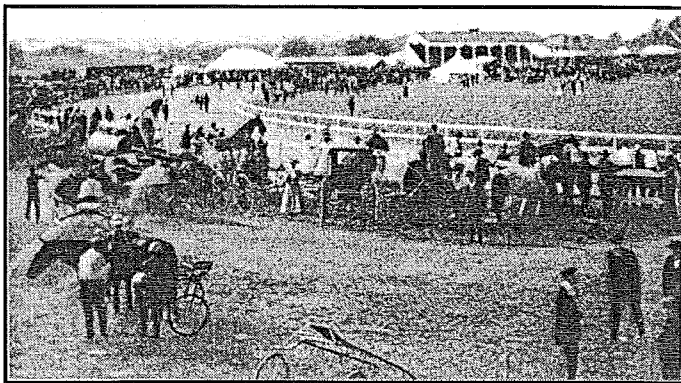
"One would have thought this was election year from the number of county officers seen about the grounds, all busy extending the glad hand . . . The Lake Crystal brass band was there . . . a merry-go-round ground out familiar airs while its operator gathered in the nickels and did a land office business. The exhibits are of the liveliest and competition is strong.

"The fair is on the order of a monster picnic, where friends and neighbors gather each year to enjoy a day's outing and rest from their harvest labors, renew acquaintances and exchange reminiscences . . . There is no place within our recollection better adapted to this purpose than the beautiful spot where the fair is held."

The reporter's story appeared in the *Review* on September 19, 1905. Barely three days later, all the county newspapers save one, the *Lake Crystal Union*, came out in favor of the future move to Mankato. Editor Galer of the *Vernon Center News* felt that in spite of "the gigantic efforts put forth by the management this year, the fair should have been patronized better . . . Mankato is the proper place for the fair."

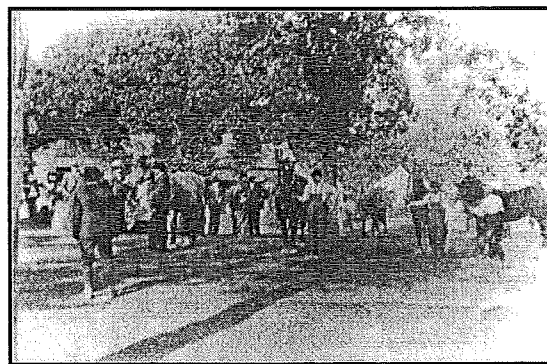
Editor Griffin of the *Good Thunder Herald* offered many suggestions for improvement, feeling that the crowds around the exhibits for the progressive farmer were small, while for the "games of chance, races and amusements the people pushed and crowded to be in the front ranks. Hundreds of prosperous framers never even viewed the agricultural exhibits . . . We believe the

time has passed when the proper spirit of appreciation in the progress along agricultural lines predominates."



Fairgrounds in 1908

"If it is amusement and recreation, a place to feast, play and spend your money, an annual carnival of sport and amusement, would be the thing. Mankato, with its Sibley Park, nearness to Minneopa Falls, its railroads, hotel accommodations, ought to present some inducement for gathering the people of the county once a year in grand carnival array."



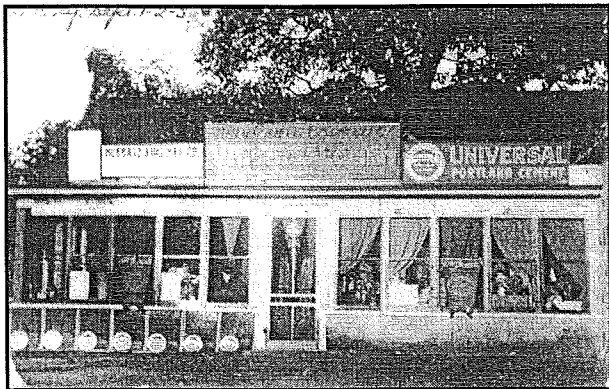
Horse Show, circa 1910

The years went by; the fair continued out at Garden City. Prizes were bigger, the competitions ever more exciting and the exhibits ever larger. By 1911 and the Golden Jubilee, at least one "old timer" could boast he had never missed a fair in fifty years. At age 77, George Goodall was a life member, with fifty membership tickets, and was the oldest blacksmith still working at his trade in Minnesota. Benjamin Pay, operator of Mankato's Ben Pay Hotel, also was a fifty-year attendee. Other county pioneers occupied seats of honor in the stands and as they toured the exhibits, they spoke of their own blue ribbons of days gone by. They noted how they had driven to the early fairs with slow-moving ox teams and now arrived along improved highways in automobiles or in stylish turnouts pulled by handsome, fleet-footed animals.

The Ladies of the Garden City Christian Church fed their famous chicken pie dinner to several thousand

each day of the fair. Among the many bands entertaining the crowds were the Amboy band and the Mapleton drum corps, while the Lake Crystal and Good Thunder ball teams played exciting games. Windmill Florists of Mankato hosted a beautiful display among the 2,500 entries in Floral Hall; along the other side of the hall, 240 jars of canned fruits and jellies were tempting to behold.

The *Mankato Ledger* carried a quarter page ad for the 55th annual fair, promising "the most successful in the history of the Blue Earth County Agricultural Society, with a new bandstand, new well, greatly improved race track and enlarged stock sheds." For the "Big Dances on Pavilion" each afternoon and evening, Sandon's Orchestra of Mankato would play, addresses by eminent speakers would be held, horse races and fast ball games would thrill crowds and to feed them—the famous Chicken Pie Dinners. This was in 1916. The fair would continue even as war loomed.



1915 Fair exhibitor

Over the years, the difficult times were made brighter by the yearly gathering at Garden City, and in 1922, with renewed prosperity, the buildings and grounds, were at peak condition, the shows were spectacular, and many new features were added. There were "kid" baseball teams, free clown and music acts, even a special contest for "pretty couples who are planning to work in double harness"—provided they would say their vows in the grandstand on August 25 at 9 AM!

Not everything was on the up and up: two special deputy sheriffs patrolled the grounds looking for people "annoying the public with fake gambling devices and especially for moonshine peddlers". According to Secretary McCormack, most of the concessions' operators are fine but "when the backs of the management are turned, they overstep a trifle, and do things that the society does not approve of".

By 1924, of the 99 county fairs held in Minnesota each year, the only one to have held meetings at one place continuously for 83 years was the Blue Earth County

Fair. In addition, no other county fair in the state was held near as small a town as Garden City. Only one other county fair received a smaller amount of county financial aid than did ours. So, why had this particular fair survived? Possibly the ideal fair grounds, possibly the spirit behind it—loyal boosters, exceptional exhibits, the growing 4-H movement, excellent speakers. In 1924, U. S. Senator Magnus Johnson spoke, as did Thomas Schall, candidate for U. S. Senate and the Republican candidate for governor, Theodore Christianson, and a local farmer's wife, Mrs. L. Bruntz spoke on farm problems.

In 1925, U. S. Senator Henrik Shipstead was principal speaker. Baseball games saw Mankato play St. James and Mapleton play the Little Giants and a \$50 purse went to the best horse shoe pitchers. More than 1,400 4-H boys and girls were enrolled in one project alone,

A highlight in 1927 was a speech by state treasurer Julius Schmall, back for his first visit in 20 years. His remarks were informative, reminding listeners that Garden City was once called Watonwan, later Fremont for a U. S. presidential candidate, and in 1858, given the name Garden City by S. P. Folsome, who laid out a townsite. He called it Garden City for the beautiful wild flowers found in the immediate vicinity of the present village, more than in any other place in Southern Minnesota. Then in 1864, the township of Watonwan took the name of Garden City.

The Art and Commerce Building at the 1928 fair featured a turning lathe through the courtesy of the Little Giant Company, maker of lathes and band saws for school use and shipped all over the country. The lathe was operated by the local Knoff Manufacturing Company and demonstrated the making of rolling pins. Another local company, the Hubbard Milling Company, furnished the empty flour sacks that had been fashioned into beautiful aprons and dresses by local seamstresses; Hubbard offered special prizes for these in addition to the regular fair prizes.

In a country still reeling from the stock market crash of October 1929, the county fair of 1930 reassured the farming areas. Directors of the Blue Earth County Agricultural Society were firm in planning for a fair that would continue to highlight the products of county people, as well as bring welcome entertainment to brighten the troublesome times. Leading speaker was Floyd B. Olson, Farmer-Labor candidate for governor. (Olson did become governor and died while in office in 1939.)

Sandon's band and orchestra again provided music, the Madelia drum corps put on exhibition drills, and for thrills, an automobile was driven over one of the 60-foot cliffs surrounding the fair grounds. The 4-H Clubs held a grand parade and a ball game between Vernon Center

and Rapidan drew crowds. Mapleton sponsored a full day at the fair and their local ball club met North Mankato in an exciting game.

In 1931, State representative John E. Regan addressed a large crowd on the evils of Prohibition, demanding modification or repealing of the 18th amendment. Regan felt overcrowded prisons and overworked courts were due to the liquor laws and that "gunmen are rapidly gaining control of this nation . . . a man who started out as a small liquor maker or peddler has become a bank robber and killer."

Guests at the fair were a tribe of Pawnee Indians from Oklahoma who defeated the Mapleton ball team by a 10-5 victory. The Indians in their turn were defeated 8-6 by Vernon Center. Later the Pawnee visitors staged an exciting program of tribal dances in the costumes of their forefathers.

A 1938 *Free Press* article noted that "a record entry of livestock and other agricultural exhibits poured through (the fairground's gate) yesterday, promising the most successful fair in the 80-year series of county fairs held in Garden City."



Fair-goers from the Early 20th Century

In 1939, the fair boasted three brand new buildings; a new cattle barn, newly completed log cabin, and new hog barn. The cabin is a replica of the first seminary of the Missouri synod and was built by the German Lutheran church.

The second World War curtailed any more new construction, and exhibits during the war years reflected the county's attempts to "do its part" on the local level. In 1944, fair officials issued a call for pictures of county men and women serving in the armed forces and the inspiring display totaled 700 pictures. The Beauford Beavers 4-H club proudly set up a booth with the theme "Serve, Save and Share". County farms did their part in producing food for the nation and the Roy Heers family of Amboy set a fair record with 15 4-H livestock entries

from one family. The five children were all members of the Shelby Hustlers 4-H club.

The years went by, and the fair continued, but with good years and bad. In 1963, Fair Secretary Wally Pape of Garden City told the board that the fair was again in the red, and County Commissioner W. F. Nickolson questioned the wisdom of continued subsidizing. No decision was reached.

The 109th annual fair opened in 1968 with a new "old" addition: the one room District 14 schoolhouse of Ceresco Township. The school building came complete with its old drinking fountain, which had to be filled every day with water from a nearby well, its maps and globe, stove and desks, looking much as it had since 1870.

By 1976, fair-goers were setting more records for annual attendance, including three boys from Madelia, who had been coming there for about seven years. Zach Carstenson, 11, his brother Jeff, 12, and pal Joel Burley, were all members of a 4-H club and for years had been going home with blue ribbons. Zach had made a rocking baby cradle and noted: "I'm going to keep it for my own kids . . . but I might give it to my uncle. He got married Saturday." Jeff had constructed a table and exhibited jewelry made from shells and beads, while Joel had already received a blue ribbon for a complete boy's leisure suit. All three had exhibits in the food divisions.

However, the boys were also trying their luck at the carnival games and all claimed to be "experts" in telling the "good games" from the "gyps". And they planned to take in all the rides, even those that "might make you throw up."

Another long-time attendee was profiled in "The Land" section of the *Free Press* in 1977. Miles Thurston of Ceresco Township had been there every year since his birth in 1900. The first year he could remember was when he was five and got lost on the grounds, but it didn't stop him from coming back.

Thurston's family exhibited every year and later, after his marriage, his own family raised and exhibited prize-winning shorthorn cattle, hybrid hogs and purebred Yorkshires. He served many years on the fair board, was a 4-H leader and hog superintendent, keeping records on all the exhibited hogs. Asked to remember some highlights in earlier years, Thurston tells of a speaker who was at the time mayor of Minneapolis. All agreed he would go a long way, and he did. He was Hubert H. Humphrey.

The veteran fair-goer planned to keep coming to the fair, feeling that it was "unique—the only real old-fashioned fair you can see anymore." In 1981, his 80 years at the fair were a *Free Press* feature. He spoke of the joy he feels when his grandchildren win championship ribbons,

and how his wife loves the fair as much as he does. His wife, Irene, interjected: "We (she and the other Christian Church members) were very well known for our chicken pie dinners, but a few years ago, us older gals got a little stiff-kneed and didn't have enough people to run the dining hall."

By 1981, other and younger people were finding the joy of exhibiting at the fair: 4-H programs were expanding into urban areas: six new clubs had been established in Mankato in the four years previous, and the areas exhibited included such things as aerospace. It also helped that the Blue Earth County Board had shared federal revenue dollars recently.

Widening its scope, in 1984 the fair board manned a booth offering shares in the Blue Earth County Agriculture Society to "give you a chance to voice your opinion as to how our County Fair should be run". The fair was in debt, and had asked county commissioners for help in the face of rising costs and falling attendance. Fair board members Raleen Larson and LuVerne Bergemann felt the rural location and competition from Farmfest and Valleyfair worked against it. The *Mankato Free Press* editorialized in favor of subsidizing the fair, pointing out that, "counties provide public parks, but not everybody uses them. The same is true of health and welfare services, libraries, etc. The county fair (is also) a public commitment and worthy of perpetuation."

A few years before, a controversial subject at the fair was whether or not beer was to be allowed on the grounds. However, in 1985, winemaking exhibits were winning blue ribbons. Alice Poppe of Good Thunder, superintendent of the canning division noted that she had been entering her wine for years and this year a woman from Holland was entering her rice and dill seed wine. Said Alice: "she always comes up with something different, grapefruit wine, carrot wine". Helen Sohre, in charge of the culinary arts division, said "Modern Baking", with goods made from mixes and frozen bread dough were frequent entries from 4-H youth as well as purist bakers. She stressed that "It tastes better than your boughten stuff (and) rolls you buy—by the second day, you can hardly eat 'em".

The perennial controversy was news again in 1989. Farmfest was moving from Lake Crystal to Austin. Steve Cornish, Fair Board President, felt that with a new plan where the County Board gave the fair more money, perhaps it was time for a new site. Mankato City Council member Claire Faust opted for moving to Mankato, where, if "the site were developed with a future stage area or maybe a racetrack, it could be a county community center with events and concerts throughout the year".

Rep. Sal Frederick noted that Mankato had been talking about an arena or convention center for 30 years: "This

isn't a racing society or demolition derby society. This is an agricultural society."

However, December 19, 1989, *Free Press* headlines read: "City joins effort to move county fair to Mankato". The Fair Board was quoted as requesting the move; with Vice Chairman Bob Schroeder of Lake Crystal saying, "You might as well move it to where the people are." Board member Kent Thiesse agreed with him: "From a 4-H point of view, a move to Mankato would make sense—fifty percent of the kids are from the Mankato area". Thiesse noted also: "Rural culture could be shared with city residents and exhibits expanded to include more works by senior citizens located in the Mankato area".

Another year dragged by as the fair suffered ever-falling attendance. Finally, the Business Institute at Mankato State designed a survey to help the county either increase attendance or find out why people stayed away. 825 questionnaires were mailed randomly to county residents; 534 surveys returned.

Fair Board member Bob Schroeder noted that most surveys returned were from people older than 55. "What are the younger people thinking?" he wondered. He was bothered by the fact that half of those responding hadn't been to a fair in three years and a fourth had never been.

Why DID people go to the fair? Most went to see the 4-H exhibits and free entertainment, not the food and the carnival. Yes, they liked the country-western bands and the grandstand events and wanted more concerts and rodeos. As for the food, go back to the church group stands with "regular food".

Did the survey show where the fair should be held? Yes, keep it where it was and use the grounds for events all year.

In June 1991, the Fair Board got permission from the County Board to make improvements on the site and to have new buildings in place for 1992. The *Free Press* applauded the decision to stay in response to a second survey by the Fair Board, which agreed with the results of the Mankato State one.

Things moved along rapidly out at Garden City for several years, with morale high, innovations like professional rodeo, with 50 nationally-known cowboys competing in seven events, free pony rides, a celebrity cow-milking contest, Senior Citizens' Day, a toddler race, and a coed adult volleyball tournament. The "Chicken Lady of Blue Earth County," Beverly Fitzloff, gave away 400 donated chicks to children to raise—a program which eventually made the County poultry program the best in the state.

Then there was the "Fair Mutton Bustin' Contest" for kids aged 5 to 10. Only one or two could hang onto a ewe's back for the required 10 seconds. Nine-year-old Russell Depuydt of rural Mankato managed to stay on his sheep to 10 seconds. One little girl, five-year old Bailey Jarvis of Garden City, thought she was going to ride "sheets" and be thrown up into the air on them. "Are we going to fly?" she asked her mom.

That same year, Nurse Mary Gleason got into the act by offering free tetanus shots and a bonus vaccination against diphtheria, courtesy of the County Public Health Department.

In 1998, for the sixth straight year, fair-goers were able to watch professional rodeo at Garden City, as well as a demolition derby, bull and bronco riding and, for the kids, the "Mutton Bustin'" event was back. Free Entertainment included the Lake Crystal Community Band and Mankato's Blue Ox Jazz Babies.

Other attractions included the Celebrity Milking Contest, with three politicians, three broadcast personalities, a teacher and a deputy sheriff doing the honors. The Merely Players and the Dakota Dan Medicine Show held forth on the free stage.

Soon it will be August 10-13, 2000. The Blue Earth County Fair, as presented by the Blue Earth County Agricultural Society, is about to welcome visitors to the 141st annual event. The world this fair is being presented in is far different form that of the mid-1850s. Many of the attractions that have drawn people to the Garden City Fair over the years can now be seen in person at the Civic Center or sitting in an easy chair glued to the tube. But there's something missing.

Walk through the gates of the fair on a bright late summer morning. You probably will go first to the right and follow your nose to the barns full of the best looking live stock, smartly groomed horses, the finest swine, the plump poultry, the rabbits and the dogs. You will note the pride on the faces of their young 4-H owners as they describe how they worked to raise such fine specimens.

Walk down the midway and spend time in each of the exhibit halls. See the rows and rows of beautifully canned fruits and vegetables, the enormous tomatoes and squash you wish YOU could raise, the huge sprays of gladioli, the lovely flower arrangements, the perfect cakes and breads and plates of luscious cookies. Try to figure out why one plate of cookies got the "blue" and the next, equally perfect, maybe didn't even earn a "white".

Step from the hot sun into another building and see the displays of commercial and industrial products—the latest in cell phones and computer gadgets, the electric fencing and electric kitchen ranges. Be sure to sign up at each booth: your chance to be the lucky winner of

something will be a lot better than your chance on a lottery ticket.

Check out the historical buildings—one at least new to the grounds this year. Each carries with it a lot of our county's history and may have items donated or loaned by our own county's people. Don't pass up the annual Blue Earth County Historical Society's exhibit and pick up some free information and helpful books about your own past, as well as unusual replica toys like your grandparents played with.

Go out on the midway again and see the children and adults enjoying the carnival atmosphere, all the rides and the games of chance, along with some loud music that just seems to go with carnivals. Then move back down to one of the food stands and find a spot on the long benches under the canopies. Get some "real food" and eat it there, or find a nice shady place to enjoy it. The benches in front of the bandstand are inviting—it's cool and shady under the ancient trees. Sit and watch a free act on the stage and rest as long as you want.

There's all this and much more—like the street musicians with their toe-tapping banjo rhythms, and the pie-eating contests and the celebrity milking contests and the new children's petting zoo and the free lunch for senior citizens and who will turn out to be the county's oldest married couple? If you can't do it all in one day, there's three full days of the fair every year, and we haven't even mentioned the Antique Tractor and Mini-Rod Pull, the Demolition Derby and Mud Bog.

So, why not join the fun? You can always go the Civic Center when it's too cold to walk very far and the TV is always there if there's a blizzard and you just can't get out of your driveway. The best part is, when you go to the fair, you're part of the action—you're not just sitting somewhere and watching someone else do something.

Wish List

These items are currently needed at the BECHS Heritage Center. Please let us know if you can provide any help.

- Used Books to be sold in the Museum Store.
- Money for the Hubbard House Garden fund.
- Copies of Windows 97 and Microsoft Office computer software for our new computer network.
- Volunteers for the Hubbard House and BEC Fair booth.
- Unlined 3x5 index cards for the research center.

ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACT DONATIONS

April – June 2000

Gretchen Becker, Mankato, MN: Frank Mahowald family photo album.

Doris Berger, Mankato, MN: Photographs of Miss Bowden and Agnes Larson and the Kelly, Johnson-Boman Funeral Home, 526 So. 5th St., and articles about Dr. Harrington.

Blue Earth County Mapping Department: Blue Earth County atlases and plat maps for the years, 1929-1988.

Joel Botten, Mankato, MN: Toy cannon used by the Franklin School kindergarten, PTA records from the first Roosevelt School, c 1920s, and stereoscopes.

Alec Boyce, Sioux Falls, SD: 6 B&W postcards depicting Mankato's storm damage from the June 11, 1929 tornado.

Doris Boyce, Mankato, MN: B&W aerial view of downtown Mankato, c1925.

Inella Burns, Mankato, MN: Art History Club's records for the years, 1976-1992.

Kathryn Cain, Weaverville, NC: Assorted *Mankato Free Press* newspapers, 1929-30, photos depicting events and people of Mankato; deeds and probate court papers from the Nels Anderson and Peder Christensen families, c1871-1912.

City of Mankato, MN: 1976 B&W aerial view of Mankato.

Ogden Confer, Mankato, MN: 1890s oil painting of Hubbard Mills.

Betty Cords, LeSueur, MN: Programs from the Mankato Music Club for the years of 1976-2000.

Joseph M. Dobie, St. Peter, MN: Family history entitled, J. H. and Jessie [Dobie].

Mary Dooley, Mankato, MN: 3 *Minnesota Genealogist* Magazines, 1999-2000, 4 B&W photos including the St. Clair School, Pagenkoft General Store, the Rasdall family & home at the Winnebago Agency House.

Mike Frederick, Madison Lake, MN: Coupon book issued by the Mankato Ice Co., All Saints Catholic Church Parish Family Directory, 1999-2000, Mankato Mashers baseball cards, list of Mankato Mashers staff.

Kay Thro Frost, North Mankato, MN: Wedding dress worn by mother, Cora Linder Thro, c1911; Cora's graduation dress, c1908; John Thro's wedding shirt [Kay's father].

Kathryn B. Greever, Morgantown, WV: Family history "Some Descendants of John Burk (1656-1699)"

Win Grundmeier, Mankato, MN: Original pages from the *Mankato Weekly Record* (Dec. 26, 1862) and the February 12, 1863 issue of the St. Paul Weekly Press.

Paul Hadley, North Mankato, MN: Chamber of Commerce Annual Reports & Programs of Work.

Lester Hewitt, North Mankato, MN: Family chart for the descendants of Gwen Jones, photocopy WW2 scrapbook.

John Huettl, Mankato, MN: Wooden steamer trunk, c 1840s and metal meat grinder with flywheel attachment.

Alice Jenkins, Mankato, MN: Lake Crystal 8th grade graduation announcement, c1898; paper written by her father, Wm. Jenkins as a Mankato Normal School student as well as the 1935 Old Settlers' Picnic poem written by Evan Price.

Marcia Kjelberg, Mankato, MN: Child's dress from the 1920s, opera glasses in a leather case, paper fans advertising Backlund's Music, Alka-Seltzer, c 1940s and rulers advertising the J. W. Scheerer Agency, c 1940s.

Jo-an Lavitschke, North Mankato, MN: 22 glass jars depicting Mankato sites.

Theresa McLaughlin, Mankato, MN: Master's thesis entitled, *Ethnic Settlement Patterns in Mankato, Minnesota, 1880*.

Steve Michels, Mankato, MN: 2 panoramic photos, the Rapidan Dam and a WW I army camp.

Roger Norland, North Mankato, MN: Recent paper written about George Evans, first Blue Earth County volunteer in the Civil War.

Beth Norman, Lake Crystal, MN: Documents referring to dams at Lily Lake and Lake Crystal, c1921.

Ken O'Brien, Mankato, MN: Souvenir photo album of Mankato, c1909 (photos by Blissenbach Studio), Mankato Centennial Celebration stamps, *The Daily Review*, March 19, 1900 and May 12, 1900, Centennial edition of the *Mankato Free Press*, 1952.

Bill Ries, Madison Lake, MN: Complete WW II Marine uniform; photographs featuring the Elk's Band during their 1922 trip to Atlantic City, an old photo of the Wiecking House; book entitled, Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865; Dagmar's Memories; old bottles.

M/M John Robertson, Seattle, WA: Assorted photos depicting people and sites from the Mankato area.

Karla Rusten, Good Thunder, MN: 3 umbrellas, photo of colorful painting on kitchen wall as well as a history of a home.

Ruth Schellberg, Mankato, MN: Camp Fire ceremonial gown and sash, a blue Camp Fire vest. The donor wore both items.

Tom Schweim, Mankato, MN: Bobbs-Merill Sixth Reader c1929 and wooden hangers advertising local businesses.

Alma Severson, Mankato, MN: Color photos of the Marsh Rainbow Bridge.

Jane Tarjeson, Good Thunder, MN: Atlas of Minnesota; Social and Economic Characteristics of the North Star State / A Million Years in Minnesota; The Prehistoric Peoples of Minnesota / Chronicles of the Century / The History of St. Peter and Paul's Parish 1854-1899 / five 1997 atlases for Martin, Waseca, LeSueur, Watonwan, Blue Earth Counties / 1993 atlas for Nicollet County / Story of My Childhood.

Tommy Trexler, North Mankato, MN: 4 photos depicting the 1929 tornado damage at the J. C. Marlow farm.

Thank You all
For your help in preserving the
History of Blue Earth County!

BECHS Volunteers since the last issue

Adams, Mickey	Jones, Jack
Anderson, Elaine	Keenan, Delilah
Apitz, Darrel	Keenan, Jerry
Baer, Marcia	Kettner, Jody
Baird, Jane	Kubicek, Joe
Bartholdi, Roberta	Lavitschke, Jo-an
Bartsch, Glenn	Lundblad, Larry
Bensch, Bob	Lundgren, Molly
Bensch, Mary Ann	McComb, Mary
Boyce, Dave	McLaughlin, Theresa
Burns, Inella	McLaughlin, Tom
Burton, Ronnie	Meyer, Lesley
Cords, Betty	More, Carol
Crogg, Tyler	Nisja, Millie
Decker, Audrey	Norman, Beth
Demaray, Kandi	Nussbaumer, Linda
Dooley, Mary	Ohlenkamp, Ora
Falenczykowski, Lona	Oney, Gary
Frederick, Gerald	Ries, Bill
Frederick, Michael	Salsbery, Tom
Ganzel, Margaret	Severson, Alma
Garlick, Russ	Schaub, Shirley
Goff, Harley	Schrader, Julie
Greeley, Dolores	Schultz, Jo
Grundmeier, Win	Schultz, Bob
Grundmeier, Shirley	Sofchalk, Helen
Hadley, Paul	Stewart, Deb
Hagen, Tom	Tarjeson, Jane
Hallet, Tom	Walker, Jeff
Hanson, Kathryn	Webb, Donna
Herzberg, Edith	Westphal, Myrtle
Hopman, Edith	Wilmes, Brad
Jaenisch, Carol	Wright, Lorraine
Jansen, Steve	Ziegler, Ken
Jensen, Mary Ann	Zielke, Dan
Jensen, Orv	Zimmer, Beth

New in the Museum Store!

The Museum Store has seen several very unique additions to our inventory. These one-of-a-kind items are sure to make nice additions to the homes of BECHS members.

The Twin Cities Decorative Arts Guild is working on painting images of the Hubbard House and Carriage house on some left over shingles from last year's restoration of the roof. These shingles had been on the house for over 100 years! Most of the original shingles were kept on the house. Some of those that could not be re-used have had scenes of the house and carriage house painted on them. Each one has a different look. They include the house painted from different years and each is hand painted and has its own feel.

Paul Hadley has made over 100 scale model boats that are housed in museums across the East Coast and Great Lakes. BECHS has two of them in our new exhibit on the Riverfront area of Mankato. To go along with this new exhibit Paul has made a limited number of even smaller models and has given them to BECHS for the Museum Store.

These limited edition items may not last long. Come on down to the Museum Store soon before they are all gone.

Please also remember the Museum Store for your unique birthday and holiday gift giving.

New and Renewed Members

Anderson, Verna	Lahann, Dell and Flo
Barber, Eddice Dr.	McLean, Edward F.
Borchardt, Elizabeth	Medalen, Ethel
Botten, Joel	Meyer & Sons
Bursaw, Iona	Neilsen, Gerald
Casella, Donna	Norman, John and Beth
Coughlan, John	Nydahl, Irene
Date, Jane	Perry, Lisa
Demaray, Kandi	Peterson, Mary Helen
Dewitt Bierbauer Joanne	Pond, Patricia
Gage, Kelton and Dorothy	Rathai, Evelyn
Hoehn, Pat	Rettmer, Forrest and Georgia
Hunziker, Arline	Rivera, Barbara
Jacobson, Kay	Sanford, Raymond Dr & Mrs
Jenkins, Margaret and Alice	Schaub, Shirley
Jerabek, Steve and Barb	Nussbaumer, Linda
Johnson, Barbara	Solie, Tim
Johnson, Marguerite	Strobel, Judith
Jones, Eldon and Helen	Vosbeek, Judy
Jones, Jack	Ward, Steve
Keenan, Jerry and Delilah	Y.W.C.A. of Mankato

Hubbard House Palmer Centennial Gardens

The Twilight Garden Club maintains the Palmer Centennial Gardens on the grounds of the Hubbard House. The club donates their time each year to plan, plant and maintain the gardens. BECHS would like to thank them for their ongoing support in making the Hubbard House a beautiful sight to see during the all too short summer season. The funds for the gardens are funded through donations. If you enjoy the gardens, please help us keep the garden growing by making a small donation to the BECHS Garden Fund.

Blue Earth County Historical Society
415 East Cherry Street
Mankato MN 56001

Non-Profit Org.

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56001
Permit No. 343

Upcoming BECHS Events!

***August 10-13, 2000
BEC Fair***

***September 21-24, 2000
Travel Like Bert Trip
In the Footsteps of Lewis & Clark***

***September 28, 2000
History of City Hall Exhibit opening
with a program on Gilbert Fletcher
& demonstrations of block print making***

***October 6-7
Annual Ghosts from the Past***

***December
Victorian Christmas at the
R. D. Hubbard House***

Visit BECHS at the Fair

BECHS will have displays set up again this year at the Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City on Aug. 10th thru the 13th. See the 1916 fully restored Buick fire truck. Read about the Minnesota Preservation's top 10 most endangered properties - Rapidan Dam has been selected as one of the top 10 for 2000. The Museum Store will have a table set up offering a variety of selections from the store. Stop by and pick up your copy of the "Family Heritage Cookbook", or check out the local history books and old-time toys. Take a chance on drawings for two items. The first item is an original slate shingle (removed during the 1999 restoration) from the Hubbard House with a one of a kind picture of the Hubbard House hand painted on it by a member of the Twin Cities Decorative Arts Guild. The second drawing item is a fiery red boys 16-inch Huffy bicycle, donated to BECHS by C & S Supply.

See you at the fair!