The Blue Earth County Historian

Blue Earth County Historical Society Fall 2001

BECHS TURNS 100!

The Blue Earth County Historical Society Reaches the Centennial Mark. By James Lundgren

This fall the Blue Earth County Historical Society officially reaches the centennial mark of 100 years of preserving history. The first organizational meeting was held on October 10, 1901, but the final organization was set at November 7, 1901. There were 33 charter members of the society.

The original mission of the society was to "collect, arrange and preserve a library of books, pamplets, (sic) maps, manuscripts, prints, papers, and other material illustrative of the civil, religious, literary and natural history of Minnesota: to obtain a cabinet of minerals, and archeological curiosities to rescue from oblivion the memory of its early pioneers and to obtain narratives of their exploits. Perils and adventures, together with their portraits and personal histories; to obtain statistics as to the past present condition and resources of Minnesota including the horticulture, agriculture, and mineralogy, and other things pertaining to its social and political history and to cultivate among its citizens a knowledge of the useful and liberal arts, science and literature; and it may take steps to this end by lectures and other suitable means whereby the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge among its members and the people generally shall be accomplished."

While this wording has been changed over the years the basic mission of preserving and promoting the history of Blue Earth County remains the same a century later.

The first officers of BECHS were President Judge Daniel Buck; First Vice President Charles A. Chapman, Second Vice President Herbert C. Hotaling; Secretary Thomas Hughes, Treasurer Philip Mueller; and librarian Minnie McGraw.

The original group founded the society in preparation of the 50th anniversary of the arrival the first settlers in what would become the city of Mankato. A five-day event was held where the historical society created exhibits and papers were written and read to

commemorate the teachers, businessmen, churches and pioneers who created the city and county. The event also had a parade and picnic at Sibley Park with an evening banquet. The grand finale included a fireworks display on the Fourth of July.

After anniversary passed, the society entered a period of inactivity. There are no records of any BECHS meetings or activities until 1916 when renewed interest brought life back to BECHS. During these years, the preservation of Blue Earth County history was handled by individuals like Thomas Hughes. He published books including, Mankato It's First Fifty Years, and the in depth History of Blue Earth County, the definitive book on the county of the time. It remains an often-used book by people researching the early days of the county.

When interest in the society grew again in 1916, the society re-created itself. The new officers included Judge Lorin Cray as president. His dedication to history would prove vital to BECHS in the future. The Society acquired space in the Mankato Normal School to house and display its growing collections. The mission was the same as in 1901 and annual membership dues were set at \$1.00.

Since the Society became active again in 1916, it has remained active in the preservation of archives and artifacts of importance to Blue Earth County.

The First World War inhibited the society, but following the armistice, the society enthusiastically collected items important to the history of the county. Local efforts were buoyed by a statewide effort from the Minnesota Historical Society to establish more local societies and preservation efforts.

During the 1920s, the society planned trips to different historical places, the reading of papers on historical topics, collecting more artifacts, placing plaques and working on preserving buildings from destruction.

Centennial continued on Page 3.

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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.

Board of Trustees

Jane Tarjeson – President Larry Lundblad – Vice President Bernadette Wilson – Treasurer To Be Named – Secretary

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	Diago	
James Lundgren		Executive Director
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		Archives Assistant
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Join Us!

Please consider joining BECHS. Members receive free admission to the Heritage Museum, free access to the research center, free admission to the R. D. Hubbard House non-event tours, reduced admission for special events, quarterly newsletter, discount on many items in the museum shop, and the ability to help preserve the heritage of Blue Earth County!

Name	
Address	
City	
Phone	
Email	1 notices of programs
The e-m	ail addresses will be used to send notices of programs,
exhibits	and other BECHS news.

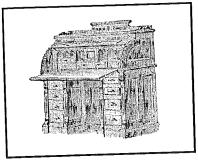
Membership Levels

Student: \$15.00	Individual: \$20.00
Household: \$30.0	0 Patron: \$100.00

Business

1 10 -1-1-1-100	\$25.00
Associate (less than 10 employees)	
Affiliate (10 to 50 employees)	\$50.00
	\$100.00
Sponsor (over 50 employees)	Ψ100.00

Make checks payable to BECHS and return with this form to 415 East Cherry Street, Mankato MN 56001.



From the Executive Director

As BECHS celebrates a century of existence and I have been reviewing what has taken place since 1901, one thing keeps coming to my mind, the importance of our Volunteers. I choose to capitalize the word, because these people are a vital part of what BECHS is. So much has been accomplished by these wonderful people. They make up the Boards and committees, serve as tour guides, research aides, special event support, and the list goes on. BECHS would be nothing without their dedication during the past 100 years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, past and present, who have helped fulfill BECHS' mission. From the initial group of citizens who met to organize BECHS through the people who volunteered this week, You have all generously given your time and talents to make our historical society better. We list our Volunteers in each newsletter. If you know someone on the list, please let them know how much their efforts have made a difference. I see the results every day.

James C. Lundgren Executive Director

BECHS Wish List

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

- > 3" & 4" black 3-ring binders for the archives.
- Many legal size file folders for the archives.
- > Three-prong extension cord
- > Surge protector
- > Radio/CD player for Museum Store to promote CD sales.

Centennial continued from page 1.

In rural Blue Earth County, the Seppmann Mill became the focus of BECHS interest in 1927. BECHS formed a committee to pursue the preservation of the mill built in 1864. Repair work was performed over a four-year period and the mill was later turned over to the state to become part of Minneopa State Park. Seppmann Mill has seen additional restoration by the DNR thereby keeping this example of early milling standing for future residents and visitors to enjoy.

BECHS continued to work on preserving local buildings during the 1930s. The George Ott Cabin, built in 1858, was to be torn down for development. Instead, BECHS made arrangements to have the cabin moved to Sibley Park where it remains today showing the results of one hardworking pioneer. The Societies collection of Native American artifacts grew substantially when BECHS purchased the collection of Frank Swain from Lake Crystal. Mr. Swain had been collecting items for 50 years.

While much was accomplished by BECHS during this time, the society also was faced with problems facing many of Minnesota's county historical societies, the lack of space and money.

The space issue was hampered when part of the collection was lost to a fire at the Mankato Normal School. The Society had plans for a fire proof building, but the hopes never turned into reality. A new temporary home was found in a combination of places. The public library offered basement space for the exhibits and the larger items were housed in a pavilion at Sibley Park. These locations allowed many people to view the exhibits.

The question of funding was partially aided by a law passed by the state legislature in 1929. This law permitted county governments to appropriate funds to county historical societies if they were affiliated with the Minnesota Historical Society. By sending in the institutional dues of \$3.00, BECHS ended up receiving a \$300.00 appropriation from the Blue Earth County Commissioners.

The collections continued to grow as more donations were made. The library wanted its basement space back so plans for a permanent home kept the Society's Board very busy. A grant application for WPA funds to build a new building at Sibley Park was declined.

The Society accepted items of historic significance into its artifact collections. Items were displayed at the library, the normal school (the precursor to Minnesota State University, Mankato) and at Sibley Park. The home moved from location to location when space was available. The search for a permanent home filled the thoughts of the BECHS Board of Trustees during these days.

When former BECHS president Judge Lorin Cray passed away in 1927, his will gave \$10,000 to BECHS to either find or build a permanent home. It would be over a decade before the Society would put it to use.

The ongoing search for a home ended when BECHS made arrangements to buy the home built by Mankato businessman Rensselaer D. Hubbard in 1871. R. D. Hubbard had passed away many years before, and his family was willing to sell the home to the Society.

The Society needed a permanent home, but was not sure they could afford to operate the house. After some public debate, the City of Mankato agreed to take ownership of the building and maintain it for as long as BECHS used it as a museum.

While some considered this a somewhat controversial decision by the city council, it resulted in the preservation of of Mankato's architectural gems. It is likely that without this arrangement the house would have been destroyed many years ago.

During the summer, BECHS volunteers made some changes to the house to allow for larger display rooms and moved the collections from the public library to the Hubbard House. The house opened as a museum to the public on September 1, 1938.

A permanent home allowed BECHS to accept many more donations of artifacts and archives. The Board of Trustees also took a significant step with the hiring of the first BECHS curator. Retired Librarian Margaret Gables was given the task of organizing and classifying the collections.

When the city of Mankato offered \$15,000 to either renovate the Hubbard House and carriage house or build a new museum, the BECHS Board decided to remain where they were. The \$15,000 was used partly on improvements and the rest put aside for future needs. The house exterior was sand blasted and painted, the carriage house exhibits were renovated, and a fire protection system was installed.

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The improved exhibit spaces allowed for more of the collections to be displayed. However, the growing collections were filling the house. Different ideas were discussed including using the basement of the house for additional displays.

The "Pioneer Exhibits" were designed for the basement. They consisted of a partial log cabin built in 1873 and carefully reassembled in the basement. Another room was transformed into a country school with desks, books and a heating stove. The rest of the basement was made available for exhibits of artifacts used by the first settlers of the county.

Mother Nature presented BECHS with a major challenge in 1968. Over seven inches of rain fell in Mankato in August of 1968, causing more than \$2 million in damage to homes and businesses throughout the city. The water was too much for the sewers to handle and a river flowed down Warren street and right into the museum. The Hubbard House and Carriage House basements were flooded with water and mud almost to the ceiling. Many artifacts were damaged beyond repair.

Many dedicated students assisted with the massive cleanup using their bare hands to sift through the mud looking for artifacts. The basement was cleaned up and life returned to normal.

During this period, the Society also worked with the MHS to identify significant county sites to be included in a statewide survey of sites. A number of Blue Earth County sites were added to the National Register including the Hubbard House in 1976. The next year a feasibility study was prepared for the complete restoration of the Hubbard House.

The Board implemented changes in recordkeeping that brought professional standards for museums to the Society. Standards for how the historical collections would be acquired and maintained were implemented. Staff hiring included consideration for professional museum training.

The Society's preservation efforts stayed close to home in the mid 1970's when the city made plans to remove the jog in Warren Street. The plan was to place Warren Street through the Hubbard Property and destroy the Carriage House. While the Board protested these plans, after many debates, the best BECHS could manage was saving the Carriage House by moving it to the north side of the Hubbard House. The move and reconstruction of the Carriage House started in 1976.

Years of adding artifacts and archives to its holdings filled the Hubbard House to its rafters. The Society's Board of Trustees once again was looking at ways to meet the growing needs of the society. The search for larger facilities took many years. Plans for a variety of options were considered. Lack of funding hindered these efforts.

In 1986, the Board learned that the Mankato Area Senior Citizens Inc. was looking for a partner to share the Newman Center Building. Both organizations raised \$175,000 and the Catholic Diocese, which still held the mortgage of the building, agreed to forgive an additional \$109,000 of the mortgage.

BECHS raised additional money for the renovation of the building into a professional designed museum exhibit gallery, research center, offices, artifact storage room, and museum store. The brand new "Heritage Center" opened to the public in three phases from June of 1989 to August of 1990.

With the Hubbard House now free of the BECHS collections, the restoration plan developed in the 1970's could begin. Much of the interior restoration was completed during the 1990s. Walls removed to make larger display areas were rebuilt. Furniture appropriate to the time period was donated or purchased with donated funds. A few Hubbard family items were located and brought back to the house. Slowly the house has returned to its grandeur of its early days.

Today the Blue Earth County Historical Society is still working on the restoration of the Hubbard House. While the restoration plan has come a long way, there is a bit of work left before it is finished.

The Heritage Center has provided thousands of people with help in tracing family roots and researching historical topics. The Collections storage has allowed for professional care of the artifacts and room for growth. Both the Heritage Center and Hubbard House have been toured by thousands of school children and visitors.

For 100 years BECHS has collected and shared the history of the county. It has been through good times and bad times and endured. While no one knows what the future will bring, I expect that BECHS will continue to ensure and preserve the past for the future.

New and Renewed Members

Anderson, Verna Anderson, Lester Anderson, Marian Apitz, Darell & Lucy Birbeck, Marilyn Boyce, Doris & Dave Brown, Perry & Jo Bunkers, Suzannne Cramer, James & Kathryn Dewitt, Joanne Bierbauer Dooley, Mary Dubke, Duane Engh, Jane Faust, Mrs. Claire Franklin, Elizabeth The Free Press Friday Mona Hodapp, Francis Holbrook, Viola How, Mary Ellen Humphrey, Mary Jenkins, Margaret & Alice Johnson, Barbara Jones, Eldon & Helen Keenan, Jerry Kind, Arn Kraft, Frank & Judy Malone, Tim Masberg, Rita

McLean, Mr. & Mrs. E. D. McNear, Virginia Meyer & Sons, Inc. Neilson, Gerald Neitge, Catherine Norland, Roger Nuessle, Ruth Nydahl, Irene Pennington, C. W. Phelps, Dean Piehl, Chuck & Kathy Ries, Chuck & Carol Ries, W. C. & Marge Ringheim, Marilyn Roscoe, Don Sanford, Dr. & Mrs. R. A. Schaub, Shirley Schweim, Tom & Mrs. Leona Scullin, Mike Strobel, Judith Swanson, Keisha Vetter, Willard & Doris Vik, Linda & Dennis Vosbeek, Judy Voss, Judy Ward, Mary Webb, Gerald & Donna YWCA of Mankato

From the Good Thunder Herald

Nov. 20, 1913

THANKSGIVING DINNER

We want to suggest a Thanksgiving dinner which may be prepared entirely from farm products with the exception of the coffee and the figs for the pudding. Of course, turkey is the traditional meat for a Thanksgiving dinner, but if for any reason it is not available try the following:

Puree of Tomato, Croutons
Stuffed Leg of Lamb Brown Gravy
Currant Jelly
Mashed Potatoes Buttered Peas
Creamed Turnips
Sweet Crab Apple Pickles
Cabbage and Sweet Green Pepper
Salad, with Sour Cream Dressing
Squash Pudding Whipped Cream
White Bread Butter Coffee

For a novel table decoration make a small pumpkin bowl, fill it with apples, and set it on a mat of autumn leaves.

PUREE of TOMATO

One pint can tomatoes
One cup water
One teaspoon chopped green pepper
Two teaspoons sugar
One teaspoon salt
Two level tablespoons butter
Two level tablespoons flour

Strain the tomatoes and rub the pulp through a sieve, add the water, the peppers, sugar and salt, and put over fire. Rub the butter and flour to a smooth paste and stir it into the tomato stock as it heats. Boil five to ten minutes and serve.

CROUTONS

Cut slices of buttered bread into squares and brown in the oven. Serve with the soup.

STUFFED LEG of LAMB

Scrape the flesh back from the bone at the shank end with the fingers and a slender knife. Loosen the flesh from the bone, push it back, and remove the bone at the joint. By making a small slit at the joint the remaining part of the bone may also be removed. Carefully remove the thin outer skin. Fill the bone cavity with a bread dressing seasoned with mint and skewer or sew the openings. Sear the cut surfaces, lay thin slices of fat salt pork over the top, and roast for an hour and a quarter.

SQUASH PUDDING

One and one-half cups sifted squash One cup milk One-fourth cup granulated sugar One-fourth cup brown sugar One-half teaspoon salt One egg One-fourth cup chopped figs

Bake in custard cups (for seven persons).

Mary L. Bull, Extension Domestic Science Specialist,
University farm, St. Paul.

Thanksgiving is at hand and the small boy has delectable visions of roast turkey, cranberry sauce and mince pie, and the older folks have equally good visions of their own in which they see family reunions and thankful times.

Archives and Artifact Donations July-September 2001

Mary Kay Ash: 1969 Map of Mankato, Menus - The Boiler Cafe and Cubs, "Good Stories" 1931, 1932, "Successful Farming" August 1929, and "Farm Journal" September 1935

Doris Bateman: 1862 Legislative Manual, Mason's Hat, and two hat rain covers

Theolin Benzie: Photo Album, Kodak Instamatic camera, Assorted flashbulbs, Voigtlander camera, WW1 Stereoscope slides, Book - "Minnesota River...", 1962 map of Mankato

Doris Diel: "75th Day of Days' Reunion" cookbook, pencil and magnet

Del Finch: Weed Burner, 1950s

Michael Frederick: Booklet - Loyola High School Special 15 Year Reunion edition, 2001 Mankato Mashers program, All Saints Parish Cookbook, Nic Petersen Co. bottle, "Use Mother Hubbard Flour" pencil. Framed local advertisements, 3 Beer labels, Hubbard Milling Co. notepad, 3 MN Viking Trading Cards, Loyola High School 2001 Commencement program, 8 Commemorative Buttons, Postcards of Teachers College, Birds eye view, and Sibley Park Zoo

Donald Glamm: Scrapbook of South Central Holstein

Joan Graham: Photographs of 1916 Commercial College class and Telex/Aemco workers, Telex/Aemco newsletters, WW1 American Red Cross Knitting Department Instructions

Winston Grundmeier: Postcards of Science and Arts Building, Old Nichols Building, Armstrong Building and Upper Minneopa Falls, Mankato Buildings 1973 calendar, Replica Minie ball from Battlefield of Wilson's Creek, (5) Grapeshot from Civil War, Indian Pottery, Book - History of the Great Northwest, Chevrons - US Air Force Staff Sergeant (2), Baking Tongs, Graduation cap and gown, Canning Jar Funnel, Mankato/North Mankato Trivia Game

Jerry Guenther: Guenther Family History

Alice Hadley: Books "The Rainbow", "Elsie's Choice", "Pictures of Natural History"

Paul Hadley: Books "Music Makers, Camp Fire Girls", "Outdoor Book, Camp Fire Girls", "Gately's Universal Educator," and Mankato Chamber of Commerce papers

Nancy Hamer: Thursday Reading Club 2000-2001 program

John Hedstrom: Men's blue dress shirt, Men's white dress shirt, Blue Sweater, Fleece Jacket, Pullover Jacket, 2 ski hats, 1 pair of sandals, Cold weather Headband, BECHS "Collections Manager" name tag, Fanny pack, DNR ski pass, MVRL library card, MN Driver's license,

Sprint Foncard, Book Credit Card, Once Read Books, Hong Kong Buffet Student Discount Card, Wildfire Pottery Business Card, Hiniker Automotive Repair business card

Katherine Hughes: 3 Hat boxes

Dennis Hurry: Adding Machine, Wire Recorder, and

Photos of Hurry's Appliance Store Mildred Johnson: Knight's Templar Hat Frances Kiffe: 2 Hat boxes and 2 fur hats

Mary Alice Koppelman: Brett's 85th Anniversary certificate.

Donna Langston: Oral Interview transcription -American Indian Women, Misc. photos, photocopies, printed quotes, 3 cassette tapes, 2 microcassette tapes, Video cassette - "Declassified Human Experimentation"

Frederick Matzke: 1916 Hubbard House postcard.

Mary McComb: Softball uniform shirt

MN State Harley Owners Group: Coaster - "H.O.G.

Ruth Nuessle: Zetetic Club scrapbooks 1987-1999, Mankato Public Schools Personnel Lists, 1957-1982.

Jerry Olinger: Sewing Machine

H. Tudor Owen: Book - Wales in America, From the Old Country to the New: The Welsh in Nineteenth Century America

Herb Schaper: Scrapbook - Service Company 135th Inf. 47th Division, Korean War and Booklet - Battle casualties 135th Inf. WW2

Georgia Schultz: Bib Overalls - Key Brand, Woman's glasses and metal glass case, Jamestown/Lime Township school records, Climbing Spikes, Gloves, Hat Shaped Crocheted pin cushion, Crocheted bag

Nancy Smoley: Woman's Running Shoes, Yellow Stole/sash, 5 Hair "Scrunchies", 3 Hair Headbands, and 3 Hair Clips

Dorothy Townsend: Woman's mink hat

Vera True: USGS map of Mankato West Quadrangle, 1951

Cecelia Vos: Girl Scout Uniform

Bradley Webb: Desert Storm uniform, newspaper accounts (2), Photocopies of letters home

Steve Woerhle: Cash register from Saulpaugh Hotel

> Thanks to all our donors for your help in preserving the history of Blue Earth County!

BECHS Volunteers since the last issue

Anderson, Elaine Apitz, Darrel Baer, Marcia Baird, Jane Bartsch, Glenn Bateman, Doris Bensch, Mary Ann Bensch, Bob Bergquist, Roger Boyce, Dave Burns, Inella Burton, Ronnie Comnick, Becky Cords, Betty Dooley, Mary Dutcher, Elaine Dutcher, Gale Falenczykowski, Lona Frederick, Michael Garlick, Russ Goff, Harley Goff, Janet Griffith, Helen Grundmeier, Shirley Grundmeier, Win Hadley, Paul Hagen, Tom Hanel, Rachael Hanson, Kathryn Harrison, Shelley Hennessey Jackie Hennessey, Ericka Hopman, Edith Jansen, Steve Jensen, Orv Jones, Jack Kennedy, Sue Kubicek, Joe Kubicek, Sylva

Kuehl, Rachael Lamson, Barb Lavitschke, Jo-an Lee, Elaine Lundblad, Larry Lundgren, Molly Madsen, Jack McComb, Mary McLaughlin, Theresa McLaughlin, Tom McQueen, Kae Nisja, Millie Norman, Beth Nussbaumer, Linda O'Clock, Clara Ohlenkamp, Ora Potter, Brad Potter, Jessica Ries, Bill Salsbery, Tom Sandon, Buzz Schmidt, Roberta Schultz, Jo Smith, H. Roger Sofchalk, Helen Tarjeson, Jane Thomas, Jo Twilight Garden Club Utermohlen, Mary Walker, Jeff Webb, Donna Wilson, Bernadette Wittrock, Eleanor Wright, Lorraine Ziegler, Jeanette Ziegler, Ken Zielske, Dan Zimmer, Beth

Upcoming events at other area Historical Societies:

Wanda Gag House will be open for the holidays on Dec. 1-2,8-9,15-16,22-23 from 1-4 p.m.

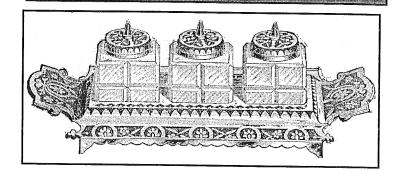
Brown County HS
Opening of Christmas Boutique,
Tree Walk & Menzel Village
Nov. 2-3 from 1-5 p.m.

Recent Financial and Equipment Donations were made by:

Bartsch, Glenn Blue Earth County Commissioners City of Mankato Dotson Company Helgeson, Constance

Jensen, Orv Qualset, Marian Schultz, Jo Tarjeson, Jane Vetter Stone Zetetic Club of Mankato

Thank You All Very Much!



From the President

A milestone has been reached in the history of BECHS; we have been in existence for 100 years. One hundred years ago several citizens of Mankato and the county had the foresight to begin to document the history of this area and preserve for future generations the tools of daily life (from the hand hewn wooden cultivator to the Apple computer).

What will the next 100 years bring? I do know that we start the next century on good solid footings, an excellent museum, an archives containing an unbelievable wealth of information on Blue Earth County, the Hubbard House brought back to its 1905 glory and the staff, volunteers and members to take us forward. BECHS mission to collect, preserve and promote the history of Blue Earth County is stronger now than it was 100 years ago, let us continue to carry this mission forward. With your continued support, we can make this happen.

Jane Tarjeson
BECHS President

Upcoming BECHS events Mark your calendar and join us.

South Central MN Genealogy Expo
At the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day
Saints Research Center
October 27, 2001 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Young Historians, **Double program!**November 10, 2001 10:30 AM –12:00 PM
Thanksgiving Decoration Making <u>AND</u>
Antique Toys. FREE!

Annual Christmas program at the Hubbard House December 3-4 6:30 – 9:00 PM

Hubbard House open for walk in visitors

December 8-9 1:00 – 4:00 PM December 15-16 1:00 – 4:00 PM December 22-23 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Holiday Goupon

Please give this coupon to a non-BECHS Member friend or relative. This is good for 10% off their next purchase at the

Blue Earth County Historical Society Museum Store

Offer valid Tuesday to Saturday 10 AM - 4 PM.

*Archival supplies

*Historical Books

*Postcards

*Souvenirs

*Toys

*Unique BECHS items

See the 2001-2002 Catalog for list of items.

Discount does not apply to consignment items or mail orders. Only one coupon per purchase, cannot be combined with other offers or discounts, offer expires December 22, 2001

Blue Earth County Historical Society 415 East Cherry Street Mankato MN 56001 Non-Profit Org.
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Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history for 100 years, 1901-2001