The Blue Earth County Historian

Blue Earth County Historical Society Winter 200

MANKATO HIGH SCHOOLS - PART THREE By Shirley Grundmeier

This is the final installment of a three part series on the high schools of Mankato. Shirley has researched these schools over the past two years in the archives of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. We hope you have enjoyed these articles. -Editor

MANKATO NORMAL SCHOOL; TRAINING SCHOOL; TEACHERS COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL; WILSON CAMPUS & COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The only other "public high school" in Mankato before the recent development of the Charter school, was (or had been) connected with a state teacher training school. When Mankato Normal School first opened in 1868, it was in temporary quarters, first in a church and later in a store. In 1870, the school moved into a new building on the site of the present Old Main at Fifth and Jackson Streets.

It was a three-story structure with four "model" (the terms "laboratory" and "campus" would come later) school rooms on the first floor, and a single "high school" room on the second. "High school" at that time included only 7th and 8th grades. A few private or parochial students only would go on further.

Anna M. Wiecking, long-time teacher in the Training Department of the Normal School, wrote later: "From the very beginning in the Normal School, provision was made for practice (later termed "student") teaching. Daniel Buck (State Legislator and proponent of education) pointed out that Model classes serve the same purpose for a Normal School that a hospital does for a Medical School.

Back in 1909, preparation for teachers continued only through eighth grade...In 1930 the kindergarten through sixth grade were organized into the College Elementary School and 7th through 9th into a Junior High."

In 1921, a Legislative Act had changed the name from Mankato Normal School to Mankato State Teachers College, and in 1929, a four-year curriculum had been adopted to train teachers for a full senior high, beginning in 1931 with a 9th grade. Each year a grade was added and the first 12th grade class graduated in the spring of 1935. Children from all over the Mankato area attended the Training School, including rural students who were bused in.

Teachers College High School boasted some kind of record in 1934 when, among its 134 students there were five sets of twins, two fraternal and three identical! A

local physician estimated that only one out of every 80 persons was born a twin.

From the beginning, the new high school's aim was two-fold: to "sell" the school to the people of Mankato and surroundings, and to point out that "this institution will serve as a leader in developing educational ideas and methods." Under the leadership of Principal Lee O. Garber (1933-1941), it did just that.

As well as a full academic program, including Industrial Arts for both boys and girls, athletics, music and drama involved most of the students, with every child in the six-year junior and senior high in some chorus or glee club or participating in a play. A "Dancing Club" met early on Monday morning taught by college phy ed majors. Each student attending paid one cent to cover the cost of music for the piano player.

Principal Garber's philosophy was that "learning of facts is important but the development of understanding is of far greater significance". He set up an activities program for the 11th and 12th graders for the last hour of the day, outlining activities. Students who needed more time for study were to participate in two of those activities; those who didn't need study time could participate all five days.

In the first year alone, there were four main activities: a recognition banquet, senior prom, junior banquet given for seniors and a senior reception. "The change in pupil behavior is remarkable...this program has done more than any 'class work' to bring about social development." (Teacher consensus)

The last class graduated from Teachers College High School in 1941. A new feature that year was an "Annual"—The Cardinal. It would be a first and a last. Money to run the school was scarce, less than 10% per student to operate than comparable schools in Illinois and Indiana. The Annual Report noted: "A high school in a Teachers College should be even better than that of the average city school...no attempt should be made to reinstate the high school until a new building is available and adequate support guaranteed."

Retired *Free Press* reporter Ken Berg was a sophomore at College High School the year the last class graduated, on May 29, 1941. There were 535 graduates from Mankato's five public and parochial high schools that year, with College High contributing 26. On May 19, faculty and students gathered in Old Main to hear the announcement that lack of funds and shortage of facilities would mean the upper three grades would have to go.

Schools Continued on page 3

The Blue Earth County Historian Winter 2001

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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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!

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The e-mail addresses will be used to send notices of programs,

Membership Levels Student: \$15.00 Individual: \$20.00 Household: \$30.00 Patron: \$100.00

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Business

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



From the Executive Director

Happy New Year to all our members, volunteers and donors. We hope that the upcoming year will be a healthy and prosperous New Year for you all. BECHS has been reviewing the year 2000 and we are pleased at what we have accomplished.

Several new exhibits went in to our Exhibit Gallery and traveling exhibits were put up at the fair and Rainbow Foods. We held a number of very interesting events. Our Museum Store did very well with the addition of new inventory. We helped many people learn more about their ancestors in our research center. A more complete review will be available at the Annual Meeting coming up in March. Please look for the flyer and join us for our recap and program.

We have another couple of events coming up before the annual meeting. The Young Historians will be having an event on January 27th on bookbinding. Participants will be able to see how books used to be bound by hand and make one of their own to keep.

The Young Historians meet every other month. These are generally FREE programs that are open to students from 3rd to 6th grade and their families. In March, the program will be on Betsy Tacy. The May program will likely be on Mankato history. The July program will be on antique toys. Please call the office for details or suggestions for possible Young Historian programs.

In February, BECHS will be hosting a workshop from the Minnesota Historical Society Conservation Department. This will be a chance for participants to get professional suggestions for keeping their family treasures for future generations. This program is FREE! Please call the office, as registrations are limited. The dates and times are listed on the back page of the newsletter.

The upcoming year should be another successful year for BECHS. We are working on the next phase of the Hubbard House restoration. The basement will be prepared to house new exhibits. The Vietnam Veteran's exhibit will be moving on to a new museum at the end of 2001. It has been a wonderful exhibit. We will be making plans for what will replace it in the exhibit gallery.

It has been a pleasure to work for a Society with such a rich history and so many dedicated volunteers. I hope you all have a chance to come see what we are working on throughout the year.

James C. Lundgren

School article Continued from page 1

The next fall, most of College High's displaced students joined the students of Mankato High, also displaced after the disastrous fire of July 1941, in the crowded halls and classrooms of Lincoln Junior High. It would be more than a decade before any of the public high school students would enter their own new building.

Following the depression years and World War II, new schools had to take a back seat to more pressing building needs. But finally, the Mankato High School Class of 1952 graduated from the new high school on Park Lane. Up on Fifth Street, the enrollment at Mankato State Teachers College was growing rapidly with the return of servicemen and increased elementary school population.

The college received a new name, Mankato State College in 1957 and new buildings on what was now a split campus—partly the Valley Campus and partly the Highland Campus. In 1958, a new "state-of-the-art" public school was erected specifically for use as a lab school for the College.

Wilson Campus School, named for the president of the United States as were all the public elementary schools in Mankato, was designed to provide teacher education students an up-close "model" school right on campus. Twenty-five students would be enrolled in each grade K-6 and 50 in each grade 7-12. Elementary students would come only from the neighborhood, but any secondary student from any part of District 77 could enroll in the high school.

The school grew rapidly under a series of able administrators and qualified teachers, with a sturdy program based mostly on research and sound teaching methods. Soon its students were winning district and regional speech competitions. The Wilson Orchestra added several "A" trophies at state contests and the track and tennis teams set records.

By 1968, the school had a reputation as a successful experimental and innovative laboratory school along with its primary function of providing supplementary teacher education. New programs included the use of closed circuit television, computer assisted instruction, working toward a learning resource center, flexible scheduling and an un-graded teaching system.

Then came the opening of school year 1968-1969, with a new director at the helm, Dr. Donald Glines. His expressed purpose was to "take a school and in a short time implement all the exciting new innovations in education". He felt Wilson had become too "traditional" and not experimental enough. He was frank in not knowing whether all his programs would work, but he

was convinced "traditional schools have largely failed in their task."

His major changes in this first year would include: individually paced instruction, personalized programs, team teaching, a "daily variable" schedule, no bells, no report cards, optional attendance.

By the time graduation rolled around in June 1969, Wilson seniors had decided they didn't need commencement speakers; that already everything worth saying had been said, and that graduation would take just half an hour.

Plans for the next year included going to a 12-month school year, "smorgasbord" scheduling with students designing their own programs, no grade level or subject boundaries. In addition, by the fall of 1970, Glines was challenging the State Department of Education's requirements. He complained that "no teachers are being prepared to teach in Wilson-type schools."

About this time, the State College Board had decided that two other laboratory schools in Minnesota would have to close and a decision on a third was pending. Wilson was spared, although a visiting team from the State had recommended that state funding be withdrawn, except for funding from Mankato State itself.

Glines remained at Wilson until the school year ended in 1972, then was transferred to MSC's College of Education, where he directed the "Program for Selecting Educational Alternatives". Wilson's new director, Dr. Joseph Schulze continued many of the innovations started by Glines, and felt "the Wilson philosophy could teach people to be more self-motivating and creative."

The next two years were difficult for Wilson in the face of budget cuts both at the state level and the local college level. The proposed merger of the Valley and Highland Campuses put the very existence of Wilson in doubt. New buildings were needed and Wilson's was already there on Upper Campus.

One bright spot in these turbulent years was that, in 1976, the Wilson Warriors had a basketball team "considered then, and still considered today, to be the best high school basketball team to ever come out of Mankato." Coach Rich Coyle, who coached the team in junior high days, said: "They were so far ahead of everybody else—we only lost one game in two years. All they wanted to do was play basketball."

Wilson supporters tried every angle to keep their beloved school alive, even during its last year, 1976-77. The staff planned for early graduations and preparing transcripts to other schools. Work was in progress to initiate a tuition-based, private alternative school in Mankato. Nevertheless, Wilson itself was forced to shut

down because, as U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger said years later, "there was no legal mechanism to offer sustained operating financing as a public school".

The new Wilson Community School opened in September 1977 founded chiefly on the principles of its predecessor. Its enrollment was always small; most of the former Wilson students dispersing to other schools around the city. It finally closed several years later.

Last May, twenty-five years after he left Mankato, Donald Glines returned to help Mankato State University set up an archive collection on Wilson, with the help of Orv Jensen, BECHS volunteer and former Wilson instructor. Glines is proud that he tried to create the most flexible school in the country and he feels that Wilson is a model for the charter schools of this era.

Ron Newell, one of the teachers who helped start the Minnesota New Country School, "Wilson...was successful (but) why aren't there more schools like it today?" Rick Lund, assistant principal at Franklin Elementary wrote his thesis for his Specialist Degree in Educational Administration at MSU. For his research on Wilson twenty years later, he queried former Wilson students. Two-thirds said they would enroll at Wilson again, the majority (94 of 126 responding) thought "communities should explore Wilson programs". Over half of the responders disliked having no required classes and no required attendance. Two-thirds responding were college graduates, 24 had master's degrees and seven had doctoral degrees.

RIVERBEND ACADEMY

Thirteen years after Wilson Campus School closed its doors, a new high school opened. The RiverBend Academy began operations on September 5, 2000 in a location in Belle Mar Mall. Mankato's first Charter school was underway.

The public school for students in grades 7-12, using a project-based curriculum similar to the Minnesota New Country School, was overwhelmed when a late enrollment surge since June raised student numbers from 90 to 150 and advisors and volunteers hurried to build new desks for them.

The push for a charter school in Mankato had been gaining ground for years, even though supporters were denied sponsorship from Mankato Area Public Schools on three different occasions. Then an eleventh-hour move by the state Board of Education granted RiverBend sponsorship just before it went out of business.

Harking back to Wilson Campus School under Dr. Donald Glines, the new school is innovative and

individualized. There is no grading system, no bells and very few classes in the traditional sense.

Just after RiverBend opened, another *Free Press* article featured EdVisions, RiverBend's parent company which also helped create the Minnesota New Country School in Henderson, and its grant from a foundation started by Bill Gates of Microsoft fame. The grant supports small schools encouraging student-focused learning.

These schools contract with EdVisions, who then contract to provide teachers, known as advisors, and assist in other ways. Boards made up of advisors and teachers run the individual schools. The hope is that the new non-traditional schools are the wave of the future.

Perhaps twenty-five years from now, those students now at RiverBend, as well as all the other students in Mankato's high schools, will find that their experience there became something significant in their lives, and that they will someday "come home just to see if it's still there.

Editor's Note. The last issue of *The Historian*, Part Two of this article incorrectly spelled the name of Mother Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger and the date of the arrival of the three sisters who founded Good Counsel should have been 1865. We regret these errors.



The Hubbard Family at Home

A few of the BECHS Volunteers and Staff who helped during the 2000 Christmas at Hubbard House event. From left to right they are: Lindsey Molstad as the maid, Kathryn Hanson as Frank Helen, (Mrs. Hubbard #2), Jane Tarjeson as Mary Esther (Mrs. Hubbard #1), John Hedstrom as Jay Hubbard, and Win Grundmeier as R. D. Hubbard.

Recent Financial and Equipment Donations were made by:

Anderson, Marian
Anonymous
Baer, Marcia
Barnes & Noble Mankato
Bartsch, Glenn
Bierbauer, Charlene
Blue Earth Co. Commissioners
Brey, Ronald
City of Mankato
Confer, Elizabeth
Couglan Companies
Crysteel Truck Equipment
DeWitt, Joanne Bierbauer
Dooley, Mary

General Mills
Jensen, Orv & Mary Ann
Mildred M. Jones Trust
Jones Page Jacobson Trust
Kubicek, Joe
Donald C. & Marjorie
Meredith Foundation
Qualset, Marian
Schultz, Jo

Including
Memorials for Gus Johnson
and Mildred M. Jones

Thank You All Very Much!

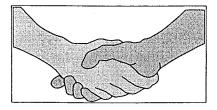
BECHS Wish List

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

- CD player for museum store and programs
- Collapsible wheelchair
- · Set of screwdrivers, assorted sizes
- Cotton sheets and blankets for use in the collections
- Volunteers for BECHS Committees

New Interns at BECHS!

This spring BECHS will be having Interns helping in the museum. Paul Mellon and Matthew Coulsey will be joining us from Bethany College. Paul will be serving as an aide in the Research Center and collections department. Matthew will be helping with some marketing and development projects in the office. Welcome Paul and Matt! We hope you enjoy your time at BECHS.



BECHS Volunteers since the last issue

Allen, Scott Anderson, Elaine Apitz, Darrel Baer, Marcia Baird, Jane Ballard, Jim Bartholdi, Roberta Bartsch, Glenn Bergquist, Roger Bethany Piano Players Boyce, Dave Burns, Inella Burton, Ronnie Christianson, John Cords, Betty Crogg, Tyler Decker, Audrey Delluge, Jacob Demaray, Kandi Dooley, Mary Eick, Jason Eick, Tim Falenczykowski, Lona Fitzgerald 6th Grade Choir Francis, Pat Frederick, Michael Frisch, Carlienne Garlick, Russ Goff, Harley Graff, Mason Griffith. Helen Grundmeier, Win Grundmeier, Shirley Hadley, Paul Hagen, Tom Hanson, Kathryn Hofmeister, Gary Hopman, Edith Jaenisch, Carol Jansen, Steve Jaspers, Tony Jensen, Mary Ann Jensen, Orv

Jones, Jack JWP Select Choir Kennedy, Sue Kubicek, Joe Lamson, Barb Lavitschke, Jo-an Lee, Elaine Leiferman, Elaine Lundblad, Larry Lundgren, Molly Maple River Boys Quartet Maple River Girls Ouartet McComb, Mary McLaughlin, Theresa Molstad, Lindsey MSU Women's Singers Nisja, Millie Nussbaumer, Linda O'Clock, Clara Ohlenkamp, Ora Otto, Amber Recknor, Katie Ries, Bill Ries, Bryan Salsbery, Tom Sampson, Jillian Schrader, Julie Schultz, Jo Schweiss, Lorraine Smith, H. Roger Sofchalk, Helen Strum, Brian Tarjeson, Jane Thomas, Jo Umphrey, Miranda Walker, Jeff Webb, Donna Wiederhoeft, Traci Wilson, Bernadette Wright, Lorraine Ziegler, Ken Zielske, Dan Zimmer, Beth

The drawing for the painted slate from the R. D. Hubbard House was held on December 5, 2000.

Barbara Weiler was the lucky winner.

More of these hand painted one-of-a-kind slates are available in the museum store.

ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACT DONATIONS October-December 2000

Diane Alm: 1965 MSC Newman Center fund-raiser program

Anonymous: pricing machine, Victory Loan Volunteer membership cards

Linley Barnes: flour bin, kerosene heater, seed bag with spreader, clothes stumper

Betty Bowman: Civil War letters

Barb Brock: Stuffed "Barney" doll

Janice Brown: Ink blotter "Gibbs and Anderson Painting"

Brown County Hist. Soc.: St. John's Lutheran Church memorabilia

Doris Burger: Lincoln Park photo, booklet, "Blue Earth County" 1938, drawings of design of Lincoln Park

Robert Burgess: Sample, stone, Mankato-Kasota Stone Inc.

Inella Burns: Two embroidered Eastlake chairs and settee

Verona Burton: 26 "Know Your Community" program videos, 29 "Summit Center Spotlight" program videos

Betty Cords: Lake Crystal Times article, Lake Crystal Project Discovery, "Old Town Roads and Services", "Old Town Crier" pamphlets, "Lake Crystal Area Development Committee", "Lake Crystal Community Center", "Old Town Association", Lake Crystal Project Discovery, survey, Lake Crystal

Evie Erdman: 1911 MHS commencement program, newspaper insert, 1970 community shelter plan

Faribault CHS: 1926 County Plat map

Daniel Fogal: 1908 Mankato Township Death register, Birth and Death forms, Birth and Death Certificates

Mike Frederick: Commemorative mugs

Ethel Frost: 1897 The New Cabinet Cyclopaedia, WW2 uniforms and accessories (WAC and AAC)

Don Goettl: Plow/harrow, handmade

Dean Goff: Goff Family Records

Helen Griffith: Ground beef rake, mock chicken leg mold

Win Grundmeier: 9 photos Mankato scenes

Joel Hansen: 2 photos of City Hall, block print "City Hall"

Tim Hayes: Book charger used in the Mankato MVRL

John Hedstrom: pamphlets & brochures, Mankato City Hall and schools, button, megaphone

A. Katherine Hughes: Research paper on the memorializing of the Dakota Hanging.

Jackson County Historical Society: Mankato Commercial College yearbook 1921

Orv Jensen: Commemorative pop can, "Taylor Center Grand Opening"

Helen Jones: Motorola car telephone

Joe Kubicek: Smudge pot

Mary Macomb: 1884 pump organ

Mary McGrew: Minneopa Drive-In glasses, cigarette holder

James Neagbour: Framed picture, Easter Seals and Blue Earth County Courthouse

Earth County Courthouse

Carol Oney: MSC notebook "History of Media" notes

Elvera Mogren Peters: 20 photos of Blue Earth County

Mary Road: 1972 Farmfest scrapbook

Rita Schoenstedt: Photo album of MN River flood in Mankato

Joann Schultz: Photograph, threshing crew

Jo Schultz: Ink blotter election of F. B. Gabler

Tim Solie: Book, A Post Card History of Mapleton, MN

Jane Tarjeson: Mankato City Directory, 125th ed., "Action Realty" booklet, "First MN Gettysburg Commemorative" program, "MSNS Library Handbook", 2 ink blotters, "Fowler & Pay", Floyd Olsen campaign pin, 4 photographs "Seedcorn Man" and 3 local portraits

Waseca County Historical Society: Photo, Front St.

David & Mary Wiecking: Five photographs, Metal toy train engine and 4 cars, toy 16" buck saw, toy 14" buck saw, 1917 Otaknam, I.O.O.F. pins & jewelry, 2 beer mugs Grain Belt, 18" German Doll, 11" German Doll, 6" German Doll, 4.5" German Doll.

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

New and Renewed Members

Anderson, Marian Anderson, Tanja Anderson, Elaine Baer, Marcia Barnard, Charles & Marilyn Bartholdi, Roberta Berger, Doris Bowman, Bettie Jane Lloyd Clements, Tom Cummiskey, June Diel, Doris Erikson, Glenn & Helen Farnham, Joe & Malda Farnsworth, Maureen Frederick, Michael Frederick, Gerald Frost, Ethel Habein, Dr. & Mrs. H. C. Halstead, Sharon Hamer, Nancy Hanson, Norma

Hopman, Edith Howard, Don Hughes, Katherine Ireland, Mr. & Mrs. L. H. Kalvig, Ann Lavitschke, Jo-an Miller, Hermine Neumiller, Robert Norris, Margaret Pettigrew, Quintin & Karen Powell, Nancy Prechel, Clare Schutt, LaDonna Schweim, Tom & Leona Sofchalk, Helen St. Peter & Paul Jesuit Community Steele, Richard & Ramona Swenson, Rachel Wandersee, Darren Weigt, Tom Zwart, Ted & Jeanne

Volunteers in our research center found the following article in the old newspapers. It is believed to come from the Mankato Review in 1909. Considering how dependent we have become on the automobile, the Anti-Auto Society puts forth some interesting ideas.

Anti-Auto Society's 10 Commandments

The following are the new commandments agreed upon by the Farmers' Anti-Auto Protective Society at its annual convention, just held in the different states in the Union.

First – On discovering an approaching team, the autoist must stop offside and cover his machine with a tarpaulin painted to correspond with the scenery.

Second – The speed limit on country roads this year will be secret and the penalty for violations will be \$10.00 for every mile an offender is caught going in excess of it.

Third – In case an automobile makes a team run away, the penalty will be \$50 for the first mile,

\$100 for the second mile, and \$200 for the third mile, etc., that the team runs; in addition to the usual damages.

Fourth – On approaching a corner where he cannot command a view of the road ahead, the automobilist must stop not less than 100 yards from the turn, toot his horn, ring a bell, fire a revolver, halloo and send up three bombs at intervals of five minutes.

Fifth – Automobiles must again be seasonably painted – that is, so they will merge with the pastoral ensemble; and not be startling. They must be green in the spring, golden in the summer, red in autumn and white in winter.

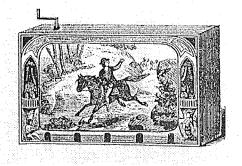
Sixth – Automobiles running on the country roads at night must send up a rocket every mile, and wait ten minutes for the road to clear. They may proceed carefully, blowing their horns and shooting roman candles.

Seventh – All members of the society will give up Sunday to chasing automobiles, shooting and shouting at them, making arrests and otherwise discouraging country touring on that day.

Eighth – In case a horse will not pass an automobile, not withstanding the scenic tarpaulin, the automobileist will take the machine apart as rapidly as possible and conceal the parts in the grass.

Ninth — In case an automobile approaches a farmer's house when the roads are dusty, it will slow down to one mile per hour, and the chauffeur will lay the dust in front of the house with a hand sprinkler worked over the dashboard.

Number ten was missing from the article.



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Upcoming BECHS Event!

PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY TREASURES



A conservator from the Minnesota Historical Society will use examples brought by participants to explain how to best preserve your heirlooms. There are two sessions to choose from.

February 8, 2001 February 9, 2001

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

This event is free Reservations required Please call 345-5566

BECHS Committees Need You!

The Society has several standing committees to help us meet our mission of preserving the history of Blue Earth County. Some of them are in need of members at this time. If you have even a small amount of time to donate and interest in history, please consider helping us.

Committees needing members.

Exhibits Committee
Programs Committee
Marketing Committee
Development Committee

BECHS will be hosting an open forum on Thursday February 1, 2001 to discuss what new exhibits we want to put in the gallery. We will then need members to help plan each specific exhibit.