



The Blue Earth County **Historian**

A publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

Spring 2004

**Roy Andrews, Gracie Allen
and George Burns**



**Ed Andrews as Koko
in the Mikado**



In this issue:

The Andrews Family Opera Company

The Blue Earth County Historian
Spring 2004

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

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***Tidings from the
Executive Director***

Greetings everyone!

Last month we held our annual meeting and we were pleased to see so many new faces. We had the largest turnout for an annual meeting in recent memory. Bill Holm provided everyone with a very entertaining program. We reviewed the annual report, acknowledged out-going board member Marcia Baer, and heard from our very active Programs Committee about their upcoming plans. The election of the new Board of Trustees took place. Several members began their second term, and Vail Belgard and Ron Gower joined the Board of Trustees. Dan Zielske and Theresa McLaughlin were elected President and Vice President respectively. Dana Niu was named to fill the unexpired portion of the secretary's term.

I cannot thank all of our volunteers enough. Over 100 people donate their time every year. Last year the volunteers gave in excess of 6,200 hours. That is the equivalent of three full time positions. Some people help out for one project and then move on; others seem to be here every day. To each and every one of you, THANK YOU. We can see the results of your hard work and you make us the successful Society that we are. Please look over the list of volunteers and if you see names that you know, please tell them how much you appreciate their efforts.

We will be having our annual volunteer appreciation event on April 27, 2004. Volunteers are welcome to join us for lunch. As *The Historian* is scheduled to be sent out the third week of April, this means the event is next week. Please call the office to RSVP.

The Hubbard House is being prepared for the upcoming season. We are always looking for more people to serve as guides. The Hubbard House is a popular tourist

**The Blue Earth County Historical Society's Heritage Center Gallery,
Museum Store and Research Center are open
Tuesday 10:00 to 12:00, 1:00 to 4:00 and 5:00 to 8:00
Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:00**

attraction during the summer months. Let us know if you are willing to lend a hand. For those who prefer not to be in a public role, we have numerous behind the scenes jobs that you can do. The Twilight Garden Club also appreciates extra hands with weeding and planting.

I look forward to a new season of activity for the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Please join us for one of our many interesting programs, or drop by to see the new exhibits. There is always something new going on.

James Lundgren
Executive Director



Rapidan Heritage Society

The Second Year - 2003

RHS continues to move forward, membership is at over 60 members. Fund raising monies and donations continue to come in, enabling the depot project to move forward.

This summer restoration work began on the depot. Some siding was replaced, more than was originally planned. Also the north wall and sill plate were replaced. Primer paint has been applied on three sides. We are now waiting on delivery of four large double hung windows that have been donated, so the front side of the depot may be finished.

Memorial Day, RHS held an ice cream social in the Rapidan Park following the Memorial Service. Fifty to sixty people attended and there was a drawing held for a wood duck house.

In September RHS hosted its second annual fund raising excursion bus trip, "Ride to the Past." This was a tour of the James J. Hill House. Hill was the builder of the Great Northern Railway. The house was built in the 1890's and is still the largest mansion in Minnesota. After a picnic lunch, we took a scenic train ride on the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway,

through the beautiful St. Croix River Valley. On this train, we got to see the last still-operating mail car in North America. We are all looking forward to this year's trip, hope you can join us. P.S. Last year's bus was full.

Last fall RHS acquired the library shelves from the old Rapidan High School, which had been relocated to the Vernon Center School. We plan to use some of them in the Depot.

We're on the Web! This year RHS set up a Web site and share it with Rapidan Township. RHS and Township information can be accessed at www.rapidandepot.com.

In these last few months the Board and a few members have been working on sesquicentennial plans. This year marks 150 years of settlement in Rapidan Township and we're planning a celebration on Saturday, September 11, 2004. Come join us in planning and working toward making this celebration a once-in-a-lifetime extravaganza.

Also invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to join Rapidan Heritage Society, so we all may better preserve our area's history.

Daryl Lachmiller
President

Memorial Day Services Rapidan Memorial Park

The traditional Honor Guard with volley and taps salute will begin May 31st at 9 a.m. with the North Mankato American Legion Post 518 performing the honors.

"Passage of Time" by Marian Anderson will be unveiled after the service. This special print highlights interests of the Rapidan area during the last 150 years.

After a short program, Marian Anderson will be available for signing prints. Watch your local papers for more information.

The Andrews Family Opera Company

by
Shirley Grundmeier
BECHS Volunteer

The popular current exhibit at the Blue Earth County Historical Society Museum is called "That's Entertainment," with the focus on some of the ways our county people spent their leisure time back in the 1930s and '40s. One of the features is devoted to the bands "that played the Kato," both the national Big Bands and the area bands and orchestras past and present who were (and some who still are) "playing the Kato."

Music in some form has been an important part of our country's culture since its earliest days, and particularly so to the pioneers who populated this area. Ethnic groups brought their music with them--the Welsh, Germans, Norwegians, Irish and Scottish, to name only a few--and these people have maintained their traditions since they first arrived in the 1850s. On their festive days, music heads the list, whether it's community singing, instrumental ensembles, dance groups, solo competitions, etc. Wherever they gather--in a park, a church, a school, a civic center, a home--some form of music bursts forth for the joy of those who listen.

Music was in the souls of the earliest pioneers to come to our area, and in the beginning many of the stalwart settlers could--and would--allow it to be heard only in connection with their religious practices and traditions. In 1856, something new was brought to Minnesota along with the family of a sturdy young Methodist preacher from Illinois. It was a melodeon, a small organ-toned instrument resembling a harpsichord, which was to become the family's most important possession.

Rev. John R. Andrews was the grandson of an English planter in the West Indies and his Spanish wife. Their son Thomas immigrated to Virginia during the Revolutionary War where he married, and with his wife went on to Indiana, where his son John R. was born. Young John in his turn moved further west with his wife, Delilah, and their children, settling on a small farm on the north shore of Lake Washington. There

they combined agriculture and religion as best they could. The circuit-riding preacher and his family, now numbering ten children, would gather around the melodeon each day to sing hymns.

It soon became apparent that the children were all musically gifted, and one of the girls was sent to learn music in St. Paul. When she returned, she taught the rest to read scores and to play instruments. Soon they were singing for church services and sacred concerts. Their proud father, of course, hoped they would become church musicians. As time went on, the popular group began to add secular music to their repertoire. Their father defended them, saying that God had given them voices and he saw no reason they shouldn't use them!

In 1876, the family began its professional career as a concert company, one of two family groups to do so in Minnesota. The other group was The Hutchinson's -- the two groups were friends and occasionally sang together. The Andrews siblings had been appearing with the usual instruments such as piano, guitar, cello, violin etc. but now they featured a set of 80 Swiss bells, and became known as The Andrews Family Swiss Bell Ringers.

For several years, all ten traveled in three large wagons, one an ornate band wagon that opened into a complete stage, and was pulled by six show horses. The family toured the surrounding states and as far afield as Kansas to great acclaim. Two of the boys then decided to leave the company, one to study law and the other the field of medicine.

And now, the fortunes of the remaining eight would change dramatically. It was 1881 and the big band wagon was rolling down Mankato's Front Street, but it was not to herald the bell ringers. It had been hired by the visiting Chicago Opera Company to publicize their performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pinafore*. After its run, the Andrews group was booked into the Opera House.

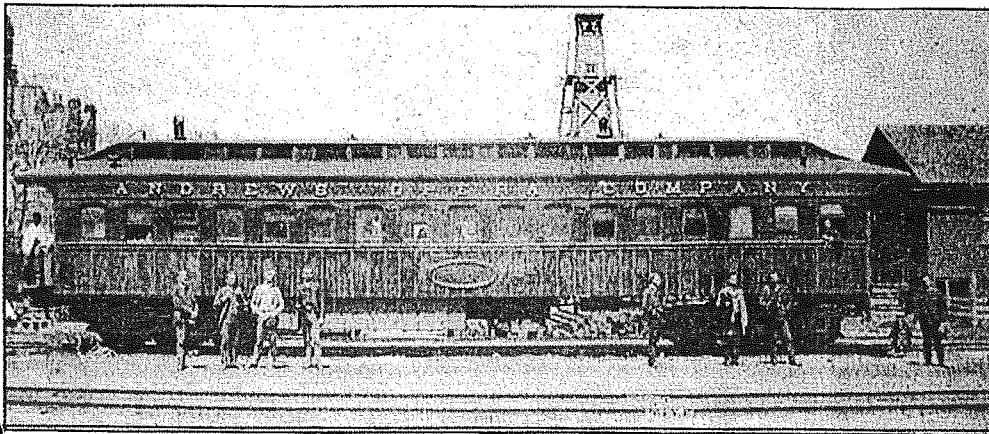
That night, the Andrews family heard their first light opera (as distinguished from "grand opera," at that time heard only in the big cities.) They were so impressed that they decided that same day that they would have an opera troupe of their own! And, of course, they would play Mankato! The Opera House was the venue of

choice at the time and attracted all the traveling companies. Later that year, a company from Boston would be there.

The Andrews Bell Ringers were invited back to the Opera House in January 1882. Following a performance one night, fire destroyed the hall, along with most of the Swiss bells, and the company's costumes and scenery. It seemed that the Andrews family was facing a disaster from which they could not recover.

Fate stepped in with an "angel" in the form of an Englishman in the area to learn farming methods. He and his wealthy father were also lovers of Gilbert and Sullivan and were proud to back the new Andrews Opera Company to the tune of \$50,000. In a short time, the fledging company had sets, costumes, an orchestra, additional cast members, and professionals to teach them the opera business.

Early rehearsals were held at the Andrews farm and their first *Pinafore* performance was given in St. Peter in January 1884. By now, the original Andrews clan had husbands, wives and children in the company, and by 1890 they were traveling via the railroads in their own comfortable Pullman car.



The Andrews Opera Company personal railroad car

During the '90s their travels took them east to Philadelphia, south to Georgia and west to Albuquerque, as well as an 8-week booking at the old Lyceum Theater in Minneapolis. They would never become rich--not when they charged only \$1.00 for the best seats in the house down to a mere 25 cents for

the gallery!

In a letter to the *Omaha World-Herald* on October 27, 1929, Willa Cather speaks of the pleasure she derived from seeing her first opera, performed by the Andrews Opera Company, when she was 16 or 17. Later, she even mentions the troupe in her book *Song of the Lark*.

Long before, they had added grand opera to their repertoire of 30 light operas, operas like *Faust*, *Il Trovatore*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Carmen* - all sung in English. They did this primarily because the company's leading members had been born and raised in the Midwest, and as a result they were an enormous success all over the United States.

The Andrews suffered their share of misfortune; a train wreck in Minnesota in 1892 killed their leading soprano, Nannie Andrews, the wife of Ed Andrews, and a fire in Peoria, Illinois in 1894 destroyed all their costumes and scenery. They built a 60-room resort hotel on Lake Tetonka near Waterville, Minnesota, and put on spectacular productions for three summers until they were forced into bankruptcy.

The Andrews Opera Company played its final season in the summer of 1901. Among the reasons were that chain companies, like the Schubert organization, now controlled major theaters and opera houses and these were no longer available to independent groups like the Andrews'.

Many family members would go on to become famous in their own right, chiefly Ed Andrews, who performed the role of Koko in *Pinafore* over 1000 times with various opera companies. During his 50-year career, he appeared in every state in the union, and after his retirement he appeared in Mankato in two of his favorite roles.

Ed returned to Mankato in 1934 to stage and to star in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. He had played the part of the Major General 400 times in New York and other major venues. There was a cast of 10 principals, a chorus of 40 picked voices and a 15-piece

orchestra. Dr. Hiram J. Lloyd was musical director and local soloists included Florence Poling Deters, Glenn Shoemaker, Valta Johnson and Brinley Jones.

The stellar performances were followed the next year by Ed's return to reprise his role of Koko in *The Mikado*, as well as again direct the production. The *Mankato Free Press* of December 10, 1935 noted he was "flawless" as Koko, and achieved "professionally perfect timing in his direction." Mrs. Deters was back as Yum-Yum, Mrs. Fred Manderfel was Katisha; other well-remembered locals were P. M. Ferguson as the Mikado, Stanley Neubert, John Deters and Daisy Strohmman.

Dr. Lloyd was again music director, with Alexis Parlova heading up the orchestra. The elegant costumes were locally produced by the Reedfield Costume Company and created from the original D'Oyly Carte designs as presented at the Savoy Theater in London. All proceeds from the production were donated to the Mankato Community Chest fund.

Ed Andrews returned to Mankato some years later to live with his nephew, Dr. Roy N. Andrews and died here at the age of 84. He had remarried after the death of his wife, Nannie, to Katherine Lee (the sister of Mrs. C. E. Wise) of Mankato. They had a daughter, Caroline, born on the Andrews family farm on the shores of Lake Washington. After her early schooling in Mankato, she began vocal study with her father's sister, Madam Alice Andrews Parker, at the latter's "beautiful studio overlooking Riverside Drive at 84th Street, the rendezvous for many of the brightest lights of Manhattan's musical firmament." (*Mankato Free Press* May 6, 1928.)

When she returned to Mankato

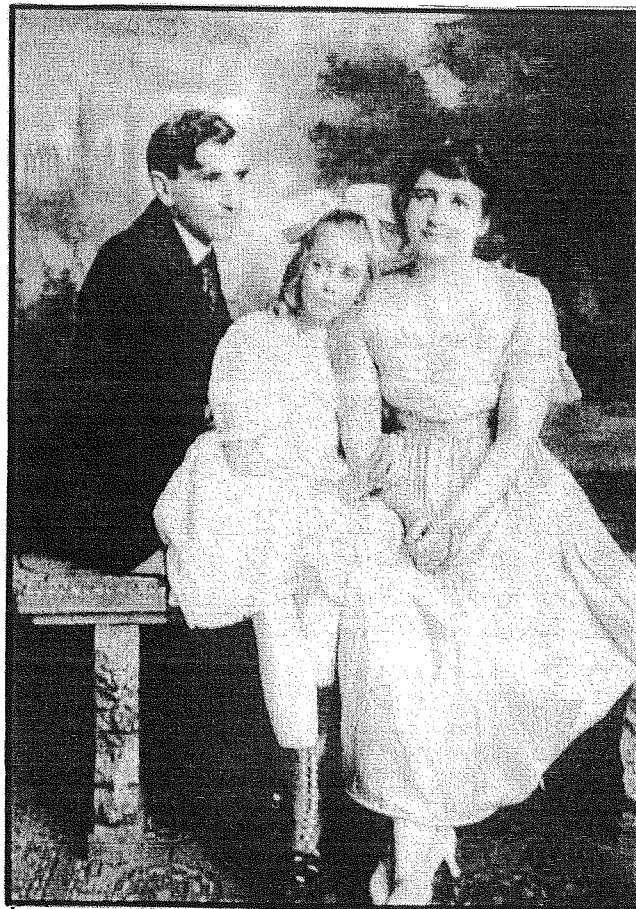
for her first "Homecoming" concert, Caroline was one of those bright lights having appeared with opera companies and symphony orchestras throughout the nation. She had also starred in a weekly broadcast from New York, heard locally over WCCO Radio. When she appeared in concert at Carnegie Hall, the reviewer noted that the audience of 4000 demanded "three encores and a dozen recalls" before it would let her go. (*Mankato Free Press* May 6, 1928)

Several of the original eight members of the Andrews Opera Company also had extended musical careers as singers and/or teachers. Of the two siblings who elected other careers, Charles N. Andrews had studied law. He practiced law in Mankato for several years before moving to California where he eventually became a superior court judge. The other was Dr. John Wesley Andrews, one of "Mankato's most prominent pioneer citizens." He began his career as a teacher in the St. Peter High School, but three years later he started medical studies in Chicago and New York. After

beginning local practice, he went to Vienna and Berlin for further study, and then continued seeing patients until a year before his death in 1932 at the age of 83.

Dr. Andrews' only child, Roy Newbury Andrews, was born in 1878. He followed his father into a medical career, graduating from the University of Minnesota School of medicine in 1908. A typhoid epidemic was his introduction to practice with his father. Later Dr. Roy did post graduate study in obstetrics and pediatrics in New York City.

The two Dr. Andrews were among the charter members who founded the Mankato Clinic in 1916. Both were lifelong members of the Centenary Methodist Church and many local and state



Dr Roy Andrews, his wife Florence and their daughter Cornelia

organizations, both civic and professional. Both loved to travel and were skilled and well-respected members of their profession, with the father's specialty that of surgery.

But where the elder Dr. Andrews never appeared to be bitten by the performing bug, other than to give frequent illustrated lectures on his trips, his son must have had music and performing in his soul. His home was filled with music. Both his wife and only child, daughter Cornelia DuBois, taught music and were published writers. Dr. Roy enjoyed nothing better than acting the part of another person. In 1933, he was pictured in the *Mankato Free Press* as Mahatma Gandhi, complete with bald wig and long white robes.

As himself, he appeared with film stars George Burns and Gracie Allen in a skit at Mankato's State Theater in 1934. The caption on the picture that appeared in the *Mankato Free Press* reads:

George (to Gracie): "You make me disgusted. I hope I never see you again,"

Roy Andrews (to Gracie): "Fine! Why don't you come up and see me some time?" (cover photo)

Dr. Roy inherited the Andrews Mediterranean complexion and frequently portrayed an American Indian in full costume. (*Mankato Free Press* November 27, 1947) But his crowning achievement came one day when he was president of the Mankato Golf Club. At this Ladies Day Event in 1945, where "no men were allowed to enter," a "conspicuously lady-like guest accompanied each foursome in turn to the first green." That "glamorous dame" was "a beautiful brunette with be-curved wig, red flowered dress, bracelets, earrings and jewels galore" who was pictured grinning from ear to ear in yet another article. (*Mankato Free Press* September 1, 1945)

Roy's daughter Cornelia wrote several articles and books about her touring family and later donated momentous of the group to the Minnesota Historical Society. In 1974, items from the collection visited Mankato in connection with a Guthrie Theater traveling production called *The Portable Pioneer and Prairie Show*. (*Mankato Free Press* May 6, 1974)

The Andrews and Hutchinson families' experiences as

! COMING! THE GUTHRIE & THEATER WITH

a unique musical entertainment embracing mirth, melody, and madness with songs of home, hope, and happiness and scenes of pathos, bathos, high humor

★★★★★★★★★THE★★★★★★★★★ **PORTABLE PIONEER AND PRAIRIE SHOW**

a potpourri of theatrical delectations concocted by
Messrs. D. Chambers and M. Marvin

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 1974 8:00 P.M.
MANKATO WEST HIGH SCHOOL AUD.**

PRICES: \$1.50 STUDENTS; \$3.00 OTHERS

Tickets available at: National Bank of Commerce, Bretts, Chamber of Commerce, Blue Earth Historical Museum, Student Union Box Office, Musicland, and at the door.

This delightful family show is based in part on the famous ANDREWS FAMILY of MANKATO. John Redding Andrews was a circuit-riding preacher with 10 children who were organized into a family entertainment group that went on the road in 1875. Aside from their talents as entertainers they are remembered for the circus bandwagon in which they toured and for later owning their own railroad car. Known also as the Andrews Opera Company, the family had a repertoire of 30 operas. The family toured for 25 years, 15 as an opera company before opening one of the most luxurious resorts in Minnesota in 1892 at Lake Tetonka in LeSueur County which later folded. This is your special invitation to an evening of unique musical entertainment. You are invited to a special open house at the Blue Earth County Historical Museum on Sunday, May 5 from 2:30 to 4:30 and meet Cornelia Andrews DuBois, a descendant of the family and to view artifacts from her collection.

Presented by MSC Concerts and Lectures in cooperation with
Fine Arts Inc. and Blue Earth County Historical Society.

traveling entertainers inspired Guthrie's production, sponsored jointly by Mankato State College and the Blue Earth County Historical Society. The picture of life in the Midwest territories was an instant hit with its "mirth, melody, magic, songs of home, hope, happiness and scenes of pathos, bathos, and high humor."

It was a nostalgic look at a long ago time that gave theatergoers "a sense of joy in the knowledge that we continue to be surrounded by the voices of the past, even though we may scarcely be aware of it today." (Guthrie brochure) It's already 30 years since the Andrews family was honored in the above production and it's nearly a year since BECHS mounted its current museum offering called "That's Entertainment," giving another nostalgic look at the past, this time an era within the lifetime of some of us who read this, but history to many others who do. We are lucky that we, also, continue to be surrounded by the voices of the past.

Sources:

The Mankato Free Press

Showcase, the Magazine of the Minnesota Orchestra

Blue Earth County Historical Society archives

Wish List

- Stool or tall chair to be used behind Museum Store counter
- Surge protector for use at programs and computers.
- Mankato City Directories **1998, 2000-2003**
- *Maple River Messenger* on microfilm 1995-2002
- *Lake Crystal Tribune* on microfilm 1997-2000
- Mankato Free Press on microfilm 1998-2003

"If you don't know history, you don't know anything. You're a leaf that doesn't know its a part of a tree."

Michael Crichton, *Timelines*

Recent Donations

Up to \$25

Jenkins, Margaret
Roscoe, Don
Schaub, Shirley

\$26-\$50

Salsbery, Tom

\$51-\$100

Hollingsworth, Alice
McLaughlin, Tom & Theresa
Meredith Foundation
Webb, Donna

\$101 to \$500

Fischer, Eldena
Jensen, Orv
Zotalis, James

\$500 and Up

Grundmeier, Win
Jacobsen, Lyle & Kay

In Kind

American Linen
Madsen, Jack
Tarjeson, Jane
Walgreens
Whiteside, Tony

Memorials

For Helen Tronvold:
Bruender, Gertrude
Guenther, Deloris
Madsen, Jack
True, Vera
Wittrock, Jerry & Virginia

For Eleanor Tronvold:
Gruhlke, Fred & Deb
Harknes, Marilyn

For Charles Adamson:
Carstensen, Vernon and Norman

Thank you all very much!

January - March 2004 Donations

BECHS: Telephone, Book - *BECHS Family Heritage Cookbook*

Christianson, John Robert: Periodical - *The Bridge*, 2002 - History of Dr. C.P. Peterson

City of Mankato: *Mankato City Directory 1999* (2)

Coleman, Mary: Book - *The Christmas Festival Book*, Book - *Good Things for Christmas*, Book - *From Flappers to Flivvers*

Fall, Phyllis: Photo Album of Mankato

First United Methodist Church, Lake Crystal: Church History 140 Years 1996, Church Directory 2002, Church Directory 1993

Frederick, Mike: Ruler - Teachers Service Bureau, Ruler - Robbie's Tire Service, Calendar - Hair Affair Eagle Lake 1998-99, Magnet - The Peddler of Rapidan 2003, Bottle Cap - KEEZ FM 99, Mirror - Tichenor Furniture Mapleton, Ashtray - Sippel Electric Good Thunder, Button - Pioneer/Indian Days 1972, Periodical - *Otaknam* (3) 1913-1914, Brochure - Mankato Golf Club, Magnet Interior Craftsman Flooring, Pencils (7) Mankato, Pens (25) Mankato, Annual *Otaknam* Sept. 1913, Annual *The Laker* (4) 1957-1960, Booklet - Burns Night 2004

Froebel, Virginia: Book - *The Immanuelite 1929*, Photo - Mankato Clinic 1920s

Grundmeier, Win and Shirley: Program - MSU Commencement 2003, Watch 1947, Book *Those Barracks Babies*, Booklet Bethany Lutheran College

Hamer, Nancy: *Mankato City Directories* (2) 1995-1996, Mankato Symphony Orchestra 1997

Herbst, Gordon: Mankato Council of Garden Clubs Records

Itasca County Historical Society: Booklet Memories and Events of a Lifetime, 1980

Keir, Grace: Man's Dress Shirts (3), Montgomery Ward Almanac 1897, Simplicity Patterns book 1947, Ration Books, MN Apparel Industries: Retrospective Vol. I, II, Magazine *Shuz*, Fall/Winter 1998

Krosch, Wayne and Pat: Photo Vernon Center Band, Photos and Scrapbook pages Mankato scenes, collected by Florence Brown

Kubicek, Joe: MN Twins Homer Hankie

LaFavor, Lyle: Photo (2) Good Thunder WWII Honor Roll

McComb, MaryL Cross Country Skiing Outfit, Black Leather gloves, Red gloves, Brown Isotoner gloves

McKnight, Roger: Manuscript Death at Kansas Lake

(final), Periodical *The Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*

Niu, Dana: *Minnesota Highway Atlas*, 2003

Norland, Roger: Photos (32) WWII Soldiers (framed)

Ohlenkamp, Ora: Camera Kodak Instamatic, Camera Brownie Hawkeye, Kodak Midget Flashholder, Map Mankato State College Campus

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Mankato Church History Our Savior's Lutheran Church Mankato, 2000

Owens, Thomas L. Fork Wigley Truck Service Lake Crystal, Spoons (2) W.E. Thomas Lumber, Thermometer Henning Johnson, Diary letters written by Julia Graves 1903, Advertisement Robert Jones, Scrapbook, Booklet All Angel's Episcopal Church 1937, Advertisement D.T. Owens, Match holder, Program Family Man Lake Crystal Community Theater

Schrader, Julie: CD - Letters from Maud, Booklet - Letters from Maud

Smith, Emmett: Card - John Hurd Construction Co., CD - KMSU radio program Dec. 2003, CD Interview re: crime in old Mankato, CD Interview re: Pvt. Glenn H. Campbell

So. MN Hist. Center: Magazine - *The Farmer*- April 5, 1958, Program - The Messiah, Jan. 18, 1922

Springer, Frank: List 12th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, 1898

Stephenson, Janis: Brewster Family photo album

Sugden, Nadine: Booklet - Quick Easy Jell-o Wonder Dishes

Swanson, Audrey: Booklet Historical Sketch of Baptist Church in Garden City, 1897

Tarjeson, Jane: Book Cover - Mankato Commercial College, Postcard - Hillside Motel, Annual - *Otaknam* 2000, Photo - Sterling Center Church (26), Photo - Jackson Lake Cemetery (2), Photo - Willow Creek Store (1), Photo - Oliver School (5), Photo - Pleasant Mounds (11), Photo - World Plowing Contest Sign (5), Photo - Jerusalem Cemetery (1), Photo - Rainbow Arch Bridge (14), Photo Butternut buildings (7), Photo - Sterling Center buildings (5), Periodical *The Moccasin*, Booklet The Dedication of St. John's Episcopal Church, 1967

Washington Co Hist. Soc: Photo - Charles Grannis (2)

Webb, Donna: CD - 1920 US Census Index, Books - *The Great Sioux Uprising*, *Over the Earth I Come*

Westphal, Myrtle: Church Directory St. John's Lutheran Church, St. Clair

Wiltgen, Sue: Annual *Mankato West High School* (20) 1959-1994

Mysteries from our Past



The slate being held by the boy in the middle says "Piper School 1918." The third child from the top right is identified as "Aunt Mary", the second child from the bottom right is identified as "Aunt Margaret" and the third child, bottom left, is identified as Lorin Kelly.



The Society has an extensive collection of photographs that have been donated over the years. Here are a few examples of some of those wonderful photographs. Sadly, the people and places in these photographs have not as yet been identified.

Can you help?



What a charming picture. It is so sad that we have no idea who the children are or when or where the photograph was taken.

Remember to carefully preserve and identify your family photographs for the pleasure and delight of future generations.

Notes from the Collections Manager..

How do you safely store negatives? This question has been presented to me many times by people starting the grand task of organizing their photographs for long-term storage. I took this question to Quality 1 Hour Foto in Mankato and asked them what materials their negative sleeves are made of. They pursued the question with the manufacturer and discovered that their negative sleeves are polyethylene based plastic. This is one of the three types of "safe" plastic that can be used when storing photographs, papers, etc. So, Quality 1 Hour can now confidently say that negatives can remain in their sleeves for long-term storage. I will try to pursue the question with other local photo developers, but in the meantime, I encourage you to ask your local developer what they use.

After challenging Quality 1 Hour about their negative sleeves, it turned out that we were both interested in the preservation of photographs and promoting this with as many people as possible. So, we created a brochure about photograph preservation. The brochure is available at BECHS Heritage Center, on our website at www.rootsweb.com/~mnbechs, at Quality 1 Hour Foto in the Midwest Plaza in Mankato and on their website at www.quality1hrfoto.com. The brochure provides basic information to keep in mind when purchasing and using materials for long-term storage of photographs.

Also, on Tuesday, May 11th at 7 p.m. BECHS will host a Photograph Preservation Workshop sponsored by Quality 1 Hour Foto. The workshop will review the information available in the brochure with hands-on examples, as well as additional information to consider when handling and storing photographs. The workshop costs \$5.00 and includes handouts. Pre-registration is required by calling BECHS at 345-5566 before Friday, May 7th.

If you have any questions about preserving your family memories, please remember that we are always here to help!

Jessica Potter
Collections Manager

Through the Research Center Door:

With our new website the Research Center is receiving research requests from faraway and exotic places. We have received three requests from Norway, one searching for ancestors that had immigrated to America and then to Blue Earth County. From Austria, we heard from someone who is stationed abroad and found her grandfather listed in the Service's Men Index. From Taiwan, we got a request from someone whose family once lived in Good Thunder and now their child needed a town history for a school project. From someone living in Alberta, Canada, we were asked to help find the birthplace of an ancestor who helped to settle South Bend. We had an obituary on file that included the place of birth.

For those of you who think these locations are too distant, we also receive requests from strange sounding and remote places like Ortonville, Long Prairie and New Ulm. None of these however require a passport or airport security checkpoints.

While we are receiving more international requests in addition to those in our own backyard, we also criss-cross the country with requests from Houston, Texas to Huntington Beach, California and Clearwater, Florida. It may surprise you to know all of these people have contacted us since the last newsletter. The borders of Blue Earth County are expanding. All of these people, living in all these faraway places, are connected to our County. So if you haven't been to the Research Center lately stop by and see me (or E-mail me, but please be patient) and ask me a question or two.

Shelley Harrison
Archives Assistant

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Tuesday, April 27th

Noon - 1 p.m.

BECHS Heritage Center

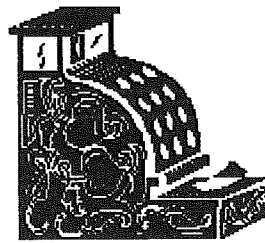
Please RSVP by Friday, April 23rd

by calling 345-5566

*Volunteers Are Always
Welcomed*

If you have some time to spare to help us preserve history, please give us a call. We can find a project to suit your interests and skills. Some examples are:

*participating on committees
researching and writing
assembling garment hangers
sewing labels in garments
working with some carpentry projects*



...at the Museum Store

Are you a new comer to the area or a long time resident? There are several books in the bookstore that tell the story of our county.

At the Bend of the River

Vernard E. Lundin

In this illustrated history of Mankato and North Mankato, lifetime resident Vernard E. Lundin paints a vivid portrait of the two cities at the bend of the Minnesota River.

128pp., 1990, over 125 b & w photos.
Hard cover, \$35.95.

Blue Earth County from 1700 - 1900

Anna M. Wiecking

A delightful history of early Blue Earth County, covering the pre-history through the growth of the railroads and townships. Written originally for children, it is also a learning tool for those new to the area.
29 pp., 1972. Paper, \$3.00.

Blue Earth County, Minnesota

Blue Earth County Historical Society

Part of the "Images of America Series," this book features never before published photographs from Blue Earth County, Minnesota.

128pp., 2000, photos. Paper. \$18.99.

Chronicles of a Century

Mankato Free Press

A collective history of the Mankato region from 1900-1999, featuring photographs and stories of the challenges, natural disasters, and changes that have been a part of the lives of the residents of the Minnesota River Valley.

120pp., 1999, photos. Hard cover, \$19.95.

CD - Sesquicentennial Minutes

KTOE radio and Blue Earth County Historical Society
Moments of Mankato History as aired on KTOE during Mankato's 150th anniversary.
Contains 1 CD, 2002. \$10.00.

On Display Now

***Blue Earth County
Century Business
HickoryTech***

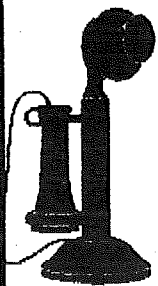
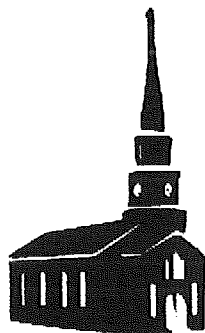


Exhibit focuses on the Blue Earth County telecommunications company formerly known as the Mankato Citizens Telephone Company.

On display in the BECHS Heritage Center Gallery through September 2004.

***Blue Earth County
Churches***

View this comprehensive display of churches in Blue Earth County at the BECHS Heritage Center.



New Programs Enjoyed by Many

Last issue, we announced the start of three new programs. Each program has held at least a couple events since January and we are very pleased with the attendance.

"*That's Entertainment Comes Alive*" consists of events that explore past and present forms of family entertainment. We enjoyed curling in Mapleton in January at the Heather Curling Club. We learned just what an art the sport of curling is. In February, we held our first *Oscar Night at BECHS* showing the first Academy Award winning film "Wings". I never thought a two hour silent movie would be so entertaining. It was a spectacular night of walking the red carpet, glitz and glamour. In March, bowling at Victory Bowl in Mankato was a great time. The Free Press wrote a terrific article about this event.

On April 19, our event will be *Rainy Day Games* at BECHS Gallery. A night of playing games of past days to remember the good times shared before video games and television. Upcoming events we hope to share are more Oscar winning movies, horseshoes in Rapidan, an ice cream social in Lake Crystal and an outdoor movie in Garden City. Hope to see more and more members and friends at these fun events.

"*Blue Earth County Diner's Club*" is a hit. Our first lunch at the historic Wagon Wheel Café in Mankato brought in 25 diners. We were excited to visit with Kevin and Wally Haefner of the Wagon Wheel. KEYC-TV did a spot promoting our program. In March, we enjoyed a fine meal and conversation at Uncle Alberts in Eagle Lake. Owner Rolene Fromm gave a brief history of the restaurant. New faces attended and the word about this great program is spreading. Next, on April 12 we are dining at Jake's Stadium Pizza in Mankato. We hope to have an even bigger attendance there. Traveling through the county to our area restaurants has been very enjoyable. We are learning the restaurant's history, trying its food, and enjoying casual conversation with those attending.

"*Hometown History Photo Night*" has been well received. County residents are helping to keep the history of their town from fading away by telling

stories of the past and sharing pictures of the town and its residents. We enjoyed evenings in Eagle Lake, Vernon Center and Lake Crystal. The residents that have attended were a pleasure to talk and share with. This program will continue through the county and we intend to make a pass through each town a second time. So, if you missed us the first time, we'll be back.

Watch and listen for upcoming events in our newsletter, local newspapers and radio stations. We hope to see you soon.

Bernadette Wilson,
Program Committee

News of the Day

Sterling Center

Reprinted from the *Blue Earth County Enterprise* 9 August 1907

A goodly number of farmers have commenced cutting oats. Harvest will be general the first part of next week. Corn has made giant strides the past ten days, but the prospects for a corn crop is not at all an assured fact.

One of the most severe electric storms passed over this part of Sterling Tuesday afternoon that the writer ever saw. It was one continuous flash of lightning and peal after peal of terrific thunder; considerable water fell and quite an amount of hail, but doing no material damage.

G. B. Lamp struck a gusher in boring for a fountain last week at a depth of 120 feet. It fills a kerosene barrel in just 49 seconds of clear sparkling water. Mr. Lamp estimates that the volume of water going to waste is equal to six horse power. He is giving the matter some thought as how to utilize this power for his own use.

The Sterling creamery shut down last Wednesday, not for the want of patronage, but on account of the necessity of putting down a new well. It is doubtful, however, if it will start up again before the first of January. The milk receipts at this time of the year are light and the directors thought it best not to start until the first of the year.

Volunteer Appreciation Month

The following is a list of those individuals, and their years of service, who have volunteered with us between January and December 2003

Apitz, Darrel 13
 Baer, Jim 4
 Baer, Marcia 6
 Baldwin, Sara *
 Bauer, Pat 1
 Baird, Jane 8
 Bartholdi, Roberta 4
 Bartsch, Glenn 14
 Bergquist, Roger 5
 Burns, Inella 34
 Burton, Ronnie 2
 Coleman, Mary 3
 Cords, Betty 36
 Das, Dee 4
 Dauk, Lindsey *
 Demars, Jeanne 2
 Diamond, Sandy *
 Dooley, Mary 28
 Douglas, John *
 Douglas-Hennis, Brandi *
 Falenczykowski, Lona 14
 Francis, Pat 7
 Frederick, Michael 10
 Geister, Dave 1
 Goff, Harley 13
 Goschy, Deb 3
 Graham, Joanne 3
 Griffith, Helen 5
 Grundmeier, Shirley 14

* = new in 2003

Grundmeier, Win 14
 Hagen, Tom 7
 Hanson, Kathryn 28
 Havelka, Ben *
 Havelka, Guy*
 Hennis, Larry *
 Herbst, Gordon 3
 Hiniker, Adam (intern)
 Hopman, Edith 13
 Hugg, Bob *
 Hugg, Corey *
 Jansen, Steve 7
 Jensen, Mary Ann 10
 Jensen, Orv 16
 Johnson, Casey *
 Keir, Grace 1
 Keir, Richard *
 Kubicek, Joe 12
 Kubicek, Sylva 5
 Lagerquist, Mike 19
 Lamson, Barb 4
 Larsen, Gary 1
 Lavitschke, Dean 3
 Lavitschke, Jo-an 8
 Lee, Elaine 8
 Lundblad, Larry 6
 Madsen, Jack 3
 McComb, Mary 4
 McGowan, Jack 3
 McGowan, Mike *
 McLaughlin, Theresa 3
 McLaughlin, Tom 3
 Mellon, Paul 1
 Nesheim, Steve 2
 Niu, Dana 3

Norman, Beth 7
 Norman, John 4
 Nussbaumer, Linda 12
 Nysteen, Aleigha (intern)
 Ohlenkamp, Ora 18
 O'Malley, Helen *
 Patterson-Lundgren, Molly 4
 Rezmerski, John 4
 Ries, Bill 11
 Riesdorf, Richard 1
 Salsbery, Tom 15
 Sandon, Buzz 3
 Sassenberg, Eunice 2
 Schaefer, Dawn 1
 Schmidt, Roberta 3
 Schmitz, Leora 1
 Schrader, Julie 18
 Schultz, Jo 16
 Shortall, Christina 2
 Sizemore, Daardi 2
 Smith, Emmett *
 Smith, H. Roger 15
 Sofchalk, Helen 4
 Sugden, George 18
 Tarjeson, Jane 10
 Twilight Garden Club 27
 Ward, Mary *
 Webb, Donna 6
 Webb, Grace *
 Wichtendahl, Paul 1
 Wilson, Bernadette 4
 Wright, Lorraine 22
 Ziegler, Ken 18
 Zielske, Dan 4
 Zimmer, Beth 6

Whether you give 3 days a week, 3 hours a month or once a year,
 your time is a precious commodity and we are grateful for any you are willing to spend some
 of it with us. To our past, present and future volunteers,

Thank you *Dank Je*
Go raibh maith agat

Merci
Takk

Dankeschoen
Dziekuję *Gracias*

Blue Earth County



Membership Form

Yes, I would like to become a member of the
Blue Earth County Historical Society!

Member Levels*

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Student | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Senior | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household | \$35.00 |

Send completed form to:
BECHS Membership
415 Cherry Street
Mankato, MN 56001

Donor Levels*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booster | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$5000.00 |

* For Business Membership information, please contact the BECHS office

BECHS Membership Benefits:

- Support preservation of our heritage
- Free admission to the Hubbard House
- Free admission to the Exhibit Gallery
- Free access to the Research Center
- Invitations to special events
- 10% discount at the Museum Store
- Reduced admission to special programs
- Quarterly history publication

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip

Telephone:

E-mail:

- ☐ Please send me information about becoming a BECHS Volunteer



New and Renewed Members

Baird, Jane
Balcome, Helen
Bartholdi, Roberta
Cariveau, Yvonne
Crane, Donald and Sue
Davis, Cindy
Diamond, Sandy
Dorn, John and Kathy
Falencykowski, Lona
Frankin, Elizabeth
Frederick, Mike
Frisch, Carlienne
Griffith, Helen
Groebner, Dewey
Hamer, Nancy
Hendrickson, Carol
Higginbotham, Jack and Shirley

Huettl, Richard
Jensen, Orv and Mary Ann
Junge, Robert
Kalvig, Ann
Keir, Grace
Kintzel, Ben and Kimberly
Kunst, Richard and Bea
Kraft, Judy
La Hann, Del and Flo
Lavitschke, Jo-an
Leeman, Harold
Lundblad, Larry
Manthe, Lois
Marlow, Richard, D.M.D.
Mathiason, Renee
McComb, Mary
McLaughlin, Tom and Theresa

MSU-M History Dept--
(Handke, Margaretta)
Ohlenkamp, Ora
Owen, Helen
Peterson, Jean
Salsbery, Tom
Sassenberg, Karl
Sassenberg, Eunice
Schmitz, Joan
Smith, Michael
Svendsen, Sigvold
Swanson, Keisha
Tarjeson, Jane
Tollefson, La Donna
Wingen, Carol
Wold, Philip and Jane
Zelin, Robert
Zimmer, Beth

Photograph Preservation Workshop

Tuesday, May 11th
7 p.m.
BECHS Heritage Center

\$5.00 fee includes handouts

Registration Required: call 345-5566
Co-sponsored by
Quality 1 Hour Foto, Mankato

National Preservation Week

"The houses where we have lived, the buildings where we have worked, the streets on which we have walked for more than 300 years are as much a part of our heritage as the wisdom of the Founding Fathers and the works of art which succeeding generations of Americans have bequeathed to us. These buildings and places, great and humble, are not only our roots, they are sources of pride in our past achievements and they enrich our lives today. We must think of them and treat them as living parts of our environment. They served a useful function in their time. Preserved, they can continue to do so.

"Historic preservations today involves much more than period rooms in house museums. It means that old houses, public buildings, hotels, taverns, theaters, industrial buildings, churches and commercial structures can be saved and put to contemporary use. Our landmarks are living history. If we treat them with respect, include them in our planning as our towns and cities grow, they will give us an environment of quality and enduring interest."

--National Trust for Historic Preservation



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

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Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901