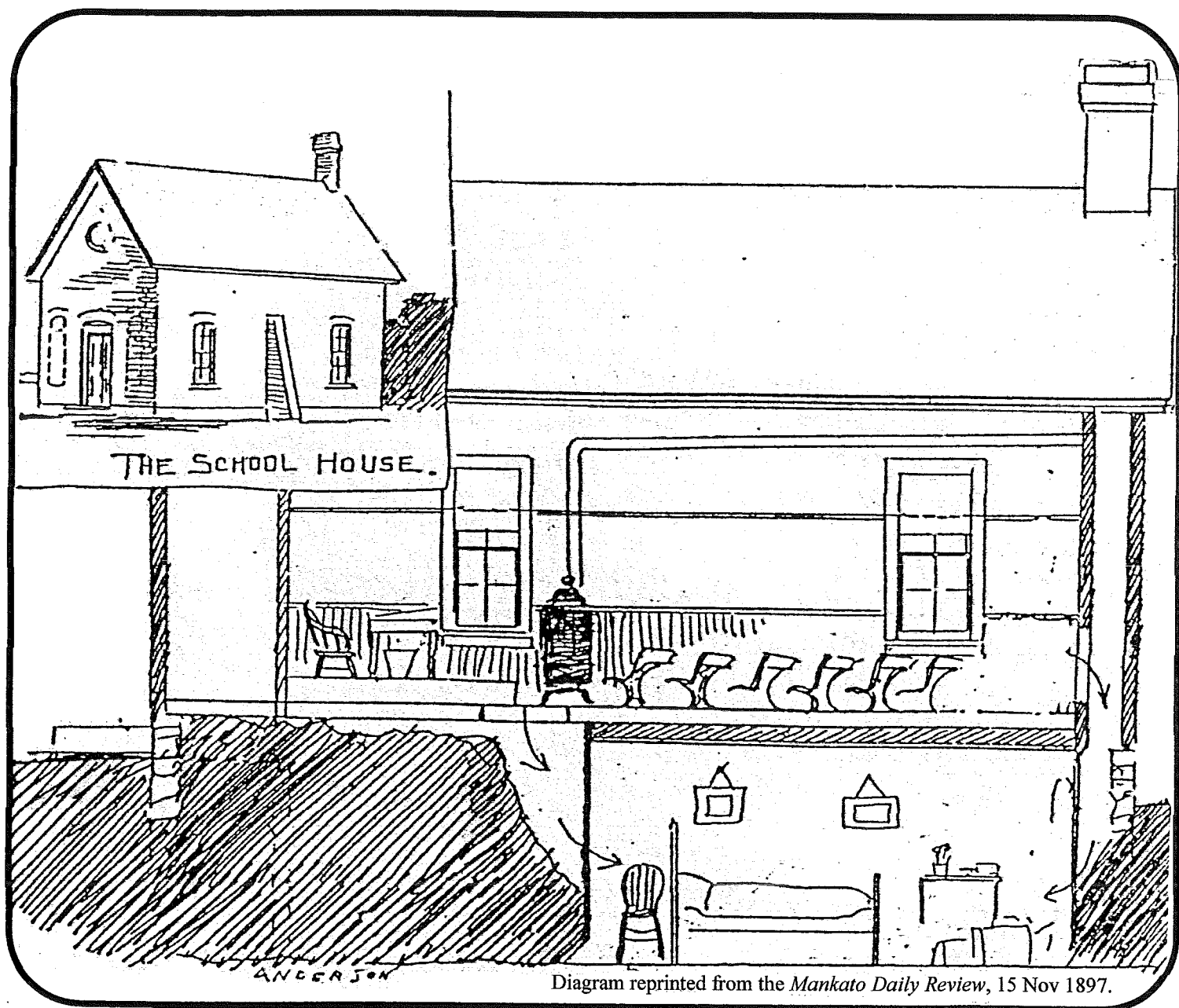




The Blue Earth County Historian

A publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

Fall 2004



In this issue:

The Mystery of the Yaeger School House Ghost

The Blue Earth County Historian
Fall 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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Blue Earth County Historical Society
415 Cherry Street
Mankato, MN 56001
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnbechs/>

Tidings from the
Executive Director



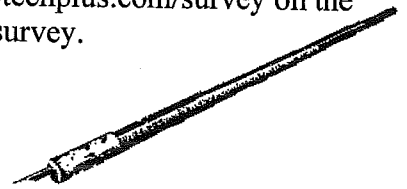
Greetings from the BECHS Office. It is fall once again and we are preparing for our busy fall season of events. I am truly amazed at what our programs committee has put together for events this year. We have been reaching out into the county visiting every community several times. Our Diner's Club has been a nice way to see the county and experience the unique dining places of our county. The Hometown History series have been filled with stories about the communities.

At this time we are busy working on our Ghost Stories event and the annual Christmas at the Hubbard House. These events allow people to see the house in the evening. It is amazing how different the house looks from daytime to nighttime. I hope many of you will come and participate in these programs.

By the time this edition of the *Historian* arrives in mailboxes the Tech Plus / BECHS survey will have been out for sometime. Those of you that live in District 77 should have received this in the school board mailing. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it. This survey will provide our Board of Trustees with valuable insight into what the public wants from their local historical society. This information will be used in the short and long range planning for the historical society. We hope to hear from many of you. For those outside District 77, you can go to: www.mankatotechplus.com/survey on the internet to complete the survey.

Have a pleasant autumn.

James Lundgren
BECHS Executive Director



**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

WISH LIST

- Glassware for the Hubbard House circa 1900
- Legal size hanging folders
- Scissors for clipping
- Heavy duty shelving for Archives
- 1930 Federal Census on microfilm
- Copy paper
- Mankato City Directories 1998, 2000-2003
- Maple River Messenger on microfilm
- Lake Crystal Tribune on microfilm
- Mankato Free Press on microfilm

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:

*researching and/or doing carpentry for new exhibit
serving as tour guide
participating on committees
sewing labels in garments
doing data entry for Archives indexes
indexing census or newspapers*

July - September Volunteers

Apitz, Darell
Bartsch, Glenn
Black, Kathy
Burns, Inella
Burton, Ronnie
Coleman, Mary
Cords, Betty
Dooley, Mary
Douglas, John
Douglas-Hennis, Brandi
Falenczykowski, Lona
Fowler, Bridget
Francis, Pat
Frederick, Michael
Geister, Dave
Geister, Pat
Goff, Harley
Goschy, Deb
Graham, Joanne
Griffith, Helen
Grundmeier, Shirley
Grundmeier, Win
Hagen, Tom
Hanson, Kathryn
Hennis, Larry

Henry, Betty
Herbst, Gordon
Hogan, Pat
Hopman, Edith
Hugg, Bob
Hugg, Corey
Jansen, Steve
Jarvis, Linda
Jensen, Orv
Keir, Grace
Kubicek, Joe
Kubicek, Sylva
Lagerquist, Mike
Lamson, Barb
Lavitschke, Jo-an
Madsen, Jack
McComb, Mary
McLaughlin, Theresa
McLaughlin, Tom
Meagher, Lindsey
Nesheim, Steve
Niu, Dana
Norman, Beth
Nussbaumer, Linda
Ohlenkamp, Ora

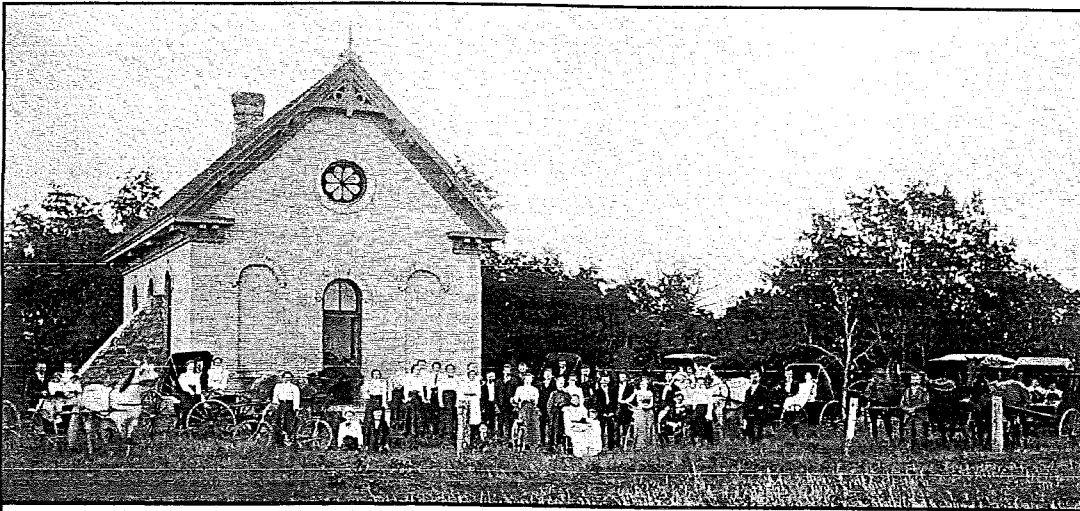
O'Malley, Helen
Pelz, Zach
Rezmerski, John
Ries, Bill
Salsbery, Tom
Sandon, Buzz
Sassenberg, Eunice
Schaefer, Dawn
Schmitz, Leora
Schultz, Jo
Schweim, Pam
Shortall, Christina
Sizemore, Daardi
Smith, Emmett
Smith, H. Roger
Sofchalk, Helen
Story, Sue
Sugden, George
Tarjeson, Jane
Twilight Garden Club
Webb, Donna
Wilson, Bernadette
Wright, Lorraine
Ziegler, Ken
Zielske, Dan
Zimmer, Beth

Mystery of the Yaeger Schoolhouse Ghost

by
Julie Schrader

Perched on a grassy green hill surrounded by a cluster of oak trees in Rapidan Township just east of Rapidan, is a brown brick school house. This school was established in 1867 as School District #91. The

and bits of paper scattered from one of the windows to the chimney. My students began to tell me stories about clothing that was missing from their mother's clothesline, chickens that were missing from their father's chicken coop or that they woke in the morning to find their cow had been milked. People all around the neighborhood were talking about these strange events and they were getting nervous.



Yaeger Schoolhouse, c 1900 Photograph courtesy of Cindy Slater.

school became known as the Yaeger school house, named for the Yaeger the family who owned the land surrounding the building. This little schoolhouse has a very interesting history because at one time it was thought to be "haunted"! Stories of the Yaeger schoolhouse ghost have become a part of local folklore passed down through the years. Newspaper accounts tell the story of what actually happened in 1897 when Eva Hower was the school teacher and the events began to unfold. The following is an account of these events as Eva may have told them.

I was the teacher at the Yaeger school house in 1897 when a series of strange events began to take place at the school and in the neighborhood. Several times when I arrived at the school house in the morning I found a window to the building was open. At first I didn't pay too much attention to this. Then one Monday morning upon entering the school, I discovered men's footprints on the floor

corn out of the crib."

Now that is how nervous people were. Every noise we heard, we thought a thief was on the place. Clothes for smaller persons, sheets, pillowcases and blankets were missing from clotheslines. Hams were missing from smokehouses and chickens and turkeys were taken from their roosts. Preserves and canned goods were missing from cellars with outside doorways.



Eva Hower, sketch by A. Anderson. Reprinted from the *Mankato Daily Review*, 11 Nov, 1897.

The former state senator, William A. Just, owned a beautiful riding horse. One morning he found his horse coming down the road toward his home, tired and sweaty. The animal had been ridden hard. But there was no rider! Herman Miescke awoke to find his team, harness and wagon gone one morning. Later in the day the team came home, driverless, tired, and showing the signs of a hard, long trip.

Leona Holberg came to school one day and told me this story: "Mother and I were out near the corn crib when we heard a noise from the other side of the crib. We knew there must be a tramp or thief in the neighborhood, because everybody was losing stuff, ourselves included. Mother said, 'We've caught the thief now! You run around one side of the crib and I'll go around the other.' We ran around the crib from different sides to find a black calf nibbling

These strange happenings kept on for months and months. At first people thought it was a very clever thief. But then stranger things began to happen. John Ballard, one of my students who built the fire for the schoolhouse during the winter, told me that many times when he reached the building he saw smoke coming from the chimney, but he always found the stove cold. Sometimes he found the kindling he had prepared the night before was gone in the morning.

Some people thought all of this was some kind of a prank or a twisted joke, but when it continued for so long, they thought the joke had passed. Carl Flo was the teacher here during the summer term. He told me that on the last day of the summer term he took a shortcut through the pasture leading by the schoolhouse. He saw smoke coming from the chimney. He knew they had not had a fire in the stove at school that day. So he went in to investigate and could find nothing wrong and the stove was COLD!

Of course the talk turned from a thief in the neighborhood to a ghost in the neighborhood! One day Lois Ballard, the youngest student in school, called down into the school basement, "Come out of there! We know you are in there!"

More and more things kept disappearing...tools, furniture, books from the school and pretty much anything you can think of. The newspapers reported clothing worth \$1250 was stolen or missing from the Omaha freight house in Garden City and horse thieves broke into George Conklin's barn at South Bend and stole a horse.

Who was this ghostly thief? Who was this who could burn fires yet never heat the stove? Who could vanish so quickly into thin air? Who could never be seen or heard? It must be a ghost!

Well, one day just as I was about to dismiss the students, Sheriff Dan Bowen arrived at the schoolhouse. I went to the door and saw Sheriff Bowen talking to Louis Yaeger, who had been plowing corn in front of the school. Then the sheriff came to the door, "Miss Hower," he said, "I have some very important news to share

with you. Let's go inside and sit down." He began to tell me how he had solved the mystery of the Yaeger schoolhouse ghost.

His story began when he received a description of Cyrus B. Miller, an escaped convict from the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln. But weeks and months passed and the convict was not seen in Blue Earth County. "Then one day I saw a little man, smooth shaven, alert, answering the description of the escaped prisoner and I set out in pursuit," said Bowen. The trail led southeast of Mankato into dense woods and ended. Deputies were put on watch, yet the convict did not appear. Many more weeks later, the man appeared near the Omaha railroad tracks and again the sheriff gave chase. This time Miller crawled into a moving boxcar and rode away on the train. "Now," said the sheriff, "we all thought he was gone for good and forgot about him." That is until Mankato merchants Perrin and Jensen reported the theft of a bright red bicycle.

A few days later, officers in Fairmont reported that a man had been seen riding a bright red bicycle. Guards were posted near the bridge where Miller had stashed his red bicycle and when he returned for it they arrested him. Once in the custody of Sheriff Bowen, he was questioned. Where did he live? "Under the Yaeger schoolhouse," he said. What? How long? "Eighteen months," he said calmly. "I was very comfortable there."



Sheriff Dan Bowen. Reprinted from the 1895 *Standard Atlas & Gazetteer*, page 137.

Then the sheriff walked over to my desk and moved it aside. To my surprise he found a trap door, and he led me down to see the ghost's den. I couldn't believe my eyes! All these months there was an escaped convict living beneath the schoolhouse! Overhead unknowing children did their sums, nor ever a thought a ghost lurked quietly beneath their feet!

But there I was, standing right in the middle of the ghosts' den. It must have been about six feet by nine. On the west side there was a table and a cot with a buffalo robe, blankets and a pillow. On the east side was an oil heating stove and a writing desk. Dishes and cooking utensils were neat and orderly on shelves on the walls.



Cyrus Miller, sketch by A. Anderson.
Reprinted from the *Mankato Daily Review*, 11 Nov 1897.

The oil stove was attached to the schoolroom chimney to carry off the gas. The desk contained newspapers and many books from our school library and from the Mankato public library. A reflecting lamp hung on the wall that gave excellent light. There were rugs on the floor, pictures on the walls and the room was spic and span. My, my

Cyrus Miller was certainly a neat and orderly ghost!

Sheriff Bowen continued to tell me the story of how Miller became the schoolhouse ghost. Cyrus Miller, a small, dark complexioned 29 year-old man, came to the schoolhouse in the summer of 1896 when school was not in session. He used a skeleton key to open the door and went to work. He sawed a hole under the teacher's desk at the south end of the room. Here a big oak sill, running the entire length of the room, was sawed through at three places to make his entrance. This weakened the floor but the ghost did not care, and the children did not know. The teacher's desk stood on a platform raised about a foot from the floor and was not nailed down. Miller made a trap door along the seams of the boards and left no marks. Children often raised up the desk, but no one ever suspected a trapdoor. A three-foot opening from the floor to the dirt beneath gave Miller plenty of room to work. Most of his work was done at night. The nearest house was the old Yaeger homestead about 60 rods away, so he was safe from interruption. He labored for days digging a slanting tunnel and a room, which was under the north end of the schoolroom. The room he carved out was about six and a half feet deep, with doors on the north and south sides. It was boarded up tightly and covered with fancy wallpaper. The second entrance was made by removing the wainscoting around the chimneys at the north end of the room, and

taking out the bricks. A weight attached to a pulley kept his improvised door tightly closed. The weight was two heavy chunks of wood in a gunny sack. These chunks of wood were imprinted with the name Eric Holberg, from whose farm they had been stolen.

Well, it didn't take long and the word that the mystery of the schoolhouse ghost was solved and the ghost himself was laid by the heels. Crowds flocked to the school to see where he lived. Someone even asked for 10 cents admission. If anything, this swelled the crowds and in one day more than \$10 was taken in. But, it developed that the revenue fell far short of covering the loss through the weakened floor, the broken chimney and the rest of the damage done by Cyrus Miller.

I was very curious about the man who had inhabited the schoolhouse unbeknown to me and felt compelled to speak to him. So I went on down to the Mankato jail to see this Cyrus Miller. He told me that on several occasions during school hours he watched the proceedings through a crack in the chimney entrance to his parlor below. He said only once did he get a good glimpse of my face. He told me that in the evenings when no one was around he would come up, make himself at home in the school and play the organ! He also told me he always had plenty to eat, and that he never stole anything he couldn't use himself.

When the trial came, Miller solved a great many mysteries in concise confessions to this theft, that ride or that burglary. According to his testimony, he stole from people far and near. Judge Severance sentenced him to serve five years and six months in the state penitentiary at Stillwater. Sheriff Bowen told me that Cyrus made no attempt to escape when he and his deputies escorted him to prison. "He told me he'll make no attempt to escape from prison and when he's discharged he'll try to make a man of himself," the sheriff said. "You know what else? He's planning to write a book while he's in prison, a history of his life. And he promised to send me one of the first copies."

Well, I don't know if he ever wrote a book or just what became of Cyrus Miller. But I'll never forget the year I taught at the Yaeger school.

Author Note: Eva Hower taught at the Yaeger School during the winter term. She became the head bookkeeper for the Mankato Telephone Company.

Carl Flo taught the summer term at the school in 1897. Later he worked in the elevator and lumber business in Rapidan. Some of the descendants of the students still live in the area and remember the "Yaeger school ghost" stories that have been passed down through the years.

Sources:

Mankato Daily Review various 1897 issues
The Journal Magazine 1927
Good Thunder Herald 1928
The Heritage of Blue Earth County, 1990.

Acknowledgments: My sincere appreciation for the research assistance and/or photographs provided for this article by: Doris Ballard, Martha Phillips, and Cindy Slater.

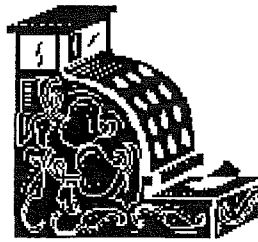
*South Central Minnesota
Genealogy Expo*

The 4th annual South Central Minnesota Genealogy Expo will take place on Saturday, October 23, 2004 at the MSU Centennial Student Union from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. A variety of workshops are being offered which include Naturalization Records, Quilting with your Family Photos, Passenger Lists, Oral History 101, Preserving Paper and Photographs and Beyond Vital Records.

In addition to workshops, participants can meet with area historical and genealogical societies including the Minnesota Historical Society and members of the Minnesota Genealogical Society.

The registration fee is \$ 20, \$15 if you sign up prior to October 15. For more information contact Jessica Potter at 507-345-5566 or check out the Expo website at: www.lib.mnsu.edu/lib/archives/expo/expo.html.

The Expo is co-sponsored by the Blue Earth County Historical Society and the Southern Minnesota Historical Center at MSU.



...at the Museum Store

This issue we are focusing on replica mechanical banks of the nineteenth century. These heavy, cast-iron banks were designed to provide novelty and enjoyment to children while encouraging them to save money. This was accomplished through bright colors, engaging themes, and spring-loaded mechanisms.



The Trick Dog bank, pictured above, features a spring-loaded dog "jumping" through a clown's hoop at the touch of a button and depositing a coin placed in its mouth into a barrel. Other types of replica banks available at the store include a fisherman pulling a fish into a basket, Uncle Sam dropping a coin into his bag, an elephant using its trunk to place a coin into a howda on its back, and a putter-wielding golfer on the green.

Antique banks of this sort can be worth hundreds or thousands of dollars to collectors. The replicas sold at the museum store range from thirteen to twenty-six dollars, plus tax, depending on the model. There is an extra shipping cost on mail orders.

Look for our new catalog shortly. Consider some of the unique and interesting items at BECHS Museum Store for your next gift giving occasion.



Rapidan Heritage Society

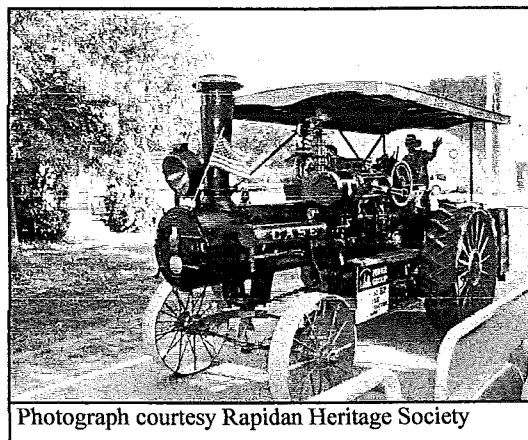
Passage of Time. A paddle dips silently into the water of the Blue Earth River, pushing a canoe further upstream into uncharted territory. The thud of an axe cutting trees for a cabin. The banishment of the Winnebago Indians from the lush valleys. The smell of the earth as virgin prairie is painstakingly turned over by a mule and one bottom plow. Diphtheria, sorrow and tears as a young child is hurriedly laid to rest in the pasture hillside that is to be known as Holberg Cemetery. A trip to the flour mill and a chance to drop a line into the river or visit a spell while waiting for the wheat to be ground. Thief! Mystery as the 'ghost' of the Yaeger School strikes again. Sauerkraut or lutefisk? Quilting bees. The clang of the hammer on steel and the sizzle of hot metal thrust in water as the blacksmith makes a shoe for King, a favorite workhorse. Threshing. Working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to complete the dam in less than a year. Electricity! Wash day, lye soap, clothes hung on the line to dry. A whistle pierces the crisp winter's stillness as the train screeches to a halt by the little depot and is met by Charlie Nelson, the depotmaster. Barn dances - playing cards. Sacrifice of the parents to build a new and modern school for their children's education. Church bells calling the faithful to Sunday morning worship. Suspense as the elevator is moved over the dam. School plays. Grocery shopping at Kunkel's and Weller's Meat Market. Horseshoes anyone? Gas and a tune-up at Bartsch's Garage. Memorial Day reflections as citizens gather to honor those who have served in the military to protect our privilege to live in freedom in this great country. The passage of time.

The Rapidan Area is 150 years old, and I want to thank everyone who helped make this sesquicentennial celebration a truly memorable event. Music, dancing, crafts, games, vintage cars and a wide variety of farm equipment from the Case steam engine to the modern tractor were on display. Special guests were Bruce Dowlin, appearing as Bishop Whipple, and Barry Blackhawk of the Winnebago Nation. Over 800 people were served at the hog roast. The night sky became a backdrop for the magnificent fireworks, and the evening was spent in fellowship and dancing at the

Good Thunder Fire Department Dance. Special thanks to all the volunteers and sponsors who helped RHS make this happen.

Rapidan Area Sesquicentennial memorabilia available include Redwing pottery, coffee cups, t-shirts, notecards, limited and open editions of Marian Anderson's Rapidan print "Passage of Time", call Jane at 507-278-3738 for more information.

Jane Tazjeson
Secretary



Photograph courtesy Rapidan Heritage Society

New and Renewed Members

Maridean Adams
Sandra K. Bachmeyer
Anita Baerg-Vatnal
Cotton-Frank Family
Duane Dubke
Glenn and Helen Erikson
Shirley A. Fitzloff
Mona Friday
Norla Hesse
Mary F. Humphrey
Marguerite T. Johnson
Mike Lagerquist
Rita Masberg
Catherine Neitge
Ruth Nuessle
Dean Phelps
Marilyn Ringheim
Judy Vosbeek
Mary E. Ward
Donna Webb
Myrtle Westphal

July - September 2004 Donations

Anonymous Donors: Papers regarding Eagle Lake Fire Dept., Tickets (3) - President Bush visit 2004

Bartholdi, Roberta: Decorative Eggs (3), Pop Beads, Wooden comb, Ski Boots, Boot Tote, Skis, Ski Goggles

Bartsch, Glenn: BEC Postcards (17), Pen Knife - Hubbard Feeds

BECHS: Papers - ACT 2000, Annual Report - Chamber 2002, Annual Report - Mankato, State of the City 2001, MSU Campus Directory - 2000, Membership Directory (3) - Chamber 1999, 2000, 2002

Boyce, Doris: Misc. travel brochures, maps

Breck, Ila: Napkin - Mike's Café, Postcard/photo - (6), Receipt - St. Joseph's Hospital

Centenary United Methodist Church: Certificate - United Order of Foresters, History - Gertrude Clare Eberhart, Blotter - Madson's Clothes Cleaners

Coleman, Mary: Computer with accessories 1982

Crane, Don and Sue: Valise (2)

Erlandson, Teresa: Oil Lamps (2), Retirement Trophy

Formerly Cranes: Membership Card - BEC Ag. Fair 1910

Frederick, Mike: Mug - First Presbyterian Church Amboy, Mug - Kregel Bros. Mapleton, Mug - Mankato West Scarlets, Plate - Morson-Ario VFW, Ad Item - Knutson Electric Lake Crystal, Ad Item - Scott's Body Shop Mapleton, Ad Item - Mankato Aglime and Rock Co., Ad Item - MinnStar Bank, Ad Item - North Star Service Lake Crystal, Ad Item - Hubbard and Palmer Elevator, Ad Item - Mankato Candy Kitchen, Buttons (15), Membership card - Rainbow Foods, Annual Report - Frost-Benco Electric 1984, Membership Directory - 2003 Chamber, Bookmark - Sticks and Stones Mankato, Bookmark - The Little Red Shed Mankato, Brochure - First Class Entertainment, Brochure - SSND, Brochure - MACS Loyola High School, Brochure - MACS Fitzgerald Middle School, Brochure - ISJ Clinic, Program - Loyola HS Commencement 2004, Program - Festival of Authors, Ticket - Mankato Moon Dogs 2003, Certificate - Louella Gries, Guide - Meeting Planning Guide-Chamber, Ruler - Spike Haskell Hardware, Glass - Happy Chef, Button - Tator Days 2004, Patch (2) - Farmfest 1976, Paperweight - Nat'l Bank of Commerce, Clip - Gordon's DX, Key Ring (6), Pencils (7), Photo/Postcard (9), Program - Lancers

Final Concert, Deeds - (4) McNamara, Jacket - MWHS, Cap - Mankato Mack Sales, Mug - Mankato East Class of 1992, Can Cozy - Festival of Trees, Table Caddy - Farmers Produce Good Thunder, Bobblehead - Mankato Moon Dogs, Cookbook - Cooking Ala Heart, Paper Fan - Rockin' in the Quarry 2004, Poster - Mankato Int'l Festival, Poster - MACS Nite Powerhouse

Griffith, Helen: Camera - Kodak Vigilant Six-20 - 1940s

Grundmeier, Win: Folder - MSU 125th Anniversary, T-shirt - Mankato Sesquicentennial, Phono-viewer, Pin - Sigma Zeta Nat'l Honor Science Society

Herke, Larry: Camera - Brownie Bullseye with flash, Camera - Canonet QL17 - 1970s, Camera Case

Johnson, Douglas and Patricia: Photos (6) - Orris and Evelyn Johnson, Dress, Cape, Child's Dress, Child's t-shirt, Sign - "Orris M. Johnson", Photos oversized (4) - Orris Johnson, Certificates (3) - Orris Johnson, Orris Johnson Papers, Magazine - Look 1960s edition

KEYC-TV: Video - President Bush visit 2004

Kinney, Robin: Sign - Century Farm, Periodical - MN Ag. Stats 2003

Klar, Luverne in memory of Scott Nelson: Otaknam (33) 1952-1987

La hann, Flo & Dell: Jewelry Box, Decorative Plate (2), Mittens, Book - Wampum Belts

Layeux, Tim: Book - Intro to Mathematics

Ledwein, Judy: Photos (13) - Mankato

Leiferman, Jerome: Tools for doorknobs, Tools for door hinges

Lindbloom, Donald: Papers - Mankato Commission

Mankato Area Public Schools: MHS Diploma of Helen Knapp 1928, Otaknam - 1928, Program - 25th Anniversary Class of 1928, Class Ring - 1928, Medal - Debate Champion 1928

Marshall, Polly: Clothing worn by donor and donor's husband (19), Shoes (3) worn by donor

McComb, Mary: Commencement Card - Pemberton

McQueen, Kae: Easel - 1940s, Footlocker - Korean War, Boy Scout's First Aid Kit

Morrow, Patricia: Photo - Funeral of unknown soldier, Photo - Aletha Prinzlow, Scrapbook - Farmfest

Nuessle, Ruth: Photo (2)

Nussbaumer, Linda: Books - (12)

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church: History - Butternut: A Village Built Around Faith

Parrow, Kenneth: Ad and letter - Fowler and Pay

Reuter, Kelly: Calendar - Amboy Centennial 1979

Rifleman, Tammy: Certificate - Stock for Tri-State Telephone

Rohde, Sharon: Business card - Josiah Baker
Scullin, Michael: Post Office Scale, Cocoanut Tin, 3 Tined Hayfork, 4 Tined Manure fork, Corn Planter Plates (multiple), Fish scaler/Corn stripper, Corn Stripper, Meat hook
Smith, Emmett: CD-Radio Program - Mankato Grand Prix racing 1950s-1960s, CD-Radio Program - Mankato Pow Wow
Stemper, Donald: Family History - Stemper, Manske, Erickson and Carlstrom, Family Histories (4) - Carlstrom, Stumper, Christofferson, Manske
Tarjeson, Jane: Photo - Ray Young, Tissues - Dr. R.L. Dorland, Book - Buckwheat Cakes and Cornmeal Mush, Book - From the Ravine, Book - Mankato State University 1968-1992
Webb, Melody: Jacket - Mankato East HS Letter Jacket
Whitaker, Douglas: Family History - The Nordgaard Family
Wiecking, David and Mary Jane: Photo Album - Wiecking
Young, Ray: Book - Good Thunder Kid



EXHIBIT UPDATE

The Hickory Tech exhibit is now on display. Check out the new Hickory Tech/MCTC history book: *Our Family Album: a Company History From 1898*, available in the Museum Store

"That's Entertainment" continues on display now through Winter 2004.

A new exhibit, scheduled to open Spring 2005, replacing "That's Entertainment" will be about Blue Earth County Agriculture and Century Farms. BECHS will take a look at the more than 175 Century Farms in Blue Earth County and a look at the evolution of agriculture throughout the county's history.

We need your help! We are now gathering information about Century Farms and the county's agricultural past. If you have stories, photographs, objects or elbow grease that you would like to contribute, please contact Jessica at 345-5566 or bechs-collections@juno.com.

Memorials

For: Vera True
From: Wittrock, Virginia

For: Ken Brown
From: Grundmeier, Win & Shirley

For: Jacqueline George
From: Deep Valley Quilters

For Arnulf Ueland, Jr.
From:

Baker, Susan Lynne
Bang, Otto and Mary
Carlstrom, George
Caulkins, George and Christina
Chalgren, Dr. and Mrs. William
Clapp, Bill and Paula
Confer, Ogden and Jane
Confer, Richard and Pam Leinberger,
Duane, Susan
Eustermann, Mary
Gage, Kelton and Dorothy
Greenwald, Dan and Carol
Hayes, Mr. and Mrs Richard
Heintz, Max and Marilyn
How, Mary Ellen
Kearney, Elizabeth
Klima, Jane and Kenneth
Kvamme, J Peder
Lamb, Randall and Kay
Linder, Margaret
Lutz, Diane
ML Properties
Neitge, Catherine
Pengra, James and Joan
Reasner, Eleanor
Richards, Marcia
Sheran, Robert and Jean
Snilsberg, Lee and Loretta
Stevens, Paul
Waldo, Gretchen
Watson, Gary

For: Jay Hubbard, Jr
From: Hubbard, John

For: Tronvold Sisters
From: Madsen, Jack

Notes from the Collections Manager..

Another History's Mystery has surfaced at the Heritage Center. For years, everyone in the Collections Department has walked past a 12 foot long tube. We have moved it out of our way a few times, but no one knew what was rolled around the tube. Some thought it was a roll of carpet from one of the building projects. One day we decided to find out what was on the tube. We cleared space in the Orientation Room and unrolled this long tube. We were very surprised to unroll an old hand-painted stage backdrop! It is full of advertisements from Mankato and Garden City businesses, red curtains are painted on the sides and a lovely Asian inspired scene frames the interior. What a sight! What a treasure! Now, what a mystery!

We had many people take a look at the piece and everyone had their opinion. We researched the businesses advertised on the backdrop and have narrowed the production of the piece to 1897-1900. Businesses like the Clifton House, Wallis Friend Blacksmith, Henry I. Parry Druggist and John Klein and Co. Furniture. But the mystery remains, where was it used?

It may have been used in Garden City because there are just Mankato and Garden City businesses advertised. But we are uncertain where. We are also uncertain who may have donated this to BECHS. I have searched our donation records and have not been able to uncover the mystery.

List of Advertisers:

Clifton House - C.J. Klein, Proprietor - Mankato
Garden City Mills - Andrew Friend, Proprietor
Geo. S. Warren, Dry Goods, Groceries & Shoes
H.D. Williams, Mankato dealer in Wallpaper, Paints, Oils...
John Klein & Co., Furniture, Carpets, Undertakers & Embalmers - Mankato
Stewart & Holmes, Booksellers & Stationers -
Mankato's Leading Dry Goods House - Mankato
"The Boston" Ready Made Clothing - Pond & Jorgensen, Props. - Mankato
M.O. Sundt Leading Tailor - Mankato
Terry & Bruce Meat Market - Garden City
M.A. Sherk & Son Groceries Farmers Barn - Mankato

Henry I. Parry Druggist - Mankato
Scott Bros. New & Secondhand Goods - Mankato
W.J. Osgood, dealer in Lumber, Coal... - Garden City
J.B. & D. Richard, Leading Dry Goods House - Mankato
Wallis Friend - Garden City Blacksmith
For Fine Shoes go to Louis Janda - Mankato
Read the Daily & Weekly Free Press - Mankato
Plus 3 other ads that are unreadable due to water damage

The backdrop is fragile and the paint is beginning to flake from the cloth. It had also been damaged by water in the upper left-hand corner. We photographed the backdrop before we rolled it up with tissue and a clean cotton sheet. If you have any ideas about where or when this may have been used, please help us solve this History's Mystery by calling or stopping by.

Jessica Potter
Collection Manager



Through the Research Center Door:

If you ever want something interesting to read, try the collection of Blue Earth County Social Notes. They cover over forty hamlets, villages and townships around Blue Earth County. Social Notes are the gossip columns that appear in the newspapers, the "Bubbles from Beauford" or the "North Lincoln Social Events" and the "Indian Lake Items". You know, those items that tell all the really important information such as who went to visit whom, who went on a trip, and the one liners like "Mrs. Phyllis Anderson hosted a lovely tea Thursday afternoon at her home, and a good time was had by all."

There are also all those little clippings on church meetings, Sunday school events, reunions, small family weddings and the occasional accident. People tend to think that if their family did nothing outrageous, then they never made the newspaper. Not true, especially if the community had a good scribe. Then there are the odds and ends: the bill of fare at the Corner Café in 1894, a list of letters that remained unclaimed at the post office in 1887 or the small poem "Ode to South Bend." There are a ton of interesting facts just waiting to be discovered.

The social history of the county can be found in these books. These articles are snap shots in time; the everyday lives of someone's relatives - maybe yours. So, if you haven't been to the Research Center lately, stop by to see me and ask me a question or two

Shelley Harrison
Archives Assistant

Reprinted from the *Lake Crystal Union*, 25 May 1910.

Garden City

Geo. W. John is painting his residence.

Mrs Carl Osgood has been very sick but is improving.

Miss Goldenstar and Miss Way have finished their schools and are at home again.

We saw the shadow of Mother Earth on Monday night but who would have thought that it was she.

Mrs Randall of Owatonna, County Supt. of Schools of Steele County, visited her sister, Mrs Stringham, over Sunday.

Prof. Everett has secured a position in connection with the government weather bureau and has been directed to report at Montgomery, Alabama, on June 6. We are sorry to lose a man of his stamp from our community.

The moon would not allow herself to be eclipsed until Mr Halley's comet sank out of sight much to the disappointment of people with naked eyes.

The body of Mr. Rusk, an old resident who left Garden City 14 years ago, was brought here for burial from Duluth on Tuesday. He was 87 years of age. His son accompanied the remains.

Some corn will be surprised when it comes up to find that it has already been cultivated. It reminds one of the advice to begin the training of children before they are born.

There were over sixty present at the Union Christian Endeavor meeting last Sunday evening. A symposium on the question "What does it mean to be a Christian" was a helpful feature.

There is a rumor of a change in the R.R. time table on the branch. Our people would like the right kind of a change. We need a train that would take us somewhere in the morning and one that would get us home after the evening Chautauqua session at Lake Crystal.

A farewell reception to Halley's comet would be in order. Man has made more changes on the earth since the last visit of the wanderer than during the previous centuries since its first appearance. This is the first time the comet has shone upon Garden City or Chicago. The reception might be held at either place and Mr Edison invited to make the speech of the occasion.

Mysteries from our Past

STRANGERS IN THE BOX

(Author Unknown)

Come, look with me inside this drawer,
In this box I've often seen,
At the pictures, black and white,
Faces proud, still, and serene.

I wish I knew the people,
These strangers in the box,
Their names and all their memories,
Are lost among my socks.

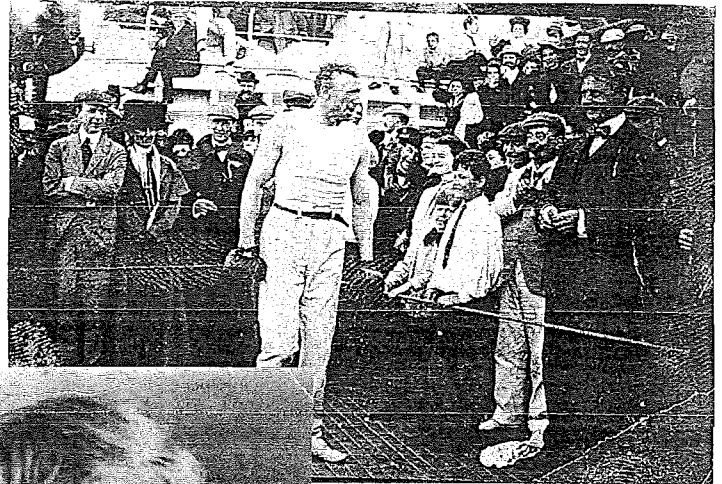
I wonder what their lives were like,
How did they spend their days?
What about their special times?
I'll never know their ways.

If only someone had taken time,
To tell, who, what, where, and when,
These faces of my heritage,
Would come to life again.

Could this become the fate,
Of the pictures we take today?
The faces and the memories,
Someday to be passed away?

Take time to save your stories,
Seize the opportunity when it knocks,
Or someday you and yours,
Could be strangers in the box.

*If you can help identify any of these
people, please contact Shelley
Harrison, Archives Assistant*



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: _____

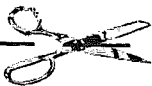
Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

- ☐ Please send me information about becoming a BECHS Volunteer

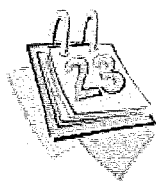


Archives Week Open House Tuesday, October 19, 2004

Join the BECHS on Tuesday, October 19, 2004 from 5-8 p.m. at the Heritage Center for the second annual Archives Week Open House. BECHS is celebrating how historical records enrich the understanding of the past, present and future. Events that evening include free admission to the Research Center and Museum Gallery and 10% discount on Archival and Genealogy supplies in the Museum Store. A display of History Day projects by Mankato West High School students will be available as well as the opportunity to talk with the Archivist from the Southern Minnesota Historical Center and much more.

Archives week was created 16 years ago to promote how historical records enrich our lives. It also acknowledges the institutions which collect and preserve historical records.

For more information, please contact Jessica or Shelley at 507-345-5566.



Upcoming BECHS Events

Please mark your calendar and join us

Tuesday, October 19

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Archives Week Open House

BECHS - 415 E Cherry Street

Mankato

Saturday, October 23

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

South Central Minnesota Genealogy Expo

MSU Centennial Student Union

Mankato

Saturday, October 30

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Ghost Stories at the Hubbard House

606 S Broad Street

Mankato

Saturday, November 13

10:00 a.m. - noon

Young Historians

Pioneer Life

BECHS - 415 E Cherry Street

Mankato

Tuesday, November 16

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Blue Earth County Diner's Club

Preri Bach Saloon and Grill

Cambria

Thursday, November 18

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Hometown History Photo Night

Good Thunder City Hall

130 Ewing Street

Good Thunder

Monday-Tuesday, December 6-7

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Christmas at the Hubbard House

606 S. Broad Street

Mankato

Saturday, December 11

10:00 a.m. - noon

Young Historians

Civil War

BECHS - 415 E Cherry Street

Mankato

Tuesday, December 14

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Blue Earth County Diner's Club

Lyn Del's Cafe

204 E Silver

Mapleton

Saturday, January 8

10:00 a.m. - noon

Young Historians

Turn of the New Century

BECHS - 415 E Cherry Street

Mankato

Tuesday, January 11

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Blue Earth County Diner's Club

Del's Cafe

Across the river to Nicollet County

229 Belgrade Avenue

North Mankato

Those interested in any of the above activities, please contact
BECHS at (507) 345-5566 for reservations one week prior to the event

Recent Donations

Up to \$25

Barnhardt, Patricia
Binder, Peg
Birbeck, Marilyn
Faust, Mrs. Claire
Meyer and Sons
Parks, James and Sandra
Vosbeck, Elizabeth

\$26-\$50

Belgard, Hugh and Vail
Cummiskey, June
Griffith, Helen
Hill, Evelyn
La hann, Flo
Thompson, Mary E.
Wright, Lorraine

\$51-\$100

Bonar, Linda Hubbard
Holbrook, Viola
McLaughlin, Theresa
Smith, H. Roger
Sugden, George
Tarjeson, Jane

\$101 to \$500

Webb, Donna

\$500 and Up

ADM
Jones, Eldon and Helen
Grundmeier, Win and Shirley

In Kind

Arctic Ice
Don Blume
Insty Prints
Grundmeier Win & Shirley
Potter, Jessica
Resner, Donna
Sizemore, Daardi

Thank you all very much!



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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mankato MN
56001
Permit No. 343

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901