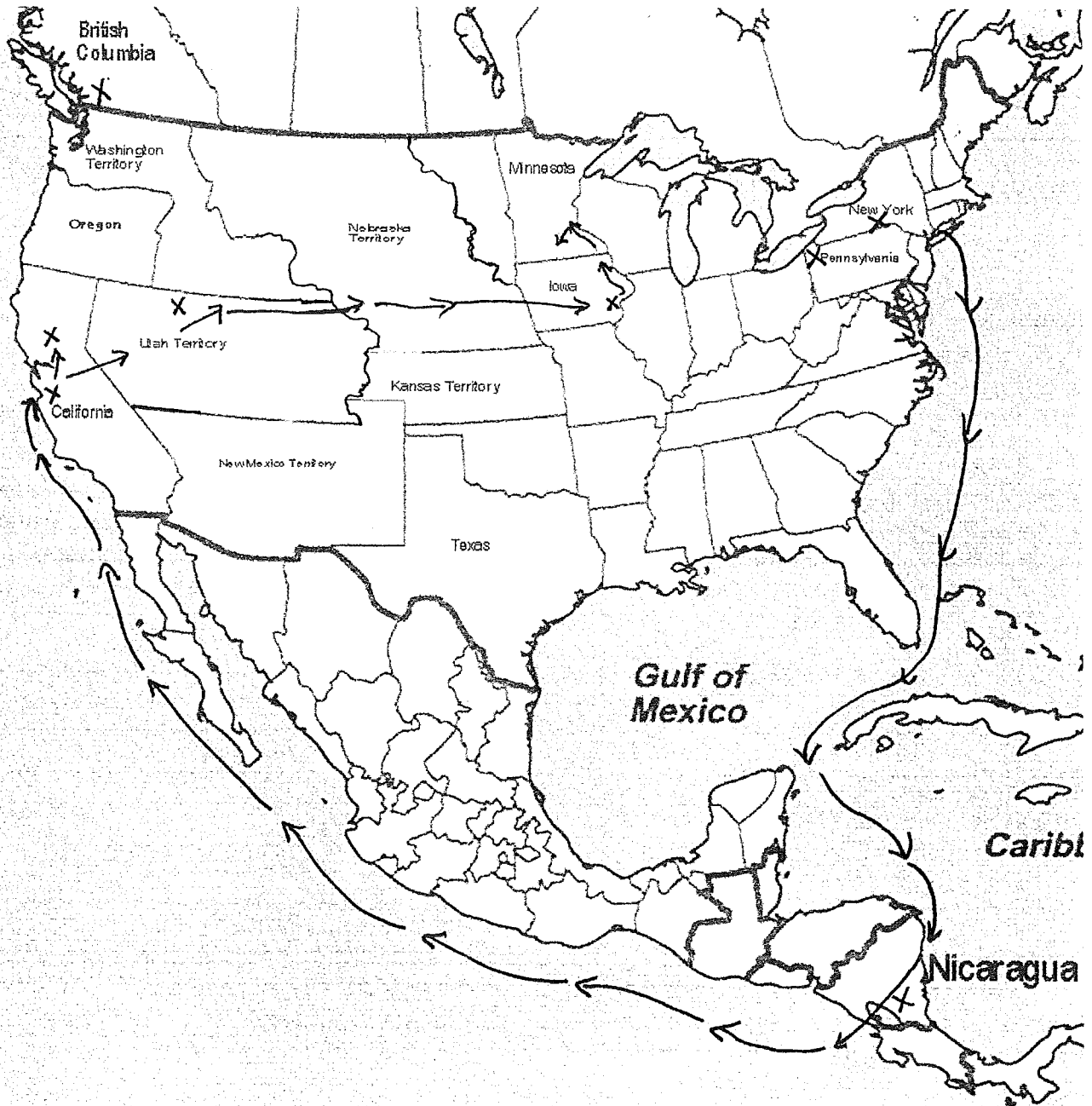


# *The Blue Earth County* **Historian**

A publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

Spring 2006



In this issue:

## **Immigration Routes and the Journey of R. D. Hubbard**

*The Blue Earth County Historian*  
Spring 2006

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/>



*From the  
Executive Director*

Celebration! The Blue Earth County Historical Society is celebrating a rewarding 2005 and an exciting 2006!

We celebrated 2005 with our Annual Meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Our keynote speaker was Sal Frederick, local Blue Earth County entrepreneur. He enlightened the crowd with his memories of growing up in Blue Earth County. It was a very enjoyable program. Copies of the 2005 Annual Report and Sal's autobiography are available at the Heritage Center. If you would like one, please stop by or give us a call.

We are celebrating the renewal of spring as well as a new season at the R.D. Hubbard House. The wrought iron fence will be installed soon capping off another spectacular project by the Hubbard House Restoration Committee. We anticipate another active year with visitors to the Hubbard House. In addition to our usual weekend tours, we will be presenting many special programs. So, please mark your calendars and celebrate *Sundays with the Hubbards* this summer at the Hubbard House. What a fantastic way to celebrate the lives of the Hubbard family.

Another celebration for us is the completion of the Museum Store remodel. This has been an exciting process for us. I would like to especially thank Mike Brennan of Brennan Construction, Jay Kall of Floor to Ceiling, Volk Electric and the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation. See the before and after pictures on page 10 and join us on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> for our Grand Re-opening Celebration!

BECHS is also proud to celebrate the great accomplishments of our volunteers. In 2005 we had over 100 volunteers contribute over 6000 hours. We will celebrate our volunteers dedication on May 2<sup>nd</sup> with

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

a Volunteer Appreciation dinner. If you have contributed 1 to 1000 hours with BECHS, please join us that evening for dinner, recognition and fellowship. After the dinner and program, we will host a Historical Society brainstorming session. What direction would you like to see BECHS head in the near and not so near future? This is your chance to have your voice heard.

Please help us celebrate our heritage through our upcoming programs, new museum store, visiting the Museum and R.D. Hubbard House and saying thanks to one of our dedicated volunteers. I celebrate all of these things everyday as the Director of this great organization; thank you for that opportunity.

*Jessica Potter*  
Executive Director

## Recent Donations

### Up to \$25

Hoehn, Pat & Jim  
Smith, Emmett  
Chris Stokesbary & Lake  
Crystal Study Club  
Goff, Harley & Janet

### \$25-\$99

Carr, Margaret  
Kiwanis Club of Golden K  
McLaughlin, Tom &  
Theresa  
Rapidan Heritage Society  
Shelby Township

### \$100-\$500

Decoria Township  
Lime Township  
Meredith, Dr. & Mrs.

### Over \$500

Jacobson, Lyle & Kay  
MacPherson Fund

### Memorials

In Memory of Mary  
Ann Thomas  
By Marcia Richards

### In Kind

Frederick, Sal  
Jensen, Orv  
Kenward, Robert  
Sofchalk, Helen

### Grants and Other Funding

Blue Earth County  
Carl & Verna Schmidt  
Foundation

**Thank you all very much!**

## Meet Our Newest Board Members:

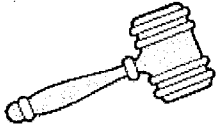
**Win Grundmeier** is a native-born North Mankatoan. He has lived in the Mankato area nearly his entire life. He graduated from Mankato State Teachers College in 1952, received his MS in Chemistry from Iowa State University in 1964 and his PhD in Chemistry from Kansas State in 1964. He served in the U.S. Air Force at White Sands for four years. He then returned to Mankato and taught Chemistry at Mankato State University for 32 years. He retired in 1990 and began volunteering at BECHS. He previously served on the Board from 1992 to 1998.

**Colleen Jackson** has lived most of her adult life in the Mankato area. She is a graduate of MSU with a degree in Business Administration. After raising a family of five children, she began a 24-year career as a School District Business Manager first in the Wellcome Memorial School District, later in the St. Peter School District and most recently at Intermediate School District #917 in Rosemount, MN. Her responsibilities in those positions included budget preparation and oversight, financial reporting to the school board and supervision of accounting and clerical staff. Colleen is a lifetime member of the Minnesota Association of School Business Officials, serving on its Board of Directors for seven years. She was elected its President in 1995-1996. Colleen is now retired.

Restoring antique furniture and collecting antique porcelain and glass has been a long-time hobby for Colleen. Along with that, she has an interest in the preservation of historical sites, buildings and artifacts in Blue Earth County. This is what has led her to serve the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

**Mike Brennan** was born and grew up in Mankato. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in civil engineering and also has a Master's degree in Business Administration.

Mike and his wife, Cathy, have 2 high school age boys. He is active in his church (Sunday School, Boards, etc) and helps lead an interdenominational Bible Study for singles and couples. He has also served on the Boards of Kiwanis and the South Central College Foundation, as well as being a stakeholder in Envision 2020.



## *From the President:*

Greetings,

I want to start this, my very first column in this publication, by telling you all how very pleased I am to be heading an organization like the Blue Earth County Historical Society. As I said at our Annual Meeting, it has been a pleasure serving on the board for the last year. I look forward to continuing to work with the Society to move forward with our mission of preserving the history of Blue Earth County.

I did have the privilege of meeting several of you at our Annual Meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>, and I do look forward to meeting more of our members in the coming months. However, because I am so new to the Blue Earth County Historical Society (and to Blue Earth County, for that matter) I also thought it might be appropriate to tell you a little about myself. I am originally from Coon Rapids, Minnesota. I moved to Mankato in the fall of 1996. Presently I live in Lake Crystal, where I have resided for just over 5 years. I have been married to Tracy for the last 10 years and have two wonderful daughters, Abigail (age 5), and Kaitlyn (age 4). I originally moved to Mankato to practice law, which I did do in Mankato and New Ulm until the spring of 2003. At that time I switched career tracks to financial planning. For the last 6 months I have worked for Wells Fargo at our downtown Mankato location, where I plan to spend the rest of my career.

I want to use the rest of this column to solicit your opinions on a very important issue. As many of you know, the Society has the opportunity to take a leading role in the possible preservation of the Cray Mansion (YWCA building) in downtown Mankato. I must say that personally I am very attracted to the idea. I believe that taking a leading role in such a project would be a wonderful opportunity to not only save an architectural gem, but would also give the Society a great opportunity for some significant public exposure. On this issue, I and the rest of the Board of Trustees would like to hear as many opinions as possible. Do you believe that the public would support such a project? Do you believe that working on such a project would possibly work

against our goal of preserving the history of Blue Earth County, as opposed to Mankato? Please feel free to contact me at home (507-726-2373) or my office (507-387-9395) any time with your opinions on this issue.

In closing, I want you all to know that my door is always open. If you ever happen to be in the downtown Mankato branch of Wells Fargo, please feel free to stop by my office and chat. I would very much like to hear any ideas or concerns you might have on anything that affects the Society. Thank you.

*Todd Stromwold*

### *BECHS Brainstorming Sessions*

#### *Heritage Center*

Tuesday, May 2 and  
Wednesday, May 3  
6-9 p.m.

Have your voice heard about what direction you would like to see BECHS go in programming, fundraising, building projects, etc.

Call Jessica to sign-up for a session 345-5566

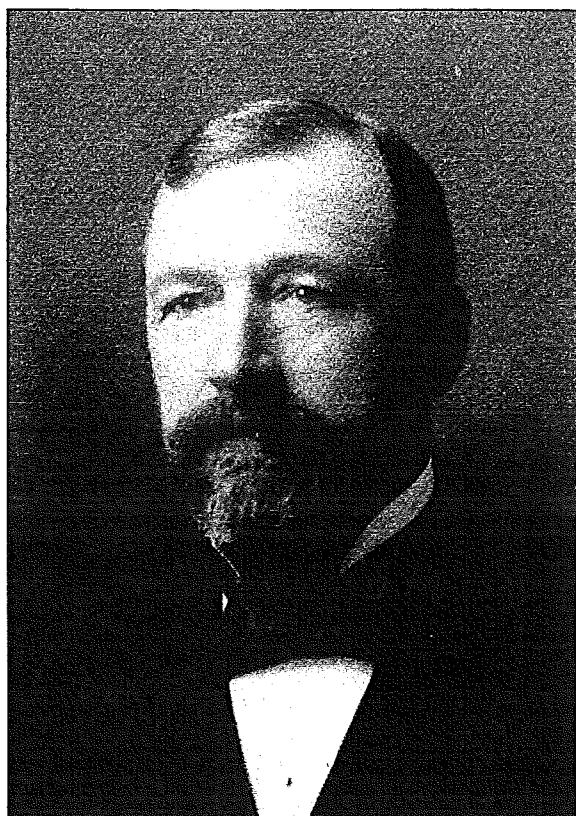
### **WISH LIST**

- Glassware for the Hubbard House
- Copy paper
- Mylar book covers
- Vertical File Folders
- Index Cards
- *Mankato Free Press* on microfilm

## **Immigration Routes and the Journey of R. D. Hubbard**

by  
Beth Zimmer  
BECHS Volunteer

The accomplishments and lifestyle of Rensselaer Dean (R. D.) Hubbard during his residence in Mankato have been related many times. His entrepre-



Rensselaer Dean (R. D.) Hubbard

neurship is legend! However, an entrepreneur does not suddenly become one; he generally has a lifetime history of dabbling in various business ventures. Researching the early years of Hubbard verified that his entrepreneurship started about fifteen years before he settled in Mankato. He not only traveled many miles looking for new opportunities, but was also very inventive in his endeavors. One writer wrote of him, "Instead of waiting for something to turn up, he went to work and made something happen!"

At the time that Hubbard arrived in Mankato, the population was primarily composed of individuals who could trace their ancestry back to the earliest European settlement on this continent. They were

descendants of the earliest New Englanders who through eight or nine generations had gradually made their way to Minnesota. The events that caused these people to pull up their roots and travel halfway across the continent is a story in itself.

Rensselaer Dean Hubbard was the ninth generation of his family to live in what we now call the United States. William Chase, the progenitor of his mother's family had arrived as a passenger on the Winthrop Fleet of 1630. The Winthrop Fleet consisted of eleven vessels that sailed from Yarmouth, Isle of Wight and arrived in Salem during the summer of 1630. These ships brought 700 passengers, and this was known as the "Great Migration." Among these passengers were Puritans who unlike the Pilgrims, were chartered colonists. Their number included Governor John Winthrop as well as other prominent colonists.

For many years, New Englanders were content to remain in the area where their ancestors settled in the 1600s. The colonists might have ventured up and down the New England coastal line, but their lifestyle was centered on what the ocean provided. At first the Yankees moved outward from the original Eastern seaboard colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island to the contiguous areas that are now known as the states of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

Between the early 1600s and the Revolutionary War, the population of New England grew. New roads made mobility easier, which in turn increased speculation of land outside the New England area. Where the Puritan founders had fostered a sense of community, there was a growing sense of individualism and self interest which changed the "Puritan into a Yankee" (Bushman, 1967). They were motivated to move to Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio.

The War of 1812 was particularly disastrous with the British raiding and sacking the coastal New England towns. Trade came to a stop as a result of the British holding the American ships in harbor. Many who had earned an honest dollar from the sea found that the economic setback was too difficult to overcome, and land further west beckoned.

In 1815, there was an eruption of the volcano Tam-

bora in Indonesia. It spewed ash that circled the globe and caused a reduction in temperatures worldwide by three degrees Celsius. The year of 1816 was called the "year without a summer," with frost forming in the months of June, July and August in New England. The crops did not mature and the people were hungry. There were 92,000 people who died of starvation world wide. When the summer of 1817 also proved too cool to grow crops, there was a mass exodus from New England to the Western Reserve in Ohio. The Western Reserve of Ohio is a narrow strip of land that runs west from the Pennsylvania border parallel to the southern shore of Lake Erie. Some historians have called this one of the largest and most homogeneous mass-migrations in American history.

In 1825, the Erie Canal was completed and became the highway from New England to the West. It crossed the state of New York, beginning just north of Albany and going west to Buffalo on the shores of Lake Erie. In one month 4,000 families passed through the Canal. Theoretically, one could continue a water trip further west traveling on Lake Erie, but the trip across the Lakes was considered more treacherous than traveling across the ocean. Therefore, many continued their journey by land on a route south of Lake Erie with horse-carts or on foot. It would take one to three months to reach their final destination in the states now called Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois.

In 1851, the Legislature of the state of Illinois gave the administrators of the Illinois Central Railroad two million acres of land in return for their building a railroad from New England to Chicago. To sell this land, the Railroad officials publicized it with promises of land equivalent in richness to the Garden of Eden. Some hearty souls must have thought the land further west would be even better. They would travel to Chicago, take a land route to the Mississippi River and then up the river to what is now called Minnesota.

The large influx of New Englanders into what is now called Minnesota has given rise to its being dubbed "The New England of the West." Just as their ancestors had established Harvard University six years after arriving on this continent, their descendants also demonstrated their belief in educa-

tion. Although it did not open until 1857, the University of Minnesota was actually incorporated by the first territorial legislature in 1851. In 1858, the year of statehood, the University of Minnesota became co-educational.

Alexander Ramsey, the territorial Governor, possessed a deep appreciation for the past and a vibrant vision for the future. In 1849, he was instrumental in the founding of the Minnesota Historical Society. This was nine years before statehood.

The migration patterns of Hubbard's family mostly followed those of their fellow New Englanders. Progenitor William Chase, who arrived with Winthrop's Fleet, worked as a carpenter in Roxbury, Massachusetts from 1630 to 1638. Roxbury is located in what is considered greater Boston today. In 1839, he moved with others to establish the town of Yarmouth on Cape Cod where he served as constable. The family remained in Yarmouth for several generations. By the fifth generation, John Chase had moved to Swansea, Massachusetts, which is on the mainland south of Boston. It was probably after the Revolutionary War that Dean Chase of the sixth generation moved his family to what is now called Maryland Township in Otsego County, New York.

In later years Judge Thomas Cooper came to Otsego County and settled in an area where he founded a town called Cooperstown. Baseball fans would recognize this as the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Literature fans might recognize Judge Cooper as the father of James Fennimore Cooper, the author of many books that tell the story of frontier New York State.

Rensselaer Dean Hubbard was born in Otsego County on the December 14, 1837, to Lavinia Chase and Oliver B. Hubbard. He was the third of five children born to the couple. James Fennimore Cooper was in his golden years at the time of Hubbard's youth. One can only wonder if Hubbard ever met his famous neighbor.

The Hubbards were struggling farmers and their young son began helping out at an early age by hiring himself out to neighboring farmers. When only 15 he found work on a chain gang crew who were laying the bed for a railroad from Albany to Bing-

hamton.

In the spring of 1854, when Hubbard was barely 16 years old, he set off on an adventure that would be daunting for all but the most adventurous. Along with friends, he set off for California! Movies always depict the trip to California as crossing North America by ox-cart. It was very dramatic when the wagon trains would be attacked by Indians. In truth, the Indians were not as dangerous as the disease cholera. However, Hubbard did not have to face either--he went by ship. He boarded a ship in New York and sailed south in the Atlantic Ocean to Nicaragua. There he crossed the country either by foot or by horse to the Pacific side, where he boarded a second boat that took him north to San Francisco. Through the next 15 years, Hubbard made this boat trip five times. The trip took from one to two months to complete.

Hubbard immediately found work in Yolo County in the Sacramento Valley. He worked as a farmhand for \$15.00 a month for two years. Later he tried get-



Mary Esther Cook Hubbard

ting his own land and farming, but he failed due to drought.

In August 1857 Hubbard bought supplies in Sacramento and traveled across the mountains to the Humboldt River Valley of Nevada. He found a ready market selling supplies to the immigrants, but soon discovered another need. The immigrants would "use up" their animals. Hubbard would take these animals, feed them and nurse them back to health. He would then trade them back to the immigrants getting two or three more "used up" animals in return for the ones that he had nursed back to health.

In July 1858, Hubbard saw another opportunity with the influx of the gold miners to the Fraser River Valley of British Columbia, Canada. To get to the gold fields the most expedient way was to go up the river, but they needed boats. Seeing the need, Hubbard started a boat rental company to take the gold miners and their supplies up the river.

Just after his 21st birthday, Hubbard went back to New York for Christmas, but returned to California the following March. This time he took a more conventional job by becoming a clerk in a grocery store in Sacramento earning \$50 a month. He must have displayed his potential since he was soon in charge of the grocery store and earning \$160 a month.

After the breaking out of the Civil War, Hubbard once again headed home to join the Union Army. Enroute, he caught pneumonia and was declared unfit for service. During his stay at home, on April 9, 1863, he married Mary Esther Cook from Otsego County. Still wanting to be of service to his country, he rented land in nearby Sidney Plains in Delaware County, where he raised tobacco and recruited others to serve in the Union.

In the fall of 1866, R. D. and Mary Esther moved to Correy in Erie County, Pennsylvania, where Hubbard began a grocery business. He had \$2,000 in capital with which to start his business, but in less than four years he had cleared \$30,000.

Hubbard evidently thought that his fortune was to be made in California. He took the money he had cleared in the grocery business and borrowed more from his friends to make a total of \$100,000. He and



his wife set off for California with the plan to establish a bank, but when he arrived he found that due to the Franco-Prussian War the economic conditions were very uncertain. The couple elected to head back east by taking the railroad, which had been completed the previous year. In contrast to the one to two month-long trip by ship, the rail trip took about four and a half days if they did not run into washouts, buffaloes, train robbers or Indians.

As Hubbard was always open to new opportunities, it is not surprising that when the train reached Davenport, Iowa, the Hubbards disembarked. They had heard that there was a thriving new community called Mankato in Minnesota that should be investigated. Besides the potential for business, it had been settled by people who shared their heritage and values. After a boat trip up the Mississippi River to Winoona, they took the recently completed train to Mankato, arriving in 1870.

Hubbard had served his apprenticeship in entrepreneurship. He had found a town that seemed like home. He was ready to make his mark!

#### Sources:

1. Bushman, Richard L. *From Puritan to Yankee; character and the social order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* ..Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967.
2. Flandrau, Charles. "Roots and Routes, GreaterYankeeland." *Encyclopedia of Biography of Minnesota*, Vol. I. Century Publishing and Engraving Co., Chicago. 1900, pp 287-290.
3. <http://www.rootsandroutes.net/roots.htm>
4. New England's Migration Fever: The Expansion of America." *Ancestry Magazine*, 7/11/2000, July/August 2000, Vol. 18, No.4.
5. <http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article.aspx?article=2834>.
6. *The Yarmouth Family of Chase*, Library of Cape Cod history and genealogy, Vol. I, Genealogy.com.
7. Various items from the archives of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

## YOUNG HISTORIANS

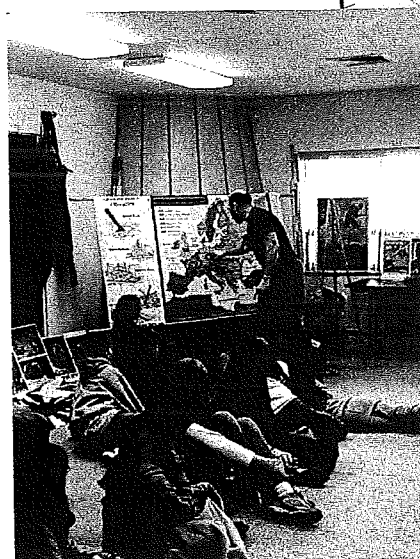
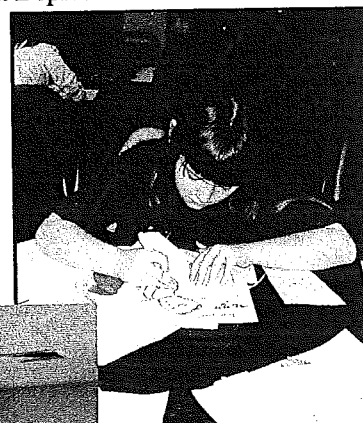


Young Historians Club member Alex Oldenburg works on her Young Historian quilt.



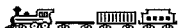
BECHS member Paul Hadley entertains Young Historians on March 11 with stories about growing up during the Great Depression.

Club member Laura Garlow works on her quilt square representing the work of Frontier Artist George Catlin.



BECHS Member Arn Kind teaches Young Historians about World War II at the April 8th meeting.





## RAPIDAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Fourth Year—2005

We started the year with a planning session to come up with ideas for what RHS could do now and in the future pertaining to fundraising and community events.

It was decided for fundraising to continue with a series of Red Wing Pottery. In 2005 we ordered a Jug Bank commemorating the "Farmers State Bank of Rapidan." For 2006 we have on order a ½ gallon crock with lid, commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rapidan Depot, which will be available on Memorial Day 2006.

In February, 2005, our Valentine Sleigh Ride was rained out. However, we did release Tim Madsen's print, "The Sleigh Ride" that day.

At our annual meeting Bruce Dowlin portrayed Bishop Whipple and also spoke on the Winnebago Indians.

In May, together with the Blue Earth County Historical Society, we hosted the Winnebago Indian visit.

As a fundraiser, RHS decided to collect aluminum cans at the depot on certain days as published.

On August 12, 2005 we hosted a bus trip to Mason City, Iowa for the National Pyrotechnics Guild International Annual Convention. We viewed the largest fire works show in the nation.

The 2006 bus trip is planned for September 9<sup>th</sup>, to the newly remodeled Lower Sioux Agency and other sites.

In October, RHS received a grant from the Milwaukee Railroad Historical Society in the amount of \$1,000.00. This grant is to be used for restoration of the depot interior.

Other events include participation in the non-profit Holiday Bake Sale at Madison East and Christmas in Rapidan with Santa at the Depot.

This year's work on the Depot consisted of finishing some exterior work, wiring and electrical hook-up, gas hook-up, insulation and the start of wainscoting the inside. Plans are to have the interior complete by Memorial Day, 2006, for a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary rededication.

We truly appreciate everyone's continued support, and could also use your help in locating historic memorabilia from Rapidan Township for the Depot Museum.

*Darys Lachmiller*  
President

## *Lake Crystal Area Historical Society*

Nearly thirty years after its last meeting, a small group of interested individuals begin meeting in homes to re-organize a historical society in Lake Crystal. The by-laws needed revising and Ryan Magnus, an attorney, volunteered his services to take care of this.

The small group meetings culminated in the first annual meeting on April 26, 2005, at the Lake Crystal Recreation Center. Officers elected were Marcia Jones, President; Ryan Magnus, Vice President; Alice Hollingsworth, Treasurer; and Sylva Kubicek, Recorder.

At this meeting a slide tape show entitled "Beginnings" was presented by Alice Hollingsworth. It covered the first fifty years of Lake Crystal's history. This segment, originally written by Mary Ann Sandt and Alice for the town's centennial pageant in 1970, was later converted into the one-hour show. One of the goals of this Society was to have this slide show updated and transcribed into a DVD format that would be easier for individuals to view. HickoryTech generously offered to sponsor the project which is now being produced by All Pro Media of Mankato. The DVD is expected to be completed and ready for sale by our second annual meeting on April 25, 2006.

This past year the Society has set up seasonal window displays at Bethel Lodge 103, 122 South Main Street.

One other goal is to find a home for the Society in order to display the many items that have been offered the Society.

*Sylva Kubicek*  
Recorder



## ...at the *Museum Store*

The Grand Re-opening on May 20<sup>th</sup> all day is a perfect time to bring your friends and family to see the new Museum Store and visit the Museum for free. At 1:00 p.m. Kathryn Doty, known in her Hollywood days as Kathryn Adams, who is originally from New Ulm and now lives here in Mankato, will join us for a reading and book signing from her two novels. *A Long Year of Silence* tells the story of Emma Altenberg living in WWI era New Ulm amidst anti-German hysteria. Her second book, a young adult novel, *Wild Orphan*, will also soon be available.

We've expanded the store space and warmed it up with rich wood, a darker shade of carpet and architectural accent pieces from our collections over the Museum windows. Anyone walking by will see an open door and a welcoming face rather than a sign on a locked door. Karen Weisz has been a wonderful resource for us with her expertise in exhibits and interior design. She has done displays for Harpies Bazaar, the River Hills Mall and created the store fronts for the Walnut Grove Centennial Celebration. We are excited to have her on board the Museum Store Committee.

This is the perfect time to come and visit. I look forward to seeing you on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>!

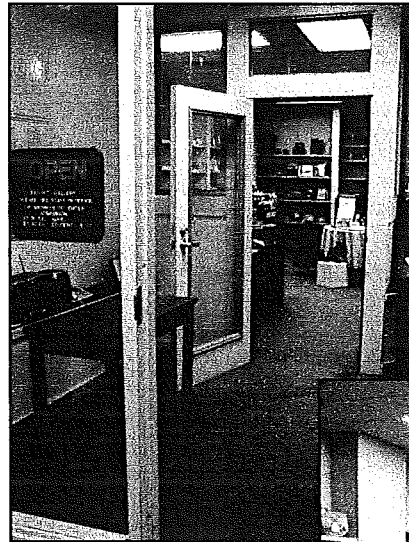
*Anna Larson*

Museum Assistant

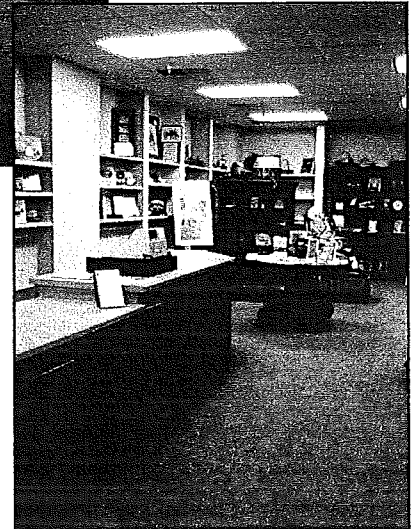
## *Volunteers Are Always Welcome*

If you have some time to spare to help us preserve history, please give us a call. Some examples are:

*serving as tour guides  
participating on committees  
doing data entry for Archives indexes  
indexing census or newspapers  
researching and/or writing*



Museum Store  
Before



Museum Store  
After

## *Museum Store Grand Re-Opening*

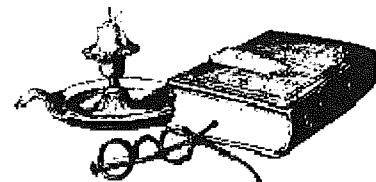
Saturday, May 20

Free Admission to the Museum all day

Kathryn Doty, author of *A Long Year of Silence* and *Wild Orphan*, will be available for a program and to sign her books beginning at 1 p.m.

Door Prizes, Refreshments  
Help us celebrate our new Museum Store!

Remember: BECHS Members





## Notes from the Archives Manager

### Do you remember.....

When the Biographical Files, the Social Notes and Service Men's Reports were located in Archive Storage, and photographs were in filing cabinets? Or when the only way to use the cemetery transcription index was on the computer in Archive Storage?

### Did you know...

That we have 92 Obituary Books, just started Book 93 and that we have approximately 200,000 obituaries indexed? That we continue to update these books and indexes? That we are in the process of creating an index to our Last Will and Testaments files and we've created a list of Blue Earth County School Teacher?

That wonderful indexes have been created for the 1857 and 1865 Censuses? That the Service Man Reports Index and 1865 Census Index are available on our website and our Research Center public computer? We also have other helpful research tools such as the Alien Register, the 1930 Census and index, a List of Men from Blue Earth County who enlisted in the Civil War. That we have recently updated our microfilm collection of the *Lake Crystal Tribune*, the *Lake Regions Times*, the *Mankato Free Press* and the *Mapleton Messenger*?

That our photograph collection is now housed in archival quality boxes and they are being cataloged? You can find some of these images online at [www.reflections.mndigital.org](http://www.reflections.mndigital.org).

### Did you know...

We have made such wonderful improvements and it's all because of those who choose to give us their time. **Thank You!**

*Shelley Harrison*  
Archives Manager



## Minnesota Archaeology Week 2006

Tuesday, May 9

6:00pm

BECHS Heritage Center

Tom Sanders, site manager of Jeffers Petroglyphs, will present the program "Ethnohistory of Jeffers Petroglyphs: a slide show and discussion of 1.75 billion years of History."



## Madison Lake Area Historical Society

Have you ever wondered what is in the little green 2-drawer file and the tall 2-drawer cabinet in the north corner of the Madison Lake Community Center's meeting room? You would be surprised at the information and memories those files hold. We have a few things on display in the glass case, but most of the treasures are things that are locked up. Items that are too large or too valuable to keep in Madison Lake are donated to the Blue Earth County Historical Society of which we are a chapter.

This is a reminder, spring cleaning is soon arriving so **THINK** before you throw away that old pair of coveralls or boots or uniform. It may be something we are looking for and wish we had or could pass on to our county historical society. If you like to write, we want those stories you tell to your grandchildren, why not encourage them to write them down. In later years so many people say, "I wish I'd saved that" or "I wish I could remember more about what my grandfather used to tell me."

We keep chugging along. However, new "blood is always welcome and you don't have to be a "forever" resident of this area. We meet the third Wednesday from April to December at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Will we see you this year?

*Jerry Frederick*  
President



## Through the Research Center Door:

What can be more fun than solving mysteries? Everyday I get to help people solve mysteries in the research center, but sometimes I need a little help. In the last newsletter, I asked if anyone had information about the Nor V Gen Leather Waterproofing Company. We had such a great response that I would like to continue the process in each newsletter. I will explain a particular mystery we are trying to solve, and in the following newsletter I hope to share what I have learned from our readers.

### Mystery Solved

The Nor V Gen Leather Waterproofing Company was started by Harry A. Rudberg in 1936. Harry was born in Mankato in 1887 and lived here until he was 18 years old. As a young man, Harry had been a shoe salesman in Seattle and St. Paul before moving back to Mankato in 1940. He had also been a traveling salesman of Norwegian Leather. From his knowledge of Harry created an oil and paste that replaced the natural oils in leather. He also created the machinery used to fill the little green cans and bottles. The spelling Nor V Gen was chosen because he could not use the common name Norwegian due to the popularity of Norwegian Leather. For thirty years, the company was run out of Harry's garage on Belgrade Avenue in North Mankato.



In 1966 Harry contacted Ken Krause with the opportunity to buy the company. Although Ken worked for Standard Oil Company and feared he would lose his job, he and his wife Dolores bought the company. It was located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. and later Willow St. of Mankato. Ken and Dolores owned the company for 20 years and sold it to Al Sween in 1986 making it a part of Sween Corporation. Later the company was sold to Rex and Cathy Glaubitz of St. Peter Minnesota. The company still thrives today in St. Peter.

I would like to thank Ken and Dolores Krause,

Roger Lovik, and Dr. Jon Rudberg for their help in solving the mystery of the Nor V Gen Leather Waterproofing Company.

### New Mysteries

Who was Dr. Arleen? I am not sure if this is a first or last name. The doctor was referred to in a 1929 newspaper article.

What happened to the New Era Steamer of Lake Crystal? We have found a newspaper article that states the steamboat sank in 1912. Can anyone verify this information or add anything to the story?

If you have any information on Dr. Arleen or the New Era Steamer, please contact Sara at 345-5566 or [bechsco@hickorytech.net](mailto:bechsco@hickorytech.net).

Sara Upadhyay  
Collections Assistant



**Come Visit the  
Hubbard House**

The house will be open for walk-in tours every Saturday and Sunday beginning May 6 through September.

Wander around our beautiful gardens anytime.

Check our calendar and join us for some of the special activities that will be taking place at the house and grounds over the summer months.



**Cambria Eisteddfod**



June 25  
Morgan Creek Vineyard  
Cambria Township

**Chairing of the Bard Poetry Competition**  
Music, exhibits, wine

Potluck begins 11:30 a.m.  
Program 2:00-4:30 p.m.

## ***VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER***

Tuesday, May 2

5 p.m.

Heritage Center

Join us as we recognize our 2005 volunteers.

Please RSVP to Anna 345-5566

by April 27th

### **New and Renewing Members**

Anderson, Maria  
Burns, Inella  
Bursaw, Iona  
Carlson, Bruce & Carla  
Crane, Don & Sue  
Davis, Judith  
Drengler, Robert  
Franklin, Elizabeth  
Frederick, Marcel (Sal)  
Hillegas, Marcella  
Hinrich, William  
Hoehn, Jim & Pat  
Jackson, David & Colleen  
Jenkins, Margaret  
Junge, Robert  
Just, John  
Klugherz, Catherine  
Kubicek, Joe & Sylva  
Madsen, Kristine  
Madsen, Tim & Liz  
Norland, Gail  
Olson, Susan  
Pond, Patricia  
Powell, Nancy  
Pulis, Tim  
Ries, Chuck & Carol  
Simonette, William & Josie  
Smith, Emmett  
Stokesbary, Christine  
Swanson, Keisha  
Tloughan, Jim & Jane  
Troemel, Clarinda

**Business Members**  
Burkhardt & Burkhardt

### **January – March 2006 Volunteers**

Affolter, Ron	Sassenberg, Eunice
Belgard, Vail	Schultz, Jo
Broadwell, Don	Shortall, Christine
Burns, Inella	Sofchalk, Helen
Coleman, Mary	Stromswold, Todd
Cords, Betty	Tarjeson, Jane
Dooley, Mary	Upadhyay, Samar
Frederick, Mike	Webb, Donna
Frisch, Carlienne	Weisz, Karen
Griffith, Helen	Wilson, Bernadette
Grundmeier, Shirley	Zielske, Dan

Grundmeier, Win  
Hadley, Paul  
Herbst, Gordon  
Hopman, Edith  
Howieson, Bob  
Hugg, Corey  
Hynes, Susan  
Jensen, Mary Ann  
Jensen, Orv  
Keir, Grace  
Kenwood, Robert  
Lagerquist, Mike  
Lamson, Barb  
Madsen, Jack  
McComb, Mary  
McLaughlin, Theresa  
Marti, Ben  
Marti, George  
Marti, Paula  
Niu, Dana  
Ohlencamp, Ora  
Peterson, Leslie  
Quade, Henry  
Rezmerski, John

#### **Interns**

**Bethany Lutheran  
College**  
Gunderson, Doug

**Gustavus Adolphus  
College**  
Evanson, Cara  
Hedstrom, Erica  
Peterson, Megan

**Minnesota State  
University, Mankato**  
Busby, Jay  
Dickinson, Nicholas  
Flanders, Nicholas  
Jeffrey, Meghan  
Lawrence, Daryl  
Minshall, Ashley  
Pase, Kathryn  
Rosenboom, Sara  
Unetic, Rebecca

### ***Tour Guide Training***

**Saturday, April 29**

**10 a.m.**

**Heritage Center**

For new and seasoned tour guides

Refreshments will be provided

Call Anna to sign-up 345-5566

## ***VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER***

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Hillegas, Marcella  
Hinrich, William  
Hoehn, Jim & Pat  
Jackson, David & Colleen  
Jenkins, Margaret  
Junge, Robert  
Just, John  
Klugherz, Catherine  
Kubicek, Joe & Sylva  
Madsen, Kristine  
Madsen, Tim & Liz  
Norland, Gail  
Olson, Susan  
Pond, Patricia  
Powell, Nancy  
Pulis, Tim  
Ries, Chuck & Carol  
Simonette, William & Josie  
Smith, Emmett  
Stokesbary, Christine  
Swanson, Keisha  
Tloutan, Jim & Jane  
Troemel, Clarinda

**Business Members**  
Burkhardt & Burkhardt

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Griffith, Helen  
Grundmeier, Shirley  
Grundmeier, Win  
Hadley, Paul  
Herbst, Gordon  
Hopman, Edith  
Howieson, Bob  
Hugg, Corey  
Hynes, Susan  
Jensen, Mary Ann  
Jensen, Orv  
Keir, Grace  
Kenwood, Robert  
Lagerquist, Mike  
Lamson, Barb  
Madsen, Jack  
McComb, Mary  
McLaughlin, Theresa  
Marti, Ben  
Marti, George  
Marti, Paula  
Niu, Dana  
Ohlencamp, Ora  
Peterson, Leslie  
Quade, Henry  
Rezmerski, John

Sassenberg, Eunice  
Schultz, Jo  
Shortall, Christine  
Sofchalk, Helen  
Stromswold, Todd  
Tarjeson, Jane  
Upadhyay, Samar  
Webb, Donna  
Weisz, Karen  
Wilson, Bernadette  
Zielske, Dan

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College**  
Gunderson, Doug

**Gustavus Adolphus  
College**  
Evanson, Cara  
Hedstrom, Erica  
Peterson, Megan

**Minnesota State  
University, Mankato**  
Busby, Jay  
Dickinson, Nicholas  
Flanders, Nicholas  
Jeffrey, Meghan  
Lawrence, Daryl  
Minshall, Ashley  
Pase, Kathryn  
Rosenboom, Sara  
Unetic, Rebecca

## ***Tour Guide Training***

**Saturday, April 29  
10 a.m.**

Heritage Center

For new and seasoned tour guides  
Refreshments will be provided  
Call Anna to sign-up 345-5566



## Fingerprints and Footnotes

In May Fingerprints and Footnotes will celebrate its one year anniversary !!!!

Fingerprints and Footnotes is a history and genealogy club. It's for anyone interested in researching your house, your town, your family or just any subject that you find intriguing. The club meets on the second Thursday of the month at the Heritage Center at 6:00 p.m. Meeting topics are anything from Identifying and Dating Photographs to the History of Blizzards. This is a Club, so there is a membership fee: for BECHS members it's \$5.00 per year, non-BECHS members it's \$10.00 per year. For those not interested in joining but are interested in a specific meeting topic there is a fee of \$3.00 per meeting. Newcomers are always welcome.

In February we discussed the blizzards that shaped our past. In March we discovered how to find all the secrets that live with us when researching your home's history. This April we learned helpful tips on how to preserve those things that are truly priceless - our family stories. If you have any ideas for topics or tours or if you have any interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know

### Future Meeting:

May - Club members can attend one or both programs the week of May 11

- ♦ Minnesota Archaeology Week "Ethnohistory of Jeffers Petroglyphs" May 9
- ♦ David Laskin's Book Signing - *The Children's Blizzard* May 10

June 8th - Family Reunion Tips

July 13th - History of Minneopa State Park

### Finger Tip-

Want to know what year your person immigrated to the United States? Check census records of 1900, 1910, 1920 or 1930. By finding the year of immigration, one can often find the ships manifest record that lists the place of origin of the immigrant.

- Provided by Beth Zimmer



## Only The Most Terrible Blizzards Are Given Names

Wednesday, May 10 at 7:00 p.m.

We are excited to have David Laskin, the author of *The Children's Blizzard*, speak about his book at the Blue Earth County Historical Society Heritage Center

Imagine the cruel irony of crossing the ocean, enduring hardships, and braving dangers to start a new life in America only to be crushed on an unseasonably mild day by the fiercest blizzard ever to hit the Great Plains. Known as "The School Children's Blizzard" because so many of the victims were children on their way home from school, this natural disaster claimed an estimated 500 lives.

In *The Children's Blizzard*, Mr. Laskin tells the story of this brutally savage, sudden snowstorm, that occurred on January 12, 1888, from the perspective of immigrant families who lived through it and lost sons, daughters, parents, homes and their faith in the salvation of the new world.

The book will be available for purchase and the author available to sign your copy that evening.

## Memorial Day-A Look Back

Monday, May 29  
Rapidan

- 8:30 Registration of military personal from this area. Registration of women who played girls high school basketball in the 1920-30's.
- 9:00 Memorial Service and Honor Guard in Memorial Park
- 9:30 *Daughters of the Game: The First Era of Minnesota Girls High School Basketball 1891-1942.* The authors will give a talk and introduce local women who played in this era.
- 10:00 Rededication of Rapidan Depot.
- 11:00 Lunch at the Depot
- 1:00 BECHS performers will present "From Quacks to Clinics."

Call Jane at 507-278-3738 with questions.



# Blue Earth County Historical Society Annual Membership Levels

Membership runs July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007

## Basic \$20-49

- Subscription to the quarterly Newsletter *The Historian*
- 10% discount in the Museum Store
- Free Admission to the Heritage Center Museum, Hubbard House and Research Center, Basic Business receives 5 individual admission passes

### Basic Levels

- |                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| ◆ Individual Student/Senior | \$20 |
| ◆ Individual                | \$25 |
| ◆ Household                 | \$35 |

## Contributor \$50-99

All the Basic Household or Business Membership benefits plus:

- ◆ \$10 gift certificate to The Museum Store
- ◆ 10 admission passes for Contributor Business

## Booster \$100-499

Basic and Contributor benefits plus:

- ◆ Your choice of one of the gift items (A-D)
- ◆ 20 admission passes for Booster Business

## Sponsor \$500-999

Basic and Contributor benefits plus:

- ◆ Your choice of two gift items (A-D)
- ◆ 30 admission passes for Sponsor Business

## Benefactor \$1,000-4999

Basic and Contributor benefits plus:

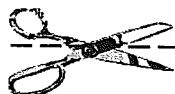
- ◆ Your choice of three gift items (A-D)
- ◆ 40 admission passes for Benefactor Business

## Patron \$5,000 +

Basic and Contributor benefits plus all four gift items (A-D), bonus gift and 50 admission passes for Patron Business.

### GIFT ITEMS

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A - BECHS Logo Coffee Mug | C - BECHS Logo T-shirt  |
| B - BECHS Logo Tote Bag   | D - Powwow Compact Disk |



## *Notice*

Please note our membership levels and great gifts for joining at a higher level. Memberships from July 1 to June 30. If you have already renewed your 2005 membership, it will carry over until June 30, 2006. Your 2006 membership can now be renewed. Please renew at your earliest convenience. If you have questions, please feel free to contact any Board, Staff or Development and Marketing Committee member.

**And, remember BECHS when considering giving a memorial or in your estate planning.  
This a wonderful way to preserve your family heritage.**

**Membership dues and monetary gifts cover a growing part of our annual operating budget.  
Thank you for your support as we preserve and protect the past for the future!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Business Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address

☐ New ☐ Renewal

**Membership Levels**  
Please note level and gift choice.

☐ Basic

☐ Contributor

☐ Booster Gift Choice \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Sponsor - Gift Choice \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Benefactor - Gift \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Patron Gift Choice A-D

☐ Please do not send my gift. I want my full contribution to support BECHS

- ☐ I would like to make a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ above my yearly membership dues.
- ☐ I would like my gift and/or membership to be anonymous

**Please return this form to:**

BECHS Membership  
415 Cherry Street  
Mankato, MN 56001

**January – March 2006**  
**Artifacts & Archives Donations**

Anonymous  
Bartholdi, Roberta  
Bartsch, Glenn  
BEC Extension Office  
BECHS  
Bieber, Duane  
Black, Delbert  
Currie, Lorraine  
Dooley, Mary  
Dowlin, Sheryl  
Fitzloff, Beverly  
Frederick, Michael  
Frisch, Carlienne  
Ganske, Maxine  
Gardner, Lorene  
Germundson, Curt  
Grams, Marcella  
Grundmeier, Shirley  
Grundmeier, Winston

Herbst, Gordon  
Hugg, Corey  
Keir, Grace  
Layeux, Tim  
Layman, Eloise  
Lundgren, James  
McComb, Mary  
Murry, Tim  
Pengra, Joan  
Resner, Donna  
Robinson, Genevieve  
Rosenberg, Mary Jane  
Schultz, Jo  
Sofchalk, Helen  
Stock, Edwin  
Sugden, George  
Tarjeson, Jane  
Webb, Donna  
Wood, Richard

***Heritage Dinner***

Honoring Blue Earth County Veterans  
***Past and Present***

Saturday, April 22  
6 p.m.

Eagle Lake American Legion

Tickets \$15  
Purchase at the Heritage Center



**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

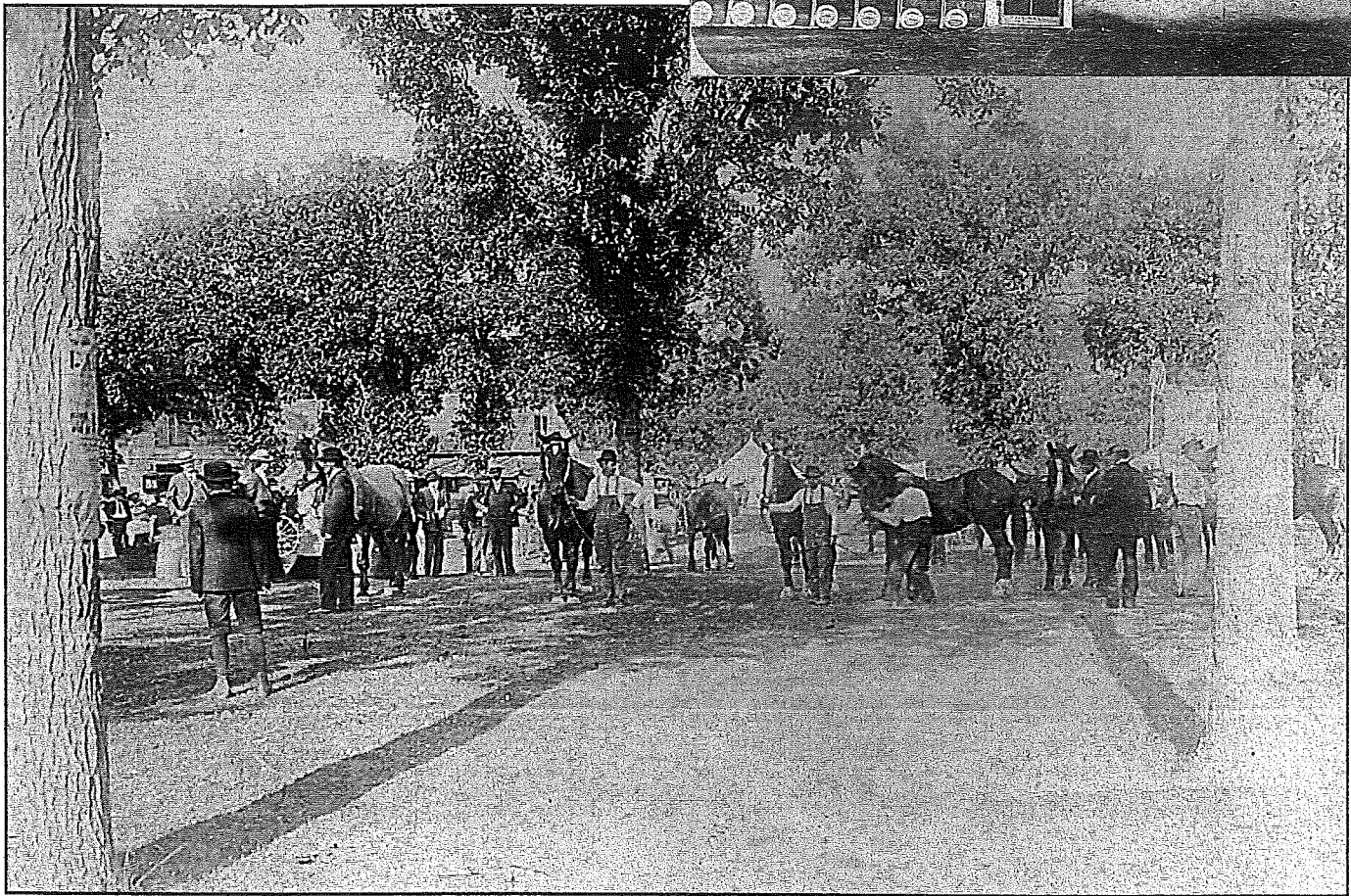
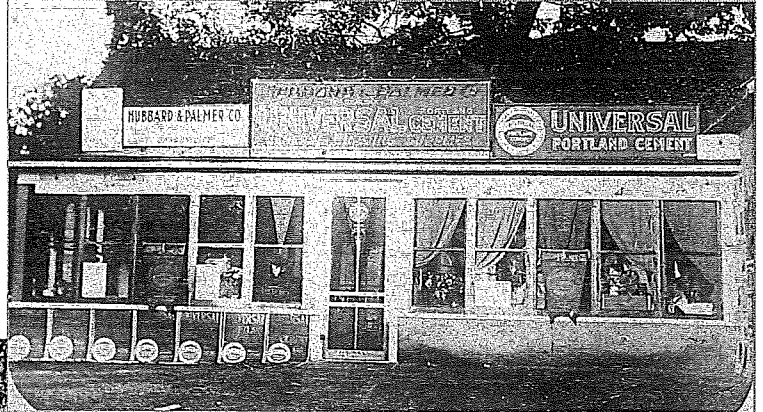
Expiration date

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901

## In this issue:

- Director's Message 2
- Ask BECHS 3
- President's Message 4
- Literary Heritage of Blue Earth County 5
- Young Historians 8
- Fingerprints & Footnotes 13

Special rest porch for mothers at the Blue Earth County Fair,  
Garden City, c1915



## See you at the Fair!

Horse Show at the Fair in Garden City, c1909. To learn about the history of the Blue Earth County Fair see the Summer 2000 *Blue Earth County Historian* available for viewing in BECHS Research Center or for purchase at our booth at The Fair in August.



## From the Executive Director

Summer is flying by. As you are reading this, BECHS is preparing for another year at the Great Blue Earth County Get-together – the Blue Earth County Fair. We are excited about some new opportunities this year. BECHS will operate the schoolhouse at the Fair. We will have turn-of-the-century schoolhouse activities and lessons for children of all ages (1-99). We will continue to have our traveling store in the arcade building, and we are planning an old fashioned pie and ice cream social with a showing of BECHS' original production, *Medicine Show: From Quacks to Clinic* on Sunday afternoon. Please consider joining us at the Fair, either as a visitor or as a volunteer. This is a great opportunity to help BECHS and to meet your Blue Earth County neighbors.

This has been a busy summer for BECHS. Since May we have hosted nearly 30 programs or events. Our programs range from Fingerprints and Footnotes and Diner's Club (both monthly programs) to the Cambria Eisteddfod and Pilgrim's Rest Cemetery

Tour (both one time only events). We also added a new program focused on local authors. Each month we will host a book discussion and author signing. And with summer comes the old-fashioned pie and ice cream social. We have taken part in three of them already this summer, with the Lake Crystal Municipal Band concert coming up on July 26<sup>th</sup>.

An exciting reward to all of these programs and events is the different people we meet and enlighten about what BECHS has to offer. As staff, volunteers and members, we are excited to share BECHS' services and opportunities with everyone. If you haven't taken the opportunity recently, please attend a program or event, visit the Hubbard House or Museum or spread the word to a friend and family member that BECHS is a great organization with many opportunities for all ages!

Please remember that without our members and dedicated volunteers we wouldn't have the incredible organization that we have today. I thank you for your continued support and commitment to helping this organization grow!

*Jessica Potter*, Executive Director



### Blue Earth County Historical Society

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN 56001, 507-345-5566

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnbechs/>

BECHS mission is to collect, preserve and publish materials relating to the history of Blue Earth County.

#### Board of Trustees

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Leslie Peterson, Vice President, Mankato  
Bernadette Wilson, Treasurer, Mankato  
Vail Belgard, Secretary, Garden City  
Mike Brennaun, Mankato  
Mike Frederick, Madison Lake  
Win Grundmeier, Mankato  
Barb Lamson, Mankato  
Jack Madsen, Good Thunder  
Mary McComb, Mankato  
Henry Quade, Good Thunder  
John Rezmerski, Mankato  
Jane Tarjeson, Rapidan Heritage Society

#### Staff

Jessica Potter, Executive Director  
bechs@hickorytech.net  
Shelley Harrison, Archives Manager  
bechsrc@hickorytech.net  
Sara Upadhyay, Collections Assistant  
bechscs@hickorytech.net  
Anna Larson, Museum Assistant  
bechsms@hickorytech.net  
LaDonna Tollefson, Archives Aide

#### Newsletter Production

Donna Webb, Editor

### The Blue Earth County Historian

Summer 2006

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# ASK BECHS

A new feature in the BECHS *Historian* will be a section titled "Ask BECHS." The Staff, Board or volunteers will answer questions from our membership. It can be a question about BECHS or the history of an event, place or mystery in Blue Earth County. We'll start this out by answering two general questions.

## Why do we need a county historical society?

"To collect, preserve and promote the history of Blue Earth County for present and future generations." This is the mission of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Since 1901 BECHS has collected over 18,000 objects including Bill Carlson's first printing press and Maud Hart Lovelace's high school scrapbook, over 10,000 photographic images and thousands of stories and memories. These stories and memories are what make the objects and images come to life. In essence, BECHS collects the life of Blue Earth County. The Society preserves history not only through proper storage and handling procedures, but also by encouraging the life of a family to be passed on to the next generation. And how does BECHS promote history? Through our Research Center, Museum, R.D. Hubbard House, programs, newsletter, tours, staff, volunteers, and members. We, as the stewards of history, have a big job to preserve the past and protect the future, and this is why we need a county historical society.

## What year was the R.D. Hubbard House built?

The house was built in 1871 for Rensselaer D. Hubbard, founder of the Hubbard Milling Company. The house is a French Second Empire style. It is constructed of brick and wood on a basement of cut stone. The main house is three stories with a Mansard roof with colored slate shingles.

The Hubbard House was remodeled in 1888. The servants' quarters, fireplaces, a bay window, and an office were added, and all the woodwork was replaced. Various species of wood were used: oak, cherry, maple, and pine. The house was described as one of the finest homes in Mankato. It had the first telephone, indoor plumbing, electricity, and the most modern conveniences of the time.

In 1905, Bradstreet of Minneapolis was hired to re-decorate the house. At this time, silk wall covering, ceiling paintings, Tiffany and Quetzal lamps and art glass windows were added. The house is currently being restored to the grandeur of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To "Ask BECHS," just call, write, or email your question to Jessica Potter. Questions will be answered in the next newsletter.

## Recent Donations

### Up to \$25

Abraham, Richard  
Buck, Margaret  
Davis, Shirley  
Kearney, Elizabeth  
Kraft, Judy  
Ringheim, Marilyn  
Straka, Stacey  
Wigley, Francys  
Wilson, Bernadette

### \$25-\$99

Anderson, Mary V.  
Bishop, Mary Louise  
Coughlan, T. William  
Craig, Nancy  
*In honor of Joshua and  
Martha (Hughes) Norman*  
Cramer, Donald  
Hollingsworth, Alice  
Nuessle, Ruth  
Sassenberg, Eunice  
Taylor, Brett

### \$100-\$500

BENCO  
Burton, Verona

Madsen, Jack  
McLaughlin, Tom and Theresa  
Rezmerski, John  
Roscoe, Don  
*In honor of Bert Burns*  
Sofchalk, Helen  
Steil, William and Nancy  
Zwickey  
Timm, Robert

### Over \$500

Grundmeier, Winston and  
Shirley

### Blue Earth Co. Townships

Cambria Township  
Medo Township  
Mapleton Township

### In Kind

Blue Valley Sod & Landscape  
Coleman, Mary  
Confer, Richard & Ogden  
Garlow, Sandi  
Jensen, Orv  
Kenward, Robert  
Richtsmeier, Scott

BECHS has received \$735 toward our \$1000 matching donation. When we reach \$1000, a donor will match that with another \$1000. Please help us reach our goal. A heartfelt thanks to all who have made donations and renewed their memberships.