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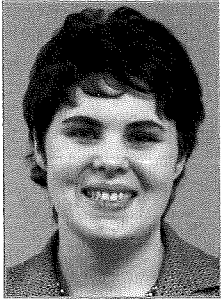


Mill stone
from the Ster-
ling Center
Gristmill
Photo by Jane
Tarjeson



Sawmills, cane mills and gristmills!

The Carl Tarjeson Sawmill, operated in the Rapidan–Good Thunder area,
was just one of many in Blue Earth County.



From the Executive Director

I hope this finds you all well, enjoying the beautiful summer season. We sure have been busy at the Historical Society this summer. From our Victorian Lawn Party to the 2nd Annual Cambria Eisteddfod, to our inaugural Courthouse Tours and Vintage 1860s Base Ball Game, we are enjoying the season and all it has to offer. Upcoming events include the Blue Earth County Fair in August, the 2nd Annual Old-Fashioned Barn Dance and the Annual Walking Tour in September, and Ghosts from the Past at the Blue Earth County Courthouse in October. Check out the enclosed calendar for details.

In the previous newsletter we distributed member surveys about the present and future of BECHS. I would like to thank all of you that took the time to complete the survey. I appreciate all of your comments and support. Please always remember that this is YOUR historical society, and we want to hear from you. I've also noticed that many of our mem-

bers are not taking advantage of all the programs and services we provide. Please take time to visit, explore the museum, wander through the Hubbard House, shop in our Museum Store, or take in one of our many programs and events.

I recently attended a meeting with my peers where we discussed image and branding for non-profit organizations. We had to go around the room and describe what first comes to mind when we think about the respective organizations. For BECHS, I heard words like growing, emerging, hidden treasure, variety, more than expected, and who knew. I think these words accurately describe BECHS today. This is where we need the support and assistance of our members. Share your thoughts of BECHS with family, friends, and colleagues. Encourage them to visit the Heritage Center or Hubbard House and encourage them to become a member. We need more people in Blue Earth County to "discover" all of the hidden treasures that we have to offer. Please help us spread the word!

Thank you all for your continued support!

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

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The Blue Earth County Historian

Summer 2007

The Blue Earth County Historian is published quarterly for the members of Blue Earth County Historical Society.

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FIRE: stories of fires and fire fighting in Blue Earth County's early years.

BECHS latest publication will be available at the Blue Earth County Fair. Come by our booth and check it out.



We need your help!

by longtime BECHS sleuth Betty Cords

Those of us who were involved with the Courthouse Open House June 25th had a very enjoyable afternoon. I was surprised at the many changes that had taken place through the years and wondered where all the old doors, fireplaces and wainscot went.

I remembered church pews at Calvary Lutheran Church that had come from the courthouse, also some wainscot and a fireplace that had been installed in Cub's restaurant back in the late 1960s. Nowadays that building is occupied by Mac's Bar and Grill located off of Third Avenue near the Kato Ballroom. I went down there one afternoon to see if that woodwork was still there, and it was!

Since then I've been trying to track down the rest of it. I thought it would be interesting to know where it was and how it's being used today. Wouldn't it be great if there were some spare pieces and parts that could be donated to the Historical Society for future displays?

Anyone with information please call the Historical Society at 345-5566 or me at 387-5145.

Now Available:

Mankato City Center Walking Tour Brochure highlighting spots in Mankato's downtown area. For your free brochure, stop by the Heritage Center.

Recent Donations

Up to \$25

Kent, John & Harriet
McComb, Mary
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Fasnacht, William
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\$50-\$99

Griffith, Helen
Kato Community Club
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Rug & Carpet Caretakers
– Gary Peterson

Township Donation
Cambria Township
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Memorials

In Memory of Fae Bateman
–Richards, Marcia

\$100-\$499

Chmielarz, Sharon
Hickorytech
McLaughlin, James
Rezmerski, John
Scheels All Sports – Phil
Slingsby
Sofchalk, Helen
Tarjesson, Jane

In Kind
Ahlness, Janice
Belgard, Hugh & Vail
Greenfield, Gary – MSU
Klugherz, Catherine

Grants

Mankato Area
Foundation for
publication of BECHS'
upcoming
Century Farm book

\$500 and up

Bartsch, Glenn

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

We all leave our own unique mark on this world in our families, work and the organizations we believe in and support. We celebrate these legacies at BECHS – after all, they are the heart of the history we preserve every day.

A legacy gift, also known as a planned or estate gift, can help ensure BECHS has the resources to preserve and present the history of Blue Earth County for many years to come.

To learn more about Legacy Gifts at BECHS, contact Jessica Potter, Executive Director at 507-345-5566.



Notes from the Archives Manager

The fourth Saturday of every month we have Genealogy Day in the research center. You can learn some tips and tricks for conducting your family history research. You can ask an "expert," one of our many volunteers who have cracked some pretty tough mysteries; they are also experienced with the Family History Center and other areas outside of Blue Earth County and Minnesota. Admission to the Research Center on Genealogy Day is free. I know I'm preaching to the choir here, all of you know what a wealth of information there is in the research center, so here is your chance to tell everyone you know about it, too.

If you are someone who has no relatives in Blue Earth County, remember you can also stop by and ask us any question, such as: What is the dot on the lower case "i" called or when was the percolator invented? These are just some questions we have been asked. If you want to know what veteran's information you can find at the County Government Center, or if you want to know if Blue Earth County had a waiting period for a marriage license in 1900, we can answer those questions too. Genealogy Day is a great opportunity for all of those people who aren't sure what we have or how they can use us, to come in and try us out. Stop by and see us the fourth Saturday of each month or anytime. Oh, and don't forget all the other free programs we offer every Saturday!

Shelley Harrison
Archives Manager

Speakers Bureau

BECHS Speakers Bureau is available for informative and entertaining programs for service clubs, organizations, church groups or nursing/assisted living homes. Topics range from History of Blue Earth County to the History of Hats. To request a speaker, a list of prepared topics or to volunteer for our Speakers Bureau, please contact Jessica at 345-5566.

YOUNG HISTORIANS

The Blue Earth County Historical Society Young Historians had a fun year filled with hands-on history. Club members recorded their own history by compiling a scrapbook this past year. This summer Young Historians related events included a trip to Seppman Mill and tea parties at the Mapleton and Blue Earth County libraries. Young Historians members were also involved this summer in the Hubbard House Victorian Lawn Party, the North Mankato Fun Days Parade, and the Vintage 1860s Base Ball game.

Young Historians will begin another season of hands-on workshops for children in grades 3-6 in September. Young Historians workshops are held the second Saturday of each month. The first workshop will be Saturday, September 8th and feature a look at Archaeology. The workshops are free and open to the public.

A new addition to the program will be Junior Historians for grades 7-12. Junior Historians will work on a special oral history project throughout the season and will assist with Young Historians workshops. This is a great opportunity for older kids to stay involved in this great hands-on history program.

If you have any questions about Young or Junior Historians or would like to get involved with this great program, please contact Jessica at 507-345-5566.



***Grab your partner,
do si so***

**Join us for the
2nd Annual
Old-Fashioned Barn Dance
at Jack McGowan's Farm
Saturday, September 22nd**

Family Fun Fundraiser for BECHS

Mills of Blue Earth County

By Jane Tarjeson

Wind, water and steam were the three sources of power for the mills of early Blue Earth County. The main types of mills they powered were saw, cane and grist.

Wind was not very reliable; on a calm day there was no power produced. The most notable of the wind powered mills were the Seppmann Mill and the Schostag Mill.

Construction of the Seppmann Mill was started by Louis Seppmann in 1862 and completed in 1864. Built of stone and timber, the walls at the base are over two feet thick. The mill is circular in shape and is 30 feet in diameter at the base and 32 feet high. The mill operated until 1890. In 1890 Herman Seppmann, Louis's son, built another mill 65 feet tall next to it, and this wind-powered mill was used as a gristmill and for sawing wood. It operated until 1907. The old stone mill was donated to the Blue Earth County Historical Society in 1930. BECHS did some repair work and put on a new roof. In 1932 it was donated to the State of Minnesota to become part of Minneopa State Park.

The Schostag Mill was originally built as a sawmill a few miles east of Mankato. Gottlieb Schostag built it entirely of native materials - the cog wheels, beams and main drive shaft were hand hewn from huge native oak trees. Unfortunately it was built in a grove of trees where the lack of wind made it impractical to operate. The mill was dismantled and moved by ox team to the northern shore of Minnesota Lake, on the Danville Township line. There it was reassembled as a flour mill; the stone burrs were hewn and polished from local prairie stone by Mr. Schostag. The mill was octagonal in shape, about 40 feet in diameter at the bottom, tapering to about 25 feet at the top, 40 feet from the ground. An axle fastened four gigantic arms hewn from solid oak, 35 feet long; to the top of the mill and to this axle, the machinery was attached. As they revolved, the arms reached a height of 80 feet with a speed of 25 miles an hour and 30 horsepower. The abandoned mill was burned in 1939 when a fire of unknown origin swept across the old lake bed.

Fred Affolter, the blacksmith in Amboy, had a wind-mill on the top of his shop. When the wind was strong enough, he was able to grind feed and flour. He also used it to run a turning lathe.

Blue Earth County was blessed with abundant water-power. Five rivers and numerous creeks ran through the county, providing water to the giant water wheels generating power to the mills. Spring freshets often took out the mill dams and sometimes even swept away the mill and all the wheat and flour stored in it. Early mill dams were built of brush, later of rock.

By the 1920s the rivers were too unpredictable for water powered mills because of changing farming practices. Farmers had tiled their fields to drain into the rivers, and this caused rapid rises in the river levels and increased damage to the mill dams.

Steam was the most reliable of the three - if water was available close by. The advantage of the steam engine was that it could be portable. Sawmills could be moved from farm to farm, making it convenient for locals to bring in their logs.

The lack of nearby water was a downfall for Alfred Howe when he built a steam sawmill in 1857 in Jamestown Township. There was no water at the mill location; water had to be hauled in tanks to the steam engine, which hindered the mill from making much money. Located near an extensive grove of black walnut trees, much of that valuable lumber was manufactured, but there was little or no market for it. After about two years the mill was moved away.

The mill was the center of activity, and often a town or small hamlet would be built around it. A post office, blacksmith shop, store and school would soon be built near the mill. Men waiting to have grain ground would visit the blacksmith shop, hunt in the nearby woods, drop a line in the mill pond or wait at the mill and catch up on all the local news. The pond that formed behind the mill dam would become the "recreational spot" of the area and was a favorite swimming hole for many.

Mill villages such as Watonwan, Fremont, Lowell, Tivoli and Champion Mills sprang up, but for unknown reasons faded and now are only memories.

Other locations such as Garden City and Vernon Center remained active milling centers, and the towns thrived.

The earliest type of mill built in the county was usually the sawmill. The settlers' first concern when moving onto the land was to build shelters for their family. Sawmills sprang up throughout the county. Native trees were cut into logs and hauled to the sawmill by teams of horses in the winter. If the winter was mild with no snow cover, the logs could not be gotten to the mill.

The Van Brunt Mill was the first sawmill erected in the county. Built in 1854, it was on the LeSueur River in Decoria Township. This mill was abandoned in 1855 when the land became part of the Winnebago Reservation. It was later operated several seasons for the Winnebago Indians.

The Volk Bros. built a steam sawmill by a three-acre mill pond in Jamestown Township in 1867. To this venture they added a store and a shingle and planing mill. In 1869 they added a furniture factory and later a small gristmill for grinding corn and feed. So extensive were these operations, it became known as "Volksville." In 1880 the furniture factory burned, but the sawmill and other buildings were saved.

In 1885 Anton Hoveland had a sawmill in the woods north of the railroad by Madison Lake. Native lumber was sold for \$7.00 per thousand board feet.

The 1891 ledgers from the Hodapp Bros. Mill in Mankato Township list black walnut, oak, maple, ash, elm, and bass trees. Their charge is not shown, but it does indicate that beside cash money they accepted trade of logs, lumber, butter, beef, threshing, use of horse and labor at \$1.50 a day.

The cane mill was operated by horse-power or gas engine. These mills were smaller, and some individuals owned them for personal use. Several larger cane mills were in operation, notably the Maxwell Sorghum Mill by Amboy and the Gustafson Mill in Judson.

Sorghum was locally grown, and individuals would bring their cut cane to the mills to be pressed through heavy steel rollers to extract the juices and

then cooked in large vats over a cordwood fire. The syrup would bubble and boil and shrink in volume by evaporation, and turn a rich brown color. Vern Lundin wrote of Charlie Gustafson's sorghum mill in Judson and the anticipation of scraping the warm, delicious molasses residue from the sides of the vat. Their "treat" proved to be a surefire fall tonic and laxative.

The farmers who raised the cane had priority on the syrup produced, but the surplus was for sale. It was used on pancakes and Johnnycake and in many recipes. In 1902 Ellis' store in Sterling Center advertised "Table syrup and sorghum in one gallon pails, 40 cents and 45 cents a pail."

An advertisement in 1865 for Honey-Dew Sorghum boasted that it "makes superior syrup, clear as honey."

The gristmill often was added to the sawmill to do custom feed and flour grinding. Some sawmill operations were completely converted to gristmills.

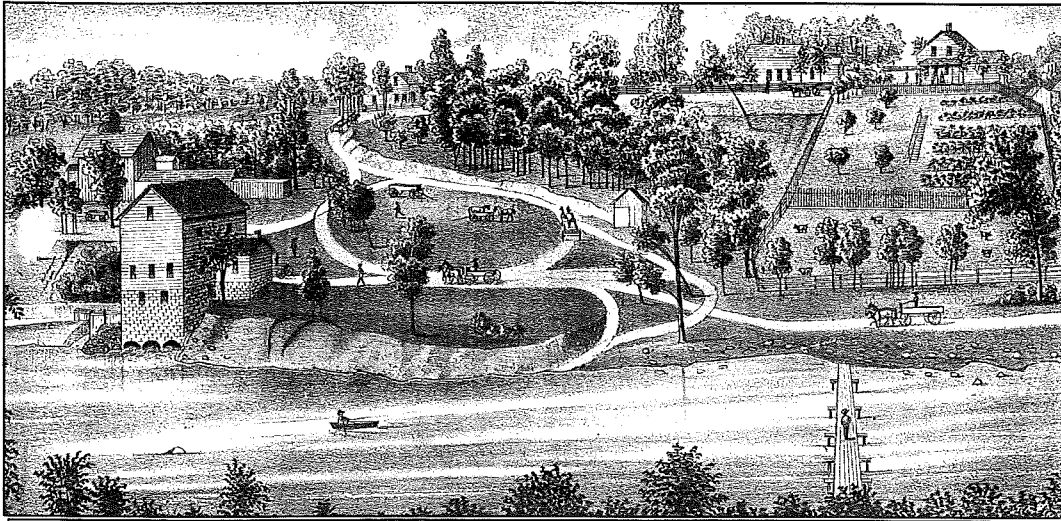
A gristmill is a mill that grinds for a share of the grain brought to it. Each miller set his own rate of exchange for grinding the grain. The average exchange was for every bushel of grain brought to the mill the farmer received 34 pounds of flour, eight pounds of bran and six pounds of shorts. The miller's toll for the grinding was twelve pounds.

Grain was ground and crushed between a pair of huge, flat, round stones called millstones or burrs. The two stones that worked together were known as a run. The bottom stone, or bedstone, did not move. A stone spindle passed through the hole in its center, was attached to the stone on top, called the runner, and made it turn. The distance between the two stones was set according to the type of grain being ground. Wheat needed less space than corn for grinding.

The surface of each millstone had flat areas called land and a design of grooves carved into it called furrows. Both the land and the furrows ground the grain, but the furrows also ripped off the grain's outer husk, channeled the ground flour to the outside of the wheel for collection, and allowed air to pass through the stones to let out the heat created during

grinding.

The flour industry remained in the hands of individual millers who harnessed either the wind or small streams to furnish the power to turn the millstones. In 1878 R. D. Hubbard erected his modern mill in Mankato and milling moved from the stone to the more efficient roller method. The grist mills continued to operate, but as feed mills.



Rapidan Mills

“Good bread is the staff of life. Rapidan flour will please your wife. Try it.” advised a 1901 advertisement in *Mankato Free Press*.

Gottlieb Schostag would not allow anyone in his mill. He said it was too dangerous because of all the machinery and moving parts. (This also added to the “haunted” rumors of the mill.) The cautious Mr. Schostag was struck with one of the rotating arms of the windmill and suffered a severe blow on the head from which he never recovered.

An incident at the Maple River Mill in 1880 illustrates how quickly an accident could happen. The *Mankato Free Press* reported that

“Miss Gerlick the proprietor’s daughter, 10 years old, went in the mill to speak with the miller, Mr. Swaggler; she had a baby in her arms, and stood talking with Mr. Swaggler, when her clothes caught on the upright main shaft. The Miller shut down the mill almost instantly, but not in time to save the

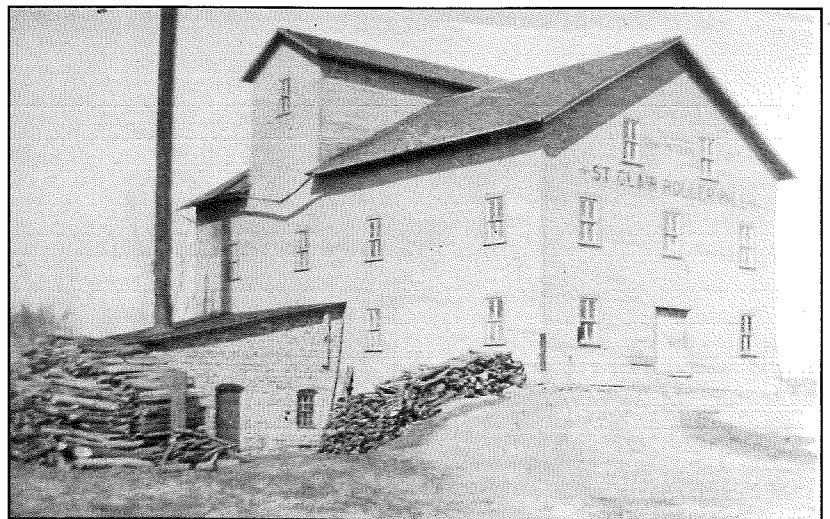
girl from injury. She only went around three or four times, which broke one leg between the knee and ankle.”

She was lucky to escape with just a broken leg. Others were not as fortunate, losing their hands or arm when caught between the belt and shaft or in the machinery.

The most destructive and most feared threat was fire.

Flour catches fire easily, and sparks from gears or millstones rubbing together could cause an explosion. The majority of the saw and grist mills at some time experienced a fire. If possible the mills were rebuilt, but sometimes the money for rebuilding was not available.

The St. Clair Roller Mills suffered a devastating financial loss when two men from Chicago ordered a carload of flour in 1884. The mill ran day and night to fill the order and ship it on time to Chi-



St Clair Roller Mills

cago. But the men, the flour and the promised money were never seen again. The mill changed hands and continued operations. In its best years, it turned out as much as 10,000 feet of lumber and 100 barrels of flour a day.

Who were these men who built the mills? Kenworthy, Rodgers, Pfaff, Dyer, Rew, Friend, Keene, Capwell, Doty, Redfearn. They learned milling from their fathers and grandfathers in the east and used that art to build mills as they moved to new frontiers.

Andrew Friend, who for over forty years controlled the grist and flour mills in Garden City, learned the trade when a boy. After building several mills in Wisconsin, he came to Mankato in 1857. A day after his arrival he was employed in the South Bend sawmill of John Williams. Weeks later he was on his way to Judson to build a sawmill for T. R. Coulson. In the next twenty years, he built or was involved in the building of the Rockey Four Mill in Mankato, Capwell Mill at Garden City, Red Jacket Mill on the Le Sueur River, Dyer Mill on the Maple River, Woodland Mill on the Blue Earth River, Champion Mill in Shelby Township and dozens of saw and flour mills in southern Minnesota. In 1865 Friend

this mill in November 1881. He updated this mill to the roller system and successfully operated it until May, 1910, when it closed as a flour mill.

Richard Rew, a native of New York, and his brother-in-law, George Heaton, built mills in Wisconsin prior to coming to Rapidan Township in 1866. They built and operated the Rew (Union) Mill on the Maple River for several years before moving, building grist mills as they continued their trek westward.

W. G. Furman owned and operated the gristmill by Sterling Center. A fitting monument marks his grave in Sterling Cemetery – a burr stone. A simple plaque reads:

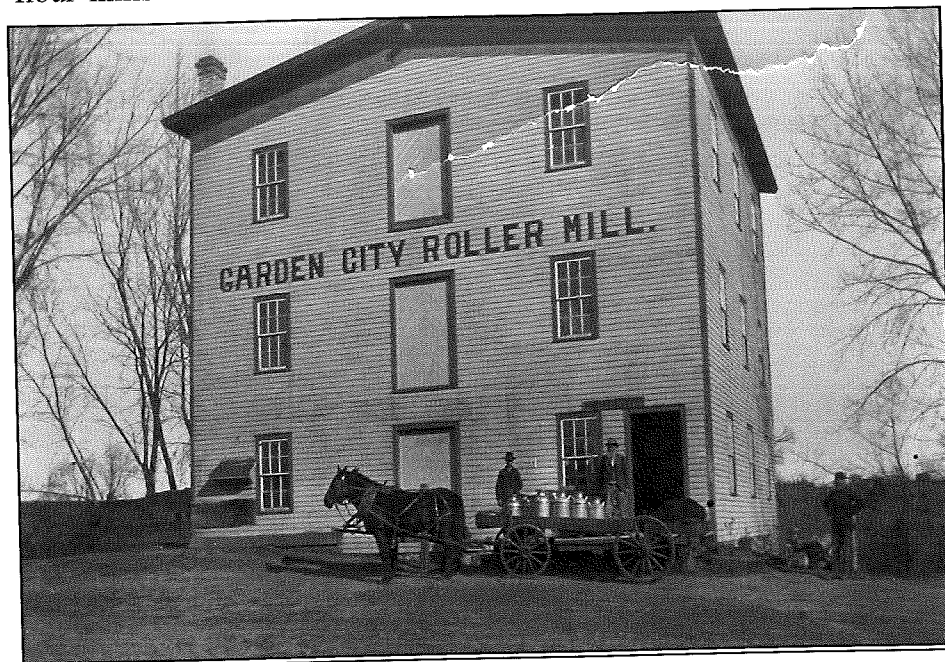
W. G. Furman 1826-1903
Sterling Center Miller

For many years the largest milling center in Blue Earth County was located in the community of Watonwan, located four miles upstream from Garden City. About 1857 Charles Butterfield built a three-story gristmill operated by waterpower. Butterfield's mill enjoyed an extremely large patronage, with trade extending as far south as Fairmont. Farmers drove many miles with their ox teams and exchanged wheat for flour.

Today Watonwan has disappeared as a community, but a few remnants remain to be seen. When the river is low a few of the wooden piles at the old milldam site may be seen. Much easier to view are the large millstones from the mill which were placed in the Blue Earth County Fair Grounds in Garden City.

Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bonin, the stones were moved by Bert Hanson on his Caterpillar tractor in 1946. The stones are displayed just inside the main entrance to the fair grounds.

The legacy of the Cable Mill begins in 1869 with the Doak Bros. building a dam across the Blue Earth River three miles west of Good Thunder. They first built a saw mill and did quite an extensive lumber business and afterwards added a small gristmill with



Garden City Roller Mill

bought the Yankee Mill in Garden City, and along with Mr. Quayle operated the old mill until he built a new mill for himself in 1869. In the spring of 1881 occurred the biggest freshet ever known in the river, which wrecked the mill and carried off the warehouse with 5,600 bushels of wheat. He spent all summer repairing the mill and in the fall was able to grind again. The Capwell Mill had also been badly damaged in the freshet and Friend was able to buy

one run of burrs and one reel. To increase their power, they built a new dam upstream and dug a tunnel through the bluff about 200 feet long and brought the water to the mill in a race about a mile long.

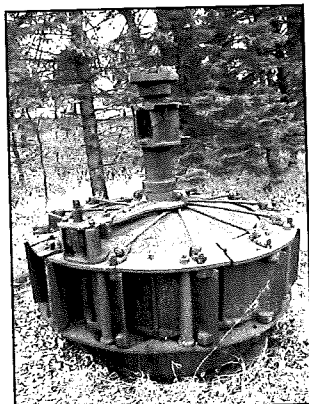
In 1877 the mill site and machinery was sold to Henry Dyer, and he commenced the erection of the Cable Mill on a natural elevation 100 feet above the river level and 200 feet from the flume which contained the water wheels. The power was transmitted to the mill by a cable running on two sheave wheels, one at driver at the water wheel and one driver at the mill. Mr. Dyer formed a partnership with Thos. Quayle of Garden City, and the work was completed. This mill had five runs of four-foot burrs and ten reels with a capacity of 100 barrels in 24 hours.

Other owners of the mill were Turner & Redfearn and W. T. Thompson & Sons. In 1900 Joseph Kreuer purchased the mill. He experienced the problems of washed out dams, machinery breakdowns and fire. During a heavy storm on the night of August 23, 1905, the mill was struck by lightning and completely destroyed by fire.

A new mill was built on the old site, 32 x 40 feet in size with a nine-foot basement, one 13-foot floor and two 12-foot floors. The latest machinery was installed with a capacity of 70 to 80 barrels a day.

In 1916 the decision to move the mill to Mapleton was made, but World War I interrupted the process. Mr. Kreuer's son was called into service, other help was scarce, and plans for moving the mill were postponed.

The mill stood idle until the son returned home. A site was selected close to where the old Commander Mill used to stand, and the move began. Taking out the machinery did not present a problem, but taking down the mill and rebuilding it so every board and timber was in the same position as before was a



Cable Mill water wheel.

complicated job. The building was divided into sections and numbered, then each piece of lumber in every section numbered. In this way every joist and beam, each piece of flooring, and every spout was returned to its exact position. It took Mr. Kreuer and his son 25 days to dismantle the mill and rebuild it at Mapleton. The mill began grinding wheat February, 25, 1920, and was now run on electric power.

In December, 1920, a disastrous fire destroyed the flour mill. This was the third mill destroyed by fire in Mapleton. The first mill, built about 1880, was destroyed in 1887. A replacement mill was built immediately and eventually was owned by the Commander Mill Company. It burned in the big fire of 1911.

The McCormick turbine water wheel from the old mill site was dug from the mud and blue clay of the Blue Earth River bottom by Wesley and Jess Cornish and remains a monument to the milling industry.

The mill still holds mysteries. In 1931 the original 1874 French burr millstones were moved to Sibley Park and mounted on a concrete platform by the grape arbor. Where are they now? The Mankato Parks Department, has no knowledge of them. BECHS does not have a picture of the Cable Mill. Do any exist?

Not all the mills in Blue Earth County are mentioned here. Many mills were in operation for only several years before changing owners and often moved to another location. Information on the county's larger mills: Hubbard Milling Co., Amboy Roller Mills, R. L. Houk Milling, Rapidan Milling Co., Commander Mill, Lyons Sawmill, etc. may be found in BECHS Research Files.

Sources:

Blue Earth County Enterprise, Garden City Herald, Good Thunder Herald, Mankato Free Press papers.
Hodapp Bros. Sawmill ledgers
Kalman, Bobbie *The Gristmill*
Lundin, Vernard *The Twig is Bent – Growing Up in the MN Valley* @1988

April - June Volunteers

Affolter, Ron
 Bartholdi, Roberta
 Baures, Lisa
 Belgard, Vail
 Benefield, Dale
 Brennen, Mike
 Brywant, Philip
 Burton, Ronnie
 Clement, Jeri
 Coleman, Mary
 Cords, Betty
 Czer, Ramona
 Engh, Jane
 Finley, Lindsay
 Frederick, Mike
 Frisch, Carlienne
 Garlow, Laura
 Gertz, Lehi
 Goff, Harley
 Grabitske, Paul
 Graham, Joan
 Griffith, Helen
 Grundmeier, Shirley
 Grundmeier, Win
 Hanson, Kathryn
 Harrison, Joshua
 Heartstrings
 Herbst, Gordon
 Hopman, Edith
 Howieson, Bob
 Hugg, Corey
 Hynes, Emily
 Hynes, Susan
 Iserman, Sarah
 Jackson, Colleen
 Jensen, Mary Ann
 Jensen, Orv
 Keir, Grace
 Kennedy, Gloria

Kildegaard, Athena
 Kind, Arn
 Lagerquist, Mike
 Lavitschke, Jo-An
 Lippert, Sarah
 Lundin, Gary
 Mergentha, Mary
 Marti, George, Paula,
 Adam & Ben
 Matthesen, Elise
 McComb, Mary
 Madsen, Jack
 Miles, Genevieve
 Moralis, Joe
 Morgan Creek Vineyards
 Nienow, Patricia
 Nussbaumer, Linda
 Ohlenkamp, Ora
 Oldenburg, Alex
 Oldenburg, Connor
 Peterson, Leslie
 Peterson, Molly
 Rafness, Lorna
 Rezmerski, John
 Robertson, Emily
 Rodriguez, Gabriela
 Sassenberg, Eunice
 Schultz, Jo
 Shortall, Christine
 Sofchalk, Helen
 St. David's Society
 Stromswold, Todd
 Tarjeson, Jane
 Thom, Andrew
 Webb, Donna
 Young, Katy
 Ziegler, Kenneth
 Zimmer, Beth



Through the Research Center Door:

As many of you who have entered through the doors of the Research Center know, I am new to BECHS. I started as the Archives Assistant on May 1. Since then there have been mountains of information to sort through and remember. This job has been one of the most interesting experiences I have ever had. I get to delve into all sorts of interesting information for people who come in asking for help researching their family as well as for those who e-mail me or simply.

Before getting hired as the Archives Assistant I was a volunteer for a year here at the Heritage Center. As a volunteer I worked on oral histories and obituary books. I had just started my next project, working on negatives, when I was fortunate enough to get this job. So if anyone wants to do research about Blue Earth County, (its people, land, etc.) please come in, call or write the Research Center. If I don't have the answer, Shelley, the Archives Manager, or one of our wonderful volunteers will.

Gabby Rodriguez
Archives Assistant



Pick up your FREE Customer Appreciation Card at Mankato's *Famous Dave's* Restaurant. Each time you dine in or out at *Famous Dave's*, use your card. You will be rewarded a 5% cash rebate that goes on your card. You can use the accumulated cash value at any time at the restaurant to be applied toward your balance.

But best of all, *Famous Dave's* will match your 5% personal reward with the same amount donated to the Blue Earth County Historical Society. You can also choose to donate your cash rebate to BECHS. This is a great program, please visit *Famous Dave's* today and ask for the Blue Earth County Historical Society Customer Appreciation Card!

2007 Cambria Eisteddfod Poets

Poetry Finalists:

Sharon Chmielarz,
 Eisteddfod Bard Winner
 Susan Thurston Hamerski
 Doris Stengel
 Susan Stevens Chambers
 Joe Paddock

Poetry Recitation Youth Finalists:

Kelsie Halvorson,
 Crown Winner
 Anna Fox



...at the Museum Store

A treasure chest: Orv Jensen, long time BECHS volunteer, is the quiet man in the back who takes on all manner of tasks and challenges and befriends the objects as tangible worlds rather than for some abstract history, good for the posterity of filling shelves. Soon after I started working for BECHS, I faced the challenge of shipping one of his donated trunks to California as a surprise birthday present for a couple who had visited and fallen in love with it enough for the wife to secretly submit shipping details to a remote location. So I had to weigh it, and Orv, with a sense of adventure, put one of those old scales back to use. Since then we've sold at least two others and now have two new ones in stock, and they are beautiful. Orv can also be referred to as "The Trunk Man" with 30 plus years of experience refurbishing trunks. In his own words, "Old trunks have dents and stains, but what stories they might tell!" He does his research; he'll find the hardware or even the full model in an 1897 Sears Catalog, say, and give everything he can to help people appreciate its history.

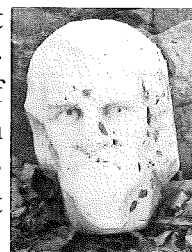
...and from the Book Shelf: They say never judge a book by its cover, but we all do it, and sometimes it pays off. I loved the MHS title, *Voices for the Land, Minnesotans Write About the Places They Love*, and the black and white photograph of two girls running through a clearing with their arms out like wings. I made my picks for a wider sampling of Minnesota interest books from the Minnesota Historical Society catalogue, and we took a chance on only a handful. Paging through the glossy pages of *Voices for the Land*, I was pleased to see three entries for Mankato including the cover image of our Rasmussen Woods. We also ordered more of our standards like *Old Rail Fence Corners* and Carley's *The Dakota War of 1862*, books that we can never keep in stock for long. We ordered copies of *Death of the Dream* as seen on PBS. We have William Gabler's book of photographs and the DVD as well.

Get in quick and take home a treasure.

Anna Larson
Museum Assistant

History Mysteries

Recently we were asked about this stone head found in a back garden on Norton Street, Mankato. If you have any information that can help solve this mystery, please contact Gabby at 345-5566 or at bechsrc@hickorytech.net



Speculation on headless statues from Win Grundmeier:

The larger-than-life plaster statue of President Abraham Lincoln, which once stood in a very prominent location in Old Main, was the object of numerous pranks by mischievous students. Lincoln stood at the main crossroads on the first floor of Old Main through the years when Mankato State Teachers College occupied the building. Lincoln was known to be tall – 6'4", so his larger-than-life statue would be enormous. Father Abraham stood there over the years, gazing down at the flood of humanity steaming by in all directions. He was truly the symbol of the college.

Occasionally, some scamps working late in the evening when no one was around, would remove the head of our President (it was easily detachable,) and next morning the college symbol appeared more like the Headless Horseman. These pranksters were quite ingenious about hiding the President's head – sometimes as near as inside the pedestal on which Lincoln stood, and again in some remote closet in the building. Never was any damage of a physical nature done – just wear and tear on the Administration's nerves in locating the head.

WISH LIST

- Shade canopy for events
- Copy Paper
- Folding Chairs
- *The Land* on microfilm
- Mylar book covers
- LCD Projector
- New Tables and Chairs for Meeting



Rapidan Heritage Society

Memorial Day is a day to remember and honor...

Events began in Rapidan with a moving Memorial Service in the park. The North Mankato American Legion Post 518 provided the color guard; and speaker, First Sergeant William Klaers, spoke of his experiences while serving in the Middle East.

Special thanks to St. John's Lutheran Church of Rapidan for providing coffee and donuts for the morning break.

A program honoring the teachers and support staff of Rapidan School followed. Jack Madsen read a tribute to them, and interesting tidbits of early school board minutes were shared. Each teacher/support staff received a carnation as a small token of the community's appreciation.

The morning events concluded with a lunch (Sloppy Joes, beans, chips, pickles and Dam Pie!) and time for visiting.

Unfortunately, the 2007 Rapidan Redwing Pie Plate featuring the Rapidan School was not finished in time for sale on Memorial Day. Call Lynn at 507-278-3535 if interested in a plate. This is the fourth in the Rapidan Redwing Pottery series.

Remember the good ole' days of threshing? RHS is co-sponsoring a threshing bee August 4th on the Gene Ziegler farm by Rapidan. The farm is located on County Road 33 immediately North of Rapidan. Just follow the signs! Crafts, demonstrations, music and tours of a nearby vineyard will begin at 1:00 p.m.; threshing begins at 3:00 p.m. followed by a pork sandwich supper. Marian Anderson will be signing the Rapidan print "Passage of Time" from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Depot Museum, Dam Store, The Peddler and Clandestine Classic Cycles will be open for visiting. Horse drawn rides will be provided in Rapidan. All are invited to 'supervise' the work being done that afternoon.

Sept. 8th the RHS bus will be heading to Pickwick Mill near Waseca for our annual one-day outing.

Although mills were very numerous in Blue Earth County in the 1800's, we need to travel elsewhere to experience an 1850's flour mill that is still operable.

One of the oldest existing waterpower gristmills in southeastern Minnesota, the Pickwick Mill operated for more than 120 years. Originally constructed as a combined gristmill and sawmill on Big Trout Creek, the mill ran 24 hours a day during the Civil War, producing 100 barrels of flour daily for the Union Army. After the war it became a flour-milling center for much of southern Minnesota and parts of Iowa and Wisconsin. In the late 19th century, the mill's French stone burrs were replaced by a more efficient roller mill operation. After World War I, the flour mill converted to feed milling and remained in operation until 1978. The mill is administered as a historic site by the Pickwick Mill Association.

Jane Tarjeson

Secretary Rapidan Heritage Society

River Passage Regional Author Series

BECHS invites you to the writer's desk. From lectures, slide shows, chats and book signing, meet a new author every third Saturday of the month.

Saturday, August 18

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Marcia Baer

Those Barracks Babies

Saturday, September 15

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Steven Ulman

The Revenge of Little Crow

Saturday, October 20

1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Emmet Smith

Internet blog writer



Fingerprints and Footnotes

Fingerprints and Footnotes had a rip-roaring, eye-popping spring. In May we dug up the past with help from Tom Sanders of Jeffers Petroglyphs. We also celebrated our second anniversary with a drawing and the winner wasTim Madsen, congratulations to him.

In June we discussed all the customs and traditions that accompany a walk down the aisle. In July the club learned about the rich local history of quarry industries. As always, the meetings are entertaining as well as educational, and an enchanting time is had by all and newcomers are always welcome.

If you have any ideas for discussion topics or any interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know.

Future Meetings:

- August 14th – V-J Day, and Return Home
- September 11th – 9/11 History and Genealogy
- October 9th – Murder in Blue Earth County

Finger Tip-

Census Discovery:

A letter was found referring to “poor Betsy,” living with a married sister. By finding the married sister in the census, it was discovered the reason that Betsy was called “poor” was because she was deaf and dumb. The index was searched to find Betsy in a previous census, and she was found living with another family. The lady of the house in this other family proved to be a third sister. Without poor Betsy’s condition, this third sister’s identity might never have been found.

- Provided by Beth Zimmer



BECHS now **accepts** VISA, Mastercard, Discover and American Express. Credit cards will be accepted for Museum Store purchases, memberships and donations.

April—June 2007 Artifacts & Archives Donations

Ahlness, Janice	Jensen, Mary Ann
Anonymous	Jensen, Orville
Barnard, Marilyn	Jones, Eldon
Bartholdi, Roberta	Jones, Ellis
Bernhagen, Bill	Keir, Grace
Bock, Claire	Lavitschke, Jo-an
Carlstrom, R.W.	McComb, Mary
Cords, Betty	Orman, Stephen
Cornish, Elaine	Ostrich, Lori
Dauk, Edith	Peterson, Brent
Deep Valley Quilters	Plotz, Harriet
Dewitt, Joanne Bierbauer	Portner, Carol
Dooley, Mary	Rasmussen, Howard
Field, Roger	Resner, Donna
First Church of Christ,	Saman, Deloris
Scientist	Schultz, Jo
Frederick, Mike	Steele, Nancy
Frisch, Carlienne	Stencel, Kathy
Griffiths, Jane	Sugden, George
Grundmeier, Win	Tarjeson, Jane
Guentzel, Cheri	Wagner, Charles &
Hendrickson, Edgar Estate	Rutheda
Hubbard, Ronal D	Walz, Tim
Hugg, Corey	Wombacher, Bob

Volunteers Are Always Welcomed

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

*Speakers Bureau
Tour Guides
Museum Store attendant
Committee members
Research and writing grants
Data Entry
Research and writing for publications*

BECHS Membership

April-June

New Members

Anderson, Gordon H.
 Benefield, Dale
 Clement, Jerene K.
 Farnsworth, Susie
 Grabitske, Paul
 Harmer, William R.
 Hines, Eileen
 Kent, Harriet and Jack
 Kidd, Terri
 Lancaster, Mary Ann
 Larson, Dennis L.
 Lennartson, Eric and Amy
 Lutes, Duncan
 Meurer, Dean
 Meyer, Sharon
 Neitge, Judith
 Nordgren, Lee and Donna
 Pothast, Robert and Sue
 Schulz, Shelly K.
 Wandersee, Barb and Steve

Renewed Members

Ahlness, Janice
 Allen County Public Library
 Apitz, Darell F.
 Baer, Marcia and James
 Barber, James and Edith
 Bartholdi, Roberta
 Bessler, Marilyn and Bill
 Boroski, Betty
 Botten, Joel
 Brandel, Ruth
 Buscher, Robert and Marilyn
 Carstensen, Vernon and Norma
 Chalgren, Marcia
 Coleman, Mary
 Cramer, James
 Cummiskey, June
 Davis, Judith
 Duane, Susan
 Dunlop, Donna and David
 Ehmke, Judy
 Engh, Jane
 Erickson, Helen
 Fitzloff, Shirley
 Frederick, Michael

Fredericksen, Joan
 Gage, Kelton and Dorothy
 Griffith, Helen
 Hinrich, William
 Hoehn, Pat and Jim
 Hoehn, William
 How, Mary Ellen
 Howieson, Robert
 Hunter, Jan Becker
 Jenkins, Margaret J.
 Jensen, Orv and Mary Ann
 Johnson, Doug and Pat
 Klugherz, Catherine
 Lavitschke, Jo-an
 McGregor, Dr. Byron and Karen
 McLaughlin, James
 McMillin, Ronald
 Manthe, Lois
 Mathiason, Renee
 Mosher, Clayton
 Norland, Roger
 Norman, Beth
 Nuessle, Ruth
 Nussbaumer, Linda
 Ohlenkamp, Ora
 Olson, Susan M.
 Penhitter, Judy
 Pierce, Glenn and Donna
 Pommerenke, Marlene
 Quade, Henry
 Rose, Robert and Luella
 Ryan, Thomas
 Salsbery, Tom and Cindy
 Sassenberg, Eunice
 Schaug, Shirley
 Schmitz, Joan
 Sofchalk, Helen
 Sontag, Leola
 Steele, Richard and Ramona
 Thompson, Jay and Darlene
 Troemel, Clarinda
 Williams, Jerry and Vee
 Zielske, Daniel

Business/ Educational Level Members

Burkhardt and Burkhardt, Ltd.
 Paulsen Architects
 SS Peter and Paul Jesuit Community



...at the Hubbard House

For those who have not met me yet, I have been hired as the very first Hubbard House Site Manager. I recently graduated from Minnesota State University Mankato with a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a minor in history. I am engaged Genevieve

Miles and we have plans to marry in October. Before this position I have had experiences working with the YMCA in Ely, Minnesota, and for the U.S. Forest Service in Idaho. I also have a two-year degree in Parks and Recreation Management and National Park Service Seasonal Law Enforcement.

It is terrific that we can now breathe some life back into the Hubbard House by extending open hours, adding some brand new programs, and by improving the existing programs that have been a hit in the past. The big project for 2007 was the iron fence that was erected at the site this summer. However, next summer we are gearing up for a more ambitious goal of the exterior restoration at the Hubbard House. We will keep you posted on the details, but wish us luck!

I am so pleased to be a part of this organization. The dedicated staff and the fantastic volunteers and members make this historical society amazing. The next time you are traveling on Broad Street, I invite you to stop by the Hubbard House and say "hello!"

Jeff Brand

Hubbard House Site Manager

Membership Renewal

It's that time of year. Reminder 2006-7 memberships expired on June 30, 2007. Renew your 2007-8 membership today! Also, consider gift memberships or encourage a friend or family member to join. Please use the enclosed yellow form to renew.



every month.

BECHS member, Emmett Smith, continues to present *Mankato History This Month* on KMSU-89.7 FM, at 10:00 a.m. on the first Monday of

Upcoming topics include the story of Abraham Lincoln and the 1862 Dakota Conflict; the story of the Harkin Store and Betsy-Tacy, then and now.

All broadcasts since the Fall of 2003 are now archived online at kmsu.org and may be heard anytime at: <http://www.mnsu.edu/kmsufm/archives.html>



1860s Vintage Base Ball: Mankato Baltics and friends at the July 2007 inaugural day game at Old Main Village.

DISCOVERY DAYS

Discovery Days is held the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. The programs feature hands-on activities relating to history, the arts, literature, science and sociology. Families are welcome throughout the day.

August 4th

Discovery Days at the Fair

September 1st

No Program—Happy Labor Day

October 6th

Harvest—Down on the Farm.

Visit BECHS at the Fair

August 2-5
Blue Earth County Fairgrounds
Garden City

Traveling Museum Store in the Arcade Building
Turn-of-the-Century Schoolhouse activities in the schoolhouse
Pie and Ice Cream Social Saturday at 2:30 p.m.

Please visit us at the Fair, but please also consider volunteering for the Fair. We need volunteers for all of the areas above during all of the open hours of the Fair.
To volunteer, contact Anna at 345-5566.

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

The Hubbard House open hours are:
Thursday 1:00 to 4:00,
Friday and Saturday 10:00 to 4:00
Sunday and Monday 1:00 to 4:00



Blue Earth County Historical Society
415 E. Cherry Street
Mankato MN 56001

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www.rootsweb.com/~mnbechs/

Expiration date

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901