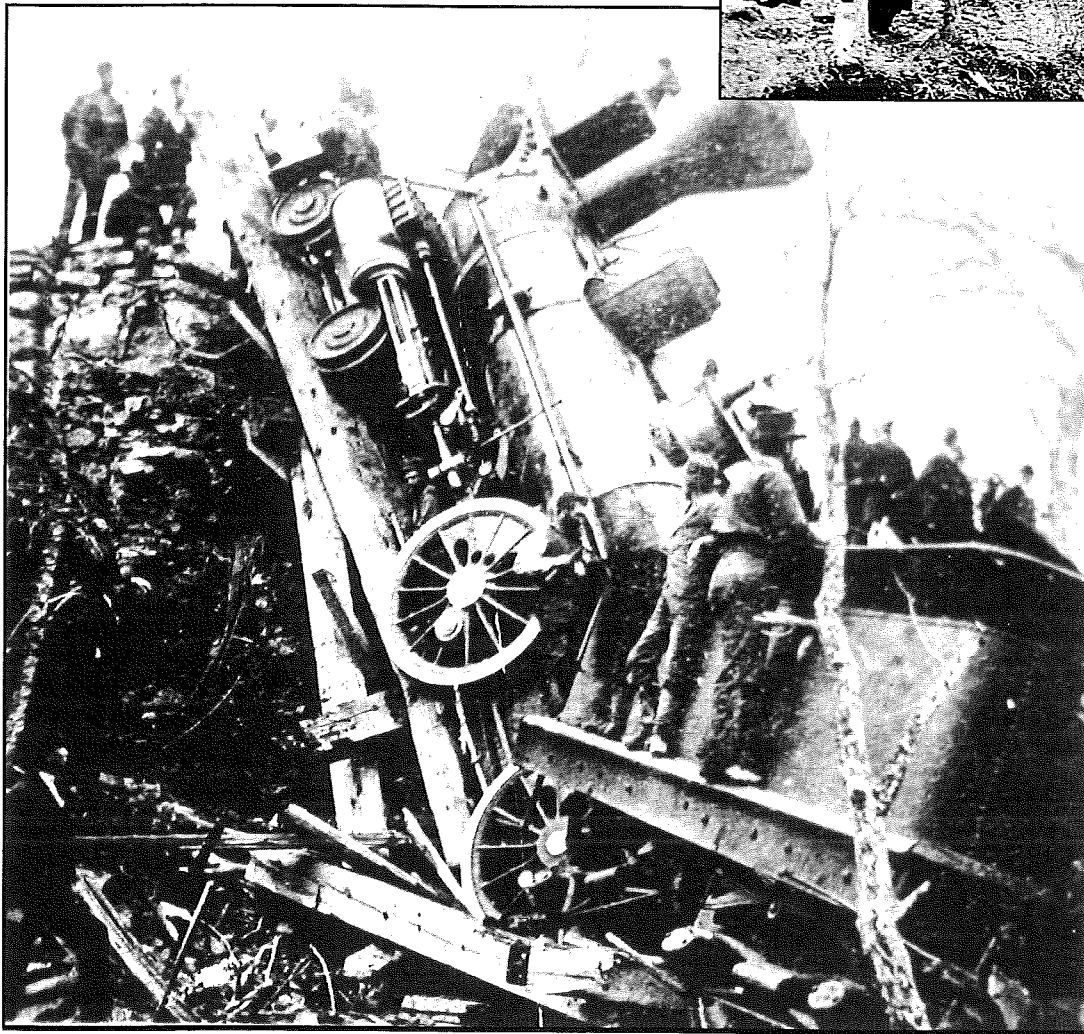
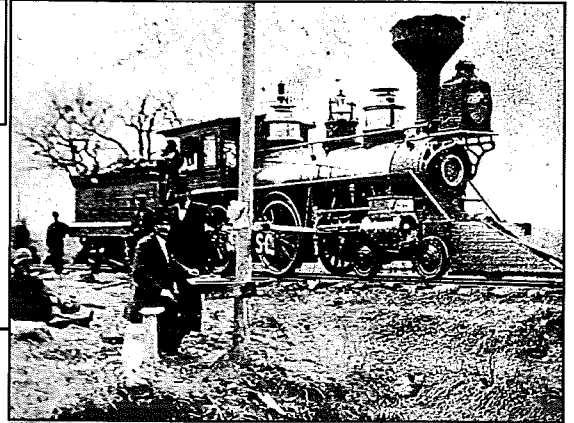


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Train at
Bradley
Station.



Train wreck at Bradley Crossing, April 18, 1875

Our Mission: To collect, preserve, and promote the history of Blue Earth County for present and future generations.



The Historian

Blue Earth County
Historical Society

415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN
507-345-5566
www.bechshistory.com

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The Blue Earth County Historian Fall 2008

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

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From the Executive Director

A new season is upon us with crisp mornings and warm afternoons. A new season always makes me look back and look forward. I look back at how the last season was spent and look forward to what is ahead. Looking back, BECHS had a great summer with the debut of our long awaited Century Farm

book and the 3rd Annual Old Fashioned Barn Dance at Jack McGowan's Farm. The book has been well-received by century farm families and local history readers. The book is beautiful and really captures generations of farm stories. The Barn Dance was a lot of fun with great food from ToKen BBQ and great silent auction items from supporting businesses and restaurants. We are already planning for next year!

Looking forward, we are getting ready for the annual Ghosts from the Past program. I went back in the records and the first Ghosts event took place in 1987. This is a timeless event anticipated annually by volunteers and the community. This year's event will honor Minnesota's 150th Anniversary of Statehood with Old Settler Stories around the hallowed halls of the Heritage Center. Mark your calendar for October 17th and 18th.

Also that weekend, the Heritage Center and Hubbard House will join forces with the Minnesota Wine, Beer and History Trail (also known as Sips of History) for special events along the Minnesota River. The Trail meanders from the Gilfillan Estates and Fieldstone Vineyard in Redwood County to Crofut Vineyard and the Stans History Museum in Scott County. The trail celebrates local vineyards, breweries and history along the River Valley. Maps of the trail are available at BECHS or on the website www.mnriverwinebeerhistorytrail.com. Special events at the Hubbard House include living history tours on Saturday, October 18th from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, October 19th from 1-4 p.m. Punch will be served, the Hubbard House's signature vessel for the Sips of History Trail. This is a great weekend to travel the River Valley and check out the sights, sounds and tastes of southern Minnesota.

Speaking of the Hubbard House, many of you may have noticed the continued restoration work being done on the house. In October we had new storm windows installed, and the porches continued to be put back together. Porch work includes new decking, structural reinforcement and restoration to original architectural details. Final painting may be done this Fall or may have to wait until next Spring. Thank you to everyone involved in all of these restoration projects!

As always, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you all for your continued support of YOUR Blue Earth County Historical Society!

Jessica Potter,
Executive Director

Financial and In-Kind Donations

April 1st - June 30th, 2008

General Donations Up to \$50

Bartsch, Janet
 Bouma, Jana
 Casella, Donna
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 Jones, Ellis and Janet
 Siebrass, Hershel

\$51-\$100

Buscher, Robert and Marilyn

\$101-\$500

Community Bank Mankato
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Over \$500

Bartsch, Glenn

Special Projects – Building Signage

In Honor of Barry Blackhawk
 Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska \$2500

Special Projects – Collections Shelving

\$650 raised – goal \$2500
 Church, Barbara
 Keir, Grace and Richard
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Special Projects - Hubbard House Paint

\$23,200 raised – goal \$40,000
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Memorials

In Memory of John Wittrock
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WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

We all leave our own unique mark on this world; through 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.

Although we are in the business of preserving the past, we do this with an eye toward educating and enlightening future generations on the history of life in Blue Earth County. If you are also thinking about the future, please consider our Endowment Fund or a legacy gift, also known as a planned or estate gift, to 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 giving opportunities, contact Jessica Potter, Executive Director at 507-345-5566 or Todd Stromswold, President at 507-387-9395.



R.D. Hubbard House under extensive porch restoration in early October. Porch restoration by Goodrich Construction and funded by the Minnesota Historical Society's Capital Grants program and the City of Mankato.

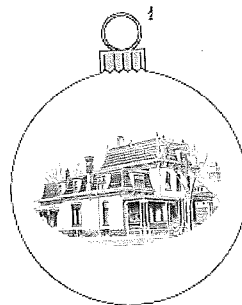
Hubbard House...



Time flies when you are having fun, at least that is how the summer season at the Hubbard House went. In June the Hubbard House celebrated with a grand party, the Annual Victorian Lawn Party, where many guests attended. At the Lawn Party, we also debuted the new Marian Anderson print featuring the Hubbard House. Throughout the summer much work has been completed on the house, such as tuck pointing and repainting. Currently under construction are the three porches. We had a great summer season and look forward to an even better one next year at the newly restored Hubbard House. On October 18th and 19th, the Hubbard House will be open as the punch bowl site for the Sips of History tours. Please join us on December 7th and 8th at the Hubbard House for our Hubbard family Christmas event. We also will be giving tours of the house the weekends of December 13th and 20th.

Melissa Seeley.

Hubbard House Assistant



Christmas at the Hubbard House

*Celebrate the Holidays
with the Hubbard Family*

Sunday, December 7

1:00-4:00 PM

Monday, December 8

5:00-8:00 PM

Music, refreshments and costumed characters.

\$5.00 for Adults

\$3.00 for Children aged 3-17



NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MUSEUM STORE

"Reflections of Days Gone By"

by Marian Anderson

Featuring the R.D. Hubbard House
Third and final of Marian's Historic Home Series

\$150 Artist Proof

\$75 Main Edition

All proceeds benefit

BECHS Capital Improvement Fund

*The Artisan Gallery, located at 1235 Caledonia
Street in Mankato, will donate 10% to BECHS for all
Hubbard House prints framed at their store.*



Notes from the Archives Manager

Most of you know that at BECHS we love Spring when the snow is melting, the grass is green and there are school tours. But with this being Fall, it is sometimes hard to get all the schools in the County to walk through our doors. So if they cannot come to us, our programs can go to them—in suitcases! History-To-Go is our outreach program where we provide objects and documents from our study collection and teachers can use them any way they like. We put the history in their hands. There are 9 different kits, all in suitcases just waiting to travel back through time and bring history to life!

The objects are from our Study Collection. This collection consists of items that were donated to be used in programming in or out of the museum. Each kit has a theme, like historical clothing or valentines. The kits are aimed at third graders, but we are always looking for ideas to broaden the kits'

scope. Mostly we want to encourage creativity in the classroom without using batteries, cables or anything that needs to be plugged in except maybe the student's imaginations.

This is our second year of delivering our kits to schools in Blue Earth County, and we have had some great responses. Like when no one guessed an item was a man's wool bathing suit from the 1900s, or the fantastic discussion a class had when sitting in a circle looking through the historical school textbooks. By far the most popular kits have to be the animal pelts and the model of a paddle boat.

We want to be able to use our donated resources to bring new excitement into every classroom and hopefully to give every student a better understanding of history. This project would not have been possible without the hard work of one of our most dedicated volunteers—Orville Jensen. Thank you Orv! If you have any ideas or suggestions or would like to volunteer with this project, please let me know.

Shelley Harrison
Archives Manager

Ghosts From the Past

Old Settlers' Stories

Honoring Minnesota's Sesquicentennial

Friday, October 17th and

Saturday, October 18th

5 - 8 p.m.

BECHS Heritage Center

415 Cherry Street, Mankato

TICKETS

\$5.00 for adults \$3.00 for children 6-17

For more information contact BECHS at 345-5566



Shadows of the Past:

Lost Villages of Blue Earth County

by
Steven Ulmen

Residents and visitors to Blue Earth County readily identify the cities and towns of Mankato, Eagle Lake, Madison Lake, Amboy, Vernon Center, Garden City, Lake Crystal, Judson, Cambria, Skyline, Rapidan, Beauford, St. Clair, Good Thunder, Pemberton, Mapleton, and Minnesota Lake as located within the county. Many of these communities date to the earliest days of Blue Earth County, which was established in the Minnesota Territory by the legislature in March of 1853, five years before statehood.

Yes, these are familiar names, but many other villages, communities, and wide spots in the road graced Blue Earth County throughout the years. Some were little more than railroad stops or post offices, while others were communities with stores and mills. It is noted that towns and townships were often listed interchangeably, with little to distinguish one from the other. Emphasis here is placed on communities, towns, and villages that we can identify, rather than townships.

In his book, *The History of the Minnesota Valley*, Rev. Edward D. Neill makes the observation that “A particular feature of these early settlements was the method by which many were effected; a means which usually took the shape of the organization of companies, as they were called. They were not really bodies corporate, but simply the association together of any number of individuals for the purpose of mutual protection and assistance. In this way were many places settled. That it was a form of colonization much in vogue in the decade commencing with the year 1850 is manifestly apparent, when the records are inspected. These companies, too, were as a rule formed for the purpose of making claim to town-sites and the fact that no government survey had been made had no doubt much to do with their organization.”

These were communities in the truest sense of the word, associations of groups of people, some being family members and extended families, and others being settlements, or colonies, of immigrants who came from the same parts of the Old Country, without benefit of formal platting or incorporation. Still others sprang up when the railroad passed through, bringing both passengers and freight in and out of the area. Neill observes that Mankato, located on the Minnesota River, quickly became the hub of the area settlements, followed closely by South Bend (whose story appeared in our Winter 2008 edition) and Lake Crystal.

Amos D. Seward, a settler, arrived at Mankato in 1855, and at that time, there wasn't much here to distinguish it from the wilderness surrounding it. Seward observed that in 1855, “there were only five houses of board and six of logs, and that there were only four horses in the entire region, two being at Lake Crystal, and two being at Mankato.” The next few decades saw the Mankato and the Blue Earth County of Seward's day grow and

flourish; and indeed, the area with its highly productive, heavy, loam soil, was able to grow wheat and other crops in great abundance, if the weather and other environmental conditions were right.

The following Blue Earth County settlements were identified by Neill:

Bradley Station – located five miles north of Mankato and named for the crossing over Bradley Creek. In 1875, a special train carrying Plunkett's theatrical troupe, their baggage and scenery from St. Paul to Sioux City and six cars of livestock, were wrecked at this crossing. According to the story in the April 17th *Mankato Review*, the crew had seen obstructions on the tracks as they neared the creek. Although they were able to clear the first, the train was thrown clear, some of the wood traveled with them, struck and damaged the trestle causing the train to crash through the bridge. None of the passengers was hurt but one crewman, the brakeman, received a scalp wound but recovered quickly. However, 45 of the cattle were killed and others so seriously wounded they had to be destroyed. Estimated damages from the wreck were at between \$10,000 to \$12,000.

Cray Railway Station – located eight miles west of Mankato, near Minneopa, and named after Judge Lorin Cray, attorney for the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha railroad. The *Mankato Review* was full of speculation about this community. "Cray's future is what cheers the town site owners. It has already the promise of a big elevator and this together with the fact that many trains pass it daily warrants the prediction that it will not be a great while before Cray will be under the calm scrutiny of the state railroad commission. Cray is nine miles southeast of Mankato on the main line of the Omaha and 27 cents distant according to first class passenger tariffs. Omaha flyers now pass Cray without even hesitating but it will not be long before brakemen will be slamming doors of passenger cars and grim and set in feature bawl down the aisles: 'Cra-a-a-y! Cra-a-y! Cray!'"

This same newspaper account from November 12, 1906, concludes its write-up with the prediction that "The people down at Cray are going to live long and



Judson Creamery at Cray about 1915.

peaceful lives. The present residents of the town are doing that now, and all comers must promise to do likewise after they get moved in and settled down. There will be no slum district for many years. There will be no paying taxes or special improvements for a long time. Unhealthy booms will be few and far between – it is promised – the present building boom is hardly guilty of the epithet for it is confined to a few small corn cribs and other winter fixing the near by – they were farm places a week ago, but now they are the various desirable residence districts of Cray – the newest town in Minnesota."

Another account from the Lake Crystal newspaper dated November 21, 1906, issued a word of caution. It comments that "...our people are shy of the benefits to be derived from the close proximity of Cray station.

In time a little all-around store, an elevator, a blacksmith shop, a dental office, or something along that line, will come in competition with the business in Mankato and Lake Crystal and then what will we do? Competition is the life of business but too much of that commodity leaves nothing to work on."

Fremont – platted in 1856 and named after John C. Fremont, the republican presidential candidate. This community was renamed Garden City in 1858.

The villages of Ceresco and Pleasant Mound, located 10 miles southeast of Madelia and within Blue Earth County, were farming settlements of German Lutherans who, it appears, lived more or less of a communal existence, much like the Amish of today. The first settlers arrived in 1867, and the settlements rapidly grew to about 100 families. Reverend Julius Miller is identified as being the religious leader of the community, and the town sites soon hosted their own church and school. The children of the settlement were educated in both German and English, and the townspeople hired a full time professor from Wisconsin to educate the children. School was taught year around with just two weeks vacation during the autumn harvest. The community maintained its own insurance company both for fire and livestock, and any disputes between members were settled by the community. They were tight, close-knit town sites that took care of their own.

The Norwegian settlement of Medo, derived from a Winnebago Indian word meaning "small potatoes," was established in 1863 on what was formerly the Winnebago Indian Agency. The community boasted a post office, a general store, a blacksmith shop, a feed store, and the Medo Lutheran church and cemetery. Mail was delivered by stagecoach from nearby Minnesota Lake. This town was later referred to as Faley's Store, and it continued to flourish until 1907 when the railroad chose Pemberton as its station. Thereafter, Medo faded into history.

An adjoining settlement, located one mile south of the Medo church, was known as the Little Cobb

settlement. A post office was established there in 1875, but the settlement declined and disappeared even before Medo did.

Another village from Blue Earth County's past is the town site of Cream, established in 1894 and located on the county line between Blue Earth and Waseca counties. By 1895, a post office was established in the community alongside a creamery, cheese factory, general store, barber shop, a boxcar used as a train depot, and the Modern Woodman Hall, which was a popular spot for dances. According to resident Elmer Severson, "For a dime or a quarter you could dance and have lunch." The railroad, known as the Alphabet Railroad, which ran from Albert Lea to St. Clair, eventually chose its station to be at the new settlement of Pemberton, and thereafter, many of the buildings in Cream either were moved to Pemberton or torn down. By 1911, the machinery from the Cream Creamery was moved to a new creamery in Pemberton, and the town was no more.

Julie Schrader, in *The Heritage of Blue Earth County, Minnesota*, mentions a few other lost villages of Blue Earth County's yesteryear. Volksville, near the towns of Eagle Lake and Madison Lake, consisted of several factories built around a mill pond in 1867 by W. and R. Volk. Volks Hall, a two-story building consisting of a cooper shop on the main floor and a meeting hall on the second floor, sat on one side of the pond. The Volk brothers also constructed a big saw mill, shingle, and planing mill, and later, in 1869, Fred Volk constructed a furniture factory at the site. All



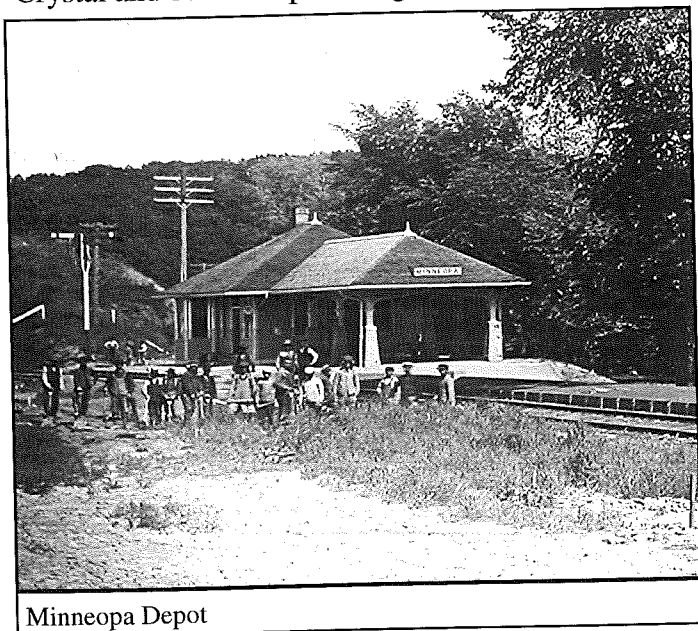
Woodman Grange Hall and other buildings in Cream, November 1879.

Perth – railway station named in 1905 after a city in Scotland because several Scottish families settled there. It was formerly called Iceland for the native island of some of the inhabitants.

Shelbyville – platted in 1856 and two or three buildings were erected that same year. In 1867 there was a hotel, church, school house, mill, stores, blacksmith, and wagon shop among others in the village. Between 1858 and 1879, Shelbyville thrived. Its decline began when Amboy was platted in 1879 and the railroad came through that village. Shelbyville's post office closed in 1881.

Stone – a railway station established in 1902. It was originally named Quarry, because much limestone was mined there. Neither Stone nor Quarry exist today, but the stone quarry mining operations continue there. This quarry extends from the northern limits of Mankato to the town of Kasota, in LeSueur County.

Minneopa – In 1868-69, the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad extended their line from Mankato to Lake Crystal and built a depot and grain elevator on



Minneopa Depot

property owned by D. C. Evans at Minneopa Falls. The town site of Minneopa was laid out in 1870 and a hotel, store, blacksmith shop and lumberyard were soon built. The town thrived on the business drawn by the falls as large excursions came to picnic there and to attend camp meetings held during the summer season. But, when the grasshopper plague arrived

and three years of crops were destroyed, the visitors stopped coming and the town of Minneopa gradually faded from existence. Today, the area is marked by Minneopa Cemetery, the oldest continuously operating cemetery in Blue Earth County, and Minneopa State Park, created in 1905.

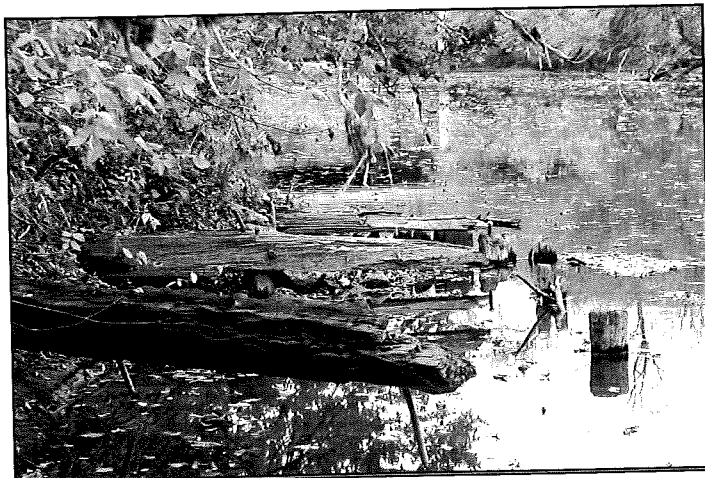
Several additional communities deserve mention here. The first is Caroline, located on Old Highway 5 between Mankato and Kasota. Situated in LeSueur County, Caroline was named for the eldest daughter of Conrad Smith, who owned the property which the railroad desired to access as a right of way and build a boarding station there. Smith agreed to the right of way on the condition that the station was named Caroline. Never a big settlement, Caroline at its peak was located on the site of the principal village of the Indian Chief Sleepy Eye. A stone house was put up by Smith, which served as a general store, and also, he built a lime kiln to which the railroad ran tracks. The railroad built a station for passenger boarding on the main level, and which contained a signal tower on the second level. There also was a post office, a smattering of houses, and a dance pavilion at the site. This was circa 1875 or thereabouts. When the Milwaukee Road tracks were re-routed years later, Caroline fell into disrepair.

An interesting story of Caroline was published by Ken Burg, editor of the *Mankato Free Press*, in 1982. It seems that a church building stood near the Caroline site, and at one point, it just disappeared, according to a letter to the editor of the *Mankato Review* by T.C. Nason. The church was built in 1876, and Nason's letter to the editor was posted in the *Mankato Review* in 1889, in which he asserted that "The Methodists have stolen and taken our church from Caroline to Madison Lake. I say stolen, and I mean stolen, like a thief in the night, they tear down and carry off the hard earnings of another."

Reverend William Copp responded to the charge on behalf of the Eagle Lake and Madison Lake Methodist congregations, saying that the church had not been pirated. He said that the church had not been used in recent years and had fallen into disrepair and was the target of vandalism, and that he acquired the timbers and other aspects of the church through "proper, if quiet, negotiations."

these mills were steam-driven from water derived from the mill pond. A fire occurred at Volksville in February of 1880, and by 1902, the last of the factories was torn down.

Watowan City came into being in 1856 with the construction of a saw mill on the Watowan River.



All that remains of the mill and Watowan City are a few pilings in the river.

A "paper town," a town that existed on paper only, was formed here called Watowan City. It consisted of the Butterfield mills, and in 1858, the post office of Watowan was established here. The District #20 school house was built here in 1858, and in 1864, A. B. Barney opened a small store near the Butterfield mill. In 1882, the post office was changed from Watowan to Blaine. In 1894, a small Presbyterian church occupied the school house, and the following year, the congregation built their own church. The community failed to thrive, however, and the post office was discontinued prior to 1908.

Lowell was surveyed in December of 1865. A grist mill was constructed along with a blacksmith shop and a few homes. The mill changed ownership several times and eventually was moved, thus destroying the town site.

Likewise, Crystal Lake City, location unknown, was platted at some point, however, the county board vacated the town site in February of 1863.

Mankato Mineral Springs was established on the farm site of Enoch Morse in 1864, during the Civil War years. After Enoch died, his two sons, John

Willis and Daniel, inherited the farm and developed the mineral spring which flowed on the property. After analysis of the water by a chemist, it was found to possess healing properties, and the two brothers decided to build a sanitarium of sorts, a resort for invalids, adjacent to the spring. In the summer of 1890, a bottling plant was built which carbonized the water, and in August of that year, the miracle healing water went on sale in Mankato. A gazebo was built where visitors could partake of the healing water at no charge, and the surrounding 40 acres of the farm was platted into parks and lots suitable for houses and cottages. A hotel was envisioned by 1891, however, neither the hotel nor the cottages were ever built. Daniel Morse and Nick Peterson, a Mankato bottler, formed a partnership known as the Mankato Mineral Springs Company, and the product continued to be bottled and sold. That same year, they sold the company to Dr. Macbeth of Buffalo, New York, who planned to build a large sanitarium at the site. As with the hotel, this building never developed, and the Mankato Mineral Springs Company reverted to Morse and Peterson. They eventually gave up on the idea, but not before building a cement tank over the spring and moving the gazebo to a nearby knoll. The gazebo, the garden house, still stands today as the sole reminder of the enterprise known as Mankato Mineral Springs.

Thus these town sites and the dreams that went with them became lost in the shadows of time. We welcome any information on these or any other additional settlements not mentioned here.



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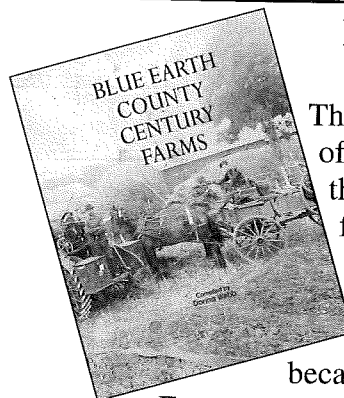
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BECHS On the Air

Listen to KTOE 1420 AM the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:10 for a BECHS update with Trish.



Blue Earth County Century Farms

The story of the development of agriculture in this county through the eyes of the farm families who lived it.

Between 1876 and 2004, 178 farms in our county became registered Century Farms. These farms have been owned and operated by members of the same family for at least 100 years, some of them for 150 or more years. These hardy families traveled by ship, boat, train, wagon and even on foot, from the eastern states and Europe, to put down roots in the rich black soil of Blue Earth County. They cleared forests, broke prairie sod, battled grasshoppers, survived droughts, floods, tornados and blizzards. One of the farmers was the only Blue Earth County person killed in the 1862 Dakota Conflict, but his wife and children persevered and the family still farms the land today. Through the pages of this book, meet these families, read their stories, learn about their lives and farms, and about their successes and failures, joys and sorrows.

Step back into history with us, see this book and many others items at the Museum Store..

8th Annual South Central Minnesota Genealogy Expo

Saturday, November 1
MSU Centennial Student Union
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
first session begins at 9 a.m.

Co-hosted by BECHS and
Minnesota State University, Mankato Library
For more information contact Jessica
at 345-5566

or check out the website at

<http://lib.mnsu.edu/archives/genie/expo.html>

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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, list of prepared topics or to volunteer for our Speakers Bureau, please contact Jessica at 345-5566.

...at the Museum Store


Thinking ahead to the Christmas season, remember to check out the Heritage Center Museum Gift Shop for some of your Holiday shopping. The *Blue Earth County Century Farms* book features 178 farms in our county that have become registered Century Farms. For those of you who have a poetry lover in your midst, we have a new book called *County Lines* showcasing the versatility, depth and breadth of Minnesota poetry; it includes all 87 Minnesota counties and 130 Minnesota poets. Another new book called the *Wineries of Wisconsin and Minnesota* is a user friendly guide to fifty-two wineries, ranging from small family-farm operations to the largest, best-known wine producers. For the young girls and boys, our selection of old fashioned games such as jacks, dominos, tiddly winks (grandchildren get your grandparents to play with you) or children's books. We also carry paper dolls and books from the American Girls collection. There are Victorian key sets along with antique door knob magnets and antique ceiling tile picture frames and a selection of free standing picture frame holders with an antique look. Why not stop in to see what the store has to offer before the holiday rush begins.



Community Day Sale

Saturday, November 15th
Coupon booklets available today!

\$5 from the sale of each coupon book will support BECHS' publications budget to publish and print books. Coupon booklets can be purchased at the Heritage Center until November 9th.


\$5

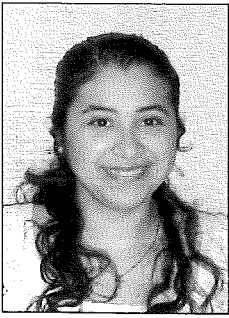
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2008
STARTS AT 6 AM **COUPON BOOKLET**

Furniture Galleries open at 9am, Carson's Gateway (LL) is closed. Event not at our New Jersey locations.

Community Day has raised over \$53 million for nonprofit organizations!

BONITON
Bohannon
Boston Store
Cowan Price Smith

Edlin-Burman
Herberger's
Younkers



Through the Research Center Door...

Many researchers find that they have to go to different towns, counties or states when doing their genealogical research. One place that you may possibly visit is a courthouse. Not many people

know how to get started on their search or who to ask for help. In a historical society or library, the staff is paid to help you. In a courthouse, the employees are not there to help you with your search; their job is to do work for the county. Here are a few steps you can follow to find the information for which you are looking.

First, establish a working relationship with the clerks. You can do this by writing to them and asking a question. Make sure the question is clear so as to not take too much of their time and include the information that you will be looking for at a later date. Second, remember that you are entering a professional setting so dress appropriately. People who are in a professional setting respond better to people who are dressed similarly. Third, be prepared. Have pencils, paper and anything else that you might need. Be sure to keep your questions and explanations brief, the clerk does not want to listen to you go on about your family history. Fourth, be pleasant and

polite. They are not there for you so they don't have to help you. Fifth, be sure you know the hours the courthouse opening and closing times and work around them. Sixth, know what records are available. Go online or try to get in contact with a person who does research and would know their way around. If you have written ahead of time this is one thing you should ask. Seventh, **never** mark on the documents, leave everything the way you found it and offer to put things back in their place.

Being prepared before your trip and knowing what to expect will help you get the most information from your experience.

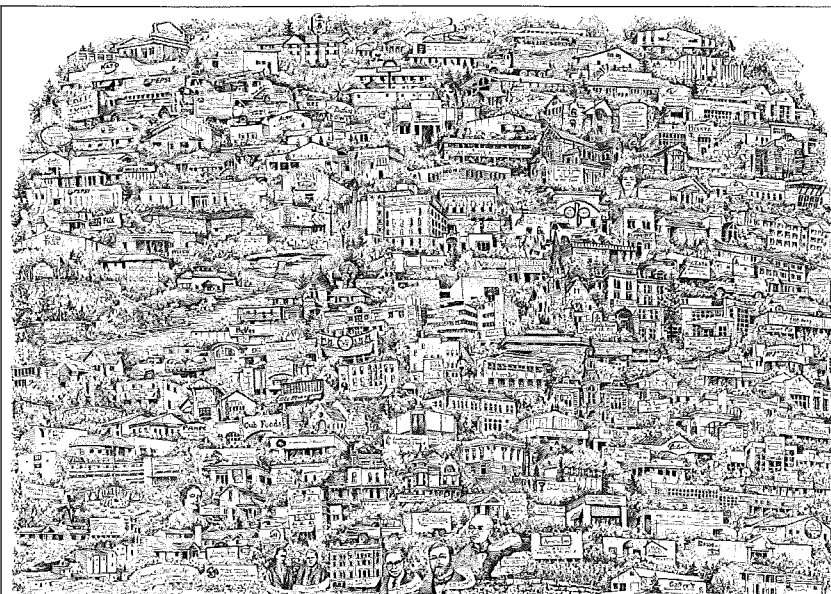
Gabriela Rodriguez
Archives Assistant



2008 Fall Festival Non-Profit Bake and Gift Sale

Saturday, November 22nd
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Madison East Center

All profits benefit BECHS as well as many other local non-profit organizations. Contact JoLynn for more information at 345-5566.



MANKATO / NORTH MANKATO MINNESOTA

Mankato/North Mankato Montage

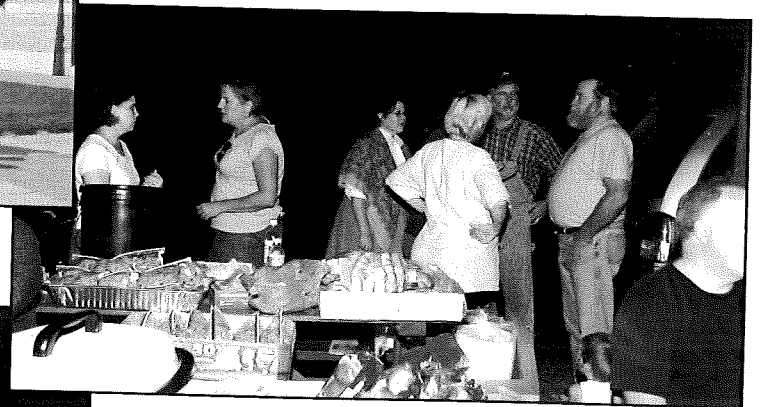
Now available in the Museum Store
Montage of Mankato and North Mankato's
past and present.
\$14.95 plus tax,
*all proceeds benefit the
BECHS Capital Improvement Fund.*

The Artisan Gallery will donate 10% to BECHS for all Mankato/North Mankato prints framed



MHS Bus Trip to MN150 Exhibit, September 7, 2008

...BECHS Wanderings



Old Fashioned Barn Dance, September 20, 2008





...JoLynn's Wanderings

This time on one of my travels, I and others went beyond the Blue Earth County borders to visit the Minnesota Historical

Society in St. Paul for the "MN150" Exhibit. A coach bus and driver were part of the ticket package, and the trip was open to anyone who wanted to join us. We had 30 plus people, with twin sets of granddaughters, mothers, and grandmothers attending. How often does that happen? The bus was ready to take us away on our trip at 9:30 a.m. with the type of blustery day that makes you glad you'll be indoors.

We arrived at the Minnesota History Center around 11:30 a.m. and had lunch at the cafeteria. About 1:00 p.m., we were met by a MHS tour guide and given a mini tour of the beautiful building plus some added information about the different exhibits showing at the Minnesota History Center. The last stop with the tour guide was at the "MN150" exhibit. It was almost like sensory overload with so many things to do and see and only two hours to do it in! The "MN150" exhibit was well put together with many areas of interest that you would expect to see as well as some that made you pause and say "I never knew that or would have never thought of that". We had a live performance by an interpreter who portrayed Harriet Bishop (who led a very interesting life) and had some rather charming youngsters help out with a few demonstrations, such as going to school, making quilts, beating the rugs, and of course the chore of emptying the chamber pot (that chore usually fell to the youngest one!) Yikes! People seemed to genuinely enjoy their outing, and then it was time to leave after we made sure we had everyone out of the exhibits as well as the gift shops. It was a very delightful way to spend a Sunday afternoon and left me wanting to go back again sometime soon.

My other traveling experience took me as far as Jack McGowan's farm for the 3rd annual Old-Fashioned Barn Dance Fundraiser. We sort of had a caravan going out to Jack's after working that day at the Heritage Center Museum and we decided to try to go

the back way out to the farm. Being the rookies that we were about the surrounding area, that probably wasn't a good idea but off we set anyway. After several wrong turns, we resorted to the cell phone and got directions and ended up calling again. Had we not had the use of our modern technology, we may still be driving around Blue Earth County.

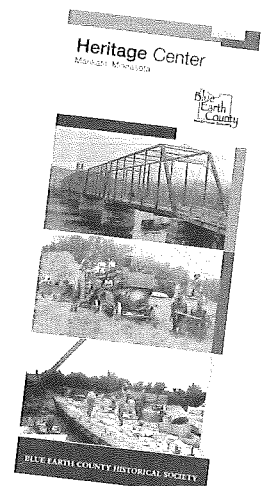
Once there, it was time to unload the van and find our spots where we were volunteering. Since I had no idea what to expect, it was a pleasant surprise to see the pretty farm tucked away in the hills and the river flowing beside it with a wonderful spot for the children to play. The farm covers the whole spectrum, from a quaint cabin down at one end of the site with its porch swing where you could sit a spell and rest your weary feet. Or, at the other end of the site where the barn dance was being held with good food and lively toe tapping music. A couple of the youngsters wore themselves out with all the dancing they did! The silent auction had many nice gift selections for people to bid on. Some of us, I'm sure, were thinking ahead to the Christmas season right around the corner.

We always strive to have interesting activities to peak everyone's curiosity and for those who attended it was a very fun evening. Just ask one of those young twirlers that danced the night away!

Happy Wanderings,

JoLynn Crowe
Museum Assistant

BECHS is proud to
unveil our new
brochures featuring
the Heritage Center
and Hubbard House.
Pick up your copy
today.





Rapidan Heritage Society

RHS encourages everyone to vote on November 4th. The Depot Museum will be open from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., serving coffee and cookies to anyone wearing an "I VOTED" sticker.

Stop by our table at the Madison East Bake & Craft sale on November 22. For sale will be fantastic home made breads, jams, pickled beets and a variety of sweets!

Santa and Mrs. Claus have scheduled a stop at the Depot on December 4th to visit with area children and adults. The Clauses will receive visitors from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Depot. Santa's visitors will receive an old fashioned goody bag and their picture with Santa courtesy of RHS. Cider and cookies will also be served in the town hall.

Despite the evening rainstorm, the Good Thunder Firefighter's Dance held in Rapidan on September 6th was largely attended. The Depot Museum was open, the fire trucks and rescue vehicles were on display and the ladder truck proudly displayed the American Flag attached to the extended ladder. (Did you know this ladder truck was used at the Vernon Center Elevator explosion? It had been recently purchased from the Mankato Fire Department and still had the Mankato emblem on the door.) The food was good, the music was excellent. Thanks to all who supported RHS by buying desserts and beverages from us. It was a fun evening and everyone looks forward to the next Firefighters' Dance in Rapidan. The Good Thunder Fire Department is supported by Rapidan and Lyra townships and the town of Good Thunder.

The Red Wing Butter Churns featuring the Rapidan Creamery are available in the Depot. In 1898 the area farmers organized the Rapidan Creamery Co. and built a creamery in Rapidan. This wooden structure was replaced by the current brick building in 1920. Butter making was discontinued in 1960. The creamery continued operation as a cream station and carried feed. In 1967 the stockholders voted to dissolve the corporation. Currently the creamery building houses The Peddler, a restaurant and gift shop.

Jane Tarjeson
Secretary



History's Mysteries

We recently received a research request asking about a man named George Francis who had apparently shot himself in 1923. The researcher was interested in confirming the manner in which Mr. Francis died and whether the story he had heard about the way he died was true.

George Francis was born in Plattsville, Wisconsin, on October 31, 1861, to Theodore Dowd Francis and Helen Nobles Francis. He moved to Minnesota with his parents when he was seven years old. The family settled in Vernon Center where George remained until his death on January 14, 1923. He had married Effie A. Robinson on September 1, 1888, and together they had eight children. George, in a time of desperate financial times, committed suicide by slitting his throat with a razor. His wife Effie found him in their bedroom. George was buried in the Vernon Center Cemetery.

The researcher wrote that in his family's story concerning George's death was that a banker named Alec Gray had swindled George of his farm. The thought of losing the farm caused George to take the drastic act of killing himself. But according to a story printed in the *Country Times*, Park and Vilma Melvin, granddaughter of Theodore and daughter of George, had possession of the land that George was so worried about losing. We looked through our plat maps and were able to find the owners of the land until the year 2000. We do not have any plat maps past that year. The story in the *Country Times* does not go into detail on how Vilma and her husband came to be the current owners.

After looking through all of our resources, we were unable to find anything on the banker or how the land was saved and transferred to Vilma. We do not have the City Directories for the years 1923, 1925-1926, so we were unable to look for Alec Gray during those years. If you have any information on Alec Gray, whether he actually did swindle George or if you would like to donate a City Directory from the years we are missing, please contact Gaby at 345-5566 or at bechsrc@hickorytech.net.



Fingerprints and Footnotes

Footnotes and Fingerprints, the History and Genealogy Club, is always growing. We now have 40 members and newcomers are always welcome. In August we took the show on the road and went to the Blue Earth County Fair! We reminisced about the pigs, pies and blue ribbons of days gone by. In September we took a guided walking tour to some of Mankato's most interesting and historic properties. Each property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In October we motored out to Morgan Creek Vineyards where we learned about gangsters, stills, mash and "moonies", and all the excitement of the thirties, if you were on the wrong side of prohibition. Morgan Creek Vineyards was a great location for re-discovering Blue Earth County's past bootlegging activities and some of the recent activities too.

These and many other interesting tidbits can be had at any of our meetings. If you have any ideas for topics or tours or if you have any interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know.

Future Meetings

November 4 – Election Day! Political parties, Facts and Trivia

December 2 – Before the Plow: Minnesota's Prairie Landscapes with Nancy Sther

January 6, 2009 – Land Records Research

Footnotes In History

November 29, 2000

Pioneering journalist Marvel (Jackson) Cooke died in New York. Born in Mankato in 1903, Cooke moved to Harlem in 1926 and worked for the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine, the *Amsterdam News*, and the *People's Voice*. In 1950 she joined the staff of the *New York Daily Compass*, the first African American woman to work full-time for a major white-owned American newspaper.

From *This day in Minnesota History* –
www.events.mnhs.org/bookofday/



Marian Anderson prints and postcards are now available at the Heritage Center Museum Store. BECHS will be the in-town source for Marian's art. Check out her website at www.mariananderson.com to view her art or stop in the Museum Store

July—September 2008 Artifacts & Archives Donations

Affolter, Ron	Jensen, Orv
Anderson, Deloris	Johnson, Joyce
Anderson, Dr. Roy	Jorgensen, Bonnie
Bartsch, Glenn	Keir, Grace
BECHS	Keir, Richard
Benefield, Dale	Kruse, Gregg
Blue Earth County	LeSueur County
Bunde, Margo	Historical Society
Burger, Nancy	Madsen, Jack
Campbell, Colleen	Masberg, Rita
City of Mankato	Matzke, Frederick
Coleman, Mary	Mensch, Robert
Department of Natural	Miller, Julie
Resources	Nibbe, Pamela
Erickson, Helen	Norman, Beth
Frederick, Mike	Peterson, Harriet
Glenwood Cemetery	Plotz, Harriet
Association	Scott, David
Griffith, Helen	Sens, Sharon
Grundmeier, Win	Smith, Marci
Hanna, Carolyn	Stencel, Kathy
Heller, Dale	Tarjeson, Jane
Hewitt, Lester	Torgerson, Allen
Hood, Donna	

WISH LIST

Items or financial donations will be gratefully accepted.

- Color laser printer
- CD holder/rack (small)
- Copy Paper
- *The Land* on microfilm
- Mylar book covers
- New Tables and Chairs for Meeting Room

BECHS Membership July - September 2008

New Members

Burger, Nancy
Cox, Beverly
Florey, Jim and Cara
Frost, Linda and Robert
Ganzel, Wayne
Genealogical Society of Utah
Hed, Steven and Pamela
Hustuft, Dean and Carol
Joyal, Rod
Klages, Cheryl
Peterson, Harriet
Reed, Lois
Ripke, Kathy
Rushton, Nanette
Schulte, Darla
Schulz, Richard
Schwamberger, Mark and Linda
Ulmen, Steve and Ida
Wilde, Sue and Chad
Zellmer, Randy

New Business Members

Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP
Piepho Moving & Storage
Pinehurst Counseling
Quality 1-HR Foto
Welcome Home Realty/
Coldwell Banker

Renewed Members

Allen County Library
Anderson, Marian
Anderson-Morgan, Verna
Apitz, Darell and Lucy
Bartholdi, Roberta
Bartsch, Janet
Belgard, Hugh and Vail
Benefield, Dale
Bouma, Jana
Bradshaw, Louise Leonard
Broadwell, Donald
Browne, Robert and Suzanne
Burns, Irene

Cariveau, Yvonne
Carlson, Bruce and Carla
Casella, Donna
Clement, Jeri
Coleman, Mary
Cotton, Glenn and Marcia
Crane, Don and Sue
Davis, Judith
Erickson, Helen
Evans, Brian
Fallenstein, Fay
Fasnacht, William
Fischer, Eldena
Franklin, Elizabeth
Frederick, Michael
Friedrichs, Barb
Gower, Ronald and Anne
Guentzel, Cheri
Halstead, Sharon
Harmer, William
Howard, Don
Howieson, Bob and Geri
Jansen, Steve
Jones, Eldon and Helen
Joyce, Ron
Kanyusik, John and Carolyn
Kenward, Robert and Ann
Krause, Dolores
Kubicek, Joe and Sylva
Lamson, Barbara
Lancaster, Mary Ann
Lavitschke, Jo-an
Linde, Laura
Madsen, Timothy and Liz
McGown, Jack and Diann
Meyer, Sharon
Moravec, Marilyn
Mortier, Mary
Murphy, Tim and Lois
Nelson, Bill and Mary
Nordgren, Lee and Donna
Norland, Roger
Oehler, Dick
Olson, Susan M.
Othoudt, John and Linda
Owens, Helen

Pierce, Glen and Donna
Pommerenke, Marlene
Pothast, Robert and Suzanne
Radichel, Paul
Rezmerski, John and Lorna Rafness
Ringheim, Marilyn
Rose, Luella
Rottunda, John
Salsbery, Caroline
Salsbery, Thomas and Lucinda
Schaub, Shirley
Schrader, Julie
Smith, Emmett R.
Sofchalk, Helen
Spielman, Gordon and Janet
Stokesbary, Christine
Survey Services, Inc.
Tarjeson, Jane
Thom, Andrew
Thompson, Mary
VINE Faith in Action
Vetter, Willard
Weigt, Tom and Bridget

Renewed Business Members

Laurel's Edge
The Mankato Free Press

Educational Members

Department of History, Minnesota
State University, Mankato
Urban and Regional Studies
Institute, Minnesota State
University, Mankato

**If you renewed your membership after
September 30th, your name will appear
in the Winter Historian.*





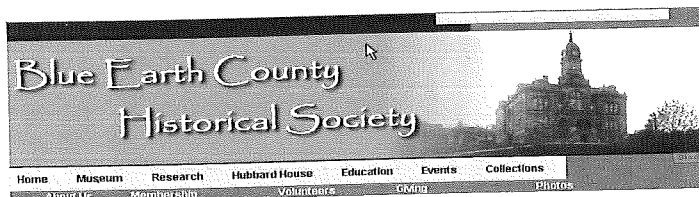
YOUNG HISTORIANS

Another season of Young Historians began in September with a hands-on history workshop about the Dakota in Southern Minnesota. Participants learned about clothing, food and crafts like a beaded bookmark, winter count and wall hanging. In October, Junior Historians (grades 6-12) taught the Young Historians about the Pioneer movement across the plains and in Minnesota.

Young Historians is a series of hands-on history workshops for children in grades 3-6 which meets the second Saturday of each month (September-May). The workshops are free and open to the public, but pre-registration is requested.

Junior Historians (grades 6-12) is a great opportunity for older kids to stay involved in this popular hands-on history program by teaching Young Historians workshops, mentoring younger kids and working on their own community project. In 2009, Junior Historians will focus on veterans in Blue Earth County.

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. Young Historians is funded by the Grace Jefferson Fund.



BECHS is moving to a new address on the world wide web – check us out at www.bechshistory.com.



Recycle Used Inkjet Cartridges at the Heritage Center - BECHS can turn them in for cash.

Volunteers Are Always Welcomed

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

*Tour Guides
Antique car maintenance person
Research and writing for publications
Research and writing grants
Data Entry*



Newsletter Changes

Watch for changes to the newsletter in upcoming issues. BECHS is offering advertising opportunities to businesses that join at a membership level of \$100 or more. Please support these local business that have generously supported BECHS

DISCOVERY DAYS

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

November 1st
Old Settlers' Stories

December 6th
Who was that jolly man?

January 3rd
Rose's Journeys
(Laura Ingalls Wilders Daughter)
Presented by Amy Lauters, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor at MSUM

Hobbies and Collectibles

This program is held the third Saturday of each month. Free admission to the Heritage Center Museum from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with our programs starting at 1:00 p.m.

November 15th

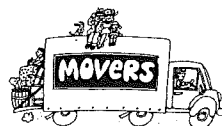
What is it?

December 20th

Handmade Ornaments

January 17th

Quilts



Moving?
Please let us know!

If you are moving to a different address, please let us know. Our newsletter is sent at a non-profit bulk rate and cannot be forwarded or returned to BECHS with the address change. Please help the Society reserve our funds for educational exhibits and programs and assure that you get your copy of the *Historian*, by notifying us of your new or winter address or letting us know to suspend mailing your newsletter if you are going to be away for a long period. Your help is appreciated.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society's
Heritage Center Gallery, Museum Store and
Research Center are open
Tuesday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday through Saturday
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

R.D. Hubbard House Hours

October - April

Open by appointment

December 7 - 1:00-4:00 p.m.

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

Weekends before Christmas 1:00-4:00 p.m.



Blue Earth County Historical Society

415 Cherry Street
Mankato, MN 56001

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

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Mankato MN

56001

Permit No. 343

Visit us on the web:
www.bechshistory.com

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901