

In this issue:

- Director's Message 2
- President's Message 4
- Prairie Skyscrapers 6
- Fingerprints & Footnotes 17
- Young Historians 19



Garden City elevator and railroad cars.



Rapidan Elevator, August 2007. Photo by Jane Tarjeson.

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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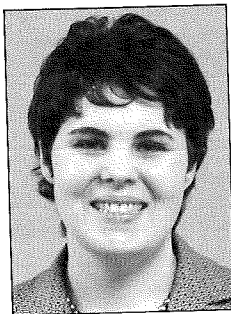
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The Blue Earth County Historian Summer 2008

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

What a summer it has been at BECHS! We had a great turnout in June at the Vintage Base Ball game featuring our own Mankato Baltics versus the Rochester Roosters. At the Hubbard House's 6th Annual Victorian Lawn Party we unveiled Marian Anderson's print featuring the Hubbard House. On

June 24th we had our 2nd Annual Tours of the Blue Earth County Courthouse. That was all in June! July was equally as exciting with Day at the Dam honoring the Rapidan Dam and preparing for the Blue Earth County Fair.

As we look ahead, we are gearing up for the 3rd Annual Old Fashioned Barn Dance at Jack McGowan's Farm on September 20th. We will once again have a silent auction, live music and lots of fun, but new this year we will have a BBQ dinner available. This is such a great fundraiser for BECHS – hope to see you all there! Also in the fall, we are planning a bus trip to the Minnesota Historical Society to view the “MN 150” exhibit. Blue Earth County is represented in the exhibit by the Rapidan Dam, Maud Hart Lovelace and the Dakota Conflict. BECHS also plans to honor Blue Earth County's own Marian Anderson on October 4th with an entire day dedicated to her art. Some of Marian's favorite pieces will be on display and available for purchase. Watch for more details. And who could forget the Annual Ghosts from the Past. 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.

Besides all of the events, we have been busy with restoration efforts at the Hubbard House. Tuckpointing was finished at the end of May, followed by painting the exterior, laying pavers for the driveway and repairing the bay window in June. We are looking forward to new storm windows and repairs to the porches in early August. It is thanks to many people's efforts that we are able to complete these projects – the planning efforts of the Hubbard House Restoration Committee, Tom Severns (City of Mankato), and MacDonald and Mack Historic Architects; the incredible work of Stone Masons, Inc. (the contractor for the porch projects will be named at the end of July); and the funding support of the Minnesota Historical Society, the City of Mankato, and various Society members including John Hubbard (great-grandson of R.D.). John Hubbard has pledged \$20,000 to fund the exterior painting project if we can match the funds (our goal is \$40,000). If you are interested in supporting this project, please feel free to contact me with any questions – remember every dollar will get us closer to our goal.

As always, from the bottom of my heart, 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

Burton, Verona
 First Presbyterian Church – Karen Nelson
 Herbst, Gordon
 Hoehn, Jim and Pat
 Hollingsworth, Alice
 Howard, Don
 Kraft, Judy
 LaFavor, Lyle
 Madsen, Jack
 Sassenberg, Eunice
 Sassenberg, Karl
 Schulte, Pat
 Torgerson, Allen and Jane

\$51-\$100

Cambria Township
 Fitzloff, Shirley
 Jensen, Orville and Mary Ann
 Lamont, Earl and Sally
 Zimmer, Beth

\$101-\$500

McLaughlin, Tom and Theresa
 Medo Township

Capital Improvement Fund Donations

Grabitske, Paul
 Jackson, Colleen and David

Special Projects - Hubbard House Painting

\$22,200 raised – goal \$40,000

Anonymous
 Bishop, Mary Louise
 Goff, Harley and Janet
 Griffith, Helen
 Hanson, Kathryn
 Hubbard, John
 Ruby, Shirley

Special Projects – Collections Shelving

\$190 raised – goal \$2000 (matching grant)

Anonymous
 Jensen, Orville and Mary Ann
 Johnson, Marlyss
 Wilmes, Brad

Special Projects – Vintage Base Ball Team

\$930 raised – goal \$1000

Belgard, Hugh and Vail
 HickoryTech
 Lund, Richard
 Play It Again Sports
 Rug and Carpet Caretakers
 Scheels All Sports
 Wagon Wheel Café

Memorial

In Memory of Russell Garlick
 by Betty and Warren Hansen

In-Kind

Mr. Monogram - Owen Dundas
 Hugg, Bob and Corey
 Jensen, Orville
 Madsen, Jack and Tim
 Quade, Henry and Ann
 Sinn, Gunter
 Stephen Cleaners and Laundry

Grants

Minnesota Historical Society
 for Collections Shelving

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.

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.



NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MUSEUM STORE

“Reflections of Days Gone By”

by local artist 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.*



**Celebrating a Lifetime
of Artistic Achievement**

Marian Anderson Art Show

Saturday, October 4, 2008

BECHS Heritage Center

Marian’s favorite art pieces will be
on display as well as others from her
collection will be for sale.



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



**Message from
the President**

I hope everyone is having a great summer! Although it is tempting to take a little time off over the summer, at BECHS we are always busy with one thing or another. As I’ve previously mentioned, our most recent major project has been mapping out a Strategic Plan. I’m proud to say that we are done. Or rather, as done as it is possible to be on a project that will be tinkered with and modified as we continue to move forward.

What does this mean for you, our members? I believe the most obvious results will be the evolution of the face we present to the public through the programs and published materials. Over the next year, our plan includes even greater improvements to the newsletter you are currently reading, as well as updates to our website, and evaluation of and improvements to our various educational programs.

Special thanks to the Advisory Council, Board of Trustees and Staff that contributed many hours to the Strategic Plan process. Thanks as well to the committees that will help us bring action to our plans. Copies of this working document are available by contacting Jessica at the Heritage Center. As always, we appreciate any opinions you

Todd Stromswold

Board of Trustees President

**National Register of Historic Places
Walking Tour**

Tuesday, September 2

Tour begins at 6 p.m. at the Hubbard House

Fee \$5 includes booklet

*Stroll past properties in Mankato that reflect a place
in time, view one-of-a-kind architecture styles and
learn more about the National Register.*

For more information, contact Shelley at 345-5566
or bechsam@hickorytech.net



Notes from the Archives Manager

Have you been asking yourself, "what's new at the Historical Society?" Did you know we have thirteen hallway exhibits and

displays?

Beginning with the "Blue Earth County Churches" display, notice the offering plates used in the Carmel Calvinistic Methodist and Jerusalem Presbyterian Churches in Judson Township. These churches were organized in the mid 1850s, some of the very first in Blue Earth County. Then there is the "Saturday with the Hubbard's" exhibit. This case gives a glimpse of items used in the Victorian Era and invites you to walk though history each weekend at the R.D. Hubbard House. Just down the stairs, you'll find a photo display of "The Rapidan Dam". Next to the big safe is the "Korean War" exhibit. It highlights uniforms that Blue Earth County servicemen wore a half century ago. Right next to that is the archives case, showcasing our Archival Collections. Displayed here are some of the records from the "Minnesota Valley Chapter of National Gold Star Mothers." The applications for membership hold some valuable information.

Around the corner and to your left is the case dedicated to "Fires and Firefighting in Blue Earth County" with 13 miniature fire trucks dating from 1896-1960. Continuing down the hallway you'll discover Paul Hadley's boats and ships. There are six models with excellent attention to detail. Did you know that portholes on some of the models are really shower curtain grommets? What other common everyday items can you discover that were used to create these grand models? Next to my office door (by the way, stop in and say, "Hi") is our Collector's Case. This is where we ask you, our members, to display your collections. "Passing Notions" is a wonderful thimbles collection from Grace Kier. There's even a game. Can you find the white ceramic top hat?

Across the hallway is a small display on "Mankato: Now and Then". We try to emphasize community

preservation by showing photos of a specific location comparing what was there before and what is there now. We also hope you'll find helpful tips and hints on how to preserve your hometown.

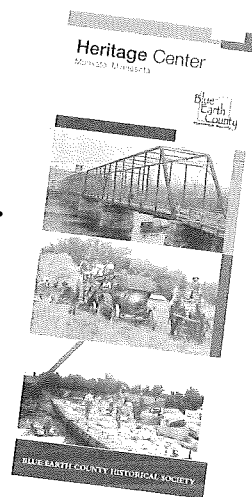
In the Meeting Room, we have "History in Minutes". These are four display cases ranging from Sibley Park Zoo to the Bierbauer Brewery. With each of these cases comes a "History in Minutes" fact sheet. For example, did you know that canned beer was introduced in 1935? It's history made quick and painless - you won't even know you're learning. In that same room is a display on "June Brides". These are wedding dresses from our collection. It is amazing that one item of clothing can hold so much family history and tradition. Did you know it was once unlucky to marry on Saturday?

So stop by and take time to stroll down the hallway and see the history that surrounds you. And one last *Did You Know...* It's FREE and it's air conditioned!

Shelley Harrison
Archives Manager

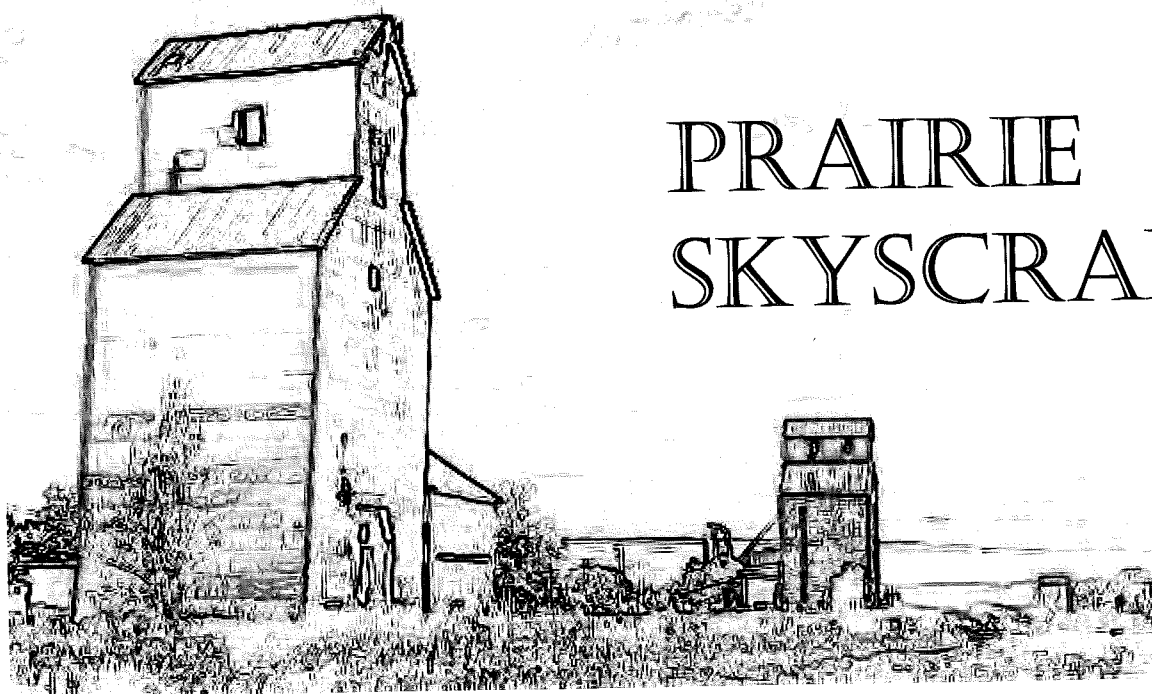
BECHS is proud to
unveil our new
brochures featuring
the Heritage Center
and Hubbard House.
Pick up your copy
today.

*Special thanks to
Lindsey Curtis of Red Door
Creative for her design work.*



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. Those ads will begin to appear in the Fall Historian



PRAIRIE SKYSCRAPERS

by
Jane Tarjeson

The small country grain elevator, the prairie skyscrapers of rural communities, played an important part in agricultural history of Blue Earth County.

The first elevators built were constructed of framed or cribbed wood and had nine or more square or rectangular bins arranged in 3x3 or 3x4 patterns. Wood crib construction used 2" x 6"s or 2" x 8"s laid flat and spiked together on the lower walls and 2" x 4"s on the upper section to provide the elevator its formidable strength. Power to operate the elevator progressed from horse power to gas engines to electricity.

With the coming of the railroad, grain elevators were built at intervals along the rail track. The elevators were spaced so that they were within easy travel distance from the farms they served. In November 1870, nearly 20,000 bushels of wheat were bought and shipped from a grain elevator that the St. Paul & Sioux City Railway had erected in Minneopa. The elevator operators were also dealers in grains, seeds, flour, feed, salt, coal, tile, livestock, gasoline, kerosene and lubricating oils.

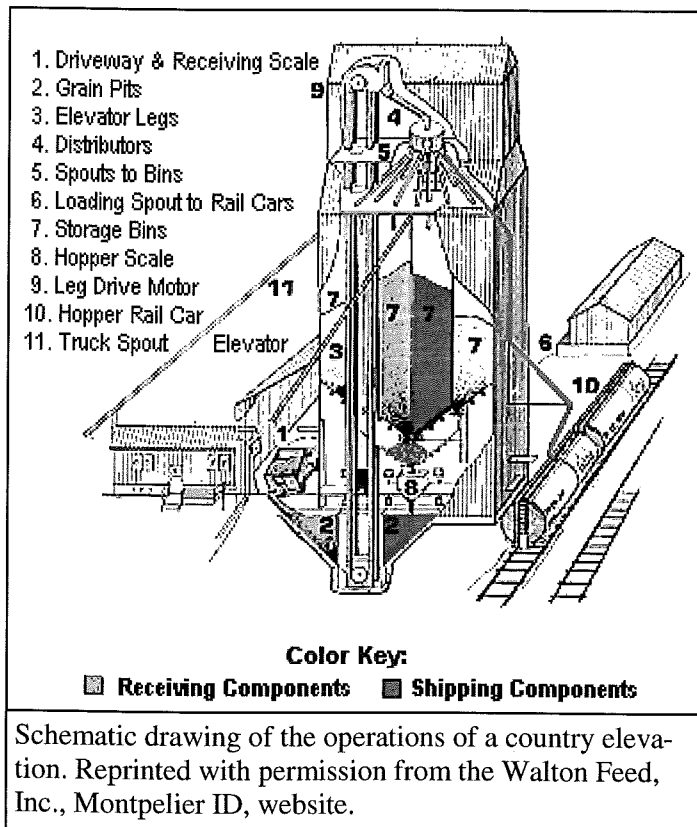
Harold Flo, in his memoirs, described the original Rapidan elevator owned and operated by his dad and uncle (Flo Bros., Rapidan) as:

"used solely as an elevator. It had no feed grinding equipment, nor did it have feed storage space. The building was, therefore, the basic traditional country elevator structure with an addition on the south side. This was used as a corn storage bin, extra grain bin, and general supply storage. Most farmers sold their corn 'on the cob' and shelled it at the elevator. They would drive their wagon loads of corn into the elevator runway, have it weighed, and then shovel it into the sheller on the right-hand side of the runway. After it was shelled, they could then shovel the cobs onto their wagon again or leave them for someone else. There was a fee for shelling, and the corn was of course bought and paid for by the elevator. The corn cobs became the property of the elevator and were given *gratis* to those who requested them. They made excellent fuel for starting fires in the kitchen stoves and furnaces, and seldom if ever was there an oversupply of corn cobs in the cob shed.

The entire elevator structure was covered with six-inch wood-lap siding and painted red. The elevator rose to a height approximating the present elevator. Clinging to the exterior wall was a somewhat dilapidated, crude stairway, equipped with treads only and hand rail of exceedingly fragile and

insecure appearance. This stairway led to a door at the top of the structure, which, when opened, permitted entrance into the area where the distribution spouts were located.”

How does a grain elevator operate? When a farmer delivers grain to an elevator, the grain truck is driven up the elevator driveway (1) and onto a scale where it is weighed. The truck is unloaded by either an

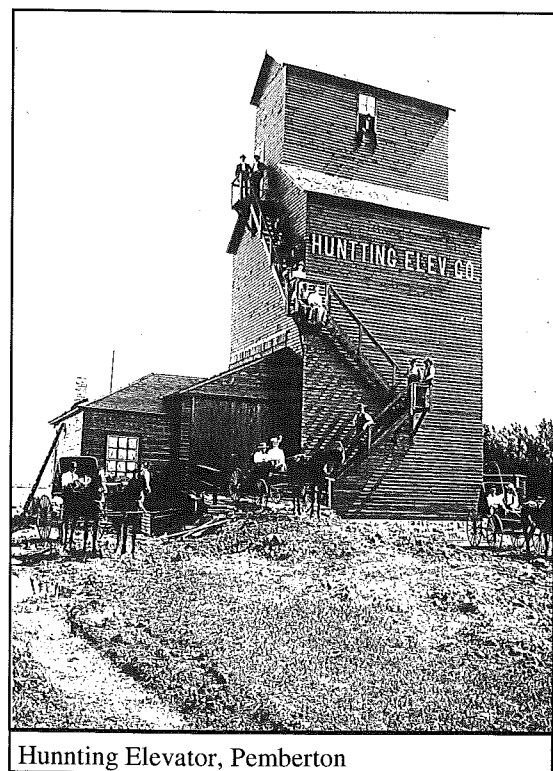


elevator hoist or a hoist on the farmer’s truck. The truck is raised so that the grain flows out of the back of the truck box, through a grate in the scale, and into a collection area called a pit (2). When the truck is empty, it is re-weighed. The difference between the full and empty truck is the weight of the grain delivered. A sample of the grain is taken by the elevator manager as the grain is pouring from the truck into the pit. This is used to determine moisture content and grade of the grain. From the pit, the grain is moved into storage. The grain is directed to an empty bin, or to one containing similar grain. A spout at the top of the elevator is positioned so the grain is elevated into the proper bin. After selecting the bin and adjusting the spout, the elevator manager starts the head drive motor (9). This electric motor

drives an endless belt, which lifts the grain in cups attached to the belt in an enclosed leg (3). The grain is carried to the top of the elevator and as it goes over a large pulley, it is dumped into the distributor (4), which directs the grain through a spout (5) into a pre-selected bin.

Nearly all the grain shipped from a country elevator leaves by rail or truck. The shipping process begins when the rail car or truck is positioned on the side of the elevator. The elevator manager sets the distributor (4) to channel grain to the loading spout (6), selects the bin (7) to draw the grain from and begins the loading operation. The grain is then taken from the bin and dropped into the hopper scale (8) where it is weighed and lowered into the back pit. The elevation leg (3) lifts the grain to the top of the elevator and drops it into the distributor, which directs it to the loading spout and into the rail car or truck. (Above description and sketch courtesy of Walton Feeds.)

Several companies owned and operated “line” elevators on railways in Blue Earth County and further. By 1902 Hubbard & Palmer owned 40 elevators in Minnesota and South Dakota, mostly on the Omaha Road. Having their own elevators gave them the advantage in the selection of wheat to be ground at Hubbard Mill.



Hunting Elevator Co. built elevators in Pemberton in 1907 and St. Clair in 1908. The Hunting Elevator Co. began in McGregor, IA in 1860 and they expanded their elevators into Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota on the Milwaukee railroad line.

The Jennison Bros. Co. settled in Janesville, Minnesota and had elevators throughout Southern Minnesota.

The *1910 County Directory* lists the following elevators in Blue Earth County:

Amboy (3): Amboy Grain Co., Hubbard & Palmer Co., St. John Grain Co.
Cambria (1): Jennison Bros. & Co.
Cray (1)
Eagle Lake (1): Jennison Bros. & Co.
Garden City (1): Hubbard & Palmer Co.
Good Thunder (2): R.L. Houk, A McGregor
Judson (1): Jennison Bros. & Co.
Lake Crystal (3): Christensen Co., Hubbard & Palmer Co., Marston Elevator Co.
Madison Lake (1): Big Diamond Milling Co
Mankato (2): Byrnes Bros., Hubbard & Palmer Co.
Mapleton (3): Byrnes Bros., W. McQueen, Powers Elevator Co.
Pemberton (1): Hunting Elevator Co.
Rapidan (1): R.L. Houk Milling Co.
Smith Mill (1): Jennison Bros. & Co.
St. Clair (1): Hunting Elevator Co.
Vernon Center (2): Christensen Co., Hubbard & Palmer Co.

These imposing structures were sometimes blocked up, put on wheels and moved to a new location. In 1906 the Marston & Larson elevator in Lake Crystal was moved to stand opposite the Peavey elevator. It was moved down the rail bed, but at Main Street obstructing the way were 125 wires of the Blue Earth County Telephone Co. and also electric light cables. Work was suspended for over a day while a lineman removed the wires. All but 12 or 14 of these were cut, and two men on top of the moving elevator raised these sufficiently to allow it to pass under without further hindrance. The elevator was 75 to 80 feet high!

In 1949 Hubbard and Palmer moved the Cray Elevator to Rapidan to replace one lost to fire that March. The Cray Elevator, built in 1906, had been

unused for several years. The 65-foot, 40 ton elevator was moved 8 miles, but two obstacles hindered the move. The Rapidan Dam, with its one lane bridge deck, had to be crossed and a steep hill climbed before it would come to rest in Rapidan. A crowd of 2,000 watched as the elevator was raised another two feet to boost it over the bridge railings and "the spider-like truck inch across the Rapidan Dam with the elevator on its back." Pictures of the elevator on the dam appeared in newspapers across the nation. The Rapidan Elevator (formerly Cray Elevator) is still in use today.

Some of these imposing structures met untimely ends. The Hubbard & Palmer Elevator in Lake Crystal had weathered many storms, but in 1941 two walls weakened by heavy winds collapsed, spilling 15,000 bushels of corn on the railroad track.

Explosions and fire destroyed elevators. Grain dust is highly flammable. Fine powder from the grains passing through the elevator would accumulate and mix with the oxygen in the air. A spark could spread from one floating grain to the other creating a chain reaction that would destroy the entire structure.

In April 1890 a fire started in a storage shed behind the Cummins & Kelly store in Eagle Lake. It quickly spread to the grain warehouse and the elevator owned by Jennison Bros. of Janesville. Cummins had first come to Eagle Lake in 1874 and operated a store and grain elevator.

Fire destroyed the R. L. Houk mill and elevator at Good Thunder in 1908. Flames spread from the mill to the elevator and threatened the entire village. The Mankato Fire Department received a telephone message asking for assistance; however, no train could be secured to go, so it was impossible to respond. The local firemen, with the aid of citizens, were able to stop the flames at the depot and save the town. Richard L. Houk, owner of the mill had established his first grain warehouse at Good Thunder in 1875 and was in the grain business for over 50 years.

In August, 1911 the Christensen Elevator in Lake Crystal was discovered to be on fire. The firemen tried valiantly to extinguish it, but their ladders were too short to reach the fire in the cupola. Across the
8 tracks stood the Marston Elevator, a two-story

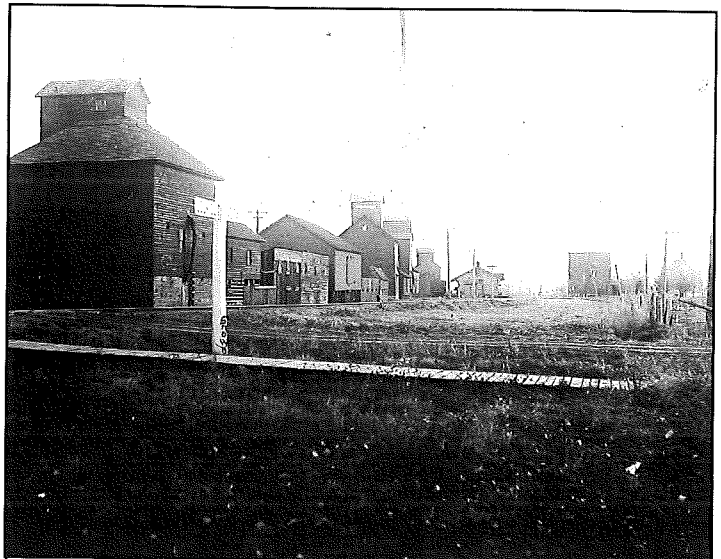
structure with a cupola. It too caught fire and then “things were becoming lively.” Men climbed to the roof of the Marston Elevator and began chopping away partly burned and scorched debris to get down into the center of the burning contents. The Hubbard & Palmer elevator that stood 80 rods from the burned elevators was not touched by fire.

An old landmark in Mankato was consumed by flames in April 1912. The old Cargill elevator, owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway company stood facing Main Street between Front Street and the Minnesota River on Exchange Street. Flames were first noticed coming from the building at 1:30 A.M. by trainmen. The *Mankato Daily Free Press* reported “Shortly after the fire whistle blew, people began rushing to windows and peering at the red glare, which was for a while thought to come from the Saulpaugh Hotel, and thinking that the large hostelry was on fire, they streamed to the scene at once. By two o’clock the street and sidewalks were as crowded with people as on a circus day.” The fireman battled the fire for five hours. How the fire started was a mystery, but there was strong suspicion that there was incendiarism connected to the burning of the vacated building. The elevator was built in the summer of 1881 by the Milwaukee Railroad and leased to the Cargill Elevator Company. It was considered a substantial elevator, holding 18,000 bushels of grain.

An insufficient water supply caused firemen from six departments to stand by helpless as fire consumed Rapidan’s Hubbard & Palmer Elevator in March, 1949. The fire, which started from a defective oil burner in the office, consumed the 18,000 bushel elevator in one hour. Value of the elevator was \$25,000, but Hubbard & Palmer officials estimated it would cost twice that to replace.

The Frank Bros. Grain Elevator in Mapleton burned to the ground in Sept. 1955. The fire was believed to have started near the top of the building. The building was used mostly for elevating grain into nearby steel bins and therefore did not have a large amount of grain stored in it.

Two elevators were intentionally burned. The Commander Elevator in Vernon Center in 1986 and the Judson elevator in 1998.



Elevators and depot, Vernon Center.

The Vernon Center landmark was built in 1890 by William Marshall and Elias Drake, the 76-foot tall elevator provided fire fighters a rare opportunity to gain practical experience in dealing with large building fires. Also tested was a new sprinkler system designed specifically for elevators – installed in the cupola, the sprinkler extinguished the flame within 8 minutes. More than 200 firemen from 22 area departments took part in the burn.

The old Commander Elevator in Judson had been built in 1900 and stood on a sidetrack of the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Firefighters from 15



Elevator and other buildings, Judson.

communities took part in the burn – and burn it did. Within two hours the towering elevator was reduced to ashes.

The skills the firemen practiced in those two planned
9 burns were tested in October of 2005 when the

Crystal Valley Co-op Elevator in Vernon Center exploded. The explosion reduced the twelve-story elevator to six stories and produced a 200-foot-high fireball. The blast was heard over 7 miles away. Six workers at the elevator were injured.

Today, Chief Good Thunder gazes serenely over the countryside from the Good Thunder Feed & Grain Elevator. In 1987 the 80-foot elevator became the canvas for a huge mural celebrating the area's history.

Did you know:

- ❑ One bushel of wheat weighs roughly 60 pounds.
- ❑ Prior to the advent of the grain elevator, grain was handled in bags rather than in bulk and stored in warehouses.
- ❑ Grain elevators were invented in 1842 in Buffalo, NY by Joseph Dart, who first developed a steam-powered mechanism, called a marine leg, for scooping grain out of the hulls of ships directly into storage silos.
- ❑ The Peavey-Haglin experimental grain elevator in St. Louis Park, MN was the first circular concrete elevator in the nation. Built in 1899-1900, it is 125 feet high.
- ❑ Most dust explosions happen in late summer and early fall when old, dried grain or corn is being cleaned out of elevators.
- ❑ Freshly harvested crops are typically less explosive because they are wetter.
- ❑ Grain elevators have been required to keep dust-

cleaning records since 1992, when grain elevator standards were implemented by the state.

- ❑ In the past 10 years there have been about a dozen explosions in the nation's grain elevators each year.
- ❑ The standard rail grain car has a 263,000 pound gross weight.
- ❑ The rail grain cars since 1988 are 286,000 pound gross weight.

Sources:

Newspapers:

Blue Earth County Enterprise,
Country Times,
Good Thunder Herald,
Lake Crystal Tribune,
Mankato Free Press

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R.L. Polk & Co, *Mankato City and Blue Earth County Directory 1910-1911*, St Paul, MN: R. L. Polk and Co. 1910

Solfchalk, Helen, *FIRE! Stories of fires and fire fighting in Blue Earth County's early years.* Mankato, MN.: Blue Earth County Historical Society, 2007.

"The Operation of a Grain Elevator."

www.waltonfeed.com

Country Grain Elevator Historical Society.

www.country-grain-elevator-historical-society.org

Visit BECHS at the Fair

July 31 – August 3

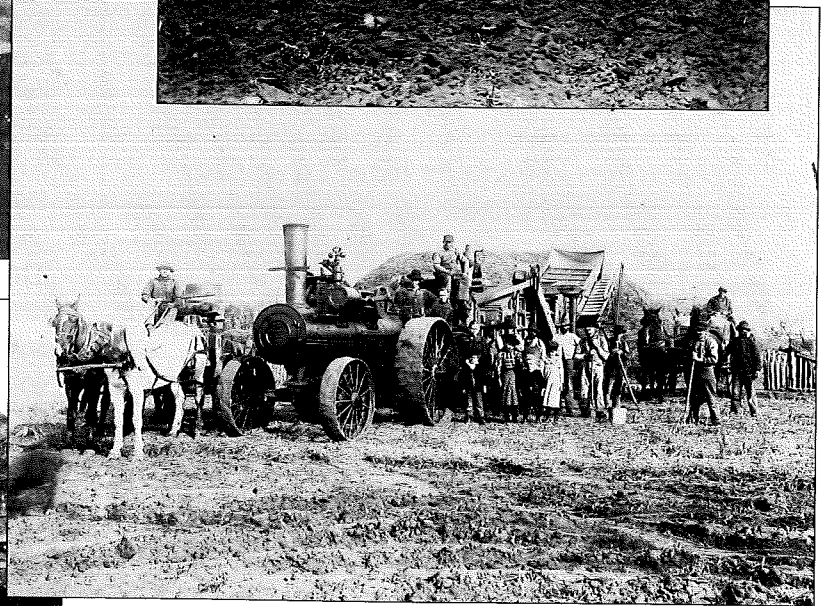
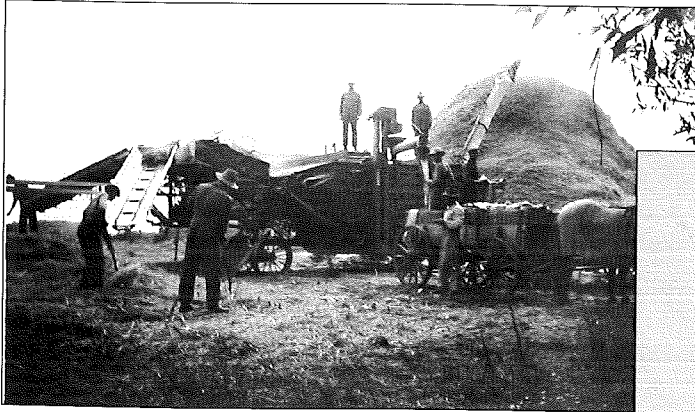
Blue Earth County Fairgrounds

Traveling Museum Store in the Arcade Building
Turn-of-the-Century Schoolhouse activities in the schoolhouse

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 JoLynn at 345-5566.



.... on the farm



Photographs from the
BECHS photograph collection.

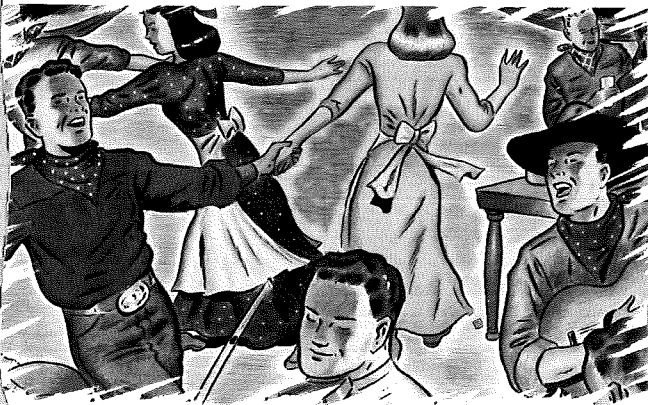


Voices from the Past . . .

"On the frontier a settler becomes ill, and his grain is sown, planted and harvested. Who by? Neighbors. A widow buries her husband and again the neighbors come. It is no light thing for one to leave his own harvest and go miles to save the crop of another, but it is and has been done times without number by those who are tried and true neighbors."

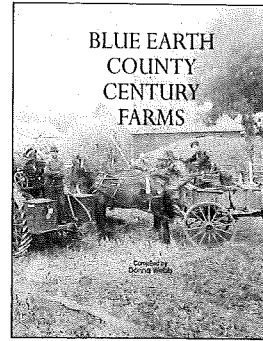
Quote from remarks by Judge Loren Cray

Old-Fashioned Barn Dance



Join us for the
3rd Annual
Old-Fashioned Barn Dance
at Jack McGowan's Farm

Saturday, September 20th 4-10 p.m.
Family Fun-raiser for BECHS
Food – Activities – Music – Silent Auction



BECHS latest publication: **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 have become 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 at the Blue Earth County Fair.



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.

Ghosts of the Past October 17th and 18th

Honoring Minnesota's Sesquicentennial
with Old Settler Stories around the
hallowed halls of the Heritage Center.
Watch for details to come.

January-June 2008 Volunteers

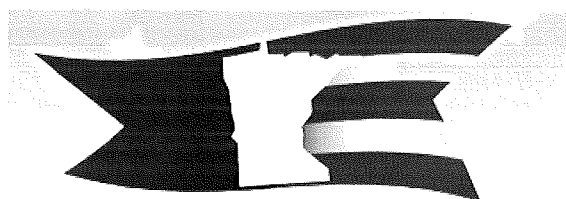
Anderson, Marian
 Bartholdi, Roberta
 Baures, Lisa
 Belgard, Vail
 Benefield, Dale
 Beyer, Jessie
 Brennan, Mike
 Buecksler, Andrea
 Coleman, Mary
 Cords, Betty
 Crowe, Jody
 Doyle, Preston
 Duncanson, Kristin
 Engh, Jane
 Forseth, Lucas
 Frederick, Mike
 Frederick, Sal
 Garlow, Laura
 Garlow, Sandi
 Garvin, Tyler
 Grabitske, Paul
 Graham, Joan
 Griffiths, Pat
 Grundmeier, Shirley
 Grundmeier, Win
 Hanson, Kathryn
 Havelka, Karen
 Herbst, Gordon
 Hugg, Corey
 Hynes, Susan
 Jackson, Colleen
 Jensen, Orv
 Johnson, Emily
 Joyal, Rod
 Kearney, Mike
 Keir, Grace
 Kennedy, Gloria
 Kind, Arn
 Lavitschke, Jo-An

Lund, Aaron
 Lund, Rick
 Lundin, Gary
 Madsen, Jack
 Madsen, Tim
 Mages, Paul
 McComb, Mary
 Nienow, Patricia
 Noren, Gary
 Nussbaumer, Linda
 Ohlenkamp, Ora
 Oldenburg, Alex
 Oldenburg, Connor
 Peterson, Leslie
 Piepho, Mark
 Potter, Brad
 Preska, Margaret
 Quade, Henry
 Rezmerski, John
 Ryan, Pat
 Ryan, Mike
 Sassenberg, Eunice
 Schaub, Shirley
 Schiming, Richard
 Schultz, Jo
 Seeley, Melissa
 Sizemore, Daardi
 Stenzel, Bryce
 Straka, Stacey
 Stromswold, Todd
 Sugden, George
 Tarjeson, Jane
 Thom, Andrew
 Ulman, Steve
 Van Amber, Jim
 Webb, Donna
 Welgel, Anthony
 Ziegler, Kenneth
 Zimmer, Beth

Take me out to the ball game!!



Mankato Baltics and fans after the
 Vintage 1860s Base Ball game, June 7, 2008.
 Photo courtesy of Tim Madsen



150 YEARS
of STATEHOOD
 1858 · 2008

Bus Trip to Minnesota History Center

Sunday, September 7, 2008

BECHS to visit the Minnesota Historical Society's
MN150 exhibit commemorating
 Minnesota's 150th Anniversary of Statehood.

*Blue Earth County recognized in the exhibit
 for the Rapidan Dam, Maud Hart Lovelace
 and the Dakota Conflict.*

Bus leaves BECHS parking lot at 9:30 a.m.
 with a stop for lunch (included) along the way
 Tour the Minnesota History Center 1-3:30 pm
 Bus arrives in Mankato at 5 p.m.

Cost \$40

(includes transportation, lunch, admission)

Limited space, reserve your seat today by calling
 JoLynn at 345-5566 or email at
 bechsms@hickorytech.net!

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



Through the Research Center Door:

Many people who come to the Research Center are not aware that we have probated wills from 1875 to 1973 available for their research. You can ask us to look

up a name for you in our index or you can check out our website "Wills Index" and bring the name or names and reference numbers to the Research Center where we'll retrieve the will for your use. To protect these fragile documents from damage, we provide gloves for you to use while viewing them.

The probate will is one of the most commonly used court records, because heirs are identified in the document. The last will and testament allows a person to distribute their estate however they want. When a person dies and there is a will the property it is called a Testate Estate. There are three different kinds of Testate Estate wills:

1. **Attested Wills:** These wills are prepared in writing witnessed by responsible adults who certify to the courts that the deceased was of sound mind and had free will when the Will was prepared.
2. **Holographic Wills:** These are completely handwritten by the person making the Will, signed and dated. These wills are not

witnessed. If any other person tries to correct or make a change, the Will is automatically considered invalid. This type of Will is not filed with an attorney or other third party. In certain places this type of Will is not valid.

3. **Nuncupative Wills:** These are Wills dictated by the person while on his deathbed. The witnesses then write down what the person has requested and presents it to a court. This type of Will is also not valid in all jurisdictions.

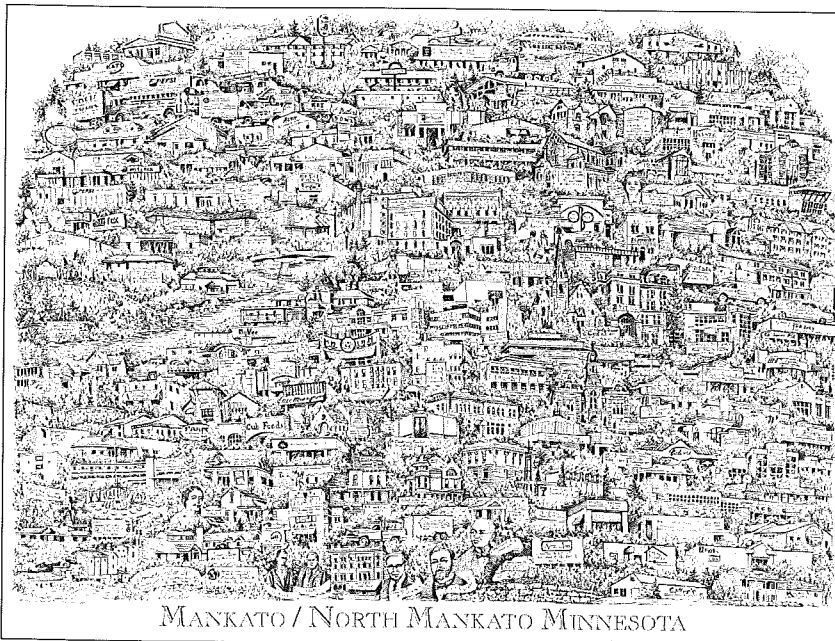
When a person dies without a will, his or her property is considered intestate and is divided according to the guidelines of the state in which they live.

A will gives you a glimpse at what the deceased was thinking and what he thought of his family by the phrasing and by how his property and assets were distributed. Sometimes as a bonus you get the reasoning behind why they leave certain items to certain people. Since these wills are sometimes handwritten, they can be difficult to read but the information you can gather from them will be invaluable to your research.

Information collected from:

Czucs, Loretto Dennis and Luebking, Sandra Hargreaves, editors. *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*, Page 201-211, 634, 678, Copyright 1997

Gabriela Rodriguez
Archives Assistant



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.*



...JoLynn's Wanderings

Greetings Everyone,

Being a recent transplant to Blue Earth County, my

husband and I recently grabbed a Blue Earth County Highway Map (available at our museum store) and hit the road on one of our beautiful spring Sundays. We didn't have a set route in mind, but headed out on Hwy. #169 to Hwy. #68. Our first stop was the Seppman Mill; imagine all the work that went into making something the size of that! We are going to save visiting the state park until our grandchildren come for a visit.

Next, we traveled on to Lake Crystal on Hwy. #60 and saw a little bit of that area with some nice lakes. It was nice to see everything so green against the blue of the lakes. Since the Fair is coming soon (it will be here sooner than we think- July 31st thru August 3rd), we decided to have a look at the fairgrounds in Garden City and the historic buildings that the Blue Earth County Historical Society operates during the Fair. Hint, Hint, we may be calling on you to volunteer at the fair. Feel free to contact us at 507-345-5566 or email us at bechsms@hickorytech.net.

Our next destination was the Dam Store at Rapidan since we were getting a little hungry and we had heard that they served some of the best pie around. When we walked into the store the place was full, except for one booth which we gratefully slid into. Needless to say, both hamburgers and pie were delicious and we got to page through a scrapbook on the history of the store while enjoying our meal. Afterward, we strolled across the dam and delighted in the fine mist from the water rushing over the dam and the beautiful sight of the tumbling water, with my husband wondering out loud if it was possible to canoe down the river.

We decided to start winding our way home with a trip to Good Thunder to see the painted grain elevators. WOW! What a huge undertaking!

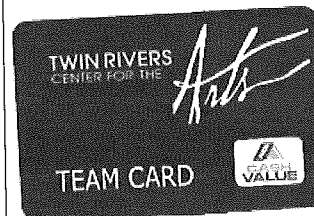
Impressive! That's how I'd like to sum up our day.

We will be planning many more countryside trips in the near future.

If you would like to learn more about Blue Earth County, stop into our museum store and see what we have to offer. Browse around for a book about the county that you may not have had a chance to read yet. A few of the book titles that popped out at me are *The Heritage of Blue Earth County* by Julie Hiller Schrader, *Chronicles of a Century* by The Free Press, *The Remarkable Men of Garden City* by E. Winston Grundmeier, and *150 Year History-Minneinneopa, Minneopa State Park* by Gordon H. Herbst. Any suggestions on a book you might like to see in the museum store about the county, let me know and we'll see what we can do for you. Happy exploring whether it be by car or by reading a good book.

JoLynn Crowe
Museum Assistant

Twin Rivers Center for the Arts TEAM card



Twin Rivers Center for the Arts (TRCA) celebrates, supports and promotes regional arts and culture as the umbrella organization representing an alliance of more than 20 local arts and culture nonprofits including the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

TRCA and BECHS have joined together to offer the Twin Rivers Center for the Arts TEAM card loyalty program. It's simple – carry your Twin Rivers Center for the Arts TEAM card with you wherever you go in town and support our local partner businesses (list available at www.cashvaluecard.com). While you are earning cash rewards for yourself, you can take great pride in knowing that you are also contributing to the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

To pick up your TRCA TEAM card today, stop by the Heritage Center, Hubbard House, participating businesses or the Emy Frentz Arts Guild.



Rapidan Heritage Society

Memorial Day is a day to pause and to remember our dedicated military personnel – past and present. It was a lovely morning in Rapidan as the Honor Guard presented the colors and Jack Madsen led the group in patriotic song. St. John's Church of Rapidan provided coffee and donuts following the service. Daryl and Ron then gave the history and exploits of moving the 'pink' cabooses. From cabooses to train robbers, author Jack Koblas took us back to the days of Jessie James and the Younger Gangs exploits and Lonesome Ron entertained us with song. Of course we all had worked up an appetite listening to these adventures, so the Sloppy Joe lunch served by RHS in the town garage was popular. Memorial Day is a day of remembering: our brave military, our history and to take the time to sit with our neighbors and visit. Our thanks to everyone who spent the morning with us as a visitor, Jack Koblas, Ron Affolter and all the members that worked to make this memorable.

The Rapidan Depot is now open for visitors from 1 to 5 p.m. every Sunday afternoon until Labor Day. The caboose will be changing colors soon. The caboose will be sandblasted to remove the old paint and prepped for the Milwaukee Road colors of orange and black.

The Rapidan Dam and Park is a great destination for a short drive. Pack a picnic lunch and relax in the Rapidan Dam Park. There is room for the kids to play and a horseshoe court where you can throw a few shoes. Take a relaxing walk through the campground, watch the river and reward yourself at the Dam Store with a slice of pie! Did you know that the Dam Store has been there since 1910? The house was originally located in what is now part of the dam reservoir. Thank you to the Blue Earth County Parks Department for placing a kiosk at the park with area history and photos provided by RHS.

The Rapidan Creamery is featured on the 2008 Redwing Butter Churn – pick up yours at the depot!

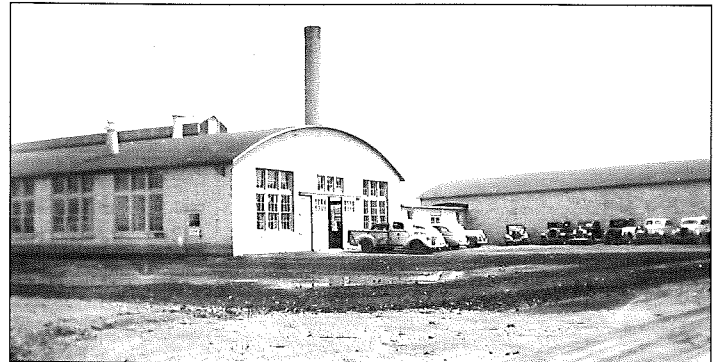
Jane Tarjeson
Secretary



Did You Know?

March 8, 1934, 150 Blue Earth County farmers gathered at City Hall to listen to F.E. Holden explain why it would be a good idea to grow Industrial Hemp; it can be used in a wide variety of products. The governments' interest was in the ability to make rope during WWII. Hemp has been grown in United States since the mid-1800s. By the 1890s cotton became easier to harvest and more marketable.

In 1934 a new machine named the Selvig Decorticator made it easier to harvest the hemp, once again making it a viable option as a product. The Selvig was capable of decorticating about 30 tons



Mapleton Hemp Plant, 1943-1945

daily compared to 10 tons before. Holden's Northwestern Hemp Company wanted about two thousand acres of hemp to be planted. Many of the farmers seeing that Southern Minnesota had the perfect climate and soil for the growth of hemp readily agreed.

Foundation for the decorticating machine was completed on the property of the North Star Concrete Company. The machine itself was brought in from Chicago. About 7000 acres of land would be used for the growing of hemp. Mankato contracted out 1,500 acres.

Recycle your newsletter!

Pass it along to a friend,
neighbor or family member!





Fingerprints and Footnotes

Fingerprints and Footnotes had an exciting spring. In May, we dug up the past with help from our Minnesota State University, Mankato graduate students, Emily, Sarah and Jason. We re-examined one of BECHS's largest Native American collections, the Swain Collection. It's sometimes surprising what you discover in your own back yard. In June, we celebrated a little poetry, a little music and lot of Welsh traditions when we discussed the Eisteddfod. We also celebrated our third anniversary with a drawing and the winner is ...Tim Madsen. Congratulations to him. In July, the club gleaned stats and facts about America's national past time. Did you know that the song "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" is a 100 years old, this year? As always the meetings were entertaining as well as educational and an enchanting time was had by all. Newcomers are always welcome.

If you have any ideas for discussion topics or any interest in presenting a topic, please let Shelley know at 507-345-5566 or bechsam@hickorytech.net.

Future Meetings

July 31st – Note Date Change! Meet you at the Fair! – at the Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City

September 2nd – National Register of Historical Places walking tour - featuring homes

October 7th – Bootlegging in Blue Earth County – meet at Morgan Creek Vineyard

Footnotes In History

The location of birth of an individual can be found in all census records starting with 1850. Starting with the 1870 census one can discover the birth location of each of the individual's parents.

- Provided by Beth Zimmer

April - June 2008 Artifacts & Archives Donations

Anonymous	Kagermeier, Jim
Brandrup, Marie	Kerns, Joanna
Carrison, Marion	LaFavor, Lyle
Colakovic, Kenneth	Mason, James and Marcia
Coleman, Mary	McComb, Mary
Daby, Dianne	Neubert, Lois
Dooley, Mary	Norman, Beth
Edward, Stanley	Quade, Henry and Ann
Fischer, Harold	Regan, R. Michael
Frederick, Mike	Resner, Donna
Frentz, Tony	Schaub, Shirley
Fritz, Madeline	Sizemore, Daardi
Greater Mankato Growth	Storm, Julie
Griffith, Helen	Sugden, George
Grundmeier, Win	Tarjeson, Jane
Hanson, Kathryn	VFW Post 950
Hugg, Corey	Young Women's Christian
Humphrey, Mary	Association of Mankato
Johns, David	

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

WISH LIST

Items or financial donations will be gratefully accepted.

- Copy Paper
- *The Land* on microfilm
- Mylar book covers
- New Tables and Chairs for Meeting Room

BECHS Membership April - June 2008

New Members

Auringer, Tim
Blume, Bradley
Carroll, Patrick
Heller, Barbara
Kietzer, David & Mavis
McCollum, Ginger
Natrakul, Mara & Monty
Vance, Daniel

New Business Members
Mapleton Town & Country
Tow Disbributing

Renewed Members

Affolter, Ronald
Ahlness, Janice
Anderson, Mary
Balcome, Helen
Ballman, Mary Lou
Barber, Eddice
Bellig, Daniel
Bessler, Bill & Marilyn
Birr, Linda
Bishop, Mary Louise
Blume, Darwin
Boroski, Betty
Botten, Joel
Boubel, John & Karen
Burns, Paul & Loretta
Busse, Walter
Carroll, Patrick J.
Carstensen, Norma
Chalgren, Bill & Marcia
Clawson, John
Craig, Nancy
Cramer, James
Cummiskey, June
Davis, Lois
Diamond, Sandy
Dobie, Joseph
Dorn, John & Kathy
Dubke, Duane
Duncanson, Kristin
Dunlop, David & Donna
Ehmke, Judy
Eick, Aileen
Eng, Helmer & Jane
Engstrom, Mary
Farnsworth, Susan

Faust, Claire
Fitzloff, Shirley
Frederick, Tom & Carol
Fredrickson, Dennis & Joan
Freyburg, Lynette
Friday, Mona
Frink, Brian & Denise
Frisch, Carlienne
Gage, Kelton & Dorothy
Garlow, Darrell & Sandi

Goelz, Nicholas
Goettl, Terry
Grabitske, Paul
Griffith, Helen
Griffiths, Jane
Grundmeier, Winston & Shirley
Habein, Dr. & Mrs. H.C.
Hamer, Nancy
Hansen, Norma
Hess, Dominic
Hesse, Norla
Higginbotham, Jack & Shirley
Higginbotham, Marla Sugden
Hinrichs, William
Hodapp, Frank
Hoehn, Jim & Pat
Hoehn, William
Hollingsworth, Alice
Hottinger, Father Ted
How, Mary Ellen
Howard, Don
Hugg, Robert & Corey
Humphrey, Mary
Hustoles, Paul & Mary Jo
Hynes, Susan
Ireland, L.H. & Patricia
Jackson, David & Colleen
Jacobson, Lyle & Kay
Jenson, Orville & Mary Ann
Johnson, David & Linda
Johnson, Marlyss
Jones, Ellis & Janet
Just, John
Kalvig, Ann
Karow, Linda
Keir, Richard & Grace
Kent, Jack & Harriet
Kerkhoff, Donald & Cecelia
Kind, Arn & Mel
Klugherz, Catherine

Kohrt, Jim & Melinda
Kraft, Judy
Lagerquist, Mike
Lamont, Earl & Sally
Lavitschke, Jo-An
Lees, June
Lites, Jerry & Arden
Lund, Kay
Madsen, Jack
Madsen, Kris & Considine,
Jack
Maker, Mary
Manthe, Lois
Masberg, Rita
Mathiason, Renee
McComb, Mary
McGregor, Byron & Karen
McLaughlin, Mr. & Mrs. James
McLaughlin, Tom & Theresa
McLean, Edward
McMillin, Ronald
Medalen, Ethel
Meredith, Dr. D.C. & Marge
Miller, Jo
Mohr, Harley
Mosher, Clayton
Muellerleile, Fred & Dixie
Neitge, Judy
Neumiller, Robert
Norman, Beth
Nuessle, Ruth
Nussbaumer, Linda
Oehler, Maurice
Ohlenkamp, Ora
Parks, Sandra
Peterson, Jean
Phelps, Dean
Piehl, Chuck & Kathy
Preska, David & Margaret
Pulis, Tim
Quade, Henry & Ann
Reich, Gerald & Judy
Resner, Donna
Ries, Chuck & Carol
Ringheim, Marilyn
Roberts, Craig
Ruble, Bruce & Shirlee
Ryan, Thomas
Saffert, Kenneth
Salk, Carolyn

Sassenberg, Eunice
Sassenburg, Karl
Sawina, James
Scheidel, Alois & Ruth
Schmitz, Joan
Schulz, Shelly
Schutt, Donna
Schutz, Shelly
Simonett, James & Patricia
Snilsberg, Lee & Loretta
Sontag, Leola
Steele, Richard & Ramona
Stromswold, Todd & Tracy
Svendsen, Sigvald
Swanson, Kevin & Jody
Tacheney, Leon & Delores
Thiesse, Sylvan & Rosalin
Thompson, Kenneth & Irene
Torgerson, Allen & Jane
Troemel, Clarinda
Vosbeck, Elizabeth
Voss, Leo & Judy
Wagner, Helen
Wandersee, Steven & Barbara
Ward, Howard & Mary
Webb, Gerald & Donna
Wilmes, Brad
Wingen, Carol
Yale, Kathleen
Zimmer, Beth

Renewed Businesses
Burkhardt & Burkhardt, Ltd.
Goodrich Construction, Inc.
Insty-Prints of Mankato
Paulsen Architectural
Design, Inc.
Red Door Creative
Tire Associates
Voyager Bank

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

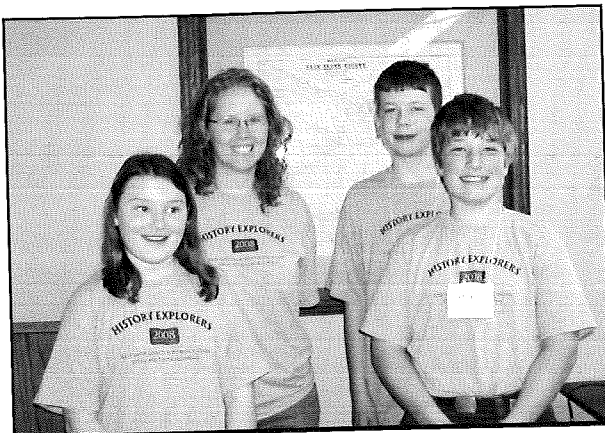


YOUNG HISTORIANS

The Blue Earth County Historical Society Young Historians had a fun year filled with hands-on history. Club members compiled historic recipes into their own Young Historians cook book. This summer Young Historians events included a trip to Seppman Mill and Pioneer Living at the North Mankato library. They were also involved this summer in the Hubbard House Victorian Lawn Party 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. The workshops are held the second Saturday of each month. The first workshop will be Saturday, September 13th focused on Native American traditions. The workshops are free and open to the public.

Junior Historians (grades 7-12) worked on a special oral history project and will have another special project for the upcoming year. This is a great opportunity for older kids to stay involved in this popular hands-on history program.



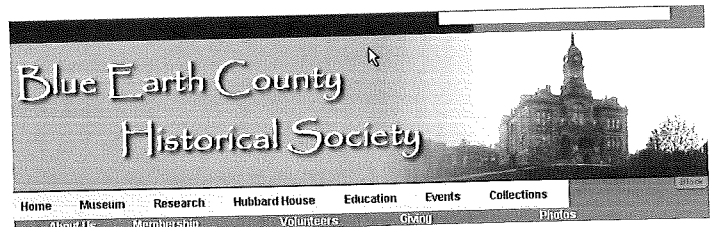
Junior Historians (l to r) Laura Garlow, Daardi Sizemore (MSU,M Archivist), Joshua Kloster and Nathan Clobes (not pictured Alex Oldenburg) conducted interviews for BECHS' Junior Historians Talking Back to Tomorrow Oral History project with the assistance of Daardi Sizemore.

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.

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*



BECHS is moving to a new address on the world wide web – check us out at www.bechshistory.com. Watch for a new look and new features in the months to come.

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.

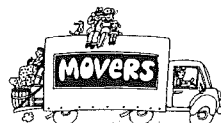
August 2nd
Discovery Days at the Fair

September 6th
Back to School

October 4th
Marian Anderson Art Show

Membership Renewal

It's that time of year. Reminder 2007-8 memberships **expired on June 30, 2008**. If you haven't already done so, please renew your 2008-9 membership today! If you are not sure, check your mailing label – if it is highlighted in yellow, you still need to renew. Also, consider gift memberships or encourage a friend or family member to join. Please use the enclosed yellow form to renew. If you provide an email address on your membership form, you will be included on our e-news list which includes reminders about upcoming events.



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. - 4:00 p.m.

R.D. Hubbard House Hours

June - August

Thursday 1 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday 1-4 p.m.

September

Saturday and Sunday 1-4 p.m.



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

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56001
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www.bechshistory.com

Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901