

The Blue Earth County

HISTORIAN

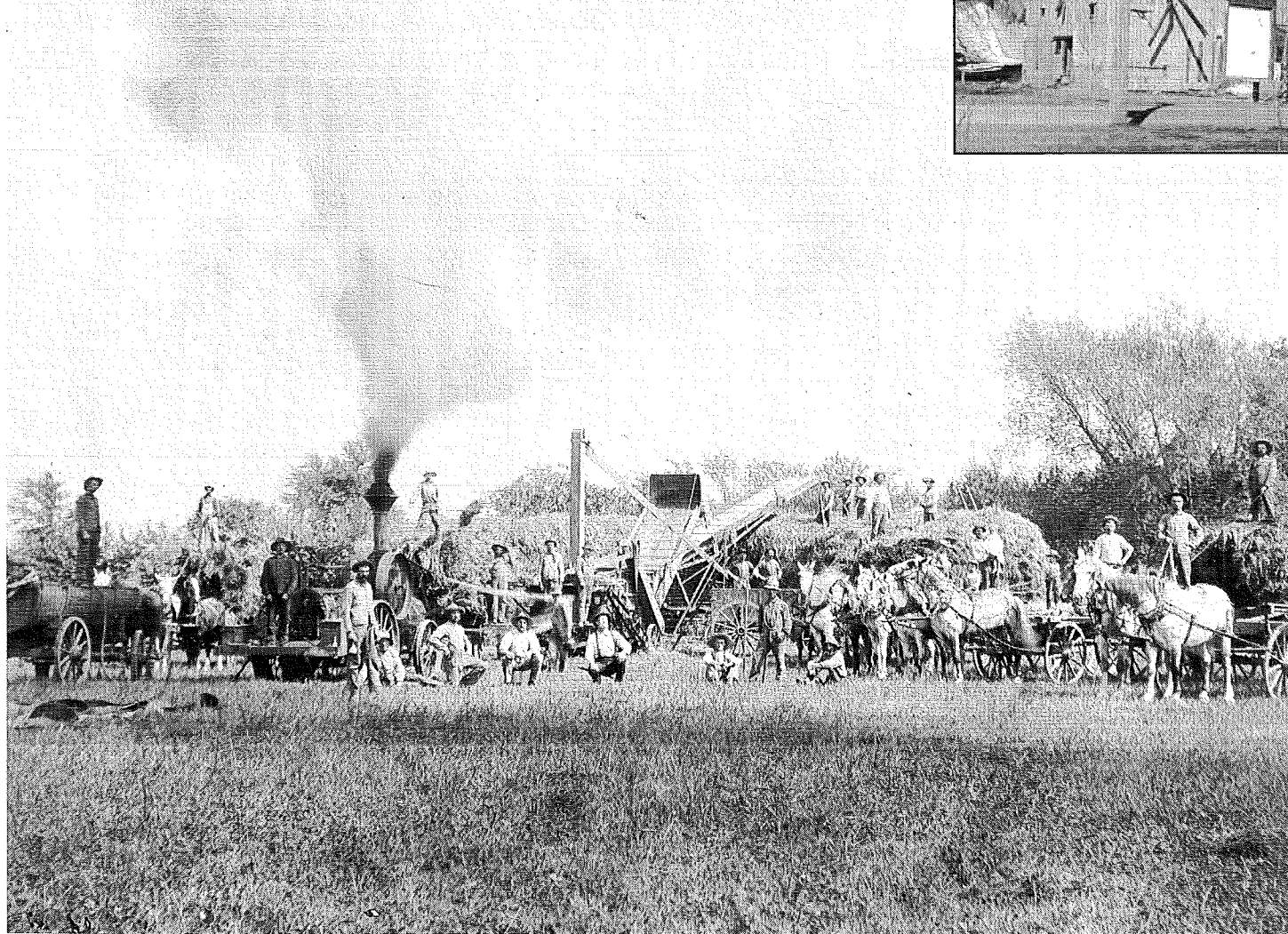
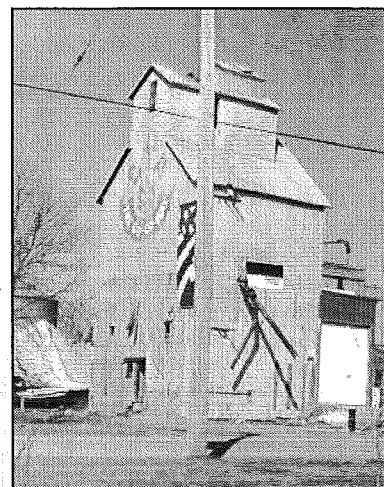


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Madison Lake
elevator before the
1994 fire.

Photograph courtesy
of Frank Hodapp.



Max and Bill Schultz threshing rig and crew.

Photograph from the collection of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

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

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 2009

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Board of Trustees

Todd Stromswold Board of Trustees President

Another summer has come and gone, and just like usual, the time has flown by. Compared to the rest of the world, it has been relatively quiet at the Blue Earth County Historical Society as of late. And with so much chaos in other areas, that has been a good thing! Our programs have been very well attended. Our Hubbard House Grand Opening in May saw phenomenal attendance. I understand from Jessica that we saw record exposure at the Blue Earth County Fair this year as well. In fact, our annual Vintage Base Ball game was so well attended that we are working on possibly expanding it. Although we did not opt to do a Barn Dance this year, the Historic Old Town Pub Crawl was a great success. It was in fact sold out, and was so well received that I am sure we'll be having another one.

Two items do deserve mention. First, we are closing in on our annual fall fundraising appeal. This year we have been challenged by one of our members, who has generously agreed to match up to \$1,000 of donations. So, if you are considering BECHS in your annual giving plan, now is a perfect time to make that contribution!

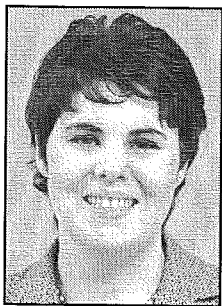
Next, we have three members of our Board of Trustees who will be leaving after their terms expire in March. So, if you have ever had the desire to be part of the governance process of the Blue Earth County Historical Society, or if you know someone who you believe would be excellent in this capacity, now is your chance! Please contact us for details.

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.

Director's Notes



Jessica Potter
Executive Director

I am excited to announce a new Historical Society project developed by MSU,M Speech Communications professor Dave Engen - "The Front Street Project."

Dave is a successful oral historian

with projects based on third places (places where people gather between home and work). His work can be heard and viewed on the website www.voicesfromthevalley.com. His new project focuses on Mankato's lost Front Street.

I have personally heard many great stories about the vitality and life of Front Street before Urban Renewal in the 1970s. In fact, that is one of the places I would like to visit. If I could go back in time, I would love to stand in the middle of Front Street during its heyday and look from the Bretts' building north to the Oleander. I would love to stand in the lobby of the

Saulpaugh Hotel. I know many of you have experienced these things that I can only see through photographs. And that's the basis for our new project. We hope to collect the oral histories, stories and memories of the businesses, shops, hang-outs on Front Street and use these oral histories in a new exhibit at the Heritage Center in 2011 featuring Mankato's Lost Front Street.

How can you be part of this project? Consider signing up for a recording session the first Monday of each month at the Heritage Center. Or call the Front Street Project phone line at 507-389-5537 and leave your thoughts from the comfort of your own home. We also have oral history kits available at the Heritage Center, that you can check-out and help record the stories of friends and family. When it's time to develop the exhibit, consider loaning or donating memorabilia and photographs from Front Street.

The oral history kits were made possible through a grant from the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Committee in 2008. To reserve your kits or sign up for a recording session, call us at the Heritage Center 345-5566.

BECHS Donations

July - September 2009

Up to \$50

Grundmeier, Win
Jensen, Orv
Mankato Woman's Club
McComb, Mary
Peterson, Leslie
Voss, Judy and Leo

\$51-\$100

Carroll, Patrick
Miller, Julie
Mueller, Keith and Bobbie
Zellmer, Randy

\$101-\$500

Preska, Margaret and Daniel

\$501-\$2500

Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

Memorials

In Memory of Jack Hunziker
by Byron and Karen McGregor

In Memory of Judy Preis
by Tony and Cindy Tarjeson
Oscar Weigelt

In Memory of Clifford Yaeger
by Tony and Cindy Tarjeson

In-Kind

Belgard, Hugh and Vail *Base Ball game supplies*
Hugg, Corey *Office Supplies*
Dull, Deb *Office Supplies*
Tow Distributing, *Pub Crawl glassware*

Grants

Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation
Shopping Cart feature for website and
Hanging Art System for gallery



Museum Store

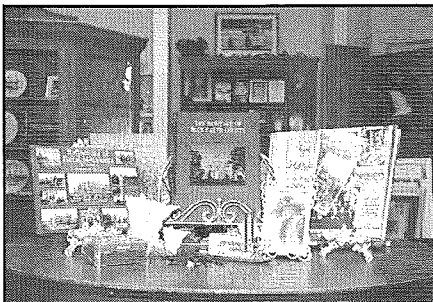
JoLynn Crowe
Museum Assistant

At the museum store we are preparing for a busy holiday season and part of that preparation will be going to the 2009 Holiday Expo at Madison East Center on Saturday, November 21st, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Be sure to check out all the fun crafts our Young Historians have worked so hard to make, as well as, the museum store items at our booth.

Something new and exciting we are planning is a Holiday Book Fair for Saturday, December 5 from 10-4 pm. Authors who currently have their books featured in the museum store will be on-hand from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to visit with folks and to autograph their book (always a nice touch for a gift).

We will also have a used book sale in concurrence with our Book Fair. Now is the time to comb through dresser drawers, closets and shelves for books you might be willing to part with and donate to BECHS for this sale. Books, magazines, music CD's are some of the items BECHS will accept. You can drop them off at the Heritage Center during the month of November. Call if you have any questions.

Now that winter is fast approaching, most of us will be spending more time indoors than out, so it's time to enjoy that book you've been waiting to crack open when the wind is whistling outside and the snow is drifting. We are the go-to-source for some great wintertime reading! And don't forget, members receive 10% off non-consignment items in the store. We have some great holiday gift items, shop early.



Heritage Center Museum and Store Hours: Tue. 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.,
Wed. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Closed Sunday & Monday

Museum Admission: \$3 adults, \$1 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members
and children under 5 Free

Members receive a 10% discount on most items available in the Store.

Blue Earth County Historical Society Holiday Book Fair

Saturday, December 5
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Meet Local Authors
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Museum Store Specials

Refreshments

Used Book Sale

*(book donations accepted at the Heritage
Center during the month of November)*

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE PRODUCTION
OF FUTURE BECHS PUBLICATIONS**

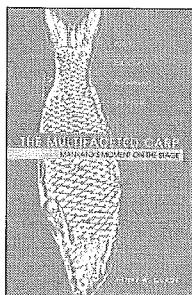


HERITAGE CENTER
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Featured Museum Store Items

The Multifaceted Carp Mankato's Moment on Stage

by Henry W. Quade



Mankato had a "moment on stage" as the result of local entrepreneur Armin Kleinschmidt's idea that canned carp could provide a delicious and valuable food source during WWII. Once a popular immigrant food source, today carp is considered by some a valuable recreational and food source and by

others a pest and a danger to the environment. Here the author gives us a historical perspective on carp, and discusses the environmental impacts and entrepreneurial ventures regarding carp today. Paper, \$12.95

John Cross Photography

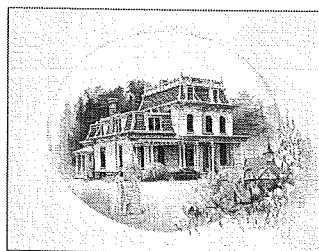


John Cross's favorite photographs taken during his 34 years at the *Mankato Free Press* are on display at the Heritage Center through 2009. The exhibit is open during regular business hours.

Some of the displayed photographs are available for purchase ranging from 8x10" for \$49 to 24x36" framed for \$269. A portion of the proceeds will be donated back to the Historical Society thanks to the generosity of Brian Fowler of the Artisan Gallery, Mankato.

Reflections of Days Gone By

by Marian Anderson



Art print of the R.D. Hubbard House. Third and final in the Historic Home Series

\$150 Artist Proof
\$75 Main Edition

All proceeds benefit BECHS Capital Improvement Fund

Unique Mankato Stories

by Daniel Vance

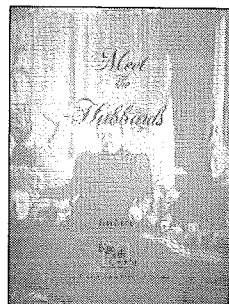


Relive the incredible forgotten stories of Mankato including those of Moses Wickersham, Maud Hart Lovelace, Julia Ann Sears, Sinclair Lewis and the Green Gables tornado. These hidden gems span the first 100

years of Mankato history. Paper, \$19.95

Meet the Hubbards

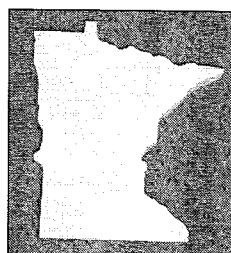
by Beth Zimmer



Mary Esther Cook Hubbard must have breathed a sigh of relief when she and her husband, R. D. Hubbard, finally settled in Mankato. She had been a devoted wife following her husband as he traveled from county to county and state to state seeking his fortune. R.D. became the founder of Hubbard Milling Company, the

largest flour mill in Southern Minnesota. This book covers the family's life here in Mankato through story and photographs. Paper, \$14.95

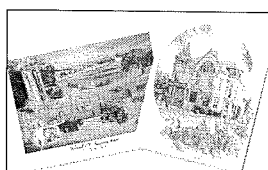
State of Minnesota Paperweight



The State of Minnesota stone paperweight was crafted with care using a 55,000 psi water jet cutting system and Minnesota Stone that was formed nearly 480 million years ago. Minnesota Stone is quarried by Vetter Stone Company. The paperweights are available in three sizes ranging in price from \$4.95 to \$19.95.

Note Cards

For sending an extra special note to a favorite someone, the Museum Store carries a selection of note cards from the Historic Homes series by Marian



Anderson as well as some of her other featured prints that are note card size. Many different designs are available to fit every occasion. \$1.50 each, sold in packets of 6 for \$9.

BECHS accepts the following credit cards for store purchases, membership dues or donations.





Research Center

Marsha Heinze
Archives Aide

The new kid on the block, that would be me, Marsha Heinze. Being an army brat I heard that phrase a lot. As a child I moved around from place to place but we always called Lake Crystal, Minnesota, our home. My mother's folks lived in Lake Crystal and my father's, at the time, lived on a farm in Butternut, Minnesota. When my father retired from the service we made Lake Crystal our permanent home. By this time I was starting sixth grade and later graduated from Lake Crystal High School.

My passion for genealogy has perhaps been from all the moving around my family has done, I'm not sure. My need to find my roots is not only important to me but also something to leave for my children. To be here working for the Blue Earth County Historical Society is like a dream come true for me, and in the research department, what a plus.

Have you ever gone up to the attic and come across a box full of old things? You just can't seem to pull yourself away from what you have found, treasures from the past. Those forgotten treasures, your family's past and what you can do to preserve it, is what I would like to talk about.

Here at the research center you can begin your journey. Find your great-great grandfather and learn what he did for a living, who he married and how many children they had. We can help you. There are many tools here to help you with that search, from

cemetery transcriptions, plat maps, even some photographs and scrapbooks. If you have time, check out our biography files. How about the many things we have on microfilm? There are census records to articles from the home town newspapers. Once you start you can't stop.

Remember that box from the attic? Well, there is something I would like you to think about—if some of those items in that box are history from this county. Something as simple as an advertisement from a department store in the early 1920s or 1930s or perhaps that doll that grandma gave you that you've wrapped and stored so well for all these years. These kinds of things are our history and should be preserved for future generations to see.

Do you have something in your attic that you would be willing to give to the Historical Society? If so, please contact Shelley, at 345-5566, for information on donating your family treasures.

9th Annual
South Central MN Genealogy Expo
Saturday, October 24th
MSU Centennial Student Union
Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.
Call BECHS 345-5566 for more information



Research Center Hours:

Tue. 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Wed. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.,
Closed Sunday & Monday

Admission: \$5 adults, \$1 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members Free

Genealogy Day 4th Saturday of each month - Free Admission

Research Fees: Copies 25¢,
Contracted Research \$15/ half hour



History's Mysteries

We recently received a letter from Audrey Howard Swanson. She had met Georgie Ray Lindeke at a gathering and, as they started chatting, Audrey realized they were both from Garden City, Minnesota. Audrey began to tell her about her family and their stories about Garden City. She shared with Georgie that her family had the grocery store there. With that statement Georgie said, "No, my family had the grocery store in Garden City."

Here began the problem. Audrey wanted me to find out whose family had the grocery store in Garden City and so the search begins. Audrey's ancestor is Thomas Nelson Boynton who came from Vermont in 1864-65 and started the grocery store at that time, Audrey recalls from her research.

Georgie Ray Lindeke claimed that her family, the Ray family, had the store. So who was it that ran the grocery store in Garden City?

The search began with Thomas Nelson Boynton. We found in our microfilm holdings, *Shoemaker's Business Directory of Mankato and County of Blue Earth* for years 1881-1882, that T.N. Boynton owned the Garden City Stock Farm. There was no mention of the General Store in Garden City. So did the Ray family run the store?

In researching the Ray family, because no first name was given, we started by looking through the obituaries. There was a file on a George M. Ray who owned a grocery store. Great, we thought, we had found the answer. But no such luck; that grocery store was on 99 South Front Street Mankato in 1874, which became 111 State Street. This information was found in the *Mankato Free Press* dated November 20, 1908.

So who owned the store in Garden City? I need your help—anyone with stories or facts about the grocery store in Garden City please contact Marsha at bechsrc@hickorytech.net or call (507) 345-5566.



Fingerprints and Footnotes

Fingerprints and Footnotes, the History and Genealogy Club, is always growing and newcomers are always welcome. In August we had an exciting adventure with the Madison Lake Area Historical Society. We met at the Gegan Cabin and had a wonderful potluck, saw a demonstration on how to make wood shingles by hand and even shot a cannon off – what a blast!! In September, Curtis Dahlin discussed his new book, *The Dakota Uprising: A Pictorial History*. We had a great crowd. This month we invited Kathy Machowski and her group of passionate ghost hunters as we went *Beyond the Veil* and delved deeper into the possibility of ghosts in our own backyards.

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 5 (**note the date change**) – Outdoor Adventures about Swan Lake, a presentation and book signing by Pell Johnson

December 1– Between the lines: a collection of Confederate Letters by Beth Zimmer

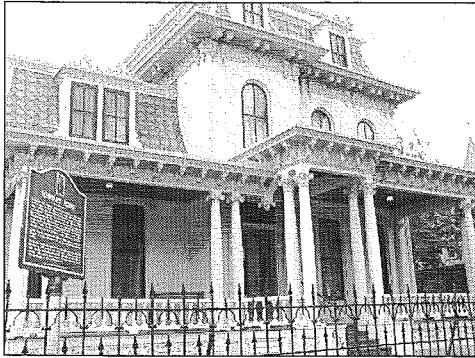
January 5, 2010 - Back to Basics: A Roundtable Discussion on Genealogy

Footnotes In History

December 10, 1930

Sinclair Lewis receives the Nobel Prize in Literature, the first American so honored. His popular titles include *Main Street*, *Arrowsmith*, *Elmer Gantry*, and *Babbitt*. He started writing *Main Street* right here in Mankato, in the house at 315 South Broad Street.

R.D. Hubbard House



Another season at the Hubbard House has come to a close. Special thanks to all the volunteers and staff that helped make this a great season, especially Brianna Patsch, Glenn Stryker, Don Straub, Ken Ziegler, Kathryn Hanson, Bobbie Bartholdi and LaDonna Tollefson. Also, a special thanks to Harley Goff for his handy-work around the House and dedication to the restoration of the Hubbard House. Over 1,100 people visited the Hubbard House this year. That is double the attendance from last year.

We are gearing up the holiday season with our annual "Christmas at the Hubbard House." This year will once again feature the Hubbard family, as well, as a special look at ethnic holiday traditions. About a dozen different ethnic groups called Blue Earth County home in the 1880s (per the Ethnic Background map available in the Museum Store). The signature event for "Christmas at the Hubbard House" will be Sunday, December 6th and Monday, December 7th followed by open hours the next two weekends in December. If you are interested in volunteering for "Christmas at the Hubbard House" or holiday decorating

on November 30th, please contact JoLynn at bechsms@hickorytech.net.

In addition to the holiday festivities in December, the Society will also debut a new exhibit about Hubbard Milling Company in the Carriage House. Exhibit cases from the Nicollet County Historical Society have been installed with the assistance of Piepho Moving and Storage and South Central Glass. Special thanks to Patrick Carroll for a monetary donation toward the creation of the exhibit. If you are interested in assisting with the creation of the exhibit, have items about Hubbard Milling Company to loan or donate for the exhibit or are interested in contributing a monetary donation, please contact Jessica at bechs@hickorytech.net.

An Annual Mankato Holiday Tradition

Christmas at the Hubbard House

Sunday, December 6th 1-4 p.m.

Monday, December 7th 5-8 p.m.

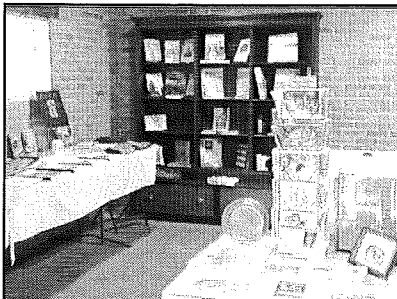
Turn of the Century Costumed Guides ~ Holiday Gift Shop

Adults \$5

Children 5-17 \$3

BECHS Members and under 5 FREE

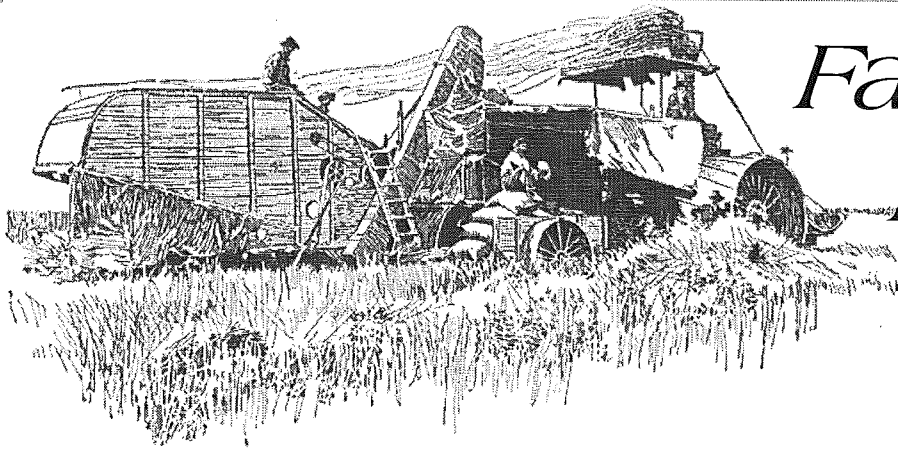
R.D. Hubbard House is located at 606 South Broad Street, Mankato.
Call 345-5566 or www.bechshistory.com for more information.



Hubbard House and Carriage House Gift Shop Hours:

Open December 6, 7, 12, 13, 19, 20 for Christmas at Hubbard House
October - April closed for the season

Admission: \$3 adults, \$1 students (age 5-17); BECHS Members and children under 5 Free



Fall Harvests

by
Jack Madsen

My memories of fall harvest go back to a simpler, quieter time of magnificent farm horses, fascinating harvest-

ing equipment (to a boy), and a panoply of men and women, now long gone, who are still very much a part of me. I don't remember steam engines; they were before my time. But I do remember Eddie Tarjeson's huge Case tractor. That was commotion enough for me.

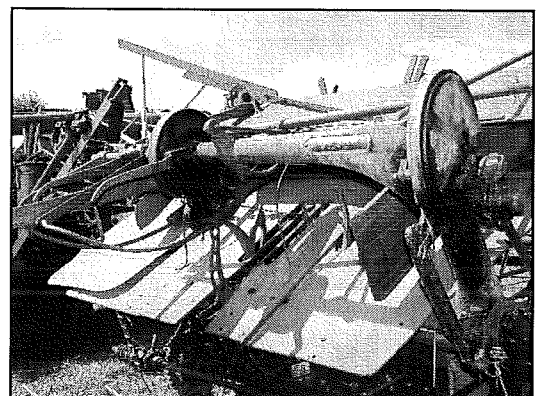
In my earliest years, the harvest season began in mid July, about the time when one could begin to notice the days were getting shorter, albeit hotter and usually drier. In those days we didn't have our own threshing machine, so we had to cut, dry, and stack our oats and wait our turn to have Eddie Tarjeson bring his rig to our farm. We didn't call it a threshing machine; we referred to it as the separator, I'm not sure why.

About the time the oats were in milk, Dad would start by pulling the grain binder out of the shed with a two-horse team to get it ready. There were always canvases to be mended, sickles to be replaced, and generally some mouse nests to be removed from the twine canister — much to the interest of our cats.

The binder was pulled by horses and powered by a large bull wheel that ran everything. The reel pulled the standing grain into the sickle, one canvas carried the cut grain to the side, and a pair of canvases hauled it up to the bundler where it was wrapped with twine and tied by a knotter. That knotter was a fascination to me. I remember watching it with the intensity of a kid watching a magician, but I never figured out how it worked.

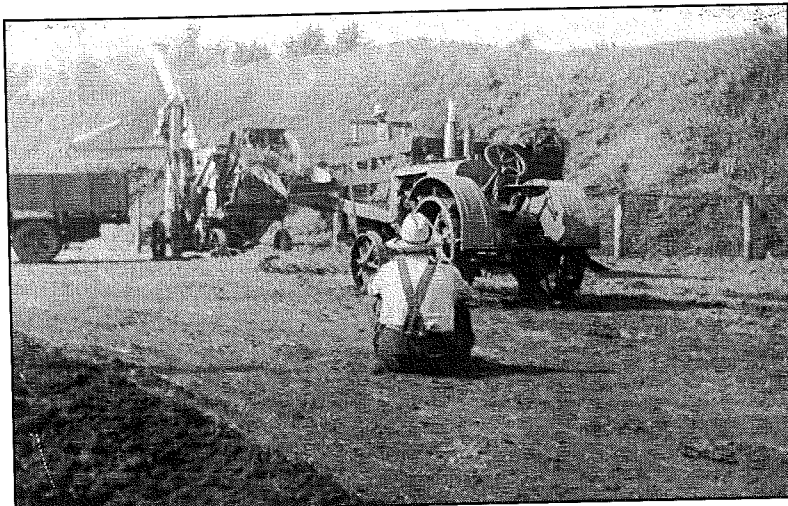
When the grain was ready, the first order of business was to open the field. This was done by going the wrong way around the field to make the first cut. The bundles were dropped from the cradle in groups of six or eight, and my job was to drag them out of the way so that the horses wouldn't run over them on the return cut. It was a thankless job, and almost impossible for a kid to keep up.

After the oats were cut, Dad and Mads — and later, I — would do the shocking, six or eight bundles to a shock. This was also a daunting task. Some fields were interminably large; it was usually hotter than blazes, no shade, and there were often sandburs and thistles mixed in with the straw. Gloves were no help at all, and I remember digging sandbur thorns out of my hands on into the winter.



Knotter portion of a grain binder. Photo courtesy of Jack Madsen.

After the shocks had stood long enough for the stems to dry, we would haul it all home to be stacked. We usually worked with our neighbors on this project, because Dad was the best stacker. The trick was to lay up a stack ten or twelve feet in diameter in such a way that it wouldn't fall apart. At our place we would have two or three stacks strategically placed so that the separator could be backed in between them and be at just the



Threshing in the early 1940s. Ted Franz rig; Clarence Preis seated. Photo courtesy of Verne Preis.

right distance to blow the straw into the barn.

The stacks were as tall as 12 or 14 feet, counting a cap of bundles on the top to keep off the rain. This cap was held in place with sharpened "staves," as Dad called them, much the same as women use hair-pins. I found they made excellent spears, once I had fitted them with feathers gathered from the hen-house, but Dad was unimpressed when he went looking for them and had to cut new ones.

On the appointed day, the whole crew of neighbors would descend upon our place, and the operation would commence. First, the separator had to be backed into place and "leveled up." This was accomplished by digging shallow holes for the wheels to drop into in order to hold it steady. However, it usually had to be pulled up out of the slots once or twice in order to get it right.

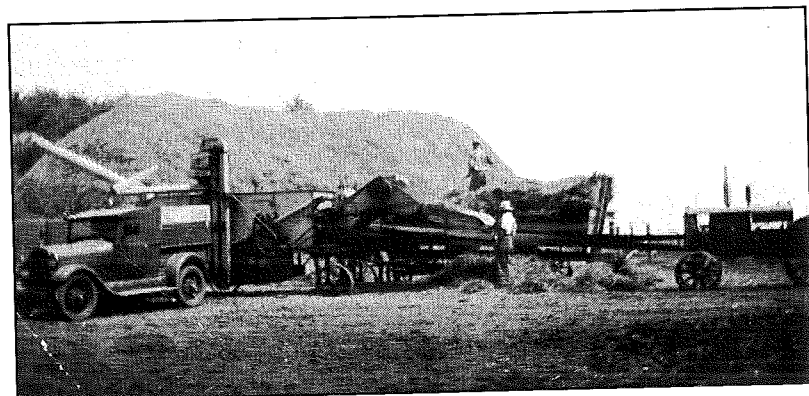
Next, the tractor had to be backed into place so that the pulleys lined up, and then the great belt, which weighed as much as a young heifer, as they said, had to be installed. This was a tricky move, as the driving pulley on the tractor was engaged when the tractor was in gear, being backed to tighten the belt. Once the belt was tight and the back wheels were blocked, we were ready to begin.

It took several hours for the iron monster to devour those stacks. My job was to level the grain as it poured into Hans Erickson's truck or a grain wagon.

At our place we always blew the straw into the barn until we had enough for bedding in the winter. Dad would go up in the mow when the separator was running to level off the stack and keep it from tipping over where we didn't want it. Even with the big door partly open, the air was so thick with dust you could hardly see, yet he did that, year after year, without a respirator.

On the north end of the hog lot where we did the threshing, we also created a straw shed. Dad had constructed it out of woven wire and saplings, with cedar posts for uprights. When we had finished blowing straw into the barn, we would then cover this framework with another mountain of straw. It had an opening on the south end for the hogs to get in, and even in the coldest days of winter it would be toasty warm in there with their body heat.

The greatest excitement of the day came when the men got down to the bottoms of the bundle stacks. That is when the mice that had taken up residence there had to scramble for new accommodations. Of course our dogs and cats were right there to join in the fun, but the men had to be careful they didn't get a mouse up their pant legs. That was fun to watch, too!



Threshing with Ted Franz rig. Model A Ford truck for grain, Minneapolis Moline tractor on belt. Photo courtesy of Verne Preis.

By the end of the day, everything was slick and clean. All the loose grain was shoveled up into the separator to be hulled and cleaned, and anything left on the ground provided a feast for the pigs and chickens, once the machinery was removed.

About my ninth year, I was shipped "over home" to

my grandparents, Roy and Ada Jaycox, for a week or two at threshing time and got to see how things were done in the Spring Island community of South Bend Township. Things were different there in that they hauled the bundles directly from the fields to the thresher instead of threshing from stacks. I think it was August Reedstrom who owned the tractor and threshing machine, and all the farmers who had signed on went from farm to farm, either by lot or by plan, taking turns hauling in the bundles.

There were also men who stayed out in the fields all day long, loading the wagons that were brought out to them. These were the spike pitchers, hardened men with faces and ears burned a deep brown, made darker by the dust and grime that stuck to the sweat on their skin, so that when they took off their straw hats you could see a white halo at the tops of their heads. One of them was Siegel Sorenson. Small of stature, he had lost an arm to a corn binder, I think. But he kept up with the best of them, hooking the end of his fork handle under the remaining stub of his arm and laying up a load of bundles twice his height.

By the early fifties, Dad had given up trying to make a living on such a small farm. He got a job as a carpenter, and he and Mom rented the farm to our neighbor, Clarence Erickson, who, with his brother, Henry, purchased a threshing machine of their own. We still had grain to harvest, of course, and I was now old enough to take on a greater role. Henry and Clarence cut the grain and did the shocking, and when it was ready to be threshed, Henry ran the separator, and Clarence and I hauled in the bundles. I was now one of the men — although not man enough to be allowed to share their 3.2 beer at afternoon lunch.

But time and farming practices soon replaced the separator with bigger tractors, a swather, and a combine operated by Raymond Tarjeson, a cousin to Henry and Clarence. Gone were our Percherons and Henry Erickson's bays; gone were the straw stacks; gone were the threshing parties up at Eddie Tarjeson's at the end of the season. Gone, too, was a way of life.

I suppose progress has its virtues, but I must admit I

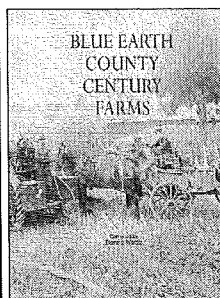


Threshing at the Preis farm, 1963. Verne Preis feeding; Steve Madsen on blower. Photo courtesy of Verne Preis.

miss the virtues of those simpler, quieter times. — Times when we got to really know our neighbors, along with the names and pedigrees of their horses and dogs; times when we kids knew which wives made the best meals. For no one made sticky rolls like Esther Erickson, and no one else could consistently match Lenora Erickson's chicken. — Times when Mrs. Tarjeson, Eddie's wife, would let us lick the pan when she made seven-minute frosting for her chocolate cake.

The years all blend together now. In memory it's hard to sort them all out. But they were good years, years and neighbors bound together with the hard work of farming, surviving the Great Depression and World War II, and I doubt that my children and grandchildren will ever experience their equal.

Blue Earth County Century Farms



Hardbound,
\$39.95

"BECHS scored another coup with their publication of 'Blue Earth County Century Farms' compiled by Donna Webb. From the nostalgic sepia cover art to the township maps, descriptive narrative of family members and photos of these historic century farm homesteads, this hardcover coffee table book offers a glimpse back in time at Blue Earth County's rural heritage."

Steven Ulmen, author of *Little Crows Revenge* and other historic novels.

Gone From the Prairie

(update of the October 2008 article)

By

Jane Tarjeson

Harvesting has begun on the farms, and the radio farm reports keep us informed with forecasted yields for 2009. The busy season for local elevators has begun! All makes and models of trucks, tractors and wagons line up by the elevator door to unload their precious cargo. As the wagon box is raised, they watch the grain flow out of their trucks, through the grate and into the pit. They may reach in for a handful to feel for moisture and weight or thoughtfully chew on a kernel. The other drivers wait patiently in the office, waiting their turn to unload. Talk turns from the weather to the markets to the local school's sports team.

But several other elevators are silenced, the building no longer part of the skyline. Fortunately, memories and photos of these linger on.

The Eagle Lake elevator was destroyed by a tornado in 1953. The twister swept into town from the southwest, blew the top off the Commander Elevator and left the walls standing at a slant. The roof was carried a half mile and dropped into the waters of Eagle Lake. The elevator stood in the worst hit area in the village.

Madison Lake's twin elevators were constructed in 1905. The West elevator was torn down in the 1930's. Fred Muellerleile remembers it being dismantled; his grandfather was part of the crew that took it down. The lumber was reused in other building projects and Fred's job that summer was to pull the nails out of the lumber. The nails were straightened and saved for reuse in repair jobs – or “anywhere a nail was needed.” This was during the depression, and nothing was wasted.

The East Madison Lake elevator met a different fate. On April 23, 1994, 120 fire fighters took part in a controlled burn of the Harvest States Elevator.

Using #1 fuel and straw bales, a fire was started in a southwest corner bin of the elevator. Flames consumed the interior of the bin and moved quickly upward to engulf the

roof. Forty minutes later the elevator was completely burned. Water used at the burn was drawn from Duck Lake at a rate of 4,000 gallons per minute. A total of 126,000 gallons of water was used.

In June, 2008, the Houk Mill in Good Thunder was deconstructed. Built by Levi Houk in the late 19th century, the mill stood watch over Good Thunder and was part of the hustle and growth of the town. But then the feed mill stood empty, unused and a liability for the town. It was skillfully deconstructed using a powerful excavator. The once busy feed mill was turned to rubble and hauled away.

The towering elevators are gradually disappearing – replaced with shiny round metal storage bins or concrete bunkers to hold the grain. More efficient, they say – but gone forever is the mystery and intrigue of the towering elevator.

Sources:

Bill Fasnacht
Frank Hodapp
Fred Muellerleile
Madison Lake Times
Maple River Messenger

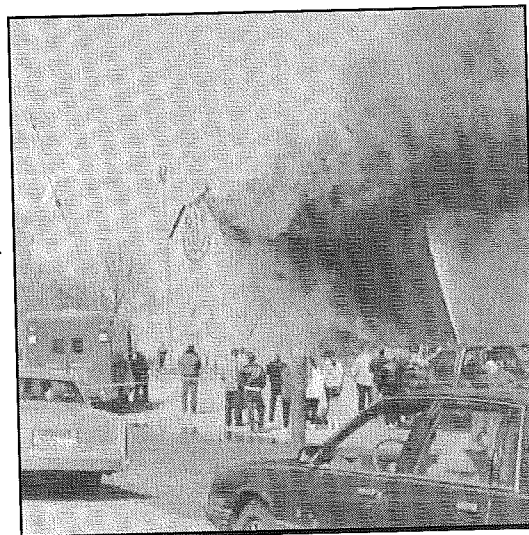
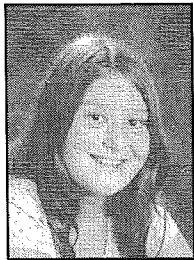


Photo courtesy of Frank Hodapp



For more information, visit the Blue Earth County Historical Society's Heritage Center or www.bechshistory.com.

YOUNG HISTORIANS



Many of our Junior and Young Historians participated in summer events for the Historical Society; hope you had a chance to see us. Many participated at the Hubbard House and at the schoolhouse and base ball game at the County Fair.

Our new year started in September. We learned about Native Americans in the 1850s led by Christina Shortall. We learned about their houses, the different materials they used, where they moved to and how much land they had. We made our own little tepees and had chicken wild rice soup for a snack. We read about their daily life and also talked about what kind of food they ate. At our first Young Historians Club meeting, Kali Goettl and I were elected as co-presidents.

This year Junior Historians will lead three programs during the year and will volunteer at upcoming Historical Society events. Watch for us. We have an exciting year coming up.

Club members will be making things for the Madison East Holiday Expo to raise money for a field trip to the Minnesota Historical Society this May. We are also each going to do a History Day project. We will have a reception on May 7th to share our projects and what we learned. You are all welcome to join us.

See what our Young Historians have been up to:

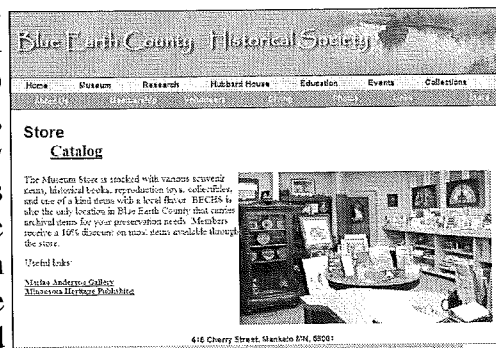
The Junior and Young Historians had a very busy and exciting summer. A lot of us volunteered at the two Hubbard House events. Alex Oldenburg won the Jefferson Good People Award for her work with For Pets and volunteering at the Historical Society. A lot of our Historians were in 4-H this year. Alex and Connor Oldenburg; Lucas, Brooklyn and Emy Youngerburg; and Nathan, Joshua, Abby, and David Clobes entered things at the Blue Earth County Fair. Alex Oldenburg, Lucas and Brooklyn Youngerburg, and Nathan Clobes also took things to the State Fair this year.

Laura Garlow
9th Grade,
Maple River High School

BECHS Website Resources

There are great things just a click away at www.bechshistory.com including past issues of *The Historian*,

volunteer and membership information, and a new **Speakers Bureau** topic list. Research tools that have been added include



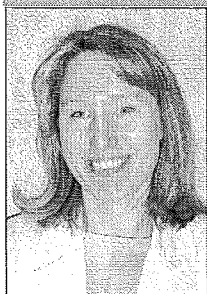
Garden City Social Notes, updated cemetery index pages, and be sure to check out the Photos and Links pages which are always changing. It's also a good idea to bookmark the calendar page; we have all our exciting events detailed there.

Debuting on November 1st is a major change to the Museum Store page. Soon there will be a shopping cart feature with secure credit card shopping for online purchases. Just in time for the holidays, patrons will be able to shop online, make a donation online or buy a gift membership online. The shopping cart component is made possible thanks to the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation and the talented people at Que Computers. In the near future we hope to offer *The Historian* in electronic format as well as in regular e-news updates to online subscribers. In addition, members-only access to online research tools and special features will be available.

Here are a few fascinating facts about our site: the most popular keyword search in September was "Blue Earth County Historical Society" with a whopping 130 searches. The next most searched keyword was the "Hubbard House" with 12 entries. Last month we had visitors to our site from the United States, Romania and the Russian Federation. Since June, we have had 2813 people visit our site.

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





Collections & Exhibits

Shelley Harrison
Archives Manager

With the opening of the John Cross Exhibit, we have added a new display in the hallway at the Heritage Center. It's all about cameras. Did you know the first photograph was taken with a camera in 1839? Our earliest photo is probably one of Minneopa Falls taken in the late 1850s. One of our earliest cameras is an Eastman Kodak from 1902.

Early cameras were expensive, large and the chemicals they used in developing photographs made them dangerous. In Blue Earth County, most of the early photos are of farms or people in front of their homes. Photographers travelled around like a salesman and asked if the family was interested in having their photograph taken. Usually these photos



included the house, the family and even sometimes their possessions. These photos showed how successful they were to their families back home in a far off place.

The exhibit also features some equipment that was used to develop

photographs, which some of our local photographers would have used. There are dry plates used in the 1880s, developing pans and paper and postcards for making prints. There are also lenses, light meters and flash bulbs.

Cameras became more popular and inexpensive by the turn of the last century. George Eastman and Kodak made it easy for everyone to own a camera. The Kodak Brownie and the other cameras on display were owned by Blue Earth County residents

who may have taken them on trips to Europe and family vacations, capturing many memories along the way. We even have a Zeiss twin lens reflex camera. Did you know that 35 mm cameras were introduced in 1925 and Kodacolor film in 1942?

The first instant camera was a Polaroid in 1948, but it wasn't until 1972 that Polaroid created film that developed in full sunlight. Did you know that disposable cameras were created in 1986?

We are missing automatic cameras, those with auto focus, timer and self-winding as well as digital cameras. We are always looking for objects with great Blue Earth County stories to go with them. All of the cameras on display are from the BECHS collections, and best part, there is no admission fee to see them.

Artifacts & Archives Donations July - September 2009

Arnsdorf, Judy	Keir, Richard
Barsness, Jeanette	Kent, Jack
Berg, Marilyn	Latzi, Joy
Bonnett, Wes and Harriet	Lavitschke, Jo-an
Burns, Inella	Lewis, LaVola
Burton, John	McNear, Virginia
Colakovic, Kenneth	Miller, Julie Williams
Dahlin, Curtis	Oldenborg, Evelyn
Dobie, Sheryl	Olmanson, Karla
Fischer, Harold	Phillips, John R
Frederick, Mike	Quade, Henry
Goettl, Terri	Rapidan Heritage Society
Golden, Anthony	Rath, Sharon
Grundmeier, Win	Rosenberg, Mary Jane
Guse, Lu	Salk, Carolyn Older
Herbst, Gordon	Schmitz, Jean
Hesse, Harvey	Schultz, Jo
Hesse, Norla	Tarjeson, Jane
Jensen, Orv	Votca, Cornelius
Johnson, Andrew	Williams, Lee
Jost, Mary	Winter, Vernon

BECHS Volunteers

July - September 2009

Affolter, Ron
Andrusko, Andrew
Bartholdi, Roberta
Baures, Lisa
BEC Sheriff's Dept.
Beiswanger, Joshua
Belgard, Hugh
Belgard, Vail
Benefield, Dale
Bouma, Chandra
Bouma, Jana
Bunde, Margo
Burns, Inella
Clobes, Abby
Clobes, Joshua
Clobes, Nathan
Cords, Betty
Coleman, Mary
Crowe, Jody
Doyle, Judy
Doyle, Preston
Engelsvud, Ernie
Frisch, Carlienne
Garlow, Laura
Garlow, Sandi
Goff, Harley
Grundmeier, Shirley
Grundmeier, Win
Hanson, Kathryn
Heaney, Kelly
Herbst, Gordon
Hodapp, Louise
Howieson, Bob
Hugg, Bob
Hugg, Corey
Humphrey, Mary
Hundstad, Patrice
Hustuft, Carol
Hynes, Susan
Jensen, Orville
Keir, Grace
Kennedy, Gloria
Kind, Arn
Krassin, Sara

Lagerquist, Mike
Lavitschke, Jo-an
Lundin, Gary
Madsen, Jack
Madsen, Liz
Madsen, Timothy
McComb, Mary
McGowan, Jack
Nienow, Dick
Nienow, Tricia
Ohlenkamp, Ora
Oldenburg, Aiden
Oldenburg, Alex
Oldenburg, Connor
Peterson, Leslie
Peterson, Rachel
Quade, Ann
Quade, Henry
Quam, Brandon
Reinbold, Bianka
Rezmerski, John
Rodriguez, Gabriela
Sassenburg, Eunice
Schaub, Shirley
Schevers, Paula
Schultz, Jo
Shortall, Christina
Sinn, Baerbel
Sinn, Gunter
Starcher, Sarah
Straka, Stacey
Straub, Don
Stromswold, Todd
Tarjeson, Jane
Ulmen, Steve
Webb, Grace
Webb, Donna
Wilker, Lin
Wilker, Roger
Youngerberg, Brooklyn
Youngerberg, Emy
Youngerberg, Lucas
Zeigler, Ken
Zimmer, Beth

Volunteers Are Always Welcome

If you have some time to spare to help us preserve history, please contact JoLynn at 345-5566 or bechsms@hickorytech.net.

Some examples are:

Christmas at Hubbard House volunteers
BECHS Board of Trustees
*Tour Guides—Hubbard House
and Heritage Center*
Antique car maintenance person
Research and writing for publications
Grant research and writing
Data Entry
Archives Volunteer
Committee members



BECHS On the Air

Listen to KTOE 1420 AM the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month 4:10-4:40 p.m. *BECHS update with Trish.*

WISH LIST

Items or financial donations will be gratefully accepted.

- 4-drawer legal-size filing cabinet (new or used)
- 3 ft. Step stool for Hubbard House
- Cordless Drill
- Copy Paper
- *The Land* on microfilm (\$35 per roll)
- New tables and chairs for meeting room (need approximately \$5,000)
- Office Max Gift Cards

Thank you for your time and talents!

BECHS Membership

July - September 2009

New Members

Anderson, Donna
Bemel, Laura and Engen, David
Blankers, Sietze and Aisha
Bomier, Robert and Angie
Cords, Marion
Cram, Shayna (Winner of the
BEC Fair Drawing)
Dinsmore, Randy
Fitzloff, John F.
Ganey, Peg
Hiniker, Char
Kabe, Evelyn
Korff, Dorothy
Kunkel, Mike and Denise
Miller, Hugh
Olson, Barbara
Ostrich, Lori
Pinney, Sharon
Poncin, Herbert and Louise
Quinn, Michael and Kathy
Smith, Lynette
Vaubel, John
Wendt, Bob
Wood, Russell and Caroline
Yanko, Erma

New Business Members

Northwestern Mutual Financial
Network
Special thanks to: Gordon Graham,
Douglas Helget, Colby Staloch,
Lance Wakefield, Wayne
Walgenbach

Renewed Business Members

Abdo, Eick, and Meyers, LLP
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The Mankato Free Press
Tow Distributing

Renewed Educational

MSU, M Department of History

Renewed Members

Affolter, Ron
Andrews, Melodie
Baer, James and Marcia
Barber, James and Edith
Bartsch, Janet
Bartsch, Nancy
Belgard, Hugh and Vail
Benefield, Dale
Berg, Marilyn
Bouma, Jana
Bowen, Patrick
Boyce, David and Doris
Brandel, Ruth
Burns, Paul and Loretta
Buscher, Robert and Marilyn
Busse, Walter
Cariveau, Yvonne
Carroll, Patrick James
Chirpich, Don and Teresa
Clement, Jeri
Craig, Nancy G.
Crane, Donald and Sue
Engstrom, Mary
Erickson, Helen
Ewert, David and Julie.
Fitzloff, Shirley
Florey, Jim and Cara
Freiberg, Kenneth
Frey, John and Anne
Gage, Kelton and Dorothy
Garlow, Darrell, Sandi, and Laura
Genealogical Society of Utah
Grabitske, Paul
Guentzel, Cheri
Hansen, Norma
Hottinger, Ted

Howieson, Bob and Geri
Humphrey, Mary
Hynes, Susan
Johnson, Marlyss
Johnson, Shirley
Kenward, Robert and Ann
Layman, Bob and Eloise
Lees, June
Lewis, Charles
Lindemann, Coleen
Lutes, Duncan
Mathiason, Renee
Meyer & Sons, Inc.
Miller, Julie
Moravec, William
Mortier, Mary
Natrakul, Monty and Mara
Neumiller, Robert
Norback, Judy
Othoudt, John and Linda
Peterson, Glen and Leslie
Peterson, Jean
Pommerenke, Marlene C.
Preska, Daniel and Margaret
Rafness, Lorna and Rezmerski, John
Resner, Donna
Rosenberg, Mary Jane
Saffert, Kenneth
Schwamberger, Mark and Linda
Showers, Pamela
Swenson, Helenrachel
Thompson, Kenneth and Irene
Ulmen, Steven and Ida
Vetter, Willard
Vosbeck, Elizabeth J.
Voss, Leo and Judy
Voss, Suzann
Wilmes, Brad
Young, Carey and Sandra
Zellmer, Randy

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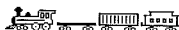
718 Mound Avenue, Mankato
www.pathstoneliving.com



Blue Earth County Historical Society
Archives Week
 October 20 – 24
 Heritage Center Research Center

OPEN HOUSE
 Tuesday, October 20
 5-8pm

Around Blue Earth County



Rapidan Heritage Society

Fall brings a busy time to the Rapidan area. The farmers are in the fields harvesting soybeans and corn. The local Rapidan Elevator has been open longer hours in the evening and weekends to accommodate the trucks and wagons bringing in the bounty of the fields. Please be watchful of these farm vehicles on the road – remember they are big and slow moving.

The last several weeks have presented an unusual opportunity to see the Rapidan Dam reservoir - the bottom of the lake - the mud flats. Due to an outdated agreement between the DNR and Blue Earth County (who owns the dam) more water was released over/through the dam than was being replenished by the river flowing into the reservoir. This resulted in a drained reservoir, with just the river winding its natural course through it.

But close your eyes and imagine this area of land 130 years ago! This was the platted town of Rapidan Mills – a bustling area of activity. Teams of horses coming down the hill on the west (yes, there was a hill, remember it has filled in with 50+ feet of silt) bringing loads of wheat to the mill to be ground into flour. Hear the ring of Johnson's blacksmith anvil or the splash of a fishing line in the mill pond. Here is the first settling of Rapidan Township!

Mark your calendar! Santa Claus is coming to the Rapidan Depot on Friday evening, Dec. 4th, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Join us for fellowship as the children chat with Santa (and receive a goodie bag and a complimentary photo of them with Santa) and enjoy refreshments in the town hall. Everyone is welcome!

Jane Tarjeson
Secretary

Lake Crystal Area Historical Society

The Society held its annual meeting on April 28, 2009. Our speaker was Dr. Win Grundmeier, who spoke on early railroad history in this area. Officers for the coming year were also elected.

President--Marcia Jones
Vice president--Lois Champlin
Treasurer--Garnann Adermann
Secretary--Sylva Kubicek

These past years we have used the large windows in a building on Main Street, owned by the Masonic Lodge, for displays. These are changed to reflect seasonal changes or special events giving us an opportunity to display some of the artifacts we have. Sometime ago we acquired a large canvas wall hanging that had served as a stage curtain in the old Lincoln Township schoolhouse. When the school closed, the curtain was moved to the Lincoln Township Hall, and when the hall was slated for a controlled fire burn, Harley and Evelyn Oldenborg rescued and stored it in a shed on their farm for about ten years.

After nearly seventy years of service and storage, the curtain was still in excellent condition. Twenty-one colorful advertisements of Lake Crystal businesses, circa 1938, framed in the center of the canvas a picturesque lake scene befitting our tri-lake community.

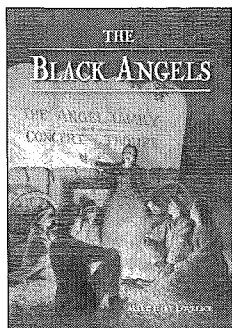
In late 2008, we approached Mr. Galen Nilson, at the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center, about finding a place there to hang the curtain. He enthusiastically embraced the project and it is now hanging on the east wall of the walking track where many people stop to admire it and reminisce. Installation of a spotlight to highlight the canvas is in the planning stage.

Our search for a more permanent home for the various artifacts we have continues. Many possibilities have been explored, but as of yet we don't have a home.

Sylva Kubicek
Secretary

The Black Angels

by Maud Hart Lovelace



"They were called the Black Angels from the time they first appeared in Minnesota, a crew of black-haired, bright-eyed youngsters, so unlike their flaxen haired father—seven of them there were, and each one forever singing, except Joseph, who could not tell one note from another.

Music was a passion with them from childhood. Small wonder, then, that they greeted with enthusiasm Benjy's plan for an Operatic and Concert Troupe; or that they set out with high hearts upon the venture, thinking their old covered wagon a golden caravan."

(quote from original 1926 book jacket)

Maud Hart Lovelace's first novel, *The Black Angels*, was published in 1926 by the John Day Company of New York, the first publisher to see it. Maud began research for her first novel in the summer of 1924, spending hours in the archives at the Minnesota Historical Society reading newspapers, magazines, memoirs and Folwell's *History of Minnesota*. The story takes place in the fictional Cloudman, Minnesota (Mankato, Minnesota), and opens in the days before the Civil War. In interviews Maud said the idea for the plot came from a family legend of her Uncle Frank, who ran away from home and joined an opera troupe. She based the character of Alex on her uncle, but she based the fictional opera troupe on the Andrews Opera Company.

The Andrews family started out in St. Peter, Minn. in 1875 as a concert troupe called the Andrews Family Swiss Bell Ringers. By 1884 they had become the Andrews Opera Company, performing primarily in the Midwest, but also in the East, South, and Southwest.

Don't miss this chance to own this special limited edition! Available October 2009. Books are available at Minnesota Heritage Publishing (www.mnheritage.com), Betsy-Tacy Gift Shop (in store or online: www.betsy-tacysociety.org), BECHS Museum Store and Old Town Antiques.

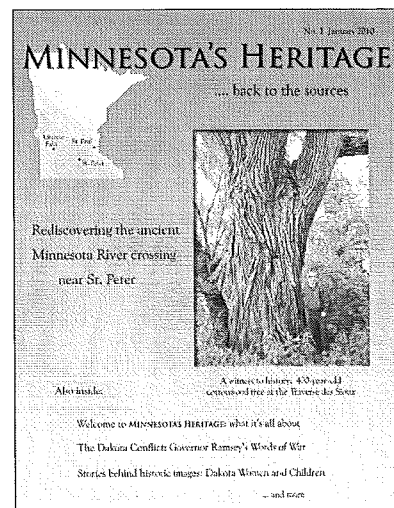
New Heritage Publication Coming January 2010

Explore Minnesota's heritage, looking forward to the sesquicentennial of the Dakota Conflict of 1862. It's your opportunity to dig deeper into its unique history and make broader connections.

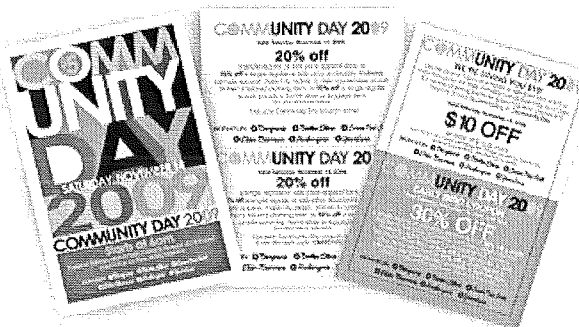
The publishers promise objectivity, and view points supported by

exhaustive, in-depth research, and will reveal where you can learn even more. Issues through 2012 will focus on the Dakota Conflict of 1862, its setting, prelude and aftermath, written by local scholars. Each issue will include more than 100 pages and feature a range of topics. Order forms are available in the BECHS Research Center.

Please note: this is not a BECHS publication.



Purchase a coupon booklet for Herberger's Community Day Saturday, November 14, 2009



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We appreciate your support!

Booklets available at the Heritage Center



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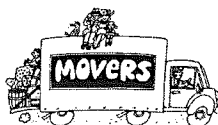
Preserving and sharing Blue Earth County's history since 1901

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.

The Hubbard House and
Carriage House Gift Shop
Open December 6, 7, 12, 13, 19, 20
for Christmas at Hubbard House
October - April closed for the season

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3. Autographed BECHS Book
*(have book signed at the Holiday
Book Fair on December 5th)*
2. Reproduced historic photograph
*(check out BECHS' images on our
website www.bechshistory.com)*
1. Anything purchased in the
BECHS Museum Store using
your 10% member discount



Moving? Snowbird? Please let us know!

If you are moving to a different address, please let us know. It costs over \$1 for each returned newsletter that could not be delivered. 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.