

Sources

Clio Club Records, 1892-1922; Mankato Art History Club records, 1896-1920; Tourist Club records, 1892-1920; Zetetic Club records, 1896-1920; Mankato Free Press, June 27, 1952, May 18, 1968; Helen Hooven Santmyer. . . . And Ladies of the Club; Zetetic Club: Lorraine Wright; Photographs, Blue Earth County Historical Society Archives.

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**“Harnessing the Power: The Building of the Rapidan Dam”**

Our travelling exhibit about the building of the Rapidan Dam as it took place in 1910 has been touring the county. It started at Rapidan Elementary School where it was displayed during October and now can be viewed in the Community Room of Wellcome Memorial High School in Garden City. We have tentative plans of placing it in Good Thunder during the month of December.

For more information about scheduling the display, contact Nancy G. Andrew at 345-4154.

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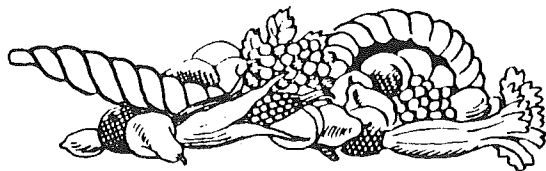
**“Recent History” Missing**

When we were asked by the National Bank of Commerce to do a 1930's exhibit as part of their 50th Anniversary celebration, we discovered that our collection from 1920 through 1984 is very sparse. If you have any appliances, clothing, or other artifacts from 1920 to the present that you no longer want or use, please call us.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Welcome . . .**

To Pam Youngblom, our newest volunteer. Pam has been typing cards, indexing books and helping out on miscellaneous tasks.



**From the Director's Rolltop . . .  
Denise Hudson**

It is amazing how much activity continues to grow at the Museum. New ideas bring on changes which in turn inspire more ideas and the cycle continues. Projects are definitely never ending - - which is exactly the way we all want it.

As these changes take place, we would like your input as members. Do you like what we are doing? What new things would you like to see? Would you like to become involved in one of our activities?

For instance, we have received favorable comments about the newsletter format. We have also gotten a couple of ideas for stories for future issues.

Let us know of any way that we can better serve you. Also, if you like something we do, tell one of your friends, good news supposedly travels fast.

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**A Special Thanks** to Ron Hicks for his assistance in picking up artifact donations for the collection and for general assistance with museum tasks.

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**Welcome to New Annual Member**, Dave Hageman, Mankato.

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**Wanted:**

1. A carpet remnant to fit a floor space of 5' x 15'. Any color.
2. Small utility cabinet.
3. **Empty** hat boxes.
4. Political posters 1984 or earlier.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Calendar**

- Nov. 5-9 **Bazaar Continues** 1:00-5:00 p.m. daily.
- 22-25 **Thanksgiving Holiday.** Museum and offices closed.
- Dec. 9 **Christmas Caroling** with the Historical Society 7:00-9:00 p.m.

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Blue Earth County  
Historical Society

**November 1984**

**A Family Night of Caroling**

Mark your calendars! Sunday, December 9th, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. families and friends of the Historical Society are invited to Christmas carol. We will gather at the Museum at 7:00 p.m. and carol in the neighborhood for an hour, returning to the Museum for cider and treats.

No one is too old or too young to join in this festive event. Don't worry if you can't carry a tune in a tin bucket because neither can we. Join us to celebrate the holiday season.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A Bountiful Harvest Festival**

The 1984 Fall Harvest Festival was a success. Several hundred visitors and members joined us for this annual event. There was plenty of food, music, and lots of new people wandering through the Museum. We had various craft demonstrations and the always successful "Weed Store". Those who came to the Harvest Festival had an enjoyable time on a gorgeous autumn day. We wish to thank all who prepared and participated in this popular event. Plans are underway for next year's festival.

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**Announcing Our New Arrival . . .  
“Changing Babies' Clothes”**

The staff of the Blue Earth County Historical Society is pleased to announce the arrival of a new addition at the Museum. The parlor was made ready for the blessed event which occurred on November 4, 1984. The new exhibit has been named "Changing Babies' Clothes".

The exhibit, which gives a revealing look at infant care and clothing from the turn of the century, was researched and prepared by Audrey K. Hicks.

## LADIES OF THE CLUB

On the current best-seller lists is Helen Hooven Santmyer's "... *And Ladies of the Club*," a novel about the organization of a woman's club in a small Ohio town shortly after the Civil War. The Waynesboro Woman's Club was purely literary. All controversial subjects were banned, and even their one community service, the founding of a subscription library, was attuned to their literary purpose. Similar women's clubs appeared in Mankato in the 1890's, but along with stimulating their own cultural growth, they were actively involved in improving the general welfare.

The earliest woman's club in Mankato was the Tourist Club, organized in 1892 by Mrs. Z.G. Harrington and Mrs. George Robbins. Since some of the members were planning to sail to Europe, the women collected travel folders and all the information possible on the countries they planned to visit, hence the name Tourist Club. Other charter members were Mmes. Cassius Hobart, Willis Farr, John Willard, George Ray, and Alan Burdick. The program topics from 1892 - 1900 were the literature, geography, and history of places travelers would benefit from knowing. In the early 1900's the club became more literary although they maintained a global interest in their programs.

Unlike the fictional Waynesboro ladies, the Tourist Club confronted controversial issues, discussing such topics as leading editorials of the time, international affairs, and morality in modern fiction. They contributed to a number of World War I efforts, such as bandages for Belgian relief, Christmas packages for soldiers, and the French baby shirt fund. Throughout their early years, they also shared with other women's clubs the promotion of social welfare.

A few months after the Tourist Club was organized, the Clio Club, named for the goddess of history, was founded by a small neighborhood group. Charter members included Mmes. C.E. Wise, W.W. Davis, D.L. Rose, H.D. Swan, W.D. Willard, Harvey Williams, L.W. Beatty, and I.D. Webster. The Clio Club was also literary, but was more politically oriented. During the year's study of Victorian poets, for example, they also studied municipal government - - the power of the mayor, the duties of aldermen, sources of income, etc. In practical terms they discussed ways and means of getting street improvements, a subject agitated by property holders. "Clio women in politics means



### Tourist Club - 1892

Top Row: Mrs. George Robbins, Mrs. Mary Robbins, Mrs. George Davis, Mrs. W.M. Farr, Mrs. Robert Brown  
Center Row: Mrs. C.H. Cooper, Mrs. Hugh Spencer, Mrs. John Willard, Mrs. John Ray, Mrs. Z.G. Harrington  
Lower Row: Mrs. C.M. Hobart, Mrs. George Barr

to stand for a cleaner city and honest men in office," so their records state.

In 1922 a local problem became the Clio Club's over-riding concern: "Paramount in all our minds at this time is the great wish . . . to help the girls of this town. Such a state of immoral conditions has recently been brought out that each mother's heart is stirred to its depths." The Clio's supported establishing a Y.W.C.A. in Mankato as a way to "make a clean, safe meeting place where girls can be warm and fed and find social happiness and protection away from the movies and the streets and its pitiful calls."

A third woman's study club, the Mankato Art History Club, was organized in 1896 by Mmes. L.P. Hunt, J.W. Andrews, and J.H. James - - "three women with brilliant minds and an urge for self-improvement," according to a June 27, 1952 Mankato Free Press account of early clubs. Other charter members were Mmes. Thomas Hughes, W.J. Morehart, D.S. Evans, D.O. Coate, W. Brooke, C.J. Holman, W.O. Fox, U.O. Cox, W.A. Funk, W.A. Pell and W.L. Comstock. Their study began with a history of Christian and Byzantine art, followed the next year by the history of architecture and sculpture. Every fourth meeting was devoted to modern art. To promote a closer relationship with other women's clubs in Mankato, the Mankato Art History Club held entertainments extending their interest in art to other groups in the community. They presented a stereopticon show of paintings (1896) and a reception and art exhibit of 100 reproductions of master works loaned by Harrington Beard of Minneapolis (1898).

In addition to these events, the Mankato Art History

Club was active in a number of civic projects. They collected books for the cases of the Traveling Library Association and wrote their legislators urging them to vote for the State Library Bill of 1898. Their concerns in education ranged from seeing that fire drills were regularly conducted in public schools to visiting the Syrians in their settlements near the quarry and in Tinkcomville to help arrange English language night classes for them. In the interest of public health, they worked to get a detention hospital in Mankato (1912). Nor did they overlook the environment: they urged the legislature to reserve the Cass Lake region as a state park (1898) and at the suggestion of Mrs. Frank Pay, looked into the possibility of developing a park on the vacant lot by Warrens Creek on Front Street.

Also founded in 1896 was the Zetetic Club, organized by Mmes. J.H. James and J.W. Andrews. Zetetic, meaning "seeker after truth," met to study literature, history, and travel. Their early programs featured book reviews, music, and studies of foreign countries. In 1920 they studied minorities: Indian songs, literature, and art; the music and character of Blacks; and Americanization, Russian Jews, and immigrants. Their guest speakers were often college professors or other prominent Mankato persons. In 1913 Judge W.L. Comstock addressed the group denouncing public dances. He proclaimed, "The majority of the city's criminals originate there, and we are responsible for that condition!" In October, 1920, as women were to vote in their first national election, The Rev. Ralph Jensen, pastor of the Baptist church, spoke on "Ideals Presented by the Political Parties Today," and urged Zetetics to vote for the "man of character and mental stamina" rather than for his party affiliation.

Among the many efforts to improve community welfare, the Zetetics contributed each year to an educational program for the retarded, devoted time to



### Clio Club - 1892

Left: Mrs. L.W. Beatty, Mrs. C.E. Wise, Mrs. Harvey Williams  
Center: Mrs. D.L. Rose, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. I.D. Webster  
Right: Mrs. H.D. Swan, Mrs. W.D. Willard, Mrs. W.W. Davis

study the causes and treatment of tuberculosis, and went on record as condemning "the immoral conditions existing at the Armory under the name 'Carnival'."

There were a number of welfare projects that most of these four early day Mankato women's clubs supported in common. They wrote their senators to support the National Child Labor Bill (1916) and federal inspection of dairies (1916); they urged the state legislature to make legal the appointment of women police officers (1913); and they endorsed the efforts of the W.C.T.U. in enforcing the prohibition laws. On the local level they helped establish, maintain, and contributed magazines for a downtown Women's Rest Room; worked for a city ordinance to assure clean, pure milk; and called on the manager of the Grand Theater to request the removal of objectionable pictures and to ask that he schedule juvenile movies for Saturday afternoons, requests with which he cooperated. During World War I they patriotically supported the Red Cross, the War Chest, and other local war efforts.

But the meetings of the early Mankato women's clubs were not all serious. These "ladies of the club" enjoyed special luncheons and parties, as well as the refreshments and socializing at meetings in members' homes. In 1902 during their study of Russia, the Clio ladies (whose club song lists "fun" along with culture and progress as their reason for being) began their meeting with a Russian story and poem; then they played ping pong in the dining room or tried a guessing game in the parlor before concluding the afternoon with Russian tea and sandwiches and the singing of the Russian National Hymn. Emma Wiecking, a long-time Mankato resident whose mother belonged to the Zetetic Club, recalls the fun of decking out their home as an Italian restaurant in the 1920's for a Zetetic luncheon at which her brothers Ernst and Herman with their University of Minnesota friends served as waiters.

Of the four 1890's clubs, only the Clio Club has disbanded. The Tourist Club, the Mankato Art History Club, and the Zetetic Club are still going strong, although no longer so actively involved in promoting the common good. They appear to be primarily study and social clubs today.

Inella Burns