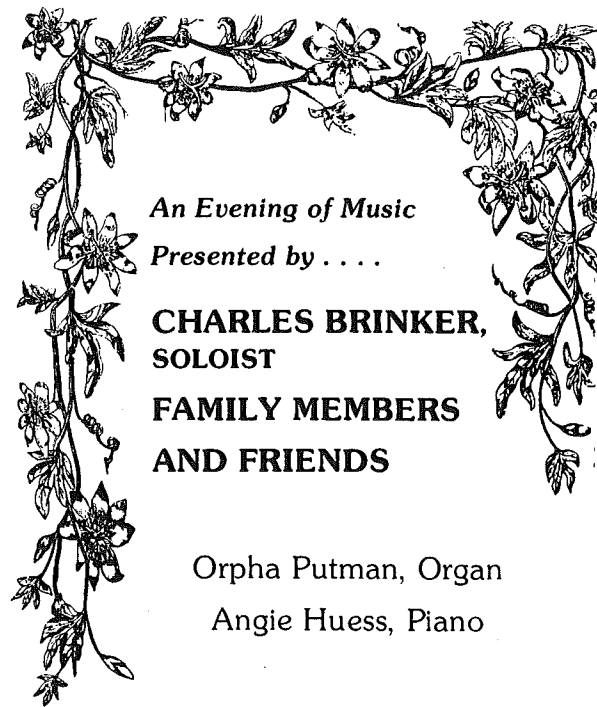
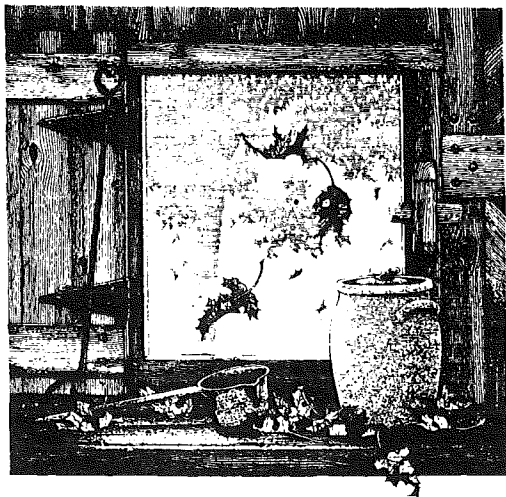


## Kids America

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is working with the Smithsonian Institution on a national *Kids America* treasure hunt. *Kids America* is a radio program which is broadcast nationally on public radio stations (locally on KMSU) which has a call-in format for children using a toll free number. The treasure hunt program will ask children to search for an object for which they have been given clues at their local museum. The show will be aired November 17 - 25. Several museums all over the country are participating in the treasure hunt. More details will be coming soon...

## Museum Shop News

If you are thinking of Christmas cards, think of the Museum Shop. We have post-card holiday greetings with photos by Peter Hornby. They come in two styles; Hubbard House and Geese on the Lake. Prices are: \$2.95 for a pack of 10 or \$5.95 for a pack of 25. Remember that postcards are an economical way of sending greetings.



*An Evening of Music*  
Presented by . . . .

**CHARLES BRINKER,  
SOLOIST  
FAMILY MEMBERS  
AND FRIENDS**

Orpha Putman, Organ  
Angie Huess, Piano

Sunday, November 2, 1986  
7:30 p.m.

St. John's  
Episcopal Church  
Corner of Broad and Warren  
Mankato, MN

Enjoy a variety of music . . .  
Classics Religious  
Show tunes Popular

FREE WILL OFFERING

SPONSORED BY:  
The Blue Earth County Historical Society



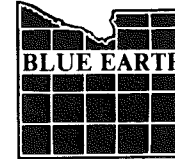
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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## November 1986

### Calendar of Events

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Oct. 31    | Halloween   |
| Nov. 2     | Program: <i>An evening of Music</i><br>St. John's Episcopal Church                                    |
| Nov. 4     | Election Day  |
| Nov. 11    | Veteran's Day<br><br>Dedication of Veteran's<br>Memorial Bridge<br><br>Festival of Lights Celebration |
| Nov. 27-28 | Thanksgiving Holiday<br>Museum and Offices closed   |

### Festival of Lights

The Festival of Lights in the Mankato area will have its grand "holiday turn on" on Tuesday, November 11th at the Historical Society and the YWCA. The festivities will begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be a short program, entertainment and refreshments. The highlight will, of course, be the lighting of the white lights on the Hubbard House and the Cray House to signal the town to light up for the season.

## Cigar Making

When Thomas Riley Marshall declared, "What this country needs is a good five-cent cigar," a surprising number of Blue Earth County patriots rallied to the cause. Although most cigar making ventures centered in Mankato, the industry spread for brief periods to Mapleton, Lake Crystal, Madison Lake and Good Thunder.

Cigar manufacturing spanned an 85-year period, peaking during the first decade of the 1900's with nine to eleven factories listed in each *Mankato City and Blue Earth County Directory* for that period. Of the thirty cigar manufacturers listed from 1866 - 1951, most were small industries employing less than five hands, but a few grew to hire as many as twenty. The *Mankato Free Press* of September 20, 1901, reported the growth one cigar maker had achieved:

The Mankato Cigar Company, recently established in this city on South Front Street, are now employing 18 hands and expect three more in a few days. Their goods are in such demand that with the present force doubled they cannot fill their orders within a year. An order for 100,000 cigars of one brand was placed with them yesterday by the largest grocery house in the world.

The genial proprietors, Messrs. Achard and Totten are more than gratified at the enormity of the business thus far, and hope to continue to merit a large patronage by the manufacturing of good smokers.

Charles Schildknecht began making cigars in 1866 in a small factory opposite Clifton House in Mankato, where according to *Mankato - Its First Fifty Years*, he made "nothing cheaper than ten-cent cigars, always having aimed to make the best rather than the most, never having more than four employees." Schildknecht, who is listed as a cigar maker in the Blue Earth County directories for over fifty years, appears to hold the record for continuous operation.

A friend of Schildknecht's, H. R. Wiecking began manufacturing cigars in 1882 near Clifton House. The *Mankato Free Press* of December, 1882, reported his arrival:

A new cigar factory has been opened in this city by Mr. H. R. Wiecking who recently came from Lansing, Iowa, where he was also connected with a factory. He is located in Block 14 and has on hand a choice stock

of cigars of his own make, which he will dispose of at reasonable figures. Mr. Wiecking is a young man, ambitious to build up a wholesale business here that will be a credit to the city and the Southwest, and should receive the support and encouragement of all.



Cigar box lids from H. R. Wiecking's Margarita Cigar Factory.

Emma Wiecking, who still lives in the family home on Byron Street, remembers her father's cigar making establishment at 207 South Front Street with its symbol of a dwarf in a red coat standing by the door. It was called the Margarita Cigar Factory (so named for H. R. Wiecking's mother, Margaretha) and it was a one-story business with a wholesale and retail salesroom in front. There were chairs on the left side where men called the Lime Kiln Club congregated, among them Judge Flittie and members of the Odd Fellows Lodge. "All were good citizens," she asserts. From the counters and shelves on the right, her father sold cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff and snuff boxes, and plug tobacco.

"In the rear of the store," Emma Wiecking recalls, "the cigar makers worked, only two or maybe three.

They worked on high stools in front of a high bench which had a door to open below for materials. The workers hand rolled cigars (no cigarettes) made from the finest Virginia tobacco from the Lorillard Company in the East."

The Margarita Cigar Factory made three brands of cigars: the ten-cent Margarita, and the five-cent Great Oriental and Moss Rose. They came in wooden boxes with elaborately decorated paper liners.

The Lorillard Company traded through Patterson Wholesale Company, which sold to stores in Mankato as well as to St. Clair, Mapleton, Good Thunder and other towns in the county. Wiecking was a good friend of the elder Patterson and sold cigars and smoking supplies wholesale through his company. Emma remembers going by horse and buggy with her father when he went to sell in St. Clair. "We could take out payment in trade," she recalled, "so we had oranges, bananas and candy from grocers, bakery goods from Eichorn's, and dress goods from Klages store on North Front."

Wiecking continued making and selling cigars until he retired in 1907. At his death in July 1914, the *Review* referred to the Margarita Cigar Factory as "one of the prominent ones in this part of the state, its products noted for the excellence of their quality."

Other Mankato cigar makers who continued in business for at least 25 years were Joseph Bienapfl (1892-1930); Charles Timmerman, who was one of the largest manufacturers at the turn of the century and employed ten hands, (1897-1930); F. Pfeiffer (1892-1915); F. A. Bauer (1916-1941); and William Raithle, listed in 1910 as a partner of Joseph Hampl, but an independent manufacturer thereafter (1916-1950).\*

Cigar factories elsewhere in the county appear to have operated for very few years and all near the turn of the century except for H. E. Hensel of Good Thunder, who made cigars from approximately 1914-1920. Blue Earth County directories also list cigar makers E. P. Rorman in Mapleton, J. P. Swanson and Amen Sdeed in Madison Lake, and the Crystal Cigar Manufacturing Company and G. T. Evans in Lake Crystal.

Although the manufacturing of cigars ended in Blue Earth County about 1950, there are still remnants of those days in the Wiecking home: a Margarita Factory table at which workers sat to hand roll cigars, two snuff jars now used for cookies, and a china cupboard with curved glass sides that once were part of the factory store's counter case in which the famous Margarita, Great Oriental, and Moss Rose cigars were displayed.

\* Since the county directories were published only biennially, the above dates are approximate.

# H. R. WIECKING

PROPRIETOR

## MARGARITA CIGAR FACTORY.

MANUFACTURER OF

THE CELEBRATED "MARGARITA"  
10 CENT CIGARS,

"GREAT ORIENTAL"  
5 CENT CIGARS,

"MOSS ROSE"  
5 CENT CIGARS,  
AND ALL GRADES OF CIGARS.

ALSO DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF

## TOBACCO, PIPES

AND SMOKERS' ARTICLES.

207 S. Front Street, Mankato, Minnesota.

An advertisement from the *Mankato City and Blue Earth County Directory, 1892.*

### Sources

*Mankato City and Blue Earth County Directory*, R. L. Polk and Company, Vols. I-XXV; *Mankato - Its First Fifty Years*, a semi-centennial publication, 1903; *Mankato Free Press*, December 1, 1882; September 20, 1901; *The Review*, July 21, 1914; Interview with Emma Wiecking.

Inella Burns