

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 1986

Calendar of Events

- June 28-29 Fort Ridgely Historical Festival
July 4-13 Bend of the River Days
July 4 Independence Day, Museum and Offices Closed
July 5 Museum Open House, 1-4 p.m.
July ? 'Members Only' Picnic (details to follow)
July 31-Aug. 3 Blue Earth County Fair, Garden City (Come and see us at our booth!)

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Heritage Endowment Fund

Donations were received from the following individuals and businesses for the Heritage Endowment Fund through the Heritage Dinner 1986 honoring the Williams family:

- Florence Standfest
Northern States Power Company
Mr. & Mrs. Ed McLean
Lillian Wendtland
Ruth Schellberg
Fisher Commercial Real Estate
Ben and Bernice Jones
Bob and Leone Hodapp
Linley and Sheryl Barnes
Vern and Kathryn Hanson

Thank you for your support!

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Leon Thomas Jefferson & Lydia F. Jefferson Memorial Fund Established

We are pleased to announce a new capital fund for the Historical Society. Grace Jefferson has generously endowed the Leon Thomas Jefferson and Lydia F. Jefferson Memorial Fund, in memory of her parents. The fund, established during May, will earn interest for use by the Society for its activities.

The Jeffersons were active in the Mankato community, especially in education. Lydia F. Jefferson taught school and was active in P.T.A., Leon Thomas Jefferson was a member of the school board and served as its president.

Our deep appreciation is extended to Grace Jefferson for this gift.

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Welcome

To Barb Lamson, Coordinator of Membership and Fundraising. Barb has been on the job for about one month. She comes to us with much enthusiasm and many ideas for BECHS.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank You!!!

To Warner Zeno of Zeno Glass Company for donating plexiglass for use in exhibits.

To Al Anderson Construction of Eagle Lake for donating styrofoam for use in a new exhibit.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wish List

--- Polk City Directories for Mankato and Blue Earth County for 1983, 1984, and 1985.

--- A 30-50 cup coffee maker in good working order.

Blue Earth County Historical Society 606 South Broad Mankato, MN 56001

Address Correction Requested

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Editorial Staff: Inella Burns, Audrey Hicks, Denise Hudson, Gail Palmer, Louisa Smith, Marcia T. Schuster

Annual Business Meeting Recap

The following is a brief synopsis of the Annual Business Meeting held on April 19, 1986 at the Mankato Golf Club.

- 1. The changes to the By-Laws were approved as written.
2. The Annual Financial statement was presented. (Copies are available upon request.)
3. Retiring Board members, Betty Cords, Penny Herickhoff, Arnold Meyer and Jim Zwickey were thanked for their service and support as members of the Board.
4. The slate of officers and trustees was approved creating the following roster for 1986-87:

President: Chuck Piehl
Vice-President: Barb Maher
Secretary: Susan Chambers
Treasurer: Bill Montag
Past-President: Anita Stone

Misty Baker Joe Kubicek
Ken Berg Bill Lass
John Christenson Jim Norman
Nancy Croce Dean Pettis
Mary Dooley Scott Taylor
Ernest Hansen Marty Wiltgen
Jerry Kenney

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Of Interest . . .

The Fort Ridgely Historical Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 28 and 29 at Fort Ridgely State Park. There will be two days of special events plus the Fort Ridgely Rendevous will take place at that time. For exact schedule and information on camping at the park for the weekend, contact: Perry Vining, 831 2nd St., N.W., Pipestone, MN 56164, (507) 825-2396.

Editor's Note:

Any information about the hotel and about a container for the Mankato Mineral Spring Water would be appreciated.

## The Ghost Town: Mankato Mineral Springs

In 1864 Enoch Morse purchased tracts of land in LeRay Township, in Blue Earth County, on Spring Brook, which empties into the Le-Sueur River six miles southeast of Mankato. Mr. Morse was aware of the several springs located along the banks of the brook. He had been informed that the Indians had sought the mineral waters of these springs for their health giving properties.

Following the death of Enoch Morse his two son, John Willis and Daniel, became heirs of their father's estate. It was Daniel and his wife, Alice, who became owners of the farm on which the mineral springs were located.

The *Mankato Review* of August 13, 1889 carried a report of the analysis of the mineral water from two of the springs as done by Dr. Klivington of Minneapolis. They are as follows, the quantity of water being one gallon.

Element	Spring #1	Spring #2
Sodium Chloride	.096	.160
Sodium Sulfate	.998	.998
Potassium	1.884	.781
Sodium Phosphate	.070	.117
Sodium Bicarbonate	6.090	6.989
Calcium	20.811	23.380
Magnesium	12.067	9.679
Iron	.296	.129
Barium	Trace	Trace
Silica	1.641	1.589
Alumina	.035	.033
Organic Matter	2.900	3.248

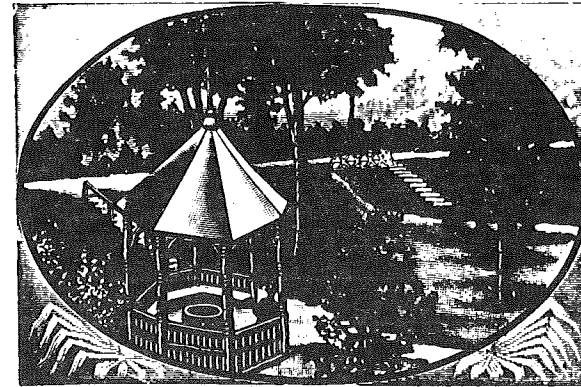
The chemist, Dr. C.W. Drew, commented on the quality of the waters as being alkaline to a moderate degree of concentration. These waters were of value in treating diseases of the liver, kidneys, bladder and skin.

Following this report, Daniel Morse expressed his intention to improve the springs and develop the location into a resort for invalids. Before this was to occur it would be necessary to ascertain if the quantity of water produced by the springs was sufficient to warrant such improvement.

The testing was done by a Mr. G.W. Cooley in September, 1889. It was found that the

largest spring flowed 16,200 gallons every twenty-four hours. The discharge of the other five springs was estimated at 35,000-40,000 gallons daily. By June, 1890 improvements had been made at the largest spring. A six-inch cylinder had been sunk. This was capped with a gas dome. The gas which it gathered was used to force the water whenever it was desired.

During this summer a bottling house was built into which the water was directed by pipes. Here the water was carbonized and bottled. On August 5, 1890, the first shipment of water was placed on sale in Mankato. Those who sampled it said it was pleasant and palatable and it promised to become a popular beverage.



Mankato Mineral Springs, Morse & Petersen, Props.

At this time the main spring was surrounded by a neat summer house (gazebo) with seats for visitors, where they could sit and drink the health restoring water without cost or restriction. The surrounding forty acres were platted into parks and lots suitable for residences and cottages. The location was named Mankato Mineral Springs. The formal dedication took place on July 25, 1890. Streets were named Mankato Avenue, Park Place, Park Avenue, Waverly Avenue and Morse Avenue.

Arrangements were underway to build a hotel in late 1890 or early 1891. This was to be operated in connection with a system of cottages to provide accommodations of families or small parties. During this winter the water was run into moulds and frozen thoroughly. It was sold as frozen mineral water.

By October, 1890, the mineral water had been distributed to all parts of Minnesota and in every instance had given good satisfaction. Accounts of amazing cures were received by the company.

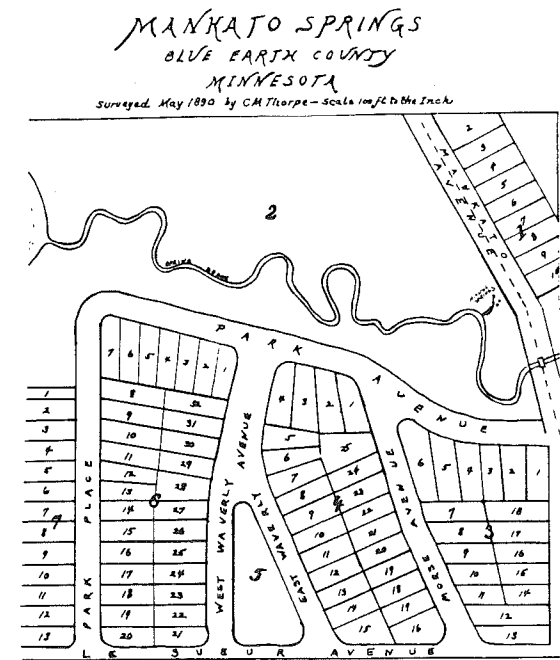
For reasons unavailable, the hotel and cottages

were not built in the spring of 1891 as planned.

In the January 19, 1894 *Mankato Review* an article revealed that Daniel Morse and Nick Petersen had formed a partnership to be known as Mankato Mineral Springs Company. Nick Petersen was a well-known Mankato bottler who owned a factory at 716-718 North Front Street. Their plans were to put the water up in all the different forms of syrup as well as its natural state. Later that same year Morse and Petersen sold the company to Dr. Macbeth of Buffalo, New York. Dr. Macbeth revealed plans of building a large sanatorium on the grounds for the accommodations of patients.

Before 1906 Dr. Macbeth had yet to build the sanatorium and his interest in the project waned. The property reverted back to Morse and Petersen. Daniel Morse, too, had become disenchanted with the enterprise. Nicholas Petersen was not yet discouraged. He still believed in the health giving qualities of the water as expressed in the large ad which appeared in the *Mankato Review* of February 6, 1906. (p. 4, col. 6-7).

In 1912 Nick Petersen also gave up the venture. A cement tank was built over the spring. On the top of the tank was the following inscription: "Built by J. Dietl, Henry Dietl, N.A. King and L.J. Reichel, 1912." The garden (gazebo) house had been moved to a nearby knoll.



In later years when improvements were made on County Road #28, further damage was done to the site of Mankato Mineral Springs. Today all that remains of the dreams of Morse, Petersen and Macbeth is the little garden house which still sits on the knoll to mark the spot still recorded on current Blue Earth County maps.

- Gail Palmer

### SOURCES

*Standard Atlas-Blue Earth County Minnesota.*  
George A. Ogle 1914 p. 25.

*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.* October 3, 1891. p. 142.

*Mankato Review Newspapers:*

April 9, 1889

August 13, 1889

September 17, 1889

June 10, 1890

August 5, 1890

August 12, 1890

October 12, 1890

January 19, 1894

February 6, 1906

Telephone interview with Judge Leslie H. Morse on November 12, 1985. Judge Morse is the son of John Willis Morse who was the brother of Daniel L. Morse.