

This brought much disagreement concerning the most appropriate site. Some felt that Garden City was the best choice because of its more central location while Mankato felt it deserved the courthouse because it was the largest town and had served as county seat since 1856 when the first 30x40 foot courthouse had been built. A compromise was effected and Mankato became the official county seat. The exterior of the building was completed in 1888.

During the winter of 1885-86 tobogganing was the craze in Blue Earth County and all over the northwest. Clubs were formed all over Southern Minnesota with parties enjoyed among them.

So were some of the educational and employment opportunities a century ago along with some of the special events of that time.

By Gail Palmer

Sources:

History of Blue Earth County by Thomas Hughes, 1907, pp. 195-203.

Shoemaker's Business Directory of the City of Mankato and the County of Blue Earth, Minnesota 1885-86, pp. 1 and 53-67.

Semi-Centennial of Mankato (1852-1902), 1903, pp. 83-112.

Welcome to New Members

Annual

Nancy Hamer, Lorraine Wright

Patron/Business

Artcraft Camera Shop, Happy Chef Systems, Kato Engineering/Reliance Electric, Greame Lang, Goshen, Kentucky

Thanks to our Volunteers

Thanks to Janet Larson, volunteer in the Archives, for the treat "baked special" for the staff. It was appreciated.

Thanks to Elmer Goodrich, volunteer in many areas, for the fruits of the harvest. It was delicious.

Our volunteers not only give of their time, they make sure the staff is well fed!!!

Memorials Received

Memorial donations have been received in memory of Blanche Barnhart from:

Janet and Scott Hermel, Bert and Inella Burns, Mildred Jones, Catherine Nelson, Robert and Marlys Wyatt, Rita Brenner, Alfred and Eva Hodapp, Robert and Harriet Conley, Stanley Hodapp, Ben and Jane Geurs, Leo and Dorothy Wilaby, Joe and Linda Hodapp, Jerome and Bernita Cummiskey, Howard Williams, Bruce and Lavona Marble, Patty Westberg, Betty Nelson, Maynard and Opal Helberg, Catherine Pinney, Ed and Bea McLean, Evelyn Johnson, Charlotte Farrish Luwe, Chuck and Babe Pennington

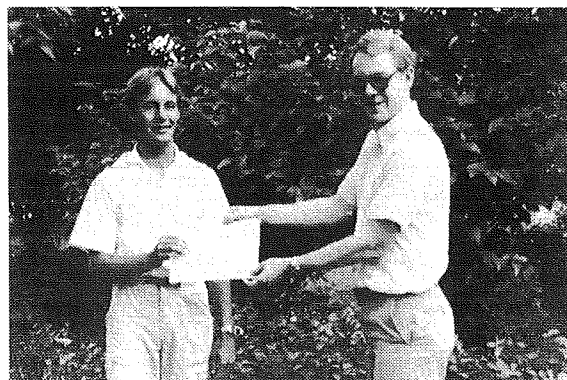
County Fair was Super!

We had many people stop at our booth at the Fair again this year. The "What-zit Game" was filled with items that stumped most people. We decided to use all items from the BECHS collection rather than borrow items and we found some "stumpers."

Thanks to all who helped staff the booth: Elmer Goodrich, Ernest Hansen, Penny Herickhoff, Janet Larson, Anita Stone, Howard Williams.

Thanks also to Jean Cuddy for the "mini quilt workshop" at the Fair.

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Chuck Piehl, President of BECHS, hands a certificate of appreciation to Chad Larson, Eagle Scout, for the construction of cases for travelling exhibits.

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 1986

Calendar of Events . . .

- Sept. 1 **Labor Day**, Museum and Offices Closed
- Sept. 20 **Southern Minnesota Historical Assembly Annual Meeting and Conference**. Sponsored by the Nicollet County Historical Society, St. Peter.
- Sept. 28 **Sunday on Broad Street**
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Update Sunday On Broad Street

We have invited Henry Swiggum, member of the International Society of Appraisers, to hold an "Expertise Clinic" that day. Mr. Swiggum will be available to discuss Antiques, Art Objects, Oriental Rugs, Glassware, Quilts and Lace. A nominal fee will be charged for his services.

Bert Burns has formed a Committee to study the possibility of a tour of Historical Homes. Betty Cords has been picking and drying weeds for the General Store.

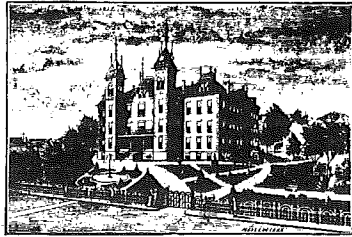
If you have already volunteered to work or donate items for the General Store, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you, if you haven't we would like to encourage you to do so and to mark September 28 on your calendar!

A Century Ago

What a thrill to be able to buy an 1885-86 Mankato City Directory and read what was happening in our county a century ago. Let's take a backward glance at the educational and employment opportunities along with the special events of those times.

With September and school resuming session let's look at those opportunities first. Mankato Normal School was a well-established educational institution which had been in operation from 1867. President Edward Searing placed the following ad in the directory describing the merits of the institution to entice students to enroll in the five departments available.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL AT MANKATO.



Beautifully situated in one of the healthiest, handsomest and most thriving cities of Minnesota. The school building, substantially built of brick and trimmed with stone, is spacious, well arranged, tastefully finished, and, situated on a natural terrace above the main portion of the city, commands a magnificent view up and down the valley for many miles. The reputation of the school is attested by an enrollment the past year of nearly six hundred pupils.

There are five departments:

Normal, Preparatory, Grammar, Intermediate and Primary.

The institution has a fine Library, a handsomely furnished Reading Room, provided with the leading periodical literature of this country and England; a Chemical Laboratory, in which the students work; a fine collection of Chemical and Physical Apparatus, Physiological Models, Charts, etc., and Mineralogical and Ornithological Cabinets.

The Elementary and Advanced Courses of the Normal Department prepare teachers for all grades of public school work. The School of Practice is one of the best planned and most thorough in the country.

For full particulars respecting conditions of admission, course of study, low expenses, etc., send for the new catalogue, mailed free to any address.

EDWARD SEARING,
President.

State Normal School at Mankato. Shoemaker's Business Directory of the City of Mankato and of Blue Earth County, Minnesota 1885-86, p. 1.

The faculty of the Normal School consisted of Edward Searing, President, who taught Mental Science, School Economy and Latin; James McCleary, institute director, who taught Penmanship and Accounts; Helen Phillips instructed in Mathematics and English Literature; Defransa Swann was in charge of classes in Drawing and Theory and Practice Teaching and Geography; Harriet Hall taught Vocal Music, Elocution and Calisthenics; Albert Sawin instructed in Mathematics and Mary Putnam taught Latin, English Grammar and Rhetoric. A model school was conducted in conjunction with the Normal School.

The Union School had one room titled Grammar Grade with one teacher in charge; one room with fourth, fifth and sixth grades with a classroom teacher and assistant; one room for second and third grades and a primary grade room with two teachers.

The Pleasant Grove school had a principal and classrooms from sub-primary to first grade and up to a combination sixth and seventh grade with one teacher in charge of each group.

Franklin School had a principal and classrooms to accommodate first grade, second grade and a combination third and fourth grade.

West Mankato had even a smaller operation. It had a principal and a combination room of first and second grades.

A Catholic College and School was located on Fifth Street between Main and Mulberry. The president, Reverend P. Schnitzler, along with four instructors conducted the operation.

The Immanuel Lutheran Church and School was established in 1867. It was part of the duties of the pastor to teach the school. In April, 1885 the school's first teacher, Mr. H.D.F. Brockmeyer was hired. When he started, the school's enrollment was 62 but in two years it had soared to 172 which he taught by himself.

The rural area of Blue Earth County was dotted with over one hundred one-room schools taught by one teacher. Most of the villages operated a grade school but none had a high school as yet. In 1885 Amboy built a new brick schoolhouse.

Most of the county's 27,000 inhabitants were farmers. The Cannon Valley Railroad, the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad operated lines in Blue Earth County. These railroads furnished the farmers better ways to market their winter wheat,

spring wheat, rye, flax, butter and eggs.

One of the most substantial industries in the Mankato area was the lime-stone quarries. The stone quarried was sought after for building bridges, business blocks, courthouses, schools and other structures. At this time stone was rapidly growing in acceptance for the paving of streets, sewers, and curbs and gutters. The lime made from this stone was highly hydraulic and made mortar almost equal to the best cement.

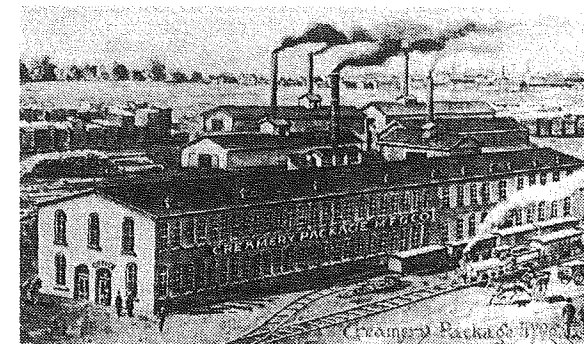
The area also contained extensive beds of fine quality clay eminently qualified for the manufacture of brick, pottery, tile, fire brick and mineral paint.

In addition to industries based on local mineral deposits there were others. Among the greatest of importance were the R.D. Hubbard Company flour mills. These were surpassed in extent and quality only by those in Minneapolis.

At Elm and Fourth Streets in Mankato was the largest linseed oil plant in the United States. This mill worked 24 hours a day and daily produced 70 barrels of oil and 25 tons of oil cake and used 1500 bushels of flax seed.

The butter and egg business was a very important industry. In 1885 over a million pounds of butter and 12,000 barrels of eggs were shipped from local cold-storage warehouses.

These three branches of business (flour, linseed oil, and butter and eggs) created the necessity for another important pursuit -- the manufacture of barrels and tubs. The Creamery Package Manufacturing Company produced \$165,000 worth of barrels and butter tubs in 1885. This plant was the largest of its kind in the world, yet it was hardly able to meet the demand.



Creamery Package Manufacturing Company. From Mankato, Minnesota Illustrated, 1890.

Other important manufacturers that flourished in Blue Earth County were foundries, machine shops, boiler works, plow works, canning factories, saw mills, planing mills, woolen mills, marble works, cigar factories, bottling works, furniture manufacturers, boots and shoes, harness, extensive breweries, carriage works, and pump factories. Most of these industries employed only men. There were fewer opportunities for women in those days. Women ran millinery shops, operated home laundries and worked as clerks in shops.

Several events of note took place in Blue Earth County during 1885-86:

On September 1, 1885 James Swan sold his interest in the flourishing flour mill of Rapidan Mill Company to S.H. Baker for \$7,700.

On November 1, 1885 William Farr and Joe Noe received a franchise for a street railway in Mankato. This horse-drawn railway system was completed on July 23, 1886 with 966 passengers carried the first day, 1,033 the second day and 1,455 the third.

On October 18, 1885 a new German Lutheran Church was dedicated in the township of Danville.

The Cannon Valley Railroad approached Mankato from Red Wing via Faribault. When it reached Jamestown Township in January 1885 a new town site and post office were established and named Madison Lake after the lake on which they were located.

At a meeting held February 6, 1886, the matter of changing the name of the Winnebago Agency Post Office was considered. The name Hilton was chosen by a close vote. However, at another meeting held on March 23, the name was changed to St. Clair.

In April, 1886, the steamboat Alvira arrived at Mankato from St. Paul with passengers and freight. Its arrival caused considerable excitement because it had been ten years since the last steamboat had come.

A proposal for building a new Blue Earth County Courthouse was begun in 1884.