

## Museum Acknowledges Donations

The following people have recently donated items to our museum and archives. The Blue Earth County Historical Society wishes to thank them for their thoughtful donations.

Inella and Bert Burns	W.K. Willard
Mrs. Del Best	Carlienne Frisch
Paul Silliman	Jeanne D. Kress
LeRoy B. Schwan	Grace M. Jefferson
Edna N. Poole	Rita Weber
Albert J. Roemer	Alma M. Roozen
Joe Kubicek	Ray Marquardt
Joyce Shain	David Treanor
Ben Jones	Lois Manthe
Linda Vaske	Shirley Origas
Marcia T. Schuster	Dr. Raymond Sanford
Mary Schultz Gray	

\* \* \* \* \*

## SENIORS!

### You're Invited to RSVP . . .

RSVP, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, is a part of ACTION, the national volunteer agency. RSVP exists so that someone like you —retired, but with knowledge and energy to spare, can make a big difference where you're needed most — in your own community.

RSVP volunteers serve through non-profit private and public community organizations.

Anyone 60 or older, retired or semi-retired, is eligible to become an RSVP volunteer, whatever level of education, experience or income. Once you've agreed on a volunteer activity that suits your interests, you will receive a brief orientation from the RSVP staff, additional instructions and supervision on your volunteer site. For more information on RSVP, contact Ms. Judy Irwin, 518 South 5th Street, Mankato, (2nd fl. Summit Center) or call 345-7787.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society will be a co-operating volunteer site for the RSVP program, please keep us in mind for possible volunteer support.

## AROUND THE COUNTY



As the new year begins, we are setting our sights high for the coming year. We have many goals which we hope to achieve. Each and every one of our members is a valued part of this organization. We do not look to our members for their financial contributions alone, but for their active interest in the preservation of our heritage. You as members are a vital link to the past. We are confident that your willingness to participate in BECHS sponsored programs, volunteer areas, and workshops will double in the coming year. Without the dedicated support of our members at large, we could not be the strong and ever-growing Society we are today. Let's all get involved in 1986!!

If you wish to submit an item for the "Around The County" section of the newsletter, please write or call Jan, 345-4154 before the 10th of the month preceding publication.

## Good Luck!

We extend this special wish to Ms. Judy Nightengale for her contribution to the Blue Earth County Historical Society while serving her internship here this last quarter from MSU. Judy did a fine job while she was here and we certainly appreciate the effort she put forth. She has left us with a temporary exhibit in the front parlour entitled, "Remembering the Thirties". The exhibit commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the Mankato State University Faculty Wives organization.

## Memorials

In Memory of: Mr. Al Schauer  
From: Arnold and Bernice Meyer

In Memory of: Mr. Ernst Wiecking  
From: Emma Wiecking

## Can You Help Us Out?

We are in need of a used bar stool with a comfortable back to be used at our microfilm reader. New rolls of microfilm have been ordered and the task of indexing will soon begin. If you can contribute a stool or are willing to donate some time to help out indexing old issues of county papers, give us a call.

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U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Mankato, MN 56001  
Permit No. 343

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

Address Correction Requested

Published monthly by the Blue Earth County  
Historical Society, 606 So. Broad St.,  
Mankato, MN 56001

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



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## January 1986

### Calendar of Events

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Jan. 1  | <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>  |
| Jan.    | Exhibit, " <b>Remembering The Thirties</b> " at BECHS museum.   |
| Jan. 18 | Children's Saturday Workshop<br>" <b>Ole' Fashioned Taffy Pull</b> "<br>9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.<br>at BECHS museum |
| Jan. 21 | Exhibit opening, " <b>The America Chest: What Shall We Pack?</b> "<br>at BECHS museum                             |

## Special Thanks

To the Church Women United for their generous donation for the Homestead Players performance in November.

We wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution our group of tour guides made during Kindergarten Indian Life tours in November. They all served as wonderful ambassadors of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. We will look forward to seeing many of them return for the spring tour season.

Joni Nieman	Connie Williams
Barb Swanson	Tara Bargman
Lisa Schaefer	Jan Fisher
Kathy Wyss	Susan Lundgreen
Rochelle Johnson	Marion Harten
Vicky Zuhlsdorf	Ruth Nuessle
Delilah Keenan	

## Impact of Four Mankato Camp Fire Leaders on National Youth Programs

CAMP FIRE (formerly Camp Fire Girls) is 75 years old in the nation and 70 years old in Mankato. Five years after its New England birth sixty-six Minnesota towns had members in CAMP FIRE.

In Mankato it was May Fletcher who was the founder. She was a teacher in Minneapolis and Mankato. She contributed to CAMP FIRE locally as its director from 1915-1946 and nationally as author of its *Book of Ceremonials*.

CAMP FIRE from its origin has stressed friendship and outdoor beauty thru around-the-fire ceremonials of poetry and song. May Fletcher created ceremonials of such beauty (many of these are in our Blue Earth County Historical Society collection) that National CAMP FIRE recognized her expertise and made her author of its *Book of Ceremonials of the Seven Crafts*. As a CAMP FIRE girl growing up in Omaha, it was this publication that made me aware of the city of Mankato and the outstanding CAMP FIRE organization here.

In addition to May Fletcher's fame as author of the *Book of Ceremonials* she also attracted national recognition for the size of the Mankato Camp Fire Council. A National Field Director visiting Mankato in 1925 reported more Camp Fire Girls here than in any other city of its size in the nation.

May Fletcher's home at 318 Byron Street was the first CAMP FIRE office. As the membership grew, the office was moved to 204½ S. Front St (over Steins).

Mankato Teachers' College and CAMP FIRE were closely related in the May Fletcher era. When I arrived on campus in 1946 I found faculty wives were Camp Fire Leaders and Board Members. In 1949-51 Ann Ford (Mrs. Leonard Ford) became Board President. There were records too of courses in CAMP FIRE leadership taught in Old Main. Lillian Chase Sperry wrote:

On the eleventh day of June,  
Later known as the Rose Moon  
Eight of us enrolled for knowledge  
Camp Fire work at Teachers College

Sought out room two-twenty-three  
Where Miss Fletcher held the key  
But though promptly there at four  
'Twas hard to get within the door  
Many others had climbed the stairs  
Until we had to bring more chairs  
And every time we counted roll  
There soon arrived another soul  
President Cooper arrived in sight  
Settled the question of our plight  
And so next day we climbed more stairs  
Where there was a choice of chairs.

In preparation for the March 1985 celebration of CAMP FIRE'S 75th Anniversary, a member of May Fletcher's first CAMP FIRE group, Edith Rosquist Owen, in explaining the dollar sign on her ceremonial gown, told an interesting around-the-fire story. In 1915 or 1916 Mankato decided to have a Bonfire Contest. Since singing around the fire was a regular activity of the Makatooze Camp Fire Group, they entered the contest. Each entry was to select a spot on the hillside and build the biggest fire possible. The Makatooze Camp Fire Group did just that and spent the evening around the fire in one of their usual ceremonials of poetry and song — but the judges looking up from the river bank couldn't see their fire. They knew CAMP FIRE girls were up there so they awarded them last place — a dollar bill — hence the dollar sign on the Ceremonial Gown of Edith Rosquist Owen.



1918  
Makatooze Camp Fire Group at Lake Washington

After May Fletcher, the next person to serve National CAMP FIRE was Elisabeth Strom. In 1927 the Kiwanis Club established Camp Patterson with CAMP FIRE as a principal user. Elisabeth Strom,

instructor of English at Lincoln Jr. High, was one of the Camp Directors. She also directed the CAMP FIRE at Fairmont. She then became Executive Director in St. Paul and Director of Camp Ojiketa and then Director of Camping for CAMP FIRE nationally.

Elisabeth Strom shared in my camping ventures and I in hers seven times in the BWCA and one summer at European Campsites. Another summer I accompanied her on visits to CAMP FIRE camps in Alaska.

She was our send-off and welcome-home committee at the New York docks for CAMP FIRE and Mankato State European camping trips during her years in New York as Director of Camp Fire Camping.

As Elisabeth Strom worked at the National CAMP FIRE office in New York City, Louise Wood, Mankato CAMP FIRE girl of the May Fletcher era was in New York City also but as National Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of America. Before Camp Patterson the "Wood House" on Lake Washington was Camp Fire Camp and Louise Wood was one of the campers. In response to an invitation to Mankato's Jubilee celebration she wrote —

2844 S. Wheeling Way  
Aurora, CO 80014  
February 1985

Dear Ruth:

Sorry my travels don't get me to Minnesota in March. Usually get to Lake Washington in mid-summer for family reunion at our old Hilltop place.

Camp Fire was very much a part of my growing up in Kato which I treasure. Youth organizations have an extra special meaning since I ended my career as National Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of America. They proved their broadmindedness by hiring me to their top post, having never been a Girl Scout.

I remember telling Martha Allen, who was National Executive of Camp Fire when I began my Girl Scout career, that the Camp Fire Torch Bearer pledge, "That Light which has been given to me I desire to pass undimmed to others." perhaps applied in my case!

My best wishes for the Camp Fire 75th Jubilee. I just celebrated my 75th year and it is great we are both thriving — Here's to the rest of our century.

Regards,  
Louise A. Wood

Louise Wood was Director of the Red Cross Program for servicemen in the Mediterranean theatre in World War II before going to the Girl Scout position so she was, in a way, also international in her service.

I had camped with her briefly at New York University's graduate camp in 1942. I was there in physical education courses. She was there awaiting departure for World War II duty. What a great Mankato Camp Fire reunion we had for a few days — and suddenly one morning she was gone. Great secrecy attended all troop ship departures because of submarine danger.

Mankato contributions to National Youth Programs do not end with May Fletcher, Elisabeth Strom, and Louise Wood, however. They are on-going! In 1981 Mankato State University's President, Margaret Preska, became a member of CAMP FIRE'S National Board of Directors, a "first" from Mankato to serve in this capacity. She now "Carries the Torch" as National President of CAMP FIRE.

Ruth Shellberg  
Professor Emeritus,  
Mankato State University  
(Mankato Camp Fire  
Volunteer since 1946)

### WITH SYMPATHY

The Blue Earth County Historical Society Board of Trustees and staff wishes to express their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Dr. David G. Taylor. Dr. Taylor was a Life Member of the historical society and on staff in the Department of History at Mankato State University. His contributions to the field of history will be fondly remembered by many.

curing all the other articles of food I have named, the women only are employed, and I believe that three-fourths of the food of an Indian family is thus supplied by the women.

Editor's Note and  
Selected Article from  
Inella Burns

**SOURCES**

*Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year, 1849, Agriculture* Washington: Office of Printers to House of Reps., 1850.

**Credits:** Drawing of Digging Prairie Turnips by Chet Kozlak, from *Dakota Indians Coloring Book*, Minnesota Historical Society, 1979.

Drawing Tilling the Soil by Frederick N. Wilson from *Goodbird the Indian*, Gilbert L. Wilson, reprint edition 1985, Minnesota Historical Society, Press.

\* \* \* \* \*

**New Annual Member**

Juanita Floth  
Paul D. Silliman

**Special Thanks**

The following people have made generous contributions to the Blue Earth County Historical Society during the past months:

GENERAL FUND: Mrs. Mildred Jones  
Mrs. Blanche Barnhart  
Mr. & Mrs. William Carlson  
Mrs. Ward Gray  
Dr. & Mrs. Donald Heckel  
Ms. Anita Stone  
Mr. & Mrs. Ogden P. Confer  
Mr. Charles Piehl

PALMER FOUNDATION MATCHING FUNDS:  
Bert and Inella Burns

**AROUND THE  
COUNTY**



We know that within our membership we have many individuals with "special" areas of interest in Blue Earth County History. If you would be willing to share your knowledge or expertise on that "special" subject let us know. We are always anxious to provide speakers, newsletter articles, and workshops by and specifically for our BECHS members. GIVE US A CALL TODAY — WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

If you wish to submit an item for the "Around the County" section of the newsletter, please write or call the museum, 345-4154 before the 10th of the month preceding publication.

**Special Needs**

We could use any of the following items for storing and protecting articles in the collection. Your contributions would be most appreciated.

- Bed Sheets
- Hat Boxes
- Shoe Boxes
- Boxes in which bulk paper is received with telescoping lids

**Memorials**

In Memory of: Mrs. Howard (Bernice) Draper  
for Restoration Fund for the R.D.  
Hubbard House

From: Ogden and Jane Confer

In Memory of: Mrs. Howard (Bernice) Draper  
From: Arnold and Bernice Meyer

In Memory of: Earl "Bud" Hofmaster  
From: Arnold and Bernice Meyer

**New Business (Patron) Members**

Security State Bank  
Madison Ave. & Long  
Theodore Williams Agency  
500 South Broad

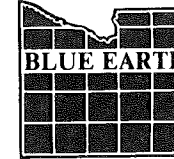
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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**February 1986**

**Farming Among the  
Sioux Indians**

Editor's Note: In 1849 the area which later became Blue Earth County was a part of the new Territory of Minnesota. The town of St. Peter was called Saint Peters, and the Minnesota River was known as the St. Peters River. Many Dahkota (Sioux) Indians lived in the Minnesota (St. Peters) River valley and in the adjoining woodland and prairie area. Following is a report by Philander Prescott, superintendent of farming for the Sioux as it appears in *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1849, Agriculture*. Although it carries a Saint Peters dateline, circumstances described can be assumed to apply also to what is now Blue Earth County.

Saint Peters, Minnesota, 10 Nov., 1849

Sir:-I notice from the Patent Office Reports, that it is your wish to obtain all the information you can from the different parts of the Union, in relation to farming, &c. I do not find anything from your newly sprung up Territory of Minnesota, and supposing you might not be displeased to receive some information from this part of the country, I have, with the assistance of a friend or two, collected such accounts of the agricultural means of our new Territory, as I suppose it would be desirable to make public. I have also sent you some account of the mode of cultivation among the Dahkotah (Sioux) Indians, with the list of the roots, &c., used by them as food, and a short description of their manner of procuring, cooking, and curing them for use.