

Welcome to the following new members:

Annual

Betty Arnoldt, Mankato
Lyndon Kunkel, Mankato
Shirley Lieske, Mankato
Sylvan V. Crooker, Mankato
Agnes Dahm, Mankato
Chris Faye, Mankato
Carlienne Frisch, Mankato
Winston Grundmeier, Mankato
Harold Natvig, Mankato
Robert Northenscald, Mankato
Doris B. Pagel, Mankato
Sandra Smith, Mankato
Lois Tamblyn, Mankato
Jack Ward, Janesville
David Wiltgen, Mankato
Truman Wood, Mankato
Adele Zemechel, Mankato
Phyllis R. Abbott, Mankato
Eugene R. Braam, Mankato
David Brunet, No. Mankato
Betty Demaray, Mankato
Verna Henry, No. Mankato
R. Wynn Kearney Jr., Mankato
Elvina R. Lewis, Mapleton
Paul Meyer, Mankato
Gordon Oftedahl, Pemberton
David Ruthenbeck, Mankato
Clifford Rudolph, Pemberton
Donna L. Swenson, Mankato
Patricia Hargrove, No. Mankato
Ellen Mrja, No. Mankato
Marian Swenson, Mankato

Couples

Frank & Judy Kraft, Mankato
Warren & Audrey Claridge, Mankato
Perry & Jolene Brown, Mankato
Larry & Mary Hammar, Mankato
Judge & Mrs. Charles Johnson, Mankato
Mr. & Mrs. Ed McLean, Mankato
Kenneth & Lorraine Tate, Lake Crystal
Dr. & Mrs. P.A. Wold, Mankato
Joe & Malda Farnham, Mankato
Charles & Mary Behrens, Mankato
Dr. & Mrs. Lawrence Markey, Mankato
Michael & Colleen Smith, No. Mankato
Bruce & Shirlee Ruble, Mankato
John & Eleanor Wittrock, No. Mankato
Henry & Ann Quade, Good Thunder

Thanks

Special thanks to **Hal Natvig** for his assistance with the Open House held in December. His special touches with decorations and refreshments made the evening truly enjoyable. (We do have the recipe for the mulled cider if anyone is interested.)

* * * *

Wish List

We are in need of cardboard boxes with telescoping lids. These boxes are the kind in which reams of paper are shipped.

Since this is 1987, we would like to have a copy of the **1986** Polk City Directory to add to our collection.

* * * *

New Faces Around the Museum

Larry Hammar has become a new volunteer lending his expertise to the restoration of some of the woodwork around Hubbard House. He has finished copying the finials on the main staircase and has replaced two missing spindles from a doorway on the second floor.

Ora Ohlenkamp has begun volunteering time in the Archives filing clippings and cards.

Steve Olson is a new volunteer with a variety of skills. He has willingly worked on some minor maintenance tasks and has begun learning the system of typing and filing cards for artifacts.

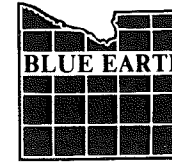
Marion Rodgers has joined the staff through the Senior Employment Training Program managed through Minnesota Valley Action Council. She is the new Registrar handling the recording of new artifacts into the collection.

A warm welcome is extended to all! If you are interested in volunteering some of your time and talents for the Society, call us. There are still **many** tasks which need expert handling.

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

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 1987

Calendar of Events

- January 31 (Tentative Date) *Young Historians Program*
Special topic for Valentine's Day
- February 16 *President's Day*
- February 21 (Tentative Date) *Young Historians Program*
Topic to be announced

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Marcia T. Schuster 1919-1987

We were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Marcia T. Schuster, former executive director, who died on January 4, 1987. Marcia began her official association with the Society as a Board member in 1973. She assumed the role as the first full-time director in 1975 and held those responsibilities until she retired in 1982. The BECHS grew and prospered during her tenure here. Her accomplishments were many — the move of the Carriage House, steps toward a new museum facility, general progress toward a more professional organization, to name but a few.

The family of Marcia T. Schuster has requested that memorial donations be made to Blue Earth County Historical Society Building Fund in her name. The Society will notify family members of all donations received.

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Hicks, Denise Hudson, Gail Palmer,
Louisa Smith

Growing Up In Judson Part I

Judson was a thriving little village during my boyhood years. Roads were dirt and gravel from the town to Mankato or Lake Crystal, and as there wasn't a car in every garage, shopping trips to the city were infrequent. But the peaceful little town was quite self-sufficient in the World War I years.

The two general stores were Bill Mason's store, which was also the post office, and the William Johnson store, which sold a variety of goods besides groceries and meats. Both had the traditional cracker barrel and a wheel of cheese, and meats were cut to order. Items such as navy beans, butter and coffee came in bulk to be weighed and bagged. In the back room were a barrel or two of kerosene which was used in every house for lamp and lantern light, and by the affluent who had kerosene stoves for summer cooking. The back room also had a bin of potatoes. Whenever a customer came with a kerosene can with no cap on the spout, it was almost automatic to grab a potato to serve the purpose. But care had to be taken so that "spud" didn't get into the family supply, for just a little kerosene would taint a whole pot of potatoes.

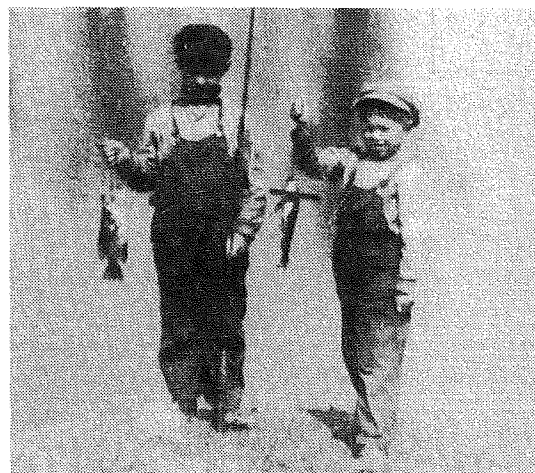
The O.F. Jones Implement and Lumber Company took care of farm needs that William Gotschalk couldn't provide for at the Commander Elevator. The elevator was the principal source of flour, then sold only in 49-pound or 98-pound cotton sacks. When Mother needed a sack of their Jersey Lily flour, we pulled our coaster wagon or sled to the elevator and brought a sack home.

Charles Rodekur repaired broken machinery parts for farmers in his blacksmith shop and shod their horses. Pumping the force for Mr. Rodekur and watching the sparks fly as he hammered red hot iron into shape on his anvil was always a pleasant diversion. On the last day of school in the spring, boys could get a free haircut at the blacksmith shop as Mr. Rodekur was an expert with his clippers. He just sheared every boy's head as close as the clipper could cut. Such haircuts were cool in summer and didn't require grooming after a dip in McCarger's creek.

Another interesting place was the Eureka Creamery operated by Pete Johnson. The name changed to the Judson Cooperative Creamery and produced quality butter which later qualified for the Land O'Lakes label. We rarely missed a churn day during vacation time, as Mr. Johnson let us drink all the buttermilk we wanted without charge and would fill a gallon pail from home for just one nickel.

Near the depot was a restaurant and confec-

tionary store, but village boys had little money or opportunity to patronize the place. Max Thomas, the proprietor, also displayed a hotel sign as he had upstairs rooms for rent to salesmen or peddlers who wanted to remain in Judson overnight.



Lawrence and Vernard Lundin (right) with their catch from McGivney Lake, ca. 1915.

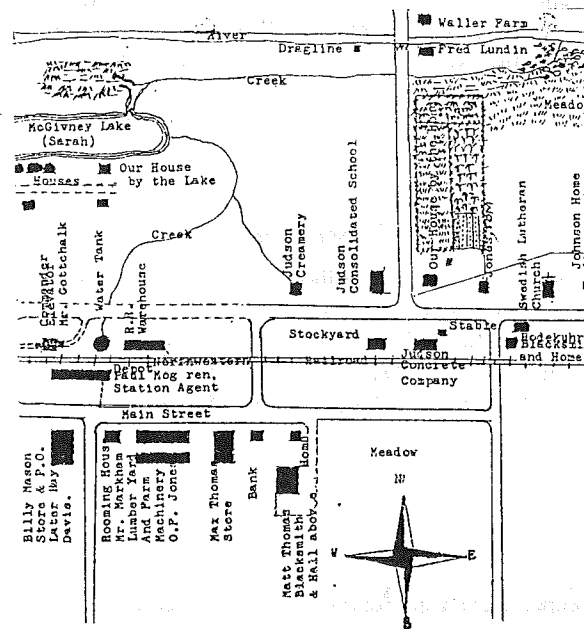
The Judson State Bank served the financial needs of villagers and farmers. W.W. White was the manager, but one of the principal owners and bank president was a farmer named R.P. Williams. Every year the bank gave away the largest and prettiest calendar in town. With each business offering one also, a calendar art hung on the walls in every home.

A saw mill run by Charlie Peterson east of town hazardous and off limits, but from the road on our way to school we watched with fascination the process of converting logs hauled in by farmers into boards and dimensional lumber for rough building.

Still a little farther east was the most magnetic attraction every September — Charlie Gustafson's sorghum mill. Farmers in the area raised a few acres of sorghum cane which was cut and hauled to the Gustafson farm when it was mature but still filled with sap or juice.

The first step in the production of sorghum was squeezing the stalks through heavy steel rollers. The fluid was collected in buckets and dumped into a large vat under which a cordwood fire burned briskly. The fluid boiled and bubbled, shrank in volume by evaporation and turned a rich brown color. Charlie tasted the sorghum for flavor and consistency and knew just when to drain the finished product from the vat. At that time, we schoolboys, who had impatiently waited for school to close so we could follow Ray Gustafson home, pounced on the empty vat like a bunch of jackals. We each had our own paddle, painstakingly shaped and smoothed by hours of carving and shaving, and we were permitted to

scrape the still warm delicious residue and imbibe to our heart's content. It was a sure-fire fall tonic and laxative. Always there was sorghum for sale and it was customary at our house to buy two five-gallon stone jugs of molasses, a staple with pancakes, cornbread and in baked goods for most of the winter.



A map of Judson Village during World War I, drawn by Lawrence Lundin.

The Judson Concrete Company, operated by Dad and Uncle Fred, was another going business which supplied concrete drain tile, concrete silo blocks, and concrete blocks for building purposes. Adjacent was a small stockyard where members of the Judson Livestock Shipping Association pooled hogs and cattle for carload shipment to market. With the stockyard operation was a portable mill to grind feed for farmers who hauled in grain.

Judson wasn't large enough to support a drug store, but the general stores handled a line of remedies, liniments and toiletries. When a doctor was needed in emergencies, he was summoned from Mankato, Lake Crystal or Nicollet.

Doctors carried a supply of staple drugs in their black satchels, but occasionally some prescription had to be ordered and sent from Mankato. On one such occasion, Grandma Vrooman was critically ill and required a special prescription as soon as possible. It was to come from Mankato on the midnight train, but getting the drug package to the Vrooman farm over a mile of road turned to quagmire by spring thaws and rains was a problem. A chap in town volunteered to take the drug by horseback from the depot and asked me to ride along — bareback,

of course. The night was pitch black without even the twinkle of a star, but we picked our way carefully. There were few farm houses to pass, and I quaked every time a dog barked, close by or in the distance. But we delivered the medicine to the grateful Vrooman family and made our return home without incident.

Judson was on the main line of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad that ran from Chicago to Rapid City, and trains came and went like the rising and setting of the sun and just about as dependable. Besides the midnight train that brought Grandma Vrooman's medicine from Mankato, three other passenger trains stopped each day at the Judson depot.

The noon train from Mankato caused the most stir in the community as it brought the mail bags, Railway Express parcels for the business places, a basket of baked goods for the stores, and often a traveling salesman with his sample cases. He could make his calls on the stores between noon and the return train to Mankato at four o'clock. For boys on hand at the arrival of the noon train, there might be a nickel or a dime, or at least a treat, for carting or dragging a salesman's sample cases, or boxes for one of the stores a short distance down the board walk. We even helped with the mail bags — mail robberies occurred only in story books.

Lord of the railroad domain was Paul Mogren, the depot agent. He was a friendly fellow who always had a kind word for us kids who "hung around" the depot platform. We watched him with awe as he operated the telegraph key. We learned a few of the Morse code signals, but when Paul applied his "fist" to the key, the dots and dashes ran together too fast for us.

The village was served also by freight trains, usually daily. They dropped off carloads of coal, lumber, farm machinery and cement for the Judson Concrete Company. Also the Commander Elevator shipped out carloads of grain in harvest season and occasionally farmers gathered a carload of cattle or hogs for rail shipment from the small stockyards owned by the Judson Cooperative Shipping Association. Occasionally an express freight or "high ball" would thunder through town without stopping and we'd listen for the whistle, which we interpreted as "Hooooo! Hoooooo! Right through!"

During those boyhood years, Judson was not only a complete service center for villagers and the farming community surrounding it, but it was also a great place for growing up.

Vernard Lundin

NOTE: Vernard Lundin is a former mayor of Mankato and continues to serve the community in a number of civic organizations. The above article is adapted from *As the Twig Is Bent*, a manuscript he is in the process of revising for publication.