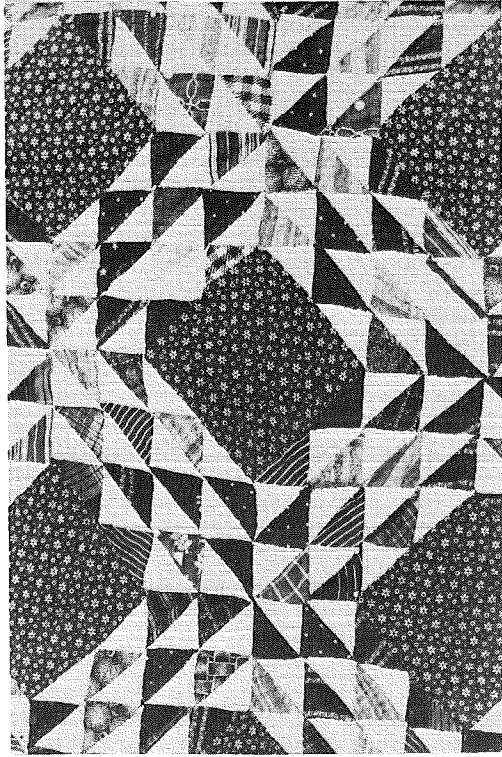


Curation Notes

The Society is proud to announce that four of our beautiful old quilts and our special "Blue Earth County Quilt" have been selected to be exhibited in the quilt show accompanying the 1987 Minnesota Quilters' Conference. The exhibition, entitled "Take a Sentimental Journey", is scheduled for June 13-15 in the Gustavus Adolphus College, Student Union Building, St. Peter. The public is invited and we encourage our members to attend this exciting event.



Maud Hart Lovelace

Mrs. Lovelace is well known for her Betsy-Tacy books, taking place in Deep Valley (Mankato), telling the story of Betsy and her friends, from childhood through marriage. In recognition of the characters and places we have come to know and love, the Garden Plaza Motel is offering a Maud Hart Lovelace Weekend Package. This package includes rooms, dinner, beverages, tax, gratuity at the Garden Plaza as well as tours of locations significant in Mrs. Lovelace's historical novels. For further information contact Julie at the Garden Plaza at 507-625-9333 or the Blue Earth County Historical Society at 507-345-4154.

Membership

Welcome to the following new members:

Billings S. Fuess, Jr.	Life Member
Louise M. Roth	Annual
SueAnn Strom	Annual

Thanks to the Mankato Art and History Club for their donation, which paid for the paper used on the cover of the Walking Tour Brochure.

This past month we received donations to the Building Fund from the following people:

Mary Dooley
Elizabeth Jones

Additional Donations Received:

Mankato Faculty Wives Association
Women's Auxiliary of the Blue Earth County Medical Society

Donations to the Heritage Endowment Fund:

Elizabeth D. Beetsch
Marjorie Morse Hill

Research Project Begins

One-room country schools and those dedicated individuals who served within them are an American institution. Thousands of Minnesota citizens have benefited from the love, concern, and teaching abilities of those one-room country school teachers. A committee is forming to preserve for future generations a glimpse of that by-gone era. Are you one of those teachers? There is no state-wide list of these country school teachers. Would you help us make one? Please send your name and address with the years you taught and the name and location of the school to:

Rural Schools Research Council
743 17th St. S.E.
Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

Garden Update

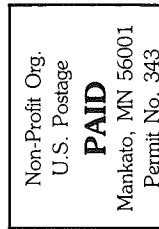
Winter was very hard on our flower beds, as a result we've had to remove the old roses and hedge. They have been replaced with a Victorian garden containing a variety of perennials and annuals. Be sure to stop by and see and smell the beauty.



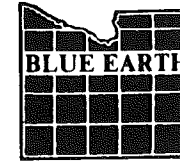
Blue Earth County
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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 1987

Calendar of Events

- June 2 **Kickoff breakfast** in support of the Dakota Indian Statue, 7-8 am at the Multi-Church Center in Mankato. Dr. Chris Cavender, Mankato Mayor Carstensen and the statue creator, Thomas Miller will be in attendance. Breakfast is free and open to the public.
- June 4 **"Public Reaction to the Dakota Conflict"** by columnist Nick Coleman of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press and Dispatch*. Program begins at 7:30 pm at the Minnesota Valley Regional Library in Mankato and is free and open to the public. Members are encouraged to attend this interesting program in recognition of the 125th Anniversary of the Dakota Conflict.
- June 21 **Father's Day**

Notes from the Director

Approximately thirty people participated in a walking tour of sixteen historic homes in the Lincoln Park neighborhood Saturday, May 16, 1987. Homes on the tour were selected and researched by Bill Bessler, an intern from Mankato State University. The brochure used for the walk was designed and produced by Dean Thurston, temporarily on staff at the Society. If you were unable to attend on Saturday but would like to take the walk at your leisure, stop by the Society and we will provide you with a free brochure. Special thanks to Shirley Lieske for video taping the walking tour and for Mankato Mayor Carstensen for sharing in our fun.

The summer season is rapidly approaching and the Society is getting ready for lots of exciting programs. Be sure to mark June 4 on your calendar and plan to attend columnist Nick Coleman's talk on "Public reaction to the Dakota Conflict." Sometime in June we will be offering another Young Historians program which as always is exciting and FREE, call the Society for time and date. Planning for the Tour of Historic Homes on July 11 is moving along with six homes open to the public for touring. Tickets for this event will be on sale at the Society starting July 1. Finally, let me add, the Historical Society is proud to announce we have become associate members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Early Blue Earth County Newspapers

Before the days of radio and television, people relied on newspapers to keep them informed on global to local events. "Ample newspaper reading is necessary in the family circle," advised an editorial in the *Amboy Herald* of December 2, 1891. "No matter how much schooling or textbook study, no individual is educated who fails to read newspapers."

Other Blue Earth County publishers must have been of the same mind, for about forty newspapers emerged to inform, educate, and influence county residents during the last half of the 1800's. Although most survived only a few months or a few years, some are still publishing today.

The earliest newspaper in the county was the *Mankato Independent*, first issued on June 13, 1857. With an inducement of \$800 in printing subscribed and paid for by Mankato merchants, Clinton Hensley and Frank Gunning brought their printing press from Kokomo, Indiana. Thomas Hughes in the *History of Blue Earth County*, describes Hensley as an "able writer" and his paper as a "valuable acquisition to the county." Although Hensley intended to be politically independent, he became swept up in the political currents of the Civil War and wrote forceful Republic editorials.

To counter this Republican influence, the Democratic leaders, after defeat in the 1858 elections, convinced John C. Wise, former editor of the *Superior City Chronical*, to start a Democratic paper. The first issue of the *Mankato Weekly Record* appeared on July 4, 1859. Hughes states that the Democrats could not have chosen a better spokesman than this genial man, who kept in touch with people and made a host of friends throughout the county.

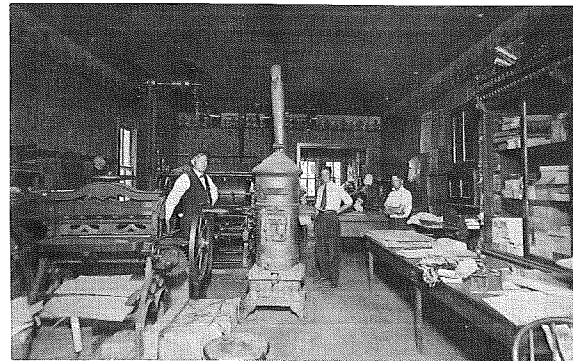
Both the *Independent* and the *Record* were political organs, much of the content comprised lengthy legislative proceedings, government reports, and other party concerns. Reports were often strongly opinionated and strewn with accusations damaging to the opposing political party. The *Independent* of August 12, 1862, referred to the Garden City Democratic Caucus as a "most disgraceful farce," and General James. H. Baker as using "rascality, dire threats, bribes, vilification, and unblushing falsehoods" in his manipulation of the caucus.

The *Record*, on the other hand, castigated the "model" Republican legislature that operated on the principle: "So I get my money, the State may go to the devil."

After Hensley's death, the *Independent* was sold in 1863 to Charles Slocum, and the paper became the *Mankato Weekly Union*. In November 1868, Wise likewise sold the *Record*. The new owners were staunch Republicans, Orville Brown and J.T. Williams. According to Hughes, Brown was an expert in invective and "his paper was always well-spiced and gingered." Almost overnight the *Record*, born and bred a Democratic paper, became radically Republican. "Staid Democratic subscribers," says Hughes, "had to pinch themselves to be sure they weren't having nightmares."

But the following year, John Wise began another Democratic newspaper, the *Mankato Weekly Review*, which under his able management became very popular, influential, and, according to Hughes, more reliable than most. Like its predecessors, it carried legislative, financial, and market reports, court schedules as well as global and local news briefs. In addition, the first issues contained entertaining articles, poems, short stories, and even such quips as "A member of the Peace Society objected to living on earth because it's a revolver." Later issues of the *Review*, however, became more staid, yet politically facetious.

In 1879 while the *Review* was enjoying wide popularity, James H. Baker purchased both the *Union* and the *Record* consolidating them into a new newspaper called the *Mankato Weekly Free Press*, which first appeared in January 1880.



The First Mapleton Enterprise Office (pictured left to right: Herbert Hotaling, Herman Lundquist, and Howard Samuelson).



The Mankato Free Press Centennial Logo.

Two years later the paper was sold to Lemuel P. Hunt, who, according to Hughes, "managed by push and enterprise and good judgment to build one of the best publication plants in the state." The paper began as a weekly, but on April 1, 1887, an additional *Mankato Daily Free Press* appeared. In 1892 the *Review* also published a daily, and both the *Review* and the *Free Press* had a large circulation in Blue Earth and adjoining counties, until 1919 when the *Free Press* purchased the *Review*. While this year (1987) marks the centennial of the *Mankato Daily Free Press*, actually the beginnings of today's *Free Press* go back to 1857 and the first issue of the *Independent*.

Elsewhere in the county, other newspapers emerged to survive the years. In 1882 George Neff began publishing the *Lake Crystal Union*, today is in its 105th year. Hughes refers to Neff as a printer of rare excellence, and the Lake Crystal Historical Society credits him with keeping the history of Lake Crystal alive. According to the Society's publication, *Beginnings*, "His news items were classics . . . punctuated as they were with his personal editorializing." Entertaining as well as newsworthy, the eight pages of the May 7, 1884 issue includes poems, recipes and tips on domestic economy, feminine fancies (high collars and high coiffures were "in") and a humor column as well as global to local news. After 32 years as editor, Neff was succeeded by his son Paul, and the business remained in the family until 1917, when it was sold to H.E. Sievert, the first of a number of changes in

ownership. In the 1920's the paper became the *Lake Crystal Tribune*, a name it retains today.

Another Blue Earth County newspaper still published today is the 99-year-old *Mapleton Enterprise*. Started by J.E. Brown in 1884 as a monthly trade sheet for his general store, it became a weekly newspaper on May 1, 1888, when Herbert Hotaling, a capable and widely known newspaper man, went into partnership with Brown. In the late 1890's the name was changed to the *Blue Earth County Enterprise*, and the paper included items from county township correspondents as well as Mapleton news and coverage of state, national and world affairs. Holiday issues at that time were elaborate in their Victorian illustrations to accent Christmas or Thanksgiving poems, stories, or recipes.

After Hotaling's death in 1938, his son-in-law and daughter, Bill and Mary Dobbs, continued the business with Kenneth Schimmele, Mary Gilbertson, and Lucia "Blossom" Spaulding on the staff. The *Enterprise* was leased to Howard Samuelson in 1946 when the Dobbs family moved to Arizona because of Mary's health. After Mary's death in 1948, Bill returned to Mapleton and the *Enterprise*. Bill ended 81 years of family ownership on April 1, 1969, when he sold the paper to Kenneth and Marcia Warner. With the change in ownership, the paper returned to its original name, the *Mapleton Enterprise*.

Inella Burns

Note: The above historical sketch of early Blue Earth County newspapers commemorates the bicentennial of Freedom of the Press, guaranteed to citizens in the Constitution of the United States of America. The article will be concluded in the July Newsletter.

Sources

Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*; Ronald J. Newell, *Where the Winding Maple Flows*; *Amboy Herald*, December 2, 1891; *Beginnings*, Lake Crystal Historical Society publication; *Blue Earth County Enterprise*, November 24, 1899; *Lake Crystal Union*, May 7, 1884; *The Free Press*, February, 1987; *Mankato Weekly Free Press*, April 8, 1887; *Mankato Weekly Record*, July 4, 1859, January 17, 1860; *Mankato Weekly Review*, May 25, 1869; *Mankato Independent*, June 13, 1857, August 12, 1862.