

Development Task Force

The blue ribbon Development Task Force that has been examining the needs of the Society with an eye to recommending a campaign goal has finished its work. Attorney Chuck Adamson and Hubbard executive Ogden W. Confer were selected by the Task Force to represent the group in presenting their recommendations to the Historical Society Board.

The report was to be made shortly after this newsletter went to press. A full article will appear in next month's newsletter.

Volunteers Needed

Gift Shop Coordinator

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is looking for a person to operate the gift shop at the Heritage Center facility. This person needs to be available Tuesday-Friday from 1-5 pm and for special events. We need someone who can be in charge of inventory, ordering supplies, sales and overall operation of the gift shop. In an effort to continually expand our services for our members, an organized, efficient gift shop offering quality products is essential.

Tour Guide Coordinator

The Historical Society is in need of a person(s) to be in charge of organizing and arranging the school and adult tours. The commitment varies from 0-10 hours per week and offers a rewarding experience dealing with interpretive educational programs. Duties include working with school teachers, tour guides and staff members.

For more information please call Susan at 507-345-4154.

Membership

Welcome to the following new members

Mrs. James C. Harten, Mankato, MN
E. Anne Haefner, Mankato, MN
Ron Green, St. Peter, MN

Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people for their recent donations:

Dan & Ronnie Burton
McLean Peterson Law Firm
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Kubicek
John Burton

Memorials Received:

In memory of: Charles Ingham from Mr. & Mrs. Ogden W. Confer.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following persons for making Phase I of our move to the Heritage Center possible:

Stan Solie, Mapleton, MN
Tim Solie, Mapleton, MN

John Brady, Mankato, MN
Alicia Brady, Mankato, MN
Nicole Staples, Mankato, MN
Jeni Koziolk, Mapleton, MN
Shirley Bowen, Mapleton, MN
Eldon & Helen Jones, Lake Crystal, MN
Elaine Cramer, Mapleton, MN
Ted & Jan Roemer, Madison Lake, MN
Charles & Lucille Dauk, Madison Lake, MN
Kirsha Swanson, St. Peter, MN
Dean Pettis, Mankato, MN
John & Ann Christenson, Good Thunder, MN
Richard Chambers, Good Thunder, MN
Elmer Goodrich, Mapleton, MN
Sue Wiltgen, Mankato, MN
Marion Kooser, Mankato, MN
Ora Ohlenkemp, Mankato, MN
Alma Severson, Mankato, MN
Kristin Bjerkelund, Mankato, MN
Tom Witcomb, Mankato, MN
Anita Stone, Mankato, MN
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Kubicek, Lake Crystal, MN
Jo Schultz, Madison Lake, MN
Mary Lou White, Lake Crystal, MN
Hal & Joanne Walberg, Mankato, MN
Rita Grueter, Mankato, MN
Julie Schrader, Mankato, MN
Doris Annis, Mapleton, MN
John & Beth Norman, Lake Crystal, MN
Catie Owens, Lake Crystal, MN
Margaret Williams, Lake Crystal, MN
Denna Kutzler, Mankato, MN
Susan Goodman, Mankato, MN
Dianne Faudell, Mankato, MN
Shirley Schaub, Madison Lake, MN
Becky Gilbertson, Mankato, MN
Bud Bernard, Good Thunder, MN
Harry Bernard, Good Thunder, MN
Susan Monk-Kjos, Mankato, MN
Audrey Burmeister-Hicks, Mankato, MN
Barbara J. Lamson, Mankato, MN
Colleen Smith, No. Mankato, MN
Eldon Marks, Amboy, MN

Thanks to the following Camp Fire members for the excellent job padding coat hangars for historic clothing:

Jessica Labs	Lisa Mark
Ruth Schellberg	Amy Malecek
Jeanette Pasek	Jennifer Ramey
Krissy Pasek	Golda Bosard
Melissa Pasek	Tessa Jergenson
Laura Pasek	Truth Chantler

Special thanks to Alma Severson for designing the slip clovers for the hangars as well as donating the muslin and necessary padding.

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

March 1988 Calendar of Events

- March 14 **Women for Agriculture, Outstanding Agri-woman Award**, 7:30 Garden Inn, North Mankato. Betty and Mareena Cords of the Homestead Players performing "When we were Young", Historical Storytelling.
- March 15 **Staff training for part-time Historical Society personnel.**
- March 17 **Susan Monk-Kjos and Barb Lamson will be attending a workshop, "Educational Strategies for Small Museums"** at the Brown Co. Historical Society, New Ulm.
- March 18 **Susan and Barb will be attending a workshop on Arts Marketing** at the Landmark Center in St. Paul, taught by the Metropolitan Arts Council.
- March 19 **"YOUNG HISTORIANS"** workshop on candymaking, bring your sweet tooth and a friend. Call 345-4154 for reservations, admission is FREE!
- March 24 **FLOWERS, FLOWERS, FLOWERS**, by Donabel C. Linney. Slide presentation of the 1987 Award winning Victorian gardens at the Hubbard House. Program begins at 2 pm at the Heritage Center (2nd floor of the Summit Center), 415 Cherry St. Admission is FREE!

Notes from the Director

As you can see by this month's calendar, spring is a busy time at your Historical Society. The Archives and textile materials have completed their move to the new facility, known as the Heritage Center. Archivist, Audrey Burmeister-Hicks and Registrar, Marian Rodgers are organizing the boxes and files for the Archives opening on March 1st. The remainder of the staff members are still at the Hubbard House with regular hours (Tues.-Sun. 1-5 pm) in effect. Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped in the Phase I move, operations are running smoothly in our "Move to the Future." Thanks also to all of our members who have written and telephoned their suggestions and helpful advice. Special thanks go to the staff and members of the Summit Center who are making us feel so welcome in our new facility. On an exciting note—Camp Fire members under the direction of Jeanette Pasek and Ruth Schellberg are making padded hangars for the Historical Society's valuable clothing. These young people brighten up the Hubbard House on the afternoons they work here.

Early Mankato Hotels Part II

The City Hotel was the dream of Henry Himmelman, a German immigrant who came to Mankato in 1855. In 1856 he opened a wagon making shop at the corner of Plum and Second St. After 15 years of careful saving, the wagon shop was removed and in 1869 the City Hotel was built in its place. The hotel at once became very popular with the farmers, who in the early years used to frequent Mankato for market purposes from miles around.

Himmelman purchased the Turner Hall, located at the corner of Mulberry and Second, in 1875. He changed the name to Union Hall and it became a social and civic community center. Himmelman conducted the Union Hall in conjunction with the City Hotel. Henry's son, Henry Jr. took over management of the City Hotel in its later years. In April 1913 the hotel was destroyed by fire. Assistant fire chief, Michael Fallenstein, lost his life in the blaze.

Out of the walls of the old Union Hall rose the new Hotel Heinrich. On July 2, 1905, Edward Himmelman (son of Henry) opened the Hotel Heinrich. The new hotel had wide staircases, spacious halls and comfortable rooms. It's beautiful dining room, known as the Palm Room, featured Kasota marble pillars and mosaic tile floor which extended into an attractive lobby. An annex containing a coffee shop was added in 1911 and a servants quarters was built in 1913.

A horse drawn bus met all trains and conveyed the passengers to the hotel. The porter and his faithful horse trunks and baggage was a familiar site on the streets of Mankato.

Following Edward Himmelman's death in 1933, his wife Gertrude took over management of the hotel. In 1936 the hotel was sold to W.G.A. Burton from Watertown, South Dakota. The name of the hotel was changed to the Burton Hotel. The Burton Hotel was demolished in January, 1984 to make way for the new Veteran's Memorial Bridge.

Benjamin D. Pay operated the Pay Candy Company (established in 1902) located on Hickory Street. During World War I the candy business was hurt by the shortage of sugar and the Pays' began renting out rooms on the upper floor and continued candy making on the first floor and basement. However, the candy making fumes were not compatible with the hotel business and the candy making operation was moved to a building on Cherry Street.

By this time Benjamin Pay had retired and his sons, B. Frank Pay and W.H. Pay went into the hotel business. The original building was remodeled and named the Ben Pay Hotel.

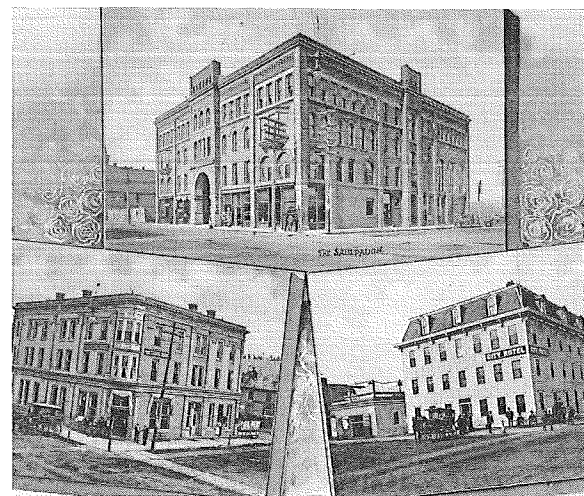
The hotel was successful and in 1925 a six story building was erected when increasing business demanded larger quarters. Although the top two floors were unfinished until 1948 when construction added 42 rooms, giving the hotel a total capacity of 200 rooms.

Several celebrities also stayed at the Ben Pay Hotel, in-

cluding Eleanor Roosevelt, Sinclair Lewis and Guy Lombardo. Members of the Pay family remained associated with the hotel until changing times saw it close and the contents were auctioned off in 1963. The building remained vacant until it was torn down in 1967 and the property turned into a parking lot.

The Saulpaugh Hotel was built by Thomas Saulpaugh, a construction company owner who came to Mankato in 1888 in search of quarries to provide him with stone for the railroad bridges he built. Saulpaugh paid \$14,000 for the property and the hotel itself cost \$142,000, more than the Blue Earth County Courthouse which was built the same year costing \$123,000.

The hotel's grand opening on November 6, 1889 was an elaborate social event with a reception and banquet attended by the famous of the time. Governor Merriam was one of the first to sign the hotel's guest register. The banquet consisted of oysters, deviled crabs, pheasant with English bread sauce, French peas and saratoga chips, punch cordinal, tongue and ham, edam and New York dairy cheese, ice cream, assorted cakes, chocolate and French coffee. There was a ball after the banquet.



Taken from a Mankato Souvenir Booklet, ca. 1900.

The original entrance to the hotel faced the Minnesota River where many patrons debarked from riverboats and trains. The Saulpaugh is said to have marked Mankato's transition from a town of wooden buildings and dirt streets to a city of stone and pavement.

Thomas Saulpaugh died May 9, 1893, a few years after the hotel opened. His son, Clarence, continued the business for many years. Through its early years of operation the Saulpaugh was a gathering place for clubs and groups. In the Gay Nineties the hotel was the setting for most parties

for the Cotillion Club. Its many parlors, wide corridors and a grand ballroom overlooking the river, the hotel had no equal luxury as a background for the Cotillion, as these favorite dances were known.

The hotel attracted its share of the famous and the notorious as well. President Howard Taft stayed overnight in 1911. FBI agents inquired at the registration desk about the gangster, John Dillinger, when it was rumored his cohorts visited the hotel.

In 1919, after Clarence Saulpaugh died, his widow sold the Saulpaugh property to the National Bank of Commerce, quartered in the Saulpaugh, for \$50,000. The bank was involved in one of the more spectacular occurrences at the hotel. In 1927 a runaway street car careened down Main Street hill, jumped its tracks and crashed through the front wall of the bank. The street car's throttle was found wide open and it was estimated to have reached 40 miles per hour coming down the hill. No one was on the vehicle, the conductor Fred Buchholz being thrown from the car at 5th and Main St., and there were no injuries. The street car, which knocked out a portion of the bank's exterior wall, took more than five hours to free.

Over the years transportation and tourism changes affected the hotel's business. New highways and freeways brought about motels which catered to automobiles. An automobile entrance was built into the hotel's north corner. But the hotel's business continued to decline and went bankrupt in January, 1964. After that the building became a dormitory for girls attending Mankato Commercial College in the Martin building located next door. In 1970, the hotel fell within the planned downtown redevelopment area when the Key City Urban Renewal Project was approved. The Saulpaugh Hotel was demolished in February, 1974.

The American House was built in 1856 by Ephram Cole at the corner of Main and Second. The front room was used as a hospital during the Indian uprisings. In 1859 the price of a room was 75¢ a day. In 1885 the proprietor was J.W. Hoerr.

Andrew Donnally opened the Empire Hotel on the corner of Main and Second. He welcomed farmers and had a barn erected on the property to accommodate horses.

The Gates House was also built by Andrew Donnally in 1867 and was owned by Richard Gates & Son. It was located on Main Street between Front and Second.

The St. Paul House was located on the corner of 4th and Washington. It was purchased by Henry Brabender in 1869 from Catherine and Michael Carr. Brabender sold the hotel in 1871 to J.W. Wissman. In 1877 the Milwaukee House is listed as the same address as the St. Paul House. J.A. Nilson operated the Milwaukee House for three years and later operated the St. Paul House.

The Commercial Hotel was operated by Cooley Root in 1893 and was located at 129 E. Main Street.

Mr. S. Sorenson was the proprietor of the European Hotel in 1895. There were sixteen rooms in the second story and

a fruit and confectionary store in the first story.

The Globe Hotel was turned into the city's first candy factory in 1890 by C.A. Everhart, E. Rosenberger and Henry Kuhn.

Miner Porter opened the Merchants Hotel and in 1883 the building was purchased by H.M. Hamilton. Hamilton consolidated the Merchants Hotel with the Mankato House.

In 1888 the Kruse Bros. were the proprietors of the Nicollet House (510 No. Front Street). Ed Miller was proprietor after 1895 until 1919 when it was torn down to make way for a fur, hide and wool house by Ohsman & Sons Company of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Sontag's Hotel was started by M.J. Sontag at the corner of North Front and Washington.

John F. Wobshall had the Park House in 1897.

The Union Hotel opened in 1895 when Miss Carrie Ellefson leased the Union block and turned it into a hotel. There were 28 rooms upstairs and a barn in back.

During the 1930's Mankato was referred to as "Little Chicago," when gangsters including John Dillinger used to stick their machine guns out of hotel windows. Most of these gangsters stayed at the Rex Hotel. The Rex Hotel was located at 103 South Front.

Very little information was found on some of Mankato's early hotels. Besides those already mentioned, in 1871 there was the Dakota House (corner of 4th and Washington, proprietor Wm. Roehl), the Davis House (Front and Second), the Packard House (Second St. proprietor Porter Miner), the Barott House (L.G. Barott, proprietor, and in 1873 the Wells House (Walnut Street). In 1900, the Whalen House (126 E. Main, proprietor Darby J. Whalen) and in 1902, the Ryan Hotel (126 E. Main, Thos. Ryan proprietor).

Trains still pass through Mankato, but the passenger cars are gone. They have disappeared along with the small city hotels. An area has ended.

Julie Schrader

Sources

History of the Minnesota River Valley by Rev. Edward D. Neill, 1882

History of Blue Earth County by Thomas Hughes, 1909
Mankato - Its First Fifty Years 1903

Standard Atlas of Blue Earth County by George Ogle and Company, 1914

Various issues of the *Mankato Free Press and Review*
Mankato City Directories

Telephone interview with Colleen Smith

Note: Julie Schrader is currently collecting information for the Blue Earth County Heritage book, of which the above article will be included. Family business, church and school histories are needed as are old photographs. For information call Julie at 625-8056 or write Blue Earth County Heritage, 205 Ledlie Lane, Mankato, MN 56001.