

## Curation Notes continued

As a footnote to the above story, we'd like to inform our members of the method that we use at BECHS to identify the artifacts in our collection. All artifacts are assigned a registration number which is adhered to the object with india ink or a small cloth label. The number consists of either a two-part number written as follows, "518-27", or a three-part number written as follows, "76.21.102".

Some items from the museum collection have become separated from the collection for various reasons. For example, in 1968 local people provided museum staff with invaluable assistance when artifacts in the museum basement and Carriage House were covered with silt following an August rainstorm flood. Not long ago several Native American stone tools were returned to the museum by a man who assisted in that clean-up but had forgotten that he still had the artifacts. We ask that persons who come across items which are marked with a number resembling the BECHS registration number please call the museum.

## Norman Family Honored

The Blue Earth County Historical Society proudly announces the selection of the Joshua and Martha Norman family as the 1989 Heritage Award recipients for significant contributions to Blue Earth County. John E. Norman will be accepting the award for the family at the fourth Annual Heritage Dinner on Saturday, April 8, 1989, 6 p.m. at the Lake Crystal American Legion Club.

Past recipients of the Heritage Award are: the Williams family with Howard Williams accepting the award, the Morse family with Leslie Morse accepting the award and the Confer/Palmer family with Ogden P. Confer accepting the award. For more information about the Heritage Dinner contact the Society at 507-345-4154.

## Membership & Programs

-Barbara J. Lamson

### New Members

Welcome to the following new members:  
Rev. W. C. Gullixson, Mankato, MN  
Tim & Mary Brown, Lake Crystal, MN  
Bennette & Emma Pederson, Amboy, MN  
Clarence & Olga Vaubel, Mapleton, MN  
Rod & Moni Leas, St. Paul, MN

### Donations

Thanks to the following people who so generously donated to the Historical Society in the past month:  
Howard Williams  
John and Barbara Hughes  
Norwegian American Laget

Thanks to the following life members who donated to the Historical Society during the Holiday Season:  
Margaret C. Buck  
Lucila Gaetke  
Betty Wise

### Memorials

Memorials received during the past month:  
In memory of Thomas L. Moir from Dr. and Mrs. Raymond Sanford.

In memory of Ben Edwards from Arnold and Gertrude Gilbertson, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Owens and Evelyn Edwards.

In memory of Mrs. Imogene Vosbeck from Charles and Marilyn Barnard and Mardy and Dave Vosbeck.

In memory of Doreen Simondet from Eldon and Helen Jones.

In memory of J.J. Dobie from Mrs. J.J. Dobie.

In memory of Kelsey Johnson from Robert J. Buscher.

In memory of Ruth Palmer Confer from Mary Confer Koehler, Thomas and Stephanie Koehler.

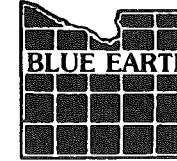
In memory of Ogden P. Confer from Mary Confer Koehler, Thomas and Stephanie Koehler.

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Please note that if we received your memorial, membership or donation after the 15th of the month when our newsletter goes to press, your name will appear in next month's newsletter.

Blue Earth County  
Historical Society  
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Mankato, MN 56001  
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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

## March 1989 Calendar of Events

- March 4 **Time and Taste, The Next One Hundred Years:** A Workshop for People Preserving Historic Buildings.
- March 11 **Young Historians Workshop.** Ukrainian Egg Decorating. 9 a.m. at the Heritage Center, call 345-4154 for reservations.
- March 14 **"Here We Go Round . . . WOMEN AT WORK".** Open House and exhibit in celebration of National Women's History Month. Free Admission from 12-5 p.m. at the Hubbard House.
- March **On exhibit at the Hubbard House, "Here We Go Round . . . WOMEN AT WORK",** throughout the month of March, Tues.-Sun., 1-5 p.m.

## Notes from the Director

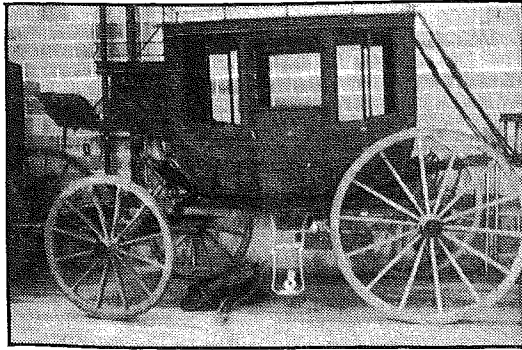
-Susan M. Monk-Kjos

Welcome to National Women's History Month at the Blue Earth County Historical Society. In recognition of this special month, we are hosting an open house on Tuesday, March 14 from 12-5 p.m. at the Hubbard House, 606 S. Broad St. in Mankato. The exhibit featured during the month will examine changes in women's lives over the last century. Admission is free during the afternoon of the open house. The Annual Heritage Dinner takes place on April 8 honoring the Norman family of Lake Crystal and will be held at the Lake Crystal American Legion. Give us a call for more information. Thank you to the people who have called and written with words of encouragement during our "Move to the Future". Special thanks to those of you who have sent donations to be used for BECHS operations. We really appreciate your help and understanding. Exhibit Gallery research on the prehistoric Blue Earth County theme has been initiated by Jill Stoffregan, a local artist and MSU student. Although we have a completed design plan for the gallery, much work needs to be done on the research and writing. I&S Engineers of Mankato have been hired to do engineering work in the new gallery which includes lighting, rewiring and extra air-conditioning. Mankato resident, Brady Mueller of the firm of Krech, O'Brien, Mueller and Wass, Inc. who completed the plans for the new Archives is now busy at work on the drawings for the gift shop which will be located on the old stage area, adjacent to the new exhibit gallery. We are so pleased to be working with talented people helping to preserve Blue Earth County history.

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# The Days of the Stage Coach - Part I

-Julie Schrader



**Stagecoach on exhibit in the Carriage House at the Blue Earth County Historical Society.**

The stagecoach was an important means of transportation in early Blue Earth County. It could travel into areas which had no navigable rivers or where navigation was impossible because of low water or ice in the winter. Because they were the only means available in many areas, they were important in forcing the development of a road system and the improvement of the few existing roads.

In 1853, the steamer Clarion occasionally brought mail to Mankato and afterwards Joseph R. Brown sent mail from Henderson to Mankato once every two weeks, which was usually brought on horseback. The first stage line established to Mankato was rather informal. George H. Marsh received a contract to carry mail weekly from Fort Snelling to Mankato. The first trip was made on foot as far as Traverse des Sioux and then down the river in an Indian canoe. A horse and light wagon was obtained for the return trip. He soon switched to two horses and a covered rig, which allowed him to carry passengers and light freight.

Within a year this service was increased to twice a week and in the summer of 1856 it was increased to three times a week. To have a regular mail service even once a week was a wonderful convenience to the early settlers in their isolation. It took from five to six weeks for a letter to reach New York and return. George Marsh and J.W. Babcock of Kasota entered into an agreement to carry mail between St. Paul and Sioux City using the military road between the two points and passing through Mankato.

There was no need for a post office or mail boxes then, for on mail day every resident in the settlement was present waiting for the arrival of the carrier. Postmaster P.K. Johnson just had to call the names and each person was on hand to receive their mail. If any-

one failed to respond Johnson would deliver their mail to them.

In 1856 a mail route was established from Mankato to Blue Earth City. By August 1, 1857, there were three stage lines carrying mail and passengers centered at Mankato. A daily line to St. Paul starting at South Bend, on which the fare was \$7.00, a tri-weekly line passing through South Bend, Garden City, Vernon and Shelbyville to Blue Earth City, with fare being \$4.00 and another tri-weekly line passing through Tivoli and the Winnebago Agency and then on to Owatonna on which the fare was \$5.00.

In 1857 stage lines also ran from Mankato to La-Crescent, Minnesota and another line went to Mitchell, Iowa. In 1858 a route from Mankato to Lake City, Minnesota was established.

The Valley Stage Company began with a relay of horses in November, 1860 and carried the mail from St. Paul to Mankato in one day.

With rapid accumulation of businesses in Mankato and other routes, the need for more stage lines was increased. In July, 1862, the first daily stage between Mankato and Winona was started by the J.C. Burbank Company. J.C. Burbank and Company was one of the major companies in Minnesota and had its start in 1854. The mail left from Mankato for Winona and for St. Paul every weekday at 4 a.m., for Blue Earth City and intermediate points three times a week at 6 a.m., and for New Ulm once a week. Four-horse stages were used on the main routes. There were two or three other routes in the county starting from other points.

Forty-eight horses and three coaches were required for the route from St. Paul to Mankato and the entire distance of eighty-five miles was performed in one day. Frequently more coaches were required and the teams compelled to do heavier duty and often two four-horse coaches were seen on the road. Between Winona and Mankato fifty-six horses and seven coaches were used. The trip of 140 miles took two days. During the late 1860s it was not uncommon on Sundays to see eight or ten coaches at Burbank's stables waiting for the order for Monday morning.

Burbank's major competitor, the Minnesota Stage Company, which was organized in 1858, had 1,400 miles of routes, 250 employees and 650 horses in 1867. Schedules were not always very convenient. Customers of the Minnesota Stage Company bound for Mankato in 1864 left St. Paul at 4:00 a.m.

**Continued next month**

# Young Historians

-Margaret-Greta Hurlbut

The Young Historians Workshop for March will be a hands on experience learning the art of Ukrainian Egg decorating. The class will observe the techniques used in formulating designs for the Ukrainian style eggs. The workshop will be Saturday, March 11, 1989, 9 a.m. at the Heritage Center, in Mankato. Please call the BECHS at 507/345-4154 for reservations and further information.

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The Young Historians workshops for children in grades 3-6 have been a huge success over the past two years. These classes are paid for in part by the Jefferson Memorial, started by Grace Jefferson of St. Paul, Minnesota, in memory of her parents, originally from Blue Earth County. The class has always been free and open to as many people as we could hold. Many times we have had to turn people away because the classes were full. We are trying to make the workshops larger but we still want to give the students personal attention. The February workshop was offered two times, both 9 and 11 a.m. to try to handle all of the children who have been put on waiting lists for previous classes.

Unfortunately, the cost of supplies has increased in the past year and we are now forced to begin charging admission to non-members of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. Of course, those of you who are members will continue to be admitted FREE! If you are not a member, the charge will be \$1.50, payable at the time of the class. However, we will not turn anyone away that cannot afford the fee.

We are determined to keep offering the Young Historians workshops and rather than reduce the quality of the classes, we will begin charging this fee in March of 1989.



## Here We Go Round . . . Women At Work



Please join the Blue Earth County Historical Society at the Hubbard House, 606 S. Broad St., Mankato, MN, for an exhibit contrasting women in the workplace. The display will feature household artifacts from pre-electric history, plus a view of 20th century women at work.

In celebration and honor of National Women's History month, coffee and cookies will be served at an Open House the afternoon of March 14, 1989, admission is free.

The Women At Work exhibit will be on display through the month of March. For more information please call the Historical Society at 507/345-4154.

# Curation Notes

Audrey K. Burmeister-Hicks

" . . . we'll probably never see them again."  
The people of Blue Earth County were shocked and saddened when the county museum was burglarized and a dozen Native American items were stolen in September 1974. Within the month several other Minnesota museums also lost Native American artifacts to burglars; many small museums did not have the protection of alarmed security systems at that time.

State law enforcement officials saw a pattern to the break-ins and speculated that the artifacts were stolen by professionals who would sell the artifacts out-of-state. Minnesota Historical Society spokesman, Don Coddington, said " . . . we'll probably never see them (the artifacts) again".

Among the items stolen from BECHS was a moccasin whose mate was inadvertently left behind by the thieves. The pair of moccasins had been in the museum since 1936 when they were acquired from amateur anthropologist and collector, Frank Swain of Lake Crystal. Swain had purchased the pair from "the son of a chief at the Sisseton (Dakota) Reservation".

The BECHS collection contains several pair of Native American moccasins but this pair, with its beautiful beaded bear claw pattern, is one of the finest examples of Native American beadwork in our possession. When MSU Anthropologist Michael Scullin designed an exhibit of Native American clothing in the Hubbard House in the 1970s, he included the single moccasin in the exhibit in spite of the lack of its mate.

Last August a tourist from Michigan visited the Hubbard House and "was surprised" when he saw the single moccasin in the exhibit. He excitedly explained to the museum staff that he was certain that our moccasin was the mate to a moccasin he purchased from a South Dakota man 15 to 20 years ago.

In the following months the Michigan man and the museum staff exchanged correspondence and it was determined that his moccasin was, indeed, the missing moccasin. The Michigan man generously offered to give the moccasin to us and we received it in January. Inside the moccasin is written the number "68-4", which is the BECHS registration number for the pair of moccasins.

In 1974 it was predicted we'd never see the moccasin again. In response to the burglary, Ken Berg of *The Free Press* (Mankato) wrote, "robbing the public of its cultural heritage is among the most despicable of crimes". In 1989, through the most generous of acts, this piece of our Native American cultural heritage has been returned to the public.