

Heritage Award to honor Joshua and Martha Norman family

-Barbara J. Lamson



Joshua and Martha Norman Family. L-R Standing: John A. Norman, Hugh Norman, Joan Norman, George W. Norman, Thomas C. Norman. L-R Seated: Martha Norman, Elizabeth Norman, Joshua Norman, ca. 1880s.

Joshua Norman was born in 1824 in Bridgetown, Winsford Sommersetshire, England. He immigrated to Canada with his parents and family in about 1833.

Soon after arriving in Canada, Joshua's parents became ill and died. Joshua, only nine years old at the time, lived with a family of Quakers, coming to Watertown, Wisconsin in 1851.

On February 22, 1853, Joshua married Martha Hughes. To this union six children were born: John P., Joan, George W., Hugh, Thomas C. and Elizabeth A.

In 1882 two of Joshua and Martha Normans' sons, John and George, came to the Lake Crystal area to start their farming careers. A few years later they were joined by brothers Hugh and Tom, and sister Elizabeth and her husband. After retiring from farming in Wisconsin, Joshua and Martha moved to Lake Crystal as well. Descendants of the Joshua and Martha Norman family continue to live in Blue Earth County where they are involved in agriculture as well as various other businesses and professions.

Members of the Norman family have provided a rich heritage to the residents of Blue Earth County. Not only have they been "tillers of the soil,"

they have also served on township, church and school boards; they've been active with youth and agricultural organizations; and they've held numerous political offices. They have indeed enriched the lives of Blue Earth County residents.

The Fourth Annual Heritage Dinner honoring the Norman family will be held Saturday, April 8, 1989 at 6 p.m. at the American Legion Club in Lake Crystal, MN. For more information about the Heritage Dinner contact the Society at 507/345-4154.

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

NEWSLETTER

April 1989 Calendar of Events

- April 8 *"Women At Work"* exhibit continues through the first week of April.
Heritage Dinner honoring the Joshua and Martha Norman family.
- April 11 **Volunteer Recognition at the Mankato Mall.**
- April 15 **Young Historians Workshop: The Art of Stained Glass.** The workshop will include instruction, demonstration, hands-on experience, and historical background about the art of stained glass. The class will meet at the Hubbard House, 606 S. Broad St., where they can view stained glass from the early 1900s. Class begins at 9 a.m. Call 507/345-4154 for reservations, members are free, non-members \$1.50.

Notes from the Director

-Susan M. Monk-Kjos

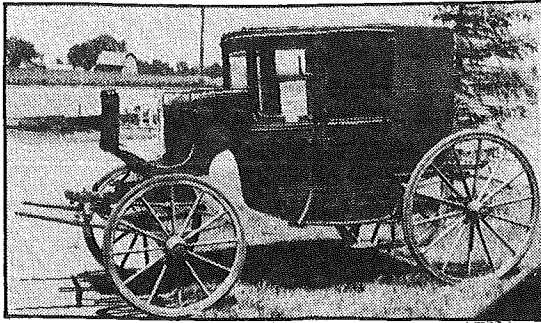
Thanks to all of the hearty Minnesota folks who came out in a blizzard for an Open House celebrating the exhibit, "Women at Work". Although the wind was blowing and rain, ice and snow were falling, many of you were treated to coffee, cookies and free admission to the Hubbard House. We appreciate your support. Because so many of you could not get to the exhibit during the snowy month of March we are extending the exhibit schedule to include the first week of April. I encourage you to stop by the Hubbard House, Tuesday-Sunday, 1-5 p.m. and see the creative exhibit prepared by Margaret Hurlbut. Heritage Dinner time is upon us which means that spring can't be far behind. All of the garden watchers are anxious for the first glimpses of tulips in the Hubbard House Victorian gardens. Construction work has been completed in the new Archives and some of the furniture has arrived. The rest of the new furnishings should be in place by mid-May. Administrative office furniture has arrived and Barb Lamson and myself will begin our move to the Heritage Center in the next month. Throughout all of the changes the Hubbard House will continue to remain open. Historical Society committees are busier than ever planning the year ahead. If you are interested in volunteering your time and talents on a special project or committee, such as the Membership Committee or Programs Committee, give me a call. We are always looking for input from our members. Due to the snowstorm on March 4, the Historic Preservation Workshop "Time and Taste: The Next One Hundred Years" has been rescheduled for June 17, 1989. Special thanks go to all of the BECHS volunteers during Volunteer Recognition Week in April. We really appreciate your help!

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Edited by Susan Monk-Kjos

The Days of the Stage Coach - Part II

-Julie Schrader



A carriage now housed in the Carriage House of the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

The weekly mail service from Mankato to New Ulm was increased to a tri-weekly in January, 1866, for which Lewis D. Lewis was contractor. There had been for some time weekly mail to Mapleton, Sterling, Liberty, Cobb River, Watonwan, Will Creek and Pleasant Mound.

Travel by stage often took days. In 1859 the **Mankato Weekly Record** informed its readers that a new line was taking passengers to LaCrescent:

"Our citizens generally are not aware that we have now a direct weekly line of stages between Mankato and LaCrescent, shorter by three or four days and cheaper by five or six dollars, than the present circuitous route by St. Paul. Mr. Davis' stages leave every Sunday afternoon, connecting at Owatonna, Monday, with two lines direct for LaCrescent via Rochester. The distance is only 150 miles and the fare \$6.50. From Mankato passengers are landed at LaCrescent in two and a half days time.

In February, 1860, the **Mankato Weekly Record** contained an advertisement for the same route. The stage left at 6:00 a.m. on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Travel time to Owatonna was nine hours, to Faribault twelve hours and to LaCrescent three days. The stage line also advertised good covered coaches and, if there was considerable snow, covered sleighs "with plenty of robes."

Travel by stage was far from comfortable. There was no standardization in the coaches used. The biggest problem was to get the passengers to their destination as rapidly as possible. Therefore every form of conveyance was used, from clumsy lumber wagons with boards laid across the frame for seats, to the magnificent Concord coaches, built in Concord, Massachusettes.

The coach drivers were picturesque chaps, hardy and tough. Their occupation at times could be dangerous. The stage lines carried the United States mails and express and money, so there was always the chance of ambush and robbery. Accidents were frequent. Problems such as harness breaking, springs snapped by rough going, runaways and delays caused by getting stuck in the mud or huge snowbanks.

The first stage barns were located in the stables of the Mankato House and later in the stables of the Clifton House. In 1865, the Burbank Company purchased a lot where the post office now stands and erected a barn.

Since the distance traveled by one set of horses was from twelve to fourteen miles, a settlement naturally sprang up at these intervals. It was necessary for the stage lines to maintain stables for the extra horses for feed and for all the material requisite for the business. With the passing of the stage lines and the coming of the railroad, many of these stopping places faded from existence.

The stage lines could not and did not attempt to compete with the railroads. The life of the stage coach business was short lived. The period when the coaches were important to the transportation of the area extended from 1854 to 1870. By the 1870s the railroads were stretching their lines of steel through the county and the days of the prosperity of the stage lines were numbered. After the coming of the railroads, the stage line still served the outlying areas which the railroads couldn't serve. Stages also carried passengers to and from the railroad.

Sources:

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

History of Blue Earth County by Thomas Hughes, 1909

Mankato and Blue Earth County by Wm. B. Griswold, 1867

History of Mankato Transportation, 1852-1870, by Glen E. Reichwald, 1963.

Mankato Weekly Record, Nov. 15, 1859 and Feb. 21, 1860

Mankato Free Press, Nov. 6, 1931 and June 17, 1955

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. Call 625-8056 for more information or write Blue Earth County Heritage, 205 Ledlie Lane, Mankato, MN 56001.

Minnesotans Helping Minnesotans

"Minnesotans Helping Minnesotans" is the state-wide theme for 1989 Volunteer Recognition Week, April 9-15. A celebration is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11, 12 noon at the Downtown Mankato Mall. Please stop by and help celebrate the wonderful work volunteers do for all of us. Although the small staff of the Historical Society works very hard, we would not have accomplished all that we did this past year without volunteers. The staff and board of the Historical Society offer our heartfelt thanks to all of the volunteers who work so hard to preserve Blue Earth County history.

Mailing Labels

Many of you have noticed that we are now producing our mailing labels with the aid of a computer. Our bookkeeper, Mary Brown, has been working for the past couple of months computerizing our billing systems and mailing labels. Please take a moment and check your mailing label on the front of your newsletter. If we have your name or address incorrect please give us a call or send us your label with appropriate corrections.

Roosevelt School Donation

Special thanks to the students of Roosevelt School in Mankato who gave the Historical Society their recent nickel collection donated from the entire student body. Nearly \$50.00 was collected to help us preserve Blue Earth County history. We thank all of the Roosevelt students and faculty!

Tourism Advisory Committee

Lt. Governor Marlene Johnson has announced the Tourism Advisory Committee for 1989. Eleven individuals were named to the committee for the first time. BECHS Executive Director, Susan Monk-Kjos has been appointed to this 32-member committee to serve a one year term.

Mapleton Area Campaign

Blue Earth County Historical Society has received additional donations for their endowment fund. The following Mapleton area residents are recent contributors:

Claire M. Bach
L.G. & Lois Barott
Larry & Rita Caron
Robert & Elaine Cramer
Leonard & Marie Gartner
Francis Landsteiner
Ronald Newell
Gerald Proehl
Clarence & Olga Vaubel
Norma Ward
Kunkel Electric Service
Eric & Ester Bade
Larry & Carrie Barott
Donald Cramer
Mrs. J. J. Dobie
James Keller
John W. Lester
Richard & Patricia Nienow
Jeffrey J. Taylor
Calvin & Margaret Ward
Maple River Burns Club

These endowment funds will be used to preserve Blue Earth County's past for the future. It is through the generosity of the Blue Earth County residents and businesses that a quality museum is possible.

Donations

Thanks to the following people who so generously donated to the Historical Society in the past month:

Roosevelt School students, Mankato
Betty Cords
Hugo F. Sellstrom

New Members:

Welcome to the following new members:
Mandy Kirtz, Lake Crystal
Mrs. Ben Jones, Mankato

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.