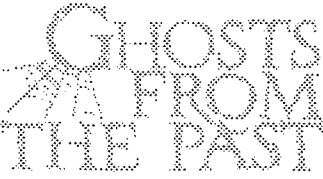


Program Update

Jane Kolars

Ghosts from the Past

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated in the fourth annual *Ghosts from the Past*: those who portrayed characters, donated food items and props, character researchers and all who attended. Through your willingness to volunteer, *Ghosts* again has proved to be both a community success and a profitable fund-raising event for the Historical Society.

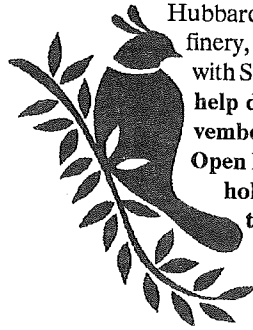


Non-Profit Organization Day

Visit the BECHS booth at the Mankato Mall, Saturday, November 17th. We will be selling *Heritage Apples* -- apples smothered in hot carmel -- and memberships. **If you would like to sign up for a two hour shift at the booth, please call Jane Kolars at the Heritage Center.**

Holiday Open House

Plan to attend the Holiday Open House at the Hubbard House on Sunday, December 2nd, 2 - 6pm. See the Hubbard House decorated in holiday finery, enjoy entertainment and a visit with Santa. **Volunteers are needed to help decorate the house in mid November, and to host on the day of the Open House. If you have hand-made holiday craft items you would like to donate for sale at the Holiday Open House, call the Heritage Center Gift Shop.**



Former Mankatoan and St. Cloud State graduate student John Haack is seeking area residents willing to fill out a questionnaire on 'Historic Preservation in Mankato since 1960's Urban Renewal.' Persons interested may receive a questionnaire at the Heritage Center or by writing Mr. Haack at USPO, Maple Lake, MN 55358.

At our Gift Shops...

The 1990 *Sandon Plate* is now available. This year's scene is 'Old Mankato High' (pre-1941). Due to popular demand, we have also replenished our supply of *Man on a Mission* video tapes. Remember the BECHS gift shops for all your holiday gift needs.

Membership News

-Mary Brown

General Donations

Thanks to the following for donations this past month:
F. Beneta Just, Mankato
Elizabeth Confer, Mankato
Town of LeRay

Memorials

In memory of Paul Lyons given by
Don & Marge Meredith.
In memory of Louise Logan given by
Mildred Thro
Mr. & Mrs. Lee Snilsberg
Miss Dorothy Good
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Groenke
Ken Bunde
Mr. & Mrs. Waldo Jaax.
In memory of Wreatha Roos given by
Dean & Ruth Wykoff.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members:
Mrs. W. F. Vosbeck, Alexandria, VA
John Just Sr., Mankato
Vee Williams, Mankato

New Sustaining Life Members

Many thanks to the following Life Member for upgrading to an annual Sustaining Life Membership:
L. G. Barott, Mapleton

Please Note: 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
415 Cherry Street
Mankato, Minnesota 56001
(507)345-5566

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Permit No. 343



BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

November 1990

Calendar of Events

- Nov. 10 *Young Historians -- How a Pumpkin becomes a Pie: Making a pumpkin pie from scratch. Heritage Center kitchen, 9:30am. Call (507)345-5566 for reservations.*
- Nov. 12 *Offices Closed -- Veteran's Day.*
- Nov. 17 *Non-Profit Organization Day -- Mankato Mall, 1 - 5pm.*
- Nov. 22 *Offices Closed -- Thanksgiving Day.*

BECHS Notes

Audrey Burmeister-Hicks

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: The Heritage Center's Research Library is adding Saturday afternoon hours beginning November 3. Family researchers and history buffs will now have access to the archives collection Tuesday through Saturday from 1 - 5pm.

The fall tour season is in full swing with busloads of energetic children and inquisitive adult travelers from Minnesota and northern Iowa visiting the Hubbard House and Heritage Center. Hubbard House tours offer a glimpse at life in a turn-of-the-century home, while the new Heritage Center Museum features exhibits of Blue Earth County encompassing prehistoric times, Native Americans, arrival of settlers, changing farmlife, and developing industry.

BECHS staff members, Jane Fossen working out of the Heritage Center and Holly Patterson at Hubbard House, coordinate tours. A trained and dedicated staff of educational docents provide the visitors with a meaningful and entertaining learning experience. The guide staff consists of Kathryn Hanson, Kari Howard, Melissa McNea, Laura Schnabel, Sharon Sens, Bryce Stenzel, Kiesha Swanson, Russell Traurig and Phyllis Votca. These individuals disseminate knowledge of the past and inspire visitors to explore the ways of our predecessors.

OLD MAIN

from Mankato Normal School to Old Main Village

In 1864 the only teacher training institution, or *normal school*, in Minnesota was located at Winona. That year a survey was conducted to ascertain the number of teachers and their qualifications. Out of 1888 teachers only 372 were qualified. That is, they were 18 years of age and had completed two years of normal instruction beyond the eighth grade.

Because of the results of this survey, the legislature decided to add two more normal schools -- one at St. Cloud, one at Mankato. Each was to raise \$5000.00 which would be matched by the state.

Judge Daniel Buck and other interested Mankato citizens raised the necessary funds. Even though the Normal School building had not been constructed, the first classes met in the Methodist Episcopal Church in October, 1868 with twenty-eight students and three faculty members including Professor Gage, principal.

By November the student body had grown to forty-eight, another faculty member was added, and larger quarters were needed. The Normal School was moved to the second floor of the Shaubut Store across from the Saulpaugh Hotel. The facility was composed of four rooms -- two for classrooms and two to house the model classes. **The Normal School remained there until 1870 when forty-two Normal School students and forty pupils of the model school proudly moved to the newly completed Normal School building on Fifth Street -- the first Old Main.** The building was constructed of brick, 126 x 116 feet, three stories above the basement, and embellished with two tall towers.

Professor Gage resigned as principal in 1872 and Miss Julie Sears, who had been assistant principal, was promoted to principal. In spite of petitions by Mankato residents and walk-outs by students, she was dismissed without written cause after one year of service. Mr. C.W.G. Hyde, who had been assis-

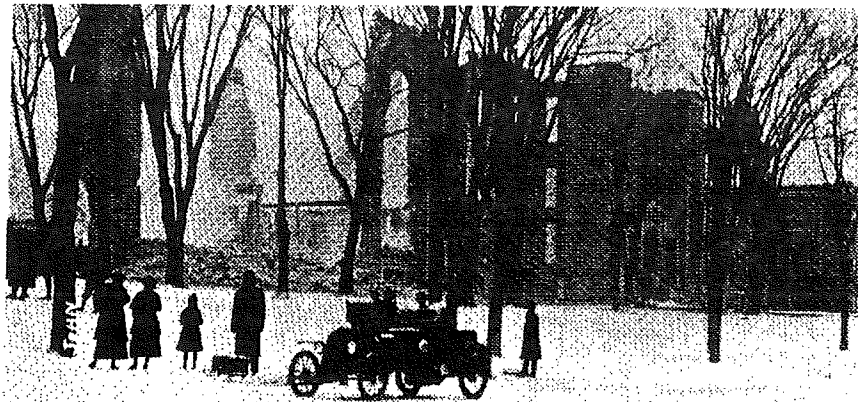
tant principal, became principal for one year.

Professor Edward Searing served as principal from 1880 - 1898. By 1891, the enrollment had grown to five hundred. Many of them were men training to accept positions as superintendents in city schools or county superintendents of schools. In 1893, the building became too small and the legislature appropriated monies to build wings on two sides of the building. By 1898, a student could complete two years of high school plus two years of normal training.

Charles H. Cooper served as president from 1899 - 1931. Once again the building became overcrowded in the early 1900's. Funds were appropriated by the legislature to build a three floor annex at the south end of Old Main. This was completed in 1909 and the model school was moved into this annex where it remained until 1957 when it was moved to upper campus.

In 1921 the Mankato Normal School's name was changed to Mankato Teachers College and with it came a four year training program which earned a Bachelor of Education degree.

On February 5, 1922, Mankato Teachers College suffered a severe set-back. Fire of unknown origin destroyed Old Main in a matter of hours. The firemen saved the annex by placing sheets of asbestos over the windows. Despite the loss, classes were resumed in three days in area churches, dormitory



The aftermath of the fire which destroyed the first Old Main, Feb. 5, 1922.

parlors, and other donated space. **In 1923, a new Old Main was erected on the same site and stands there yet today.**

In 1932, Dr. Frank McElroy became president. Under his direction the curriculum was broadened from 135 to 270 courses by 1946. The number of staff members rose to 87 and the student enrollment reached 800. A new physical education plant was built in 1937 which, with its athletic field, was ranked best in the state.

When Dr. McElroy retired in 1946, Dr. Clarence Crawford became president. He has been given credit for the college's tremendous growth. He expanded lower campus to its limit and gained funds to develop upper campus. On lower campus the first men's dormitory was built in 1952. On upper campus Wilson Campus School was built in 1957. A women's dormitory named Crawford Center opened in 1959 and another dormitory, McElroy Center, in 1961. Highland Arena and Blakeslee Stadium became part of upper campus in 1963. The student body grew from 800 in 1946 to more than 12,000 when Dr. McElroy retired in 1965.

Dr. James Nickerson began his duties as president in September 1966. During his tenure more buildings were constructed on Upper Campus: Gage Center A&B in 1965 and 1967; Armstrong Hall, the Performing Arts Building and Memorial Library in 1965; A.B. Morris Hall in 1968; and the Centennial Union and Trafton Center in 1972.

When Dr. Douglas Moore became president in January 1974, he faced several problems: declining enrollment, over-supply of college graduates, too many staff members, tightening of money from the legislature and a divided cam-

pus. He had one office in Old Main and one in the Centennial Union. This arrangement made him less accessible than he desired to be. He became a strong proponent for the entire college activities being moved to Upper Campus. **By 1978 Lower Campus was closed.**

As the years went by Nichols Hall and Lincoln Library became office buildings and the physical education plant was demolished. Old Main sat empty and deserted, deteriorating rapidly from lack of occupancy and stripped of its remaining treasures even to the

copper that adorned its towers. Mankato city officials, interested groups and individuals weighed the decision to demolish or to renovate.

Through the efforts of Old Main Limited Partnership the State Review Board of Minnesota considered the nomination of Old Main to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 10, 1983 meeting. It was added to the Register in 1984.

Renovating Old Main into a unique and beautiful 85 unit retirement community began in 1987. It was aptly named

Old Main Village. Its first residents arrived in June 1988. Old Main lives again!

Gail Palmer

From a talk given at Old Main Village by Ms. Palmer, a MTC graduate & former MSC/MSU faculty member.

