

5th Annual Heritage Dinner

Mr. George Everett Brett, son of Cyrus H. and Mary Hunter Brett, was born in Strong, Franklin County, Maine, November 23, 1845. After being educated in Maine he came west to work in the dry goods business. In 1868, when Mankato was only 16 years old, Mr. Brett opened the "Empire Store." The 20 x 22 modest dry goods store sold dress goods, trimmings, and fancy dry goods.

In 1873, George E. Brett married Miss Lizzie E. Maxfield. Three children were born to the Brett's: James Edwin, Mary, and Frank Everett. This family begins the Brett's Department Store legacy. It was Mr. Brett's "one great ambition and dream of life to give southern Minnesota a store . . . more than a store, an institution that would stand out as an example of real service to the community."

In 1895, Brett's introduced 'ready-made' dresses to Mankato, an innovation "on which many looked askance." The years between 1896 and 1958 saw the Empire Store become George E. Brett Incorporated. During this time period, structural improvements were made to the new building, including elevators, telephones, pneumatic vacuum tube systems, escalators, and air conditioning. In addition, branch stores were opened and three presidents of the George E. Brett Company came and went. In the 1960's, Brett's Department Store began carrying mens clothing, fabrics remained the mainstay through the 70's, and in 1978 the downtown mall was completed as part of the urban renewal project.

Now, five generations later, George E. Brett's dream has grown and expanded into a successful enterprise. Brett's Department Store is a leader in both the fashion and business world.

Through the years, the Brett - Taylor families have also been leaders in the Blue Earth County area, involved in civic organizations, politics, education, sports, music, church and community welfare.

1990 represents the 122nd year of the George E. Brett Company and the Brett - Taylor families involvement in the Mankato Community.

Please join the Blue Earth County Historical Society at the 5th Annual Heritage Dinner as we honor the Brett - Taylor families for signifi-

cant contributions to Blue Earth County history. The Heritage Dinner will be held on Tuesday, April 17, at the Mankato Golf Club. A social hour will begin at 6:00 pm, dinner at 7:00 pm, followed by a captivating and memorable program of fun and fashion. For ticket reservations and more information, please contact Greta at the Historical Society, 345-5566.

Where Would We Be Without. . .

Volunteer involvement has a unique place in our history. There are so many people who, over the years, have given the programs at the Historical Society their time and special talents. On behalf of the Program Committee and Historical Society staff, this is a special salute to you who have served us in any capacity. We thank you one and all! "I GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS!"

Greta Hurlbut, Program Director



Volunteer Recognition Week April 22-28, 1990

Minnesota Office on Volunteer Services, Department of Administration - 15th Anniversary

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
415 Cherry St.
Mankato, MN 56001

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

April 1990 Calendar of Events

- Apr. 1- Jun. 1 **Heritage Center entrance under construction**
- Apr. 7 **Young Historians Workshop**, "Old Fashioned Paper Twist Dolls".
- Apr. 17 **5th Annual Heritage Dinner**
- Apr. 22-28 **Volunteer Recognition Week**

Notes from the Director

-Susan M. Monk-Kjos

Welcome to early spring in Blue Earth County. The heavy rains we received in March have started to green up the lawns and gardens at the Hubbard House. Garden watchers have already stopped by to check on the progress of the spring flowers. It won't be long now. . . Speaking of the Hubbard House, Jane Fossen of rural St. Clair accepted the Receptionist position and began work in February. Stop by and visit with Jane, we're excited to have her on staff. Construction of the Heritage Center's new entrance is scheduled to begin the first week of April, weather permitting. During the two months of this project the Heritage Center door (Cherry St.) will not be usable. Visitors to the Heritage Center will need to use the Summit Center door on fifth street and take the elevator or stairs up to our floor. We apologize for any inconvenience but assure you it will be worth the effort when the new facade is finished. Landscaping the new entrance will begin this summer. Construction of the stone canopy will be completed by June 1. It's going to be great! The exhibit cases for the new gallery will arrive at the Heritage Center mid-June and construction of the exhibit gallery will begin at that time. The Grand Opening of the exhibit gallery and new entrance will be combined with the yearly Annual Meeting and are tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, August 21, 1990. We are nearly finished with Heritage Center renovations and almost ready to turn our sights on restoration of the Hubbard House. If you have questions about these exciting projects, please don't hesitate to give me a call at 507/345-5566. We love to have your input! Don't forget - Volunteer Recognition Week is April 22-28, 1990. Volunteers -we thank you!

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Edited by Susan Monk-Kjos

Curation Notes

-Audrey K. Burmeister-Hicks

*Light is the task when many share the toil.
Homer, ILIAD*

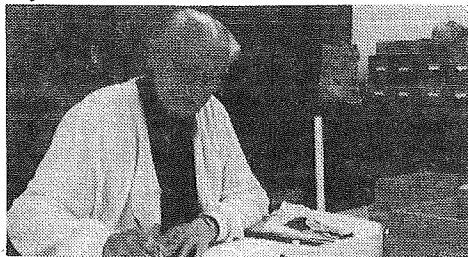
Managing and caring for a collection of thousands of artifacts and archival materials is an enormous task. Providing assistance to over 700 researchers a year requires untold hours of time. Computerizing the historical data of a county's population for the past 150 years is a formidable undertaking. Cataloging the ongoing activities of the people of the entire county seems beyond possibility.

Through the "toil" of the BECHS Collections Department volunteers, BECHS is carrying out these endeavors. During the past year the following individuals have contributed generously of their time working with the artifacts and in the archives at BECHS: Orville Jensen, Alma Severson, Margaret DePyper, Ora Ohlenkamp, Bob Vaubel all of Mankato; Georgia Schultz of Madison Lake; and Elmer Goodrich of Pemberton.

Recently they have been joined by Harold Schuchard, Ardie Wall, and Lori Lloyd, all of Mankato, who are volunteering as data entry clerks. We welcome Harold, Ardie, and Lori to the Society

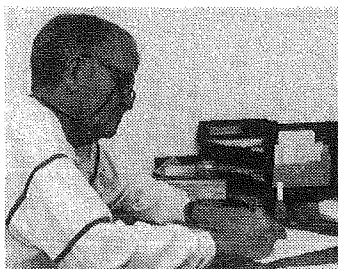
Another group of volunteers which is a vital part of the Collections staff is the BECHS Collections Committee. The Committee, which is appointed by the Board of Trustees, studies issues related to the artifact and archives collections and makes recommendations to the Board. The Committee consists of: Tricia Nienow, Mapleton; Dr. Bert Burns and Barbara Jackowell, of Mankato; John Christenson, Good Thunder; Janice Brown, Waseca; Michael Scullin, Garden City; and Joe Kubicek, Lake Crystal.

The above individuals "lighten" the task of the BECHS staff, enabling the Society to achieve its goals in the Collections area. They deserve recognition and the thanks of all Blue Earth County's citizens for their efforts in preserving our county's history.



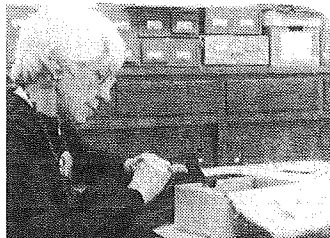
Orv Jensen records historical & descriptive information for an artifact.

Ken Knutson, BECHS Registrar, documents an incoming artifact.

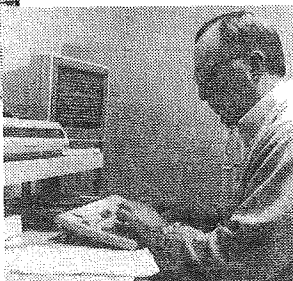


Georgia Schultz indexes a county newspaper.

Margaret DePyper sews an identification tag to a textile.



Alma Severson computerizes county cemetery transcriptions.



Harold Schuchard enters artifact information into the computer.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

-Mary Brown

General Donations

Walter H. strand Post 950, Mankato
Archer-Daniels-Midland Foundation, Decatur, IL
Women of Medo, Mapleton

New Members

Carlyn Severson, Mankato; Don Kvasnicka, Mankato; A Plus Security, Inc., Mankato; Harvey & Beverly Hesse, Pemberton; Gary Schweim, Good Thunder; Mrs. Glen Burlison, Mankato; Gerald Hoppe, St. Clair; Darrell Schubbe, Pemberton; Hugh Belgard Family, Garden City; Victoria Busch, Mankato; Mr. & Mrs. Gleamon Cansler, Mankato; Mrs. Leona Schweim, Mankato; Mrs. Mavis Day Wieland, New Prague; Steve Fralish Family, Eagle Lake; Mark Halverson, Mankato; Craig sinning, Mankato; Janet & Chuck Morken, Mankato; Margaret Ganzel, Mankato; G.M. Hoxie, Glencoe, MN; Gail Thompson, Lake Crystal; Eva Hoffman, Mankato; LoRae Dressler, Lake Crystal; Dr. & Mrs. John Norris, Mankato; Edward & Diann Olson, Mankato

New Sustaining Life Members

Michael Scullin, Garden City

Memorials

In memory of Lawrence Fowler given by the Literary Club of Mankato

We would like to thank Scott Snell and Snell Motors for their assistance in moving a loom that was recently donated to our collection.

PROGRAM UPDATE

-Greta Hurlbut



DON'T FORGET
ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY
PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 12, Hubbard House

During the last two months not a great deal of work has been possible in the garden. But, with the coming of spring, gardeners will be in a frenzy! Your greenhouses will fast become overcrowded with seeds of various flowering plants, from half-hardy annuals to herbaceous plants whose seed is too fine to sow out of doors. Plants such as geraniums, which have been kept over winter, are now watered and encouraged to grow. In the flower garden, now is the time to lift and divide. **Please** take a moment to set aside any extra perennials that you would like to donate to the Annual Plant Sale. Perennials are a **HOT** item at this sale. If you have any questions or would like more information about this event, please

contact Greta at the Historical Society, 345-5566.

WARNING!

Family History Research May Be Addicting!
Did your forebears emigrate from Europe to America? Were they Poles, Russians, Germans or some other West European nationality? And did they leave for America via Hamburg between 1850 and 1914? The Family History Research Workshop held at the Heritage Center in March attempted to answer these types of questions and provide extensive information to the beginning researcher. Thanks to Audrey Burmeister-Hicks, Janet Larson, and Craig Roberts, the workshop was a huge success!



Workshop participants, Monday, March 5.

Young Historians April Workshop

April 7, 1990

OLD FASHIONED PAPER TWIST DOLLS
Before the coming of machinery, toys were either made in the home or produced as a sideline by ordinary tradesmen. Wooden dolls in England have a long history. The Victoria and Albert Museum has one dating from the periods 1695-1710. On Saturday, April 7, 1:00 pm, at the Heritage Center, the Blue Earth County Historical Society will present the April young Historians Workshop: Old Fashioned Paper Twist Dolls. Steve Schultz of Good Thunder, will instruct the class as they each make an Old Fashioned doll of their own. The 10" dolls are created from a type of twisted paper, embellished with lace, pearls, moss, and grapevine wreaths. For reservations and more information, please contact Greta at the Historical Society, 507/345-5566. The workshop is FREE to Society members, \$1.50 for non-members.