

The Blue Earth County **HISTORIAN**

SUMMER 2023
Vol. 29 No. 3



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The Blue Earth County HISTORIAN

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Volume 29, Number 3

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COVER PHOTO:

People's Fair annual music festival at Mankato's Sibley Park, 1995. Learn more on page 5.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Music is in the air, quite literally. On July 1, BECHS opened its newest exhibit "Music and Memories: A Look Back at Mankato's Music Scene," and both the music and the memories have been going on ever since. It is such a treat to hear people reminiscing and sharing about bands, musicians, venues, events, songs and moments. Special thank you to Greg Duffy for collecting all of this local music memorabilia over the years and allowing BECHS to showcase his pieces, which have also inspired others to bring in theirs. A true collaborative exhibit, almost like a jam session, when artists come together impromptu and create beautiful music together. The exhibit is ever changing with new items arriving all the time. It will be on display through December at the History Center.



Memories of Music, July 2023

You'll notice this issue is also music themed. From a photo of People's Fair on the cover to the Kid's Corner at the end. And music is on our minds for upcoming programs too, including a return of the popular Historic Pub Crawl—a history walking tour with a musical twist. Check out the ad on page 11 for more information and grab your tickets.

It has been a great summer season at the History Center and Hubbard House. We are finally seeing attendance comparable to pre-Covid. We welcomed two new Hubbard House assistants this year—Michael Brandt and Sierra Coy. They are doing a fantastic job leading tours and entertaining guests. The ever popular Medicine Show will be back on the Hubbard grounds the afternoon of Saturday, August 26. It's an immersive living history experience into the world of the old time travelling snake oil salesmen and medicine shows. It's a great family adventure into the past. The Hubbard House will be open through Labor Day weekend and then again in December.

It's hard to already be thinking ahead to Fall, but that will be a whole new season of exciting things ahead for us. Mankato has been chosen as the host city for the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Conference September 27-29! BECHS is hosting the opening reception at the History Center on the 27th. We are very excited to have our colleagues and fellow historic preservationists (saving the built environment) here in our community. The opening reception festivities will also be open to BECHS members. More details to come. Fall also brings our annual fundraising event—*A Night at the Speakeasy*. This year it will be in a new location—Sky One Eleven, which is the top floor of the Eide Bailly Center in downtown Mankato. Special thanks to our host Neubau Holdings. Tickets and reserved tables are on sale now. Don't dilly-dally, get your tickets today! It will definitely be a night to remember. Hope to see you there.

BOLD VISION, BOLD STEP, BOLD HISTORY HEROES

In November of 2021, the Blue Earth County Historical Society shared our BOLD vision to expand the History Center. That's a big bold vision that will take many steps, partners, dollars and planning. To achieve this vision, we realized early on that we need to take small steps to realize the dream. So, the first BOLD step is to purchase the house next to the History Center, to allow for future expansion. We're happy to report that BOLD Step #1 has been accomplished thanks for BOLD History Heroes like you!

As of August 1, 2023, BECHS is the official owner of the house, free and clear, thanks to funds donated since 2021. The house was built around 1906 and has served as rental property for the past 50 years. We will be working closely with preservationists to salvage architectural and building materials that could be used for other's



projects. Then Holtmeier Construction will lead the demolition and recycling of the house.

Why demo the house? Poor condition, we are not in the position to be landlords, and we need the space for the expansion. Which brings us to Step #2—new parking lot and exterior improvements; more long-term investment in the property.

New Parking Lot will include:

- Increased parking from 37 to 46 spots with 8 near the entrance (only 3 now)
- Two parking lot entrances off of South 5th Street
- Pollinator gardens, patios, and bike rack
- Replacement of 30+ year old parking lot which is falling apart and unsafe
- Parking lot lighting for neighborhood safety

This next BOLD step will require BOLD History Heroes once the final details and budget can be announced. Thank you sincerely for believing in this BOLD vision and these BOLD steps!

NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

New Location, Same Speakeasy Fun!

Step back in time to the Roaring 20s, the era of Prohibition, Flappers, and Gangsters at ***A Night at the Speakeasy*** at Sky One Eleven on **Saturday, October 14** hosted by **Neubau Holdings**. With its unique historic vibe, the *Speakeasy* has been the Blue Earth County Historical Society's signature fundraising event since 2019 and you are invited!

This one-of-a-kind event celebrates the past, present and future of history. The entertaining evening includes Signature Prohibition-inspired Cocktails, Dinner, Silent Auction, Raffle, and Live Music with a few surprises along the way.

Now accepting items/packages and gift cards for the Silent Auction, Raffle and Gift Card Grab. All donations and proceeds support 2024 History Center Exterior Improvements.

Tickets and Sponsorship Opportunities at
BLUEEARTHCOUNTYHISTORY.COM/SPEAKEASY

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY



NEW ART EXHIBIT by David F. Globes

David F. Globes is a talented indigenous photographer, who has a knack for turning everyday life into mesmerizing art. He finds beauty and joy in the simplest things and captures them in a way that makes you appreciate the wonders all around us, even in our own backyard.

This new art exhibit at the History Center showcases only a few of the photographs David has taken over his 40-year, award-winning career. Meet David on Saturday, August 5, at 1 p.m. at the History Center. Exhibit on display through September. David also has a large selection of beautiful photograph notecards available in the History Center Gift Shop.

BECHS Live Music Night @ The Wine Cafe

Join us for a captivating evening of music and history at The Wine Cafe for a special Live Music Event on Thursday, September 21, 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. Delight in the soulful tunes of local musician Peter Klug while supporting future BECHS projects. Tickets are \$15 and available September 1st. This event coincides with the Music & Memories.

SELF-GUIDED CEMETERY TOURS Now through September 30th

The Blue Earth County Historical Society invites you to visit three local cemeteries: **Glenwood Cemetery, Minneopa Cemetery and Calvary Cemetery (Mankato).** These self-guided audio tours feature historic photos and great stories about each cemetery and some of its residents. All tours are available on your smartphone or mobile device for a self-guided experience at the cemetery. Plus, it's available to view from the comfort of your own home. Tickets \$10 per cemetery at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Tickets

MUSIC CITY *The Explosion of the Mankato Pop Music Scene 1963 to 2000*

Join Pete Steiner for an informal exposition of and meditation on what we could call a "super boom of music" in Mankato

and North Mankato on August 15, 6 p.m. at the History Center. The era was bookended by the "British invasion" (the Beatles, Stones, etc.) and assassination of JFK on the front end, and the end of the People's Fair on the other. Many of the musicians and venues of that period are highlighted in the History Center's "Music & Memories" exhibit. Program is \$7/BECHS member, \$10/non-member and includes a tour of the exhibit.



OLD TIME MEDICINE SHOW

*Hilarity, High Jinks
and Cure-Alls*

Meet a bevy of colorful characters from the past at the Hubbard House Saturday, August 26 from 1-4 p.m. Three new and different shows at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. The Cherry Sisters believe laughter is the best medicine and they are back to entertain you with their antics. Violet McNeal will reveal the secrets of the Medicine Show trade. Plus, so much more! Drop by for a while or stay for all three shows. FREE fun for all on the Hubbard House lawn. Tour of the house available with admission.

Family Day at the History Center

Join us at the History Center September – May on the second Saturday of each month for free hands-on history fun for the whole family! Each month will include free admission to the Museum, special building-wide scavenger hunt and all ages history-related craft.

September 9—make paper hats and bookmarks

October 14— make yarn dolls and paper plate pumpkins



MUSIC CITY, MINNESOTA

A Stroll Down Mankato's Music Memory Lane

Unidentified band performing in front of crowd at People's Fair, 1995

By Peter Steiner

It was probably Bobby Drengler who once gave Mankato-North Mankato the nickname, "Music City, Minnesota." As evidence submitted herewith will demonstrate, he was probably pretty much right. In fact, our little mini-metro is still bursting with a new crop of live musicians playing at a plethora of local venues. But the purpose of this article, in addition to promoting an impressive new exhibit at the History Center, is to revisit the heady scene that erupted here in the wake of the Beatles and the Stones and Beach Boys in the 1960s and '70s. Dozens of area musicians, mostly men, with a few women, decided to take up the guitar or start pounding on the drums. The cast of characters from that era could populate a new drama from Shakespeare. Names of all the bands and their members from that era are too voluminous to include here, but we'll highlight many of them.

For more than half-a-century, Greg Duffy has been assembling the elements of a museum that portrays that golden age of music in Mankato. Unfortunately, it's mostly just his buddies, who

stop by to watch Sunday afternoon football in Greg's man-cave, that have gotten to see this impressive collection—until now!

Working with Shelley Harrison, Blue Earth County Historical Society's Collections Manager, Greg has culled some of the most remarkable items from his sizable collection to present the latest exhibit at the BECHS museum — *Music and Memories*. When you stop in, you'll find the framed historic poster promoting the Everly Brothers appearance at the Kato Ballroom in November, 1964. Just two dollars to see and hear the famous duo and their leadoff act – our own Gestures! (More on the Gestures shortly.) There are framed posters of the band that preceded the Gestures, the Mark V's with Steve Neitge, Dan Coughlan, Pat Regan, and future Gestures Bruce Waterston and Tom Klugherz. There's a poster of the pioneering Group de Ville featuring Drengler, Pat Riley (who later would build a successful classical music career), Larry Hofmann and Bill Denison. There are two arty, early City Mouse posters designed by Mankato native, Michael Lokensgaard, who has gone on to become national renown as an artist.



The Gestures

2024 will mark 60 years since North Mankato's The Gestures debuted the biggest hit our area has yet produced: "Run, Run, Run," which was written by Dale Menten. The driving surfer-influenced tune was released long before the age of downloads. It probably would have been an even bigger hit (it peaked nationally at #44, #1 in California!) if Soma, their small record label, had had the capacity to produce and distribute more copies. But the song was successful enough that two of the teenaged band members were soon driving Corvettes. In 1965, the band's four members (Menten and Gus



The Gestures album cover, 1964

Dewey on guitars and vocals, bassist Tom Klugherz, and drummer Bruce Waterston) made an appearance on the nationally broadcast "American Bandstand." Then, all four members plus their equipment crammed into their Chevy van for a

major tour. But bands and their members are notoriously fickle and restless. Menten soon left for Minneapolis, where he eventually became a major player in the city's ad industry, penning famous jingles for Dairy Queen and Valley Fair. The Gestures continued for a while, but individuals soon migrated to other groups. (This "mix and match" pattern would be common among many bands, even today.)

The success of The Gestures seemed to ignite the local music scene. New bands abounded – The Uncalled Four featuring the Marshall Brothers, Arnie and Jack; the Shaw Band, whose Brian Jentges just recently released a new CD of his own music; Prince and the Paupers featuring Eddie Helder; City Mouse, whose "mix and match" incarnations would include 40 different Mankato and Minneapolis musicians in just their first two decades. Later, the '70s would see the emergence of Judd, the East Side Pharaohs, Laurel Ambush, The Epicureans (who would become the Murphy Brothers Band with Hall of Fame guitarist Steve Murphy), Good Thunder, the Bone Band, Ace in the Whole, Slaughterhouse, the Fabulous Full Range Band with Rod Scheitel, and many more. And then came along that young woman with the exceptional voice, Mary Jane Alm. On a recent return engagement at Hooligan's, Mary Jane told of how she was shamed at one of her early performances of a particular John Prine song. An audience member came up to her and said she had no right to sing such a gritty song, that she needed a lot more life experience. Nevertheless, Mary Jane persisted, getting plenty of life experience and becoming one of the most successful artists ever to come out of Mankato.

Backlund's Music Store

No story about the '60s - '70s blossoming of Mankato music would be complete if it omitted

Dave Boyce. He was not a band member, but without him, many bands would have struggled. Dave was the proprietor of Backlund's Music on South Front Street, near where Blue Bricks is today. With his goatee and liberal politics and seeming disregard for pure profit, he was a bit of a renegade to the local business community. He offered musicians liberal credit terms on their new guitars and other instruments. In the decades before Spotify, if a lead singer wanted to learn a new song, Dave would let them take a 45-rpm record – those old vinyl singles with the one-and-a-quarter-inch hole in the middle – and go into a listening booth in the back of the store. After memorizing the lyrics, the singer could replace the record, no purchase necessary, nothing owed.

I worked at Backlund's for a year after I got out of the Army.

A co-worker was the truly-

legendary guitarist, Jim McGuire. One of the benefits of that job was, when things would get slow, Jim would grab a guitar off the display wall and sit down and start playing – sometimes jazz, sometimes classical. Whatever it was, I got treated to a personal concert by a local virtuoso.

Once Backlund's was closed by Urban Renewal, the spiritual center of Mankato music shifted in part to The Lost Chord, opened by Mark Weinstein, Steve Perl and Nickie van Stelten. A combination music and clothing store, as well as a "head shop," "the Chord" was located at 624 South Front Street, near what is now the southeast corner of Walgreen's parking lot. It wasn't just local music lovers who frequented "the Chord"; during Vikings training camp, "Purple People Eater" defensive stalwarts Jim Marshall and Carl Eller would occasionally stop in.



Backlund Music, 424 S. Front Street, 1962

Legends

Gus Dewey probably still owes Dave Boyce some money. He might “borrow” a new Telecaster for a gig, and neglect to return it. It’s a moot point, since both of those stalwarts of the local music scene are gone from us. Gus was only 57 when he died of cancer in 2004. He was, in the opinion of many, a national caliber singer and songwriter. But then, he was not the only one. Before Gus and before The Gestures, there was Spike Haskell, Leas Schwickert and Jerry Udelhofen. They were all highly gifted musicians who called Mankato home.

Paul Durenberger is another supremely talented performer and songwriter, who has been producing original music for decades and who should no doubt be more widely known. Still it’s a fact that, while many of our local faves have achieved regional renown, real “fame” is so often dependent on timing and luck.

Take the story of City Mouse, who recently celebrated 50 years of playing music. The earliest trio incarnation – Bob Drengler, my brother Billy Steiner, and Bill Denison, traveled to Chicago in 1972 to audition with RCA records. The producer really liked the country rock trio; unfortunately, he told them he’d just signed a similar group the day before called Pure Prairie League to occupy that niche.

Or take Jim McGuire. As we mentioned, he can play guitar with anybody in any style. When the great Andy Stein came to town to solo with McGuire and the Mankato Symphony Orchestra a few years back, Stein quipped after the two played a rousing duet, “How come nobody ever told me about Jim McGuire?” But like so many fine local players, modest Jim has composed a happy life playing mostly around here.

The Venues

In the late 1960s and early ‘70s, Michael’s Restaurant (now Shared Spaces at Second and Walnut) was a hotbed for a variety of music. You could hear Terry Powell’s barrel-roll piano, or catch Dixieland with Lowell Schreyer and Michael’s Minstrels in the Red Boot Saloon. In Michael’s intimate Walnut Room (now Tandem Bagels), top local groups like

Rosewood would display their beautiful harmonies. Major national acts like Chad Mitchell would sometimes play the Walnut Room, which is of course where a young Jackson Browne allegedly got fired. The story goes, it was because only one person came in to hear him. That listener was Greg Duffy’s brother, Dan, who has played in many of Mankato’s best-known groups, and currently leads the Dan Duffy Orchestra. Dan told me it was obvious the guy was good, and it’s too bad more didn’t come to listen. Dan, however, had one-on-one time with Browne helping him change strings between sets.

The 1970s brought an explosion of live music venues. In North Mankato, it was no longer just Jim McGuire’s jazz at the Century Club; you could also hear rock at the nearby Comfy Bar. (Both the Century Club and the Comfy were torn down in the mid-80’s to make way for Veteran’s Memorial bridge.) Off of Highway 169, you could hear City Mouse at the Garden Inn, and rock at the Dutler’s Bowl lounge for a time called “The Horny Bull” (how 1970s!)

On the Mankato side of the river, on the hilltop, there was the Stone Toad (now Tav on the Ave). Seven nights a week there was country and country-rock at the Caledonia (now Hooligan’s.) At the “Cal”, you might hear Gary Tyson or Sandra Lee and the Velvets (later Crimson Velvet, with bass player, Howard Mock, who eventually opened Rhapsody Music).

In the valley, there was the Rathskeller (the “Rats”, near Front and Main Streets), The Cellar (in the Inn Town at Second and Cherry, now Menari Spa), and The Square Deal, where you might catch the Dust Bowl Blues Band with Don Scott, “Chief”, and Kit Kildahl.

Perhaps most legendary of all was the Hurdy Gurdy (about where Nolabelle is now.) The Hurdy Gurdy was a large space, and on Friday and Saturday nights, it would be packed with dancers and drinkers depending on the band. Find a copy of Gus Dewey with City Mouse playing “Take Me Home” recorded live, and you can hear the milling crowd and the clinking glasses to get a feel of what it was like.

A bit later in the decade came the Burgundy Haus, at



Rathskeller, 109 S. Front Street, 1967

the south end of the Mankato Mall. Friendlies was a basement venue in the block where the Civic Center now stands. Some would call Friendlies the best local live music venue ever, put together by Drengler, Klugherz and Waterston. The bar strove for a mix of the best local bands and some top regional acts, with an occasional national act.

Unfortunately, Friendlies did not have deep pockets. Three consecutive weekend blizzards in January 1982 wiped out appearances by Twin Cities bands like the Metro All Stars, bands with expensive guaranteed contracts. Friendlies just couldn't survive.

Urban Renewal, which wiped out many of the downtown music venues in the 1970s, gained an ally against the live music scene in the 1980s—Disco. Now club owners could pay for a one-time expensive sound system and not have to deal with band contracts or blizzard-related losses. Recorded dance music ruled at newly-popular venues like the Albatross in University Square and R.J. Noodles, which replaced the Hurdy Gurdy. Eventually, in the 1990s, live music would experience a resurgence at venues like the Coffee Hag, McGoff's (now U.S. Bank), Midtown Tavern, the Wine Café, Buster's on Madison Avenue hilltop, Red Sky (in the old Hurdy Gurdy space), and What's Up? at the Oleander.

People's Fair

In the early 1970s, increasing abuse of drugs other than alcohol, brought a need to address the problem. The Eclipse Crisis Intervention Center was born. To help fund it, Paul Horrisberger and some of his colleagues came up with the idea for an outdoor festival featuring crafts and music. They chose to call that festival "People's Fair," and it would become a highly anticipated annual event every May for three decades.

Eventually expanding to a two-day affair, People's Fair offered a big stage to many local bands. They also brought in popular regional acts like Shangoya, and occasional national acts like Little Feat, the Wailers (Bob Marley's old band who played in parkas on a 50-degree Minnesota spring day), and "Kid" Johnny Lang. Sibley Park, with the sliding hill as a natural amphitheater and an open space in front of the raised stage, provided an ideal venue for a party band like the East Side Pharaohs, self-described as "the zaniest band around".

Another favorite was Judd, originally from Rochester, but whose members ended up headquartering communally in a house on State

Street. The featured vocalist Steve McCloone (our local answer to Steven Tyler) with Bruce Judd on



People's Fair at Sibley Park, 1995

keyboards, Judd was another of those local bands that seemed to have national potential. They even led off at a concert on the MSU campus for a pre-"Born to Run" Bruce Springsteen in the early '70s. But fame again proved fickle. Several members of the seven-piece group would eventually join Mary Jane Alm's 1980s band.

As for the People's Fair, our mini-Woodstock eventually ran its course and faded out in 2000.

It's probably remarkable that a small metro the size of Mankato-North Mankato could and does support so much music and music of such variety. After all, it's not just popular music we produce. We have a symphony orchestra, a chamber music series, numerous college and semi-professional choral concerts, musical theater, and a community band. Music often serves as a unifying force. It can be emotionally uplifting; and of course, it is the source of many cherished memories. The exhibit inspired by and including Greg Duffy's remarkable music memorabilia collection runs through December at the History Center. It promises to stimulate plenty of reminiscences about a great era. We should all be grateful to live in Music City, Minnesota.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pete Steiner (incidentally the brother of Billy, City Mouse founder and Hall of Fame harmonica player) spent 44 years in commercial radio. Pete only infrequently got to play local artists, regardless of how good they were. Now retired, he writes a monthly column for *Mankato Magazine* and, on the fourth Tuesday of the month, he hosts an hour of musical programming on non-commercial KMSU 89.7, where he gets to play whatever he wants!

COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITS: PRESERVING SOUND

By Shelley Harrison, Collections Manager

The Blue Earth County Historical Society's music collection contains over 1,200 items which includes all formats of audio recordings: vinyl LPs, CDs, 8-tracks, cassette tapes and even wax cylinders. There are also items related to music such as instruments, band uniforms, and audio recording equipment.

Here is a peek at the process that goes into preserving our musical past. When considering if an item will be added into the permanent collection, there are many questions we ask. The first being, does it have a connection to Blue Earth County? In other words, was this item created by or used by somebody living within the County? For the music collection, it could be a CD by local harpist Amy Kortuem or a 77 Lancers marching band uniform.

Once an item is approved by the Collections Management Committee for acceptance, our collections volunteers begin the process of cataloging the item. This involves assigning an identification number and writing a detailed description with measurements, condition, and provenance (history). After the item has been catalogued, it is photographed, lightly cleaned and prepared for storage.

Due to the weight of LPs, they should be stored vertically to minimize warping. For preservation purposes, records are encased in a high-density polyethylene sleeve to keep them dust-free and prevent scratches. If it has an album cover or a paper sleeve with writing on it, those are kept with the record.



Record storage

The next step is to enter the information from the catalog worksheet into our collection management database. At any point in time, the information can be retrieved for research, publications or the creation of museum exhibits.

Each of these steps may take staff and at least two volunteers' a substantial amount of time, depending upon the size of a donation. I could not do my job without our dedicated collections' volunteers. There are also costs associated with

adding items to the permanent collection, including preservation materials, shelving, environmental controls and a secure storage room.

Our mission is to collect and preserve the history of Blue Earth County, which includes recorded music and music related materials to ensure that the melodies of the past can continue to inspire and resonate with future generations. If you have a treasured instrument or recording connected to Blue Earth County, would you consider donating the item?



Check out Blue Earth County music memorabilia in the new *Music & Memories* exhibit at the History Center. See items like the 1963 Stella Acoustic Guitar (pictured here). Did you know Stella guitars were known for their unique sound, affordability, and their association with various styles of American Folk and Blues music? This type of guitar was used in the Elvis movie *Jailhouse Rock* (1957). Our guitar was used and donated by Gerald Eick.

MUSIC AND MEMORIES

A Look Back at the Mankato Music Scene

APPEARING AT:

Blue Earth County History Center
424 Warren Street, Mankato
Open thru December 2023

Exhibit is FREE and open to the public.

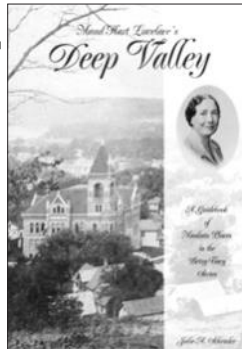
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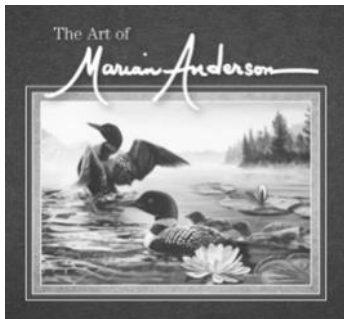
By Heather Harren, Operations Manager

Summer is the perfect time to explore your community! For the Maud Hart Lovelace and/or historic preservation fans, the book *Maud Hart Lovelace's Deep Valley* by Julie Schrader is a must have. Schrader documents the history of the real people and places fictionalized in the Betsy-Tacy book series. This is a great way to tour Deep Valley (aka Mankato) in the early 1900s (\$25).



To share that summertime feeling, consider sending a note card to a friend or family member. David Clobes' photographs showcase the beauty of the Midwest and are now available as photo note cards (\$6). Clobes is also the featured artist in the History Center Art Gallery on display through September.

Marian Anderson's *Good Ol' Summertime* reminds us of the past from The Oasis to the A&W. This print is also available as a note card (\$7.50/



pack of 6). If you love Marian's work, get your copy of *The Art of Marian Anderson* before they're gone. Only 500 books were produced and half are already sold. This wonderful coffee table book commemorates the life, legacy and work of

this beloved Minnesota artist (\$49.95).

The History Center Gift Shop is a great place to find local, one-of-a-kind items, as well as state and local history books. The Gift Shop also features the Marian Anderson Art Gallery, displaying Anderson's Fine Art prints and original paintings. If you can't make it to the History Center, shop online! BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Online-Store

MEMBERS MATTER

Member dues support BECHS programs, facilities, exhibits and preservation of Blue Earth County's past for future generations. In exchange for member support, enjoy a variety of benefits for BECHS members-only. Thank you!

WELCOME NEW BECHS MEMBERS

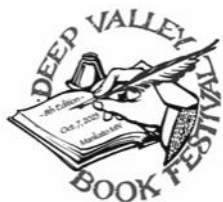
April 16 - July 15, 2023

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Amanda Stenzel
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Louis Willette

BECHS Member Benefits

- Free admission to the History Center, R.D. Hubbard House and Research Center, plus free or reduced admission to most BECHS events
- *The Historian*, quarterly publication
- 10% off most items in the Gift Shop and Marian Anderson Art Gallery, in store and online
- One 30-minute Research Center search by Staff, a \$15 value
- Annual Member's State-of-the-Society meeting

Join or renew online at
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership



8th Edition

Where Readers & Authors Meet

DEEP VALLEY BOOK FESTIVAL

Saturday October 7, 2023 10 am-4:30 pm
Country Inn & Suites Conference Center, Mankato

www.deepvalleybookfestival.com

Anna and Emma Wiecking: Mankato Educators

By Bri Krumwiede, Archives Assistant

Anna Wiecking is known for her contributions to educational and historical fields in Mankato. She was a writer and also a faculty member of Mankato Normal School, and Mankato State Teacher's College (now known as Minnesota State University, Mankato). Anna was born in Mankato in 1887. She was born in the Shaubut Building, the same building where Mankato Normal School was first located from 1868-1870.



Anna Wiecking, c. 1940s
Courtesy MSU,M
University Archives

From a young age, Anna had a passion for early education. She graduated from Mankato High School and then Mankato Normal School. Anna took courses with the goal of teaching Kindergarten, even though many schools did not offer Kindergarten at the time. She went on to receive her bachelor's degree at the University of Minnesota and taught at public schools in Amboy and Mankato.

Anna received her master's degree from Columbia University in 1915 and began working at Mankato Normal School in 1917 as a Kindergarten Supervisor in the lab school. She became the Assistant Principal and later Principal of Mankato State Teacher's College Elementary School. Anna received her doctorate degree from the University of Iowa in 1933, where she studied education and educational psychology and became a Professor of Education.

Anna was also an avid writer. She wrote two history books—*Blue Earth County from 1700 to 1900* and *As We Once Were*—and also wrote articles for the *Mankato Free Press* and other

publications. The Wiecking Center on the campus of MSU,M is named after Anna and her sister, Emma.

Emma, born in 1894, followed a similar path as Anna. She also graduated from Mankato High School, Mankato Normal School, University of Minnesota and Columbia University. However, her master's degree was in Library Science.

Emma began her career in the Mankato Public Library before joining Mankato State Teacher's College, first as an Assistant and then as a Librarian. Altogether, she worked for Mankato State Teacher's College, later Mankato State College, from 1922-1959.

BECHS is proud to house many of Anna Wiecking's papers, including notes, outlines, drafts and published writings, as well as letters and other records. Stop by the Research Center or check out the online Research Center Finding Aides to learn more about the Wiecking family.



Emma Wiecking at the dedication of
Wiecking Center, 1980
Courtesy MSU,M University Archives

LOCAL HISTORY PODCAST

Explore the history that surround us!



New episodes air Saturdays
at 11:05 a.m. on
KTOE AM 1420/102.7 FM.
You can find all previous
episodes on our website at

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast

SOUTH FRONT STREET Historic Pub Crawl

Walking Tour with a Local Music Twist

Tuesday, August 22 | 6 p.m.

\$25 for BECHS Members | \$30 for Non-Members

PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS:

Blue Bricks | Square Deal | Ummie's

SPACE IS LIMITED!

Tickets available online or at the
Blue Earth County History Center

Ticket price does not include the cost of drinks. Drink purchases are not required to participate. Attendees must be over 21 and show photo ID.

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com | 507.345.5566

Welcome BECHS's Newest Staff Member: Cliff Coy

Hello! My name is Cliff Coy, and I am the newly appointed Community Engagement Manager at the Blue Earth County Historical Society.



Having grown up on a small hobby farm outside of New Richland, Minnesota, I developed a profound appreciation for my surroundings and a love for history through a lot of reading and the support of amazing teachers. Motivated by a strong desire to find myself and my place in the world, I embarked on a remarkable 12-year journey in the Army, fulfilling the role of a Public Affairs Specialist. During this time, I had the incredible opportunity to contribute to the preservation and documentation of history as a Combat Historian, serving in Iraq from 2009 to 2010. I also developed a love for travel during this time and had the opportunity to travel to most of the continental United States, as well as several countries.

While history is undoubtedly one of my passions, I also find solace and creative fulfillment in the realm of art. Through the mediums of photography and printmaking, I can express myself and delve into various artistic ventures. At present, my focus lies in creating a collection of relief woodcuts featuring the diverse native North American animal species. My educational and artistic endeavors have been further enriched by the acquisition of an Associates of Science degree in Multimedia Technology from South Central

College in North Mankato, followed by a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Studio Photography from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Beyond my professional and artistic pursuit, I find immeasurable joy in spending quality time with my beautiful wife and daughter. Engaging in hands-on activities such as home improvement projects, exploring the wonders of zoos, and embarking on delightful small adventures with my family, bring me immense happiness and fulfillment. I also enjoy riding motorcycle, playing guitar and singing in my spare time, and love the amount of art, music, and culture that this small part of Minnesota has to offer.

With my comprehensive background, unwavering dedication to history, and innate passion for hands-on work, I am thrilled to assume this role. I firmly believe in fostering meaningful connections with the community and I am committed to preserving and sharing our local history.

Book Your Next Special Event, Meeting or Gathering with BECHS



The Blue Earth County History Center meeting rooms and the Hubbard House Grounds have a number of rental options perfect for your next gathering.

Visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals for more information and rates.
Contact the History Center for availability.

A NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

OCTOBER 14, 2023

6 PM Social Hour | 7 PM Dinner



SKY ONE ELEVEN

111 Second Street, Mankato

Dinner | Cocktails

Auction | Raffle

1920s Dress Encouraged

GENERAL TICKET PRICE

\$85

RESERVED TABLE OF 8

\$800

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Hosted By:
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Benefiting:
BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL
COUNTY SOCIETY

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy

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April 16 - July 15, 2023

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IN MEMORIAM

*In Memory of
Jane Schostag*
Harriet & Merlyn Plotz

VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

Volunteers are truly the lifeblood of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. There is no aspect of work done at the History Center or Hubbard House that doesn't involve volunteers. **THANK YOU BECHS Volunteers for all you do!**

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

History Center Gardeners

Care for and maintain the flower beds on the Cherry Street side of the History Center. This involves weeding and trimming as needed. Some tools and supplies are available.

Front Desk and Gift Shop Assistant

History Center front desk helper. Duties include greeting visitors and ringing up store sales. This may be combined with data entry or archival work.

Rental Host

After-hours History Center Meeting Room rental host to greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the rental and lock-up when done.

Research Center Filing

Index and file newspaper articles into the Research Center's Subject and Biography Files.

Training is provided and schedules are flexible for all opportunities. If you are interested in these opportunities or volunteering in general, please contact Heather or sign-up at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer

Historic R.D. Hubbard House

GUIDED TOURS BY APPOINTMENT

Friday - Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

Weekends Memorial Day thru Labor Day

606 South Broad Street, Mankato

SPECIAL EVENTS

Old Time Medicine Show, August 26, 1-4 p.m.
Three all new and different shows
at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Come for one,
stay for all three. FREE

Follow "Hubbard House,
Mankato" on Facebook
for updates



BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Hubbard-House

Singing of Welsh Hymns

(English and Welsh in 4-part congregational singing)

2023 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival

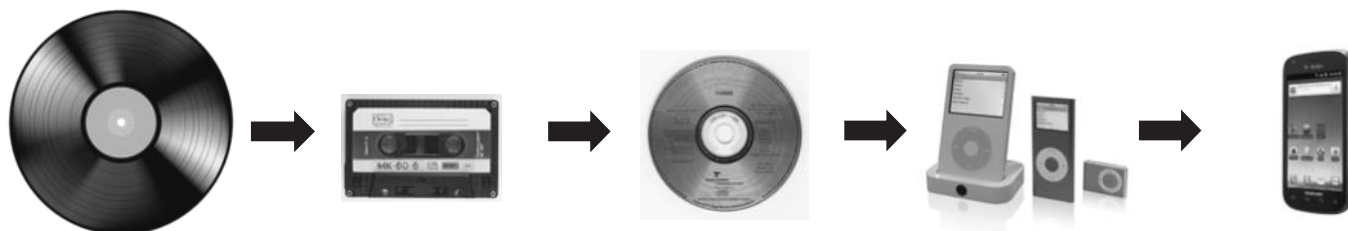
Sunday, September 24th at 1:30 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church, 220 East Hickory, Mankato, MN

Free Admission and Te Bach (Refreshments) after hymn sing

mnwelshassociation.weebly.com
www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation

KIDS CORNER: From Discs to Digital

Have you ever thought about how amazing it is that you can listen to any kind of music, anytime, anywhere? Today, all you have to do is press play on your phone. Music wasn't always so easily accessible though. Ever heard of vinyl records? What about cassette tapes or 8-track tapes? The evolution of music formats from vinyl records to the era of streaming has revolutionized the way we listen, discover and share music. Let's take a musical journey down memory lane.



1948: Record
Records of varying speeds and materials have been around since the early 1900s. Early versions rotated at 78 RPM (revolutions per minute) and were made of shellac, which made them noisy and fragile. In 1948, Columbia Records produced a 33 RPM 12-inch 'long play' format, also known as the LP. Shortly after, RCA Records developed a 45 RPM 7-inch 'extended-play single' format – "EP". Both Columbia and RCA Records produced their LP and EPs on vinyl.

1963: Cassette Tape
In 1962, studios began recording music on multi-track analog tapes, following the experiments of inventor and guitarist Les Paul. In 1963, Philips introduced the cassette tape, with a maximum play time of 45 minutes per side—significantly longer than a LP's playtime (15-20 minutes per side). Tapes were a more affordable, compact package which made them a convenient development in how and where we listen – even in the car (standard in the 1970s).

1982: Compact Disc (CDs)
Digital Audio Compact Disc (CD) was invented in 1979 as a joint project by Sony and Philips. Its public release came in 1982. CDs brought together the best of every format that came before: high-quality audio (vinyl), compact, portable and inexpensive (tape). The audio storage capacity of a standard CD is 74 minutes. Within 3 years, CDs took over as the medium of choice. In many ways the CD was the beginning of the end for physical formats.

1992: MP3
The MP3 players of today exist because of the digital audio player prototype designed way back in 1979. As soon as it became possible to access music digitally through your computer, most people no longer wanted to have physical copies of music. MP3 players became the next affordable, portable options to store and play music in 1992. But it wasn't until 2001 when Apple took the world by storm with its iPod changing the portability of digital music.

2002: Streaming
With 24/7 internet accessibility expanding thanks to cell phone developers, we saw the possibility of listening to, and discovering, new music without having to purchase CDs or download files. Samsung UpRoar launched in 2000 was the first cell phone to have MP3 music capabilities. The release of the iPhone in 2007 is what really caused streaming and internet radios popularity to skyrocket. Apps that were just on the computer before, were now available in the palm of your hand.

Discs to Digital Scavenger Hunt

Go on a music hunt around your home (or car) to see how many of these "historic" recorded music formats and devices you can find AND still play.

☐ Record

☐ Record Player

☐ Cassette Tape

☐ Tape Player

☐ Bonus: Mixtape

☐ CD

☐ CD Player

☐ Digital Music

☐ MP3 Player

What will be the next big thing?

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August - October 2023

AUGUST

- 5 **Artist Reception with David Globes**, 1 p.m.
- 15 **Music City: The Explosion of the Mankato Pop Music Scene 1963-2000** by Pete Steiner, 6 p.m. (\$)
- 22 **South Front Street Historic Pub Crawl**, Historic Walking Tour with a Musical Twist at Blue Bricks, The Square Deal, Ummie's 6 p.m. (\$)
- 26 **Old-time Medicine Show** Hubbard House, 1-4 p.m. Shows start on the hour with family friendly activities between shows. Free. Guided House tours available (\$).

SEPTEMBER

- 2 **History Center Closed, Hubbard House Open**
Last Weekend Hubbard House Open for the Season.
- 9 **Family Day at the History Center**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Activity: paper hats and bookmarks
- 16 **Mankato Community Band 50 Years** by Bryce Stenzel, 1 p.m.
Featuring music by Sarah and the Houlligans. Copies of new book *Mankato Community Band* will be available for purchase.
- 21 **BECHS Live Music Night at The Wine Café** featuring Peter Klug, 6-8 p.m. Tickets on sale September 1 (\$).
- 27 **PreserveMN Conference Opening Reception**, 6-9 p.m., food trucks, live music, watch for more information to come.

OCTOBER

- 7 **Deep Valley Book Festival**, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., visit DeepValleyBookFestival.com for registration and details.
- 7-8 **Indigenous People's Day Film showing**, details to be announced.
- 14 **Family Day at the History Center**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family, 10 a.m.-Noon*. Activity: yarn dolls and paper plate pumpkins
A Night at the Speakeasy, Sky One Eleven, 6 p.m., Tickets on sale now at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy
Annual Blue Earth County Historical Society's party with a purpose
*NOTE: History Center will be closing at Noon.
- 21 **Genealogy 101: Beginning DNA and DNA Tests**, 1 p.m.

All programs will be held at the History Center and are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. \$ = fee charged

For more information, to register or purchase tickets, visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

BLUE EARTH  HISTORICAL
COUNTY SOCIETY

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Expiration Date

PLAN YOUR VISIT



HISTORY CENTER: MUSEUM, RESEARCH CENTER, GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

424 Warren Street, Mankato
507-345-5566
Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

ADMISSION

\$7 Adults
\$3 Children 5-17
BECHS Members and
Children under 5 FREE



Proud Participating
Museum



R.D. HUBBARD HOUSE

606 S. Broad Street, Mankato
507-345-4154
Open Memorial Day Weekend
- Labor Day Weekend
Friday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday 1-4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com



Facebook.com/BECHShistory



@BECHShistory (Instagram)



YouTube.com/c/BECHShistory

EXHIBITS



Music & Memories: A Look Back at the Mankato Music Scene

On display
through December



ART GALLERY David F. Clobes

On display
through September