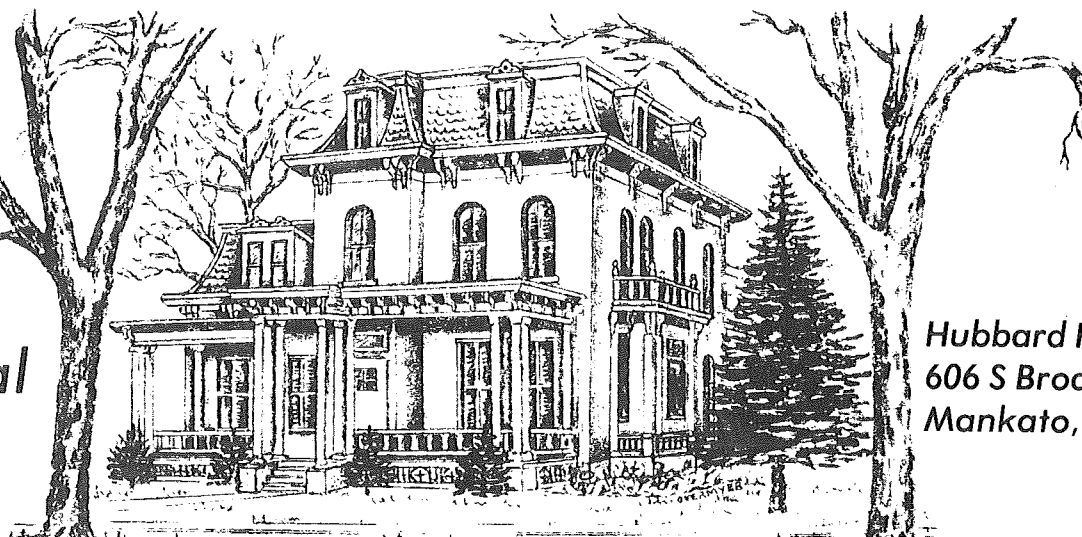


Blue Earth County Historical Society



Hubbard House
606 S Broad St.
Mankato, Minn.

Volume 5, Number 3

NEWS LETTER

October, 1976

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 5 - 11

WEEK OF WINTER WARMTH at the MANKATO YWCA

The HUBBARD HOUSE VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TREE will be on display throughout the week and the MUSEUM SHOP TABLE will offer a special selection of historical items for Christmas gift-giving.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

A number of gifts received during the past three months have added to the museum's collections of clothing, business machines, household equipment and furnishings, and educational materials.

A SUMMARY LIST:

- From THE THRIFT SHOP: Women's and infants' clothing of the 1890's.
- From MRS. H.J. BRANDRUP, Mankato: A lady's dress, early 20th century (before 1910)
- From MRS. BEA WATERSTON, North Mankato: Two dresses of about 1900.
- From MRS. JOHN MILLER, Pemberton: Women's clothing, including house dresses from about 1900.
- From MRS. MICHAEL GEORGE, North Mankato: A dressmaker's form, early 20th century.
- From MR. M.C. SCHLIEF, North Mankato: A U.S. Army uniform, a spinning wheel, a wool coverlet, and several items of glass and stoneware.

From MRS. FRED CORDS, Lake Crystal: An early duplicating machine.

From MR. CLARENCE OLSON, formerly of North Mankato: A numbering machine.

From MRS. W. EARL PAY, Mankato: A side chair made in Mankato, mid-19th century.
(See Page 7)

From MISS EMMA WIECKING, Mankato: A 19th century jewelry box and jewelry, including a novelty brooch with a portrait of Lillian Russell.

From the ESTATE OF J.B. SMITH, Mankato: A teacher's edition of the New Practical Reference Encyclopedia (6 volumes), 1907-1910.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY ARCHIVES:

From MR. R. DEAN HUBBARD II: Family papers and photographs.

From MISS EMMA WIECKING: Papers of her sister Anna Wiecking.

MUSEUM OPEN TUESDAY - SUNDAY, 1 - 5 pm
SCHEDULE CLOSED MONDAY and LEGAL HOLIDAYS
LIBRARY SERVICE TUESDAY - THURSDAY

There is a charge for group tours, which are by appointment only.
For information and appointments,
PHONE the MUSEUM - 345-4154

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

On September 14, Ogden P. Confer, chairman of the board of Hubbard Milling Company, announced the firm's offer to the city of a park to complement the restoration of the Hubbard mansion and the Carriage House.

Historical Society members will particularly appreciate the prospect that Blue Earth County's newly designated National Historic Site will be given a setting eminently suited to its character.

Charles Wood Associates (Jordan, Minn.), landscape architects, developed the design shown here, in consultation with Foster Dunwiddie (Minneapolis), architect for the Hubbard House restoration project. Their plans are based on extensive research on gardens and landscaping of the Victorian period.

CARRIAGE HOUSE DIARY

SEPTEMBER 19 The empty carriage door and windows of R. D. Hubbard's "spacious barn" stare forlornly toward Warren Street, which has separated it from the Hubbard House since 1973. Removal of doors and window frames was the first step in dismantling the building.

SEPTEMBER 20 Work begins in earnest on both sides of the main house: Steel scaffolding installed to support the "barn's" second story, interior woodwork removed. To the north, on the ground of earlier Warren Street, excavation for foundation on which the Carriage House will be reconstructed.

SEPTEMBER 24 The big day! R.W. Carlstrom's crane crew lashes the entire upper story and roof onto a frame of I-beams. The crane raises the roof intact off the brick walls. But disappointment! The crane is not sufficiently powerful to remove it completely.

SEPTEMBER 25-26 The Historical Society's Brick-Cleaning Bee. Some dozen enthusiasts, with contractor Robert Carlstrom as supervisor, make a beginning dent in the mound of bricks which must be cleaned, to face the block wall of the reconstruction.

SEPTEMBER 30 In a dramatic three-hour performance, a second larger crane lifts the top half off the Carriage House and sets it down on the lawn.

OCTOBER 4-8 Action shifts to the north side. Concrete footings and block foundations put in. Park Department cuts four elm trees. One takes out Hubbard House electricity in its fall! Brick-cleaning goes on apace - a slow one.

OCTOBER 12-15 The crane moves second story floor across Warren Street.





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GOINGS AND COMINGS

Our part-time librarian, Mrs. Mary Keefe, is leaving the Museum staff as of November first, in order to devote full-time to an expected new member of the Keefe family.

Welcome to David Sears, who as Mankato's new Superintendent of Parks (replacing Robert Swafford, who resigned last May), is in charge of the Hubbard House and property.

Mr. Sears is a graduate of Morningside College (Sioux City, IA), where he studied business administration and physical education. He obtained his master's degree from the University of South Dakota, with work in health, physical education and education. He comes to Mankato with five and a half years' experience as director of parks and recreation for the city of Yankton, S.D.

Park planning is the aspect of his work which he enjoys most, he says. He expressed admiration for the Hubbard Milling Company's park plan, saying it should be a great asset to Mankato to have the Hubbard House and the Carriage House preserved as an entity and enhanced by such a setting.

We have already begun to get acquainted with Mr. Sears, as he has been around to check on the Carriage House project, and we look forward to seeing more of him.

THE LAKE CRYSTAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY met October 4 at the First National Bank of Lake Crystal.

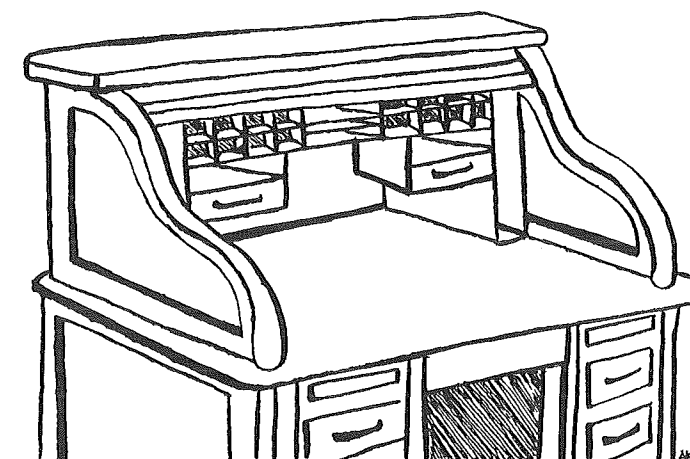
Mrs. Ellis Norman, president, reported that the society is now duly incorporated and has made great progress during the summer. It now owns a building to use as a museum, a gift from Mrs. Eva Roberts. The group will also acquire the 1884 farm home which was at Farmfest. Arrangements to obtain a site on which to locate both buildings are presently being made. Paul Kroubetz and Earl Miner are in charge of arranging for the actual moving of the buildings.

Officers for the year 1976-77 were elected. They are: James Zwickey, president; Nancy Reinhardt, vice-president; and June Miner, secretary-treasurer.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CONTINUING FUND DRIVE

The Board of Directors is happy to add the following names to the list of Historical Society Supporters:

MARION CARR
MANKATO CITIZENS TELEPHONE
COMPANY FOUNDATION
PAUL LAMM



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S ROLLTOP

The Carriage House project seems to overshadow other Museum activities these days. It was a thrill to see the huge crane lift off the roof and set it on the ground. Construction on the new site is going rapidly.

What a pity to see the four elms at the back of the Hubbard House go down as a result of Dutch Elm disease! Happily, the Hubbard Mill Centennial Park plans call for replacement plantings of walnut trees.

The visit of Mrs. Dorothy Duncan, Museums Advisor for the Province of Ontario, Canada, was most informative. Mrs. Duncan was here October 4-7. Her consultant service was provided to us by the American Association for State and Local History. We are anxiously awaiting her report and recommendations.

We were all saddened at the death of Lawrence Will of Mapleton. Lawrence served on the Board and as President of the Board. We will miss his wise counsel and kindly manner. He was a true gentleman.

Marcia T. Schuster

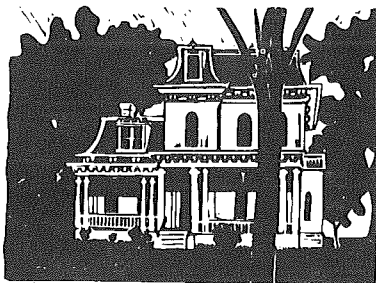
ATTENTION
SOCIETY MEMBERS

M.A.R.K
SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 12

ON YOUR CALENDAR

MEMBERS
CHRISTMAS
PARTY

NEWSLETTER
Blue Earth County
Historical Society
606 South Broad
Mankato, MN 56001



Address Correction
Requested

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NEW MEMORIAL FUND ESTABLISHED

Friends of the late Henry Heidel of Mankato, a musician who was also interested in history, have set up a fund in his honor, to be used for the restoration of the Museum's square piano.

This unusual instrument, which stands in the parlor of the Hubbard House, was made about 1860 by Bacon and Raven of New York. It is thought to be one of three pianos of this model which are still extant. It was bought by Edward Parker in 1868 and brought to Northfield. From there it went to Garden City, where Parker became school superintendent. It came to the Historical Society in 1940 from the estate of his wife, Florence Parker of Garden City.

Mr. Heidel's friends would welcome contributions to this fund, which can be sent c/o the Museum Director, Marcia Schuster, 606 South Broad Street, Mankato, Minnesota.

THE HUBBARD HOUSE is the focal point of a "Minnetour" outlined by the State Department of Tourism for summer motorists interested in weekend trips which combine gas-saving distances and family-interest places to visit. The suggested route of this tour, entitled "Pioneer Heritage", starts at the Hubbard House and includes Minneopa Park and Seppman Mill in the Mankato area. Other points of historic interest are the Village of Yesteryear south of Owatonna, Mantorville, (which is on the National Register of Historic Places), Northfield, Savage and Shakopee. The suggested route completes the loop via Highway 169 to St. Peter and Traverse des Sioux State Park, ending at Mankato.

THE VICTORIAN TOUCH

Shirley Helmbrecht, Home Economics student at Mankato State University, has completed a study project which combined her interest in period costume and our Director's wish for a dress to fit her surroundings on occasion. Miss Helmbrecht designed and drafted a pattern for a Victorian dress which Marcia Schuster will wear at Museum functions this season, to give atmosphere and to enhance her role as "lady of the house."

SUMMER was marked by visits to the Hubbard House Museum by people who have special associations with its history.

Ten members of the Confer and Koehler families, representing three generations of descendants of George M. Palmer (co-founder of the Hubbard Milling Company) were here on August 3. Some came from as far away as California.

Mr. and Mrs. Norman FitzGerald (Jean Richter FitzGerald, granddaughter of R. Dean Hubbard) also visited the Museum in August.

Mr. Clarence Olson, formerly of North Mankato, who was Mrs. R. D. Hubbard's chauffeur and handyman in the 1920's and later had his own business (Olson Printing Company) in North Mankato, was here to give us some early printers' equipment. He also provided information about the house and the "barn" which will be helpful in planning the restoration of both buildings.

HISTORY ON THE MOVE

HUBBARD MILLING COMPANY CENTENNIAL PARK

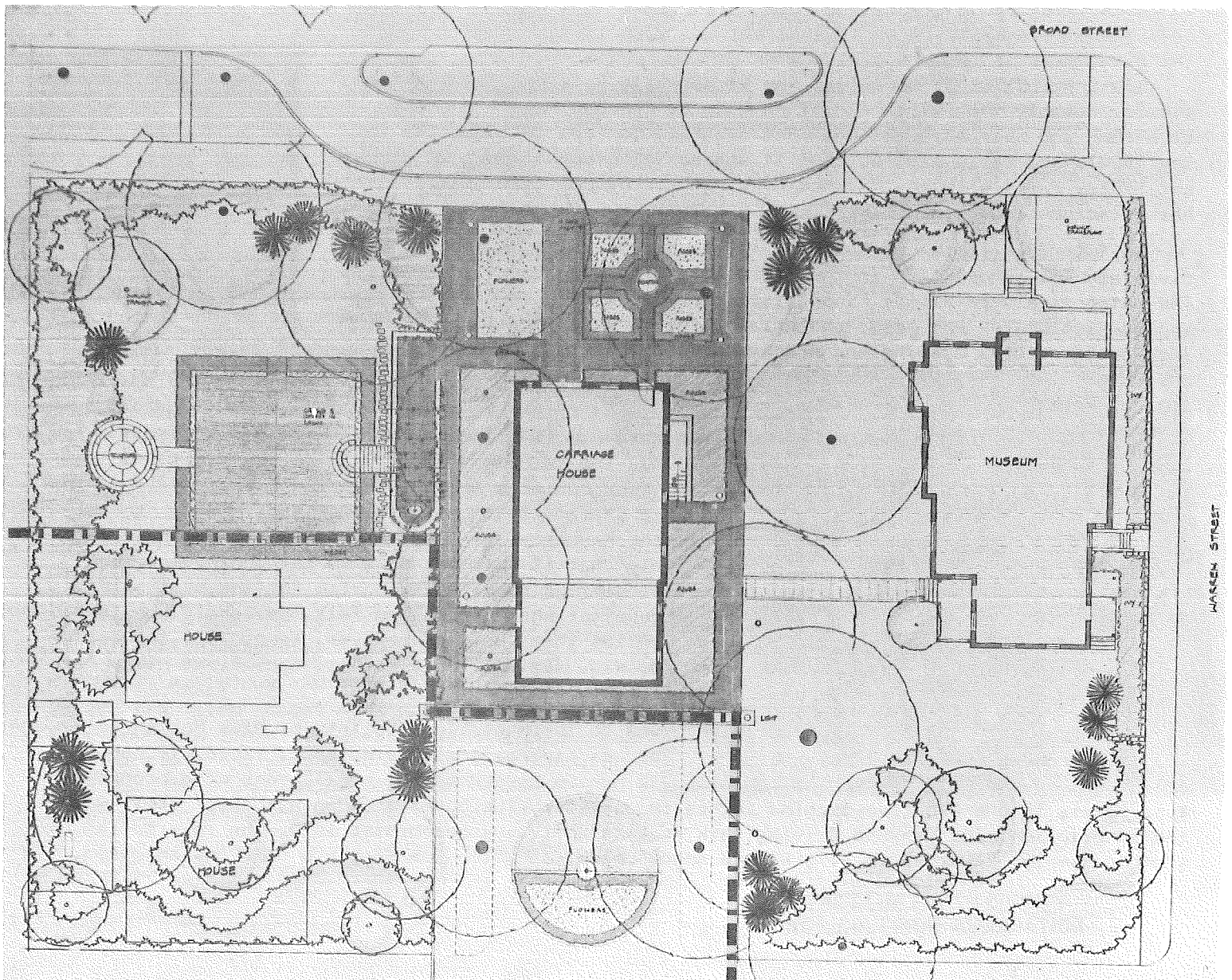
A formal rose garden will occupy a large space in front of the Carriage House, which faces Broad Street. A gravel walk going between the rose garden and another leads to the main Carriage House entrance. A brick and wood arbor along the side wall of the building will give access to an "out-door room", a lawn area enclosed by hedges. This space is planned for outdoor concerts and social gatherings, typical features of entertainment in Victorian times.

The full plan includes additional gardens, lighting and ornamental sculpture, as well as extensive planting of trees and shrubbery around both buildings. The loss of elm trees to Dutch elm disease will be compensated by the planting of two mature

walnut trees from the memorial grove planted in Minneopa Park by George M. Palmer, co-founder of the Hubbard Milling Company.

Intentions are to begin work on the major part of the project this fall. It is hoped that the park can be completed by April 1978, when the Hubbard Milling Company will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The company has chosen this way to signalize the occasion, with the hope (to quote Mr. Confer) "that this project will provide impetus for further revitalization of Mankato's older residential and commercial areas."

Truly an example of civic-spirited munificence in the grand manner of the Victorian Age !



REFLECTIONS

BLUE EARTH COUNTY FAIR AT THE MUSEUM

The charm of the fair grounds immediately impresses the first-time visitor. The broad grassy space, shaded by towering oaks and walnut trees, is bordered by the Watonwan River and framed against the river bluffs. A more picturesque setting could hardly be imagined. It seems made for a nostalgic scenario of the good old times. But the beauty of the site was not the primary reason for the choice made back in 1866 by the Blue Earth County Agricultural Association. The price was right! Half the sum needed for a suitable site in Mankato. So the Association bought this place, even though Mankato offered \$356 more than Garden City as an initial bonus. Incidentally, a number of leaders of the organization lived in Garden City Township. Did this perhaps make the difference?

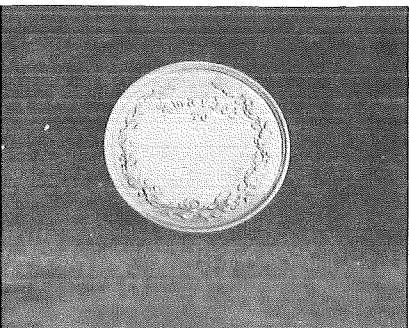
Today's fair has a carnival atmosphere, created more by the baseball games and the seemingly endless horseshoe-pitching contests than by the rides and traditional exhibits of the traveling amusement show. The lively patronage of the Four-H food tent adds to the feeling that this is a "monster picnic", as a condescending reporter of the Mankato Review wrote in 1905.

Less noticeable at first glance, the real business of the fair was going on all around. On this first afternoon, the registration of entries was in full swing. Some divisions appeared to be completely set up. Rabbits nestled cozily in their cages and fowl of every description fussed about in quarters they obviously considered too confining. Here, observing the Four-H'ers hover over their livestock as they eyed their neighbors' entries, I could feel the spark of competition. Floral Hall was the busiest spot. Vegetables and flowers were arriving, understandably at the last minute, to make the 5 pm deadline, competing with art works and preserved foods for attention.

Next day at the Museum, I looked to see what I could find to explain the fair's long history. The original constitution of the Blue Earth County Agricultural Association is there - a faded hand-written document dated 1861. The signatures, mostly those of settlers in the Garden City area, are barely decipherable.

(Continued on Page 6) →

MANKATO ARK ASSOCIATION



The elaborate DIPLOMA pictured at the right was a form award published for the Blue Earth County Agricultural Association. It is a tinted lithograph which measures 20 by 24 inches, and would have made an impressive wall decoration.

This particular example was awarded at the Garden City Fair in 1868. The filled-in citation reads: To Mrs. S.T. Mills for the Best Variety of Flowers, Sept. 26, 1868. It is signed by H.W. Perry, President, and Daniel Buck, Secretary.

Mrs. Mills was the wife of Samuel T. Mills, the first actual settler in Garden City Township (1854). She was evidently a skilful craft artist. Accounts say that she made very fine decorative seed and hair wreaths. She was also an expert taxidermist!

The diploma was given to the Museum by her granddaughter, Ruth Mills Stiles, 1969.



**DIPLOMA OF
THE BLUE EARTH COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**

RELICS AND THE



"Seppman Mill in 1887"

OIL PAINTING by Ida Martin

A month ago, somewhat weary of the high-powered build-up of Farmfest 1976, I decided this was the year to visit the other major agricultural happening of our county, the Fair at Garden City.

Accordingly, armed with a premium book and a camera which I didn't use (it rained that afternoon), I set out on a pilgrimage of sorts, to discover the secret of this community undertaking which can claim a history of 117 years.

**MEDAL OF THE
DRIVING**

IN EARLIER YEARS, as today, the Garden City Fair had its big-time rivals, notably the fairs held at Mankato by the Southern Minnesota Livestock and Fair Association. This organization was quite active in the 1880's and early 1890's, when it shared its grounds (part of present Sibley Park) with the Mankato Driving Park Association, Mankato's horse-racing club.

A fair is a fair - and at Mankato, as at Garden City, there were divisions for competition in the "fine arts" and the "domestic arts". The categories were broad: Fine arts included not only painting, drawing and sculpture, but also "photography, penmanship, printing, framing, architectural drawing and specifications of farm houses and buildings." Craft work also came under fine arts, and included "needle, shell, wax, hair and leather work."



The painting and the award medal shown here are two objects in the Museum collection which seem to be related to the Mankato fair of 1888. The painting is the work of Ida Martin, whose father, William J. Martin, had a grocery and feed business in the city from before 1871 to his death in 1899. The family lived at 306 Willard Street. It is a guess that Miss Martin probably won first place for her painting of 1887 at the Mankato fair the following year. Her name is clearly engraved on the medal, though so finely that it does not show in the photograph, and there is no date. The Museum records say only: "awarded to Miss Ida Martin for the best oil painting." Unfortunately the Mankato Review reporter who covered the fair apparently considered fine arts unimportant, for he did not even mention them. He did, however, record all the awards for foods, including the information that Mrs. W.J. Martin (Ida's mother) took first place for pickles and second for a sample of butter.

Both the painting and the medal were given to the Historical Society by Miss Martin in 1935. The canvas measures 12 by 20 inches, and was professionally prepared. Framed, it hangs at present on the wall of the log cabin in the Museum basement. The medal, made of a bronze-type metal, is one and five-eighths inches in diameter. The obverse shows a sort of seal, with the inscription: The Mankato Driving Park Association ... Incorporated 1873. The reverse is stamped simply: "Awarded to ..", with a space below, in which Ida Martin's name was engraved.



THE PAY CHAIR

(Continued from Page 5)

However, the constitution's declaration of purpose is clear: "the promotion of agriculture, horticulture, manufacture, mechanics and household arts." An annual fair was to be the Society's principal activity.

I made comparisons: The premium book has 60 pages this year. In 1871 - the Museum has a copy! - it was a single folded sheet, making a tiny booklet of four pages. But the rules of competition were basically the same, emphasizing that entries must be produced in the county by the competitor.

A century ago, as today, the elements of survival and success were the same: local pride and enterprise; and the concern to promote agriculture and the quality of rural life by encouraging individual achievement (competition!) in pursuit of those goals.

Photographs for this issue are by
Roberta Kress

THE CARVED WALNUT CHAIR pictured at the left, one of our recent accessions, is of particular interest from several points of view. First, its associations: It comes from a family whose history coincides with that of Mankato. It is the gift of Mrs. W. Earl Pay, in honor of her husband. He inherited it from his father, W. Horatio Pay, son of Benjamin D. Pay, who came to Blue Earth County in 1856.

Originally this chair was one of four. They were made for Horatio Pay by a Mankato cabinet-maker, Herman Knoff, from the wood of a single tree. (Knoff, in partnership with Ole Odjard, established a furniture shop in Mankato in the 1870's, and continued in business until the end of the century.) One chair went to each of Horatio Pay's children: two sons, Benjamin F. (B. Frank) and W. Earl; and two daughters, Nellie and Mary. We learned from Mrs. Kelsey Johnson (daughter of B. Frank) that she still has her father's chair. She does not know what may have been the fate of the two other chairs which belonged to her aunts.

Precise information as to when the chair was made is also lacking. A guess would be the years 1875-1880. The design, particularly the sharply slanted narrow back, seems quite unusual. One surmises that Knoff himself created it, and wonders what sources (if any) of mid-Victorian design may have influenced him in the production of this original piece of "American Provincial" furniture.

A NON - ANTIQUE ACCESSION !

Emma Wiecking has presented the Hubbard House with a brand-new refrigerator ! It stands gleaming white in the basement nook which serves as our staff lounge. Having real ice for our instant tea and a place to keep our soft drinks cold made the hot dry days of August easier to endure for all the Museum employees.

Many thanks to Miss Wiecking for this thoughtful gift, which will also be appreciated by committees responsible for serving refreshments at Society functions.

The Mankato Free Press reprinted in its major September supplement, The Land, the article on early farm implements which appeared in the July issue of The Newsletter. The editor is flattered !

The Museum recently loaned a number of items from its Welsh Church collection to the Library of Gustavus Adolphus College, for a special display in connection with the regional Gemanfa Ganu (Hymn Festival), held at the college on September 26.

CORRECTION FOR THE RECORD to article in the Newsletter of October, 1976 (Vol-

ume 5, Number 3) Page 6
Accession 76.10.1 Walnut Side Chair, Gift of Mrs. W. Earl Pay

The chair is one of four, made for Benjamin D. Pay (not W. Horatio, as stated in the article), who gave one to each of his four children, William Horatio, Benjamin Franklin (generally known as B. Frank), Elizabeth (Nellie) and Mary.

The two chairs which are known to be still in existence are the one which belonged ~~originally~~ to W. Horatio Pay, which (as stated in the article in Paragraph 1) was inherited by his son, William Earl Pay; and the one which belonged to B. Frank Pay, which is now in the possession of his daughter, Mary Pay Johnson. Mrs. W. Earl Pay gave the one which was her husband's to the Blue Earth County Historical Society Museum in July, 1976. It is Accession No. 76.10.1 in the Museum records.

The article should have read: (2nd Paragraph)

Originally this chair was one of four. They were made for Benjamin D. Pay by a Mankato cabinet-maker, Herman Knoff, etc. One chair went to each of Benjamin Pay's ~~children~~ ^{two sons} Wm. Horatio ~~and~~ Benjamin F. (B. Frank) ^{and} and two daughters, Elizabeth (Nellie) and Mary.