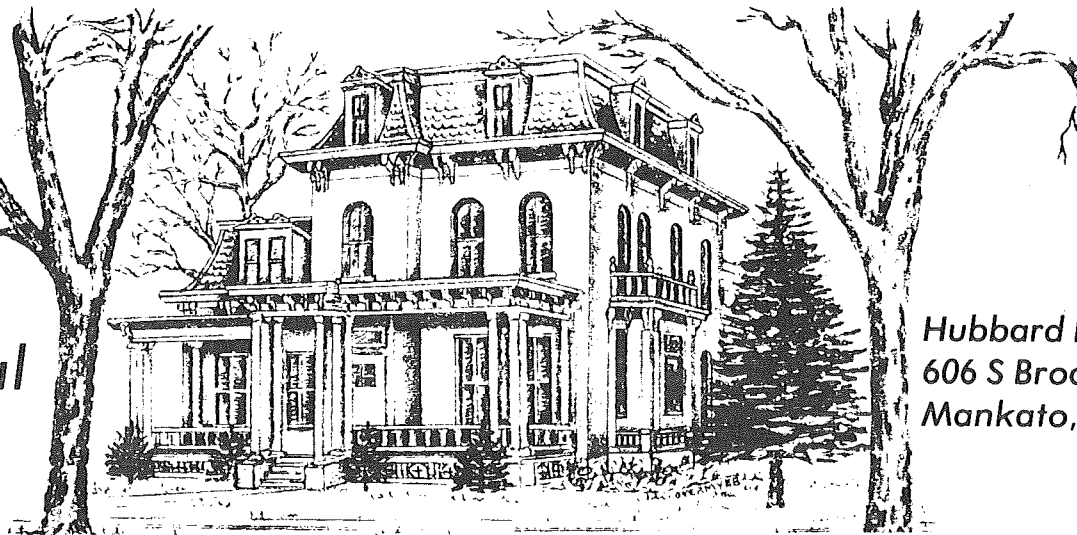


Blue
Earth
County
Historical
Society



Hubbard House
606 S Broad St.
Mankato, Minn.

Volume 8, Number 1

NEWS LETTER

April, 1979

COMING EVENTS

- APRIL 18 (WED.) ANNUAL DINNER AND BUSINESS MEETING of the
BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PLACE: Torchlight Supper Club, Mapleton, MN
(Junction of Highways 22 and 30)
TIME: Dinner - 7:00 pm. Program - 8:30 pm.
SPEAKER: Mr. Donald Shank, Vice President and General Manager,
Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway Company
SUBJECT: The History of Railroads in Minnesota, as Interpreted
by the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation.
DINNER: \$7.00 per person. Please Make Reservation. (Form Enclosed)
Both Dinner and Program Open to the Public.
- June 2 (SAT.) BENEFIT RUMMAGE SALE
PLACE: Hubbard Carriage House (rear) - 604 S. Broad St., Mankato.
TIME: 9:00 am. to 5:00 pm.
CHAIRMAN: Karen Sundstrom (See Director's Rolltop, p. 6)
- NOVEMBER 4 - 11 MUSEUM SHOP ANNUAL BAZAAR
TIME: Sunday, November 4 through Sunday, November 11
PLACE: The Hubbard House - 606 S. Broad Street, Mankato

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S THANKS
for
FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

MEMORIALS TO: EFFIE JABRA
TOM GUILLIATT

SPECIAL GIFTS FROM:
BLANCHE BARNHART
MAPLETON TOWNSHIP
TOM MARKS

HICKORY STREET REVISITED

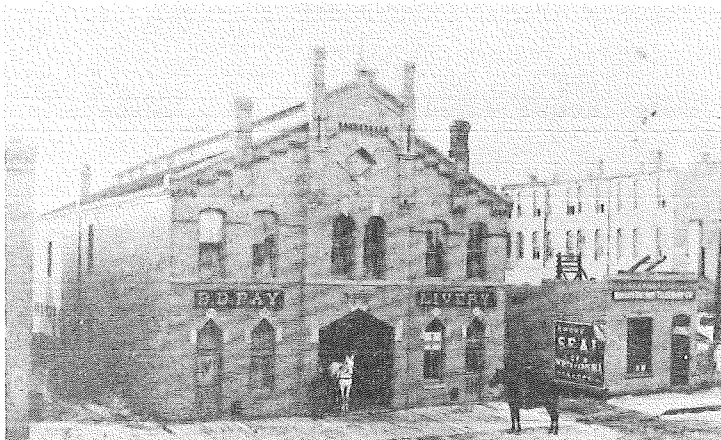
George Scherer's recollections of people and places on Hickory Street, published in the Newsletter of January 1977, described some aspects of the street familiar to him in his boyhood, when his father owned and operated the Star Laundry at 120 East Hickory, a site now occupied by the parking lot of the First National Bank. In this number Mr. Scherer continues with reminiscences of other places along the street, and reflections on urban history in general.

We searched the Museum collection for photographs to supplement his description, and came up with more than we can show here!

As he comments at some length on the history of the Pay family enterprises, we tried particularly to match our old photographs of buildings owned by the Pays with Mr. Scherer's information.

J. Kress

THE PAY LIVERY BARN



100 BLOCK, SOUTH SIDE OF HICKORY STREET

This is our earliest photograph of the building which was built in 1880. Most of Mr. Scherer's account relating to it is on pages four and five. The building to the left is presumably 121 East Hickory, which belonged to John Noe. (see Page 3)

J. Kress

REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE SCHERER

The laundry building at 120-122 East Hickory Street has already been described.

Next to the laundry on the east was the A.G. Meyer Monument Works. It was owned by Mr. Meyer, and his son George did the carving of names and dates on the stones. I marveled at his skill in layout and design and his precision in handling his chisels. At first, he did his work with chisels and wooden mallet. Later, the motive power behind the chisels was an air compressor. As the chisel was held against the stone, the pressure of the air caused it to vibrate. That took much of the labor away and resulted in more accurate and finer work.

In back of the building was an open platform covered by a makeshift roof against the sun and light rains. Here Mr. Tollefson worked on shaping bases for the finished monuments. Big pieces of rough-cut stone would come from quarries in St. Cloud and Vermont, and marble from Colorado. These pieces were accurately cut, shaped and beveled to specifications by Mr. Tollefson, using chisels and mauls. I recall that one tool was like the little kitchen utensil with spikes on it that my mother used when she beat flour into Swiss steak. He used that to give a sort of pebbled appearance, especially on the bevels. I often chuckle when I think of future archaeologists when they dig into the long-buried ruins of Mankato. Where Mr. Tollefson worked there was originally a small gully. By the time he quit work there, the gully was about level with the surrounding area, filled by chips of various stones from many parts of the country. The savants might someday postulate that a "Noah's Ark" type of flood had washed all these pieces into one place, à la Petrified Forest.

The next building to the east of the Monument Works was the home of the Mankato Post, a German-language newspaper founded by my father, George W. Scherer. It was a weekly, printed in German type. Through the years the paper and the job printing press went through several hands. The successive owners, as I remember, were George Traub, one of the Mankato Blissenbach brothers, Bill Meixner, Paul Neff and Val Imm.

(Continued on Page 3, Left Column)

REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE SCHERER (Cont'd.)

Across the street, adjacent to the Elks Lodge Building, to the west, was a two-story brick building, occupied on the ground floor by Mr. John C. Noe, with his Abstract of Title Office. Mr. Noe was a "gentleman of the old school". He was a small, dapper man, and wore old-style mutton-chop whiskers. After he retired, the ground floor was occupied by Mr. John W. Kuebler's plumbing business. He had a retail business in the front part and warehoused plumbing supplies in the rear, where he and his employees cut and threaded pipe and drew tools and supplies for the next job.

Later, the Ben Pay Hotel took over the building, using the second floor for additional bedrooms.

The building is now gone, the ground leveled off, and instead of a parking lot, the site is now occupied by a piece of modern sculpture.

(Continued on Page 4, Right Column)

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HICKORY AND
SECOND STREETS - 1897



THE YOUNG MEN'S INVESTMENT COMPANY BUILDING

Though Mr. Scherer does not mention this building, it played an important part in the history of the Pay family enterprises. Built in 1889, it occupied the site of the later Elks Lodge. Both structures had a similar fate, being destroyed by spectacular fires.

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HICKORY and SECOND STREETS
MARCH 18, 1898



In this photogravure B.D. Pay's house, 310 S. Second Street, is at the extreme left. (In 1926, when the annex to the Ben Pay Hotel was built, the house was moved to its present site, 427 S. Broad Street.) To the right, looking down the street, is 121 East Hickory, the office of John Noe, to which an elaborate brick front has been added. Another small building occupies the easement which earlier separated it from Pay's Livery, seen at the extreme right. (See Photo, P. 2)

J. Kress

The Young Men's Investment Company Building was destroyed by fire on March 1, 1898. The exterior walls remained standing, only to be blown down by high winds two weeks later. The newspaper account describes how the walls swayed and collapsed, causing heavy damage to the buildings owned by John Noe and B. D. Pay. The second floor apartments of both buildings "had the appearance of being struck by a cyclone." According to the newspaper, W. H. Pay and his family took refuge in his father's house, which suffered only some broken window panes.

(J. Kress)

PAY and SON LIVERY, 115-119 EAST HICKORY STREET
BETWEEN LATE 1898 and 1902



Scarcely a week after the destruction caused by the collapse of the Young Men's Investment Building, a second fire (probably set by an arsonist) burned out the Pay Livery barn. (Mankato Free Press, March 25, 1898). The building shown in this photograph, planned by architect Henry Gerlach, was constructed later in the same year. It completely filled the space between the alley and John Noe's building, which appears to have been rebuilt and its elaborate decorative brick front restored.

The Pay building as it appears here is the one which became the Pay Candy Company factory in 1902, and subsequently the earliest unit of the Ben Pay Hotel, in 1917-18.

J. Kress

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HICKORY
& SECOND STREETS - 1926

The architect's drawing shows the relation of the expanded Ben Pay Hotel, with its six-story annex facing on Second Street, to the Elks Lodge, which had been built in 1911 on the site of the earlier Young Men's Investment Building. Apparently the corner had remained vacant from 1898 to 1911!! In 1908, the Elks were talking about building a new lodge there; and the site is labeled "Ruins of Fire" on the Sanborn insurance maps of that year.

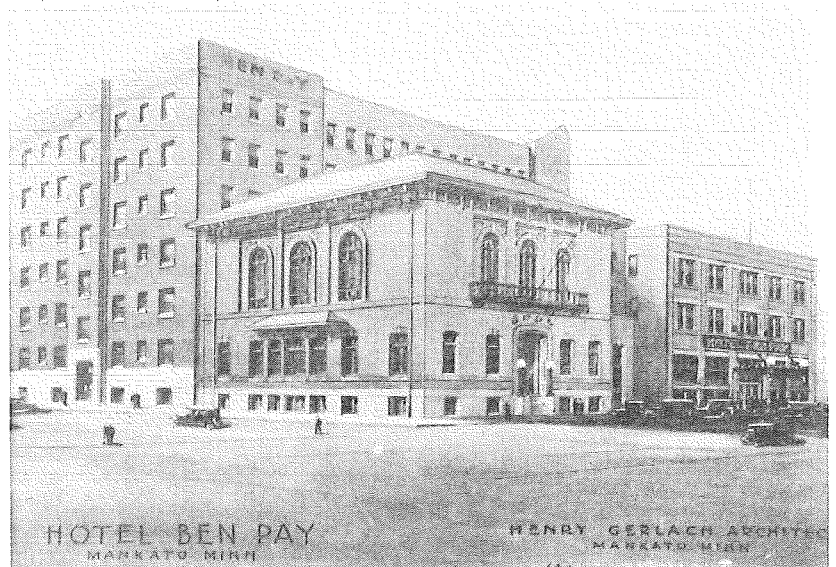
J. Kress

HICKORY STREET REVISITED
REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE SCHERER

The Ben Pay Hotel Building had indeed a checkered career. It was a livery stable, operated by Mr. W.H. (Rashe) Pay. The second story was the hayloft, and (on one side) the residence of the Pay family. There were three children: W.E. (Earl), Hazel and Irene. The two girls both died during the typhoid fever epidemic of 1908. Earl was desperately ill for weeks, but recovered and lived for many years, a highly respected citizen, residing on Byron Street.

During the early years of the livery business, a "livery barn war" broke out in Mankato, and several barns were set on fire, including a fire in the hayloft next to the Pays' residential quarters. Fortunately the fire was discovered in time, and there were no injuries.

(Continued on Page Five)



REMINISCENCES OF GEORGE SCHERER (Cont'd.)

The livery business came to an end, probably due to the advent of the automobile, and the Pay family went into the candy manufacturing business. The chocolate dipping room and refrigerators were in the basement. The fondants and other candies were made on the first floor. I well remember watching flat trays of dry starch going through a machine which impressed the shapes of chocolate creams into the starch. Then those trays went through a machine which squirted a measured amount of fondant into each hole. Stacked up, cooled and dried, they were next sent to the girls who did the dipping. Earl Pay was the chief candy maker, and several salesmen were employed on the road to sell the products.

Again a change in life-styles forced the candy factory into smaller quarters; it was moved to a livery barn on Cherry Street, which later became the Model Dairy.

The next and final use of the building was its conversion into a hotel, which was named after the first member of the family in Mankato, Benjamin D. Pay, and called the Ben Pay Hotel. Mr. W.H. Pay and Earl were the active managers of the hotel, but another son of B. D. Pay, B. Frank Pay, devoted some of his time to the business and had an office in the building. The hotel business became so successful that the Pay home on South Second Street, next to the Elks Building, was moved to another location, and a six-story annex was erected.

The hotel remained successful for many years, until again a change in life-style forced it to close. The "new" annex was razed, and a parking ramp erected on the site. With all the new parking lots, it would seem that it should now become another white elephant. It may even become the victim of still another life-style.

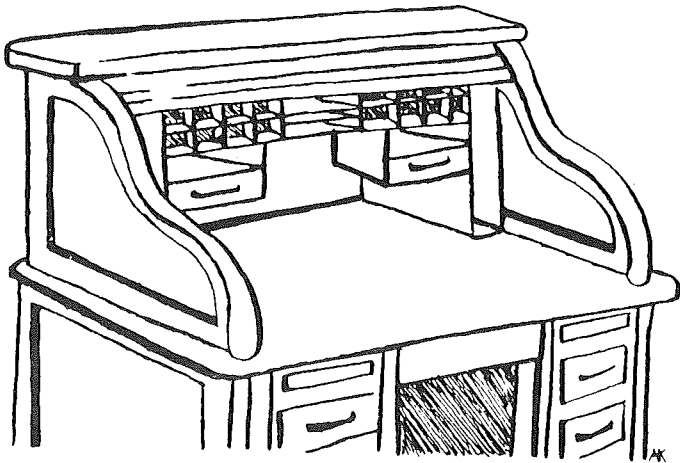
George W. Scherer

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF HICKORY & SECOND STREETS
MARCH, 1979



Both Ben Pay Hotel buildings of 1926 were razed in 1967 to make room for the Second Street parking ramp. The area on Hickory Street, between the alley and the Elks Lodge, became a parkette, with the Eldridge steel sculpture. The Elks Lodge burned in July, 1977, and was demolished in December of that year. It seems likely that the "Hickory Street Crater" (as I am told it is called) will be filled by an office building in the near future. Progress, progress ?!!

J. Kress



Spring seems to be on the way at last, and we're looking forward to a busy year. The Society's Annual Meeting begins the season, with dinner at the Torchlight Supper Club in Mapleton, and Don Shank, of the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation (and also general manager of the Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway), talking and showing slides of the museum in Duluth. Those of us who have heard him know what a dynamic speaker he is and are sure you will enjoy his presentation.

Our next event is the Society Rummage Sale, set for June 2. Karen Sundstrom, one of our new members, will be in charge. Please start saving your rummage sale items for us - except NO CLOTHING. You will be hearing from us about when and where to bring your contributions. Anyone wishing to volunteer time to work setting things up or clerking the day of the sale, please call and give us your name. Our bazaar last fall was so successful that we plan to make it an annual event. The 1979 dates are November 4 through November 11. So start on your handwork now. We will be calling on all of you again to donate your work for the benefit of the Museum.

The YWCA has received a grant from the Minnesota Humanities Commission to present a series of four forums on the topic of "Meeting Our Foremothers". I have been asked to moderate the first session, in addition to presenting thumbnail sketches of a few early women from this area. There will also be readings and dramatizations from the early records.

Coincidentally, I have been asked to speak on "The Role of Women in Mankato History" at the Mankato State University Women's Center Brown Bag Lunch series, on April 26.

Our apologies to an anonymous member who paid annual dues and then was billed again! Somehow the name was not recorded when the payment was received, so we don't know who he/she is. Please call and let us know, so we can properly credit your membership record.

The Minnesota Historical Society will be conducting two surveys in Blue Earth County in the very near future. Dennis Ginnestad will investigate historic structures in the county, including the Red Jacket Bridge. The Board decided to have the bridge included in this survey, among all structures of historic significance in the county, rather than submit a separate application for the National Register, as previously reported.

Edward Lofstrom will be surveying archaeological sites. This will be the final survey of the series for Blue Earth County. The Museum artifacts and newspaper collection have already been surveyed. Anyone interested in the preliminary report to the Legislature on these state-wide surveys may stop in and read our copy. The report makes several recommendations which, if accepted and funded, will change for the better the processes of preserving historic resources throughout the state.

Foster Dunwiddie, of Miller-Dunwiddie Architects, met with the Board on February 27th to present his plans for the entire restoration of the Hubbard House. The plans are exciting! You are invited to drop in and look them over. The first phase of the restoration will start very soon: electrical contractors have been surveying the Hubbard House to bid on its re-wiring, in order to make it safe. Periodically we have a short in the old wiring. So far serious consequences have been avoided, but we constantly worry about the danger of fire. Bids will be opened April 5, and hopefully the work will begin immediately thereafter.

(Continued on Page 8)

AN APPEAL for the JEFFERSON HOUSE

by John Haack, Project Coordinator

JEFFERSON HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT
PLEDGES NEAR \$ 2,000!

Time is running out faster than money is coming in, as efforts continue to raise the \$10,000 needed to move this 200-ton limestone house this spring. Built in 1865 by Adam Jefferson, who started the first quarry at Mankato, it is historically significant as the oldest stone house in the city. The Minnesota Historical Society has assured us that the survey of historic sites currently under way could place the house on the State Register, if it gets a new lease on life through this appeal.

Following the recommendation of the Minnesota Historical Society, a steering committee for the project is being formed. Jerry Fuller (of Fuller Metal Decor) has agreed to be the contact person in Mankato for the committee. (Phone 345-5989). Dave Lamm is serving as volunteer attorney, working to establish non-profit, tax exempt status for the project. Ralph Bengtson has donated two lots on Cleveland Avenue North, to which the house can be moved. Donors of \$100 or more would automatically be members of the steering committee, to help direct the project.

Kenneth Kozitza, a long-time Mankato resident and professional fund-raiser, is contacting organizations in the Mankato area. Many people have already contributed to save this fine old structure. Grace and Dorothy Jefferson, who at one time thought that their childhood home was doomed, now have renewed hope, and have indicated that family members can be counted on to provide a share of financial support. We need help not only from early Mankato families, but from early Mankato businesses as well. We are getting help from comparative newcomers to the community, who are interested in maintaining local historical perspectives.

Many potential donors are taking a "wait and see" attitude, but the time factor is becoming critical. Dick Lundin has told us that the Jefferson House will become grist for the rock crusher by late spring, if steps to move it have not been taken.



What a shame this would be! Many Mankatoans are still kicking themselves for not having done more to save the Saulpaugh Hotel. Let's not let another historic structure be destroyed when efforts to save it have already progressed so far. We need your help now!

Contributions (including pledges already made) can be sent to the Jefferson House Restoration Fund, c/o ORLA, Northwestern National Bank, Mankato, MN 56001. For further information, contact Kenneth Kozitza (387-2938), Jerry Fuller (345-5989) or me, John Haack, Project Coordinator, Maple Lake, MN, 612-963-3322. I would be happy to meet with interested people during the week of April 11-17, or on weekends, to explain future plans for the restoration project.

John Haack
Project Coordinator

NEWSLETTER of the BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Published four times a year by the Blue Earth County Historical Society, at
606 South Broad Street, Mankato, MN 56001
Editor Jeanne D. Kress
Free to members of the Historical Society
Annual subscription (4 issues) - \$ 3.00

ATTENTION
SOCIETY MEMBERS !

ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 18

INFORMATION
and
RESERVATION FORM
ENCLOSED

NEWSLETTER
BLUE EARTH COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
606 South Broad
Mankato, MN 56001



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DIRECTOR'S ROLLTOP (Continued)

New in the Museum Shop is notepaper done by artist Lucille Sundermann of Le Sueur. She has prepared a series for us, showing the Hubbard House, Minneopa Falls, Seppmann Mill and the Blue Earth County Courthouse. These are available in packs of eight sheets of notepaper and eight envelopes, or a packet of eight, with two views of each scene. There are also larger prints of the Courthouse and the Hubbard House, suitable for framing. Mrs. Sundermann has sketched historic buildings throughout the area and her work is on sale at the Mayo House in Le Sueur, as well as at gift shops in the area. She does beautiful work. Any of these items would make fine gifts.

We also have new postcards in stock: Peter Hornby photographs of the Blue Earth County Courthouse, Minnemishinona Falls (near Minneopa), Minneopa Stream and Prairie Sunset.

Donna Sandon announces that her 1979 Historical Plate will be "The Red Jacket Bridge". Watch for it in the fall.

Personnel changes at the Museum: Vernon Hanson has been appointed to replace Bruce Smith as Treasurer. New tour guides are Margaret Jahr and Maxine Carpenter; Kaja Powers and Steve Kvale are new week-end employees. Donna Winter is working on new exhibits and refurbishing old ones. You should see the renovation and cleaning she has given Betsy, our bride model, as part of the new Betsy-Tacy and Maud Hart Lovelace exhibit!

Our congratulations to Holly and Jim Ahern, who welcomed Aubrey Elizabeth on January 26. Holly is returning to our Tour Guide staff, now that Aubrey is getting to be a big girl.

Carol Kvale, secretary and receptionist (as well as Board member), is working on a reference notebook for the tour guides and staff about our two buildings, their exhibits and artifacts. When completed, this will be an invaluable aid in training new guides and in keeping the staff informed of the new data we continue to unearth about our various holdings.

See you at the Annual Meeting on April 18!

Marcia T. Schuster

RECENT ACCESSIONS - JANUARY - MARCH, 1979

ARTIFACTS

Souvenir Plates: Mankato Scenes.
Ladies' Accessories.
Sewing and Handcraft Accessories.
Personal Items.
Wooden Skis (early).
GIFT OF MRS. KATHERYN MOEDE, Mankato.

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Family Memorabilia and Photographs;
Family Bible and Album.
Memorabilia of Mankato Schools & Churches.
GIFT OF MRS. KATHERYN MOEDE, Mankato.
Memorabilia of the Emil Moe Family:
Photographs, books, etc. (McPherson Township, Mapleton and Waseca).
GIFT OF RAPHAEL MALECHA, Madison Lake.