

Blue Earth County Historical Society



Hubbard House
606 S Broad St.
Mankato, Minn.

Volume 7, Number 4

NEWS LETTER

January, 1979

LIFE AT THE HUBBARD HOUSE **** THE YEAR IN REVIEW **** A SUMMARY

VISITORS to the Hubbard House this past year numbered 6,424, as compared with 6,190 in 1977, an increase of approximately four percent. The total of visitors registered at the Carriage House was 4,716, a figure which is relatively small as a result of staffing problems. The loss of Mike Eigen as a full-time staff member has meant that since September first, the building has been staffed only on Saturdays and Sundays. During the week it was opened by the receptionist at the Hubbard House only if visitors requested. Of these totals about 55% were residents of Mankato and Blue Earth County - 3,757 at the Hubbard House, and 2,695 at the Carriage House. Visits by other Minnesotans made a combined total (for both buildings) of 2,278, again an increase over the last year in this category. Visitors from other states numbered 1,390. We had 207 foreign visitors, representing twenty-one different countries, as compared with thirteen in 1977. The list begins with Africa and continues: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Czechoslovakia, Germany, Guadeloupe, Hong Kong, Ireland, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand. A specific African country, Uganda, finishes the alphabet.

CONDUCTED TOURS totaled 98, of which 78 were of groups of young people. This percentage is the same as in 1977, while the actual number of tours represents a small increase. Approximately two-thirds of the total of groups toured both the Hubbard House and the Carriage House. Eighty-five percent of the young people's groups were from Mankato and Blue Earth County; adult groups were evenly divided, half from the county and half from other places. The tour services furnished, in terms of the number of separate groups actually conducted by individual guides, amounted to a total of 145.

THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES received a total of 287 requests, an increase over the 1977 figure of 245. As in the previous year, 50% of these were from people who came to the Museum. Telephone inquiries account for 32% of the total; the remaining 18% were requests by mail. These percentages vary only a little from those of 1977. Inquiries from outside Minnesota amount to 14% of the total, almost exactly the same as in the preceding year. These requests came from twenty different states, and we had one request from Canada. About 25% of all requests were for help with genealogical research. New types of requests appeared this year: One sort came from institutions or individuals making surveys of various kinds, asking for

(Continued on Page 2)

Page 1

information on the contents of our archives. The Minnesota Historical Society's state-wide Newspaper Inventory was the major request of this kind. Others were from the University of Minnesota for a state-wide inventory of county atlases and plat books, and from the University of Illinois for a nation-wide survey of resources on American music. Similar requests came from individuals making surveys of research materials on various subjects, for example ethnic minorities. Another type of request coming directly or indirectly from public agencies was for information on the history (really archaeology) of particular areas of Mankato. We had similar requests about particular building sites from private construction firms, and a number of inquiries from individuals about the history of old houses in the city.

ACCESSIONS of artifacts received during the year numbered 29. In addition, 14 gifts of archival materials were received, which included collections of books, research papers and records of local clubs. Other items in this category were maps and photographs. (See Page 8 for a list of accessions in the last quarter of the year.)

THE MUSEUM SHOP added two items of historical interest to its stock: the Sandon Historical Plate for 1978 (fourth in the series), which depicts Minneopa Falls, and a metal Centennial Souvenir Plate issued by the Hubbard Milling Company for its hundredth anniversary.

SPECIAL FINANCIAL GIFTS were received from a number of Blue Earth County Townships: Cambria, Ceresco, Garden City, Judson, Lime, Lincoln, Mapleton, Rapidan and Vernon Center. School District # 77 and the Cities of Mapleton and Mankato also made special donations. The total of gifts from these sources was \$1,900. Donations to the Hubbard House Restoration Fund, the Ways and Means Committee and special Christmas gifts were received from William D. Carlson, Ogden W. Confer, Abby Draper, the Hubbard Milling Company, Martin Jenson, Emma Wiecking, Edna Will and Anne Ziesmer. The sum of these gifts was \$970. An anonymous donor made a gift of

\$500. to help defray the cost of publishing the Newsletter.

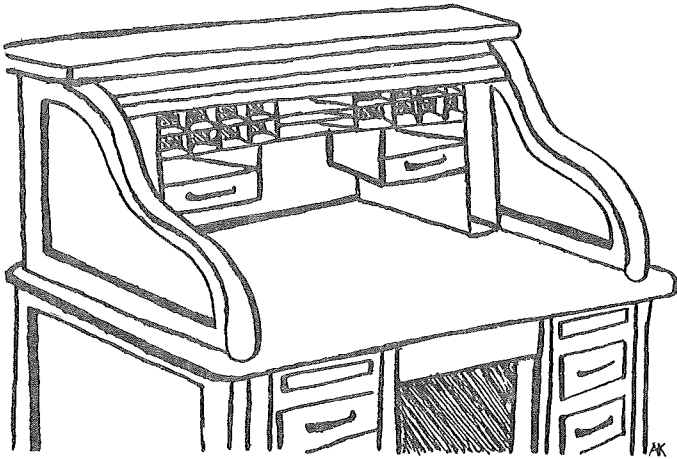
NEW EXHIBITS: Additions on the second floor of the Carriage House are exhibits on the sport of curling in Mapleton and Mankato, and on pioneer doctors and medical care in the early days of Blue Earth County. Downstairs is a new display of items related to the horsebreeding business of John Lang of Mapleton, about the turn of the century. At the Hubbard House, various changes have been made, partly necessitated by the problem of space for special events and partly in the course of continued reorganization of existing displays. In the South Parlor, the cases containing Indian artifacts have been moved to their former position against the walls, to make room for the Bazaar. The Museum Shop is now set up in the Dining Room, where it will probably remain. A number of Norwegian artifacts, household items formerly on display in the Kitchen, have been moved to the Holberg Cabin. Two special temporary exhibits occupied space in the North Parlor during the year: Memorabilia of the Hubbard Milling Company were on display from June through November. A display of items from the Museum Shop, with the theme of "A Victorian Christmas", was set up in December as an adjunct to the Bazaar. A new small exhibit of old-fashioned swim suits can be seen on the second floor.

SPECIAL EVENTS during 1978 were four: The Society's Annual Meeting and Dinner in April was held at the Answer Restaurant in Lake Crystal - an innovation which we would like to continue by having this year's meeting in another city in Blue Earth County. The Dedication of Palmer Centennial Place on June 4th was the gala event of the summer. September 23 was the date of another new project, the bus tour to the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. December events were the Members' Christmas Tea, followed by the ten-day Bazaar.

THANK-YOU'S TO PEOPLE WHO ANSWERED
OUR CHRISTMAS WISH LIST !

EVELYN SCHMANSKI for laundering and
ironing Museum curtains
MRS. FLORENCE LA HANN & LARRY SCHNOOR
for the gift of card tables

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S ROLLTOP



The Museum Shop Bazaar was a great success. We learned so very much about space, timing, pricing and displaying that another effort should be even more successful. The Committee will recommend to the Board that this become an annual fall event, and that the treasures and trinkets left over from this bazaar be used as the nucleus for a rummage sale in the spring.

Rough figures for the bazaar show a profit of around \$800, but there were some intangibles that perhaps are worth more than the money taken in. Four persons joined the Society as a result of interest in the bazaar, and some Society members who have not participated in Society affairs in my nearly four years here responded with contributions of merchandise and time. We all were impressed with the talents shown by our membership. Without a doubt our group possesses more high caliber talent per member than any other organization can boast! The only disappointment (for which we refuse to take responsibility!) was the weather on the opening day of the Members' Tea. Six to eight inches of snow kept many persons from attending, and we commend the brave souls who did get here.

At the risk of omitting names of some equally generous persons, for which I apologize in advance, I would especially like to commend our staff members for donating services and time above and beyond the call of duty: Holly Ahern, Jeanne Kress, Sue Monk, Mary Pongratz and Stewart Simpson, who worked overtime and extra time to prepare for the opening; Marcia Coonce, Bernice Jones, Carol Kvale and her tea committee, Marge Meredith, Mildred Zeno and Anne

Ziesmer for special services donated; and then of course the many members who made cash contributions, donated their handwork and "treasures and trinkets", loaned their tables and tea services, and who did their Christmas shopping here. Thank you one and all!

Personnel changes at the Museum: Carol Kvale has agreed to replace Holly Ahern in the assistant director's job until a permanent replacement can be found. Bruce Smith, Society treasurer, has resigned, and that post will be filled temporarily until the election at the Annual Meeting in April. Finances dictate that the Carriage House be open on weekends only and by request to the Hubbard House staff.

Foster Dunwiddie and staff members of his firm have nearly completed the job of preparing plans and specifications for the restoration of the Hubbard House when money becomes available. The Minnesota Historical Society provided matching funds in a grant to do this study, plus money for re-wiring the Hubbard House, to correct some of the faulty wiring we now live with. Antiquity is great, but not in electrical wiring!

We hope to have announcements in the April Newsletter of a special slide-lecture series on house restoration, another bus trip, bazaar and rummage sale plans, and our Museum cookbook. We are still looking for a chairman/woman for this project. We have recipes of Mrs. R.D. Hubbard and Mrs. George Palmer, and would also include recipes from our current members. This would be a money-raising project for the Society. Who will take on the job of getting this project off the ground? There are many persons who have said they would like to work on it, but cannot accept the responsibility of taking charge. We need someone with time, persistence and managerial ability to see the project through to the end.

Bills for annual membership renewals will be going out soon. Some of you may want to consider changing your membership from Annual to Life, or to Patron. (Annual \$8.00; Life \$40; Patron \$100.)

Happy New Year to one and all. Please resolve to give us your ideas for advancing the Society and the cause of historical leadership in the community.

Marcia T. Schuster

HISTORIC PORTRAIT ACQUIRED FOR MINNESOTA



Portrait of Little Crow
by
Frank Blackwell Mayer

(Photograph by permission of
The Minnesota Historical Society)

The Minnesota Historical Society recently added to its collection a painting that should be of particular interest to history-minded people in Blue Earth County. It is a portrait of the famous Dakota chief Little Crow, painted in 1895 by the American artist Frank Blackwell Mayer, after a sketch which Mayer made in 1851 at the signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux. The Summer 1878 issue of Minnesota History describes the painting: "It is an oil on canvas, 20 x 14 inches, and bears the Mayer inscription: 'Cha-tan-wah-ka-ma-nee (the Hawk that chases walking) - Little Crow - Petit Corbeau - Chief of the Kaposia band of Dakota or Sioux From Life Minnesota 1851 July 2nd F. B. Mayer pinxt.'" A fine color photograph appears on the

cover of the magazine. We regret that our format permits only a black and white photograph which, of course, cannot do justice to the original.

Whatever their reasons, Minnesotans continue to be interested - even fascinated - by the Dakotah Uprising of 1862 and its tragic aftermath, the execution in Mankato of thirty-eight of the Indian prisoners of war, on December 26th of that year. Here at the Blue Earth County Museum, we find that this episode of our history accounts for the greatest number of requests for information made on a single subject. The inquiries are not merely local; they come from all over the state and from outside as well. In view of the event's historic importance and this continuing interest, it seems both fortunate and appropriate that through the Minnesota Historical Society the people of the state now possess this authentic portrait of the man who led the uprising.

The artist, Frank B. Mayer, came to Minnesota in 1851 with the express purpose of studying and sketching Indian subjects. He spent several days at Kaposia (Little Crow's village, located in the area of present-day South St. Paul), as the guest of Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, who introduced him to the chief. (Williamson was a physician and Presbyterian missionary who had moved to Kaposia from his earlier established mission station at Lac Qui Parle at the invitation of Little Crow.)

Mayer's impressions at the time of this visit are recorded in his diary:

"The chief is a man of some forty-five years of age and of a very determined and ambitious nature, but withal exceedingly gentle and dignified in his deportment. His face is full of intelligence when he is in conversation and his whole bearing is that of a gentleman."

1. Bertha L. Heilbron, ed., With Pen and Pencil on the Frontier in 1851: The Diary and Sketches of Frank Blackwell Mayer, (St. Paul, 1932), p. 125. Page references to Mayer's diary are to this publication.

The artist apparently asked to be allowed to sketch the chief, whose response reveals something of his character.

"He declined sitting to me until he was dressed in a manner more becoming his rank, he being then clothed in nature's garb with the exception of his breech clout."

(p. 125)

Subsequently Mayer had considerable opportunity to observe Little Crow, as both were passengers on the steamboat Excelsior, which made the two-day trip from St. Paul up the Minnesota River, carrying the U. S. treaty Commissioners and also a "delegation of the principal men of the Kaposia band, headed by their chief." (P. 116)

Mayer records that "when nearing Traverse des Sioux, ... the Kaposia Indians ... attired themselves in full costumes, ... that they might appear to their brethren in becoming plight." (pp. 148-149) "Little Crow being attired in state, he fulfilled his promise to me by sitting for his portrait." (p. 149)

The sketch made at this time (reproduced p. 119) and Mayer's detailed description in his diary of the chief's headdress and costume (p. 149) were the foundation for the dramatic portrait in oil produced some forty years later. The tendency today may be to think that it romanticizes its subject too much. But perhaps this artistic style reflects more truly the character and personality of Little Crow than a more modern and austere representation. The one other detailed description of Little Crow's appearance and character, by a man who knew him over a number of years, seems to bear out the psychological authenticity of Mayer's portrait. Dr. Asa W. Daniels, who was the government physician at the Lower Sioux Agency from 1854 to 1861 and who was well acquainted with Little Crow during those years, described him thus:

"...at the time of our first meeting, in 1854, Little Crow was a man of about forty years of age, five feet and ten inches in height, and weighed about one hundred and sixty

pounds, with marked features of the Indian type. He was of a nervous temperament, restless and active, intelligent, of strong personality, of great physical vigor, and vainly confident of his own superiority and that of his people. He was affable and always self-possessed."

"Little Crow was a gifted, ready and eloquent speaker, and in council was always ready to answer any demand made by the government. Of his gift in this direction he seemed very proud, and made the most of opportunities that afforded such a display. His appeals in these addresses to the government and to the Great Spirit that justice be done to his people, with his rugged eloquence, the lighting up of his countenance, the graceful pose of his person, and the expressive gestures, presented a scene wonderfully dramatic."

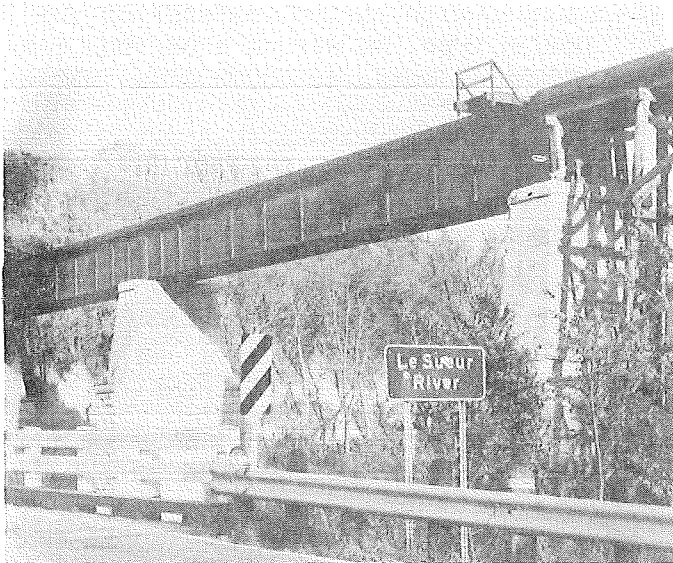
Mayer's portrait is a visual evocation of Little Crow as a human being, which parallels and also goes beyond the written record. As such it is a significant and valuable addition to the historical data. From it we can obtain a better understanding and appreciation of the tragedy of the Dakota Uprising and of the man who was its reluctant leader.

Jeanne Kress

2, 3. Asa W. Daniels, "Reminiscences of Little Crow," Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. XII (St. Paul, 1908), pp. 514 & 517.

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



HISTORY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION: A TALE OF BRIDGES

Last October's number of our Newsletter contained an article on the building of the Red Jacket Bridge - the railroad bridge over the Le Sueur River on the Milwaukee line running from Mankato to Rapidan. This bridge has long been regarded as a local historic landmark. As such it was included in the Minnesota State Inventory of Historic Sites (1975) on the recommendation, made in 1970, of a citizens' committee chaired by Bert Burns, then president of the Blue Earth County Historical Society.

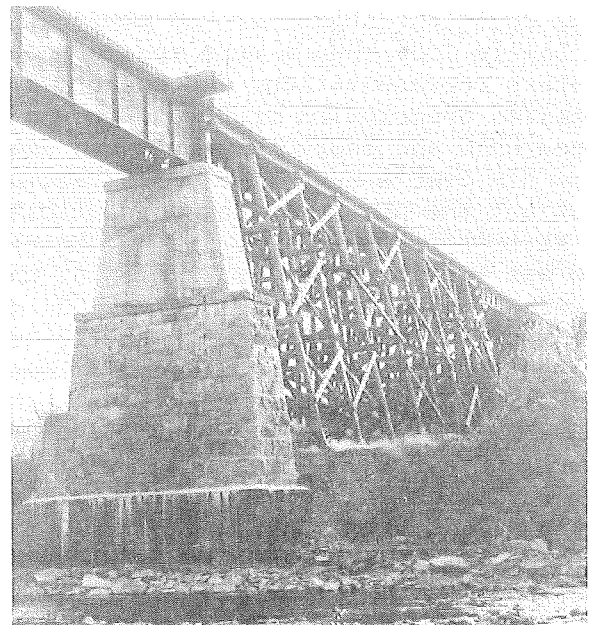
The recent abandonment of the right of way by the Milwaukee Road has raised the question of what will become of the Red Jacket Bridge. Government regulations require that the structure be dismantled unless some use can be found for it and its maintenance assured by some public agency or private organization. One possibility for its preservation is to have the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources use it as part of a recreational trail.

The prospect of its imminent destruction raises the question of the historical significance of the bridge for Blue Earth County and the State. The Board of Directors of the Blue Earth County Historical Society decided at a recent meeting to investigate this, with a view to finding out whether the structure might qualify for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, "the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation." Accordingly, your editor, in her capacity

as Museum archivist, was instructed to gather information needed for a possible application for the National Register. Considering how much public interest in historic preservation has developed, I thought that Society members might like to learn about the process from this local example.

The starting point of my investigation was naturally the statement which was the basis for the bridge being included in the Minnesota Inventory. This meant verifying the description of the bridge as "unaltered".

A comparison of early photographs with others made in 1978 gives the impression that the river span, with its steel girders, and the wooden trestle have remained substantially the same. However, the earliest photograph for which we have an absolute date is the famous 'panoramic' photo made by J. R. Snow on August 22, 1911, at the dedication of the concrete road bridge which crossed the river parallel to the railroad bridge, in the same location as the present crossing on Trunk Highway # 66. The other early photograph is on a postcard, of which we have two examples, one postmarked 1912. It shows the railroad bridge as similar in appearance to the photograph of 1911, but no concrete highway bridge is visible! So the postcard photograph must be earlier. Information from railroad records, obtained from the Milwaukee Road and from Thomas



Lamphier, president of the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation in Duluth, indicates that the steel spans of the railroad bridge over the river were installed in 1901. The postcard photograph, therefore, must show how the structure looked between 1901 and 1911.

The question that remained was, what was the bridge like between 1874, when the original structure was built, and 1901? We have no photographs from this period, and the railroad records furnished us do not go back this far. Here our newspaper files and the papers of John A. Willard in our archives supply the answer. Willard's



files contain specifications for a Howe Truss bridge over the Le Sueur and a trestle, with estimates for materials and work for both structures. The trestle is described in considerable detail in the newspapers of 1874, but, curiously enough, very little is said about the bridge over the river. The newspapers of 1901 give additional information: the Howe Truss * - "the old wooden bridge which has been used since the road was built" - was replaced by steel spans. (Mankato Free Press, May 31, 1901). It seems that the masonry piers (certainly the abutments) were either built or substantially reconstructed at the same time. (Mankato Review, July 2, 1901).

* The Howe Truss was a type patented in 1840 and used in a number of early railroad enterprises. Its main members were wood, combined with wrought iron. (American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 95: Bridges.)

The trestle, being of wood, has naturally been "altered" over the years. The present structure was built in 1931, the steel span over Trunk Highway # 66 being added in 1932, as a consequence of the highway being widened. (Milwaukee Road blueprint).

Thus our bridge, as it now stands, is not as old as generally believed - only 77 years old, rather than 104. What bearing these facts may have on its eligibility for the National Register must be judged by the State Board of Review for Historic Preservation. The railroad line, of which the bridge is a part, remains historically significant in the growth of transportation and commercial agriculture in Blue Earth County. The Red Jacket Bridge, as the most prominent feature of the road, perhaps deserves to be preserved as a monument to the Age of the Railroad.

Jeanne Kress

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Our first annual Museum Shop Bazaar is now history and we are all beaming with pleasure about the success of our first effort of this kind. We grossed over \$1,000 and we feel this is tremendous. We also learned a lot about running a bazaar, and next year's will certainly be much better. The talents and generosity of our members are truly gratifying, and I extend a heart-felt "thank you" to everyone who contributed. Attendance at the pre-opening Christmas Tea for members was especially gratifying, considering the bad weather that day.

The quality of the handcrafted items we were given was excellent, and some of the "trinkets and treasures" turned out to be quite valuable. The food donated was also very good and very popular. We are pleased to note that we were given merchandise by some members who had not been active in Society functions before this. Whenever we get more members involved, we feel it is worthwhile. We gained four new members during the bazaar!

Again, thank you to everyone who helped to make our bazaar a success, and please start planning and working on your donation for next year!

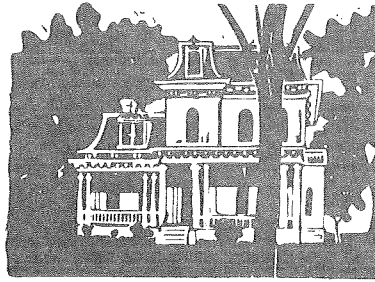
Sincerely,
Holly Ahern
Museum Shop Bazaar Chairman

ATTENTION
SOCIETY MEMBERS

THE NEW YEAR
IS HERE

TIME TO RENEW
ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIPS

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



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Mankato, MN. 56001
PERMIT NO. 343

Address Correction
Requested

RECENT ACCESSIONS - OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 1978

ARTIFACTS:

1. Hubbard Milling Company Centennial Souvenir Apron. Unbleached muslin, with Mother Hubbard trademark and motto: "The Perfect Family Flour. 1878-1978". Gift of the Hubbard Milling Company.
2. Electric Stove. "Triangle Toaster Stove". Mfr. American Electrical Heater Company, Detroit, U.S.A., ca. 1913 (?). Gift of Mrs. Ernest Hansen, Garden City.
3. Lady's Folding Fan. Wood frame, and painted fabric. Early 20th century. Gift of Mrs. Katheryn Richards Moede, Mankato.
2. Account Memorandum of Mankato Alderman Boegen for repair work done on the Main Street Bridge, 1888; and two photographs of the Frederick Boegen family and residence, 315 North Fifth Street, Mankato. Gift of Mrs. Mercedes Gugisberg, Albuquerque, NM.
3. Commemorative Brochure and Order of Service of the Diamond Anniversary of St. John's Lutheran Church, Good Thunder, Minnesota. 1945. Gift of Marcia T. Schuster, Mankato.

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS:

1. Photographs of Welsh clergymen, including the Rev. William E. Evans, pastor of Zion Presbyterian Church, Mankato, 1895-1934; the Rev. Hugh P. Morgan, pastor 1935-1946; and the Rev. William Machno Jones, pastor of Jerusalem and Salem Churches; also Welsh hymnals, children's books and song books. Gift of Ben Jones, Mankato.
4. German Language Books and Church Calendars (22 items), including children's readers, song books and Bible stories, for German Evangelical Lutheran schools. Published by Concordia Press, St. Louis, Missouri. Early 20th century. Gift of Don Klingbeil, Mankato.

NOTES FROM LAKE CRYSTAL

Since its very successful Bridal Revue project of last September, the Lake Crystal Historical Society has been taking a breather, so to speak. The Secretary, Mrs. John Norman, informed us that a meeting scheduled in November was cancelled because of bad weather. The group expects to meet in January (weather permitting!), at which time election of officers will take place and plans for the year will be discussed.