

Blue  
Earth  
County  
Historical  
Society



Hubbard House  
606 S Broad St.  
Mankato, Minn.

Volume 10, Number 1

## NEWS LETTER

April, 1981

### COMING EVENTS

APRIL 8 - WEDNESDAY

ANNUAL DINNER AND BUSINESS MEETING of the  
BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PLACE: NORMAN'S CAFE, AMBOY, MINNESOTA

TIME: Social Hour, 6:30 pm. Dinner 7:00 pm. COST: \$8.25  
Reservation Form enclosed.

PROGRAM: 1. Business Meeting. Election of Officers and  
Amendments to By-Laws.

2. "The Spirit of the Voyageur". Presentation  
by RON HOBART as Louis Baron, Voyageur. He  
will show slides and tell the story of his  
eight-month, 3,200-mile expedition from  
Montreal to the Gulf of Mexico in 1976-77.

JUNE 6 - SATURDAY

THIRD ANNUAL BENEFIT RUMMAGE SALE

SEE Director's Rolltop, Page 4, for details.

JUNE 13 - SATURDAY

SPRING BUS TOUR to FORT SNELLING, the FARIBAULT HOUSE and  
the SIBLEY HOUSE.

SEE Director's Rolltop, Page 4.

THE THANKS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
for

CONTRIBUTIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

MEMORIAL TO: MR. A. J. GRUENFELDER

DONATIONS FROM: TOWN OF CAMBRIA  
TOWN OF JUDSON  
TOWN OF MEDO  
CITY OF MADISON LAKE

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS !

ANNUAL: Kay Confer Lamb

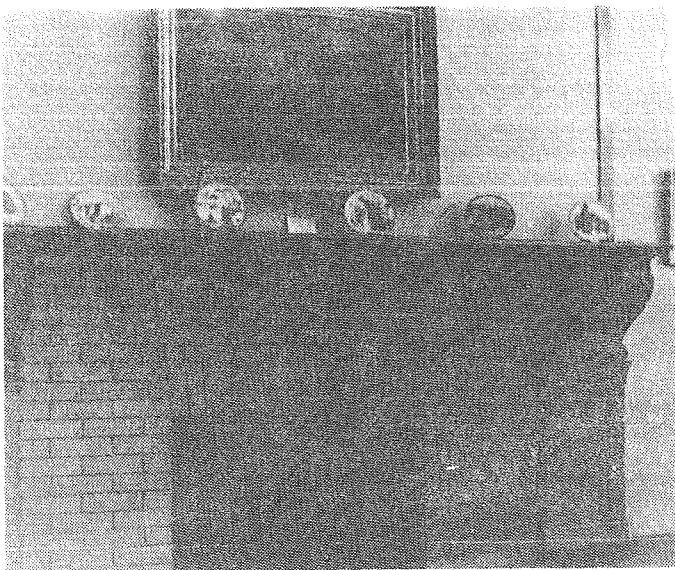
LIFE: Vera J. Kvamme  
Lyle Hohenstein

### THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY

has been much in the public eye recently, and details of the structure have been described at some length by both Ken Berg and Betty Nelson, writing in the Free Press. Mrs. Nelson's interest has been focussed on the interior of the building, which is most likely to be greatly altered, if the library is sold to private investors. Ken Berg has called attention to the elements of local craftsmanship and materials in the details of the exterior.

With the thought of anticipating and partially forestalling the total loss of these pieces of our past (Remember the Saulpaugh!), I hastily betook myself to the spot on February 25, when the building was open for a meeting of the Arts Council, to see what photographs I could get. An adequate photographic documentation of the interior is, alas, far beyond my limited equipment and skill as a photographer. I did succeed in recording two bits of the inside, the fireplace which Mrs. Nelson has described, and the marble tablet on the wall of the central rotunda area, with its inscription which declares the building to be a monument to the generosity of Andrew Carnegie.

(See opposite page 3)



Ken Berg has called attention to the exterior stonework of the building, which was quarried in Mankato. T. R. Coughlan had the contract. Mr. Harold Appel, who supplied Ken with a 1902 photograph of the stonecutters crew, believes that his grandfather, Henry Feldbusch, did the lettering of the great stone lintel. Feldbusch very likely produced another special piece which is less evident to the casual observer - the cornerstone at the right-hand side of the facade.

The stone bears the representation of an open book and the Latin inscription recalls the Biblical account of the Creation in the Book of Genesis (I, 3.): (And God said) "Let there be light, and there was light."

The laying of the cornerstone took place on July 2, 1902. The event is described at length in the Free Press of that time. The ceremony was conducted by the Mankato Masonic Lodge No. 12, A.F. & A.M.; and doubtless for this reason, the contents of the stone (listed in the newspaper account) are mostly items having to do with that organization! The other items mentioned are a history of the public library, a resolution of the library board, copies of the souvenir editions (50th anniversary of the city) of Mankato newspapers, and a "picture of the execution of the Indians"! (Presumably the lithograph published by J. C. Wise.)

Jeanne Kress

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY and the Museum staff were gratified to receive the expression of appreciation contained in the following letter:

Blue Earth County Courthouse  
December 31, 1980

Marcia Schuster  
Museum Director  
Blue Earth County Historical Society  
Mankato, MN 56001

Dear Marcia:

On behalf of the Court System in Blue Earth County, I want to thank you for all of the assistance and research you and your staff provided in conjunction with the temporary exhibit for our courtroom dedication on December 18, 1980. The exhibition items, photos and articles, were all viewed with excitement by those attending.

We also have a continuing interest in any further items that you may find pertaining to the Courthouse or the Court System in Blue Earth County.

Thanks again ....

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Richard H. Fasnacht  
Clerk of Court

CONTRIBUTORS TO BLUE EARTH COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ENDOWMENT FUND

ENDOWMENT PATRONS - \$500 or more

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Emma Wiecking  
Howard L. Williams

ENDOWMENT SUPPORTERS - \$200 to \$499

Julie W. Miller  
Audrey B. Todd  
Fern S. Williams  
H. Lee Williams

FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY - \$1 to \$199

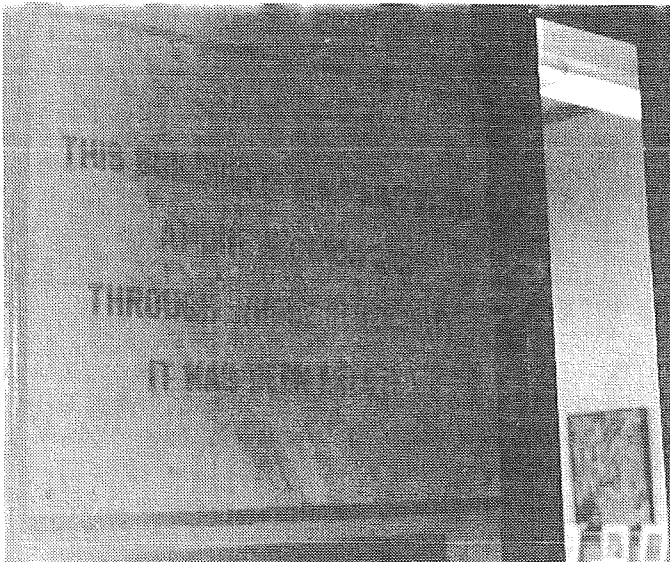
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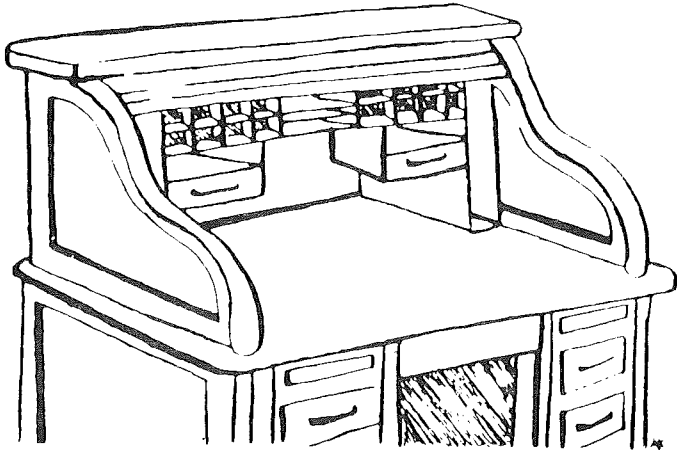
\* Life Membership

\*\* Donor of Memorial Gift

The Board of Trustees directed that unspecified memorials and donations should be placed in the Endowment Fund. They further specified that all Life Memberships should be placed in the Endowment Fund.

April 10, 1981.





This past week the architects made their final inspection of the exterior restoration work at the Hubbard House and pronounced it a job well done. There was enough grant money left over to pay for replacement of rotted beams and stabilization of the side porch off the kitchen. Progress!

Dates for your calendar: June 6, our annual rummage sale will be held in the rear of the Carriage House. You will be notified in May when to bring your contributions. The more interesting the rummage you have for us, the better the sale will be! We will need help, of course. If you have time to help set up, or to clerk on the day of the sale, please call me.

June 13, Saturday, is the date for our bus tour to Fort Snelling, the Fari-bault House and the Sibley House. You will receive information about the particulars nearer to the date. Bert Burns will again conduct the tour.

Other tours: The Mankato Hiking Club sponsors tours, which they have scheduled as follows: May 16, to the Tulip Festival in Orange City, Iowa; July 11, to Walnut Grove, to see the Laura Ingalls Wilder pageant; October 4, a Mississippi River trip to see the fall foliage. For further information, contact Berniel Weigt, 388-3416. If you should be travelling near Galena, Illinois on June 13 and 14, plan to attend the House Tour of five privately owned homes which will be open, and the Galena Historical Museum. Margaret Buehler is Museum Director there. We became acquainted at an AASLH workshop.

Education: School Programs and the Museum is the title of a correspondence course your director is taking from the American Association for State and Local History. Since many historical societies are unable to afford to send personnel to their workshops, AASLH is offering correspondence courses on a variety of subjects pertaining to museum operations. So far this course has provided me with a lot of good information, and a chance to learn more about coordinating museum and school programs.

Our newest artifact is a gift from the City of Mankato Street Department - a handhewn stone curb, corner section, complete with manhole cover. We placed it at the rear corner of the Carriage House; and it makes a very appropriate addition to Palmer Place, which has replicas of early Mankato street lights. Thanks to Foreman Don Paegel and city street crews, for thinking of us instead of hauling it to the dump!

Is anyone missing a spoon? One was left behind after the Christmas potluck supper at the Museum. Please claim it, or we'll put it in the rummage sale.

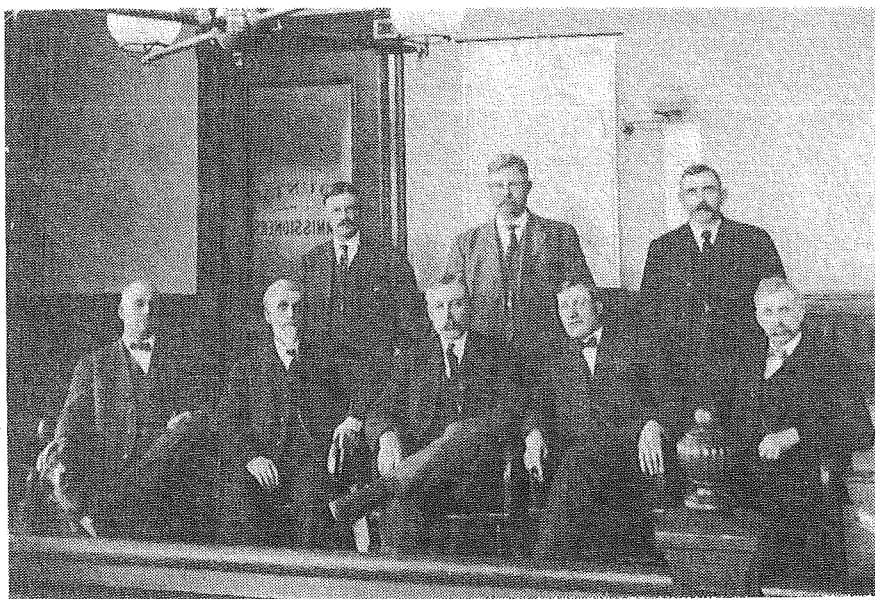
The planning committee for our exhibit at the Agricultural Heritage Building at the Blue Earth County fairgrounds will be meeting soon. Members to date are: Dean Pettis, Mary Dooley, Bert Burns and Marcia Schuster. Anyone interested in working on this committee, or helping at the Fair, please speak up.

Those of you who have renewed your membership, please let us know if you want your new card and receipt mailed to you. You may, of course, pick them up here at the Museum. We save considerable postage by not mailing cards unless requested.

For the genealogy-minded, there will be a seminar on local and family history research, sponsored by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, on May 2 at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Brochures are available at the Museum. Robert B. Porter, Center City, MN, has published an interesting little book - How To Trace Your Minnesota Ancestors. It is available from him by mail, at \$3.40 per copy. A copy is on hand at the Museum for your inspection.

(Continued on Page 5.)

PHOTOGRAPH ( ca. 1910) OF A GROUP OF BLUE EARTH COUNTY OFFICIALS



This photograph, taken in the Commissioners' Room of the Blue Earth County Courthouse, presumably shows eight county officials, one of whom is William Schultz, father of the donor, Mrs. Ward Gray (née Mary Schultz), of Minnetonka, Minnesota. Mrs. Gray believes that the picture was taken about 1910. She identified the group as the Board of Commissioners. However, this cannot include all of the men in the picture, as the Board had only five members. Mrs. Ward recalled the man seated at the extreme left as Ed Weaver, who was county auditor for many years, but never served as commissioner. On the back of the photograph Mrs. Gray wrote earlier: "Wm Schultz seated L. side as one faces picture". However, in a phone conversation, she said that her father had a moustache, and the man with the moustache is seated on the right, as one faces the picture!

Director's Rolltop (cont'd.)

We've just received a postcard from John Koblas, author of the Sinclair Lewis biography, saying that his book is now at the publisher's. We're eager to read it. Watch for an announcement setting the date for an autographing party.

See you all at the Annual Meeting, April 8, in Amboy.

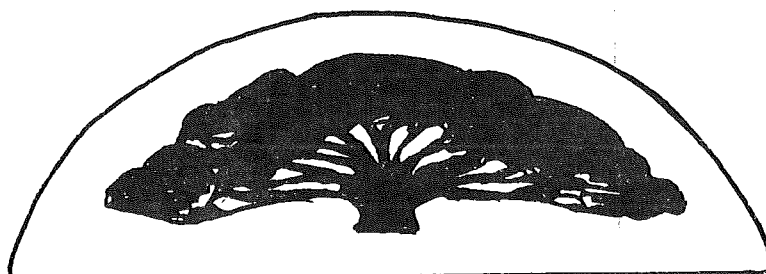
Marcia T. Schuster

I have not yet been able to call on Mrs. Gray with the picture in hand, to ask for clarification. Extensive search through our photo files, books and newspapers has so far yielded nothing but guesses.

Can any of our readers help us out? Possibilities: William Schultz was 4th District Commissioner 1903 - 1910. His colleagues in 1909 - 1910 were Robert Madigan of Eagle Lake, 1st District; Delos P. Young, 2nd District; Alec Hansen, Lake Crystal, 3rd District; and Charles E. Jones, Mapleton, 5th District.

Of other county officers in those years, no one in the picture resembles the two judges, A. R. Pfau, Sr., District Court, or William F. Hughes, Judge of Probate. The same is true for Thomas Hart, Treasurer. The man seated second from the right looks a bit like Ben Bangerter, Register of Deeds; and the man at the extreme right bears some resemblance to Stephen Thorne, Clerk of Court. However, maybe this is William Schultz. We haven't yet found any photographs for comparison of John Donahue, Sheriff; Walter Plymat, County Attorney; Wm. B. Davies, Court Reporter; E. R. Kennedy, County Coroner; O. O. Ulvin, Superintendent of Schools; or Walter F. Brooks, County Surveyor.

If you have any guesses, please call Jeanne Kress at the Museum. We'd like to identify everyone in the picture, so as to furnish Milt Owens, our County Auditor, with correct information. Then he can label an enlargement for the Courthouse!



#### ACTIVITIES AROUND THE COUNTY

Members of the TRAVERSE DES SIOUX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY are engaged in several on-going projects which will be of great value in preserving information on the history of the county. Efforts are concentrated on recording private cemeteries (family plots and single graves) throughout the county. Dean Pettis had taken pictures and transcribed inscriptions from the Stratton family burial plot near Good Thunder. He has also investigated the church site and cemetery at Caroline Station. Microfilming of cemetery and church records is also under way. The records of Minneopa and Pilgrim's Rest cemeteries have already been microfilmed, as well as an early record book from Glenwood Cemetery. Margaret Schreyer is presently engaged in microfilming the records of the Eagle Lake Methodist Church.

In addition to these activities, the society has regular meetings which combine a program and related work on individual members' investigations. At a meeting on March 4, the speaker was Jenny Robinson of Mankato, Vice President General, National Society DAR, who talked on how the DAR relates to genealogical work. The subject of the evening's work session was census records. The next meeting will be April 1st, with a program by Betty Goodrich on how to organize genealogical research data.

The society is very anxious to record private burial sites in the county, and would appreciate information about such sites. Please contact any member of the Genealogical Society, or call the Museum.

Dick Fasnacht informs us that "Doc" Sheppard and other residents of MADISON LAKE are working to organize a historical society there. The group had originally sought to have the old fire station as a historical center, but found this not feasible, because of the poor condition of the building. Plans now are to have space in the new Community Center and Fire Station.

Architectural plans are for an office and space for both wall and case displays in the vestibule and corridor areas. A permanent wall display of historical photographs (enlarged reproductions) from the collection of Charles Hoehn is planned for the main community room.

The LAKE CRYSTAL AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, having sold its property on the edge of the city to Blue Earth County for the Highway Department, is looking for a permanent and more centrally located home for its collections and activities.

Alice Hollingsworth's slide-tape program on the history of Lake Crystal is a project which has developed from work done for the city's centennial celebration in 1970. The society has published the script of the program as a separate pamphlet, entitled "Beginnings: Early History of Lake Crystal". (22 pp., price \$1.00). It traces the history of the town from its very start down to 1900. The slide-tape program, which takes approximately one hour and fifteen minutes, consists of some 80 slides, mostly photographs, supplemented by pictures which illustrate parts of the narrative for which no photographs exist. These illustrations are the work of Sue Crane, Myrna Thomas and Edith Sutherland. Mrs. Sutherland is now working on additional illustrations for a second program, which will cover the history of the community from 1900 to the present.

Society officers who continue to serve are James Zwickey, President; Mrs. Lester Williams, Vice-president; and Mrs. Alfred Lee, Secretary-Treasurer.

#### CORRECTION

The three stereoscopic photographs listed in "Recent Accessions" in the Newsletter of January, 1980 as received from Bert Burns are actually the gift of Amber Van Eaton, Mankato.



THE PERRIN HOUSE

618 BYRON STREET

MANKATO



#### PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER:

#### AN OLD HOUSE AND A NEW MUSEUM EXHIBIT

At the Museum we are continually concerned with fitting the things in our collection into exhibits that show our past in a meaningful and (we hope) interesting way. A case in point is a new display of objects related to "common school" education in Blue Earth County. It is located in the Hubbard House basement hall, close to our 1880's schoolroom, and includes a number of items which have been in the Museum for a long time, but which, as far as we know, have never been on view, to show our visitors, particularly those from our schools, what school was like a hundred years ago.

Accustomed to typewriters and xerox copying machines, today's young people are intrigued by the exercise and copy books used to teach penmanship, and by the "Handwriting Helper", a patented device designed to make the young penman hold his hand and pen in a certain position. They are surprised at the three-dimensional effect produced when they look at double photographs through a stereoscope. Also in the display are books from the Minnesota Textbook Series, officially authorized in the 1880's, to insure that country schools would have some uniformity of instruction, based on books written by authors recognized as competent in their subjects. There are also photographs of Mankato's first four elementary schools and of schools and classes in other places in the county.

The item that links this exhibit with the charming old house at 618 Byron Street is the teacher's certificate issued to Horace B. Perrin in 1865. It was discovered in a bundle of old papers in the cellar of the house, which Perrin owned and lived in from 1894, when he came to Mankato, until his death in 1933. (After him, his daughter Alice, Mrs. Josiah A. Baker, owned and occupied the house until 1977.) The certificate is one of some 34 items found by William Krueger, the present owner, who gave them to the Historical Society last year. Most of them are too fragile to be exhibited, but they provide interesting details of the history of the Perrin family, whose members apparently were quite important in the Amboy area in the earliest period of its history.

William F. Perrin came to Blue Earth County from Vermont, bringing his family with him, and took up land in Pleasant

(Continued on Page 8)

#### 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 8

INFORMATION  
and  
RESERVATION FORM  
ENCLOSED

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



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#### PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER (Cont'd.)

Mound Township in 1863. There he farmed, was a town supervisor for 20 years, and also served as town clerk, until he moved into Amboy in 1890, to live with his son Willis. He was a Blue Earth County commissioner from 1872 to 1876, and served a term in the State Legislature in 1879. The family kept some of their farm property in Pleasant Mound Township until the mid-1920's, but seems to have resided in Amboy, where William died in 1902.

His other son, Horace, had a varied career. In 1864, at the age of twenty-one, he enlisted in the Eleventh Regiment of Minnesota Infantry, the last Civil War unit to be recruited in the state. A certificate of his promotion to corporal in Company "C" of the regiment, and a personal memorandum book, in which he kept track of some of his activities while in service, are among the papers found in the house.

When he returned home to Blue Earth County, he taught school in Sterling Township, but shortly moved into the village of Amboy and went into business as a dealer in farm implements. He apparently was the first teacher in the Amboy school, also the first chairman (mayor?) of the village council, and was one of the founders of the IOOF Lodge in Amboy. Like his father, Horace was elected to a term in the State Legislature in 1889.

He left Amboy in 1892, to spend two years in Sioux Falls, S.D., but returned to Minnesota in 1894 and settled in Mankato. His first venture in business was as a partner in the long-established carriage-making firm of H. P. Jensen. About 1905, he had a carriage business of his own, and shifted to automobiles about 1909, as an agent for Overland, Chalmers and also Ford vehicles. His showroom and garage were at 520 South Front Street.

At the same time he was an independent insurance dealer, and was very active in the organization of the Mankato Citizens Fire Association, serving as secretary-treasurer from its establishment in 1894. This association seems to have been the first mutual fire insurance company in Minnesota.

Insurance continued to be Perrin's principal interest until his retirement in 1925, at the age of eighty-two. The automobile agency, managed by his son Harry, went out of existence about this time, it would seem; and Harry moved to California. Horace's two daughters, Alice and Minnie, taught school in Mankato and Kasota respectively, until they married; and both lived out their lives in Mankato. So the name Perrin disappeared from the scene in Mankato, but the family house at 618 Byron Street remains, a well-preserved example of Mankato domestic architecture of the 1890's.

Jeanne Kress