



# The Blue Earth County **HISTORIAN**

SPRING 2024  
Vol. 30 No. 2



A Publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

The Blue Earth County  
**HISTORIAN**

Spring 2024  
Volume 30, Number 2

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**COVER PHOTO:** Willard Farnum graduated from Mankato High School in 1924 and became a radio actor with NBC. The photo is of Farnum and co-star Mary Patton on the daily radio drama about the U.S. Coast Guard called "Flying Patrol" in 1943. Farnum was not only a homefront radio voice, he also served in the military.

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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Nik Proehl, BECHS Board Chair

At the Annual Meeting in March, we thanked outgoing Board member Joe Farnham for his service on the BECHS Board of Trustees. We also welcomed three new members of the Board of Trustees which we would like to introduce to you. Each member was asked two questions: 1. What is your favorite place/thing about Blue Earth County? 2. What are you most excited about as a new BECHS Board Member? See their responses below:

Jim Tatge

1. The variety of natural landscapes and topography. A fact I always found fascinating is that Blue Earth County contains more miles of river shoreline than any other county in Minnesota.



New Trustees (l to r): Jim Tatge, Laurie Williams and Jeff Lang.

2. I hope to bring a unique perspective to future planning and capital campaigns to both grow the organization and expand its reach to the residents and visitors to Blue Earth County.

Laurie Williams

1. Blue Earth County Fair. As long as I can remember, we have gone to the fair, and it brings people from all areas of the county together in a fun and learning atmosphere.

2. Bringing people from all areas of the county to the Society and getting them involved in the fun and exciting activities that are held during the year. Also, to bring their history into the Society.

Jeff Lang

1. Sibley Park and Red Jacket Trail.

2. Learning about and helping execute future activities while being part of a group trying to capture our history for future generations.

## BECHS COMMEMORATIVE BRICK PROGRAM



Choose from three brick sizes (4x8, 8x8 and 12x12), each with your personal inscription.

CUSTOMIZE AND ORDER YOUR BRICK AT  
[www.BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/BECHS](http://www.BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/BECHS)  
or contact us at the History Center.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Happy Spring! The beautiful flowers at the History Center and Hubbard House are changing every day. This Spring is even more exciting than usual because construction on the new History Center Parking Lot will be starting soon! This project has been in the works for a decade and will impact decades to come.

Our sincere appreciation to everyone who has donated toward this project. So far, over 100 commemorative bricks have been purchased. I personally cannot wait to see all of those tributes to Blue Earth County families and businesses in the new patio next to the main entrance. There is still time to get your brick. All funds from brick sales directly support the parking lot and future capital improvement projects.

If you're like me, you are probably wondering about some of the project details. Here are a few things you may be curious about:

**When will construction begin?** According to our contractor, Holtmeier Construction, Inc., construction should begin mid to late May and should last about 30-45 days (weather pending).

**Where will visitors park and enter during construction?** The History Center will remain open during construction, however, the Warren Street entrance will be closed due to construction. Visitors will be redirected to parking and entering on either 5th Street (street parking) or Cherry Street (parking lot).

**What will happen to the beautiful flower gardens?** Great news! Only a small portion of the existing garden will be impacted by construction. Those plants will be temporarily moved until they can be replanted in the new garden. When the project is finished, there will be two large, beautiful gardens filled with native plants.

**Will there be a celebration when the parking lot is done?** YES! I've personally been waiting 10 years for this project. I'm hopeful that we can celebrate the new outdoor space with a block party this summer. Watch for details to come.

**Can I still contribute to the project?** Yes, and we have a big announcement that will double your



History Center Parking Lot April 26, 2024

impact. **A generous donor has pledged \$75,000 for the project IF we can raise \$75,000 between May 1-31!** These funds will make it possible to increase exterior lighting for safety, use local native plants in our new landscaping, and increase visibility with new signage. Double your impact with a donation, including commemorative brick orders. All donations will be matched 1:1.

If you have any questions about the project, please give me a call or stop by the History Center.

## Historic R.D. Hubbard House

GUIDED TOURS BY APPOINTMENT

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

Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

Weekends Memorial Day thru Labor Day

606 South Broad Street, Mankato

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Nooks & Grannies Tour, May 23, 7 p.m.

Twilight Garden Club Plant Sale, June 1 & 2

Victorian Lawn Party, June 1, 1-4 p.m.

Hubbard House After Hours: Historic Fashions, June 10, 7 p.m.

New Pearl Buttons Concert on the Lawn, June 30, 2-4 p.m.

Hubbard House After Hours:

Historic Foods, July 17, 7 p.m.

Follow "Hubbard House, Mankato" on Facebook for updates.



[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Hubbard-House](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Hubbard-House)



# NEWS & NOTEWORTHY

## MANKATO BUS TOUR

The City of Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission is an appointed group of citizens interested in preserving the built environment. In honor of Historic Preservation Month, the HPC will host bus tours of Mankato on May 9 and 11 (see calendar on page 15). Historic sites on the tour include properties with green heritage plaques. The one-hour tour is free and open to the public, but you need to reserve your seat by calling 311. This is NOT a BECHS tour.

## NOW HIRING: Hubbard House Assistant

The Hubbard House Assistant is a part-time, seasonal position responsible for assisting in the daily operations of the Historic R.D. Hubbard House, providing high-quality customer service and guided tours, as well as conducting various interpretive programs. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Visit our website for more information.

## Hubbard House Opens for Season on May 24

The Historic R.D. Hubbard House will open for the season on Friday, May 24. The house museum is open from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend.

To kick-off the 2024 season, check out the special Hubbard House Nooks and Crannies Tour on Thursday, May 23 at 7p.m. Space is limited and tickets go fast, so

get yours today (see calendar on page 15 for details).

Last year, we announced that the stained-glass windows at the house were being removed for repairs. They are back and even more beautiful. Each piece of glass was carefully removed, cleaned, and reassembled with new lead. The windows can be seen from the outside, but a tour inside is even better.



## Annual Twilight Garden Club Plant Sale and Victorian Lawn Party

Two great Hubbard House events on Saturday, June 1! The day starts with the Twilight Garden Club's Annual Plant Sale from 8 a.m.—4 p.m. All funds raised support the beautiful Hubbard House gardens. The plant sale also continues on Sunday, June 2, 8 a.m.-Noon.

Step back in time for the annual Victorian Lawn Party from 1-4 p.m. Enjoy outdoor activities, lawn games, child's play tea party, costumed characters, and more! The Lawn Party is free; however, admission is required to tour the Hubbard House.

## G.I. JIVE AT THE KATO

In recognition of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day, BECHS is hosting the G.I. Jive: a 1940s USO-style Celebration on Friday, June 7, 2024, at the Kato Ballroom. Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door.

The G.I. Jive will be a one-of-a-kind event celebrating the past, present, and future of local history while remembering our local WWII Veterans. Immerse yourself into a WWII USO-style celebration with music by The Southern Minnesota Big Band, swing dance demonstrations, a canteen-inspired box lunch, 1940s costume contest, and other activities right out of the "War Years." Get your tickets today!

## Stones & Stories: Historic Lake Crystal Cemetery Tour

Visit the Lake Crystal Cemetery with this unique self-guided audio and visual tour on your mobile device. The tour features over 15 stops with historic photos and stories about the cemetery and historical figures from Lake Crystal's past. The tour premieres on Thursday, June 20 at 5 p.m., and will be accessible through September 1. Tickets are \$15 per household/email. Tickets are required to receive the tour download link. Past tours of Mankato Calvary, Glenwood, and Minneopa cemeteries will also be available June—August.



# Blue Earth County's Homefront Heroes

By Hilda Parks

*Remember Pearl Harbor  
Everybody – Every Payday – 10% in War Bonds  
Aim to Win the War – Buy Bonds  
Back the Attack! ... Buy More Than Before  
More! More! More! Men and Materials  
How much are YOU going to invest in your  
country's Fight for Victory?*

Full-page ads with headlines like these filled local newspapers during World War II, all encouraging the purchasing of War Stamps and Bonds. War is expensive. The United States Treasury aimed at getting funding from citizens, helping the government to pay for tanks, planes, ships, uniforms, weapons, medicine, food, and everything else the military needed to fight and win. Eight War Loan Drives were held between 1942 and 1945 with the intent of raising between 9 and 15 billion dollars. It would take everyday heroes on the homefront to do their part. And it worked! Historians record that 85 million Americans (over half the population) purchased 185 billion dollars of bonds. That comes to over \$2,000 per person when the average salary was only \$2,000 per year.

How did it work? War Bonds – Series E (known as Liberty Bonds in World War I) sold for 50% to 75% of their face value, with denominations ranging from \$10 to \$100. For example, a bond could be purchased for \$18.75 and cashed in for \$25 when mature.

One could purchase war saving stamps through the post office for even smaller amounts (10¢ up to \$5). These stamps were collected in a War Bond stamp book, and once enough stamps had been accumulated, a larger war bond

could be purchased. Interest rates were low and could only be collected when the bond matured. The small investment made the purchase doable for almost any person, and carried a sense of patriotism with each stamp or bond. One full-page advertisement in the *Free Press* stated, "You're not giving your dollars – you're lending them .... So don't wait. For your Country's sake – for your own sake – invest all you can!"

Ads were sponsored by local businesses, by local banks who sold the bonds, and by the War Advertising Council. The Ad Council, which was formed as a nonprofit in 1942, organized efforts around the sale of war bonds. It also created materials like "Women in War Jobs" and "Loose Lips Sink Ships." The Ad Council still exists today, known for the Smokey the Bear and McGruff the Crime Dog campaigns and, most recently, "Fight the Virus" ads to provide information on the COVID-19 virus and pandemic.

Dipping into any local newspaper during the war years, it becomes apparent how incessant the drives were. By mid-December 1941, full-page ads were already appearing for stamps and bonds, often including the banner, "Remember Pearl Harbor" across the bottom. A small item in the *Free Press* for December 15, 1941, reminded readers that "It will cost money to defeat Japan," and encouraged "all Americans to support your government with your dollars." Bonds and stamps

could be purchased at all banks and post offices, and stamps could be acquired at retail stores and from newspaper carriers. The newspaper reported that by December 23, \$82,950 had been purchased in the area.

**NOT WHAT YOU EARN...  
BUT WHAT YOU SAVE!**

**BUY AND *Hold* WAR BONDS**

**The older they get –  
The more valuable they are**

Minnesota War Finance—M-32, Colwell Press, 1,500,000, 12-13-44

### 1942: *Sure, It Makes You Mad*

Hollywood stars began appearing all over the United States to encourage the purchase of War Bonds. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello came to Mankato on August 3 by way of Iowa. They were part of a Victory Parade the following day, launching the war bond drive and ending with a rally at Mankato State Teacher's College athletic field. The rally was to begin with the Third Regiment band from Fort Snelling and the local Elks band playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Three five-star mothers were introduced, fourteen Southern Minnesota navy recruits were inducted, and then Abbott and Costello took the stage. Lunch followed at the Saulpaugh Hotel, with the comedians performing again. The actors traveled on to Austin that afternoon for more War Bond appearances.

Even as the drives followed one after the other, people at home supported the troops in a variety of ways. They collected tin cans, scrap metal, paper, and even animal fat. In fact, 2,164 tons of scrap metal was collected in October 1942, 37,000 pounds of tin cans were shipped out of Mankato in July 1943, and 870,720 pounds of wastepaper was collected in May 1944. A final report in 1945 determined that 1,776,550 pounds of tin cans were salvaged in the Mankato area during the War! People also conserved rubber by driving slower and preserving their tires, and were even banned from driving if caught speeding. They also planted Victory Gardens and learned to can their produce.

Not only money was being given through War Bonds. July 1942 also saw a USO Drive with the goal of raising \$7,000 in Blue Earth County; \$7,200 was gathered. The Army Emergency Relief Fund, which began in 1942 to help with financial emergencies for those in service, held a Victory Exposition at the Armory in July 1943. It exhibited military weapons and equipment, including walkie-talkies and a tear gas demonstration.

### 1943: *Aim to Win the War – Buy Bonds*

There were eight War Loan Drives between the end of 1942 and the end of 1945. Towns received quotas, and volunteers went door-to-door seeking pledges and sales. An ad in the *Lake Crystal Tribune* was very direct, reading as follows:

"And remember this – THIS drive is voluntary. If Uncle Sam can't raise the 13 billion by voluntary means, he's going to get the money in some way, because the money is there, and he needs it."

Another ad in the *Lake Crystal* newspaper, sponsored by the Lake Crystal National Bank,

Unknown women at a ship launch party. Standing aboard the ship with a sign noting that the ship was sponsored and funded by War Bonds purchased in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, 1943.



encouraged the community to welcome the solicitor as a war worker. It also reminded people that War Bonds were loans, not gifts. The drives raised money but were also intended to create friendly competition between local towns.

The April drive was described in the *Amboy Herald* as "An intensive campaign ... prepared to reach every person in every community." However, the editor was annoyed that he had not yet received any information concerning local arrangements, although the drive was to begin in a few days.

The April campaign encouraged those who bought bonds to sign an "Honor Roll." The large scrolls of names were then to be sent directly to locations where fighting forces were located. "Don't let it go without your signature," was the plea.

July 1943 seemed to be an especially busy month. *The Free Press* sponsored an essay contest for adults living in Mankato or North Mankato on the theme "Why we as Americans should purchase war stamps and bonds." Entries were to be no more than 100 words. Among the rules was: "Neatness and grade of stationery will



not have a bearing in the judging of essays; so, do not let these factors deter you from competing in this patriotic service to your country."

July 17 was designated "War Heroes' Day" with "Finders, Keepers' Friday," sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. Over 10,000 leaflets were dropped from an airplane, which could then be exchanged for War Savings Stamps at the Chamber's office. Pictures of Mankato's War Heroes were also displayed in retail store windows.

An August article with photos in the *Free Press* reported that the Navy had purchased its first amphibious tank, called the "Water Buffalo", and an aircraft rescue ship with the War Bonds that had been purchased in Blue Earth County.

The September drive in Blue Earth County and North Mankato needed to raise nearly \$2.5 million to reach the state quota. Nearly 200 solicitors were trained for canvassing in Mankato and North Mankato, with additional workers for the remainder of the county. Air raid warning sirens, steam whistles, and church bells opened the campaign on September 9. One difference with this campaign was that all funds were to be raised by the general public, not from banks.

*The Amboy Herald* reminded people that the town had gone over the quota in a few hours in April and promised "black face type" in the Minneapolis daily newspaper if they did so again. Bert Hansen, canvassing the Village of Vernon

Center, had his quota in purchases or promises even before the official kick-off, and Vernon Center Township completed its campaign that afternoon.

The attraction for this campaign was a Japanese submarine sitting on Walnut Street in Mankato between South Front and 2<sup>nd</sup> streets. It was only on exhibit for four hours on September 14. To get a ticket to tour the sub, individuals had to purchase a bond during this campaign drive. According to the *Free Press*, one of the viewers was an American-born Japanese man living in Mankato. He had been purchasing war bonds in previous campaigns as well.

### **1944: Grandmother's Bond with the Future ... for your grandchildren, the best in the world!**

There were three campaigns in 1944. Blue Earth County planned to complete the fourth campaign in one day, January 19.

The Fifth Campaign in June tried a new approach, encouraging grandmothers to buy bonds for their grandchildren. Any grandmother who bought bonds or started stamp albums for their grandchildren was enrolled in the Grandmother's War Bond League founded by Mrs. George C. Marshall, wife of the Army Chief of Staff.

"It is the start of the greatest 'war call' ever sent to the American people," read information for this campaign. The promotions said that because of the labor shortages, everyone was employed and, therefore, should have money for bonds. *The Free Press* printed an article giving the amounts on deposit in the county, showing how they had gone up even after each campaign. The national goal was \$16 billion; while Blue Earth County's quota was \$2.6 million. Victory Volunteers in the rural areas had one section to cover, while volunteers in towns and cities each had several blocks.

When the campaign ended in July, Blue Earth County and North Mankato had exceeded its quota. Minnesota was the first state to make its quota that year. However, sales nationwide were slow and only 78% of the \$16 billion had been raised.

**IN HONOR OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY**

★ **G.I. JIVE** ★  
1940s USO-style Celebration

**Friday, June 7, 6 - 10 PM Kato Ballroom**

**TICKETS \$35 in advance/\$45 at the door**  
[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)

**Featuring the sounds of**  
**The Southern MN Big Band**

★★★

★ **TICKET INCLUDES:**  
19-Piece Big Band Music  
1940s Inspired Box Lunch  
Swing Dance Demo  
1940s Costume Contest

★

**BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



## 1945 – *They Finished Their Job; Let's Finish Ours!*

The seventh campaign began just days after victory had been declared in Europe. There was concern that the declaration would lessen sales. Nevertheless, \$26 million was raised in pledges over six weeks. However, less than half were actual purchases. Reminders to redeem the pledges appeared regularly in the ensuing months.

There was one more campaign in the late fall of 1945, advertised as the Victory Loan Drive. The county's quota was \$1.7 million. Ads declared, "Blue Earth County's War Bond Record Something to Talk About – Let's Keep it That Way." The drive began on Armistice Day, November 11. Amboy, Sterling, and Shelby townships raised over their quota by 11:00 a.m. Vernon Center village and township and Ceresco Township had surpassed their quotas in twelve hours. Although pledges in the county were over the top, actual purchases were below the state average.

All were encouraged to purchase the pledged bonds by December 7, Pearl Harbor Day. Thus, the War Bond campaigns begun and ended with the same banner: *Remember Pearl Harbor.*

### SOURCES

- BECHS Subject Files and Archives
- [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org)
- [www.armyhistory.org](http://www.armyhistory.org)
- [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)



Blue Earth County Historical Society  
**STORIES & STONES**  
CEMETERY WALK

**Lake Crystal Cemetery**  
**June 20, 2024**

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Self-Guided Mobile Tour featuring over 15 stops  
around the Historic Lake Crystal Cemetery.

Tickets are \$15 per Household/Email  
Tour is Accessible June 20 - September 1

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/TICKETS](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/TICKETS)

## Explore Blue Earth County History Online

By Stephanie Hess, MDL Digital Curator

The Minnesota Digital Library (MDL) contains digitized content from Minnesota's cultural heritage organizations in a single website. Over

200 participating organizations, including the Blue Earth County Historical Society, have contributed

photographs, documents, maps, recordings, and more to our free searchable online database.

To get started, visit our website at [mndigital.org](http://mndigital.org). You can browse or search through more than 59,000 items on our website. You can also simply view the BECHS digital collection by using the "Browse by Contributor" button on our homepage.

Here are some highlights from Blue Earth County to explore:

- Standard Atlas of Blue Earth County, including a plat book of the villages, cities, and townships of the county and other maps from 1914.
- Postcards from locations around Blue Earth County. Some have handwritten notes on the back.
- Stereograph cards of Mankato and its surroundings with two photographs mounted side-by-side. When viewed through a stereoscope, the images appear three-dimensional.
- Snapshots and portraits of individuals and groups from Blue Earth County.
- Black-and-white photographs of area businesses, houses, farms, schools, and churches.
- Images of the Rapidan Dam and scenic views of Minneopa Falls.

Additionally, MDL staff have created online resources for students, teachers, and the public to use. Our primary source kits, maps, timelines, and online exhibits provide the stories behind these historic materials from contributors across the state.

The Minnesota Digital Library is pleased to offer access to these wonderful examples of local history. We hope you enjoy digging deeper into the past through this website!



Dr. G.A. Dahl posed with a photographer, c. 1900



# COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITS

By Shelley Harrison, Collections Manager

Take a whimsical journey through time where toys spark imagination and curiosity roams free. Experience fun that transcends age and brings us together at the History Center's newest exhibit, "TOYS!"

This fun exhibit explores the rich history of toys featuring more than 100 toys over 100 years from the Historical Society's collection, and some loaned specifically for this exhibit. There is something for everyone: 1950s John Deere pedal tractor, 1970s Crissy Dolls, and 1990s Power Rangers.

The exhibit is a hit, with countless visitors eager to contribute and share their spectacular toys and stories. We are grateful to everyone who is willing to share their beloved playthings with us. We are constantly rearranging and adding new things, including a collection of View Masters.

For the young and young-at-heart who find it irresistible to touch and play with some marvelous toys, you are in luck. For you, we've added new things into the Cabin and Barn Hands-on History area.

Since the exhibit opened in March, many toys have been donated to the BECHS collection. Here are a few fascinating "new" toys:

## Renewal brand dollhouse furniture, 1940s

The intriguing thing about these "modern" plastic pieces is that they have movable parts.



The treadle sewing machine pops up from its recessed

cabinet, the highchair's tray lifts up, and the agitator spins in the wringer washing machine. Here is the best part: they were used in the 1940s dollhouse now on display.

## Arranbee Nancy Lee doll, 1948

This doll is 11" tall with a jointed, a composition body. She has enchanting blonde curls and a pretty pink gown with a large-brimmed hat. She is part of the Southern Girl series, inspired by the



Lynette Berndt Smith, age 3, Christmas 1948 with Nancy Lee Doll in highchair.

popularity of the movie "Gone with the Wind". She even has her original box.

We invite you to wander through the "TOYS!" exhibit and see if your favorite toy is on display. Was it a classic action figure, Barbie, a snuggly plushie, or a high-tech gadget? See which toys will spark memories of childlike joy for you. Every toy has a story. "TOYS!" will be on display through the end of the year.

## An Exhibition of the Blue Earth County Historical Society



Take a whimsical journey through time, where toys spark imagination and curiosity roams free. Experience fun that transcends age and brings us together.

## Blue Earth County History Center

424 Warren Street, Mankato

March 1 - December 31, 2024

ADMISSION: \$10/Adult, \$8/Senior, \$5/Child 5-18; Free under 5 and BECHS Members

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com) | 507.345.5566

# GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

By Rachel Walden, Museum Manager



My name is Rachel, I'm the new BECHS Museum Manager. I am a Minnesota native but sought adventure, so I moved to New Mexico to work with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Historic Sites.

But the desert is no match for lush foliage and 10,000 lakes. The longer I was away, the more I realized that Minnesota was home, so I returned in January of this year. I am an alumnus of Minnesota State University, Mankato, with a Bachelor's and Master's of Science in Anthropology, and a graduate certificate in Museum Science. I enjoy writing, painting, hiking, and herpetology (the study of reptiles and amphibians). I look forward to meeting you.

The gift shops at the History Center and Hubbard House are undergoing a refresh. We are adding new products and sharpening our focus areas. I am working with local artists and artisans to feature more handmade items, and I hope this can be a space for Blue Earth County talent to shine. Minnesota-made snacks and craft sodas should be in stock before Summer.

The gift shop offers a wide variety of books about Blue Earth County and Minnesota, many of

which are hard to find. This makes us unique, putting us on the map as one of a small handful of bookstores in Blue Earth County. This is one of the reasons we are adding a bountiful selection of fiction works by local authors.

In tandem with our new "TOYS!" exhibit, the gift shop carries a variety of vintage toys, such as Rubik's cubes, jacks, yo-yos, and paper dolls.

Many of the toys are not only fun, but also educational. Did you know the game of jacks helps teach physics and math skills? These toys make great gifts for kids of all ages. We also carry the book *Toys of the '50s, '60s and '70s* by

Minnesota Historical Society authors Kate Roberts and Adam Scher. This colorful book takes you on a ride through three decades of toys, their pop cultural roles, and their places in history. A great companion to our Blue Earth County "TOYS!" exhibit on display through December.



## HISTORY CENTER AUTHOR SERIES

Join us monthly at the History Center for a featured Minnesota author talk. Books may be available for purchase. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 children, free for BECHS members and children under 5.

**Amy Mattson Lauters**

*The Rediscovered Writings of Rose Wilder Lane, Literary Journalist*

May 15, 6 p.m.

Author Amy Mattson Lauters is also a Mass Communications Professor at MSU, M. Her latest book, *The Rediscovered*



*Writings of Rose Wilder Lane*, introduces readers to Lane's life through examples of her journalism, and argues that her work and career help establish

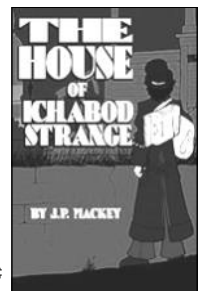
her not only as an author but also as a literary journalist. Lauters has assembled a collection of rarely seen articles that illustrate Lane's talent as a writer of literary nonfiction, provide on-the-spot views of key moments in American cultural history, and offer sharp commentary on historical events.

**James Mackey**  
*Ichabod Strange series*  
June 22, 1 p.m.

Ichabod Strange is a custodian who inherited his long-lost great

-uncle's creepy old house. Each book is a series of short stories detailing some of his day-to-day adventures.

Author James Mackey is a graphic artist for Minnesota State University, Mankato. "I've been writing and illustrating forever, but started publishing in 2019. I've self-published seven titles (mostly children's and young adult books)," Mackey said.



# REMEMBERING MARY MCCOMB



The BECHS community was saddened by the unexpected passing of long-time volunteer Mary McComb on March 1, 2024. Mary grew up on a farm outside of St. Clair. After attending Mankato State University, she served as the librarian and German teacher in St.

James. Upon her retirement in 2000, Mary became a dedicated BECHS volunteer with the three-dimensional collection. She meticulously documented, described, numbered, and determined a home for each object donated. Mary also scrupulously transcribed the object information into our collection management system. Mary did not like mistakes. When she found one, her trusty pink pearl eraser helped with the fix. Over the years, Mary assisted with the

creation of many exhibits, reorganization projects, served on the Collections Committee and BECHS Board of Trustees, plus many proofreading assignments (including the newsletter). Mary was a dedicated BECHS volunteer (over 5,000 hours/year), supporter, and friend. Her absence is felt with the staff and fellow volunteers.

For a time in her retirement years, Mary was also a part-time librarian at Bethany Lutheran College, and part-time helper at Franklin Elementary School. To keep her brain sharp, she also took classes at Bethany to learn both Norwegian and Hebrew. Mary loved to walk in all seasons; averaging a couple of miles each day. Some of her favorite places were Calvary Cemetery, "The Hill" (Good Counsel), and indoors only when the weather didn't cooperate.

Thank you, Mary, for your time and talents!

## VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

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

### NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Rental Host**

After-hours History Center Meeting Room Rental Host to greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the rental and lock-up when done. Time and day of the week vary.

#### **Tour Guide**

Seeking individuals to lead group tours at the History Center and Hubbard House. Volunteers can specify student and/or adult tours and preferred site. Tour guide training in May.

#### **Committees**

Each BECHS Committee is guided by the 2024 Strategic Work Plan and made up of Staff, Board and volunteers. Committees seeking members are: Facilities, Finance, Fundraising, Marketing, Events.

Training is provided and schedules are flexible for all opportunities. If you are interested in these opportunities or volunteering in general, please contact Rachel or sign-up at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer)

## TRIBUTES

*In Memory of Mary McComb*

Penny Banwart

Bob Diedrichsen

Sandi and Darrell Garlow

Audrey Gatchell

Corey and Robert Hugg

Susan Hynes

Grace and Richard Keir

Larry and Trixie Kortuem

Hal and Marsha Natvig

Ken and Julie Schrader

Jo Schultz

Don and Marti Weisgram

Dave and Lisa Wolf

*In Memory of Richard Kuball*

Sandi and Darrell Garlow

*In Memory of Elvera Olson*

Jane Haala

*In Honor of Marcia Richards*

Nate and Lori Gardner

**Thank You for these tribute gifts to the  
Blue Earth County Historical Society!**



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January 17 - April 19, 2024

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*\*Monthly Recurring Donors; Sign-up Today!*

*Thank You!*

In 2023, Blue Earth County Historical Society received \$1,331 in Thrivent Choice Dollars® directed by 5 individuals. Thank You, Thrivent!

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## Book Your Next Special Event, Meeting or Gathering with BECHS



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



Visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals) for more information and rates. Contact the History Center for availability.

## Twilight Garden Club Plant Sale



Saturday, June 1 & Sunday, June 2  
 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Historic Hubbard House Gardens  
 606 South Broad Street, Mankato  
 Rain or Shine

# NEW ART EXHIBITS

The History Center will now host two community artists each quarter with exhibition space on each floor. Both exhibits are free and open to the public until June 30, 2024.

## Rural Roots

by Rochelle Johnson Koberoski

Growing up on a farm in Southern Minnesota surrounded by crops and a variety of animals gave me an appreciation for nature and the outdoors, and the demanding work it took to manage and operate a farm.

My love of nature and farm life has inspired me to photograph my rural surroundings, which in turn has led to an exploration of transferring my photos to block prints or monoprints. As you will see, farm animals have been a major source of inspiration for me. Like people, their personalities come forward and the ensuing photographs capture their individuality and their status in the barnyard.

A bit of history is included in this exhibit. Ancestors on both sides of my family were farmers, and my Great Grandfather Johnson purchased land and made a home in the Indian Creek Valley just outside of Mankato. Through the years and generations, pieces of this property have changed



hands, but the Johnson family has always lived on a part of it. My children are the fifth generation to have grown up here!

My grandmother had an interest in photography and painting, so I am featuring one of her paintings that captures harvest on their farm. Early photographs of the Johnson farm are on display as well.

Expressing my creativity through the process of living and discovering my "Rural Roots" has been a deeply satisfying creative outlet for me, and one that offers a continual source of new subjects! I hope you enjoy these glimpses into country life and the little bit of history that goes with it!

## Days Well Spent

by Kyle Seys

Photography has been an ongoing hobby and passion of mine since around 2007. The photos shown here are some of my bests, but it's been quite a journey, and I have come a long way. My favorite way to take photos is to simply bring my camera with me on a walk or hike. I, as with most people, always carry my cell phone with me. Some of these photos you see were taken with my phone; I challenge you to guess which ones!



# MEMBERS MATTER

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

## BECHS Member Benefits

- Free admission to the History Center and R.D. Hubbard House for one year, plus free or reduced admission to most BECHS events.
- *The Historian*, quarterly publication.
- 10% off most items in the Gift Shop and Marian Anderson Art Gallery, in store and online.
- One 30-minute Research Center search by Staff.

## WELCOME NEW BECHS MEMBERS

January 15 - April 19, 2024

Brenda and Thomas Allen  
Randy and Linda Berkland  
Jane and Robin Bluhm  
Leslie Fields  
Eric Hammers  
Mary Hanna  
Greg Hanson  
Rochelle Koberoski  
Stanton Morse  
Beverly and Mike Peters  
Jim Tatge  
Dick and Mary Walker  
Charles and Rosie Wingert

Join or renew online at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership)

# KIDS CORNER: BLUE EARTH COUNTY ADVENTURES

It's a great time for an adventure, especially if the adventure is visiting new-to-you places in Blue Earth County. For generations, people and families have packed up the car, or horse and buggy, for a day trip of relaxation, fun and discovery. The photograph to the right is the Jones family exploring Minneopa Creek in 1899. Minneopa did not become a State Park until 1905. Did you know that the word *Minneopa*, originally pronounced *Minneinneopa*, comes from the Dakota language and means "water falling twice," referring to the Minneopa Creek waterfalls?



## BLUE EARTH COUNTY FAIR

The Blue Earth County Fair has been creating good times for over 160 years. In fact, Blue Earth County is home to one of the oldest county fairs in Minnesota starting back in 1859.

The Blue Earth County Agricultural Society held its first county fair on October 7, 1859 at Miner Porter's farm near today's Minneopa State Park. The fair was billed a huge success. The second fair was held on October 2-3, 1860 in Garden City, and then moved to South Bend for a year. No fairs were held for the next two years, but in 1864, Garden City became its permanent home.

When the fair began in 1859, a large percentage of Blue Earth County's residents were farmers. The skills learned at the fair were practical in early farm life. Among early fair exhibits were lessons on weaving cloth, making leather harnesses, and preserving food.

Check out the Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City July 25-28. What is your favorite thing to do at the Blue Earth County Fair?



Blue Earth County Fair in Garden City, c. 1932.

## BE A HISTORY EXPLORER

Do you like to learn new things about the history of where you live? Do you like to go on explorations and adventures? We have a great way for you to discover and explore Blue Earth County this summer, and earn great prizes!

The NEW Blue Earth County History Explorer Pack was created for kids and families to explore Blue Earth County while also learning about our local history. The History Explorer Pack includes: guide, selfie scavenger hunt, map, and a few surprises. The guide will lead you to special places or events around Blue Earth County where you will discover local history while there. Then, take a selfie. The photos you collect will be tickets to great prizes awaiting you at the History Center.



Once you have completed your first five stops on the Selfie Scavenger Hunt, visit the History Center with your guide and photos to receive your first special prize. After you have completed the entire Selfie Scavenger Hunt, visit the History Center again with your completed guide and photos. You will receive a prize for completing the adventure and you can enter for a chance to win a grand prize. Entries must be turned in by August 1; random drawing will be held on August 5.

Blue Earth County History Explorer Pack will be available at the History Center beginning May 10 for \$15. Have fun exploring the history all around you right here in Blue Earth County!



Explore the history that surrounds us!  
**LOCAL HISTORY PODCAST**  
[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast)



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May – July 2024

## MAY

- 11 **Family Day at the History Center**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family with Free Museum Admission and special activities.
- 15 **Author Series: Amy Matters Lauters, *The Rediscovered Writings of Rose Wilder Lane***, 6 p.m. \$
- 23 **Hubbard House Nooks and Crannies Tour**, 7 p.m., \$, Special behind-the-scenes tour of the house, visit locations not on the typical house tour. *Tickets on sale now; no tickets at the door.*
- 24 **Hubbard House Opening Day**, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Open weekends through September 1.
- 25 **History Center Closed, Hubbard House Open**

## JUNE

- 1-2 **Twilight Garden Club Plant Sale**, 8 a.m.-Noon each day, Hubbard House.
- 1 **Victorian Lawn Party**, 1-4 p.m., Hubbard House. Free. Admission charged for Hubbard House tours only.
- 7 **G.I. Jive: 1940s USO-Style Celebration**, 6-10 p.m., Kato Ballroom, \$. *Tickets on sale now. See page 7.*
- 10 **Hubbard House After Hours: Historic Fashions**, 7 p.m., Hubbard House, \$. Special Hubbard House evening event.
- 15 **History Program: Blue Earth County's Main Streets - Lake Crystal**, 1 p.m. Discover Lake Crystal's main street history.
- 20 **Self-Guided Cemetery Tour: Lake Crystal Cemetery**, 5 p.m., \$ *Tour will be available through September 1, see page 4.*
- 22 **Author Series: James Mackey, *Ichabod Strange* book series**, 1 p.m. \$
- 30 **New Pearl Buttons Concert on the Lawn**, Hubbard House, 2 - 4 p.m. Free concert with a free-will offering for the musicians. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to enjoy the musical performance.

## JULY

- 4 **History Center Closed Happy Independence Day!**
- 17 **Hubbard House After Hours: Historic Foods** 7 p.m., Hubbard House, \$. Special Hubbard House evening event.
- 25-28 **Blue Earth County Fair** Visit BECHS and other local historical organizations in the Heritage Building.

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

**For more information, to register or purchase tickets, visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)**

BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL  
COUNTY SOCIETY

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**History Center**  
507.345.5566

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Membership  
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# PLAN YOUR VISIT



**HISTORY CENTER: MUSEUM, RESEARCH CENTER, GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY**  
424 Warren Street, Mankato  
507-345-5566

Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.



**R.D. HUBBARD HOUSE**  
606 S. Broad Street, Mankato  
507-345-4154

Opening May 24, 2024  
Friday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Sunday 1-4 p.m.

### ADMISSION

\$10 Adults \$8 Seniors (65+)  
\$5 Children 5-17  
BECHS Members and  
Children under 5 FREE



Proud Participating Museum

### VISIT US ONLINE

[www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com](http://www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com)



## SPECIAL EXHIBITS



*TOYS!*

*Rural Routes*  
by Rochelle  
Johnson Koberoski



*Days Well Spent*  
by Kyle Seys