

The Blue Earth County **HISTORIAN**

WINTER 2023
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A Publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

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Winter 2023
Volume 29, Number 1

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COVER PHOTO:

Elementary students at Lincoln school on the playground, c. 1930s. Notice the merry-go-round the boys are sitting on.

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Nik Proehl, BECHS Board Chair

Greetings from the Board of Trustees! I hope that your holiday season was joyful and that you are enjoying these quiet days of winter.

Over the past three years, I've had the unique pleasure of serving on the Board of Trustees for BECHS. I've met



Nik with Arn Kind, co-hosts of the 2021 Speakeasy

and worked with some of the greatest History Heroes imaginable from all walks of our county. They have a common goal of sharing and preserving the rich history of Blue Earth County, which ensures that BECHS continues to thrive in the present while remaining poised for the future.

I chose to serve as a means of giving back to an organization that I have a deep respect for, but also to ensure that our history is preserved and accessible for future generations. That history - inspired, complex, nuanced, and profound - contains multitudes of stories that hold lessons for today and tomorrow alike. The work of maintaining that history needs the talents and abilities of History Heroes like yourself. BECHS may be blessed with incredible staff, but they cannot do all the work alone!

The Board of Trustees is currently accepting applications to join the Board and we would love for you to join us. If you've never donated your time to a community organization, BECHS is a wonderful first experience. If you've given your time before, please consider sharing your knowledge. The next few years will be an exciting time for BECHS as we begin to undertake some truly transformational projects.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you to all of the amazing staff, volunteers, and supporters. You are the guardians of our history.

Join the BECHS Board

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is currently seeking candidates to fill open seats on the Board of Trustees beginning March 2023. The Board members represent Blue Earth County and provide insight and direction for future endeavors.

The Board is currently seeking individuals with strengths in finance, accounting, fundraising, legal, facility management and human resources. In addition, the Board is seeking candidates from greater Blue Earth County. Board applications will be accepted until February 3, 2023.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

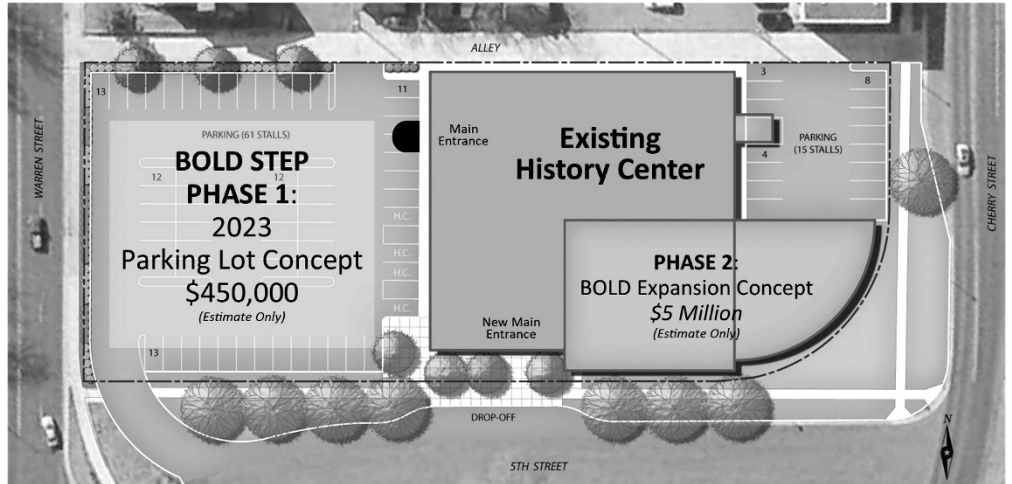
By Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Did you hear the news? At the very end of 2022, BECHS Board of Trustees approved a purchase agreement to buy the property next to the History Center. We have been working on this acquisition for a number years. This is part of the vision for an expanded History Center, which we have been sharing with you the past few years. This is the first major step in that BOLD vision.

What happens next? Over the next few months we will be working with a local engineering firm to finalize site development documents. And we are working with a local construction company to plan out the timeline for de-construction of the house and construction of a new parking lot with access off of 5th Street with a more accessible parking area near the building.

How can you help? You already have! In 2021 and 2022 we asked for your financial support for

BOLD VISION, BOLD STEP, BOLD HISTORY HEROES



this project and our History Heroes donated \$320,000 over two years. As the final construction numbers come in, we will keep you informed if additional project funds will be needed. Feel free to reach out to me at any time if you would like to chat about this project or the overall BOLD vision.

Thank you, History Heroes! We are so excited about the transformation to the exterior of the History Center this year and we hope you are too.

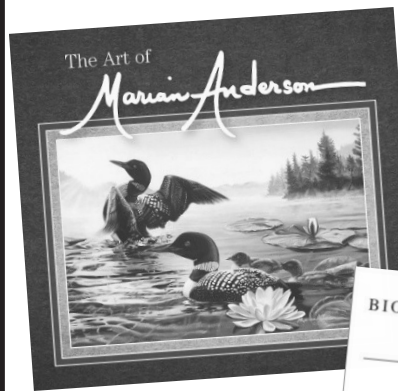
Blue Earth County Historical Society ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, March 5 at 1:00 p.m.
Lincoln Community Center

Annual Member State-of-the-Society Meeting followed by a self-guided historic tour of Lincoln Community Center

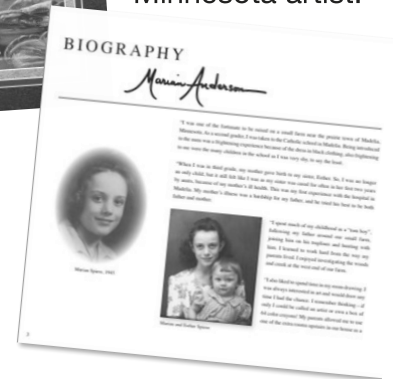
Registration is required to attend.
Please RSVP by March 1
to 507-345-5566 or
Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

Get Yours Before They're Gone



The Art of Marian Anderson is a wonderful keepsake commemorating the life, legacy and work of this beloved Minnesota artist.

Retail: \$49.95
Hard cover w/dust jacket, 140+ pp.
Full Color
10.5" x 9.75"
Published by MN Heritage Publishing



All Proceeds Benefit
Blue Earth County Historical Society

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BECHS Annual Member's Meeting

Calling all BECHS Members to join the Board of Trustees on Sunday, March 5, at 1 p.m. for the 2022 Annual Member's Meeting. The business meeting features the 2022 State-of-the-Society report from the Board and Staff, election of new Board members and a look ahead at 2023 projects and activities. The meeting will be held at Lincoln Community Center (110 Fulton Street, Mankato) in honor of the building's centennial. Self-guided historic tours of the building will follow the business meeting. Annual meeting and tour are free and open to BECHS members. Not a member? Join today and attend the meeting. Pre-registration is required. To register please contact the History Center by March 1.



Lincoln Community Center Self-Guided Historic Tours
BECHS, in partnership with Mankato Area Public School Community Education and Recreation, will present monthly self-guided historic tours of Lincoln Community Center the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 2-4 p.m. Tours are free and open to the public.

February is National Black History Month

The Blue Earth County History Center is hosting two historical programs in recognition of Black History Month. Both programs are free and open to the public.



"MLK 11.12.61" February 4, 11 a.m.

Attend a showing of a local documentary which recounts Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life, his visit to Mankato in 1961 and his legacy in Mankato and beyond. On November 12, 1961, Dr. King came to Mankato, Minnesota and gave two sermons at Centenary United Methodist Church and a public speech at Mankato High School.

To commemorate this history, the Kessel Peace Institute of Minnesota State University, Mankato and True Facade Pictures collaborated to make this 40-minute film. The film explores the history, context and legacy of Dr. King's visit to Mankato and reflects on where we have been as a community and where we need to be heading.

Following the documentary showing, Ryan and Michael from True Facade Pictures will be available to answer questions about making the documentary.

"Jim Crow in Blue Earth County: Researching Housing Discrimination in Mankato History"

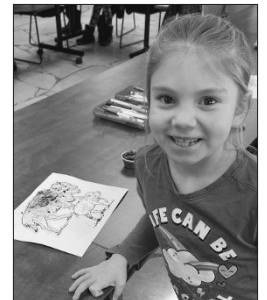
February 18, 1 p.m.

Join Angela Jill Cooley, Associate Professor of History, Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Olivia Johnson, History student, Minnesota State University, Mankato as they share information about an ongoing local community project that has been mapping areas of discrimination in Mankato. They will also talk about similar projects that have been done in Minnesota.

Second Saturday Fun

Explore the past through two great free opportunities the second Saturday of each month at the History Center.

For our younger generation, check out **Young Historians** hands-on history workshop for elementary age kids.



Pre-registration is requested to ensure that there are enough hands-on activities available. See the calendar on page 15 for monthly topics.

Free Second Saturday welcomes visitors to the Museum or Research Center with no admission. Special family activities will take place in the Museum, while the Research Center will host experts to help with research questions.

(continued on page 11)

LINCOLN SCHOOL

Celebrating
100 YEARS



Lincoln School, 1922

By Jessica Potter

History is important. It connects us to specific times, places, people and events that serve as guideposts in our collective past. What better way to celebrate those connections, but through the preservation of a century-old building like Lincoln School.

The Public School system in Mankato began during the winter of 1856, just four years after the City was founded, in a one-room log schoolhouse on the corner of Broad and Mulberry streets. The first two public school buildings, Union and Pleasant Grove, were built, respectively in 1868 and 1871 to support the growing population. Union School replaced the log schoolhouse and Pleasant Grove School was constructed on the corner of Pleasant and Byron streets. Pleasant Grove School was a large structure for its day, containing eight classrooms. Perhaps Mankato's most famous school, Pleasant Grove, was immortalized by former student and local author Maud Hart Lovelace in her *Betsy-*

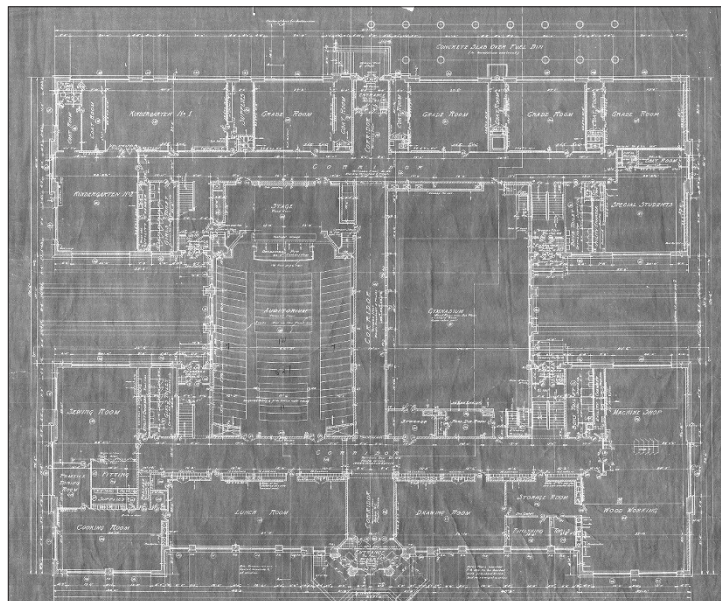
Tacy book series:

“The schoolhouse was built of red brick trimmed with yellow stone. A steep flight of steps led up to the door. At the top of the steps stood a boy, holding a big bell. When he rang that bell, Julia explained, it was time for school to begin.”

Betsy-Tacy by Maud Hart Lovelace

In 1919, the Mankato Board of Education changed the names of two schools to honor former U.S. Presidents. Pleasant Grove was renamed Lincoln School and West Mankato (West 6th Street) was renamed Roosevelt School. The other schools at the time included:

Mankato High School (5th Street), Union (Mulberry Street), and Franklin (Broad Street). Two years later, the 50-year-old Lincoln School building was razed due to size, safety and condition to make way for a larger, modern school.



Blueprints for construction of Lincoln, 1921. Note the “H” design with the auditorium and gymnasium in the middle.

NEW BUILDING

The new building, designed by the prolific Mankato architectural firm of George Pass and Son, was made of red brick and local cut stone in the Collegiate Gothic style.

This architecture style was often chosen for institutional buildings, such as churches and schools, to invoke a sense of civic pride and the ideal of elevated learning. The design of Lincoln includes arched entrances and bay windows within a central tower. The exterior is brick and native limestone highlighted by bas-relief decorative panels or plaques on the front facade. The main entrance is on Byron Street, with side entrances on Pleasant and Fulton streets.

Lincoln was designed in the shape of the letter H. There's a three-story wing for 400 junior high students and a two-story wing for 400 grade school students with a gymnasium and an auditorium connecting the two wings. The central location of a gymnasium and/or an auditorium in a school building provided easy access for public functions such as Parent and Teacher Association activities, civic meetings, election polling places, social and sports events. When built, Lincoln and Franklin were the only Mankato schools to have both an auditorium and a gymnasium.

Lincoln was built to house 800 students in grades Kindergarten through 9th grade. The floor plan of Lincoln school reflects new ideas about child development and health at the time. The long narrow hallways and large windows provided natural light and natural ventilation. Terrazzo floors meant the spaces could be easily cleaned to prevent the spread of disease (post-Influenza pandemic).

Lincoln's elementary wing entrance was on



Elementary students outside the Fulton Street entrance, c. 1920s

Fulton Street and included two kindergarten rooms and twelve elementary classrooms, as well as the nurse and dental rooms. In Minnesota, publicly funded kindergarten was introduced in

1905. Lincoln was one of first schools in Mankato with rooms designed specifically for the littlest students with hooks and chalkboards placed lower, a large dollhouse, a reading corner and a sandbox.

When Lincoln was constructed, the concept of junior high was also fairly new. Previously, Kindergarten through 8th grade students attended grade schools and 9th-12th grade students attended

high school. Junior high was created to support students in grades 7-9 to slow the high rates of students leaving school after 8th grade. Located in Lincoln's junior high wing were the library, lunchroom and a variety of specialized classrooms like music, art, industrial arts and home economics. At the time, Junior high students were required to take a course in agriculture to learn about Minnesota's major industry.

Another aspect of this new "modern" school was more room to spread out, almost an entire block. This trend was influenced by the Progressive Era's "Playground Movement", which promoted urban parks for health and cognitive development in children. New schools in the 1920s typically had a ball field and playground equipment, unheard of a generation prior. In the 1940s, the Mankato Safety and Recreation Program kept records of playground equipment at all Mankato schools. Lincoln had a merry-go-round (see photo on cover), swings, slide and sandbox.

The building opened to students on September 4, 1922 and was formally dedicated on January 11, 1923.

ACROSS TOWN AT MANKATO HIGH SCHOOL

Mankato High School was built in 1891 on Fifth Street between Jackson and Hickory Streets and an expansion was added in 1910. In 1939, the state fire marshal condemned the building deeming it unsafe. Renovations were immediately completed in an attempt to make the building fire safe.

On Saturday, July 19, 1941, Mankato High School caught fire forcing an evacuation of the building. School had ended for the year, but several faculty and staff were in the building preparing for the next school year. In addition, eleven men were taking Civil Service examinations and a school board election was taking place in the building. Sometime before noon the fire, likely caused by faulty wiring, started inside the roof. Around noon, the fire was discovered by people outside the



Mankato High School Fire July 19, 1941

building who alerted the Fire Department. The fire soon spread into the ventilation shaft and created a backdraft that sounded like an explosion to the people inside the building.

When the firemen arrived, the school was already beyond saving, so they focused on controlling the blaze. Three small fires spread to nearby buildings, but they were quickly extinguished. By the time the fire was extinguished, the entire building was scorched. Much of the second floor was destroyed, but most of the first floor was intact. Remarkably, no one was injured. The damage was estimated at \$250,000 and the building was a complete loss.

The Mankato Board of Education went right to work to find a home for the displaced high school students. Lincoln and Franklin schools were the largest in the district, but there was no extra space. "During the meeting of the board of education on the following Monday evening (after the fire on Saturday), arrangements were completed for the opening of the school term, September 2, 1941. Under their plan, the 680 Mankato high school students were housed in the junior high section of the Lincoln building. The 270 Lincoln junior high students were transferred to the school at the Franklin building and the grade school children at that school (Franklin) attended classes at the Union school." *Mankato Free Press* 6/27/1952

This move was not ideal for high school students. Everything was destroyed by the fire including desks, books and equipment. The desks at Lincoln were made for 7th graders and had to be mounted on 2" strips of wood to raise their height for the older students. The auditorium with capacity for 100 students served as the lunchroom and study hall. Lap boards were added to the auditorium seats to provide space for writing. Grade school rooms were converted for high school band and chorus classrooms with large sections of old grey cotton flannel hanging on the walls to dampen the sound.

Talk of a new high school began immediately after the fire with plans to rebuild on the existing site and stretch from 4th to 5th Street between Jackson and Hickory. It would take one million dollars to build and would double the capacity of the old high school. Local architect George Pass, Jr.'s sketch for the new building appeared in the newspaper on October 30, and voters were heading to the polls to approve it on December 16, 1941.

"At 12 noon on December 8th, I was in the Lincoln auditorium, one of 680 students who filled every inch, standing shoulder to shoulder. The lucky ones, like me, had Study Hall there

just before, and got seats. We all listened intensely to the loudspeaker as President Roosevelt spoke to Congress in person and the nation on the radio: 'Yesterday, Sunday, December 7th, 1941, a day that will live in infamy, the United States was suddenly and deliberately attacked...' We were at war - many of the young men in that room would never have a homecoming." Winston Grundmeier, MHS Class of 1948



Lincoln Auditorium, 1922

However, the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 changed everything. The U.S. was at war. By March 1942, the War Production Board declared that all building supplies were needed for the war effort with a moratorium on any new construction.

When the war finally ended in August 1945, the Mankato Board of Education began to talk once again about a new high school. There was controversy from the start when two new sites were proposed: Memorial Field (aka "the slough") near West Mankato and on hilltop at Main and Division streets. The battle over the site lasted over two years with seven elections and students walking out of school on November 25, 1947 in protest of the delays. Finally in 1948, voters (and the School Board) agreed to building the school at Memorial Field (West Mankato).

Construction began in 1948 and a whole new set of obstacles quickly presented themselves. It would take three years and \$2 million to fill in the slough, drive 42' pilings to reach limestone base and build the school. Close to completion, construction was delayed again when the Minnesota River overflowed its banks in the spring of 1951 flooding the school and site.

Although the building would not be ready for students for a few more months, the 1951 commencement took place in the auditorium of the new Mankato High School. After 10 years, a World

War, seven elections, and a flood, the new Mankato High School officially opened in the fall of 1951.

AFTER THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

In the fall of 1951, Lincoln returned to an elementary and junior high school. In 1961, after Jefferson Elementary opened, Lincoln then became just a junior high and at one time held as many as 770 students in grades 7-9.

By the 1970s, student enrollment went on the skids and by the 1981-82 year there were only 270 7-8th graders in the building. Lincoln served as a junior high (along with Franklin and Garfield in North Mankato) until 1982. Due to declining student enrollment and budget cuts, those students were moved to the junior high programs into East and West Senior High School facilities.

LINCOLN COMMUNITY CENTER

In August of 1982, the Board of Education made it possible for the Community Service Department of Independent School District 77 to embark on a mission to establish a viable community center and night school at Lincoln. The Community Services Fund, which is separate from K-12 funding, took on the responsibility of operating 'Lincoln Community Center'. To help cover the cost of operation space was leased to non-profit organizations. Renting and program fees also contributed to offset building operational expenses.

First tenants in the new community center, aside from the Community Service Department, included Mankato Area Bantam Association, community access cable television studio, Merely Players Community Theatre, and Christ the Redeemer School.

"Lincoln is truly a Community Center, hosting a variety of activities and programs. The Alternative High School was moved to this facility as was the need for a Junior High athletic facility. Community Service Department offices were established in the principal's office area, and access to the facilities allowed the development of many programs such as community theater, woodshop, family recreational times and cooking classes," according to Community Services Director Mark Sivanich in 1986 brochure for Lincoln Community Center.

In six short years, Lincoln Community Center had developed all available space. Early Childhood Family Education (formerly housed at Franklin) now called Lincoln home. Merely Players Community Theatre program had expanded into dedicated support space immediately adjacent to its' performance area. Adult Basic Education program

expanded to include a learning center with a new nine station computer laboratory. And Mankato's Alternative High School expanded into the building's third floor.

In 1977 an Evening School, held in the evenings at West High School, began for students who needed credit recovery to graduate. The program moved to the Lincoln Community Center in 1982 and was renamed the Alternative High School. Though the program was originally created to help "troubled" students who were considered ill-equipped to excel in traditional public school settings. Today's alternative schools appeal to a wide variety of students with unique challenges and abilities by providing and supporting the opportunity to succeed in a non-traditional educational setting. The Alternative High School was renamed Central High School in 2001 with a



Central High School Class of 2022 at Lincoln

focus on the concept that all students deserve to have an equal chance at academic success, but not every student learns in the same way. In 2007, Central Freedom School was created to provide a year-round high school program serving referred students in recovery from chemical dependency.

Although Lincoln School was originally an elementary and junior high school, it became the interim high school from 1941 to 1951 after Mankato High School burned to the ground. Returning to use as a primary school in 1951, it then served as Lincoln Junior High School until 1982. In August of 1982, The School Board of Independent School District No. 77 made it possible for Community Services (community recreation and education) to embark on a mission to establish a viable Community Center at Lincoln School. At 100 years old, the building stands as the Lincoln Community Center serving students of all ages from preschool to high school and beyond providing a path for many different academic journeys.

SOURCES

- Grundmeier, Shirley, "East Side West Side: Public High Schools in Mankato," *Blue Earth County Historian*, Fall 1999.
- Various articles in BECHS Subject Files

EVERY OBJECT HAS A STORY...

By Shelley Harrison, Collections Manager

The Blue Earth County Historical Society textile collection contains over 5,600 items including 1850s bodices and skirts, 1950's wedding gowns, military uniforms, hats, quilts, needlework, etc.. Here is a peek at the process that goes into preserving our textiles.

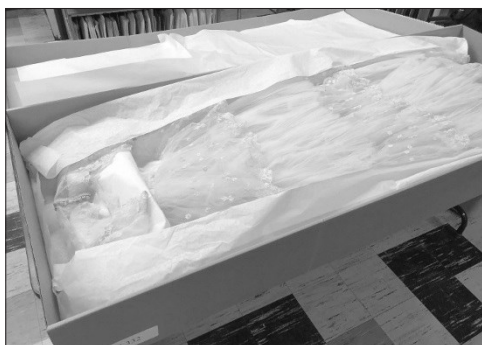
Once a garment is formally accepted into BECHS's collection by our Collections Management Committee, our volunteers begin the process of cataloging. This involves writing a detailed description of the textile including measurements, material, condition and provenance. The textile is then photographed and



numbered by loosely stitching a cotton label with its accession number onto it. It might be at this time any small repair may be made like securing a loose button.

Next a storage location is selected. In selecting a storage location, it depends on several factors such as the item's condition and material content. Certain items, like men's suit coats, are good candidates to hang from padded hangers. Other garments, like heavily beaded gowns, should be carefully folded and stored in a box. This is because the weight of the beads can distort the shape of the gown or, worse, create large tears at the shoulders if hung. Garments are stored in boxes with other similar garments. Therefore, a 1930s dress is stored with other 1930s dresses.

Some items like a 1950s wedding dress may need a special box that is able to accommodate its full train. Textile boxes are acid-free, lignin-free and lined with unbuffered tissue paper. Tissue paper is used to cushion any fold to prevent creases and to separate garments within the box.

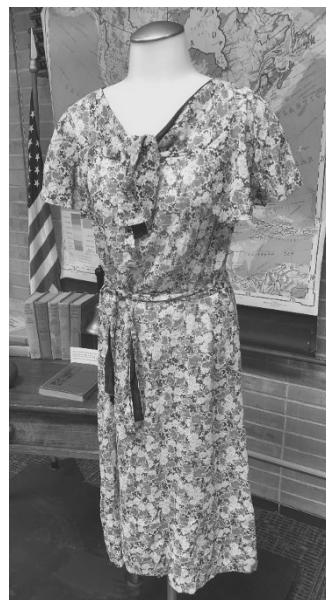


The final step is to enter the information from the catalog worksheet into our collection management system so that, at any point in time, it

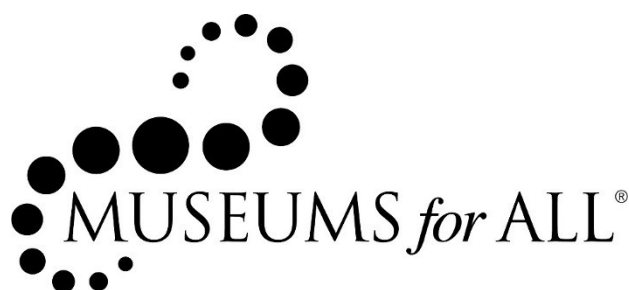
can be located and the information used when comparing the next donated textile that comes into the collection. The information in the database is also used for research, publications or museum exhibits.

Each of these steps takes time and meticulous detail. The process may take days or months depending on the size of a donation. Each textile is managed by staff and at least three volunteers. It is not just volunteer time that goes into the preservation of textiles, there are also cost associated with long-term storage. For example, a box to store a 1950s wedding dress costs \$79, not including the many sheets of tissue. Indirect costs included shelving, temperature control and security.

Our mission is to lead in the collecting and promoting of Blue Earth County's history to ensure its preservation for the enrichment and benefit of present and future generations – which is priceless.



Now on display, this floral cotton voile dress is from the 1930s and was worn by Mary Willard Sugden. Mary was graduate of Mankato High School and Mankato Teachers College. She taught at Union School and was also the principal before she married George W. Sugden.



Museums for All Initiative is a national access program that encourages people of all backgrounds to visit museums regularly to enjoy lifelong learning experiences and build museum-going habits. Individuals receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits) gain free or reduced admission. **Museums4All.org**



Construction of the Rapidan Dam

By Bri Krumwiede, Archives Assistant

The Rapidan Dam, formerly the site of the town Rapidan Mills was constructed in 1910-1911 at the former townsite of Rapidan Mills. The Dam was built by the Ambersen Hydraulic Construction Company of Boston—contracted by the Consumers Power Company of Chicago—to provide “cheap” power to southern Minnesota.

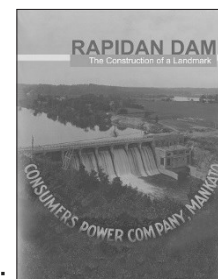
In Minnesota, industrial and commercial dam building began after the 1837 land cession treaties with the Ojibwe and Dakota people and increased after the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux.

The building of the Rapidan Dam was seen as “one of the largest and most important projects ever undertaken in this section of Minnesota” according to *The Daily Review* on February 28, 1910 especially concerning industrial development in Mankato and the surrounding areas. Housing was built to support 200 workers. At its height of

construction, 345 men were employed by the project. In all, the project cost around \$2,000,000. By 1915, the Consumers Power Company served much of Blue Earth County and surrounding areas in Southern Minnesota.

Construction resulted in one death, that of Hugo Heyn of North Mankato in October 1910. Heyn was born in Germany and married in Elysian, Minnesota. He was a member of the German Lutheran church and was the secretary and treasurer of a branch of the Appleton Insurance Company. He was survived by his wife and six children.

Visit the Research Center to view photographs of the dam’s construction or check out *Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark* in the gift shop to learn more about the dam’s construction.



MEMBERS MATTER

WELCOME NEW BECHS MEMBERS

November 1, 2022 – January 21, 2023

Karen Anderson
 Elizabeth Knutson
 Margaret and William Lindberg
 Rod and Kendall Meyer
 Tracy Zins

Member dues support BECHS programs, facilities, exhibits, preservation of Blue Earth County’s past for future generations. Thank you!

BECHS Member Benefits

- Free admission to the History Center, R.D. Hubbard House and Research Center, 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, a \$15 value
- Annual Member’s State-of-the-Society meeting

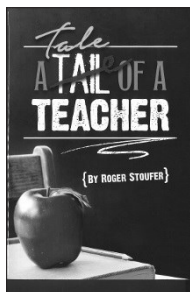
Join or renew online at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Membership

GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

By Heather Harren, Operations Manager

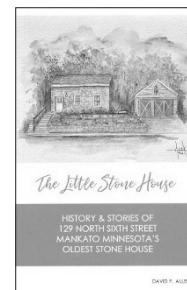
School can be a big part of life for many of us. And many of us remember that special teacher who made all the difference in our education. The History Center Gift Shop carries a few books written by local teachers.

A Tale of a Teacher
by Roger Stoufer
Softcover, 280 pages
\$15.00



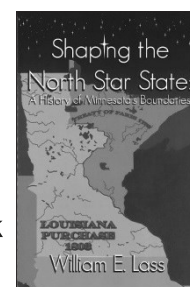
A junior high school principal once said, "Good teachers are born teachers, not made into them." This story shows otherwise. It is about a little boy who at first hates school, but who with the influence of nurturing teachers, supportive friends, and strong role models, grows to love the classroom and chooses it as a career. Included are entertaining descriptions of how his personal life affected that career; colorful accounts of the most memorable students, teachers, and administrators, candid critiques of education reform efforts and retrospective analysis of how the teaching process worked and didn't work.

The Little Stone House
by David Allen
Softcover, 74 pages
\$20.00



David Allen, his siblings and parents lived in the little stone house on North Sixth Street in Mankato. He later became a teacher and taught high school for 43 years. This book recounts the tales of 14 kids growing up in this 1,100 square foot house.

Shaping the North Star State
by Dr. William E. Lass
Softcover, 224 pages
\$16.95



Dr. William E. Lass is Professor Emeritus of History at Minnesota State University, Mankato. This book is the history hidden in the story of Minnesota's borders. How were those borders formed, what deals were struck and why does Minnesota look like it does?

The History Center Gift Shop is great place to find local, one-of-a-kind items as well as state and local history books. The Gift Shop also features the Marian Anderson Art Gallery displaying Anderson's Fine Art prints and original paintings. Can't make it to the History Center? Shop online anytime!

www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Online-Store

NEW & NOTEWORTHY (continued from page 4)

Guest Speaker

Dr. Roger L. Nichols is Professor Emeritus of American



History at the University of Arizona. He taught courses on the West, Frontier America, and Indians in

American history. He will be lecturing in Mankato in Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

At Noon, Dr. Nichols will be presenting "Indian Religion and

the Environment" on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College. At 7:30 p.m., he will present a public program titled "Modern Indian Protests: Religion, Environment, and Sovereignty" at the History Center.

Dr. Nichols also taught at three other American and four European universities, he is the author, co-author, or editor of twelve books. The presentation at the History Center is free and open to the public in partnership

with Bethany Lutheran College.

New Look for Historian

We hope you like the new look and features available in this issue of *The Blue Earth County Historian*. We love hearing from you on what you like and suggestions for improvements. We are also always seeking contributors for the newsletter. Please reach out to staff with comments or to contribute.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

Volunteers are truly the lifeblood of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. There is not any aspect of work done at the History Center or Hubbard House that doesn't involve volunteers. **THANK YOU to all past, present and future volunteers for your support.**

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join BECHS' Board of Trustees

BECHS is seeking Blue Earth County individuals skilled in accounting/finance, fundraising, facility development and human resources to serve on the Board of Trustees. **Applications are due February 3, 2023** for Board terms beginning March 2023. Details at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/About

Newspaper Clipper

BECHS is seeking someone to clip the area newspapers for stories related to Blue Earth County. Newspapers and training will be provided. Time commitment: About two hours a week. Can be done at home or in the Research Center.

Rental Host

BECHS is looking individuals to assist with after-hours rental of the History Center Meeting Room. Volunteers will greet and assist renters, stay on-site during the rental and lock-up when done. Typically, one after-hours rental per month. Time and day of the week vary.

Contact Heather if you are interested in these opportunities or volunteering in general.

New volunteer? Sign-up at BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer

LOCAL HISTORY PODCAST

Explore the history that surround us!



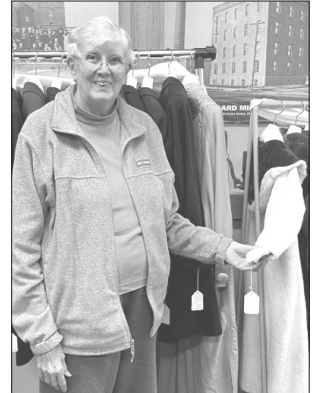
New episodes air Saturdays at 11:05 a.m. on KTOE AM 1420/102.7 FM.

You can find all previous episodes on our website at

BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast

Volunteer Spotlight

Grace Keir has been a BECHS volunteer since 2001. Her first volunteer project involved assessing a collection of hats. Now as our resident textiles expert, Grace works closely with all things fabric—clothing, accessories and, most recently, needlework.



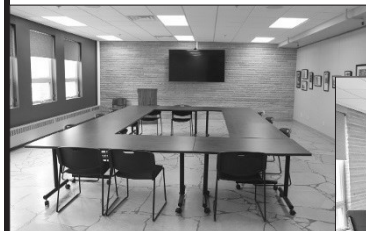
Grace is a longtime resident of Blue Earth County, having taught in the Family Consumer Science Department (formerly Home Economics) at Minnesota State University, Mankato, for 18 years. There, she taught courses on clothing, textiles, tailoring, merchandising, and more.

Grace enjoys being surrounded by history at the History Center. As a lifelong learner, she enjoys continually learning more about history and working with new historical artifacts. She also enjoys the social aspects of volunteering and interacting with other BECHS volunteers and staff.

Grace would tell prospective volunteers that no matter your historical interest, there is a project for you, and there is always a need.

Thank you Grace, for your years of dedication to Blue Earth County history and the care you put into your work.

Book Your Next Meeting or Special Event at the History Center



The Blue Earth County History Center has a number of rental options perfect for your next gathering.

Visit BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals for more information and rates. Contact the History Center for availability.

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November 1, 2022 – January 21, 2023

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KIDS CORNER: School Days Long Ago

LeRay Township School, 1890s



When settlers first moved to Blue Earth County there were no schools. Children learned math and reading from their parents or other family members. As communities grew, land was set aside to build schools and money was saved to hire teachers. Large school buildings were built for the many students who lived in towns. Farm communities also built schools for their children, some had only one room. In a one-room schoolhouse, children of all ages sat side-by-side in the same room and the teacher taught grades 1-8 all together! Mankato's first school opened in 1853.

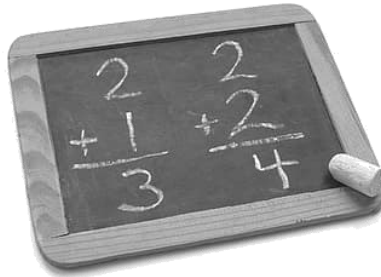
Daily School Schedule

A long time ago, kids had many of the same school subjects as today. A daily schedule included reading, history, recess or playtime, arithmetic (math), spelling, lunch, geography, writing, science and grammar. **The three R's** all children learn in school (even today) are Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic (math). Children were taught to recite things until they could pronounce them correctly and had memorized them. What is your favorite subject in school? _____

The school year was about a month shorter in the past than it is now, so students could help their family plant and harvest crops. Many students graduated after the 8th grade and went to work. To be able to graduate, students had to pass a final examination.

Getting to School

Long ago there were no school buses. Kids were expected to travel up to 5 miles a day and back again from their homes to school by walking, riding a horse or bike, or catching a ride in a wagon, tractor or car. How do you get to school? _____

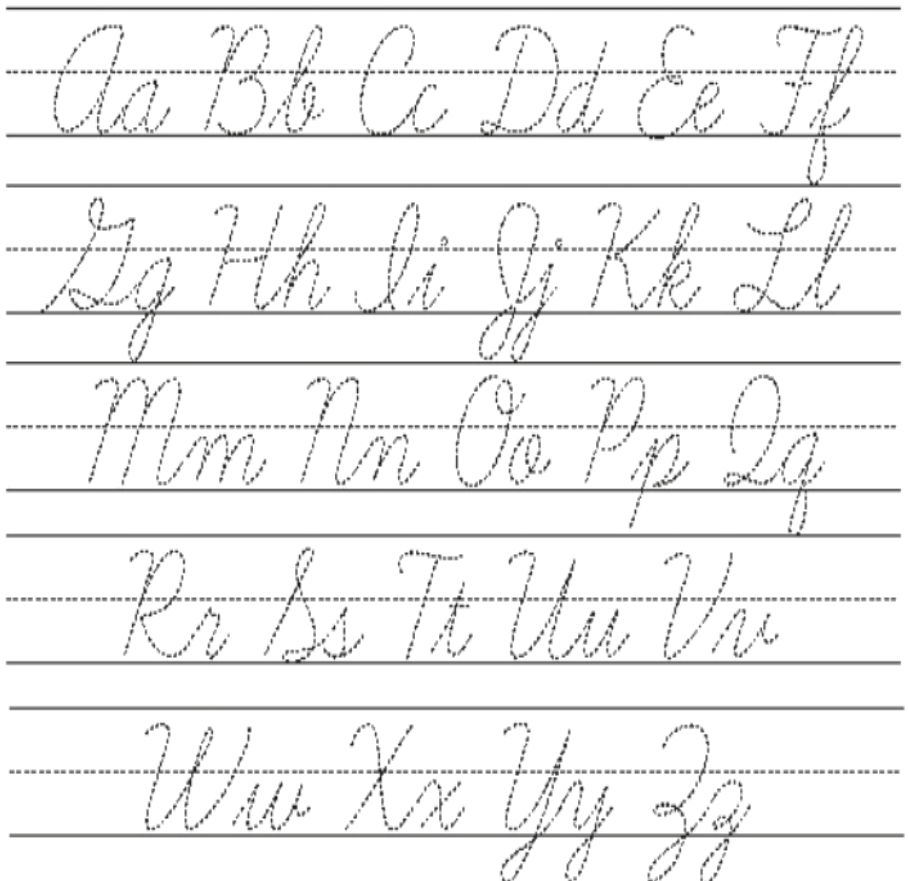


School Supplies

Long ago pens and paper were saved for adults. Students used slates board to write on and rags for erasers. Once a little older, kids might use a homemade paper copy book and quill ink pen. Did you know crayons were invented in 1903?

Practice Your Penmanship

Penmanship is the art of writing with your hand instead of typing. Cursive is a word for a type of loopy handwriting which connects all of the letters in a word. Long ago and even today school children learn to write in cursive. Trace over the cursive letters below. Can you write your name in cursive?



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February – April 2023

All programs will be held at the Blue Earth County History Center and are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

FEBRUARY

National Black History Month

- 4 **MLK 11.12.61** documentary chronicling Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to Mankato in 1961, 11 a.m.
- 8 **Lincoln Community Center Self-guided Tours**, 2-4 p.m., Lincoln Community Center, Mankato
- 11 **Young Historians: Westward Migration**, 10 a.m.-Noon, Pre-registration required.
FREE Second Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m..
- 18 **"Jim Crow in Blue Earth County: Researching Housing Discrimination in Mankato History"** presented by Dr. Angela Jill Cooley, MSU,M History Department, 1 p.m.

MARCH

National Women's History Month

- 5 **BECHS Annual Member's Meeting** 1 p.m. Lincoln Community Center, RSVP by 3/1/23 to Museum@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com or 507-345-5566
- 8 **Lincoln Community Center Self-guided Tours**, 2-4 p.m., Lincoln Community Center, Mankato
- 11 **Young Historians: Early 20th Century Immigration**, 10 a.m.-Noon, Pre-registration required.
FREE Second Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m..
- 18 **Women' History Month** presentation by Dr. Lori Lahlum, MSU,M History Department, 1 p.m.

APRIL

- 4 **"Modern Indian Protests: Religion, Environment, and Sovereignty"** presented by Dr. Roger L. Nichols, 7:30 p.m.
- 8 **Young Historians: The Great Depression**, 10 a.m.-Noon, Pre-registration required.
FREE Second Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m..
- 12 **Lincoln Community Center Self-guided Tours**, 2-4 p.m., Lincoln Community Center, Mankato

For more event information or to register, visit
BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Events

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History Center
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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.

ADMISSION

\$7 Adults
\$3 Children 5-17
BECHS Members and
Children under 5 FREE






R.D. HUBBARD HOUSE

606 S. Broad Street, Mankato
507-345-4154
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Open Memorial Day Weekend
- Labor Day Weekend

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www.BlueEarthCountyHistory.com

-  Facebook.com/BECHShistory
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-  YouTube.com/c/BECHShistory

EXHIBITS



*Celebrating
100 Years of
Lincoln School*

On display
thru May 2023



ART GALLERY

People Being People
By Randy Wood

On display
thru March 2023