



# The Blue Earth County **HISTORIAN**

SUMMER 2024  
Vol. 30 No. 3



A Publication of the Blue Earth County Historical Society

The Blue Earth County  
**HISTORIAN**

Summer 2024  
Volume 30, Number 3

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**COVER PHOTO:**

Kids on the Wilder Farm  
enjoying at late summer day  
with fresh watermelon in  
September 1934.

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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Nik Proehl, BECHS Board Chair

Greetings from the Board of Trustees! It is with great pleasure and excitement that I announce the successful completion of the parking lot renovations at the History Center. This important project marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to enhance the accessibility and appeal of our facilities, ensuring that the rich history of Blue Earth County remains available to all members of our community and visitors alike.

The newly renovated parking lot is designed to provide a more welcoming and accessible environment for everyone. With improved paving, expanded parking spaces, and enhanced lighting, we have created a space that not only serves the practical needs of our visitors but also complements the aesthetic and historical integrity of the History Center. This transformation is a testament to our commitment to preserving and celebrating our shared heritage while making it as accessible and inviting as possible.

In celebration of this achievement, I am delighted to invite you to join us for our Parking Lot Party on September 17. This event is our way of expressing heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to this project. Whether you purchased a commemorative brick for our new patio, made a direct donation, or helped spread the word about our endeavors, your support has been invaluable. The Parking Lot Party promises to be a joyful gathering where we can all come together, appreciate the results of our collective efforts, and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed and festive atmosphere.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend my deepest thanks to each and every one of you. Your unwavering support and dedication are what make projects like this possible. The History Center is not just a repository of artifacts and stories; it is a steadfast community hub, made all the more special by the people who care about its mission and future. We look forward to seeing you at the Parking Lot Party, where we can celebrate this wonderful transformation together!



Proehl next to the new patio and handicap spaces



Before construction, May 2024

**PARKING**  **PARTY**  
September 17, 4-7 PM Food, Music & Fun!

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

By Jessica Potter, Executive Director

Since our last issue, we witnessed history as it happened when heavy rains in June lead to major flooding in Blue Earth County. We helplessly watched the Blue Earth River devour land around the 1910 Rapidan Dam, including The Dam Store and dam keeper's house. As the flood water receded, the blue-green clay, for which the river and county are named, began to appear along the river banks. What a sight—all of it. Thank you to everyone who documented the day-to-day changes, devastation, and rebuilding. We are here to collect and preserve this event so future generations can learn about this turning point for the Rapidan Dam.

A little closer to our home, we watched our own history unfold with the construction of our long awaited new parking lot, lights, landscaping, and donor brick patio! Thank you to our donors and supporters who financially made this possible! Thank you to the following companies who partnered with us on this project: Holtmeier

Construction, Nielsen Concrete & Blacktopping, Chamber's Excavating & Landscaping, Traverse des Sioux Garden Center, River City Electric, SignPro, and Loken Parking Lot Striping.

The brick patio is in, but we are waiting for the donor bricks to be installed in early September. Commemorative bricks will continue to be available for purchase with all proceeds supporting future capital investment projects.

As our Board Chair, Nik Proehl, so eloquently shared, please join us for the Parking Lot Party on September 17 to celebrate the individuals, families, and businesses who came together for this project.

In this issue, please check out the new events we have planned for the Fall including: 5-part Genealogy Series, Revisiting *Main Street*, After Hours Hubbard House Flashlight Tours, and the 6th annual A Night at the Speakeasy which will take place on Saturday, October 26 at Sky One Eleven in downtown Mankato. Don't miss our prohibition party with a purpose to raise funds for local history!

BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INVITES YOU

# A NIGHT AT THE SPEAKEASY

OCTOBER 26, 2024




Sky One Eleven

A Prohibition Party with a Purpose

Hosted by Neubau Tower

1920s Dress Encouraged

TICKETS



Step back in time to the Roaring 20s, the era of Prohibition, Flappers, and Gangsters at **A Night at the Speakeasy on October 26, 2024, at Sky One Eleven, Downtown Mankato.** With its unique historic vibe, the Speakeasy is the Blue Earth County Historical Society's signature fundraising event for 2024 and you're invited!

The event will include:  
Heavy Hors d'oeuvres & Dessert  
Signature Prohibition-inspired Cocktails  
Auction, Raffle & Gift Card Grab  
Music by Hannah Bretz Jazz Ensemble

TICKETS AND SPONSORSHIPS AT [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy)

# NEWS & NOTEWORTHY



Join BECHS and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts for a fun and relaxing afternoon in the beautiful Hubbard House gardens. The event includes live music, Twilight Garden Club garden tours, botanical mixology demonstrations, special self-guided Hubbard House tours, local art pop-up, lawn games, kids activities and so much more. Enhance your experience with an English Tea box and/or a Bloom Bar bouquet. Tickets at [TwinRiversArts.org](http://TwinRiversArts.org).



BECHS has four Stories & Stones self-guided cemetery tours available for you to explore. Each tour introduces you to a dozen or more people and their stories behind the stones found at four local cemeteries. The tour lets you to hear their story, see historic photographs, and learn more about the past on your mobile device or computer. Stories & Stones Tours include:

1. NEW - Lake Crystal Cemetery explores the founders and businesses of the town.
2. Glenwood Cemetery Tour

features many familiar names such as Hubbard, Cray, and Lovelace.

3. Minneopa Cemetery Tour highlights many of the Welsh settlers to the area as well as interesting tales of life in the community.

4. Calvary Catholic, Mankato Cemetery Tour showcases doctors, businesses, and interesting characters.

The tours are \$15 per email address and available through October 2024.



## FLASHLIGHT TOURS

See the Hubbard House in a whole new light—flashlight. Join us for new Hubbard House After Hours Flashlight Tours Fridays in October. Learn the rich history of this elegant space and see it with only a flashlight to guide you. Participants must arrive fifteen minutes prior to scheduled tour time, and must sign a waiver before allowed to proceed. This tour is open to all ages. Tours start at 8, 8:30, and 9 p.m. The tour includes the Carriage House, Hubbard House attic and basement. Timed tickets are \$30/person and must be purchased in advance. Space is limited. Tickets on sale September 15.

## GENEALOGY SERIES

October is Family History Month and BECHS is offering a month long series of classes focused on family history research, tips, and tools. Join us at the History Center Tuesdays in October at 6 p.m. to explore different topics. Single classes are \$10/Adults, \$7/BECHS Members and \$5/Youth 5-17. Save \$ when you purchase the entire 5-part series. Classes can be found on page 9, please note that the schedule is subject to change.



## HOLIDAY MEMORIES

BECHS is collaborating with *The Free Press* for the *Mankato Magazine* holiday issue. They are looking for written and photographic submissions of holidays past. Memories and photos can be sent to [jgreer@mankatofreepress.com](mailto:jgreer@mankatofreepress.com). You must include your name and city, your memory, names of people in the photo, year (or approximate), and any other information you would like to share. If sending a photo, please scan at hi-res; not a screenshot or photo of a photo. Scanning is available at The Free Press office at 418 S 2nd Street between 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Ask for Barb or Jordan.

# Rapidan High School Girls' Basketball Got Net Results with Aileen "Point-A-Minute" Just

By Jane Haala

The game "basket ball" was invented as a winter activity in 1891 by James Naismith in Massachusetts. A year later the game was played by a group of women at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. By 1897, the first girls' high school basketball game was played in Minnesota. By the 1920s, girls' basketball swept through Minnesota colleges and high schools. At times, the girls' teams were more popular than the boys'.

Blue Earth County was among many Southern Minnesota schools to offer girls' basketball. When the new Rapidan Consolidated School opened its doors to students in September 1922, it also opened the opportunity for students to play on sports teams and compete against nearby schools. Rapidan Consolidated was made up of four country schools: Spring Island School, Dam School, Just School, and Yaeger School.

The Rapidan school gym floor was divided into three equal sections to serve as girls' basketball courts. Six girls were on a team, with two guards, two forwards, and two centers, each staying in their section of the court. By the late 1920s, the rules changed to two-court basketball, with guards and forwards limited to half the court.

The Rapidan school gym floor was 40' wide x 66' long, with a balcony provided for spectators. Today, a standard high school basketball court is 42' wide x 74' long. Not every school in the area had ideal playing courts. Waldorf's gym had an area screened off for the heating unit. If the ball happened to bounce just right, it would land down



1923-24 team for Rapidan were Stella Johnson, Clara Olson, Pearl Daughterty, Lydia Kriel, Mildred Pettis and Louise Just. Substitutes included fifth grader Lorna Lachmiller and sixth grader Aileen Just (top right). The school principal Carl Pothoff was the coach.

in the boiler room, requiring a time-out to retrieve the ball. Pemberton's gym had support beams on the edge of the playing floor, which players were warned not to run into. At Nicollet, the spectators sat near the edge of the playing floor. Many times, players were accidentally tripped. Rapidan played against teams from St. Clair, Lake Crystal, Garden City, Vernon Center, Good Thunder, Bethany College, and Mankato Loyola.

Because of the small class sizes, team members were recruited from grades 5 through 12. The coaches taught the girls how to play the game as well as values such as fair play, good sportsmanship, discipline, poise, coordination, balance, and leadership.

The Rapidan girls' and boys' basketball teams traveled together to away games by school bus, usually driven by a favorite

bus driver, Charlie Nelson. The teams ate a light lunch before each game under the supervision of the Home Economics teachers. The menu was usually creamed eggs on toast and fresh fruit.

Pep fests were held before each game, with skits and yells. One of the girls would lead cheers for the boys, and a boy would lead cheers for the girls. The teams were well-supported by parents and the community. The gym was packed for home games, and parents would travel by school bus to away games.

The girls' team uniforms comprised a white middie (loose long-sleeved shirt) with a black collar and long black bow, black bloomers, and blue and white stockings worn over the knees. The bloomers were made of black sateen using about

five yards of pleated material. They were very full and hung below the knees. Later, Coach Pearl Ware changed the uniform to a more fashionable medium blue short-sleeve shirt with white trim to reflect the school's colors. Made and paid for by the mothers, the bloomer-type bottoms were still worn, but these had a 'yard or two' less fabric. Long blue and white stockings completed the outfit.

"The girl basketball team was the big show in the town of Rapidan," said Richard Just in an interview. "We boys played the second game of a doubleheader with the girls playing the first game. Very few spectators would have come to the boys' game if we had played the first game. Everyone came early to see the girls play. We used to scrimmage the girls' team, and they would always win."



Aileen Just's newspaper photograph, 1928.

### "Make it Aileen, Make it Aileen!"

One of the stars of the Rapidan Girls' Basketball team was Aileen Just, who played from 1923 to 1930, and became known as the "Sensational Aileen Just." Aileen entered 5th grade in 1922 and joined the girls' basketball team as a substitute. Little is known of that first basketball team, but there is a recollection of an unsuccessful season. The girls did some recruiting, and the team improved. Three years later, Aileen was moved up as a regular on the team.

"My sister Aileen was an outstanding player. There was no comparison between Aileen and the boys and girls who played basketball at that time. Even with all the publicity she received, Aileen was very humble and modest about her success," said Richard Just, Aileen's brother.

In one game, Aileen scored 60 points; another time, 50 points in four eight-minute quarters. In 366 minutes of play during one season, Aileen Just scored 410 points. Thereafter, she became known as "Point-a-Minute Just." In another season, Just scored 453 points in 416 minutes of play. The Rapidan team scored a season total of 614 points compared to an average of 224 points by the opposing teams.

By 1928, Aileen's story and photograph were in newspapers across the U.S. with captions like: "Aileen Just, Outstanding Girl Basketball player of the State of Minnesota. A 16-year-old and a sophomore at Rapidan, Aileen has brought her

team through to 40 victories in 43 games played in three years. Scoring 30 to 35 points in a game is a common occurrence for her."

Followed by headlines reading:

- "Rapidan Downs Garden City Aileen Just is Star of Go; Gets 27 of 28 Points, Sensational Forward Gives Ample Proof of Ability To Win Game For Her Team".
- "Aileen Just of Rapidan Has Scored 219 Points in 166 Minutes of Play Will Be Out to Better Average In Contest With St. Clair High School Tonight."

The 1929 District 23 Class B Tournament Finals were held at the Mankato State Teachers College between two powerful rival girls' basketball teams - Garden City vs. Rapidan. The Rapidan girls team headed by Aileen Just scored an impressive 18-8 victory over Garden City. The *Free Press* reported "Aileen Just played in the form

which made her the outstanding girl player of this section of the state scoring sixteen of her team's eighteen points. She counted five two-point field goals, a single point field goal, and five free throws." Winning the 1929 tournament and receiving the trophy called for a celebration! Superintendent Mr. Strobel and his wife furnished cookies and Kool-Aid, which was drank from the trophy cup.



1929-1930 Rapidan team: Front: Dorothy Lachmiller, Evelyn Miescke, Aileen Just, Elsa Lachmiller, Pauline Knutson, Virginia Sandon. Back: Coach Earl Engbritsen, Leona Just, Leila Friedrichs, Viola Krueger, Dorothy Washburn, Mabel Nassif.

Aileen graduated from Rapidan High School in 1930, the last year for girls' basketball at Rapidan. By this time, Minnesota schools began to respond to state and national recommendations to drop all girls interscholastic sports and replace them with recreational-level programs. They believed competitive sports and physical activity was too hard on the girls fragile body. By the 1940s nearly all competitive girls' high school sports in Minnesota was eliminated.

After graduation, Aileen was invited to play professional basketball but had other plans. "I had my mind set on home economics," she stated. After two years of training at the University of Minnesota, she became a county club agent working with 4-H groups in Watonwan County. Aileen married Wilbur Luther and lived in the St. James area. They had four children who recall fond memories of playing basketball on their driveway court with their mother.

In 2019, Aileen Just Luther was inducted into the Minnesota High School Basketball Hall of



Aileen Just Luther next to the 1929 winning trophy at Rapidan Township Hall.

Fame. She was the first woman from the first era of girls' basketball to receive this honor.

Aileen will once again be a featured "star" in the upcoming traveling exhibit *Girlhood (It's Complicated)* at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul from September 7, 2024, through June 1, 2025. "The exhibit originated at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. It covers the history of being a girl in

America, focusing on education, work, politics, fashion, and more," according to Kate Roberts, Senior Exhibit Developer at MNHS.

"The Smithsonian allows each sponsoring institution to develop a local section related to the main exhibit. The Minnesota Historical Society is adding a 1,000-square-foot section on Minnesota girls and basketball history. We hope to give visitors a sense of our state's long, rich history of the sport. We are drawing on MNHS collections, including a recent oral history project, and loans of objects and photos from across the state, including Rapidan Township". The Minnesota History Center exhibit will include photos of

Rapidan girls' basketball star Aileen Just and the team plus the 1929 trophy all on loan by Rapidan Township.

Aileen's mother, Marie, would be proud to know that her cheer for Aileen from her favorite spot on the balcony during games still resonates through all these years. "Make it Aileen, Make it Aileen!" And make it she did!

Sources:

- Aileen Just, November 8, 2000 interview
- Blue Earth County Historical Society archives
- "Celebrate Our Legends", Minnesota High School Basketball Hall of Fame, 2019
- *Daughters of the Game, the First Era of Minnesota Girls High School Basketball 1891-1942* by Marian Bemis Johnson & Dorothy E. McIntyre, 2005
- "History of Girls' Basketball at Rapidan High School" by Aileen Just, 1973
- *Mankato Free Press* articles, 1922 – 1969
- Minnesota Historical Society
- "Our Golden Years at R.H.S. July 27, 1973"
- Photographs courtesy of Rapidan Township
- *St. James Plaindealer*, March 12, 1980

**Rapidan Consolidated School Girls' Basketball Players and Coaches 1922-1930**

**Players**

(alphabetical order, not in order of date played)

Ellen Berger	Elsa Lachmiller
Doris Councilman	Lorna Lachmiller
Marjorie Crase	Evelyn Miescke
Pearl Daughterty	Verna Miller
Leila Friedrichs	Mabel Nassif
Eva Hanson	Clara Olson
Cameon Hawes	Mildred Pettis
Stella Johnson	Mabel Plumb
Aileen Just	Minnie Plumb
Leona Just	Virginia Sandon
Louise Just	Hilda Schwamberger
Pauline Knutson	Ruby Strand
Lydia Kriel	Harriet Summers
Viola Krueger	Dorothy Washburn
Dorothy Lachmiller	

**Coaches**

Carl Pothoff 1922-1926
Lewis Robertson 1926
Pearl Ware 1926-1927
Herbert Hartshorn 1927-1928
Gladys Wandersee Mohr 1928-1929
Earl Engbritson 1929-1930

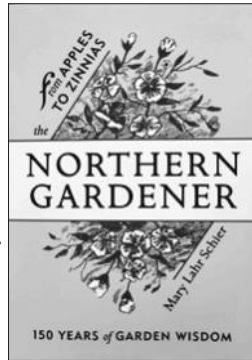
# GIFT SHOP & ART GALLERY

By Rachel Walden, Museum Manager

Butterfly weed, common milkweed, columbine, wild bergamot, and rough blazing star are among the many native plants featured in the History Center gardens. Botany is a beautiful way to connect with the world around you. Whether you're a gardening geek or just love nature, plants are integral to our lives.

The Gift Shop has stocked many new books about Minnesota plants and gardening from varying perspectives.

Become quite the outdoor enthusiast with Matthew Alfs' *Edible & Medicinal Wild Plants of the Midwest*, or master your gardening skills with Mary Lahr Schier's *The Northern Gardener: From Apples to Zinnias, 150 Years of Gardening Wisdom*. Prefer an Indigenous perspective? We've got you covered with Gilbert L. Wilson's *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden: The Classic Account of Hidatsa American Indian Gardening Techniques*. While picking up a new book, check out the beautiful native plants around the History Center.

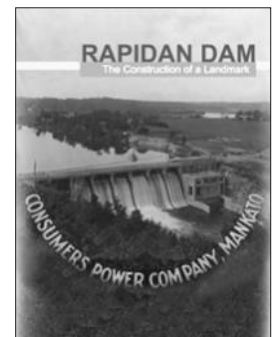


We are also excited to introduce more Minnesota-based children's books in the Shop. These books include titles such as Wanda Gag's *Millions of Cats*, and *A Little House Picture Book Treasury: Six Stories of Life on the*

*Prairie*, adapted from the works of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Additionally, check out local author J.P. Mackey's *Ichabod Strange*. Don't miss out on grabbing a free workbook from the Minnesota Historical Society called "Making Minnesota" to learn more about our amazing state.

Did you know that the Hubbard House also has a specialty shop with books, specifically on the Victorian Era, ranging from fashion and architecture to the macabre? Be sure to stop by and browse the selection, which now includes titles such as *A is for Arsenic*, *An Essential Handbook of Victorian Etiquette*, *How to be a Victorian*, *Invention of Murder*, and *100 Victorian Architectural Designs*. There's even a new adult coloring book on the era.

Of course, we would be remiss if we didn't mention the various items commemorating the Rapidan Dam. *Rapidan Dam: The Construction of a Landmark* details the construction of the dam in 1910 through newspaper accounts and photographs. We also offer limited prints, posters, and notecards of Marian Anderson's "Passage of Time," featuring the Rapidan Dam. And a special ink sketch of the dam by Marcia Carlson.



Please stop by one of our Gift Shops to explore these titles and the many others in stock.

**BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Commemorative Brick Program**

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

**CUSTOMIZE AND ORDER YOUR BRICK AT**  
**BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/BECHS**  
 or contact us at the History Center

**Celebrating Welsh Song**  
*4-part hymn singing*

**2024 Minnesota Welsh Singing Festival**  
 Sunday, September 22 at 1:30 p.m.  
 First Presbyterian Church, 220 East Hickory, Mankato MN

**VISITING CONDUCTOR**      **MUSICAL PERFORMANCE**  
 Rev. Joseph Corbin      Mankato Riverblenders

Free Admission and Te Bach (Refreshments) after festival

[mnwelshassociation.weebly.com](http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com)  
[www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation)



# RESEARCH CENTER: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, MANKATO

By Bri Krumweide, Archivist

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Mankato has a long history in the Mankato community.

The Mankato church was the second Disciples of Christ Church established in Minnesota. The first was in Garden City. Mankato's First Christian Church organized on May 3, 1868, shortly after the City of Mankato was chartered. The church was organized by E. W. Dickinson and 16 charter members. The church adopted articles of incorporation in February 1871. The first pastor employed by the church was Austin P. Council, who served in the position from 1870-1872.

First Christian Church held services in halls around Mankato before constructing their own building. In 1873, Elmira J. Dickinson gifted land to the church on the corner of Grove and Second Streets. Their first and second churches were built here with the second church being completed in 1895. Church membership doubled after the second church was built in 1895, and the congregation had a goal of reaching an attendance



First Christian Church Mankato, 1913.

record of 250 for the children's Bible school after the church opened. First Christian Church later had a Sunday school attendance contest with the First Christian Church in Minneapolis in 1940. While Mankato didn't win, they did reach an attendance of around 200 by Easter of that year. Membership peaked in the 1940s after WWII when the church had 200 active members.

Eventually, a new church was built at 1735 E. Main Street in 1962. The congregation remained there until it closed in 2011. The building is now used as Resurrection Lutheran Church.

First Christian Church Mankato had a strong history of women's organizations, including the Christian Women's Board of Missions, Ladies Aid, Women's Council, and Christian Women's Fellowship. The First Christian Church in Garden City had a woman pastor from 1923-1933.

First Christian Church Mankato donated their records including membership lists, directories, minutes, reports, and more. Visit the Research Center to explore these records.

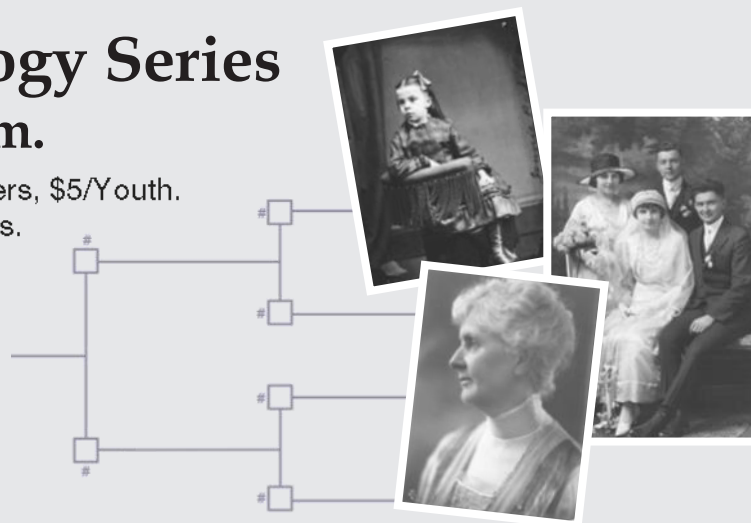
## OCTOBER IS FAMILY HISTORY MONTH

### History Center Genealogy Series Tuesdays in October at 6 p.m.

Single classes are \$10/Adults, \$7/BECHS Members, \$5/Youth.  
Save \$ when you purchase the entire 5-part series.

- 10/1 – Beginning Genealogy
- 10/8 – Conducting and Using Oral Histories
- 10/15 – DNA Tests for Beginners
- 10/22 – Using Census Data
- 10/29 – North Mankato Family History Center

*Schedule subject to change*



Your ancestors count on you to remember them.

# NEW ART EXHIBITS

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

## *Portraits of the Minnesota Fairground*

by Kristian Bjornstad

"I am a Minnesota native who moved to Mankato in 2018 after many years out of state. I enjoy making a wide variety of images conveying landscapes, nature, cityscapes, streets, people, events, and religious subjects. Since visiting my uncle when I was 12 years old and finding a treasure trove of photography magazines in his basement to read, I have been fascinated by capturing a subject in time and circumstance. I appreciate the opportunity it gives for further reflection on the meaning and beauty of life. Being a Christian (Lutheran pastor by day), I desire to convey the heart of God in the great wonder of His created world and the humanity that inhabits it. One of my favorite places to take my camera is the county or state fair. There are so many people having so much fun! Best of all,

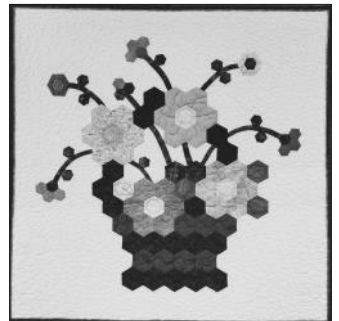


everyone in the animal barn is eager to have their portraits taken with their beautiful animals. Special thanks to Daelyn and Kaedyn Judd of Waterville, MN (featured in several images) for helping me journal behind the scenes at their livestock showing at the Rice County Fair in 2022. Please enjoy these portraits of the Minnesota county and state fairs that I have taken over the years. Many thanks to the Blue Earth County Historical Society for making it possible to share my work." Meet the Artist on Saturday, August 3, 10-Noon.

## *Mini Pieces: A Collection of Small Wall Hangings*

by Grace Keir

"Over the last twenty-plus years, I have made mostly small wall hangings and table runners. I enjoy trying new techniques and designing my own patterns; some are displayed here. The items I have chosen to exhibit also show my interest in nature. I am a member of the Deep Valley Quilters, and I am inspired by the skills of the members."



**ON DISPLAY AT THE HISTORY CENTER**

**Take a fun whimsical journey through time, where toys spark imagination, curiosity roams free, and play transcends age bringing generations together.**

**TRIBUTES**

*In Memory of Mary McComb*  
Molly Erdman  
David and Julie Ewert  
Linda Hachfeld  
Norla Hesse  
Janis Lueth  
Tom and Theresa McLaughlin  
Kathryn Stencil

*In Memory of Dave Beeman*  
Jane Haala

*In Memory of Randy Lorentz*  
Shirley Rosenau

*In Memory of Bob Bensch*  
Louis and Rebecca Schwartzkopf

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

# VOLUNTEERS MAKE HISTORY

Volunteers are truly the lifeblood of the Blue Earth County Historical Society. No aspect of work done at the History Center or Hubbard House doesn't involve volunteers. **THANK YOU, BECHS Volunteers, for all you do!**

## NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### **Rental Host**

As needed, after-hours History Center Meeting Room Rental Host to 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.

### **Newspaper Clipper**

Clip the area newspapers for stories related to Blue Earth County. Newspapers and training will be provided. The time commitment is about two hours a week. It can be done at home or in the Research Center.

### **Local History Writers**

Research and write short historical articles about Blue Earth County to be used for blog posts. If interested, please submit a sample of your writing to Rachel.

### **Processing Assistant**

Help organize, catalogue, and arrange historic materials for long-term storage. This position requires working with a computer.

Schedules are flexible for all opportunities, and training is provided. If you are interested in these opportunities or volunteering in general, please get in touch with Rachel or sign up at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Volunteer).

*Explore the history that surrounds us!*

## **LOCAL HISTORY PODCAST**

Partnership between Blue Earth County Historical Society and Radio Mankato



Episodes air  
Saturdays at 11:05 a.m.  
KTOE AM 1420/102.7 FM  
and available online at  
[BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/  
Podcast](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Podcast)

## **Historic R.D. Hubbard House**

### **GUIDED TOURS BY APPOINTMENT**

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

Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

Weekends thru Labor Day

606 South Broad Street, Mankato

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **ART IN THE GARDEN**

Sunday, August 4, 1-6 p.m.

General Admission \$20/adults 17+, \$5/children 3-16  
Join BECHS and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts in the beautiful Hubbard House gardens for live music, garden tours, botanical mixology demonstrations, self-guided Hubbard House tours, local art pop-up, lawn games, kids activities, and more. Enhance your experience with an English Tea box and/or a Bloom Bar bouquet. Tickets available at Hubbard House, History Center, [www.TwinRiversArts.org](http://www.TwinRiversArts.org), and at the gate. Rain or shine.



## **ANNUAL OLD TIME MEDICINE SHOW**

*ALL NEW Hilarity, High Jinks and Cure-Alls*

Saturday, August 24, 1-4 p.m.

Meet a bevy of colorful characters from the past. The Cherry Sisters believe laughter is the best medicine, and they are back to entertain you with their antics. Violet McNeal will reveal the secrets of the Medicine Show trade. Plus, a world-renowned thought reader, musical entertainment, and games and prizes! Three all-new and different shows at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Free.



## **AFTER HOURS FLASHLIGHT TOURS**

Fridays in October

Learn the rich history of this elegant space and see it with only a flashlight to guide you. Tours start at 8, 8:30, and 9 p.m. and includes the Carriage House, Hubbard House attic and basement. Timed tickets are \$30/person and must be purchased in advance. Tickets on sale September 15.



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

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April 20 - July 19, 2024

Donations supports BECHS mission to collect, preserve and present Blue Earth County's history for present and future generations. Thank you!

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*\*Monthly Recurring Donors. Sign-up today by calling Rachel!*

**BLUE EARTH HISTORICAL  
 COUNTY SOCIETY**

Leave your love of local history for future generations by including the Blue Earth County Historical Society in your Estate Planning. Please contact Jessica for information.



**INSPIRE. ENGAGE. CONNECT.**

## WELCOME NEW BECHS MEMBERS

April 20 - July 19, 2024

Mari Dailey	Joan M. LeMere
Anne Gillespie	Kristi Maruska
Janette Greene	Michael Mullin
Aneesa Hojat	Trudy Obermeyer
Jeff Lang	Dawn M. Ulrich-Spitzer

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.

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

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



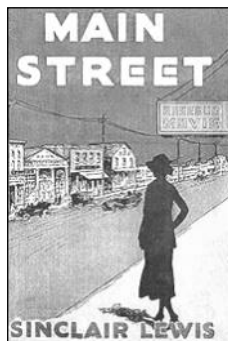
The Blue Earth County History Center and the Hubbard House Grounds have a number of rental options perfect for your next gathering.



Visit [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Rentals)

## Revisiting Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* Community Read and Historic Walking Tour

Join the Blue Earth County Historical Society, in partnership with the Blue Earth County Library, on a literary journey through the heartland of America with Sinclair Lewis's classic novel, *Main Street* for a Community Read discussion and walking tour.



This novel – which satirizes the conformity and ugliness found in small Midwest towns during the 1910s – led in part to Lewis's eventual 1930 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Born in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, Lewis drew heavily from his experiences growing up in the Midwest for much of his

writing. In one of his most famous novels, *Main Street*, he examines the tensions between tradition and progress in a small Midwestern town called Gopher Prairie. The protagonist, Carol Kennicott, a sophisticated and idealistic young woman, was from Mankato. In fact, Lewis wrote some of the book while he and his family were living in Mankato the summer of 1919.

Pick up a free copy of *Main Street* at the Blue Earth County Library beginning August 7, then meet us at the History Center on Tuesday, September 24, at 6 p.m. as we engage in a dynamic discussion about the context of the novel.

Then BECHS will lead captivating walking tour on Thursday, September 26, 6 p.m. as we revisit Sinclair Lewis' 1919 Summer on Broad Street. The tour will walk from the steps of the



315 S. Broad Street home to Lewis family in summer of 1919.

Hubbard House to the former Mankato Clinic building (now Cultivate). Along the way, learn intriguing anecdotes about people, landmarks, and businesses that may have inspired Lewis's *Main Street*. Step back in time to discover the vibrant stories that shaped this iconic book and street.

The Community Read is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant provided by the Traverse des Sioux Library Cooperative, thanks to the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

# KIDS CORNER: EXPLORING HISTORY THROUGH STORIES

Keeping the past alive through storytelling is nothing new; people have been telling stories about each other and where they came from for as long as there have been other people to tell. Stories recount events and a person's life. Stories can take you to an imaginary time and place. There are many people who like to explore history through stories. They read history books, diaries, letters and speeches, look at photographs, drawings, and objects like toys, furniture, and buildings. They try to imagine themselves in the past. They use all this collected information to write a fiction or a nonfiction History Story.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
FICTION refers to a story that is not based in real-life events but is made up or created from a writer's imagination.  
NONFICTION refers to fact-based stories based on real people, information, or events.

## Maud Hart Lovelace

Maud Hart Lovelace was a History writer from Blue Earth County. Maud loved history and wrote many stories about Minnesota's past.



Maud Hart, 1910.

Maud started writing when she was a child. When she was 10 years old, her father, Thomas Hart, had some of her poems printed in a booklet. Not much later, she began sending stories to magazines, selling her first story at age 18. When she was 25, Maud married Delos Lovelace, who was also a writer.

*Betsy-Tacy*, the first book of the 10-book series, resulted from Maud telling stories about her childhood in Mankato (called Deep Valley) to her daughter, Merian. It was published in 1940. The book page above is from the book *Betsy-Tacy and Tib*.


Visit the History Center to see Maud's High School scrapbook and special childhood treasures. Maud's books are available in the History Center Gift Shop.

## You Can Be a History Writer!

History writers and storytellers ask a lot of questions about life in the past. Their questions use words like "who, what, when, where, why, and how". To find the facts, History writers use many sources of information including photos, documents, maps, spoken stories, and books to learn about aspects of the past. History is full of stories waiting for a writer. The writer could be you! With these story starters, you can explore history through stories.



1. Write a story about a Christmas tree ornament that hangs on your Christmas tree. What would it say if it could tell its story? Or stories about your family?
2. You are an aspiring chef cooking for a famous food columnist who leaks your secret family recipe. What is the recipe and its special story?
3. You get a chance to travel back in time. Which year or century would you go to? What would your daily life be like? Why did you pick that time in history?



Where Readers & Authors Meet

## DEEP VALLEY BOOK FESTIVAL

**Saturday October 5, 2024 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**  
Country Inn & Suites Conference Center, Mankato  
[www.deepvalleybookfestival.com](http://www.deepvalleybookfestival.com)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August - October 2024

## August

- 3 **Artist Reception: Kristian Bjornstad** "Portraits of the Minnesota Fairground", 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 4 **Art in the Garden**, Hubbard House Gardens, 1-6 p.m., \$, All proceeds benefit BECHS and TRCA. Visit [TwinRiversArts.org](http://TwinRiversArts.org).
- 17 **Blue Earth County's Main Streets - Madison Lake**, 1 p.m. Discover Madison Lake's main street history.
- 24 **Old Fashioned Medicine Show**, Hubbard House Lawn, 1-4 p.m. Three different shows at the top of each hour. *See page 11*
- 31 **History Center Closed, Hubbard House Open**

## September

- 1 **Hubbard House last day of regular season**, 1-4 p.m. \$
- 14 **Family Day**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family with Free Museum Admission with crafts and scavenger hunt.
- 14 **Author Series: Geoff Herbach**, 1p.m., Young Adult Author, \$
- 17 **Parking Lot Party**, 4-7 p.m. Celebrate the completion of the new Warren Street Parking Lot!
- 24 **Community Read: Main Street by Sinclair Lewis**, 6 p.m. Copies of the book available at the BEC Library beginning Aug. 7.
- 26 **Sinclair Lewis' Broad Street Walking Tour**, 6 p.m., \$, *Tickets on sale September 1; limited tickets at the door.*

## October

- 1 **Genealogy Series TUESDAYS IN OCTOBER**, 6 p.m., \$ Purchase the entire series or just one program. *See page 9*
- 4 **Hubbard House After-Hours Flashlight Tours**, FRIDAYS IN OCTOBER, 8-10 p.m. \$, Tickets opens September 15. *See page 4*
- 5 **Deep Valley Book Festival**, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., visit [DeepValleyBookFestival.com](http://DeepValleyBookFestival.com) for author registration and details.
- 12 **Family Day**, Hands-on History fun for the whole family with Free Museum Admission with crafts and scavenger hunt.
- 17- **MEA Break Family Activities**, special family-friendly activities.
- 19 Free child museum admission with paid adult or senior.
- 26 **A Night at the Speakeasy**, Sky One Eleven, 6 p.m., Tickets on sale now at [BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy](http://BlueEarthCountyHistory.com/Speakeasy)  
\*NOTE: History Center will be closed.

All programs held at the History Center and free unless otherwise noted.

**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  
Expiration Date

## 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

Friday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Sunday 1-4 p.m.  
Open through Labor Day weekend

### 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



*A peek at the 1980s case.*

**TOYS!**  
Explore  
decades of  
childhood  
favorites.



**Mini Pieces: A  
Collection of Small  
Wall Hangings**  
by Grace Keir



**Portraits of the  
Minnesota Fairground**  
by Kristian Bjornstad