# CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Antique/Collectible Appraisal Fund Raiser - June 18 (See Pages 3 & 14)



Red River Cart drivers relax by their vehicles near St. Paul in 1858. Trains of carts like these creaked through Clay County 150 years ago.

B.F. Upton Photo, Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

## President's Report

By Norman Roos, President

In the middle of the 19th Century, the future states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, upper Michigan and the Dakotas were generally called "Northwestern." One traveler said "I know nothing about "Northwestern" except that it is big, big, big."

The whole large country that is now the United States originally belonged to the Indians, but through war and negotiations "Uncle Sam" (the name the government was called) had gotten possession of much of the continent.

In 1862 Congress agreed that a part of this land should be given away to the many immigrants and settlers who had reached a certain age, and were willing to live on the land. This law was the Homestead Act. A secondary law establishing the land grant colleges (University of Minnesota and North Dakota Agricultural College in our area) was enacted the same year by Congress.

The land was then staked out by the government into townships and sections which were then subdivided into quarters of 160 acres, and made available to a settler for little or no cash.

Some land in each township was not available for "Homesteading." It was called "school land." The area settlers had the option of erecting a school on that section or selling it for $5 per acre to finance a school at a more suitable location.

Other lands were given by Congress to railroad companies to encourage them to build tracks into the "Northwestern Wastelands." They were allowed and encouraged to sell these lands to anyone willing to pay $5 per acre. Land parcels near the tracks were of course most valuable and prices became very negotiable.

In 1870 and 1871, as the Northern Pacific Railroad construction crews were pushing westward toward the Red River, land speculators were busy guessing at the location of the river crossing because that place would likely become a future city. So the railroad officials "faked out" the land speculators by sending survey crews to the Georgetown area, where a Hudson Bay Co. Trading Post had been in operation for some time. This

explains the location of many Clay County Communities such as Dale, Hawley, Muskoda, Glyndon, Stockwood, Dilworth and Moorhead.

The Clay County Historical Society is doing a fine job of preserving many aspects of local history from the past 150 years. Your continued support of CCHS is vital to this effort.

## It happened in May

In May 1762, David Hume, Scottish philosopher and historian, thanked Benjamin Franklin for sending him his (method) invention of the lightning-rod.

In May of 1858 Minnesota was admitted to the Union.

# Antique and Collectible verbal appraisal clinic set for June 18 at Hjemkomst Center

Nationally recognized antiques and collectibles expert Harry Rinker will present a verbal appraisal clinic on Sunday, June 18 at the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave N, Moorhead. This is a fund raiser for the Clay County Historical Society (CCHS) and members receive a discounted admission/appraisal fee.

Harry Rinker hosts "Whatcha Got," a radio call-in show on KFGO-AM, Fargo and is well known in the area. His television credits include guest spots on Oprah, Martha Stewart, Wall Street Week, and the Today Show. He is a prolific antiques and collectibles writer, serving as editor of *the Official Price Guide to Collectibles, America's leading price guide to objects made after 1920,* now in its second edition along with many other antique and collectible publications.

Rinker's program at the Hjemkomst Center will consist of a lecture and program from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. and a verbal appraisal clinic from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. During that time Rinker will conduct 175 admission/appraisals. Consequently, 175 appraisal tickets will be sold at $15 each or $10 for CCHS members. General admission tickets without an appraisal are $10 per person.
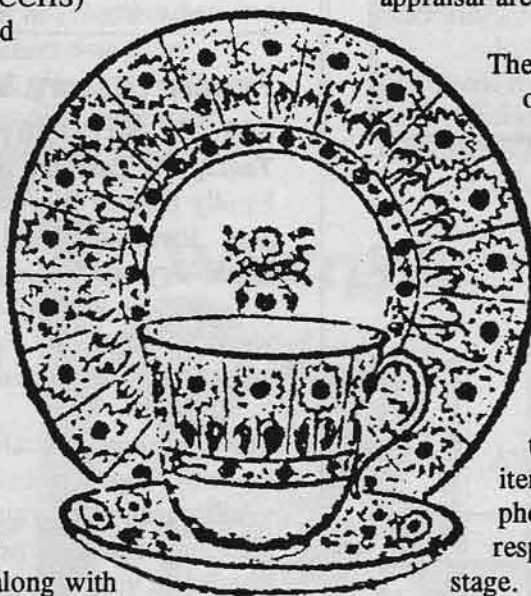
The clinic will be divided into five time slots of one hour. Tickets will be color coded to match each time slot. When signing up for an appraisal, you may choose the time slot you want for your appraisal. All tickets holders are welcome to stay throughout the day and watch Rinker appraise all the items.

People are encouraged to bring objects that can be held in their laps. If larger items are to be appraised a clear photograph can be used. Individuals are responsible for carrying their items to the stage.

Tickets are now on sale at the Clay County Museum at the Hjemkomst Center. No ticket reservations by phone will be accepted. Get your ticket(s) early in order to choose your preferred time slot. For more information call 299-5520.

## Cemeteries Before Dark

What can a cemetery teach us? Cemeteries are historical artifacts - and can be used as a source of clues to our past.

For three Saturdays in May you can learn about how to find and use information about our past using cemeteries. The main focus of the class will be the Prairie Home Cemetery, but other local cemeteries will also be visited.

The class will meet from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for three Saturdays in May, on the 6th, the 13th and the 20th. Classes will be in the Clay County Board Room at the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave N., Moorhead. You are invited to attend even if you missed the first two sessions.

Paul Harris will be the course instructor. Harris, who earned his doctoral degree in American culture from the University of Michigan, teaches history at Moorhead State University. He is a past president of Clay County Historical Society and historian of Prairie Home Cemetery, Moorhead.

Fees for the class are $22 for adults, $18 for senior citizens and $15 for students.

The Clay County Historical Society is happy to be able to underwrite in part this class presented by Harris.

## Outreach Displays

The CCHS outreach case program is on vacation for about a year. The curator needs to catch up on work created by the 1998 water main break and the move into new quarters.

## Monetary Donations
### March/April 2000

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Moorhead
Georgetown Gardniers, Georgetown
Elsie Pitsenbarger, Fargo
Merlyn & Shirlee Valan, Moorhead
Marie and Art Wenner, Moorhead
St. John's Ladies Aid, Barnesville
Gail Brown, Marshall TX
City of Fargo - Re: Library Program
Burton & Catherine Grover, Billingham, WA

## Artifacts & Donors

### MARCH/APRIL 2000
**Donors include:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Moorhead: | Lynda Backman, Celeste Johnson, Dorene Swenson |
| Georgetown: | Loren Helmeke |
| Minneapolis: | Timothy Layeux |
| Edmore, ND: | Dorothy Johnson |

**Artifacts include:**
(1) vol. *St. Lukes Hospital School of Nursing: A Commemorative Album: 1908-1987; Ninety-eight Creative Poems, Prayers & Praises* by Ben Holt LLD 1896-1980; certificate of citizenship for John Strand, Clay Co.; cert. of marriage for John Strand & Hilda Evenson 1905; promissory note John O. Strand to Halland & Askegaard, Comstock 1894; (2) bank books, Comstock State Bank for John O. Strand (passbook); (2) pass books, 1st National Bank, Mhd; (2) pgs invoice from Halland & Askegaard, Comstock ca 1912; (2) b/w film negs of Ohrdurp concentration camp in Germany ca April 11 or 12, 1945, taken two or three hours after liberation; Hawley Lutheran Ladies Aid Cook Book, 3rd Ed. (green cover); blotter, Hetland, Reg. of Deeds, 1906; box, wooden from O.C. Martinson Mhd mailed COD to Ernest Strand, Comstock, wallet from the Comstock State

Bank; "Grandma Barker's Historical dresses [not inventoried] and Dr. Olga Holte (Mrs. Albert) Johnson's* doctor's bag & contents portable medicine case.

* Dr. Johnson (1899-1988) had a general practice in Moorhead from the late 1930s until she retired in the mid-1960s. Her office was at the corner of 3rd Ave. & 5th St. South. She enjoyed the fields of obstetrics and pediatrics.

## Family History Workshop XXV set for Saturday, Sept. 16

*Taking the Past into the Future* is the theme for Family History Workshop XXV to be held Saturday, Sept. 16, at Moorhead State University. Using modern technology and techniques to discover your family history is the focus of this year's workshop. The workshop features a variety of classes for beginning and experienced genealogists of all origins.

The workshop schedule includes many "how to" sessions. Topics include: getting started; interviewing family members; writing and publishing your genealogy research; using the computer and the Internet in your research; publishing your family history on CD or on the web, research, using LDS Family History Center resources; doing Irish, German and Scandinavian research; and using census, county and military records in your research.

For more information visit the *Taking the Past Into the Future* web site at *www.moorhead.msus.edu/heritage/xxv.htm* or contact Continuing Studies, Box 401 Moorhead State University, Moorhead MN 56563, or call (218) 236-2182. The Family History Workshop is sponsored by the Heritage Education Commission of Moorhead State University.

## Educational trunk in need of...
The CCHS's Good Old Days trunk needs a general interest magazine (from the mid-1920s) such as the *Saturday Evening Post*. Call 299-5520 if you have such a magazine you would like to donate.

**Gardening** Gardins or jardins were originally fruit and vegetable plots that monks in medieval France enclosed, or guarded, to keep cattle and other animals away from their plants. By the early fourteenth century the word gardin was being used in England, but it wasn't spelled garden for another 100 years or so. Courtesy of Robert Hendrickson "Ladybugs, Tiger Lilies & Wallflowers."

# Bored?  How about a local board game?

By Pam Burkhardt, Collections Manager
[In the March/April 1994 newsletter we printed an article on the history of board games, part of which is reprinted here.]

*When Clay County was settled in the early 1870s, a number of board games had been in existence for centuries. Backgammon and checkers date from antiquity and a form of chess was played in India in the 6th century AD. Our residents also could have chosen to play cribbage, parcheesi, lotto (a game of chance) or fox and geese (a marble jumping game).*

*In  1843, the first mass-produced American board game appeared. Mansion of Happiness was a very moral and upright game which took you along a path of five dozen steps - you landed safely on Charity and Piety, but lost one turn for Immodesty. Later changes incorporated Sabbath Breakers who were represented by baseball players.*

There are three "local" board games represented in the CCHS collections. One is political, one means business and one is trivial.

## TWICE THE FUN...
### HALF THE PRICE

The earliest game in our collections is *Watergate and Impeachment* invented by Cecil A. Brinley of Moorhead. Some time late in 1983, former CCHS Director John Schermeister found one game at a second-hand shop. He noticed the copyright was issued to a Moorhead resident in 1974. A newsletter article of the period summed up the find:

*Back in 1974, [Brinley] explained, about 4 a.m., I made up a game I called "Watergate." It was really done to provide some new entertainment for two of his children who liked to play board games.*

*At the time, he and his wife, Marcella, operated a resort near Detroit Lakes. One rainy day, some Canadians who were staying at the resort, came looking for playing cards. He didn't have any*

*available but he gave them one of his home-made versions of Watergate. They played it several hours and when they brought it back to him, they said they had enjoyed it, but there should be a sequel about impeachment. So, he put another game together and called it "Impeachment" and had it printed on the other side of "Watergate."*

*Convinced that he had something salable, he financed the production of 10,000 copies. The games were supposed to be ready for distribution in September, but they didn't reach him until December, much too late to publicize for that current Christmas market. "By the next year, Nixon was out" and so was the game. He managed to sell about 4,000 of the games, but then he gave up and "just sat with them." The games set up for sale at $5.95 when they originally went on the market.*

The *Watergate and Impeachment* game box has a playing card design on the cover with Nixon's head in place of the King's. The game is played by two to four players who advance four men (tiddly wink-type disks) down a path after the roll of one die. On the *Watergate* side you advance from START, avoid CAUGHT IN BURGLARY and a SENATE HEARING. You can end up either in JAIL or at HOME. The active squares on the *Impeachment* side are the same as in *Watergate*, but also include IMPEACHMENT, COURT TRIAL and PERJURY CHARGES/GO TO JAIL. The layout on the second side is slightly different. The box cover has the rules printed on the inside and, on the outside, boasts "Twice the fun...half the price!" and "Two games for the price of one!"

Cecil Brinley still lives in Moorhead and is keeping the few games he has left.

## ALL AROUND THE TOWNS
With a name like *Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead*, you don't know what to expect until you see the game board. Actually, the game board is paper laminated in

## Board Games (Continued from Page 5)

clear plastic and flexible enough to roll up. The layout on the board is taken directly from the game of *Monopoly*. Instead of street names along the sides there are businesses from the three towns. Quality Meats and Seafood in West Fargo has the lowest purchase price at $1400 and de Lendrecie's/West Acres the highest at $6800. From two to six players buy property and collect rent from the other players. The play proceeds much like *Monopoly*. After rolling two dice, each player moves plastic game pieces shaped like a witch's hat with a knob on the top.

There are two kinds of cards in this game. The first is the "deed" card giving the listing basic rent, the mortgage price and the cost of one and two branch offices. Branch offices are represented by bright red, flattish chunks of plastic. Doubles cards are used only after a player rolls doubles. These are the "take" or "pay" cards.

Each player gets $5000 for passing START! The banker takes care of play money printed in amounts of $50 to $5000 dollars. Instructions are on a separate sheet of paper which also contains more advertising. Thirty-six businesses are represented. The 1983 copyright is held by Milco, Arnold Miller, La Crescent, Minnesota.

No game box was included when it was donated so we don't know what it looked like if there was one.

### IN PURSUIT OF TRIVIA

Patterned after the trivia games popular some years ago, *Fargo/Moorhead Trivia* has a 1984 copyright by Butler Games, Rochester, Minnesota. The game board has a path down which two to four players advance after the roll of two dice. Players each have three game pieces identical to those found in the previous game. Player A asks Player B one of the

questions found on one of the many game cards. The player can only advance after a correct answer. The first player to get all three men to the center of the board wins.
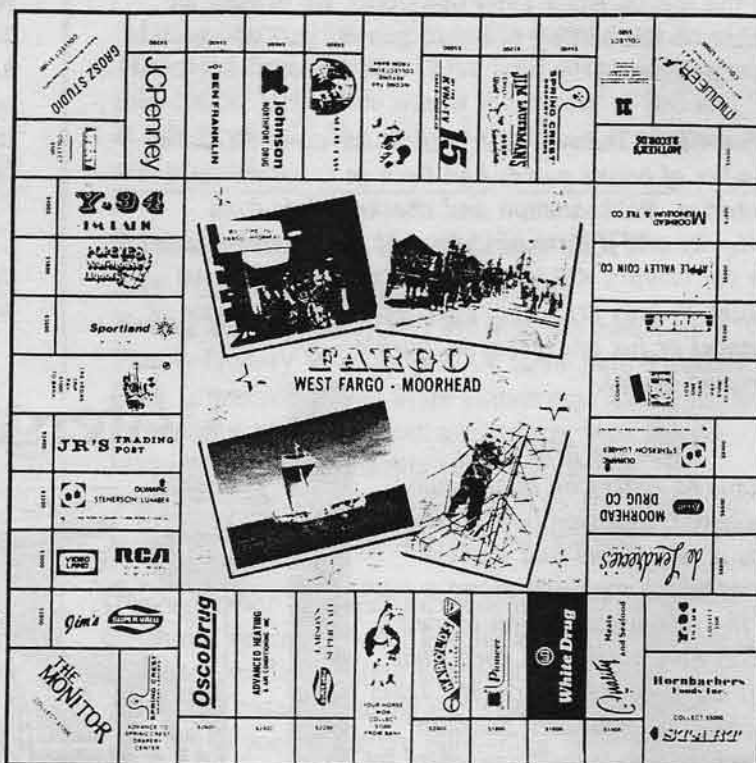


Game board for *Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead* and two doubles cards (below). This game is *Monopoly* on a local level.

The game board's path is made up of business advertising including Clay County Historical Society. Instructions are printed on one sheet of paper. The box invites you to play by asking "So you think you know Fargo/ Moorhead?" Butler Games couldn't be reached for comments.

Curator Burkhardt remembers hearing Doris Eastman



formerly with the *Forum*, and CCHS Director John Schermeister talking about the trivia questions for the Moorhead side. It isn't known how much CCHS was involved with research for the game. If you have information on the history of the last two games, would you drop us a line or call 299-5520 and ask for Pam.

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**FARGO/MOORHEAD TRIVIA**

1. What was the Belle of Moorhead? ★ A flour made in Moorhead
2. An 1883 pamphlet listed low water depth of the Red River at Moorhead as: ★ 5 to 6 feet deep
3. In 1883 there were how many brick yards in Moorhead? ★ Five
4. Did Moorhead have a brewery in the 1880's? ★ Yes, John Erickson's lager beer
5. What subjects did Lucy Sheffield teach in Moorhead schools: A. history, B. mathematics, C. penmanship, D. art ★ C & D
6. Which of the following were Clay County sheriffs? A. Parker Erickson, B. Adolph Olson, C. John Blanchard, D. C. G. Dosland, E. Edgar Sharp ★ A., B. & C.
7. Which of these are or were funeral homes? A. Cadieux, B. Wright, C. Korsmo, D. Houglum and Olson, E. Parkview ★ A,B,C,D,E
8. What drycleaning establishment has been in the same building for at least 40 years? ★ Hollands on 4th St. S.
9. What was the name of the theater on Center Avenue? A. Moorhead Theater, B. The Lark, C. The Bijou, D. Center Ave. Theater ★ A

This card from the 1984 *Fargo/Moorhead Trivia* game asks questions about Moorhead.

# Artifact recovery group to display treasures at Clay County Museum

Who doesn't enjoy a treasure hunt? or better yet, a buried treasure hunt. If you don't have the time or energy to go out digging for treasure yourself, plan to take in the new display opening at the Clay County Museum on July 1.

Minnkota Artifact Recovery Group (MARG) is a metal detecting club based in the Fargo/Moorhead area. Metal detectors make it possible to locate buried artifacts such as coins, jewelry, farm and home relics, and military items. According to Jeff Kehl, the club's president, new micro-chip technology can now identify the metal content, size and depth of an object before the retriever even considers bending down. New waterproof detectors make it possible to look for lost coins and jewelry in local lakes and beaches. At least four club members have been able to locate and return lost valuables to happy owners.

MARG'S Clay County display will include historic objects such as: military buttons, buckles and musket balls, gold and silver rings and necklaces, copper spear points and tools, shackles, old dog tags and coins, watch fobs, trade tokens and buttons and farm and household relics.

Club members spend time wandering around with funny little gizmos, that go beep, looking for hidden treasure. They also spend many hours at local libraries, book stores and historical archives researching ghost towns, trailways, schools, picnic groves, parks, churches and homes from by-gone years through history books, old maps, photographs and newspapers. Research plays a key role in the success of a treasure hunt.



This copper spear point was found in Buffalo, ND. It dates back 400-500 years and is on loan from Buffalo Cnty Historical Society.

Many times members search for a lost town that may have vanished years ago. Deserted community sites provide fertile ground for finding treasures. There are many reasons for a communities' population decline. Sometimes the reasons are economic and other times it might be flood or tornado. The now non-existent town of Bowesmont, ND, succumbed

to the Red River's swiftness in 1997. Of the 30-40 homes that once stood near the railroad at Bowesmont, only one remains today.

The club is represented by members from a large geographic area including Minot, Niagara, Cavalier, Chaffee, Cooperstown, Jamestown, Grand Forks and Fargo in North Dakota and Hawley in Minnesota.



Treasure hunter Dennis Halvorson is shown here with a set of shackles (ca 1850-1870) found in a farm field near Cooperstown, ND.

The club sponsors a competition among its members every month. Members accumulate points based on rarity, popularity, value and uniqueness of their finds. Winners at the end of the year are awarded gold and silver coins.

Stop by the Clay County Museum to browse over treasured relics that have been unearthed. Information regarding the club will be available at the site or you can call Kehl at 218-483-4636.
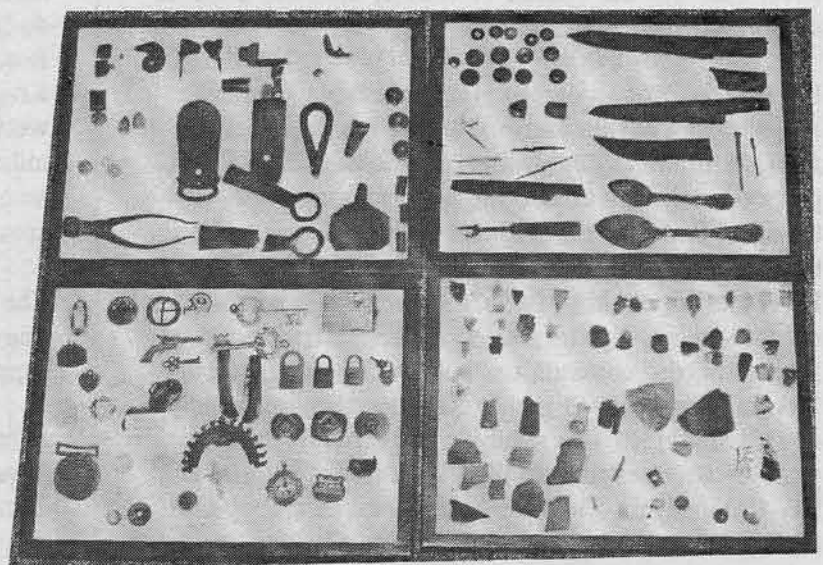


A 1914 dog tax tag from Rogers ND, religious medals, gold and silver rings, an old lock, gold/diamond brooch, and a shark's tooth pendant are among the array of artifacts found by Jeff Kehl.

# Red River Cart Trails

By Mark Peihl, Archivist

In our last newsletter we discussed the construction and development of Red River carts. In this issue we'll look at where the carts ran, specifically, the trails through Clay County. Much of the information in this article comes from the superb *Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlment, 1820-1870* by Rhoda and Carolyn Gilman and Deborah Stultz (Minnesota Historical Society, 1979). I strongly recommend this detailed work to anyone interested in the carts, trails or the early history of the Valley. It is available in local libraries and bookstores.

As mentioned last time, the mixed-blood Metis people of the Red River Settlements (around today's Winnipeg) invented the all-wood, two-wheeled carts to haul the products of their semi-annual buffalo hunts on the North Dakota prairies. These rugged, easy to repair, one-horse vehicles could carry 1000 pounds over varied terrain.

Through the first half of the 1800s they also carried furs and trade goods between the two major population centers in the upper mid-west: St. Paul on the Mississippi River and the Red River Settlements. For most of the 19th century the Red River Valley was not a destination but a place to pass through. And the Red River cart was the vehicle of choice, the semi-truck of the 1800s.

In 1670 the British owned Hudson's Bay Company received in a royal charter granting it a monopoly on all trade in the region drained by Hudson Bay. This private business was also the governing authority for the area. Red River Settlement residents soon realized that St. Paul merchants, with access to the Mississippi River traffic, could provide a wider variety of goods at cheaper prices. By the 1820s, American traders set up shop in border communities such as Pembina, North Dakota. Carts moved goods north to the border and carried smuggled furs south across the line. After years of attempts to stop the illegal trade, Hudson's Bay Company in 1849 threw in the towel and opened the border.

By that time a regular network of trails through the Valley had been established.

But the first carts to roll south carried, not furs, but refugees. Beginning in 1812, Scottish nobleman, philanthropist and major stockholder in the Hudson's Bay Company, Thomas Douglas, Lord Earl of Selkirk, settled groups of Scottish and Swiss colonists on HBC land near the Company's headquarters at the Red River Settlements. Woefully ill prepared for life in this harsh land, nearly all the Swiss and most of the Scots soon left for warmer climes around St. Paul and Galena, Illinois. With their belongings piled in Red River carts, Metis guides led them along a trail hugging the North Dakota bank of the Red River to south of present day Breckenridge. There they crossed the Bois de Sioux River into Minnesota and continued south to Lake Traverse. This route required crossing various tributaries of the Red near their mouths but the Red's gallery forest provided a ready supply of firewood and physical and psychological shelter. At Traverse they crossed the continental divide between the waters of Hudson Bay and the Minnesota River. They floated in wooden canoes down the Minnesota to St. Paul and the Mississippi.

The earliest goods from St. Paul came up stream on the Minnesota in boats all or part of the way to Lake Traverse where they met carts from the north. The carts followed closely the Minnesota side of the Bois de Sioux and Red north to a variety of fords: south of Breckenridge, near Kent, Minnesota or northwest of Kragnes. From the fords, trails led northwest to the western beaches of glacial Lake Agassiz, some twenty miles west of the Red. This route was higher and drier than the river route and the tributaries could be crossed further upstream where they were narrower.

The Minnesota River route was the main trail until the mid-1840s when two shorter paths further north supplanted it.

After 1837, white settlement crept up the Mississippi River from St. Paul. A fine road developed on the eastern bank as far as St. Cloud. Carters began using this route as a shortcut to the fords on the Red. Crossing the Mississippi at St. Cloud, they turned west up the Sauk River Valley through Stearns County then northwest across Pope, Douglas and Grant Counties. The new trail then cut through extreme southwestern

# In Clay County

THE WOODS TRAIL    61

R48W   R47W   R46W   R45W   R44W   R43W   R42W   R41W   R40W

T144N
T143N
T142N
T141N
T140N
T139N
T138N
T137N

Wild Rice River
Thunder
Hills
Fossum
MAHNOMEN
Waubun
NORMAN
Flom
South Branch Wild Rice River
Fur Post
Georgetown
Felton
Ulen
Ogema
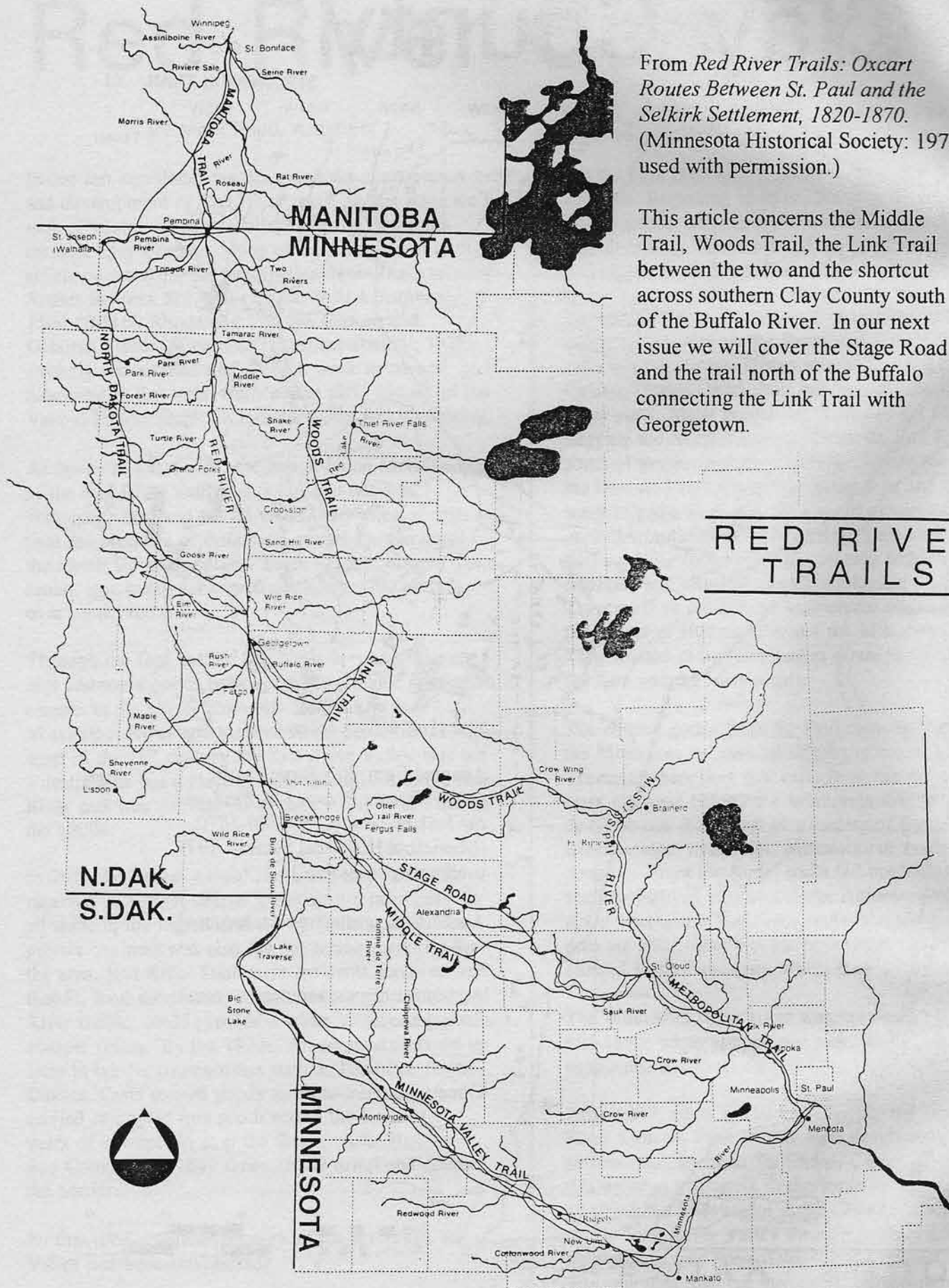Indian Agency
White Earth
Shayenne City
Lafayette
BECKER
Kragnes
Averill
Callaway
Richwood
CLAY
Westbury
Rock Lake
Moorhead
Glyndon
Hawley
Lake Park
Audubon
Floyd Lake
Eagle's Nest Lake
Woods-Middle Link
Detroit Lakes
Downer
Cormorant Lake
Detroit Lake
Rustad
Rollag
Shoreham
Baker
Cormorant
Frazee
Comstock
Barnesville
Red River
South Branch

Adapted from: *Red River Trails:
Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and
the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870.*
(Minnesota Historical Society: 1979,
used with permission.)

Authors' suggested routes, assumed:

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Authors' suggested routes,
documented:

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Our suggested route:

◆◆◆◆

Wolverton
Lawndale
Rothsay
Fort Abercrombie
McCauleyville
Kent
Graham's Point
WILKIN
Brushvale
French
Foxhome
Middle Trail
Breckenridge
Dayton
Otter Tail River
Old Crossing

WOODS TRAIL

Miles    0    5    10    15
Kilometers  0   5   10   15   20   25

From *Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870.* (Minnesota Historical Society: 1979, used with permission.)

This article concerns the Middle Trail, Woods Trail, the Link Trail between the two and the shortcut across southern Clay County south of the Buffalo River. In our next issue we will cover the Stage Road and the trail north of the Buffalo connecting the Link Trail with Georgetown.

RED RIVER
TRAILS

# Red River Carts (Continued from Page 9)

Otter Tail County and across Wilkin south of the Otter Tail River to the Bois de Sioux ford five miles south of Breckenridge. (This route is called the Middle Trail by the authors of *Red River Trails*.) It was notorious for sloughs and swamps along its length but it was much shorter than the Minnesota Valley Trail and soon became the major route to the Red River.

In 1844, however, mounting tensions between the Dakota and Metis erupted in violence on the North Dakota plains. The Metis buffalo hunts had been decimating the herds the Dakota relied on for their sustenance. That summer a misunderstanding led to the death of two young Dakota and all out war followed.

Earlier that year, Peter Garrioch, a Scottish Metis, had led a cart train to St. Paul. It was no longer safe for him to return via the North Dakota route. Desperate to reach home before winter, he cut a new trail which kept well to the east of the Dakota. He extended the Mississippi River road north from St. Cloud to the mouth of the Crow Wing River then cut west up the Crow Wing and Leaf Rivers to Otter Tail Lake. From there he headed north to present day Perham and followed the route of US Highway 10 through Frazee, around the eastern and northern shores of Detroit Lake on to Oak Lake, four miles west of Audubon. From there the trail led north past Callaway, Mahnomen, Fertile and, eventually, Pembina. The new route was commonly called the Woods Trail, even though only the section between Detroit Lakes and the mouth of the Crow Wing actually passed through timber.

Garrioch was a man in a hurry. His trail crossed frozen swamps and twisted wildly, avoiding wooded areas he'd have to cut through. The route later needed much work. Stumps snapped axles and its eastern end was very boggy. But it was safe and quickly became popular.

Now we come to two of the four trails that passed through Clay County. As the Middle and Woods Trails became ascendant, carters devised a Link Trail to connect them. Coming from the north, they left the Woods Trail north of Waubun heading south and west passing a few miles west of Lake Park. The trail entered Clay County a mile north of Highway 10 angling southwest across Eglon township then south to the county line. It cut through northeast Wilkin County and western Otter Tail County meeting the Middle Trail twelve miles south of Fergus Falls.

With this Link freighters could avoid both the Dakota

to the west and the worst stretches of the Wood Trail southeast of Detroit Lakes. According to *Red River Trails*, military surveyors in the mid 1850s called it "the Main Road leading to the Red River of the North." Another military expedition in 1856 cut a short connecting trail between the Link and Woods Trails which followed Highway 10 from the Clay/Becker County line to the Woods Trail at Oak Lake.

Later, as difficulties between the Metis and Dakota eased, another trail split off from the Link Trail in southeastern Clay County headed northwest through Glyndon to the ford northwest of Kragnes. Carters used this shortcut to avoid the marshy "Breckenridge Flats" east of that city.

(We'll discuss the other two Clay County trails in our next issue. One closely followed the eastern bank of the Red from the Wilkin County line to Georgetown. The other ran along the north side of the Buffalo River connecting the Woods Trail with Georgetown.)

The authors of Red River Trails are to be commended for the fascinating and detailed maps that accompany the book. They used a wide variety of resources to locate the trails' routes. These included the General Land Office's original surveyors' plats and notes filed after the state was first measured. Township lines in Clay County were laid out in the late 1850s; the section and quarter section lines 10 or 12 years later. The surveyors recorded unusual features such as roads as they measured the land. Unfortunately, surveyors in Clay County were not as diligent here as in other counties. The authors had to make educated guesses as to the exact locations of many of the Clay County trails. They also didn't have time to thoroughly explore locally available materials. In their introduction they write, "it is our hope that county and local historians will pick up the trails where we by necessity have left off and will trace them in greater detail over the actual ground that they traversed." We intend here to take a couple steps in that direction.

First the Link Trail itself. The authors found compelling evidence of its route in northeastern and southwestern Eglon Township and its continuation south of the Wilkin County line. It apparently left Clay County through the southeast quarter of section 35 Humboldt Township. Quite reasonably the authors assumed the trail continued south-southwest by-passing the huge slough east of Barnesville known as "Black Swamp." But I believe the trail threw the

# Red River Cart (Continued from Page 11)

authors both a literal and figurative curve when it left Eglon Township and entered Parke Township. Today northeast of Rollag on the grounds of the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion is a fenced off section of trail which has been identified as "an ox cart trail." I think this is a remnant of the Link Trail. Local historian, Rollag native and WMSTR pioneer William A. Nelson described the trail in his 1983 book *Stories and Poems of the Hills and Homes of Rollag*. Nelson's ancestors were among the first settlers in the Rollag area. They arrived in the very early 1870s. Presumably they knew something about the trail and its past. Nelson said the trail "came close to where Rollag now is and then passed through Thresher Hill." Beyond the trail remnant it ran northeast along the path of the Steam Threshers' "Train to Nowhere" following the eastern shore of Gunderson Pond. According to Nelson, the trail crossed a boggy area between the pond and a smaller pond to the east over a corduroy road, "a series of logs laid close together crosswise for about two hundred feet to form a firm roadbed across that marshy ground." Nelson remembered crossing the logs on his way to school when he was a kid between 1910 and 1918. From there the trail ran north then west on the high ground around the Parke Township hall and continued north just east of the present Highway 32. Staying on high ground it crossed to the west side of 32 around section 8, Parke Township.

Settlers later used the trail as a wagon road. In her 1966 book *Eglon Memories*, Emma Erickson Elton said the trail entered Eglon Township through section 32, just where the authors place it.

So why did the trail veer east toward Thresher Hill as it entered Parke Township instead of continuing southwest as the *Red River Trails* authors speculated? To avoid a swampy area around the upper reaches of Hay Creek northwest of Rollag. Unlike our arrow-straight township and county roads today, the trails snaked around wet areas, woods, hills and lakes taking advantage of the lay of the land. We tend to forget how land forms influence where things are. To get a real sense of a trail's path one has to visit the area in person and imagine what it must have been like 140 years ago.

I recently did just that. I wondered where the Link Trail went south from Rollag. Nelson doesn't discuss this in his book. Tansem Township, south of Rollag, is dominated by two natural features: the rugged hills (called the Leaf Mountains by the carters) which

extend east and south to Pelican Rapids and beyond and the "Black Swamp" which abuts the western edge of the hills. The Trail to the north follows the very western edge of the Leaf Mountains taking advantage of the high ground. But the whole point of the Trail was to avoid the wooded hills as much as possible. I don't believe the trails went south through some of the toughest hills in the county. At Rollag the Trail took to the prairie. One can imagine a route basically west and southwest from Grong Lutheran Church, winding around low spots eventually reaching Highway 31 around Gran Lutheran Church and following the high ground south between "Black Swamp" to the east and the low, wet areas to the west. It crossed Whiskey Creek in section 25 Humboldt Township and continued southwest. The surveyors in Wilkin and Otter Tail Counties were much more diligent in recording trails than those in Clay County. The Link Trail is clearly indicated leaving Clay County through section 35 Humboldt Township as would be expected. And they recorded no other trails entering Wilkin or Otter Tail Counties from the north.

The other trail connecting the Link Trail with the Red River ford northwest of Kragnes came later in the 1850s. As tensions between the Metis and Dakota subsided, carters returned to the North Dakota trails. Cart trains could follow the Middle Trail to the Breckenridge area fords. But that took them through the treacherous "Breckenridge Flats." They could avoid that area by taking the Link Trail and cutting across Clay County to the Kragnes area ford. The *Red River Trails* authors have found evidence of the trail's location between the river and present day Glyndon. From there they assumed it followed southeast to connect with the Link Trail. This would track through what is now the Nature Conservancy's Bluestem Prairie, south of the Buffalo River State Park. This environmental jewel sits on a sandy delta formed where the Buffalo River entered glacial Lake Agassiz thousands of years ago. It's one of the last remaining vestiges of the Tall Grass Prairie which once covered the Red River Valley. A cart trail might still be seen in this unplowed area. But the delta made for tough going in a horse drawn vehicle. In 1893, Glyndon *Red River Valley News* editor Luther Osborn loaded his family in a wagon and headed along this possible route to pick wild raspberries in the hills of Parke township. Osborn published an account of the expedition titled "Camping in Parkesylvania: How a Whole Family Went Raspberrying, a Continuing Story." [The tale turned into a major shaggy dog story taking over three years to tell! Someday we'll reedit and print this yarn.]

## Red River Carts (Continued from Page 12)

Osborn wrote that in section 14 Riverton Township, "we found our sand-heap so called to be about a section of land west and east...As we meandered toward what appeared to be the summit of the incline, [we let] the lines lop across the dashboard and [told] the ponies to take their time...The horses, left to themselves and the sand, subsided to a walk by unanimous consent. On the upward incline their action became not unlike that of a treadmill; the pose of ear and pumping motion of the neck and head accentuated the impression. A little of that thing goes a good way with a driving party..."

In 1988 we received a fascinating letter from Fargoan Gary L. Stuhr. Mr. Stuhr owns land in the northeast quarter of section 10, Elkton Township. In his letter he makes a compelling case for a cart trail through his property. A hard ridge runs through the land from northwest to southeast. The ground is so packed he can't get trees to grow on it. Mrs. Emma Aldrich, a neighbor, told Mr. Stuhr's mother that it was a trail used by ox-carts from Pembina. Mrs. Aldrich's husband was one of the earliest settlers in Elkton Township and probably knew something of the trail. The ridge crosses Hay Creek on the southern edge of section 11 to the southeast. Here Mr. Stuhr has found evidence of campfires. The spot would be a natural stopping spot with wood and water available in the ravine through which the creek flows. Further on the trail would connect with the Link Trail somewhere in central Humboldt Township.

The ridge is Norcross Beach, one of the Lake Agassiz beaches. It doesn't take much imagination to spot a cart route through this area. *Red River Trails* author Rhoda Gilman agrees. In a letter to Mr. Stuhr (copy in our files) she wrote, "History owes you a debt!...[We] had no firm evidence of just where the trail ran between the southern border of Clay County and Glyndon... Your find suggests that our line was drawn too far east and north. I see little reason to doubt that the trail really ran through Elkton Township and that there was a camping spot where it crossed Hay Creek... [If] we're ever able to do a revised edition of the book, we'll correct the map."

If anyone has other information about cart trail through the county, please contact me at the museum.

We'd love to hear about it!

## Does your employer have a matching funds program?

More and more employers are providing "Matching Funds" for their full and part time employees' contributions to eligible organizations. Clay County Historical Society (CCHS) is a 501 C3 non-profit organization with a focus on education and as such is usually eligible for these funds.

Foundations that CCHS has received matching funds from through their employees in the past, or who have matching funds pending include: The Boeing Gift Matching Program, TRW Foundation Matching Gifts Program and US WEST Foundation Matching Gift Program. Addresses to obtain information are: Boeing Company, Gift Matching Office, PO Box 3723, Princeton NJ 08543; TRW Foundation Matching Gifts Program, PO Box 7907, Princeton NJ 08543-7907; and the US WEST Foundation, Matching Gift Program, 7800 East Orchard Road, Suite 300, PO Box 6508, Englewood CO 80155-6508.

If you are currently working for, or are retired from, any of these businesses, inquire about their Matching Funds Program. Many other companies and businesses also provide matching funds for their employees' and retirees' contributions to non-profit organizations. Ask at work if your company has such a program.

## Membership drive benefits from Matching Funds

Our current membership drive is receiving matching funds from Lutheran Brotherhood Branch 8430 for all new individual and/or family memberships from now through August 1, up to $1,000.

Ask a friend to join

## Go figure!!! -
Prior to Sept. 22, 1922, an alien woman could become a citizen of the U.S. by marriage to a citizen. After that date an alien woman could not become a citizen merely by marrying a citizen.

If she married an alien before Sept. 22, 1922, and that alien was naturalized after that date, she would then become a citizen.

Prior to Sept. 22, 1922, a woman who was a citizen but who married an alien lost her citizenship. After that date, she didn't.

# *Antiques Appraisal Show*

*With Nationally Renown Appraiser*
*Harry Rinker of "Whatcha Got?"*

## Sunday, June 18

## 12:30 - 1:30 - Lecture/Program
## . 1:30 - 6:30 Appraisals

### at the
### Hjemkomst Center

Tickets available only at the Clay County Museum
202 1st Ave N, Moorhead

Admission/Appraisal  **$15.00**

General Admission  **$10.00**

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED....

*Presented by Clay County Historical Society*
*Call 299-5520 for more information!*

## Telephone Factoids

**1900** - First coin telephone installed
**1951** - First long distance phone call without directory assistance.
**1968** - First 911 system introduced in the U.S.
**1971** - First commercially viable answering machine.
**1985** - Cellular car phones introduced.
**1993** - The White House goes on-line.

\* The busiest organization in the world is the Pentagon, which has 34,500 telephone lines and get 1 million calls per day. It received over 1.5 million telephone calls on the 50th anniversary of D-Day.
\* Fiber Optic cable is considered to be the perfect transmitter for telecommunications. It is made of hair thin strands of glass and is so pure that you could see through a window of it 70 miles thick. It is virtually unaffected by weather and its capacity is nearly 250,000 times as much as a standard copper wire.

Collectively, as of December 1999, telephone companies have installed nearly 20,000 miles of fiber optic cable in Minnesota.
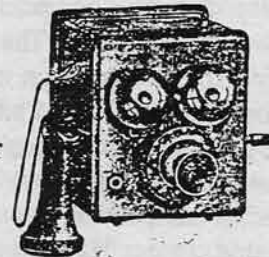
# CCHS Memberships - New and Renewals

### March/April 2000
CCHS extends a very special thank you to the following individuals who have renewed their membership for another year.

#### RENEWALS
Mrs. Robert J. Roberts, Moorhead
Bruce Thorson, Waite Park MN
State Bank of Moorhead, Moorhead
Florene Culp, Georgetown
Olaf & Rhoda Wicker, Hawley
Howard & Marcell Wergeland, Detroit Lakes
Joel Belgum, Moorhead
Kenneth & Janet Fox, Hawley
Sharon Hoverson, Fargo
Tom & Beth Iverson, Moorhead
Keith A. Larson, Hawley
Joanne C. Ogren, Barnesville
Sherwood E. Peterson Jr., Rochester
Pat & Ann Zavoral, Fargo
Elmo Erickson, Moorhead
Keith & Lorraine Langseth, Glyndon
Shirley Strand, Hawley
Harold & Arlys Buland, Moorhead
Elsie Pitsenbarger, Fargo
Hawley Public Schools, Hawley
Corla Paulson, Moorhead

O.T. (Bud) Swanson, Moorhead
Jean Doty, Hawley
Robert & Dorothy Belsly, Moorhead
Helen D. Benson, Moorhead
Carl & June Bailey, Moorhead
Olive Andvik, Moorhead
Dorothy Carey, Moorhead
Leslie & Katherine Rogne, Kindred ND
Gary & Nancy Ronsberg, Hawley
Laurren Schwarz, Fargo
Merlyn & Shirlee Valan, Moorhead
Marie & Art Wenner, Moorhead
Donald Pingree, Georgetown
Earl Ingebretsen, Felton
Joyce & Gustav Haug, Hawley
Sandra McEvers, Moorhead
Stenerson Lumber, Moorhead
Dick & Kathy Zaylskie, Fargo
Donna McMaster, Moorhead
Charlotte Onstine, Moorhead
Paula (Wilson) Johnson, Moorhead
Margaret & Richard Reed, Moorhead
Richard Bollmann, Sheboygan WI
Rudolph Johnson, Moorhead
Sister Mary Ann Fay, Crookston
Gunhus, Grinnell, Klinger,
 Swenson & Guy Ltd, Moorhead
Delmar & Rhoda Hansen, Moorhead
Juliet & Harold Hanson, Fargo

Aubrey & Catherine Thomas, Moorhead
Philip & June Felde, Moorhead
Gene & Diane Pickett, Moorhead
T.W. Richards, Moorhead
Mel Ristvedt, Hawley
Donna Chalimonczyk, Moorhead
Aggie & Loren Helmeke, Georgetown
Marlowe & Joan Parries, Moorhead
Marvin & Ardis Witte, Moorhead
Mrs. Stella Carlson, Moorhead
Robert Gerke, Moorhead
Earl Hammerud, Moorhead
Mrs. Joy Johnson, Moorhead
Sylvia Larson, Moorhead
Bette Haring, Lake Park
Ethel R. Medalen, Mankato
Burton & Catherine Grover, Bellingham WA
Gene & Betty Christensen, Glyndon

CCHS welcomes the following new members:
#### NEW MEMBERS
Hope Peterson, Moorhead
Bob Backman, Fargo
Bev & Lloyd Paulson, Moorhead (BIOS)
Jim Bergquist & Jane Eastes, Battle Lake
Gloria Weisgram, Moorhead
Richard & Mildred Skugrud, Moorhead

# CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM
## *Stitches in Time*

Clay County's Handmade Textiles

The "Stitches" exhibit explores the role of textiles in the social history of Clay County

## *Rug Making Exhibit*
### May 5 - June 16
Demos: May 13, June 10
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

### Artifact Recovery Display
Opening July 1 (See Page 7)

Museum Hours: 10-5 Mon.-Sat.,
10-9Thurs., 12-5 Sun.

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## Clay County Historical Society
### Business, Individual and Organization Support (BIOS) Members

Thank you to these special BIOS Members of Clay County Historical Society

**PATRON ($200 - $499)**
Grosz Studio, Moorhead

**SUSTAINING MEMBERS ($100 to $199)**
Bev & Lloyd Paulson, Moorhead
City of Hawley, Hawley
Dilworth/Glyndon/Felton Schools
First National Bank, Hawley
F-M Printing, Moorhead
Hawley Public Schools, Hawley
Korsmo Funeral Service, Moorhead
Moorhead Kiwanis, Moorhead
Rapat Corporation, Hawley
Sellin Brothers, Hawley
The Forum, Fargo
Vikingland Kiwanis, Moorhead

**SUPPORTING MEMBER ($50 to $99)**
Bentley & Bentley, DDS, Hawley
Cass-Clay Creamery, Inc., Fargo
City of Barnesville, Barnesville
Dilworth Wal-Mart, Dilworth

Eventide, Moorhead
Fevig Oil Company Inc., Felton
McLarnan, Hannaher, Vaa
  and Skatvold Attorneys, Moorhead
Gunhus, Grinnell, Klinger, Swenson and
  Guy, Ltd, Moorhead
Hannaher's Inc., Moorhead
Hornbachers Foods, Moorhead
Mid-Day Central Lions, Moorhead
Moorhead Area Retired
  Education Association
Norwest Bank MN, West N.A., Moorhead
National Sojourners Inc., Moorhead
Petermann Seed Farm, Hawley
State Bank of Hawley, Hawley
State Bank of Moorhead, Moorhead
Stenerson Lumber, Moorhead
United Electric Serv. & Supply, Inc, Fargo
Veteran's of Foreign Wars, Moorhead
Wahl Drug Store/Gift Shop, Hawley
Ward Muscatell Auto, Moorhead
Wright Funeral Home, Moorhead

# CCHS BIOS Memberships

☐ $ 50 to $99      Supporting Member
☐ $ 100 to $199    Sustaining Member ·
☐ $ 200 to $499    Patron
☐ $ 500 and up     Major Exhibit Sponsor

As a CCHS BIOS (Business, Individual, Organization Support) Member you will receive all benefits of an individual and family memberships plus a certificate ready to frame and display, extra complimentary passes to visit the Viking Ship, the Stave church, traveling exhibits in the building, and a listing in all CCHS bi-monthly Newsletters. To become a CCHS BIOS Member please return this form or a facsimile to CCHS, Box 501, Moorhead, MN 56561-0501 or call 299-5520.

Business: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone #: _____

# CCHS Membership Application

I would like to become a member of Clay County Historical Society.

☐ INDIVIDUAL $20.00   ☐ FAMILY $35.00   ☐ Donation

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

* Support preservation of our heritage
* Bi-monthly newsletter
* Discount on Acid-Free Materials
* FREE Admission to Clay County
  Museum & Archives and two
  complimentary passes to the Stave Church, Viking Ship and Traveling Exhibits.

* Discount on Photo Reproduction
* Voting Privileges
* Invitation to all CCHS Social Events
* Access to all CCHS Tours

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____