

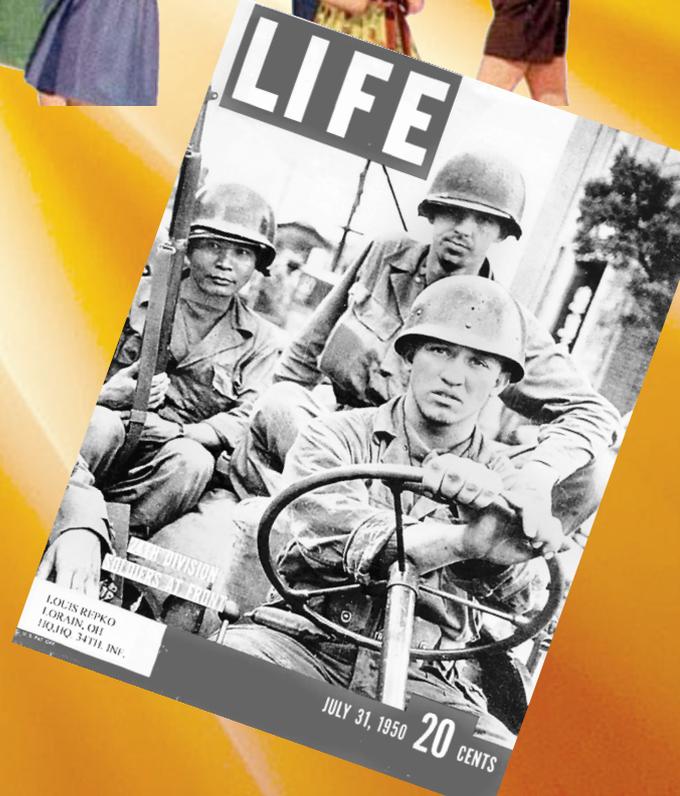
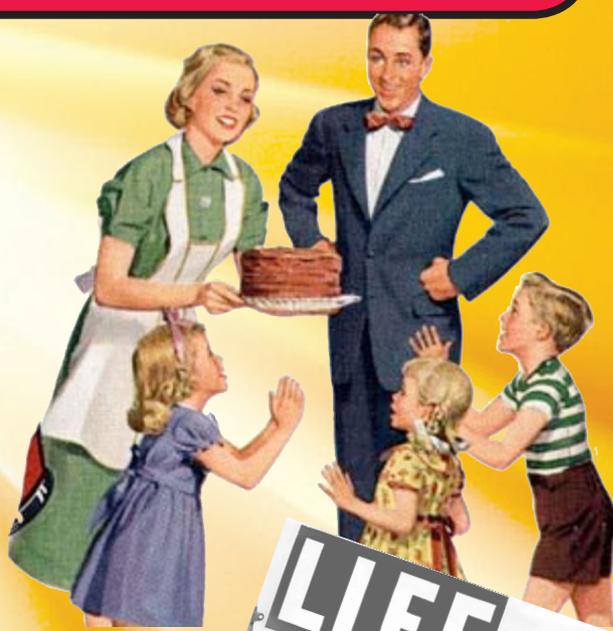
# The BOOM



## Clay County - 1945-1960

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Growth In Clay County  
During The World  
War II Baby Boom



Volume 4 Issue 3 Historical And Cultural  
Society Of Clay County Newsletter  
Fall 2012 ISSN #2153-5876



# Thortvedt Family Honored With Award

By: Jacob Underlee

This year's Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County Heritage Award is being awarded to the Thortvedt family, a group of early Red River Valley settlers, for their dedication to recording early pioneer experiences over the course of many years.

The Thortvedt family will be honored at the annual HCSCC gala, to be held Friday, October 26, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Hjemkomst Center.

Previous recipients of the Heritage Award include entertainer Bobby Vee, Clay County's first township of Georgetown, MN, historian, professor and author Hiram Drache, and former college president Roland Dille.

The Thortvedt family first immigrated to the United States from Telemark County in Norway in 1861. Olav and Tone Thortvedt brought their one-year-old son, Levi, with them on

the ship Preciosa.

After landing in Canada they traveled south to settle first in Minnesota's Fillmore County, then in Houston County.

Levi, his new sister Signe, and his parents moved north towards the Red River Valley in the summer of 1870 as part of a caravan. A few months later they settled along the Buffalo River northwest of Glyndon.

"They were very early settlers," said Mark Peihl, Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County archivist. "The entire family had this mania for documentation and keeping track of things."

Because of their desire to record the events of their lives, the Thortvedt family left behind a detailed record of early Clay County history through journals, news clippings and art.

Levi, the Thortvedt's eldest son, paid close attention to the

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 44**



The Thortvedt family first arrived at the Buffalo River settlement near Glyndon in the 1870s. The family poses for a photo in 1908. Back row, left to right; Dora, Alpha, Eva, Ole, Stella, Goodwin and Adele. Front row; Olav, Orabel, Norman, Levi, Florence and Ingeborg.



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## Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# Agriculture In The Boom Years 1945-1959

**By: Dr. Hiram Drache** Agriculture is so taken for granted by the American public that I have often made the statement, prior to making a speech, that unless you are

a farmer the only people who should be interested in what is happening in the industry are those who eat. Many times I have commented that is why people do not buy books about agriculture---as long as the shelves are well stocked, who cares about farmers? I would like to think that people of Clay County and the Red River Valley area might feel differently.

My wife Ada and I have lived in this great area nearly 60 of our 64 years of married life and we have no intentions of moving. After we moved to our new home on a farm south of Baker I learned from Pat Griffin, whose late brother had owned our farm, that in the 1930s they had a crop every year and even sold hay to farmers in Dakota so they could keep their cattle alive.

My first recollection of the Red River Valley dates back to 1937. My dad was a trucker and we were moving a minister and his family from southern Minnesota to a new call at Devils Lake. The countryside was quite brown that year because of the drought that had started in 1932.

Dad said, "Wait until we get to the Valley, it will be greener." Sure enough, it was. The second and only other memory of that trip was on our return from

Devils Lake the next night when we counted 21 straw pile fires. Yes, threshing was over and the straw piles in the middle of the fields were just in the way for preparing for a crop in 1938 when the drought finally broke.

For those who live in the Valley I would like to remind you that in the article I wrote for The Forum for their bi-centennial issue in 1976 I wrote that historically the Valley has suffered more from too much water rather than drought. Over the years there has been substantial loss to flooding.

The purpose of this article is to present a chronological history of changing agriculture in the years 1945 through 1959. I have used the County Extension agent's annual reports blended with events that were happening in agriculture that changed farm operations.

Nationally, we lost farms each year and at the same time production increased. This trend was feared by many living in the rural areas. Those who saw the big picture understood the how and the why and at the same time farm state politicians pledged that they were going to do everything possible to maintain the status quo. In the process, American agriculture became

the envy of the world because it has provided our nation with food and fibers in abundance, which was looked upon as a plague.

On the other hand, it freed labor to produce goods that has given us a level of living beyond the dreams of all nations.

The greatest danger our agriculture faces today is from the critics who do not appreciate what a mere one plus percent of those on the land, backed by a massive agribusiness, bless us on a daily basis.

In the 1920 census farm numbers and horse numbers reached their peak. Clay County farm land was priced at \$82 an acre. Then, all agricultural prices took a sharp tumble and farm numbers and horse numbers started a decline that has continued to this day. By 1930 the price of Clay County land was \$41 an acre.

In 1933 Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace addressing county extension agents said, "Having conquered the fear of famine with the aid of science, having been brought into an age of abundance, we now have to learn how to live with abundance."

Record-keeping farmers  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 25**

## Dr. Drache Reports On Agriculture In Boom Years



Ada and Hiram Drache pose in Drache's home office, in front of a map showing the many locations he has spoken over his decades-long career. The Draches work together to proofread Hiram's books.

In its many forms, agriculture has been the lifeblood of the Red River Valley since the first settlers arrived. However, the methods and technology used to harvest the products of the land have changed drastically through time.

A prolific documentarian of local history is Dr. Hiram Drache, an author and former college professor who is currently the historian-in-residence at Concordia College

Drache has written several books on local history, beginning in 1964 with 'The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley.'

The success of the work led to speaking engagements across the world and over a dozen published books.

While his initial works focused on local agriculture,

he later widened his focus from the Red River Valley to the rest of the state and nation.

He has been historian-in-residence at Concordia College since 1991, where he taught history for 37 years.

Drache is also a World War II veteran, having served as a navigator during 30 B-17 bombing missions over Germany and Nazi-occupied countries in Europe for a total of 216 combat hours.

In 2010, Drache was honored with the Heritage Award from the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County.

For this publication, Dr. Drache has provided a summary of the many industrial and technological changes that shaped Clay County and the entire Red River Valley ag industry after World War II and into the early 1960s.



Leo Wright farm, Barnesville, Minnesota when toured in 1926.



## Scheffler Recalls Service During Korean War



Wilbert Scheffler holds the Army uniform he wore while serving overseas as an infantryman during the Korean War. Scheffler was drafted into the military in 1952 and sent to Korea.

**By: Jacob Underlee**

Wilbert Scheffler had spent his entire life on the family farm when he was drafted to serve overseas in the United States military during the Korean War.

Scheffler was born in September 1929. He, his two sisters and one brother grew up on a farm six miles outside of Barnesville, where he helped raise grains and cattle. Scheffler also gained experience in fixing small appliances that he would put to use later in the war.

He attended country school for six years, then relocated to Barnesville High School in seventh grade. Scheffler graduated in 1947 and continued to farm with his father until he was drafted.

"I went into the service in February of 1952," Scheffler explained. "They sent me into the infantry."

Scheffler completed his basic training at Camp Breckenridge, KY. After a two-week furlough back to Minnesota, he traveled to Fort Lewis, WA, and was then sent overseas to Japan.

According to Scheffler, a soldier's destination was determined by their position in the alphabet. Letters A to H were sent to Germany, while the latter half of the alphabet was sent to Japan.

"It was all because of how your name was spelled," he said. "But that's the way life went anyway. It was the luck of the draw."

It took two weeks to reach

Japan aboard a troop ship.

"It was packed," Scheffler said. "I think my bunk was about five decks down. There were a lot of guys that got sick, but it never bothered me at all."

The troops arrived in Japan in August and were given two weeks of instruction at Camp Drake.

"They were getting ready for atomic bombs," Scheffler said. "It was training on how to survive in chemical warfare."

After finishing the instruction, the troops were sent to Sasebo Naval Base to be assigned to a company.

Initially, Scheffler was to join Item Company.

"About that time the Chinese hit an outpost where Able Company was, so they quickly changed my assignment to that company," he said. "Which I think was fortunate, in time."

The decision brought Scheffler to the front lines of combat as an infantryman.

"Then we went up to the front, which was terrifying," he said, recalling icy temperatures and tanks rolling constantly along the road.

The troops arrived at Outpost Harry, which had previously been held by both Chinese and American forces but was now abandoned.

"I remember walking around the empty bunkers," Scheffler said. "When we got out there, there wasn't a living soul on that hill."

The troops stayed on the front lines until November 1952, and were then sent to Inchon, and later to the Koje-do POW camp.

"They loaded us onto Japanese freighters, which weren't fit for cattle," Scheffler said. "It was wintertime, and there was ice on everything. We guarded those prisoners for two months."

During his time at the camp, Scheffler ordered a radio so he could once again enjoy the pleasures of music. However, the item slipped his mind as he and his fellow soldiers were later sent back to Korea on a landing craft in early 1953.

"I don't know how far we traveled," Scheffler said. "Then they loaded us on to trucks, and we didn't have any winter clothes. It was the first and only time in two years I cried. It was so damn cold on that truck. Then we got back to the front."

Scheffler found himself along the 38th parallel in Korea, serving among a series of hills including Eerie Hill, Snook Hill and Pork Chop Hill.

"They were kind of stabilized then," Scheffler said. "I spent the rest of the year in Korea, in that area on different hills. Pork Chop was the worst one. Now I guess they're all in the de-militarized zone. You can't go see them."

The de-militarized zone is a 160-mile-long, 2.5-mile-wide stretch of land separating modern-day North Korea and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

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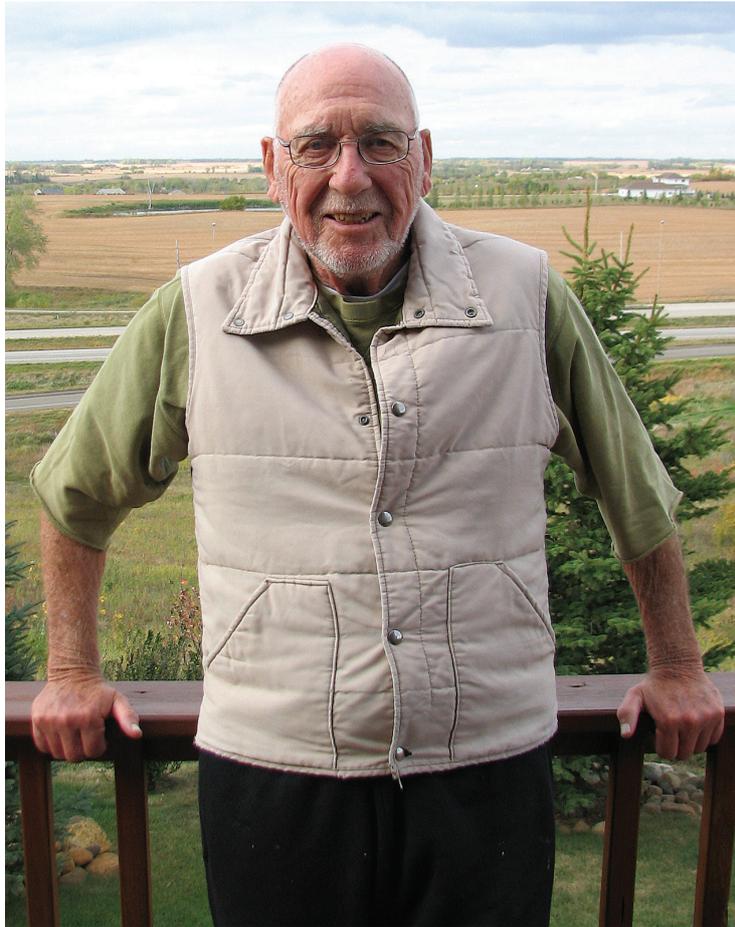
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## Hawley Man Supplied Power For Air Force



Marv Gerhardson used his experience as an Otter Tail Power Company lineman to maintain power generators for the Fifth Air Force overseas during the Korean War.

**By: Jacob Underlee**

Rural Hawley resident Marv Gerhardson was an Otter Tail Power Company lineman when he enlisted in the military to put his skills to use overseas during the Korean War.

"The reason I was in the Korean War is because I knew I was going to be drafted," he explained. "I was right on the edge."

Gerhardson decided to join the conflict so he could make a choice about what branch to enter. He knew that he wanted to learn something new during his military time, so he chose the Air

Force.

His work with the Otter Tail Power Company ended up affecting his placement in the military.

"I actually got into an electrical field when I was in the service," he said.

Gerhardson was born in 1929 and grew up on the family farm near Fergus Falls. After completing country school he was encouraged by his mother to attend high school in town, where he graduated in 1947.

He went to work at Otter Tail Power Company after school and gained experience that he

would put to use later on during the war. He enlisted in 1950 and completed basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas

He passed on his electrical skills for two years as an instructor at Francis Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, WY.

"I taught in the power generation school," he explained. "I was teaching students how to manage power and climb poles and string wire and all those kinds of things that are connected with power line distribution."

After a while, Gerhardson was ready for something new.

"I wanted to get out of there," he said. "I started applying for anything I could get. There was an opening for someone with my skills in the Far East. I would go any place, so I signed up and got assigned to a distribution center in California."

As he shipped out in 1953, Gerhardson was unsure of where he would end up among the many destinations in the Far East.

"They didn't tell us where we were going," he said. "We all thought we were going to Japan, but we were processed for Korea."

Gerhardson admits he was a bit apprehensive after learning of his destination.

"It was not good duty to be in Korea during war time, but we made the best of it," he said.

Gerhardson became a non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of power distribution for the Fifth Air Force, first radio squadron, which included soldiers from the United States and several other countries.

"I had some rank over there, and that helped," he said. "Our unit furnished power for all those forces the United Nations had brought in."

He was tasked with maintaining four large diesel generators that were responsible for the communications at the headquarters of the Fifth Air Force in Seoul. There were two diesel generators in the city, and two at an outpost in the country.

"All of the Fifth Air Force communications came through the base," he said. "That's what those big diesel generators did, was furnish power for that communications center."

Gerhardson was tasked with keeping the devices running to ensure any important messages would continue to be transmitted. Sometimes the fix was easy, and other times it required a bit more work.

"I had one of the big diesel generators, a GMC, start leaking oil," he said. "Finally we decided we had to overhaul the thing."

He often got assistance from skilled civilian mechanics that came to help when things got complex.

"He had the skills, and we worked together," Gerhardson said.

Gerhardson explained that he arrived in Korea at a time of deadlock, as the Chinese had just been driven back after an attempt to cut off American forces.

"It was pretty static after that," Gerhardson said, "We'd get shelled every once in a while. But it was really quiet where we were. They'd drop some bombs

on us just to create confusion or demonstrate they could still attack us. But it wasn't a serious effort."

However, one clear memory Gerhardson has from his time in Korea is the introduction of the F-86 fighter jet. He explained that originally the United States held the advantage in the air with the F-80 and F-84 fighter jets.

However, that changed when the enemy began using Russian MIG jets, which were superior and, according to Gerhardson, "Were chewing up the Americans."

He remembers MIG jets flying above the air force base regularly, as a way to show the aerial superiority of the Russian fighters. This continued for the first three months that Gerhardson spent overseas.

"There were always MIGs right above us," he said. "Then the F-86 came along. The F-86 was an incredible plane. It came along and you never saw another MIG! They just overpowered them. It got into serious aerial warfare then."

The best part of the new fighter jet's arrival, according to Gerhardson, was not only how it affected the pilots, but the people on the ground.

"It was demoralizing to see these MIG planes go up past our place and then do lightweight

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



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# The BOOM

## CLAY COUNTY 1945 TO 1960

"It was the best of times...It was the worst of times..." began the classic novel Oliver Twist. Although that book refers to the troubled times in Europe, it could well apply to Clay County and what it and the rest of the nation experienced in the years following World War II.

The years from 1945 to 1960 are typically called the "baby boom" years. That 15-year period would see all of the GIs that served in World War II coming home. They had seen enough of the world and the horrors of war. They wanted to begin a "normal" life, to settle down, get married and start a family.

And that is what they did. The years following the war saw an incredible increase in the population that strained the education system to its limits. New schools in the major cities of the county had to be built to accommodate all of the young kids headed to classrooms in the 1950s. That decade would see all of the rural one-room schools close and consolidate into elementary and high school facilities in the major cities of Moorhead, Barnesville, Hawley, Dilworth, Glyndon, Felton, Ulen and Hitterdal.

The years following World War II would bring another war. Within five years of the end of hostilities in Japan and Europe, the United States would find itself embroiled in another armed conflict in Korea. The South Pacific with its heat and Europe with its bitter cold winters would prove to be a training ground for even worse conditions that would be found by the GIs fighting in Korea.

Although the total number of troops involved was much less, the suffering and brutality of that Korean incident was as bad as anything seen in World War II. There are a few interviews with Korean War vets included in this edition.

That decade and a half would see changes that could not even have been imagined. There would be the miracle of television where every night could be movie night and you never had to leave your home. But before you could have a television set, you needed electricity and that too would come to all of rural Clay County following the war.

Along with electricity would come the luxury of running water that was plumbed directly into the house. This meant that the necessary trips to the freezing outhouse no longer had to be made on those sub-zero winter nights.

Things were changing dramatically on the agricultural front in those 15 years. During the "Great Depression", many of President FDR's programs would see unemployed people moved to small subsistence farms where the residents could barely eke out a living on the tiny farms. After World War II the ag industry began to expand in a big way. That left no room for the small farmer. Farms have been gaining in size ever since.

At the beginning of "The Boom" years there were teams of horses being used on nearly every farm in the county. By 1960 those horses would be gone, replaced by tractors that could do more in a day than horses could do in a week. To pay for the tractors, production had to increase and the expansion of farms that continues to this day, was underway. In 1945 a half section of land, 320 acres, was considered pretty big farming. By 1960 a farmer working a section of land was small and a thousand acres was looked at as quite large.

The increase in acreage per farm meant less and less need for people to work the land. One man and machinery could do what no amount of horses and manpower could even think of doing. Livestock began to be eliminated from area farms and crops became the main focus meaning even less hand labor was required.

With poor commodity prices and no jobs on the farm, the migration to the city began. In 1945 nearly 75% of the country's population was rural. By 1960 that number had dropped to less than 50% still on the farms. That number still continues to shrink every year even today.

The ag scene in that particular time is very interesting. Dr. Hiram Drache, in his own unique style, gives us a rundown on area agriculture in that 1945 to 1960 time frame in this publication. While all aspects of life were changing rapidly during those boom years, nothing changed faster than agriculture.

While those boom years would see radical change across the nation, only two U.S. Presidents would preside during that period of time. Franklin Delano Roosevelt would die in office only three months into his fourth term. He would be replaced in 1945 by Harry Truman who would serve out the remainder of FDR's term in office as well as a four-year term of his own. He was only three months shy of two full terms in office, 1945 through 1952.

General Dwight David Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander of European Troops during WWII would be elected president in 1952 and serve from 1953 through 1960. So it was only Harry, followed by Ike occupying the White House during those formative years. They would be very different presidencies with Truman overseeing the turbulent days at the end of World War II and also the Korean War. The warrior Eisenhower would preside over eight years of relative peace around the world. In this publication we take a look at the presidencies of these two men, Truman in particular.

It was a changing world during those boom years. Enjoy this newsletter of the Heritage and Historical Society of Clay County as you learn more about life in the area some 60 years ago. Relive some of the stories of your neighbors.

-- Eugene A. Prim, Publisher

# The BOOM

## CLAY COUNTY 1945 TO 1960



*Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...*

## The 1950s Saw Bad Weather And Depressed Prices For Area Farmers

**By: Dr. Hiram Drache**

A good indication that county farmers were satisfied with their progress in the 1940s is that at the start of the decade the average price of land was \$25 an acre and when 1950 arrived the price was \$65 an acre. But as the war ravaged countries of the world regained their agricultural production, the demand for food and fiber from America and Canada declined. This put downward pressure on crop prices, but not on other commodities and this caused discontent in the farm sector.

The year 1950 was remembered as the year of "the big spring rains". It started with corn as "the black sheep crop...only about 40 percent is expected to be mature enough to crib and store normally. Large acreages are practically worthless especially in the non-livestock area." Wheat averaged about 18 bushels, which was the long term average. The top yield in soybeans was 15 bushels and the low was three bushels. "However, soybeans should not be sold down the river... They have been a good crop and fill a much needed place in the rotation," reported Clay



Hand picking onion sets in the 1940s at Hank Peterson's farm in Moorhead, MN. At this time, Peterson was reputed to be the nations largest producer of onion sets.

Extension Agent Bob Gee.

Five sprayings of fungicides were required on the potato test plot at Sabin. There was no disease, and insects were kept under control. Fifteen varieties were planted in the test plot at Baker with the Cobblers having 87 percent over two and one-quarter inches followed by Red Pontiacs with 82 percent meeting that size, but the price was bad.

About 1,500 acres of onions were grown in the Moorhead

area. But 1950 was an unusual year, one of the largest crops in years, but very few onions were mature enough and had to be plowed down; the price was unsatisfactory.

Early spring rains caused flooding and livestock farmers suffered because the flooding and barns and feed lots were soaked. Only the beef breeders on the eastern hillsides avoided the excess moisture. Sugarbeets got off to a bad start with seeding as late as June 22.

"As soon as thinning was over, worms hit and another big investment was necessary. Then there was no rain from July 5 until September 20.

The good news for 1950 was that increased spraying was reducing the weed seed content of the soil which showed throughout the county with higher quality grain and more economical field preparation. The county had a reputation for raising good seed crops but the barley malter apparently needed more seed barley and got the elevators and 115 growers to plant 7,945 acres of three different varieties of foundation seed. Gee wrote, "This should make quite a difference in the quality of malting barley delivered to future growers."

The following two items are good reflections of what county agents must have often faced

labor force where there could be a rotation in the work schedule to allow some free time. The Cass-Clay Cooperative was toying with the idea of having dairies of 75 to 80 cows. They wanted help from extension to determine if something could be done. "It works in other parts of the country, so why not here?"

Gee's other lament was about all the superstitions he heard about all the bad things commercial fertilizer did to the land. But he had some satisfaction as he wrote, "However, more and more is being used each year. Through the use of soil testing farmers are saving money and getting bigger crops when they follow the recommendations.

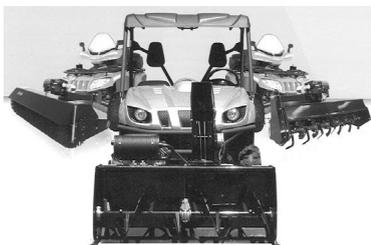
... A large number of farmers are using field check plots and proving to themselves whether fertilizers are doing the job they want done."

The county experienced another cool summer in 1951 and only the short season of well fertilized fields of corn could be safely cribbed. Many farmers purchased feeder cattle. Most were thin cows and bulls that were fed the wet corn either as ear corn silage or whole corn

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 36**

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# Bennett Served In Korea On Carrier

**By: Jacob Underlee**

Before living 37 years in the Moorhead area, Joe Bennett spent three years serving on an aircraft carrier throughout the Far East during the Korean War.

Bennett was born the youngest of six children in 1933, and grew up in rural Wisconsin. He first considered the military after his brother enlisted and enjoyed the experience.

"He liked it, so I wanted to go in early and select what I wanted to do," Bennett explained.

A year after high school graduation in 1951, Bennett enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Lancaster, WI, then traveled to San Diego for boot camp. He later completed aircrewman school at Whidbey Islands in Washington, located about 30 miles north of Seattle.

"Planes fascinated me, and I wanted to be around them," Bennett said.

He was assigned to the crew of the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kearsarge, which joined up with the Seventh Fleet to sail to the far east.



Moorhead resident Joe Bennett spent eight years in the military. Three were spent as a crew member on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Kearsarge, patrolling the Pacific Ocean during the Korean War.

Bennett was one of around 5,000 soldiers aboard the ship. The sheer number of people made the experience similar to living in a small city but he was still able to recognize faces.

"When you're on a ship for three years you see people in passing, either at the barbershop or wherever," he said.

Bennett was an airman apprentice, with his first job aboard the aircraft carrier as a tail hook runner. He was responsible for making sure the arresting wire that helped slow aircraft landing on the carrier was clear once the landing was complete.

In later years he was put in charge of the barricades at the back of the carrier that were in place to stop aircraft that went too far.

"There was a lot of fighting going on," Bennett recalled. "It was really severe, so we furnished air support."

The aircraft carrier housed squadrons of F-9 jets as well as AD-2 propeller-driven aircraft. There were also Banshee photo planes that recorded images of

the combat.

"They flew around and took pictures of what was going on, and then forwarded the information to the ground," Bennett said.

He recalled that the aircraft carrier was always busy, with constant landings and takeoffs, especially in its first few days of operation.

"We would sometimes go three to four days, 24 hours a day," he said.

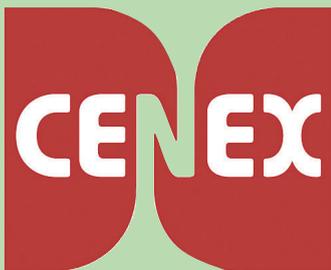
The U.S.S. Kearsarge always traveled with another aircraft carrier to ensure operations were smooth, as well as a Destroyer escort.

In February 1955, the U.S.S. Kearsarge was involved in the massive evacuation of the Tachen Islands, with thousands of civilians, soldiers and equipment removed by the Seventh Fleet. Bennett remembers seeing people and animals from the islands aboard the ship.

He recalls the situation was tense, with American jets flying

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 34**

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## Popularity Of TV Grows In Post-War Years

**By: Jacob Underlee**

Television is among the most common forms of mass media in the world today, having made its way into homes and businesses as a part of everyday life. However, it wasn't always that way.

In fact, there was a time when television was a brand new form of mass communications.

Before the rise of television, news was dominated by newspapers and radio transmissions.

Families would gather around the radio for both news and entertainment, where the stories being told would be visualized inside the mind of the listener.

Anyone looking to stay up to date on local and world events

before television had to keep up to date through a variety of papers and news reports.

This became especially important during international events like WWII. At the time, the public was also updated via newsreels that ran at movie theaters and provided video footage of the action overseas.

As World War II drew to a close, radio would soon give way to the technology of television, which was just in its infancy.

Between the years of 1946-1960, however, it would drastically change in both its appearance and influence.

The so-called "Golden Age" of television stretched from 1948 to 1959, and spawned many of the entertainment programs that are regarded as classics and frequently still shown somewhere in the world to this day.

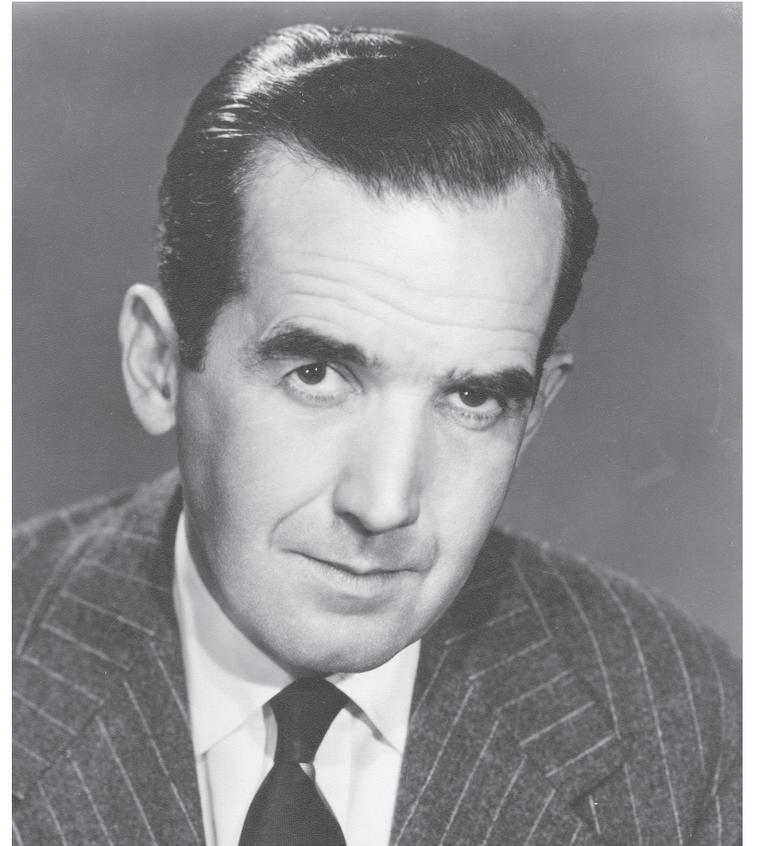
Early television history began with the most basic of transmissions. The technology was pioneered over many years by several inventors, including American inventor Philo Farnsworth. However, it largely remained a novelty until coming into prominence within the home when the National Television Systems Council (NTSC) began providing TV licenses to stations around the country.

Early television stations were centered in major markets such as New York City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Chicago, where

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 30**



"The Ed Sullivan Show," which began as "Toast of the Town," aired on CBS from 1948 to 1971. The variety show was famous for vaudeville performances and appearances by famous musicians.



Edward R. Murrow gained fame as a correspondent during World War II. He hosted the news program "See It Now," which ran from 1951 to 1958.

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Clay County And The Bomb –

# Civil Defense In The Cold War And Backyard Bunkers

By: Mark Piehl

These days our emergency preparedness activities focus on protection from tornadoes and floods but fifty years ago, Civil Defense (CD) authorities concentrated on a now seemingly remote threat – a Russian nuclear attack on the US. In the early 1960s, anxiety about a warming Cold War set Americans to converting basements and backyards into bunkers for riding out atomic Armageddon. Clay County was no exception.

The Soviet's first atomic test in 1949 took US officials by surprise. Eighteen months later President Harry Truman signed the Civil Defense Act of 1950. The Act placed responsibility for CD plan development and implementation firmly in the hands of state and local agencies. The Federal government provided over all guidance and some funds but the decentralized aspect of CD remained through the Cold War.

An early federal initiative is still remembered by many Baby Boomers. In 1951 the Office of Civil Defense introduced the cartoon character Bert the Turtle who encouraged school kids to "Duck" under their desks and

"Cover" their heads when they saw the bright flash of an atomic detonation. The early relatively low-yield, bomber delivered nukes gave officials hope that folks in suburbs of eastern cities, the presumed targets, might survive with enough protection.

"Duck and Cover" had little to do with rural Minnesota. Soon, however, new much more destructive hydrogen bombs, hundreds of times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II, dashed those hopes. The Feds quietly shelved Bert the Turtle in 1953. Times called for a new approach.

In accordance with the 1950 CD Act Minnesota Governor Elmer Anderson appointed H. A. Schon to head the new Civil Defense Department. Schon developed the "Minnesota Survival Plan," calling for county and local authorities to form CD organizations.

Many reacted slowly. In 1954 the Clay County Commission appointed newly elected Sheriff Parker Erickson as County Civil Defense Director. No budget or staff accompanied Erickson's new duties.

Public apathy and ignorance bedeviled CD authorities.

In August 1955, Erickson conducted a test of warning sirens around the county. Sirens blew a steady note for one minute to warn residents of danger. This was followed by a wavering tone or series of short blasts to indicate an attack was imminent and one should take cover. The results were not encouraging.

Smaller county towns used their fire sirens for the test. Many thought it meant there was a fire. Glyndon's Fire Chief refused to blow the whistle. Moorhead used the steam whistle on the Fairmont Creamery. Few heard the signal and fewer yet knew what it meant.

Another statewide test a year later yielded similar results. CD Officials in St. Paul phoned Moorhead Police Chief Les Bielfeldt warning him an "attack" was coming. He in turn called CD Directors in 13 Minnesota counties who teamed with local telephone operators to alert city and village officials. Each village Director placed a series of pre-arranged calls to farm residents.

The cumbersome system may have advised folks of a problem... what then? The *Moorhead Daily News* asked,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



Clay County Sheriff and Civil Defense Director Parker Erickson poses with a Geiger counter.

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## Lights, Water Come To Rural Clay County

By: Mark Piehl, Archivist

Throughout The Boom period technological advances such as new machinery, chemicals and crops revolutionized agriculture. But few innovations improved the lives of farm families more than two simple things we take for granted today: indoor plumbing and electricity. At the beginning of The Boom, 1945, less than a quarter of Clay County farms had electric lights. Less than 20% had indoor plumbing and running water. By the end of The Boom in 1960 nearly all farm families had both. During The Boom, rural families really entered the modern era.

Electric power greatly reduced the amount of hard, manual labor for farmers but its real benefits were inside the farm home.

Residents of Clay County towns and cities enjoyed the benefits of electric power for decades before it became available to farm families. Moorhead residents had access to electricity in 1896, Ulen in 1902 and Hawley by 1910. But in 1929 less than 11% of Clay County farms were electrified. Most of those farmers operated their own plants.

Levi Thortvedt of Moland Township was an early adopter. In 1913 he dammed the Buffalo River on his farm and installed a water-powered generator/battery system. It proved problematic and was switched to a gas engine. Like most farm families the Thortvedts used power first to light their house and barn later investing in an electric motor to run a washing machine and do other household chores. They used stationary gas engines for heavier work like running fanning mills and pumping water.

Electrical systems were expensive, dangerous and cantankerous. By the early 1920s gasoline powered Delco light plants were available to Clay County farmers. An outfit (complete with engine, charger, batteries, 10 light bulbs and installation) ran \$550 in 1923. Wind powered systems were also available but, like most gasoline powered units, did not provide enough juice for other than minimal home lighting or a radio.

Radios were among the first electrical appliances used on Clay County farms. There



In 1948 the Clay County Extension Service arranged for area appliance dealers to display their new wares in Moorhead's American Legion Hall. The Extension's Home Demonstration Agent gave classes on how to select and use the newly available electric devices. Moorhead Daily News, September 10, 1948.

were very few radio stations broadcasting in the US before 1922. That fall radio exploded on the scene with stations popping up everywhere. Radios sets quickly followed, especially in rural areas where the new devices broke the isolation and silence that had always been part of farm life. By spring 1925 over 11% of Clay County farms had radios. By 1930 it was 45%. Batteries powered most of these sets. Farmers took them to town to be recharged or installed cheap six-volt wind chargers on roofs to keep the boxes squawking.

Some farms used acetylene gas for lighting. Pearl Eide-Melbye described her family's plant in the 1920s in the 1984 *Hitterdal History Book*:

*"We were the first, and one of the few in the area, to have carbide lights. Barrels of calcium carbide flakes or pellets were poured into a tank which had been installed in the ground near the windmill. Water was added. The water reacted with the carbide and formed a gas, acetylene. The gas was piped into the house and the barn through underground pipes... When the lights began to dim, we knew it was time to replenish the supply of carbide. The tank was opened. In there had formed a white substance that looked like whipped cream slaked lime. It was scooped out into buckets, and...was used as a white-wash paint."*

Some farmers used the slaked lime as fertilizer or disinfectant. Acetylene was stinky and extremely flammable and the dim light flickered, but gas systems were inexpensive. Most people used kerosene lamps and lanterns for lighting. These were also dangerous and smelly and dirty to boot. Fragile, glass chimneys had to be cleaned of soot every day or so. My grandmother hated this job. The day their home was electrified she carried all of their lamps out to a rock pile and smashed them on the rocks with glee.

Running a farm household without benefit of electricity required an astonishing amount of hard work. In the 1920s a pilot project in Goodhue County electrified a number of farms in the Red Wing area. The project report found that before electricity "just three farm tasks - pumping and carrying water, turning the cream separator and cleaning kerosene lamps - each required about 30 eight hour days a year."

Electric pumps to move water was an important innovation, making indoor plumbing practical. Before electricity, most farm families used a combination of wind and hand pumping to move water. Farmers located their wells where the most water was needed - close to their animals - and far from the house.

The HCSCC Boom Exhibit

features a pump from our collections from the Roscoe and Mabel Belsly farm south of Moorhead.

The Belslys used it to water livestock and provide household water for cooking and cleaning beginning in 1928. A trough carried water to a nearby stock tank for horses and cattle but family members hauled household water in a wheeled water tank the quarter mile to the farmyard. When the wind blew the pump could be attached to a wind mill to pump the water. But still days meant attaching an iron handle and pumping by hand.

Laundry was an especially hot, grueling task. Each load could take fifty gallons of water.

All of it had to be pumped, hauled, heated, wrung from the clothes and disposed of. Washing involved either scrubbing clothes on a wash board or hand pumping a manual washing machine.

Ironing meant heating at least a couple of flat or sad irons on the stove, one to use and another to heat. Some irons featured interchangeable insulated handles. "Sad" didn't refer to the state of the homemaker's mind. It's from an old term for something heavy. Some sad irons weighed 15 pounds. It's no surprise that washing machines and irons were among the first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41



Bob Belsly on his parents' farm south of Moorhead. Note the distance between the family's windmill and pump at right and their home at left. That's a long way to haul water!

Photo courtesy of Robert Belsly.

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# Reflections On Clay County Farming

**By: Dr. Hiram Drache**

I am taking the liberty to tell a personal story. Ada and I had lived in Moorhead in the 1952-1953 school year where I taught Economics and European History. Ada was employed as a secretary in the college admissions office. We had an enjoyable time but were lured back to Owatonna where we never stopped thinking about the great life we had at Concordia.

In August 1955 we were given an opportunity to return. I had become well acquainted with Leonard Gabbert, who had owned a farm and a registered Holstein dairy herd in Section 25 Oakport Township until 1947. He realized that interest in dairying was waning here, as cash crops, especially sugarbeets, were taking over. Gabbert sold his land here and moved his herd to my home township located in Steele County in southern Minnesota which had been the butter capital of the nation. He purchased the well known Gilkey Farm.

We owned and operated a farm near Owatonna and were interested in doing so in Clay County. I asked Gabbert about farming in Clay County. He replied, "It's terrific. You can raise every crop that we raise in southern Minnesota except corn." Corn was the crop I knew best and I knew that genetics in corn had improved in the meantime.

I made contact with a realtor in Moorhead and told him what we were looking for. Then I called Ada's father and asked him if he would join me on a trip to Breckenridge to look at a farm. We got to a farm at Baker and were given all the details my father-in-law said that he could not help me but said what was the

top price I should set for the farm.

When I asked for the price I did not dare to look up because it was less than what we would have been willing to pay. After we agreed to the terms he said, "I wish I was 40 years younger because I would like to start over right here. I have never seen anything like this valley."

My dad had purchased potatoes for many years and when I told my dad I had made a deal to buy a farm near Baker he said, "Five miles in any direction of

there was top notch potato land."

That farm was our home until 1981, and what happy years they were. I soon found out that we had the best of two worlds. When I heard a Concordia colleague gripe about pay or teaching conditions I answered that I thought things were OK and they replied, "What do you care? You are a rich farmer."

When I heard farmers complain how bad things were in farming I would question him and he would say, "What do you know about the problems in farming? You are a rich professor."

During the winter of 1955-1956 I contacted Ozzie Daellenbach the county agent and Les Pulkrabek from soil conservation and told them what I was interested in doing on the farm and came away satisfied that we were at the right place. Daellenbach became a trusted advisor and did all the picture production for my first four books.

I recall that first winter on Highway 52 that there were 12 large dairy barns adjacent to the highway, but most of them were no longer being used for dairying. In 1956 we rented the farm to Stanley Miller. At the same time Pat Griffin who owned land adjacent to our farm, offered to rent land to me if I would raise corn on it because he had not been using much commercial fertilizer and wanted to see what could be done.

As stated earlier, that was not a good corn year but I averaged 66 bushels an acre when the county average was 46. Griffin watched that land closely and said that he had a carry over advantage from the fertilizer for the next three years.



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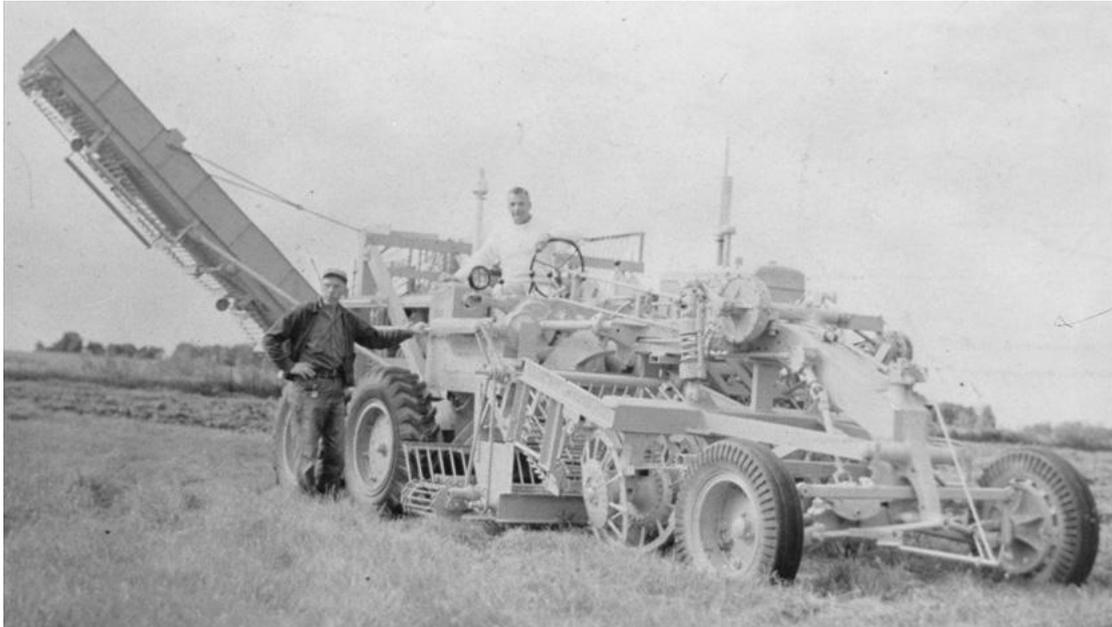
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## Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# 1950s See Great Strides In Ag Technology



In 1956 Merle Allen had Walter Quandt of Stewart, MN build a four-row self-propelled harvester lifter using a road maintainer chassis. Quandt had made a machine for personal use in 1954. Steering was the mechanical problem that handicapped full development of this idea. It also proved to be expensive in relation to a pull type machine. Cost was \$22,000. Could easily lift a ton a minute on good going. The pull-type harvesters have an electric row finder.

**By: Dr. Hiram Drache**

On January 1, 1955, Oswald Daellenbach became the Clay county agent. The agricultural economy was continuing a decline in income and the government was striving to improve the situation. In 1953 the Agricultural Research Service ARS was established in an effort to increase its knowledge of its largest and most critical and yet most fragmented economic sector. In 1954 that was followed by expanding the Social Security Act to include farmers when it was realized that over half of the farmers of the nation had an income of less than \$1,000 annually and a majority of farms were so small that they could not provide adequate retirement income. Then Public Law 480 was passed which enabled the government to offer food relief to the needy countries. This had strong overtones of a relief program for agriculture.

Great advancements were made in technology during these years with the adoption of the center pivot irrigator, the corn head for combines, monogerm sugar beet seed, tractor numbers surpassed horses on farms, augers were introduced for automatic feeding of livestock and poultry and trucks and barges became competitive with railroads. Railroads then made one of its greatest changes since

the 1870s when they introduced unit trains. This was almost a death sentence for small elevators but it gave farmers a greater portion of the final price of their produce.

In 1955 the Clay County Crop Improvement Association was organized and within the year it had 249 members. The biggest crop story of the year was that the Selkirk foundation wheat that was grown in 1954 was increased to 6,640 bushels and divided out to the 250 farmers in the association. Selkirk proved to be a real boost to the wheat growers.

Corn had one of its best years on record, and those who fertilized properly had yields of up to ninety bushels an acre. The extension service encouraged corn because it was relatively free of disease and it was the latest seeded crop which helped control wild oats.

Clay County soybeans jumped 10,000 acres to 30,219 acres in 1955 and were expected to increase another 10,000 acres in 1956. Ed Dullea Jr. had the soybean test plot for the association.

At the winter meeting at the Baker Hall, samples of potatoes picked at the local store proved "very interesting and also disappointing because of their low quality right in the potato producing area." Potato acreage

was down 60 percent from 1933 but yields had increased so they still were an important crop. Forty percent of the production was certified. The Red Pontiacs were washed and waxed and were increasingly being shipped by truck while the Irish Cobblers were shipped for potato chip processing.

Cow numbers dropped to 9,900, but because of increased production per cow, the total production had been maintained. DHIA testing, improved pastures seeded with Birdsfoot Trefoil, and better management of alfalfa production were all responsible for the greater milk production per cow.

In 1954 James Wiedemann seeded sweet clover in a corn field in the middle of July by airplane. The 160 acres were seeded at the rate of nine pounds per acre in two hours at the cost of seeding at \$0.50 an acre. The stand was uniformly good and aided in controlling weeds in a row crop plus it provided a legume for plow down. Wiedemann said that Ernie Krabbenhoft and Art Peterson had previously used this method.

The ever thoughtful Daellenbach's final comment for the year was that 10,000 tons of fertilizer was used in the county at an average price of \$75 per ton. "We need to do more testing... and we could easily save the

growers \$200,000 a year."

In 1956 in response to the continued depressed condition of agriculture nationally, two major and far reaching pieces of legislation were enacted: The Agricultural Act of 1956, better known as the Soil Bank, and The Rural Areas Development Program. As mentioned earlier, over half of the farmers nationally had annual incomes of less than \$1,000. The great bulk of these were in southern states with many in the Lake States.

In a conversation with

Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland, he said to me, "Millions were spent and all we got in return was green grass."

Daellenbach had visited areas in the mid-south in 1955 and told me that he saw farmers cutting grain with a scythe. He saw no equipment that in any way would be large enough for a Clay County farm. The Soil Bank and the Rural Development were obviously not aimed at the Midwestern and Great Plains areas although a number of

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 24**

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**VIKING**



# Harry Truman Presided Over The Start Of The Baby Boom Era

By: Gene Prim

The baby boom era from 1945 to 1960 would see only two presidents in those 15 years. Technically that is not quite true as Franklin Delano Roosevelt was still alive and was president at the beginning of that era, but he would be dead four months into 1945. The end of the era, 1960, would see the election of the youngest and first Catholic president of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. But Jack Kennedy would not take office and usher us into the nuclear and space age until January of 1961.

So, for all intents and purposes, Harry S. Truman and Dwight David Eisenhower were the two presidents in power during the boom. They were both great, but very different and complex men.

Ike was the Supreme Allied Commander of Troops during the European phase of World War II. He had seen the horrors of war first hand and was a West Point educated intellectual who wanted no part of another war.

Ike led our troops to victory



Harry S. Truman campaigns off the rear of a train in Moorhead in October of 1952. He was promoting the presidential ticket of Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver who would lose to Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon.

in Europe. He also took it upon himself as a priority, to extricate the United States from the Korean Conflict as quickly as possible. While we still maintain a military presence in South Korea, Eisenhower did bring the hostilities to a close in his first year in office.

Eisenhower would preside over the "good years" of the baby boom era. And for most they were good years. Ike would oversee the beginning and most of the preliminary work on the interstate highway system that we enjoy today. He would preside over nearly eight years of peace around the world with only an occasional skirmish to mar that record.

On the socio-economic front, the Eisenhower years were great. The country would see slow, steady, manageable growth. Nearly all of the rural areas were electrified as the REA brought power to the farms. Housing was going great guns as GI-bill loans gave ex-soldiers access to money to achieve the American dream, a home of their own.

The farm economy, however, was not great during the Eisenhower years and Ike's Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson became a hated man

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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# Housing Shortage Leads To Boom



A 1960 advertisement announcing a new housing development about to be built just north of I-94. In recent years the beautiful riverfront homes of the Brookdale neighborhood have been badly hit by our record spring floods. Many of the homes along the west side of Rivershore Drive have been bought out by the city and demolished since the flood of 2009.

**By: Markus Krueger**  
Like cities across the nation, Moorhead went through a tremendous house building boom after World War II. Between 1946 and 1959 there were 3,221 new housing permits signed by City of Moorhead officials.

All around America millions of Cape Cod and Ranch style houses sprouted up on the outskirts of cities, often with white picket fences, well tended lawns, and scores of young children of the Baby Boom.

Elsewhere they were called Suburbs, but around here they were just new parts of town with suburban sounding names like Brookdale and Morningside. Although Moorhead is 140 years old, a quarter of all the homes standing in the city today were built between 1945-60. The most common year of construction for a house in Moorhead today is 1955.

The post-war building boom in Moorhead was fueled by three factors: a population explosion, a preceding 15 year stretch of little housing construction, and a booming American economy.

The population of Moorhead more than doubled from 9,491 residents in 1940 to 22,934 in 1960. Moorhead became the largest and fastest growing city in

western Minnesota. Many people from smaller communities were drawn to Moorhead for jobs during and after WWII. This was part of a general trend all across America of people moving from the country to the city after the war.

People were pulled into the city by good paying jobs and college educations. At the same time people were being pushed off the farm as more and better machinery led to bigger and fewer farms that needed fewer full-time farm laborers. Clay County's rural Ulen Township lost 42% of its population between 1940 and 1960, while the city of Moorhead grew by 142% and Oakport Township, just north of Moorhead city limits, increased in population by 179%!

The Baby Boom also played an enormous part in Moorhead's population growth. The all time record for most marriages in a single year in Clay County is still 1948, three years after the war ended. Marriage, of course, leads to babies. In 1945, when so many men were still serving overseas, Clay County women had only 501 babies. Five years later, that number went up to 900. In 1960, there were 1093 babies born to Clay County women.

All of these new Moorheadians needed homes but there were almost none to spare in 1946. The housing construction business in the city, and indeed the entire nation, had been in the toilet for the last 15 years. Few people could afford to build a new home during the decade-long Great Depression in the 1930s. World War II ended the Great Depression but new home construction actually decreased since almost all building materials were diverted to the war effort.

Current city records list only three houses in Moorhead built in the war year of 1943. Some homes were always being built in these years, but certainly not enough to keep up with the demand, especially for a city with two growing colleges.

America went right from an unemployment problem in the Depression to a worker shortage once millions of young men were sent overseas in World War II. The labor shortage meant workers could demand higher wages in town.

Terry Shoptaugh in his great new book *"Fighting for their Lives, Clay County and the War, 1938-45"*, available only at the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



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# College Boom Is Start Of American Tradition

By: Markus Krueger

When I take kids on tours of our county history exhibit, *The Boom: 1945-60 in Clay County*, I always ask them to raise their hands if they plan on going to college after high school. Almost everyone raises their

hand. One of the great traditions in America is that everyone, rich or poor, has the opportunity to go to college. It is part of the American Dream of bettering your lot in life through your own hard work.

To people of my generation

- the children of the Baby Boomers - college is so common that some called Minnesota State University Moorhead, "Moorhead High 13th Grade."

But this tradition of higher education for the average person is less than a lifetime old in America.

If we want to give the tradition a birthday, June 22, 1944, would be a good one. That is the day president Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly called the GI Bill.

Looking at that date - June 22, 1944 - I am struck that my own college education was made possible not so much by ACT scores or high school grades. In large part, I went to college because in June of 1944, American soldiers stormed the beaches on D-Day and retook Rome from the Nazis. Marines fought inch by inch across the island of Saipan, and sailors and airmen sank the Japanese carriers in the Battle of the Philippine Sea.

The GI Bill was designed to thank our servicemen as they were busy saving the world and help them readjust to life after the war and help the US economy absorb millions of ex-servicemen flooding the labor pool once we won. For millions

of American families, including my own, it started a tradition of higher education that is about to enter a fourth generation.

Before WWII, going to college was a rare privilege reserved mostly for wealthy families or the gifted students who would become teachers after attending places like Moorhead State Teachers College.

For the parents of the WWII generation, it was often difficult just to attain a high school education. Those who lived in the country went to one room schoolhouses where a single teacher would teach every kid within walking distance.

On display in the museum now is a photograph of a Spring Prairie Township schoolhouse where teacher Elvira Scherling taught 13 kids ranging in age from six to 15, all at the same time.

In this land of immigrants, many kids had to overcome language barriers at school in the early twentieth century. In 1940, the US census still shows that the majority of the people in Clay County were either immigrants or the children of immigrants, and it is not uncommon to meet people around here who grew up speaking Norwegian as their first language.

There were many reasons why 20-somethings in the

1920s and 1930s did not enter college, not the least of which was choosing careers that did not require a college degree and the economic catastrophe of the Great Depression.

"I would not have been able to go to college without the GI Bill, and that applies to many of the veterans that returned," said WWII Navy veteran Tommy Grandy of Cass Lake, MN. Grandy's story is included in the history of the Moorhead State Teachers College, written by Clarence "Soc" Glasrud, who himself went to school at Moorhead State on the GI Bill.

Vets like Grandy could receive up to \$500 per year for tuition plus \$50 per month for a single veteran or \$75 for married vets under the GI Bill. With that kind of support, even poor children of the Depression like Tommy Grandy could have his pick of colleges. He chose Moorhead State Teachers College, now Minnesota State University Moorhead, because of the town's good reputation.

"Shortly after I was discharged from the Navy, someone told me on a late Saturday night that the best looking girls in the world were from the Fargo-Moorhead area. When it came to choosing a college, I said, 'Well, if we're

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

## President's Message

By: Gene Prim  
Historical And Cultural  
Society Of Clay County



It's Been A Busy Year . . .

As the year 2012 moves into the home stretch, it might be time to pause and reflect for just a moment. The last three months of the year will be hectic around the Hjemkomst Center as plans for new displays are made and preparations made for fall and Christmas visitors at the Center.

Over the first nine months of 2012 events seem to have been piling up and running over one another. There was the opening of "The Boom" exhibit on the downstairs level of the center. That exhibit will be on display until the end of the year and is also the theme of this year's special fall tabloid publication.

The "Boom" exhibit was barely up when we were invaded by Vikings for their festival. The Vikings also came to visit again in July when most of the crew of Robert Asp's Hjemkomst Viking ship voyage to Norway reunited at the Heritage and Cultural Center. It hardly seems like 30 years since that historic voyage but that is the dream that started the center itself and the building that now houses the great war ship of the Norsemen.

Intermingled with the special events, there are always the kids coming through the museum staring in wide-eyed amazement at some of the exhibits. The kid's visits taper off a bit over the summer, replaced by family groups of visitors. But with the opening of school, we're glad to see the kids back in force again. The kid crowd will continue to pick up throughout the year and it's always fun for them and the staff when they pay us a visit.

The vintage style show in mid-September drew a huge, sellout, standing-room only crowd. It's always nice when a project exceeds expectations and we're very proud of board member Gloria Lee's efforts in organizing this first-ever vintage style show. We have already fielded numerous questions about whether we will do another show next year. The answer to that is a definite "maybe," but it will be hard to not do a repeat of such a popular event.

Plans are rapidly taking shape for the fall fundraiser. That is always a fun event set for late October when the HCS Heritage Award is presented and a fine evening of dining and entertainment is hosted at the center. Details on this year's event can be found elsewhere in this publication.

The Holiday season always brings out a good crowd to special events hosted at the center. It never seems to be crowded in the large amount of space that is available at the center, but there are always a lot of folks around taking in the exhibits and doing a little shopping at the Gift Shop now being managed by Kelly Wambach and featuring a lot of new items.

After the Holidays we catch our breath and then start all over again.

There are many more new ideas and exhibits in the works for 2013. Stay tuned for the details.



Moorhead State Teachers College in 1949. Fertile Acres, temporary housing units for married students and faculty, is in the upper right of the picture.



## Lisa Vedaa Recieves 10 Year Appreciation Gift



HCSCC Collections Manager Lisa Vedaa receives a gift of appreciation for 10 years of service with the Society from Executive Director Maureen Kelly Jonason at the HCSCC annual meeting in May.

## Goose Feather Trees Were First Christmas Trees



The first artificial Christmas trees were developed in Germany and carried to the United States by immigrants in the 1890s. These early trees were made from dyed goose and turkey feathers which were attached to the wire branches. The branches were attached to a wooden trunk and set into a painted wooden base. The trunk was then wrapped with green or brown paper to hide the wires and to simulate tree bark. Many had branches which were finished on the ends with red composition berries or metal candle clips.

The tree made in the workshop will be a modern version of the feather trees. Traditionally, the style of tree had short needled branches arranged in tiers. A natural pine tree branch was used for the trunk of the tree. The feathers that will be used in the workshop will be longer than traditional trees but the process is the same.

## Rose Bergan Retires From HCSCC Board Of Directors



Board member Rose Bergan retired from the board after serving three three-year terms and was presented by HCSCC Executive Director Maureen Kelly Jonason and Board President Gene Prim with a beautiful bowl turned and finished by Kurt Anderson.

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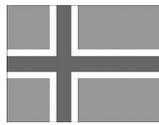
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# Meet The HCSCC Staff Members...



MAUREEN KELLY JONASON

Dr. Maureen Kelly Jonason taught college writing and humanities for 20 years before coming to HCSCC as executive director.

She once worked at Cass County Historical Society at Bonanzaville as the Visitors Service Coordinator. She was fortunate enough to be raised in a multigenerational home with mother, grandparents, and maternal great-grandmother all under one roof in Harvey, ND. While she never took any history classes in college, she has maintained a strong interest, particularly in plains history, and she enjoys learning more about Clay County and its neighbors every day.

She and her husband Martin Jonason have no children and live in south Fargo. She enjoys reading and gardening.

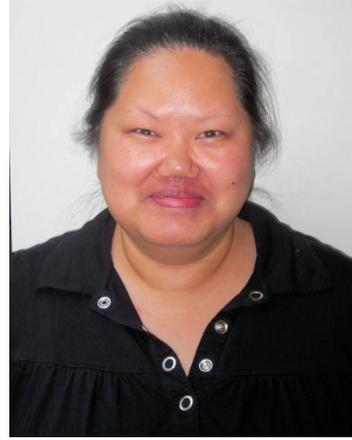


TIM JORGENSEN

Tim Jorgensen is HCSCC's Event Coordinator and Exhibit Registrar. His various roles include organization of festivals, fundraisers, volunteer parties and exhibit openings.

In 2002 Tim finished a BA degree in American Studies from Minnesota State University - Moorhead. Then, in 2006, he finished an MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University. Tim's favorite historic periods include The Viking Age, The American Old West, and The Vietnam War. He also enjoys playing bass in blues bands, travelling to Viking festivals, and barbecuing.

Tim was recently married on May 12, 2012 to Jennifer Jorgensen.



MICHELLE CARLSON

HCSCC's Administrative Assistant Michelle Carlson grew up in St. Cloud, MN in a very close-knit Scandinavian family. She moved to the Fargo/Moorhead area in 1997.

For the past 14 years or so she's been a stay-at-home mom to her three children ages, 14, 12 and 10. Though busy, she very much enjoys the HCSCC, meeting and interacting with not only members, but also the many visitors and tourists that came through the doors.

In her spare time, Michelle enjoys reading, reading and more reading, writing short stories, and hanging out with her family



MARK PEIHL

Mark Peihl, HCSCC Archivist, grew up in Hunter, North Dakota and attended the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in History in 1978.

He worked for Rochester Armored Car Company for seven years and began working as a volunteer for the HCSCC in 1985. In 1986 Mark was hired as the HCSCC Archivist. He enjoys hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking and camping.

Mark lives in an 80 year old home in north Fargo with his wife Gloria and their Yellow Lab Zoe.



MARKUS KRUEGER

Markus Krueger is the Visitors Services Coordinator for HCS. Markus first came to the Hjemkomst Center as a volunteer stave church tour guide in college. Today, he handles the group tours to the museum, assists the volunteers who keep HCS operating, researches Clay County history for the newsletters and exhibits, and, like the rest of the HCS staff, does whatever else needs to be done.

Markus is a graduate of Moorhead High and MN State University Moorhead, where he studied art history and history.

Markus, wife Megan, and their three cats live in Moorhead.

Save The Date For The HCSCC Fall Fundraiser Friday, October 26, 2012

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## Meet The HCSCC Staff Members...



**KELLY WAMBACH**

Kelly Wambach, began full-time as gift shop manager for HCSCC in August after working part-time over the summer. Originally from Georgetown, MN, Kelly served on HCSCC's board of directors and volunteered regularly for special events.

He owned Old Market Antique Shop and has a great deal of customer service experience. As a collector of artist Annie Stein's works, he is helping to develop the January exhibit called "Prairie Daughters: The Lives and Art of Annie Stein and Orabel Thortvedt.

Kelly has contributed significantly to the improved appearance and inventory of the gift shop. Come on in and see what's new!



**GWEN MCCAUSLAND**

HCSCC Marketing Coordinator, Gwen McCausland grew up in North Dakota and received her undergraduate degree in Anthropology from North Dakota State University. She traveled over seas for her master's degree in Welsh Ethnological Studies at Cardiff University in Cardiff, Wales and graduated in 2003.

Gwen began working in the Public History field while still a student at NDSU as an interpreter for Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation in Mandan, ND and as the assistant curator at the Emily Reynolds Costume Collection at NDSU. She continued to focus on collections care while interning at various museums in the US and Canada before becoming the Curator

at the Cass County Historical Society at Bonanzaville in West Fargo, ND.

In 2006, Gwen moved south to New Mexico. She spent four years as the Curator of Collections at the Hubbard Museum of the American West. After her son was born, she and her husband moved back to Fargo to be closer to family. She has been the Marketing Coordinator for HCSCC since April of this year. She enjoys crafts, reenacting, and spending time with her family.

\*\*\*\*



**LISA VEDAA**

HCSCC Collections Manager Lisa Vedaa lives in Fargo with her husband Rob and three sons, Jacob, Evan and Erik.

Her interest in history was sparked early, with her

grandmother's National Geographic magazines and grade-school fieldtrips to local historic sites. Lisa cherishes her childhood and formative years on her family's farm near Ruso, North Dakota.

After high school graduation at Velva, ND, she attended NDSU to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in public history with a minor in anthropology. She attended St. Cloud State for a Masters in Public History, and began her museum career as assistant director/curator at the Codington County Historical Society in Watertown, South Dakota. She became director of the CCHS in May 2002 and Collections Manager for HCSCC in January 2009.

Lisa enjoys spending time with her family, stopping at the occasional garage sale, and researching her family history.

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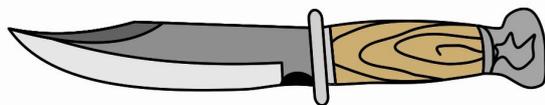


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# Civil Defense And Backyard Bunkers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

“What would you do if Friday’s air raid drill were real?... The best possible advice is to be prepared to evacuate, and to know how to take cover if there is little or no warning.”

But there was no comprehensive plan to follow. The *News* suggested citizens contact Erickson’s office or Washington for copies of pamphlets with titles like “4 Wheels to Survival,” “Facts About the H-Bomb” and “Atomic Blast Creates Fire.”

State CD Director Schon, however, was at work on the Minnesota Survival Plan. In late 1956 Schon’s staff decided that the Soviet’s primary Minnesota targets would include the Twin Cities and harbor facilities at Duluth.

East Grand Forks also made

the list because of its close proximity to the Grand Forks Air Force Base. They considered Fargo-Moorhead a secondary target, one which might be hit if Russian bombers failed to reach a primary target, because of Fargo’s Hector Airport, bridges on the Red River and the North Dakota Air National Guard base.

In February 1957 CD officials from Minnesota, Cass County North Dakota and Clay, Norman, Otter Tail, Becker and Wilkin Counties met in Moorhead to develop an evacuation plan for Fargo-Moorhead. Their set up divided Moorhead into four zones.

Downtown residents would drive east to Detroit Lakes on US Highway 10. Those in southeast Moorhead would head for Fergus Falls on Highway 52. Others were to travel north to

Ada or south to Breckenridge on US Highway 75. They left the downtown zone narrow to allow Fargo residents with lake cabins to follow Center Avenue through Moorhead to the east.

The plan assumed a two-hour warning time. Those without an automobile were urged to “make

advance arrangements in your block to set up an evacuation car pool.”

In September workmen installed over twenty evacuation route signs along Moorhead’s streets. The plan made no mention of rural Clay County residents though everyone was

advised to put at least 50 miles between themselves and Fargo-Moorhead.

Assuming no one’s car broke down or otherwise blocked traffic, what would greet Clay County refugees in our neighboring counties? The Moorhead Daily News reported the receiving communities “have made plans for the reception of evacuees in case of emergencies.”

But in November Erickson addressed a faculty meeting at Moorhead State Teachers’ College. A summary says “When people get to their destination, the cars are to be parked in the fairgrounds and people re-registered. If someone is missing, a check will be made by radio. A floor plan is available for every school, college and church in the area. For example, a church may be converted to a hospital. The ladies aid will cook the food.”

Given our experience with evacuation during Hurricane Katrina, this all sounds hopelessly naïve. Although there is comfort in the idea of local folks surviving nuclear war on church basement food!

Newspapers also hint at plans to unite children with parents if an event occurred during school hours. Starting in 1958,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43



Clay County Sheriff and Civil Defense Director Parker Erickson, right, watches as Mayor I. T. Stenerson, left, and Assistant County CD Director Joe Turner hand an evacuation route sign to county employee Norman Krump for installation on a Moorhead lamp post. The signs were to guide residents to safety in case of nuclear attack.

Red River Scene, Sept 19, 1957

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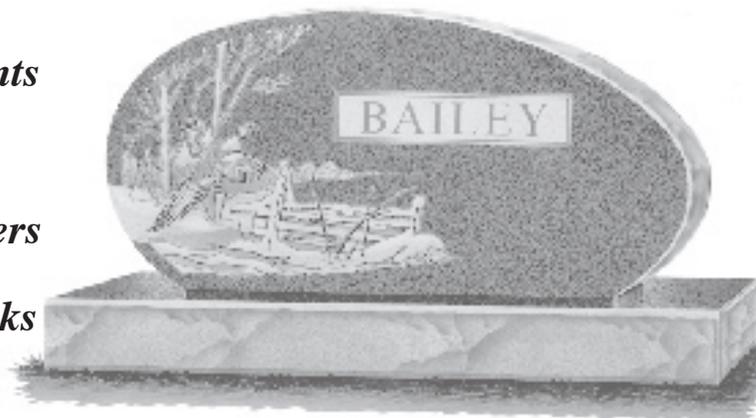
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# Housing Shortage Leads To Boom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Hjemkomst Center gift shop as an ebook, found that good crop prices and higher wages for farm laborers led to the quadrupling of bank balances in Ulen during the war.

Rationing gave everyone less to spend their money on and many invested in War Bonds as a patriotic duty. These savings fueled a booming post-war economy as American factories switched from a war-time economy to a consumer economy after the war.

After 15 years of economic depression and war shortages, everyone in America, not to mention the rest of the world needed new cars, new shoes, new radios, and especially new homes. Low interest rates on home loans, especially for veterans as part of the GI Bill, helped steer much of those

savings into house construction.

Stenerson Bros. Lumber Company barely made it through the Great Depression. "Only by the grace of God, understanding creditors, hard work and loyal employees was the company able to survive," writes Jim Stenerson of the Depression years in his history of the company.

Because of rationing during World War II, the company was only able to keep their yards supplied by dismantling old buildings and selling the reclaimed wood. The Stenerson family, however, knew that Fargo-Moorhead was ready for a building boom after the war, and opened a new lumber yard in Moorhead in 1946. Because building materials were still in such short supply, their Moorhead lumber yard at 1702 First Avenue North is largely

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52



Because of a shortage of affordable housing, nearly 175 people in Moorhead spent the winter of 1946-47 in small trailers like these ones in the Moorhead Tourist Camp. The Moorhead Tourist Camp was located about a block south of the Hjemkomst Center, the north side of the Center Avenue/NP Avenue bridge.

## Housing Boom Fast Facts

- Median value of a non-farm house in Clay County 1950: \$6,710
- Median purchase price for a home in Moorhead 2010: \$141,000
- Median Clay County family income 1949: \$3,198
- Median Clay County family income 2010: \$48,395
- The 1950 census shows that 756 Clay Countians were employed in the construction industry, accounting for almost one in 10 non-farm jobs in the county.
- The most common year of construction for a home standing in Moorhead today is 1955.
- A quarter of all homes standing in Moorhead today were built between 1945-1960.



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# Anything Was Possible During the Boom

By: S. Ray-Degges,  
Ph.D., ASID

"A time when anything was possible" reflected the mindset of the United States at the end of World War II. With the development of new economic, social, and technological advancements, prosperous citizens engaged in the business of buying, building, and babies.

Clay County residents experienced this new way of life as industry refit to civilian production of new homes, new products, and new stores. The citizens that populated Clay County were not only home-owners but now had an automobile and a television set, refrigerator, washing machine, and vacuum cleaner.

Home interiors reflect the events of life, and this can be seen in the wartime technologies applied to post-war interior materials, such as molded-plywood and fiberglass, press-formed plastic, foam rubber, and plastic laminates. Moisture-proof paint, wallpaper, and flooring; wire-framed, vinyl-covered furniture; translucent plastic-room partitions and cabinet doors; patterned synthetic counter tops and plasticized, customized plastic inserts for refrigerators; and fiberglass draperies are just a few examples of inexpensive mass-produced products in the post-war interior.

The use of metals, such as steel or aluminum, were very popular as manufactures retooled to meet the needs for kitchen cabinets, metal dinette sets, decorative trash cans, TV stands, and magazine racks instead of



producing machine gun turrets.

Color also captured the essence of the post-war era. Dyes and pigments were used to color new plastics and heat-resistant colored metal coatings, previously limited to military applications, exploded in a riot of color. The red and chartreuse of the early 1950s evolved into yellow, pink, and turquoise, shifting to copper and earth-tones by the mid-1960s.

High marriage rates and the booming bridal market for basic housewares trousseau of kitchen and bath products pushed for manufacturers to develop not only high quality appliances but coordinating gift sets and accessories in order to impress users for future purchases.

What types of accessories were seen in the post-war era? As suggested in a 1946 Plan Your Own Home decorating book, "suitable accessories for each room must be considered.... They make a room seem finished and go far toward giving the lived-in look so necessary to an

attractive home."

Post-war home interiors were sometimes decorated in a modern, futuristic style with new materials like plastic, vinyl, and metal. While others chose to use traditional styles with wood cabinetry and painted or papered walls.

Often labeled as Colonial or Early American, traditional interiors were characterized by wood paneling, brick fireplaces with colonial-style molding, wrought iron hardware, maple furniture, Americana wallpaper, plaids and traditional prints, café or Priscilla curtains, and heirloom pieces or reproductions from Colonial days. Eagles and patriotic color palettes were used by those individuals with a patriotic fervor. Two Early American variations included the themed styles of Pennsylvania Dutch or "Knotty Pine."

Pennsylvanian Dutch is a folkloric style where interiors were enriched with painted

Pennsylvanian Dutch flowers and birds in blue, yellow, red and green and tole painting and rosemaling, combined with Early American decoration and antiques.

Following traditional Early American designs, a preponderance of "Knotty Pine" interiors evolved. There is some speculation that while there was greater affluence in the United States, individuals were very conservative and often liked to "do it yourself." The combination of an inexpensive material—knotty pine—woodworking skills, and tools, resulted in widespread installation of knotty pine paneling in post-war interiors as well as knotty pine cabinetry.

Streamline Moderne, a pre-war style that reflected the growth of speed, travel, and technology in the 1930s, continued to be popular during the post-war era. This post-war design was characterized by simple and functional aerodynamic designs that were seen in automobiles, trains, ocean liners, and airplanes. Interior decoration included Formica countertops edged with metal, metal venetian blinds, and bullet-nosed cabinet forms.

While traditional designs reflecting periods of the past continued in popularity, designs available through local department stores and mail-order catalogs showed a shift to interior products by using newly available technology to develop new solutions that resulted in contemporary "organic" and

futuristic forms.

The impetus for contemporary design, also referred to as Mid-Century Modern, can be traced to the Organic Design in Home Furnishings competition that was launched by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in 1940. The impact of entries from this competition crossed into almost all of the decorative arts by the 1950s, appearing in everything from ceramics to lamps.

Light fixtures resembling flying saucers, cabinet pulls, and door-sets that looked like starbursts, and printed organic boomerang patterns in Formica were examples of decorations for this new contemporary design.

Designs were also impacted by the "Atomic Age." Bombs dropped to end the war created an interest in science and technology. Manufacturers eagerly adopted motifs that resembled exploding atoms, amoeba-like biomorphic shapes, and molecular structures that were influenced by the discovery of the double helix of DNA in 1953.

Post-War designs whether traditional, modern, or futuristic met the diverse needs of a society with dramatic population growth that revolved around new economic, social, and technological advancements. The dream achieved – the post-war era was the manifestation of what was considered the "good life."

To read more about Post War Interiors and Housing visit: [www.midcenturyhomestyle.com](http://www.midcenturyhomestyle.com)

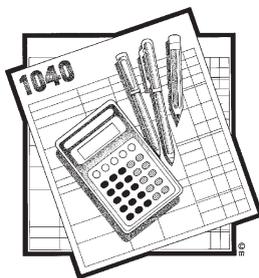
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## "The Boom – 1945-1960 In Clay County"

The exhibit provides two excellent Mid-Century Modern "organic" accessories representative of post-war social affluence: the "palette coffee table" and the "organic-shaped ceramic ash tray."

The "palette coffee table," was built by using plans found in a 1951 *Popular Mechanics* magazine. This piece demonstrates the use of a wartime material, plywood, constructed in an organic form that still looks futuristic.

With the booming economy, more leisure time was available to explore hobbies. Men often had home woodworking shops and power tools to create home furnishings and accessories for their new homes.

*Popular Mechanics* and other home shelter magazines provided plan drawings so individuals could purchase the necessary materials to build their own coffee tables, book shelves, or magazine racks.

Finished in a turquoise glaze, the "organic-shaped ceramic ashtray" is the epitome of post-war accessories. Ashtrays cut across all strata of taste and class, and their shapes were adapted to living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms.

Department stores everywhere sold ashtrays. From assembly-line production to handcrafted designs, ashtrays were often considered "jewels" of the household. The late 1940s and through the 1950s was the golden age of glamorous smoking; cigarettes, bowls of nuts and drinks were put out for cocktail parties.





## College Boom Is Start Of American Tradition



Concordia's "Paradise Hall" – 60 former GIs sleeping in the gymnasium.

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

gonna go to school, why not go to one where there is something to look at.' That's how I came to Moorhead State."

For millions of American families, the first person to receive higher education was a WWII serviceman. I need to look no further than my own family. My grandpa Ralph Jensen earned his ticket to a college education by serving on a hospital ship in the Pacific.

Before him, the closest the

family had come to college was once when Ralph's grandfather laid brick for a building on the University of Minnesota campus.

After the war, Ralph was able to attend that college where his grandpa laid brick, eventually earning a masters degree in education and becoming an elementary school teacher and principal. Ralph sent all of his children to college and, so far, all of his grandchildren have gone, too.

Dozens of millions of Americans can tell you the same

story of how the tradition of college education began in their family and how it was passed on to later generations.

Almost half of the 16 million veterans of World War II used these benefits for education or training of some kind, creating a spike in college admissions in the late 1940s. There was a dip in admissions during the Korean War, but the passage of the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952, called the Korean GI Bill, produced another bump in the mid-1950s.

Today, young veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are walking the campuses of Moorhead and Fargo with their own government funded GI benefits.

### Soaring Admissions and Crowded Campuses

When the boys came home, they went right off to college. In 1946 the student population of Concordia almost doubled from the previous year. Moorhead State Teachers College, now MSUM went from a low of 214 students in 1943-44 to 801 students in 1950-51. North Dakota Agricultural College, now NDSU, went from 688 students in 1942-43 to 2975 in 1948-49.

The GI Bill was not the only factor in the college boom. Carroll Engelhardt points out in his history of Concordia College,

*On Firm Foundation Grounded,* that from 1946-49, veterans made up less than one third of the students at Concordia.

The post-war economic boom made college affordable for more young men and women than ever before.

Of all the great economic powers in the world before the war, America was the only one whose cities and factories were not bombed to rubble. Europe and Asia were being rebuilt with goods from American factories.

On top of that, after the lean years of the Great Depression and the shortages during the war years, almost every American needed a new car, a new toaster, a new pair of shoes...a new everything. The buzzing economy improved the standard of living of the average American and many families used that extra money to send their kids to college.

Affordable college played a role in the rural to urban population shift after the war. As area farms became larger and more prosperous, farming families were able to send their children to college in town, especially those who would not inherit land. Engelhardt's research shows that of the 40 percent of Concordia students who came from farm families in a 1948-49 survey, only one percent returned to farming.

The biggest problem was where to put all of these new students. Even without the

hundreds of new Cobbers and Dragons flocking to town, Moorhead was experiencing a chronic housing shortage. Few people could afford to build new homes during the decade-long Great Depression, and during the war years all of the building materials were diverted to the war effort. Moorhead's southern limit reached Prairie Home Cemetery, between the two colleges, in the late 1920s and advanced no further for almost 20 years.

With two colleges only three blocks apart from each other, students and faculty competed for every available room and basement apartment in south Moorhead.

Local alumni scrambled to find homes for 350 new Cobbers in the Knapp Park and Comstock neighborhoods when the student population of Concordia College doubled in 1946. The desperate colleges had to improvise housing on campus.

Concordia's gymnasium was filled with beds and renamed "Paradise Hall" by the 60 former-GIs that called it home. Many classrooms on the first floor of McLean Hall at Moorhead State Teachers College were filled with bunk beds. North Dakota Agricultural College built Silver City – 24 tiny bungalows for faculty - and Trailer City – 88 even smaller trailers for students – to cope with a student

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Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# 1950s See Great Strides In Ag Technology

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

farms in the county participated in the Soil Bank.

Daellenbach opened his annual report: "It was an exceptionally good crop year for the county. Small grains were outstanding. However corn and soybeans suffered setbacks because of the unusually cool summer and early freeze on September 5. Potatoes suffered from over production which caused low prices. . . . There was a re-awakened interest in livestock production in many parts of the county. Farmers who have been without livestock since the war years are talking about renewing these enterprises, and others are expanding."

On July 1, 1955 Paul Hasbargen became the assistant county agent. He had specialized training in farm management and soon became very involved with planning and inaugurating changes in farming operations and organization for many families. Further gains in production efficiency came with new crop varieties, insecticides, fungicides, and sound fertilizer programs. "These gains are not being made in some areas of the county due to the prevailing opinions that the capital requirements of these technologies are prohibitively high."

On the other hand the positive thinkers of the Crop



This photo is of potato cutting at Peterson Farms, Moorhead, MN. Prior to mechanical cutters in 1950, it took eight people to keep up with a four row planter. With a mechanical cutter, two men working part-time could do the same job. Men could cut about 400 pounds per hour while others handled the sacks.

Improvement Association continued to make progress. There were eight new releases, two in barley, one in flax, three in soybeans, and two in durum. There was high interest in test plots with 17 plots located in 16 different sections. The most striking result was revealed in a potato test plot where the no fertilizer plot produced 181 bushels per acre, the one with fertilizer containing Sulphate of Potash yielded 214 bushels, and the second with Muriate of Potash 276 bushels. The test

plots also indicated that an iron deficiency was becoming more prevalent each year.

Corn acreage for grain increased but not as rapidly as expected considering the advances in seed, fertilizer, and weed control. Soybean acreage was double the corn acreage. Paul Horn and Hank Peterson were the largest growers of onions and with a couple of other smaller growers produced 1,900 of the 3,800 acres of onions grown in the state. The 15,000 acres of potatoes yielded over three million bushels, which was more than what was produced when 45,000 acres were raised. Some farmers continued to grow certified Cobblers because they always had two markets for seed or for chippers, but they could also be sold as regular table stock.

The 1956 report included watershed meetings regarding flooding that overlapped a Clay and Wilkin County area and another in Moorhead about the need for a watershed in the Stony Creek area. The weed problem persisted, but more crop spraying was conducted in the county than any previous year, and there was more pre-emergence weed control than ever before with good results.

Dairy cow numbers remained static, but the local DHIA had 110 cows that produced over 600 pounds of butter fat. The

entire association had an average of 406 pounds per cow. Cash receipts from livestock and poultry reached \$4 million, and the total cash farm income rose to \$17 million. Beet pulp was a good product for cattle feeding, and pelleted barley was an excellent hog feed.

Daellenbach understood the reality of the times, "Farmers faced another round of increased business costs as well as increased cost of living. This continued increase, unmatched by farm product price increase, has caused a number of farmers to seriously analyze their present operation. Some are considering other employment either part or full time. The Soil Bank, it appears will be used by some as a 'lifeline' while shifting to another occupation. Others are looking for ways of using this tool and others to increase their incomes."

The first item in the extension report for 1957 was that Paul Hasbargen had become the Farm Management Specialist at the State Extension office in St. Paul. He was replaced by Curt Johnson who later became a banker in Hawley. The spring was very dry in 1957 but the fall was very wet and delayed harvest especially of beets, corn, and potatoes. "Soybeans will probably have their best year on record if they can be harvested before the snow comes. Potatoes

are down in the entire Valley. This, however, is a blessing since prices are up considerably over last year."

The interest in test plots continued strong with 21 in the county, four of which were in Alliance Township. The test plot on the Forest Thompson farm had 16 varieties. The yields ranged from 56 to 280 bushels an acre but several varieties had problems.

Daellenbach expressed disappointment that corn acreage had not increased which he realized was from fear of frost and low fertility. He felt that the recent advancements had made corn more profitable than small grains and it was the extensions' aim to help the farmers adopt the advancements and make corn a more profitable crop--grow earlier varieties, increase the fertility and the population, and encourage farmers to take part in the X-tra Corn Yield Contest.

The sugar company had two full-time field men to cope with the field problems so extension did not have a specific program for that crop. The webworm affected some fields, and farmers sprayed with toxaphene and had good results. "That spraying was done without the blessings of either the beet company or the extension office."

Wheat had another good year, and well fertilized fields

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## Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# Agriculture In The Boom Years 1945-1959

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

who switched to tractors were showing that they could produce at a lower cost than those who were not adapting, but there were influential people in politics and within the agricultural department that felt that it was essential that the nation preserve its small farm base.

Others felt that the cost of welfare was less for people on the farms rather than having them move to town so after the 1932 election, a massive rural resettlement program was responsible for establishing about 500,000 farms. That intensified the farm problem and from 1935 to 1940 farm numbers dropped about 700,000, 10.5 percent.

Unfortunately, for those who remained on the farm, productivity increased even faster, but wartime demand enabled industry to absorb those who left the farm and world demand took the surplus agricultural products.

The Second Agricultural Revolution completed the transition from animal to mechanical power. In 1945 the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was organized and our nation sent food to the most desperate spots of the world. By then the leadership in the USDA was aware that the "Revolution"



A two and one half ton load of beets at four mph to carloading siding at Ruthruff near Moorhead from Merle Allen farm in 1934. Handloaded at one ton per man hour.

would bring an end to semi-subsistence agriculture. This was important, for census data indicated that one-third to one-half of the families in farming had little economic function and were contributing little to the commercial food supply.

Socially they were living to a great degree in poverty and were producing more children than any economic group.

Census data also showed that record-keeping farmers had a much greater income than non-record keepers and were adopting technology sooner and becoming more efficient. The government stepped in to reduce the surplus by establishing the National School Lunch program and authorized non-profit school lunch programs which used various surplus agricultural products.

In 1945 Clay County Extension Agent, G. E. May, reported that of the 2,000 farmers in the county about 120 were arranging a plan for more conservation and 270 were actually doing some conservation work. That spring the soil had been wet, but farmers who planted 90 day corn and used a completed fertilizer program had an above average crop for the county. The corn had high moisture, but those who stored it in their traditional corn cribs were able to use the "new commercial on-the-farm driers" and were able to dry their cribbed corn down to 16 percent in only 25 hours. There were six portable drying units in the county, and they all had favorable results.

Agent May recorded, "Soybeans as a cash crop had few rivals in the past five years.

This year beans gave at least one-third more profit per acre than corn. 'Wisconsin 38' is about out of the picture and 'L' barely has taken over the acreage." Wheat yields were not good.

May wrote, "Tama, Vieland, and Boon oats made up at least 95 percent of the oats. Gopher was completely outdone by the other varieties. Even the hard to convert have come to

the conclusion that these new varieties are better than their favorite old time varieties. The finest potato crop in the past ten years was produced this year in the area from Watts siding to Glyndon and south through the Sabin and Baker area. Yields were about 200 bushels per acre."

He continued, "those growers who dusted by machine or planes had no damage from late blight but those who did not had a break down in storage. DDT was used in an experiment on flea beatles and the vines stayed green long and gave increased yields."

Potatoes had their top year in the county in 1933 when 37,894 acres were harvested and then declined steadily to 15,064 acres in 1945.

Of sugarbeets May wrote, "They have been the best crop on heavy soils because of their deep rooting system and their mellowing affect on the soil plus the farmers having the ability to fight weeds with chemicals... they have become a very popular crop. Most of the tops were fed to either sheep or cattle and both do very well on them. The yield was ten and one-half tons so it was a profitable crop."

Most farmers were using seeds recommended by the Crop Improvement Association, and about 90 percent of the farmers

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*Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...*

## Agriculture In The Boom Years 1945-1959

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

used seed treatment for their grain and corn. The county had ample private and commercial treating machines which gave the seed some protection from disease and insects. Farmers were doing a good job of using green manure, sweet clover plow down to improve tilth, weed control, and drainage. The only restriction to better production was that there was insufficient commercial fertilizer.

After the end of WWII men were coming out of service rapidly and were quickly absorbed by every type of business other than agriculture which was a trend that had been detected in census data starting in the 1920s.

May wrote, "It seems to take from two weeks to two months for the general run to find their place in civilian life and be satisfied with their work."

But labor would have been

in short supply for agriculture had it not been for good media coverage for recruiting which helped secure an ample supply of "good men" from the northern cutover areas "so that it was not necessary to recruit women and girls except for potato picking." Seventy-five prisoners of war from the nearby camp were used in the vegetable and sugar beet fields and about 50 were needed in potato picking.

Because it was a wet year controlling weeds was more of a problem than in drier years. Sodium chlorate was difficult to obtain, so it was supplemented with borax. Fortunately, 2-4-D, used in the trial plots, gave good results so there was hope for future years. An improved "duck foot" tiller worked especially well because the weather provided "the right intervals" to do timely work in the big fields.

In the fall of 1945 "approximately six carloads of dynamite had been sold in the



Early retail "You Pick Em" potato sales at the Hank Peterson farm, Moorhead, MN. In 1938 the price for potatoes were two cents per pound.

county and thousands of rods of ditching resulted" which benefitted about 8,400 acres of land. The watershed projects have continued their work to the present which explains why many thousand acres have been added to the tax rolls and production base.

In the livestock sector May reported that there was increased beef breeding and fattening during the year but he admonished that there was still a need for intense culling of the breeding stock. He cited Denton Jepson, Eugene Peterson, Max Goldberg, and Fred Janssen as securing "the best bulls possible without going completely wild on prices."

He closed his report on a down note, "Dairying has been on the decline because of the lack of help and they are able to make a good living without milking cows. In the last three years there has been a reduction of 10,000 dairy cattle in the county. Without the 4-H dairy exhibit there would have been exactly '0' dairy cattle at the county fair."

There was a slight turnaround in the dairy sector in January of 1946 when a Dairy Herd

Improvement Association (DHIA) was organized. Agent May reported that there was increasing interest in dairy production. Some farmers had done severe culling of their herd. Plus, the extension office had received several requests for milk houses and also for

pasture improvement data. The dairy people were encouraged by the news that self-propelled corn pickers and mechanical silo unloaders were introduced which greatly reduced labor requirements.

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**CONTINUED ON PAGE 27**

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## Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# Agriculture In The Boom Years 1945-1959

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enterprise to receive much attention was beef. The annual report stated that little encouragement was needed and in some cases probably discouragement would be better for some were paying too much for breeding stock which the market prices for finished beef could not justify.

However, some potato farmers had cattle to supply manure for their light soil and were improving the carrying capacity of the pastures. They also used creep feeders to keep the manure on the fields which were then used in rotation for potatoes. Beef feeders were aided with new corn technology for if corn did not ripen it could be converted to ear corn silage.

Only a couple hundred acres of onions were grown in the

county in 1946. Henry Peterson and Paul Horn were probably the most likely growers. The yield was excellent but the demand was so poor that "thousands of bushels were being plowed under."

The prison camps were closed down and the prisoners were returned to their homeland so Jamaicans were imported to replace them. "Texas-Mexicans were encouraged to come to the Valley to help in vegetables, potatoes, and sugar beets. This created discussion about better housing, sanitary toilet facilities, gardens, and educational and recreational facilities for the children."

The labor question created great interest in mechanization. Precision planters were needed which also required better soil preparation and cultivation to help in weed control. Improved toppers were also being developed.

At a meeting of the beet growers the opinion was clear that "the entire production process . . . in relatively few years would be almost entirely mechanized."

Increased regulations and accompanying labor costs made that a certainty. In some respects 1946 was a trying year because heavy frost damage to spring planting required replanting. Fall harvest was delayed because of a shortage of rail cars, then good

weather came to the rescue. But it was all worthwhile when a heavy yield of up to 19 tons of beets per acre were harvested. Even better was the news that the company was locating a site for a new plant that would be ready in 1948.

Potato acreage peaked at 37,894 acres in 1933 and declined steadily. In 1946 only slightly over 15,000 acres were planted. The extension report indicated that DDT was helping to take care of insects, but farmers needed to do a better job of rotating and fertilizing.

In March 1946 Ronald D. Offutt, Sr. purchased a 220-acre farm in section 15 in Moorhead Township. Ronald's family was one of the leading potato farmers and marketers in the state of Missouri but they had been buying seed and partnering with valley potato farmers since 1917. In 1933 William Offutt purchased land in Moland Township and in 1935 Berch Offutt came to the county to operate that land. The next year Berch rented a 485-acre farm near Watts Siding and in 1943 he purchased a farm in Moland Township. Ronald soon established himself as a potato buyer in the valley.

The national economy continued to boom in 1947 and agriculture was carried along in the tide. Farmers were seeding more sweet clover to control weeds and help in soil building. Field peas were seeded by others for the same reason. More commercial fertilizer was applied as it and spreaders became more available. The corn crop was heavy and of good quality.

After storing their needs for the year, many growers were able to market much of their crop. A new and more practical beet topper improved the harvest situation for that crop. The biggest problem for the small grain farmers was a shortage of combines, but a few were obtained from North Dakota. Transient labor provided ample help for the grain harvest and even though the potato yield was reduced because of adverse weather, the high schools were contacted for help to ease the demand for harvest labor.

"All schools excused children for the potato harvest and a few schools closed for a week or

10 days." The beet company recruited about 200 Mexican nationals which were needed for harvest.

Technology gave agriculture another boost in 1948 when self-propelled sprayers became commercially available, pipeline-milking machines were introduced and grain aeration systems were adapted to force fumigants into large storage bins to control insects. Three new makes of beet harvesters were used. The International was slow but it stood up for the full season.

Agent Bob Gee wrote, "Chlordane, DDT, and Toxaphene have revolutionized insect control...Grasshoppers and crickets were abundant this summer and fall. Without the new insecticides, terrific damage would have been done. It is the opinion of this writer (Gee) that there will never be extensive and thorough weed eradication until less expensive methods both in time and money are developed that is weedicides with the effectiveness of the new insecticides." He commented that 34 dairy farmers used A-I, "The artificially conceived calves...are more or less a novelty."

The corn crop was the best since 1941 and produced a very good income. Gee stated, "Farmers have not considered corn as an important crop in the county and have not been as careful in their cultural practices as they have with other crops. . . . But there is definite improvement."

Soybean yields ranged from 15 to 30 bushels. He wrote, "They have made an excellent cultivated crop in the rotation and have a definite purpose as well as being a reasonably good cash crop."

Price supports for potatoes made it possible to use more costly practices such as airplane dusting with newer fungicides. "DDT is the answer as far as insects are concerned. Just apply it and they die," wrote Gee. The general yield for potatoes in 1948 was 175 to 225 bushels per acre with some yields up to 300.

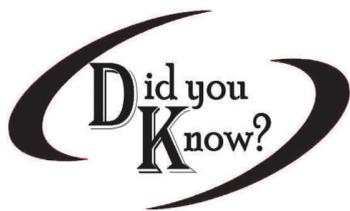
The new sugarbeet processing plant went into operation so there was great expectation for the future. The acreage climbed each year, but not everyone was happy. "Labor was more

independent than ever this year especially those working for farmers who had harvesters. Under normal conditions many beets would have been left in the ground... But ideal harvesting conditions lasted until November 10 but by November 6 the harvest was completed. However, contracted wages for harvest rose from \$1.50 per ton to \$3.00 before harvest was completed. Beet farmers benefitted by using a grain/sweet clover rotation which produced seventeen tons per acre on several fields. The following year 30 to 40 bushel wheat yields "were not all that uncommon."

Gee had closed his 1948 report in this manner: "The Moorhead area . . . is one of the important onion producing areas of the United States. It has advantages . . . but also some disadvantages-they are so labor intensive. In his 1949 report he continued, "There is only one thing that onions are good for and that is human food. They cannot be diverted to other uses. County farmers are dropping out of onions."

The best corn crop in ten years was produced in 1949. "Even the 95-and 100-day corn ripened." Corn was near the top that year as a cash crop. Soybeans yielded 27 to 30 bushels. For several years farmers had made money growing them, and the acreage expanded rapidly. The biggest improvement in potato production came about in storage with the availability of electricity to run the blowers to lessen the humidity problem.

The extension service was involved with many land leveling and drainage demonstrations and planning future projects. Hydraulic levelers and Whirlwing Terracers were used to make shallow drain ditches. In all, 142 farmers attended the demonstration and 50 percent of the level land farmers did some ditching in the fall of 1949. The Soil Conservation Service equipment was in use "practically all of the time." Membership in the DHIA grew from 86 in 1947 to 215 in 1949. Most of the herds used artificial insemination. The average cow in the association produced 10,075 pounds of milk which sold for \$435.02 and had a feed cost of \$160.27.



Canuto and Andrea Cruz are thought to be the first Mexican-Americans to become permanent residents of Clay County. They came to the Red River Valley in the 1920s as migrant workers in the newly developing sugar beet industry.

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*Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...*

# 1950s See Great Strides In Ag Technology

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yielded over 50 bushels but many farmers had not kept pace with the fertility programs. Wheat needed a more favorable position in the rotation, and it would be the highest return crop with a good rust resistant seed. About \$800,000 was spent in the county for fertilizer but more time should be spent with the dealers to give them a better understanding of the value of a good soil testing program. The extension test plots showed that following proper recommendations brought a return of \$3 for each dollar spent on fertilizer.

Progress was being made in the South Buffalo Watershed which consisted of about 130,000 acres in the Stony Creek, Hay Creek, Whiskey Creek and South Branch of the Buffalo River areas. More education was needed for those who lived in the area of the South Branch of the Wildrice River about what can be done for them.

Beef breeding herds were dropping out partly because not enough was done to make pastures more profitable. The same applied to the lack of good hay programs. On the other hand, there was more activity in beef feeding. Cattle feeders Donald Grant, Hiram Drache, and Ed Dullea all cited low feed cost as their advantage. Mechanical potato harvesters were being quickly adopted, and schools no longer had to excuse students for picking potatoes. The year ended with the soybean harvest which lasted until December 15. "It was almost unbelievable to see harvesters on the frozen ground and picking up beets as well as they did but several thousand acres were left in the area northeast of Moorhead."

The first commercial production of potato flakes and the herringbone milking parlor system that was developed in New Zealand were introduced in 1957. I am not sure if herringbone systems were ever used in Clay County but there are probably a few people in the Barnesville area that might remember Gateway Flakes which became a reality in 1959.

In 1958 American farmers treated 92 million acres of cropland with chemicals to



This is a six-row sugarbeet planter with fertilizer boxes, using 20 inch row spacing. Fifteen to 20 acres could be planted each day depending on conditions. The photo was taken at the Peterson Truck Farms, Moorhead, MN 1939.

control insects, diseases, weeds and brush. Airplanes treated 21 million of those acres. That year Clay County had about 600,000 acres in all farms and of the 1,700 farmers 317 of them did soil testing. The extension agent opened his report with a very positive statement: "The year 1958 will be remembered as one of the better years for Clay County farmers. Grain crops were excellent, wheat hit an all time record of 60 bushels per acre, potatoes were spotty but mostly good, flax and sugar beets were good with one of the smoothest beet harvest recorded. Corn and soybeans were slow all season but came through surprisingly well. The September sunshine held off the frost until the end of the month. Livestock farmers enjoyed good prices . . . and total cash income will be between 18 and 19 million dollars." That was up from \$13 million, which was the low point, after the post WWII income decline.

Elevator managers complained because the protein in the big wheat crop was low for farmers had not used enough nitrogen. The education program using test plots for potatoes was met with some resistance because some feared that new seed could be a source of disease. But eventually a total of 18 test plots were established of which four were in Holy Cross, six in Alliance, and six in Barnesville townships. Dale Barry had one of the potato plots in Alliance and had some top yields of 287.7 bushels/acre of Red Lasoda, 296 of Red Pontiacs, and 329.1 of Kennebec.

Weeds were a problem in

soybeans and for the first time ever Daellenbach reported seeing wild oats that was taller than the corn in some fields. By contrast sugar beets were affected by webworm, and virtually all the fields were sprayed so the crop was not severely damaged. The soil was in perfect condition for the mechanical harvesters and the beets came to the plant "cleaner than ever before. The sugar content was exceptionally high at 16.5 percent.

Green Giant Canning Co. had a representative in the area to determine if the county would be a good place to produce canning peas. John Nelson, of Sabin, and Bob Berg and Kenneth Christianson, of Barnesville, had plots for Green Giant.

A very isolated incident took place that year which eventually led to a significant growth in the potato industry for Minnesota. Sixteen year old Ronnie Offutt was the on site manager of the 220 acre Offutt farm because his father Ronald was in Missouri operating their potato farm there. The Offutts were trying to hit the early fall market by having potatoes in Missouri. Ronnie was well versed because his father had given him 'hands on' as soon as he was capable of doing the work. He did such a good job in 1958 that in 1959 he was able to convince Ronald to rent an adjacent 400 acres.

The dairy industry kept dwindling and was down to about 9,000 cows of which 2,083 were in 73 herds that were still in the DHIA. Twenty-three herds had an average butter fat production of over 400 pounds per cow, and the top seven cows ranged from 677 to 776 pounds.

About 2.5 million dozen eggs were still being produced in the county. Daellenbach wrote, "If the quality of eggs could be improved so it would bring one cent more per dozen, it would mean \$25,000 addition income."

Three minor crops garnered most of the initial attention in the 1959 report. Extension

had worked hard to convince livestock farmers in the eastern part of the county to plant Birdsfoot Trefoil because it was very winter hardy and would far out yield native pastures.

Sunflowers, which had been popular for a few years, had practically dropped out of the

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## Thank You!

**Congratulations** to the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County for their great work in collecting, recording and preserving the history and culture of Clay County and the surrounding area.

Please join me in supporting the HCSCC through your membership, your volunteer time and your attendance at sponsored events. You can join in the fun and get started by attending the Fundraiser on October 26th. I hope to see you there.

It is a pleasure representing you on the Clay County Commission. I would appreciate your vote on November 6th.

*Sincerely, Jon Evert*

This ad was prepared and paid for on his own behalf.



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## Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

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picture. Many people did not like the heavy losses to blackbirds each fall, and some complained because of the volunteer flowers in the following year. Those who used 2-4-D were able to control the volunteer problem, and in 1959 the contract price of \$0.065 per pound caused a renewed interest.

The winter had caused a severe winter kill for alfalfa, but an ideal growing season helped a rebound. This was fortunate for those who grew alfalfa because drought in southwestern Minnesota and in South Dakota created a good market for hay. A total of 504 tons of excellent quality alfalfa, 775 tons of fair quality alfalfa, and 395 tons of good quality alfalfa-brome were sold.

The number of dairy cows dropped in 1959 to about 7,800. The top 68 herds averaged nearly 30 cows to a herd with a butter fat production of almost 400 pounds per cow. In 1935 90 percent of the farms had dairy cattle and by 1960 the figure was 45 percent. There was no indication that any of the farmers were willing to develop larger herds that would justify having a proper work schedule.

The future was brighter for crops with a new high of 379 out of 1,600 farmers taking soil tests. Peter Hanson, of



Loading onions after they were dug and dried on the H.R. "Hank" Peterson farm in Moorhead, MN. This was 1947, farmers were trying every method to eliminate costly hand harvesting. This was also used to load sugarbeets after they were lifted out of the ground and topped.

Elkton Township, had the potato fertilizer test plot which produced new highs in yields. Dazoc made 364 bushels, Pontiacs 371, and Red Lasoda 472. Potato acreage in the county was down to 14,028 acres but total production continued to rise.

In 1957 some progressive farmers in the southern part of the county envisioned that they could create a better market for potatoes by establishing a flake plant and formed the Barnesville Development Corporation to make the project possible. It was projected that the plant would require 600 carloads of potatoes and employ 45 people working in three shifts for nine months a year. The opening of the plant in 1959 was heralded

as "a significant milestone for agriculture."

Gateway Flakes, Inc. was the official name of the enterprise. About 65 percent of the \$600,000 cost was funded by area farmers. Contracts were made for about 50 percent of the potatoes needed at a base price of \$1.00 per hundred weight, field run, bulk delivery at harvest time. Many other plants came into operation at that time so competition was keen. The extension report closed, "It will take a while before housewives will make general use of the product."

In 1959 about 10 percent of the acres suffered some hail damage, and there was excessive water damage in the Barnesville area. County agriculture was on a roll, and in addition to the flake plant a new 4-H Round Up building in Moorhead and another 4-H building at the fair grounds reflected a new optimism. It was all helped by a cash farm income of nearly \$19 million.

Innovation did not stop. Two test plots in the county in 1960 were for atrazine which had just become available, and fertilizer. One was at our farm and another was in Tansem Township. Daellenbach stated that it would kill all weeds and should be used only with corn. The experience gained from the test proved that. I could raise corn and not have to cultivate. In the second year the test area was 100 percent black which really stood out in a lush wheat field. Everybody laughed when they saw the black square patch in the wheat field and so did we because it was all we needed to know so we could raise continuous corn with no till.

war years the big problem since the 1920s was over production which for the nation was a blessing when the alternative is considered.

The decade of the 1950s opened with 23,048,000 people living on 5,388,437 farms and ended with 15,635,000 people on 3,710,503 farms. That was a 31.1% decline in the number of farms. Farming had dropped from 12.2 percent of the labor force to 8.3 percent.

The major portion of that decline was attributed to the Soil Bank which provided farmers a graceful opportunity to withdraw from farming. It was seriously criticized by many because they were sure that by losing all those farms we would also lose all the small, farm service centers. In my research I have learned of only one farmer who returned to farming. What does that prove?

We were married in 1948 and Ada saved the slips from our first grocery bill dated March 6, 1948, which totaled \$9.43. At our 60th anniversary we priced the identical 21 products and quantity and the bill was \$42.71. In 1948 the Consumer Price Index was at 250 and in 2008 it was at 2,200. Our food bill had increased a multiple of 4.53 times while the price index had increased 8.8 times.

Nationally the cost of food is about 10 percent of disposable income and at least 50 percent of that is spent for eating out which is much more costly than eating at home so why do people complain about the price of food?

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# Popularity Of TV Grows In Post-War Years

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9**  
large groups of people could be reached by the transmissions.

As television licenses spread around the country, the audience continued to swell. However, the opportunity to purchase a station was still risky and depended on the size of the TV market. In a city like Minneapolis there would be a larger audience and more competition for ratings, while the Clay County area was much more sparsely populated.

In fact, WDAY, the first television station in the eastern part of North Dakota, didn't come along until 1953. It was the third television station in

the state, and provided NBC programming for the Fargo-Moorhead area.

Once the television took hold of the American imagination, its growth was immense.

While around 6,000 television sets were in homes in 1946, the total skyrocketed to 12 million five years later in 1951. What was once considered an uncertain new form of technology had become the norm for homes across the country.

Part of the growth was likely the increase in actual programming. In the years after WWII, much of what is now considered "prime time" in the



Television began as an uncertain technology but quickly grew to become a part of everyday American life. Usage increased from roughly 6,000 sets in the United States in 1946 to over 12 million in 1951. Early programs included sitcoms, game shows, dramas, variety shows and anthologies.

evenings was still empty air.

Over time, however, NBC, CBS, ABC and the DuMont Television Network began to fill their schedules with sitcoms, variety shows, sporting events, quiz shows, anthologies and dramas.

The public's drastic transition from radio to television is perhaps not that surprising. After all, many of the most popular early television shows were adaptations of famous radio programs. The audience was already built in, and now had the added entertainment value of seeing the story play out visually as well as through audio.

Among the many early black-and-white classics were "I Love Lucy," "Howdy Doody," "Amos 'n' Andy," "The Honeymooners," "Father Knows Best," "Flipper," "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," "Leave it to Beaver," "Family Affair," "The Aldrich Family," "The Goldbergs," "The Courtship of Eddie's Father," "Nanny and the Professor," "My Three Sons," "The Life of Riley," "The Jack Benny Program," "The George Burns and Gracie

Allen Show," "Bachelor Father," and many more.

The listed shows were all sitcoms, or situation comedies, a term referring to programs featuring the same cast of

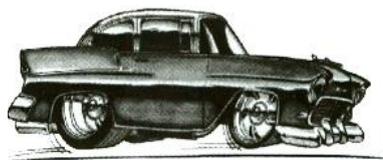
characters each episode. Each week a familiar set of faces would entertain TV viewers with a new problem to be addressed

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 31**



John Cameron Swayze was among the many anchors that became familiar faces to viewers as television started to compete with newspapers as a major source of news. Swayze worked for NBC as anchor of the "Camel News Caravan," an early news program sponsored by the cigarette company.

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## Popularity Of TV Grows In Post-War Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

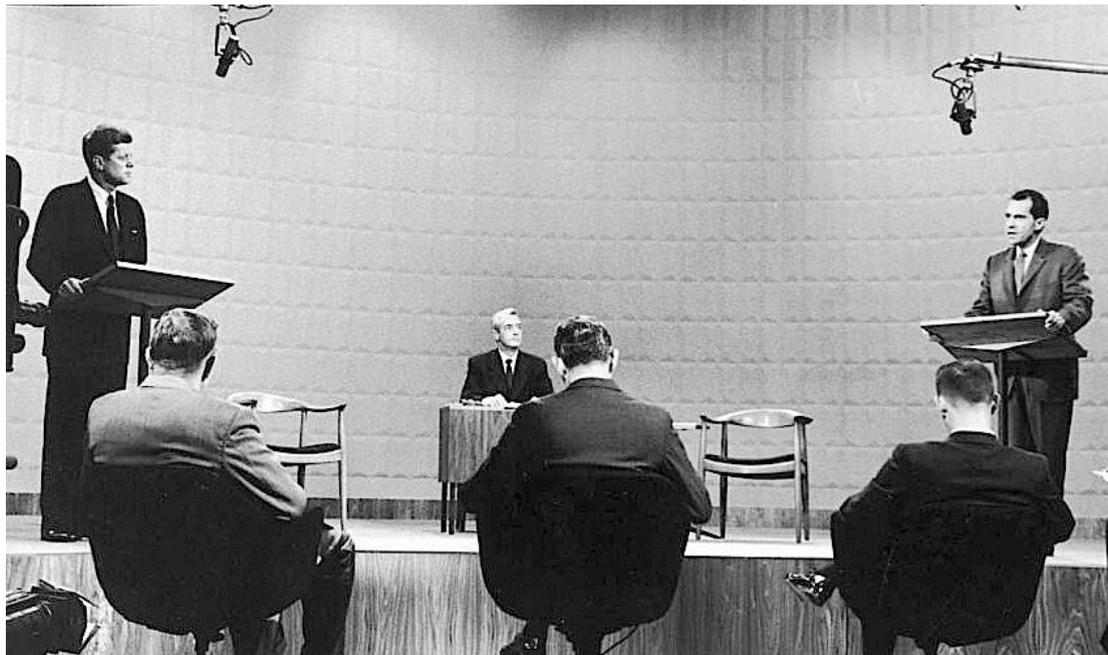
and new lessons to learn.

Perhaps the most famous show of its time was "I Love Lucy," the program created by Lucille Ball and her husband Desi Arnaz. After premiering in 1951, the show went on to produce 180 episodes across six seasons.

The program was also noteworthy for how it transferred the seat of television production from New York City to Los Angeles. While many television programs at the time were performed live and sent across the country from the east coast, Desi Arnaz instead decided to film the program in Los Angeles, allowing it to be preserved for the future.

The deal meant less initial salary for the work, as well as having to pay for some parts of the production of the series. However, it paid off when the show found massive success and made Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz millionaires.

"I Love Lucy" popularized the practice of filming in front of a live audience, as well as using three cameras for multiple



Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy faced off in the first televised presidential debate on September 26, 1960. Since then, TV coverage has become a constant part of politics.

angles, both practices which have since become standard in many television comedies to this day.

By switching to filmed sitcoms, an actor's work could be preserved in a way that was previously impossible with live broadcasts.

Early programs were often based around an actor's previous comedy. Such was the case with "The Honeymooners," which starred Jackie Gleason as Ralph Kramden, a bus driver who lived in Brooklyn with his wife, Alice. "The Honeymooners" began as part of DuMont's "Cavalcade of Stars" and later "The Jackie Gleason Show." While it only lasted 39 episodes, the program made a lasting impact and is regarded as a classic television comedy.

Just as TV shows were based around comedians like Jackie Gleason, radio stars eventually found success in television as well, including personalities like Bob Hope and Jack Benny.

Just as the TV sitcom was modeled after a radio show format, television soon featured programs based on vaudeville, another earlier form of entertainment. The traveling entertainments of the past took the form of variety shows on the major networks.

They soon became some of the most popular early TV programs by the late 1940s, including "Toast of the Town," which later became "The Ed Sullivan Show."

"Texaco Star Theater," starring Milton Berle, became a huge hit for many years and earning the host the nickname "Mr. Television."

Variety shows lived up to their title, including elements like live audiences, music, skits and comedy.

Anthology shows also

title.

Popular anthology shows of the period included "Kraft Television Theatre," "Playhouse 90," "Studio One," "The United States Steel Hour" and "The Goodyear Playhouse."

Early television programs were often sponsored by companies that included their names within the show title. Also, the sponsor's products were often integrated into the program itself as a form of advertising. Eventually the trend died off and advertisements were relocated to the breaks in programming still used today.

Sitcoms would dominate TV programming until the late 1950s. By 1960, the evening lineup included a host of Western-themed hour and half-hour productions, including such notable programs as "Gunsmoke," "Rawhide," "Wagon Train," "Wanted Dead or Alive," "Have Gun-Will Travel" and "Bonanza."

During the 1950s, television

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47



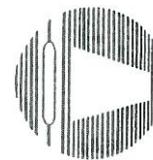
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# Truman And The Baby Boom Era

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

in the rural economies that had flourished during the war years.

But the ag economy was the only part of the national economy that did not accelerate under the Eisenhower administration. While ag labored to keep up with the rest of the nation as farm sizes grew, commodity prices and demand for product dropped, and employment stagnated on the farm, there was slow but steady growth in all other sectors of the economy.

With all of the presidential politicking that is going on right now, the picture on Page 14 seems appropriate. It was snapped by Downer area farmer Art Halverson at a whistle stop rally in Moorhead on October 14, 1952. The photo was furnished for this publication by Art Halverson's son, Brian, who still works the family farm near Downer.

Delivering a speech in Moorhead, off the rear end of the presidential train, was then President Harry S. Truman. It can be assumed that Truman was delivering a campaign speech promoting the Democratic slate of candidates in the upcoming fall presidential election slated in just a bit over three weeks. The ticket that year for the Democrats consisted of Adlai Stevenson for the chief executive's office and Estes Kefauver for the vice presidential position. Those two would lose the

1952 and 1956 elections to the immensely popular World War II hero Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight David Eisenhower and his running mate, a little-known congressman from California, Richard Milhaus Nixon. The 1952 election of "Ike" would end a 20-year stranglehold that the Democrats had on the White House since Franklin Delano Roosevelt was first elected back in 1932.

FDR would be elected to an unprecedented four terms as President of the United States. He would actually serve out three full terms and less than three months of his fourth term. The nation was shocked to hear in April of 1945 of the passing of FDR, the only president that a generation had known.

Picked to replace the legend of FDR was an unknown, upstart vice president and haberdasher from Missouri, Harry S. Truman. Harry was a likeable sort but not much was expected of him as presidential timber. He was hardly a John Nance Garner, the intellectual vice president that had preceded him. Truman had risen through the political ranks in Missouri, some say with connections to the Pendergast crime mob from Kansas City. Lacking more than a high school education, the nomination of Truman to run on the 1944 presidential ticket with an obviously frail FDR, caused many to wonder who was



President Harry Truman displays one of the biggest newspaper blunders of all time, the announcement that Thomas Dewey had defeated Truman for the presidency in 1948. Didn't happen that way as Truman won the election.

actually pulling the strings in the Democratic party behind the scenes.

If anyone behind the scenes was expecting to control Harry S. Truman, they were in for a rude awakening. From humble beginnings, born in Lamar, Missouri in 1884, Truman would become arguably the best president of the 20th century.

The beloved FDR had achieved near sainthood in many quarters with his social and some even today argue, socialistic programs. But it was Harry Truman that wound up doing the heavy lifting and the actual dirty work that needed doing at the end of World War II.

While the war in Europe was all but over by the time he took over the presidential offices, Truman would have the final say in the terms of the surrender of Germany. He would initiate and oversee the Marshall Plan that would rebuild Europe. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall was the architect of the plan that would rebuild Europe. In a bit of irony, Marshall had turned down Reserve Colonel Truman's offer to take an active role in the United States Army during WWII while he was a United States Senator at the age

of 47. Truman would eventually become Marshall's boss.

Truman was faced with the gut-wrenching decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japan, a decision that could cost hundreds of thousands of Japanese lives but may well have saved that many American lives. Truman would preside over the formation

of the United Nations, NATO and would be the guy in charge of trying to hold the USSR from taking over all of Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Truman would face a hostile congress throughout the three and three-quarter years of his inherited presidency. In 1948

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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## Scheffler Recalls Service During Korean War



Scheffler spent time along the 38th parallel in Korea, which is now known as the de-militarized zone separating North and South Korea.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

South Korea.

It was during this period of time at Pork Chop Hill that Scheffler believes an event happened that saved his life.

To maintain communication, the company ran wires to keep in contact with what was going on at the front. The system of wires was connected to a "commo," or communications hub.

Because of his previous experience working with radios back home, Scheffler noticed there was an error with how the wires were being spliced.

"They called it a commo, where you run the switchboard and radio for the company," Scheffler said. "I met a man named Jim Cunningham, who was in charge of the commo,

in the trench one day and said 'You're not splicing the wires right.'"

After Corporal Cunningham learned Scheffler's name, he told him that the radio he had ordered back at the prison camp had arrived and was in storage.

"They had shipped it up to the front!" Scheffler said. "Cunningham said, if you bring that radio along, I'll get you into the commo to fix the problem."

Scheffler brought the radio and shared it with the soldiers, then fixed the connection problems.

"In regular infantry everyone walks on you. You're the lowest of the low," Scheffler said. "Then when I got in there with the radio, they kind of looked after me like I was some kind of god. That was a lifesaver for me! I know I wouldn't have survived if those

things hadn't happened.

"Having the radio made me feel important, for the music," he said. "They kind of looked after me after that."

Scheffler said he believes that the support of other soldiers, especially Cunningham, helped him make it through a trying overseas experience.

"It's all luck or circumstances," he said. "I would have probably never met Cunningham if I hadn't been switched from Item Company to Able Company."

While he was overseas, Scheffler regularly received letters from his father that kept him connected to home.

"I think it was more than one a month," he said of the letters, which gave descriptive updates of the community.

During his military service Scheffler had several close calls. One night he was stationed on the north side of Arsenal Hill, near a sheltered area with sandbags and timber as fortification.

"I could see the Chinese one night milling around down below the hill," he said. "But I couldn't see too good so I stepped out in the open part of the trench. I no more than got outside and a mortar round came right through where I was standing. I would've been mush, you know? It was a good thing their aim was good."

One night during the winter he accompanied a medic to a hill.

"Me and the medic went out and there were so many dead Chinese soldiers you could hardly walk among them," he said. "What struck me was the fear on their faces."

It was the middle of April 1953 when the Chinese soldiers severely attacked Pork Chop Hill, causing Scheffler's company to be sent to retaliate. However, before they left he became ill from a series of shots the soldiers had been given.

"While I was in the MASH hospital they sent our company up Pork Chop, and the Chinese hit it real hard and my good friend Jim Cunningham got killed," he said. "He got killed April 18. It always stuck in my mind, that spring."

It was the only time in nearly two years that Scheffler was sick. After three days he was sent back to the front.

"When I did get on the hill there were two trucks loaded with dead American soldiers," he said. "Just piled on."

After a few days of R&R in May, Scheffler was stationed at an outpost at Snook Hill.

"They hit us one night about May 15," he said. "Just pounded the hell out of us."

The fighting continued into June and July, when one of Scheffler's friends was injured from a mortar round to the arm on Pork Chop Hill.

"Actually I think it saved his life because the Chinese hit Pork Chop and took it, and he would've been killed" Scheffler said. "They were bound to take it. Our company was up there and nearly every guy was killed."

The fighting finally came to an end with an armistice agreement signed on July 27, 1953.

"I can remember the night they signed the armistice," Scheffler said. "The moon came out and everything got so damn quiet. After all the shelling and stuff, it was really unreal."

Soon after the agreement, Scheffler was sent home. However, the intended troop ship was loaded, so he and a dozen other soldiers traveled across the ocean on a destroyer escort.

"We slept and ate with a Navy crew," he said. "It could've been a Caribbean cruise, you know? But I was going home and I didn't enjoy it because I was trying to comprehend what had all taken place before."

Scheffler ended up spending 21 months in active duty as an infantryman. He stayed in the reserves until 1960.

Scheffler passed under the Golden Gate Bridge on his return to the United States. He took a train to Colorado, then flew to Minneapolis.

"Would you believe I got a plane ticket from Minneapolis to Fargo for \$14?" he asked with a laugh. "Can you image? You couldn't warm the engine up for \$14. I've still got the damn ticket."

Scheffler met his parents in Fargo and rode with them back to Barnesville. He continued farming after the war, as well as doing repairs around the community.

"I think I was in just about everybody's house in Barnesville at one time," he said with a laugh.

Scheffler and his wife, Mary Ann, were married in the 1970s. They have two children. Their son, William, works in computer services at Minnesota State University Moorhead. Their daughter, Peggy, resides in Carrington, N.D.

Looking back on his experience, Scheffler explained that the war had a powerful effect on him, and it was a unique set of circumstances that allowed him to make it through. To him, his radio and the connections it provided to other soldiers helped him survive.

"I think about being over there. It's a long time ago, but there's still, after all these years, many nights I can't sleep," he said. "You can be a good soldier, but it's circumstances that save you. It's all luck or circumstances."

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# Bennett Served In Korea On Carrier

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

in one area and Russian MIGs overhead in another clearly defined area.

“So if somebody had an itchy trigger finger, it could’ve been another World War,” he said.

Bennett said that serving on an aircraft carrier was rough, and often full of unexpected dangers. One time a pilot was trying to land but things went wrong.

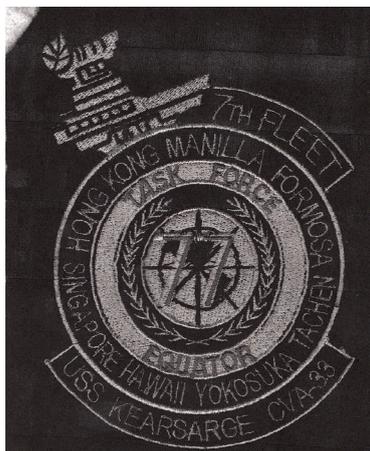
“It’s a lot more dangerous than people think,” Bennett said. “This one time, a pilot was coming really fast and high, then he hit the deck and jumped over barricades and landed up front, in a bunch of planes they were refueling. Luckily, nobody got hurt.”

There were other times when Bennett suffered injuries during his time on the aircraft carrier, including being knocked unconscious while unloading ammunition and hurting his back during an emergency.

The hustle and bustle became normal to Bennett as he helped the Kearsarge maintain its carrier air patrol (CAP) while also providing cover for ground troops with several aircraft launches per day.

Life on an aircraft carrier was never an exercise in luxury. Bennett recalled times he would be at sea for weeks on end. Soldiers had to learn to make do with their situation, including a limited amount of food selection.

“We were out there once for 62 days!,” he said. “In the Navy you ate what you were given.



Joe Bennett’s Korean War Navy patch shows the name of his aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Kearsarge, as well as the various places it visited. They include Hawaii, Yokosuka, Manila, Hong Kong, Singapore, Formosa and Tachen.

Powdered eggs and milk don’t taste so good, but I guess I got used to it. But the first thing I did when I got to shore was get some real milk.”

Bennett recalled one time at sea when the mechanism for removing salt water broke down and the crew was unable to use fresh water.

“So for about a week to 10 days you had to take a salt shower,” he said. “It was just rough. You talk about hard water, like on the farm. That’s rough. But this was worse than I ever had!”

The aircraft carrier docked at ports all across the Indian Ocean. Bennett’s patch from his time on the U.S.S. Kearsarge includes the port of Yokosuka, Japan.

“That was our main port overseas,” Bennett explained. “That’s where we went for our fuel and supplies.”

After spending time at sea, the U.S.S. Kearsarge also stopped at Singapore.

“We pulled in there once,” he said. “Not for very long, maybe four days. That wasn’t an actual dock. There, we were anchored out in the water.”

The carriers frequently anchored away from shore and allowed the soldiers to take smaller transports in to enjoy some time on land, provided they were back again by midnight.

When the troops finally returned to their home port in Yokosuka they were able to relax briefly at an enlisted men’s club.

“It was a nice place,” Bennett said. “That’s always where we went first. That time after we were at sea for 62 days, boy that was something, just to get away!”

Bennett also worked as a shore police officer in eight hour shifts which rotated between soldiers. He would work with the local Japanese officers to maintain order between the soldiers and civilians while at port.

“If they had a sailor or anybody they thought was out of line, they contacted us and we got involved in it,” Bennett said. “I had shore patrol quite a bit when we went into different ports.”

Usually the problems were minor, such as soldiers having a bit too much fun back on land. Bennett explained that, because of the intense heat at many ports, the local bars would be heavily

air-conditioned.

“I don’t mean mild, I mean cold!” he said with a laugh.

After the soldiers had a few beers and some liquor in the cool building, they would be in for a surprise when the time came to venture back into the heat.

“They’d be so cockeyed we’d have to bring them right back to the ship!” Bennett said.

Perhaps the warmest place the U.S.S. Kearsarge stopped was Manila, the capital city of the Philippines.

“That was what we call hot!” Bennett said. “That was hotter than the equator!”

The aircraft carrier also visited Hong Kong, where it received an immediate welcome.

“Within twenty minutes there were all these little boats with people wanting us to throw money and food,” Bennett recalled. “It got you thinking about how much we had when they were trying to live on a little rice.”

He tossed some fruit and currency that couldn’t be exchanged to the residents on his way out.

The carrier usually stayed at each port about a week to get supplies and address mechanical issues.

“Also, a lot of it was PR with the officers,” Bennett added.

After three years on an aircraft carrier, Bennett left active duty in 1956 and was fully discharged from the military in June 1960. He briefly returned to Wisconsin before moving to California to get a job with Firestone in 1958. After working in sales, he entered property management with his wife, Cory.

They managed properties in California and Nevada before moving to Minnesota in 1973 to manage the Morningside Motel. They were also very active with the Bennett Cooperative Park, a mobile home neighborhood in Moorhead where they hosted several community events.

The Bennetts have two children. Their daughter lives in Rosholt, SD, and their son has remained in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

“Both my kids are very much involved in helping other people and that’s what I feel so great about,” Bennett said.

It is Bennett’s opinion that, in the years after the war, Korean veterans have failed to receive the same attention as

those from World War II and Vietnam. Particularly lacking is the amount of war records that would help him secure aid later in life.

“Veterans like me, we fell into that gap. We are having a hard time getting our benefits,” he said. “When we tried to go get help from our records, there was no paper trail.”

Nevertheless, Bennett remains proud of his service. He is a member of the VFW Post 1223 in Dilworth, the Moorhead American Legion Post #21 and Vietnam Veteran’s Association #941. He is also working to create a Korean War veteran’s association.

Nowadays Bennett stays busy helping veterans of all wars.

“I’m still going,” he said. “I still volunteer at the Clay County Veterans Service, sometimes three afternoons a month. If someone can’t make it I’ll come in.”

The experiences of his past, good and bad, have left a strong impact on Bennett.

“The Navy taught me a lot about who I am, and how you treat people. And I think it’s getting a lot better, too,” he said of the public’s view of the Korean War. “I’ve had quite a few people stop me and say ‘thank you for your service.’”

## Meet The HCSCC Board Members...



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JADE ROSENFELDT

Jade Rosenfeldt serves as HCSCC’s secretary. Jade grew up in Moorhead, graduated from Concordia College and then graduated from the University of North Dakota School of Law.

Jade currently works as an attorney for the Vogel Law Firm in Moorhead, Minnesota. She works primarily in the areas of criminal defense, guardianship/conservatorships, and environmental law. Jade is very active in the community. She currently serves on the Women’s Leadership Council for the United Way and the Clay County Law Library Board.

Jade and her husband, Steve, along with their son, Weston, reside in Moorhead. For relaxation, Jade enjoys spending time at the lake with her family.



LES BAKKE

Les Bakke, retired computer director from MSUM, has a long interest in history and genealogy. Les started at MSUM as a history major, changed to mathematics and then to computer science receiving his Bachelor’s degree in 1972. Les also has a Master’s degree in counseling.

Les is active on several boards including Heritage Education Commission, Moorhead Public Service, Moorhead Community Access TV, and Moorhead Economic Development Authority. Les also manages web sites for several non-profit organizations.

Les has lived in Moorhead since returning from service in the US Air Force in 1968.

See you at the Fall Fundraiser Friday October 26!



## Hawley Man Supplied Power For Air Force



Gerhardson maintained two diesel generators at the Fifth Air Force base in Seoul, and two generators located in the country. He was sometimes assisted in his work by skilled civilian mechanics.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

bombing and things like that," he said. "But seeing those F-86s was really a morale booster for the guys on the ground. It demonstrated the superiority of the American Air Force."

Despite being thousands of miles from his home in Minnesota, Gerhardson found the Korean climate not much different from what he grew up

with.

"They have typhoons during the summer," he recalled. "But other than that it was just like being in Minnesota, so I fit very well."

And, just like Minnesota, the winter season brought icy temperatures to the soldiers, who were sleeping in tents with only a small coil stove for heat.

"That's all we had, there was no permanent structure.

We froze, but that was alright," Gerhardson said. "It was better than being up in the division where all the people were sleeping in trenches."

The area of Korea he was stationed in was rural, similar to Gerhardson's upbringing on the family farm.

"It was all small farms, and everybody had a little plot of land where they grew their vegetables for themselves," he said. "There were business people and entrepreneurs in Seoul, but the ones in our area were just people making enough of a living to feed themselves."

The local farmers maintained rice paddies and had a diet Gerhardson recalls as close to vegetarian.

One local food that he cannot forget, even if he wants to, is kimchi. Kimchi is made from pickled vegetables with added seasoning.

"It smelled terrible, like something rotten," he said with a grimace. "Any place you went you would smell this kimchi. But it was valuable, it was critical to their diet. But I would never even think about trying it. It was bad enough to smell it. But it was a staple to them."

Gerhardson returned to the United States in early 1954 and was eventually discharged after three-and-a-half years of active duty.

He planned to return to his job at Otter Tail Power Company, but ended up attending North Dakota Agricultural College, currently NDSU, on the G.I. Bill instead.

"I went winter quarter and found out I liked it, so I went spring quarter too," he said.

While in a psychology class Gerhardson met a fellow student named Audrey, who would become his wife in 1955.

"We figured we might as well get married," he said with a laugh.

Gerhardson earned degrees in education and counseling psychology from the University of North Dakota.

He took a position as counselor at West Fargo High School, where he stayed for several years. Later, he worked at Moorhead State University for 25 years, first as a counselor and eventually dean of students.

The Gerhardsons moved to their farm near Hawley in 1970, along with their five children.

One daughter lives with them in their two-story home outside of town, while another lives in Fargo.

A son resides in San Francisco and a daughter in Illinois, while another son is employed by the State Department and currently lives in Croatia.

Gerhardson maintained contact with a few veterans in the years after the war, and he and Audrey also attended a couple reunions,

However, nowadays he prefers to enjoy the view from his home overlooking Highway 10, and to spend time with his children and grandchildren.

Looking back, Gerhardson sees Korea as a different type of conflict than World War II and Vietnam. To him, it became a symbolic war once the negotiations began, with seemingly little progress and a steady turnover of new troops being sent to fight towards an uncertain outcome.

"It was not a war like the United States had ever seen

before," he said. "You couldn't win. The North knew it and the South knew it. But you had to go through this kind of symbolic warfare.

"I think a lot of what the Korean War was is symbolic demonstrations of power. There were no winners or losers. You couldn't win. It was just survival. All you could do was survive."



30.6% of the population of Moorhead claimed Norwegian ancestry in the 2000 census. According to the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, that is the highest percentage of any city in America with a population over 30,000. Some places in Clay County have Moorhead beat, however. 31.3% of the population of Barnesville, 33% of Glyndon, 34.3% of Oakport, and 44.5% of Hawley claim Norwegian heritage.

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Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...

# Crops Affected By Weather And Prices



This photo is of a young girl beet worker, near Fisher, MN in October of 1937. An expert topper could do about one-quarter to one-half acre of seven-10 ton of beets per day.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

silage. That was the only way they could salvage most of the crop. Soybeans, the other warm weather crop, like corn, were hurt except for those who planted the short season variety.

Wheat liked the cooler summer, and those who planted hard red spring wheat were happy, even at a cost of \$30 a bushel for seed, for they "had fantastic yields of up to seventy bushels an acre with a strong overall average of forty-five bushels worth \$5 a bushel."

In 1950 the war time government price freeze program for potatoes came to an end. "In 1951 it was back to the free market economy which usually meant high one year and low the next, but most of the growers seem to prefer that." Potato blight hit in late August, but those who cut down the potato tops were paid big dividends. Gee wrote, "The price was \$2 per hundred weight and was increasing so it will be a good year financially.

The same was true for the onion growers who had suffered two loss years but were now having a very profitable year.

Forty barley growers were in the malting barley contest and experienced many problems which apparently were not pleasing to the malters."

All who have farmed will say, "Amen" to what Gee wrote about weeds and insects. He said that controlling weeds was like controlling your temper. About the time you think the weeds were under control, things began to happen and you are in trouble again.

Leafy spurge, bindweeds, wild oats, and sow thistle were the four major weed pests. Apparently some patches were not watched and got out of control. Gee commented, "Cheap unproductive land and farms that are rented continuously... are extremely difficult to handle because the land cannot support an extensive eradication program."

He gave an example where a widow, who had a fairly productive farm but had a very small income. The spurge was so thick that good farmers would not rent the land and poor farmers could not handle the problem, and the state stepped in to do the eradication.

The insect problem frustrated

Gee. "Nothing causes less interest in their absence and more interest when they are present than insects. Therefore, an educational program is impossible until a particular insect is present in large numbers." But the future looked better because insect damage had been greatly reduced over the years due to the development of effective pesticides. Applying them had become so quick and simple with the improved equipment.

After several years of promoting soil testing, farmers became more comfortable with increasing the amount of fertilizer they applied. However, Gee had a problem with fertilizer dealers who were confident that all the farmer had to do was apply more and they would have big crops, but that was not happening. "Now, after all these years, they are completely confused and want to learn something about soil and fertilizer."

With the advent of more powerful tractors and improved tillage equipment, farmers could practice better soil management. It is surprising that many farmers were still plowing only three or

four inches deep, a holdover from the horse age, which was proven to be inadequate. Six to eight inches was established as the optimum depth. Some farmers with lighter soils were plowing as much as 10 to 12 inches which brought no gain.

Beet harvest was always a period of high tension because it came so late in the season and required so much help. Gee expressed his concern: "The rate some farmers were charging ahead, because of wishful thinking, in purchasing unproven harvesting equipment. It is a very delicate subject on offering advice. There were still 40,000 tons of beets in the ground when the Mexican beet workers left. A loss of the crop in the ground can break some of the growers."

The 1952 crop report got off on a good foot after two years when corn did not mature. Then corn "hit the jack pot" when all of the crop matured. There were reports of up to 85 bushels per acre. It was important that all the fields were very good, and there would be plenty of feed on the farms. The best yields came after sweet clover or alfalfa plow down.

Gee's final note on corn, "It seems almost like being in southern Minnesota to see a corn crop like Clay County has this year."

But it was not a good year for wheat. Only about half of the crop germinated and at different stages. The same was true of all the other small grains. "Neither the farmers nor the elevator men are griping because of the lack of railroad cars this fall."

Soybeans, like corn, had a good year, and because beans were somewhat more reliable in maturing than corn, soybean acreage increased in acreage each year. He closed his commentary, "Beans leave the heavy soils in very good condition and grain after beans is about as good as after potatoes."

It was a tough year for potatoes because there was no rain until July and then the potato area got 18 inches of rain in 20 days and 50 percent of the crop drowned out. Seed cost alone ranged from \$50 to \$80 per acre which "made quite a loss." The county produced about one-third of the Minnesota certified seed which meant there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

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*Ag Began To Change As Baby Boomers Come Back From WWII...*

## Crops Affected By Weather And Prices

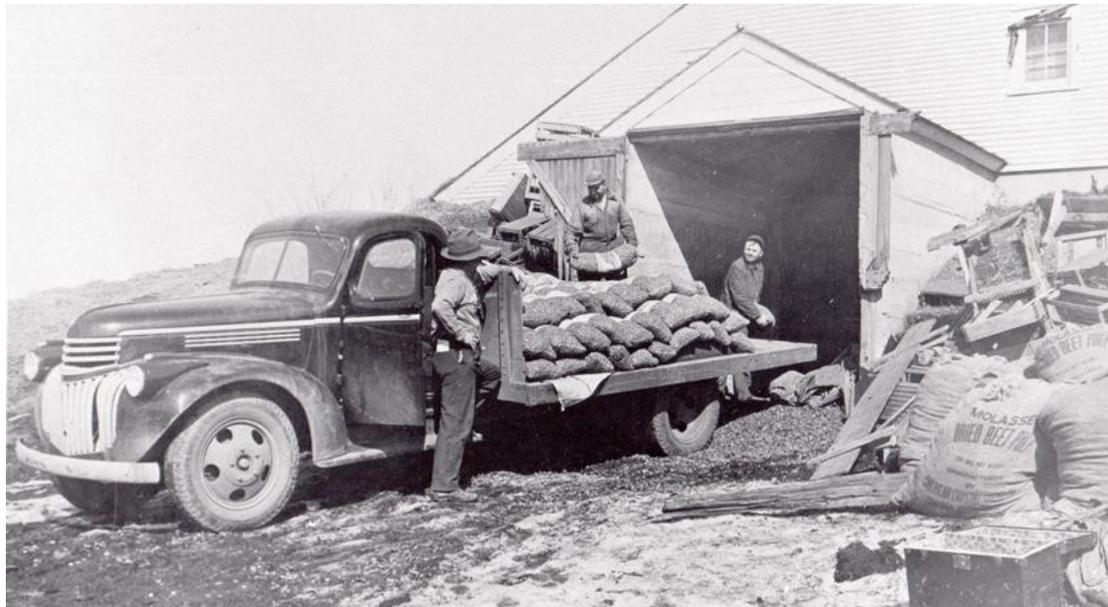
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could be a shortage of seed. The beet farmers had a problem with the sweet clover weevil which had become so severe that it was difficult to get a good stand of clover. They tried several other legumes but none were as good on the heavy soils and also were more costly.

One of the most difficult problems that the extension people had was to get farmers to make good hay and when to cut it. But as equipment improved, many farmers developed good roughage programs by cutting grass silage with generally good results. If the weather was good for making hay, they made hay, but if it was not good they made silage which was also less labor intense.

Gee was still having trouble with dairy farmers. He wrote, "Dairy farmers in general are the most difficult group to get to change any of their methods of doing things. This year, 1952, 1,683 cows were artificially bred which indicates a slow but healthy growth for the program. Out of the hundreds of dairymen in the count only 20 are in the DHIA program of all the different phases of agriculture in which the extension try to help dairying is the most challenging."

He was not much more satisfied with those who had beef cattle. "There are many herds of



Hand hauling onions out of the warehouse in 1942. H.R. "Hank" Peterson from Moorhead, MN stands at the truck cab.

cattle in the count that are not beef and not dairy. The cows are milked when convenient and calves suck when it isn't convenient. There has been a considerable shift from that type of thing to straight beef production...but it takes a long time to get a decent herd by using scrub cows and fairly good bulls."

As the 1950s progressed foreign demand continued to decline and the agriculture sector became increasingly depressed. Some farmers turned to protest movements while others sought ways to improve their business

methods. Because the county contains diverse environmental areas, it has several different types of farming which was depicted in the annual reports. In 1954 the central area of the county exported over 400 carloads of hay to southern states that experienced drought. For many years hay had been exported to places like the South St. Paul stockyard and for the horses that served as the means of transportation in the urban areas. S. A. Torgerson and Edwin Olson, of Hawley were the two men that brokered most of that business.

That year 20 beet growers, all under age 30, called on the county agent and stated that extension should be more involved with research on fertilizer for beets and that it should also be doing more research on the mechanical harvesting of the crop. The beet company had ongoing programs for raising beets, and more than one beet farmer has told me that to succeed in beets all you have to do is follow the directions you get from the company field men.

At the same time that the above farmers were pleading for more help from the extension people, "many young farmers from the Hawley area were following the advice from their vocational agricultural instructor. They were doing an excellent job with their pigs and are willing to take advice and learn."

Gee reported that those young men had established their area as the swine center of the county. A similar group in Barnesville established a swine breeders association.

By the 1950s dairy was almost entirely located in the eastern half of the county, but Cass-Clay and Fairmont plants in Moorhead were the best outlet for Grade A milk and were very stiff competition to the Barnesville and Hawley creameries.

DHIA and AI both had steady growth and Gee recorded, "If the management improved as fast as the quality and production, Clay

County would be quite a dairy county."

One of the pet peeves of urban housewives in the Valley had been the lack of getting good quality table stock potatoes. Something had to be done. "For 50 years low grade potatoes have been put on the market in direct competition with the better grade grown here in the Red River Valley. They have gone to the consumer and often the better grades have gone begging. Retail stores say they never know what quality to expect... therefore they bid less for Valley potatoes than for those grown in other areas," wrote Gee.

To try to improve the quality of what was sold, the growers, extension and the growers association held meetings to enact cull regulations. Clay County did not reach the two-thirds majority to enact the regulation, but the rest of the district voted overwhelmingly to put regulations into effect. Robert Berg, of Barnesville, had the first fertilizer test plot in the county exclusively for potatoes which would help with the quality problem. The potato industry was also making progress in mechanical harvesting.

One of the best examples of how technology was helping agriculture took place commencing July 13, 1954, when Chester Possehl, of Baker, called the extension office to report that something was eating his crop. He had a heavy infestation of army worms and a quick search determined that there was heavy damage in a five mile area. Radio and newspapers were informed to relay the information. Within five hours over 500 acres were treated with toxaphene.

By noon the next day the supply of toxaphene was being rationed. Flying services from several states were contacted and more was being shipped from as far as North Carolina. The highway department was notified that three semi loads of toxaphene would be allowed to travel since there was a ban on trucks over the weekends so they could deliver their goods to the Valley. Before the campaign was over 30 planes flying from 40 different fields had sprayed over 100,000 acres in the county.

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# Truman And The Baby Boom Era



Dwight David Eisenhower would serve as United States President from 1953 to 1960. After a military career that would take him all the way to the top, "Ike" would be named the Supreme Allied Commander of all forces in the World War II on the European front.

The West Point graduate would preside over nearly eight years of relative peace around the world during the 1950's.

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32**

he was at a low point in his presidency and would almost assuredly lose that fall's election. All of the political pundits and prognosticators had all but inaugurated Thomas E. Dewey as the country's president. But it is the voters of this country who run this country and they kind of liked old Harry. They elected him and his vice presidential running mate Alvin Barkley by an overwhelming margin, contrary to polling data of the day.

One of the biggest newspaper gaffs of all time involved the now famous photo of a beaming Harry S. Truman holding up a copy of a national newspaper that proudly proclaims on its front page, in huge block letters, "DEWEY WINS!" Well, he didn't.

Truman's election would preface four more years of turmoil. He was again faced with a confrontational U.S. House and Senate which he referred to as "the do-nothing congress". Midway through his second term war would break out in Korea and a war-sick nation would again see American troops sent off to foreign shores to fight under horrendous conditions.

Faced with an insubordinate commander, Truman would unceremoniously fire the war hero General Douglas MacArthur, setting off a fire storm of rage back home.

If anyone thought they were going to pull Truman's strings, they had another thing coming. Harry S. Truman was his own man and probably the last of the truly "citizen" presidents that we would ever see. In the future, political bosses working in their smoke-filled rooms, would be much more careful in their selection of candidates.

"Give-em Hell Harry" had richly earned that nickname and was admired and respected by the American populace even if not particularly well liked any more.

At the time that this train photo was snapped, Truman had announced his decision to step down from his high office even though he was the last man that could have run for what would have been nearly a full third term.

As you can see in the photo, times were much different back in 1952. The Chief Executive toured the United States in a train car. True, it was a nice car, but it was no Air Force One royal elegance like we see today.

There was also little to no security around the president. The crowd was free to move up to within hand shaking distance of the president without being cleared by security. Note the top of the brick building in the background. There's nobody up there. That is an ideal spot for a sniper to lurk in waiting, but there is no sign of Secret

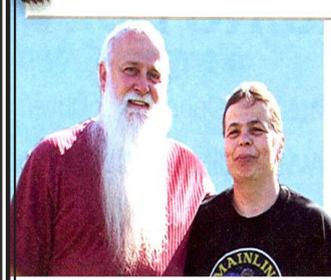
Service personnel guarding the president or commandeering the high ground to prevent an assassination attempt. That would all come to a halt only 11 years later in Dallas, Texas when President John F. Kennedy would be assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963.

Harry S. Truman is the stuff  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 50**

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## Summer Interns Discuss High Points Of Experience At HCSCC



AMANDA ASSELIN-NORDICK

My internship experience with the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County was very beneficial to me as someone who enjoys helping others explore their history. I worked primarily with Claudia Pratt on the Hjemkomst 30th Anniversary exhibit "Hjemkomst Sagas."

The project was well into the research when I joined the team, but I was able to jump right in and begin my own discovery of all the Hjemkomst archival materials and quickly became familiar with the story. My involvement and roles within this project increased as time went on, going from research and discovery methods to

becoming responsible for much of the textual content within the exhibit as well as recognizing and delegating other tasks.

This role shift was a welcome but unanticipated one that allowed me to gain greater hands-on experiences with exhibit creation and handle more responsibilities.

Throughout this experience I gained practical knowledge of exhibit design, research, and the many details that go into a project such as this. I worked with many of the HCSCC staff on the variety of projects that were available each day especially when the exhibit opening drew near.

Every day was different with new tasks at hand. One day I would be writing, then researching or going through records, and the next day I could be painting, putting up shelves, and sewing artifacts. Overall, the experience was beneficial

to help me better understand the interworking of historical societies.

\*\*\*\*



MCKENNA TYSDAL

My experience as a volunteer for the Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County in the Hjemkomst Center this summer was great! I learned to do a variety of different things and I experienced how a museum is run on a day-to-day basis which is what I wanted. Besides doing the various tasks, I also learned a lot just listening to everyone on how they did different parts of their jobs.

Some of my favorite things this summer were helping with the festivals. I helped with the Syttende Mai Polsefest serving

food, and it was really cool to see all the people that turned up for it! It was the same with the Viking Festival, which I really enjoyed helping with. I helped with the tents, setting up signs, taking photos during it for marketing purposes, doing evaluation interviews and anything else people needed help with. I also liked wearing the costume! When I wasn't busy, I got to enjoy the festival, which I had never attended before. I will have to make sure to go back next year and check it out again.

Another task I did this summer was doing research for different things such as the Celtic cross outside or a vintage vending machine. I don't enjoy research as much as other parts of museum work, but I was glad to get some experience in it.

I also enjoyed just learning some basic tasks around the museum. I really liked learning to bend Plexiglas into various

stands for exhibits and was glad to help start a few posters for different events. Learning tricks to better cut out various objects for an exhibit with an X-Acto knife or learning the process of hanging different paintings at museum standards was good experience. This all was to help set up exhibits in the museum, which was fun to do. It was interesting to learn about some of the processes that go into designing an exhibit and getting it set up.

After finishing up my informal internship this summer, I'm very happy with how it turned out. I learned what I wanted, which was to experience how a museum is run on a day to day basis and a whole lot more! Whether I work in a museum-type field in the future or not, I hope to volunteer more in the future as I enjoyed this summer very much.



1927



1932



1942



1952



1962



1972



1982



1992



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## College Boom Starts American Tradition



Joe and Virginia Kolba with their son Mike standing in front of their home in Moorhead State's "Fertile Acres." The Kolbas lived in this corrugated metal former military barracks from 1947-49 while Joe went to school on the GI Bill.

a different name once little Baby Boomers started crawling out of the barracks, Fertile Acres.

As far as problems go, skyrocketing attendance is not a bad one for colleges to have. Once building materials became available after the war and the post-war economy kicked into gear, Concordia College went on a building spree, adding 10 new buildings between 1945-60.

Only three new buildings were added to Moorhead State College. The college dropped the "Teachers" part of their name in 1957, 11 years after they started offering non-teaching majors in the post-war years. Their building boom would come later, when the Greatest Generation sent their Baby Boomer children to college.

More than half of the buildings on the campus of Minnesota State University Moorhead today were built because the World War II generation decided that, from now on, a college education would be part of the American Dream.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 23**

population that tripled in three years.

Many of these incoming freshmen were not the typical 18-year-old kids that the colleges were used to. Many of the returning GIs were well into their 20s, often mature beyond their years after what they had seen, and married.

You can't stick a family in a dorm room on bunk beds. Like

colleges across the country, all three Fargo-Moorhead colleges shipped in prefabricated army barracks, no longer needed once we won the war, to use as much-needed housing for married veterans and faculty.

At Moorhead State, the barracks were on the eastern edge of campus where Comstock Memorial Union and the Dragon Wellness Center stand today. Officially called Dragon Terrace, everyone on campus knew it by



On July 6, 1936, the US Weather Bureau recorded a high temperature of 114 degrees in Moorhead - that's still the highest temperature ever recorded in Minnesota. Uff da, that's hot!

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## Meet The HCSCC Board Members...

**JOHN DOBMEIER**

John Dobmeier was raised in Barnesville, MN where he graduated from high school. After four years active duty with the U.S. Navy, he attended college seeking a degree from the University of Minnesota in Mortuary Science. He spent 30 years in the funeral industry, 22 of them as owner/operator of the funeral home in Barnesville, a business he purchased from his father.

He presently teaches AP European history and comparative government at Moorhead Senior High School.

His wife, Terry and he have two adult children who live in the Fargo - Moorhead area.

**NEIL JORDHEIM**

Neil Jordheim serves as Historical and Cultural Society's treasurer. Neil graduated from NDSU with a degree in business. Currently he is the Executive Vice President and member of the Board of Directors of Heartland Trust Company.

Neil and his wife, Nancy, an assistant superintendent for Fargo Public Schools, are both active in the community. He serves on several not-for-profit organization boards and committees including the Fargo Lions Club.

He and Nancy have two grown sons, Brent and Erik both of whom are married.



## Lights, Water Come To Rural Clay County

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

electric appliances farm families adopted.

No running water in the house also meant going out back for other duties. Outhouses could be smelly, unsanitary and inconvenient – especially in winter. Toilet paper was invented in the mid 1800s but didn't come into general use in rural Minnesota until the 1930s and 1940s. Before then farm folk and others made do with pages from Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward mail order catalogs or the paper that came wrapped around fresh peaches and pears.

Though relatively soft and absorbent, both materials sometimes needed some "roughing up" to make them more comfortable. Toilet paper's use may have had more to do with the catalogs' adoption of slick, coated paper in the 1930s than the new product's availability. Some folks resorted to, believe it or not, corn cobs!

Most Clay County farmers received electricity through a federal government assistance program. For decades rural folks pressed private electrical utilities to extend their power lines to their farms. The companies balked, claiming they'd never recoup the cost of running wire to isolated farmsteads. In 1935 Franklin Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration, REA as part of his New Deal depression relief program. REA provided low interest loans to farmer owned cooperatives to pay for buying or building power generating facilities and stringing wire to farm homes. REA also provided cheap loans to farmers to wire their homes.

In 1938 residents of six towns in western Norman County, displeased with their electrical provider, joined with area farmers to create Red River Valley Cooperative Power Association and began a REA funded power plant in Halstad.

Just getting depression-era farmers to cough up five bucks for a co-op membership was a tough sell. REA rules required that at least three farmers sign up for power per mile of line. A mile of line cost about \$1000 so each was responsible for about \$300 in cost, unless they could convince their neighbors to join in. Wiring a farm cost



Mabel Solum does laundry at Rollag in the early 1920s. A load could take fifty gallons of water. It all had to be pumped, heated and wrung out of the clothes by hand.

Solum-Nelson Family Collection.

about another \$300. Many farm families feared they might lose their farm to the federal government if the scheme failed.

Nevertheless, the co-op signed up enough farmers to extend their lines through the western two tiers of townships in Clay County as far south as Comstock and Alliance Township. Officials pulled the switch in March 1940, electrifying wires to 500 farm families, including 200 in Clay County. By spring 1940 17% of Clay County farms had electric lights, most through Red River Valley Co-op "high lines."

The Thortvedt family was among those to take the plunge. In May 1940 two electricians from Red River Valley Co-op spent several days at their farm wiring buildings. The big day came May 29. Daughter Orabel wrote in her journal, "A beautiful day in May – Finished wiring and turned on the juice 25 minutes to 3 p. m. today. Hurrah!!" Neighbors came over to ogle the bright lights.

Because the family did not charge for the men's board the Co-op presented the Thortvedts with an electric iron, which

pleased them very much. It may not have been completely altruistic on the Co-op's part, however. It was in their interest to get farmers to use as much electricity as possible. Marketing electrical appliances and encouraging electric use was a full time job for the producers.

Wild Rice Co-op out of Mahnomon and Lake Region Co-op in Pelican Rapids planned to extend lines into the Ulen-Hitterdal-Hawley and Barnesville-Rollag-Tansem Township areas respectively. But World War II material and man power shortages brought a halt to most REA building until war's end in 1945.

In the late 1940s, industries which had expanded dramatically to meet war production shifted to producing consumer goods including refrigerators, washing machines and irons. Good farm prices left many young farmers with money to spend. The Boom was on.

In her 1946 annual report, Clay County Extension Home Demonstration Agent Eleanor Stoltenow reported, "Rural women feel more definitely that the standard of living

and conveniences the urban homemaker takes for granted should be assessable to them, too. With electrification in sight, a possibility not too far away, rural living will become more attractive."

Stoltenow had seen this coming. Starting in 1944 the Home Extension Agent shifted Home Demonstration groups' projects from the practical and prosaic, basic nutrition, budgeting and "buymanship" lessons, reupholstering old furniture to improving the home through classes on planning for a new indoor bathroom or kitchen, wiring the home for power and preserving food by freezing in a meat locker.

In September 1948 the Extension Service sponsored an electrical appliance show at the Moorhead American Legion. Five hundred area farm women viewed new washers and refrigerators provided by six local dealers and attended classes on how to select and use the new devices.

The show was timely. Area electrical co-ops were busy stringing wire. Since Clay County was served by three co-ops based in other counties, Clay was electrified from outside in. By 1949 about half of County farms had electric lights.

Leading the way were residents of the western two tiers of townships who had acquired

power before the war. Wild Rice Co-op lit up the northeast and eastern part of the county and Lake Region the southeast. The last areas to be wired were the small, less affluent farms in Parke and Eglon Townships and remote areas of central Clay County in Riverton and Spring Prairie.

By 1955 rural electrification in the County was nearly complete. With electricity came indoor plumbing. By 1960 nearly 80% of Clay County farms had running water, and nearly as many had indoor toilets.

With these innovations came, not only an improved standard of living for farm families, but rising expectations for life in general. The activities of the Clay County Home Agents reflect this. In 1946 Agent Stoltenow surveyed members of Homemakers' Clubs. In her annual report she listed several "principal things" homemakers wanted: comfort, to have their emotional needs met, health, improved education for their kids and themselves, home improvements, leisure time and, simply, "time to live."

By 1958, Agent Edna Jordahl complained that she had a hard time getting farm women to educational meetings, they wanted fun stuff. Jordahl's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



Roy Erickson of Tansem Township carries water from his family's well to the house about 1920. His bucket holds about four gallons. That's about 32 pounds!

Solum-Nelson Family Collection.



# Lights, Water Come To Rural Clay County

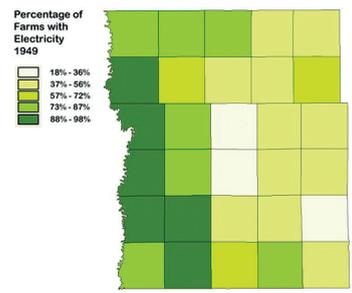
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

response was programs “absolutely educational with a few frills... We often heard women remark they liked a lighter program; that they did not belong to Homemakers entirely for study... in order to keep clubs from dropping out we find it will help to keep one or two fun lessons in the year’s outline as a drawing card for reenrollment.” Classes included foil dinners, outdoor cookery

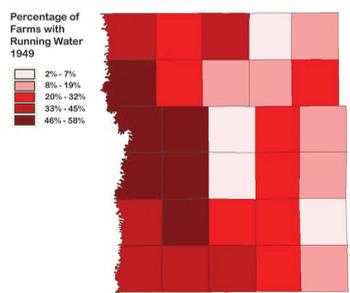
and parenting lessons.

Her replacement the following year wrote, “farm women today are better educated, busier, more articulate and have more and broader interests than homemakers of a dozen or more years ago. These women are harder to please... so many activities and organizations ... continually compete for the homemaker’s time.”

Clay County farm families had entered the modern age.



Map showing the percentage of farms with electricity by township in 1949.

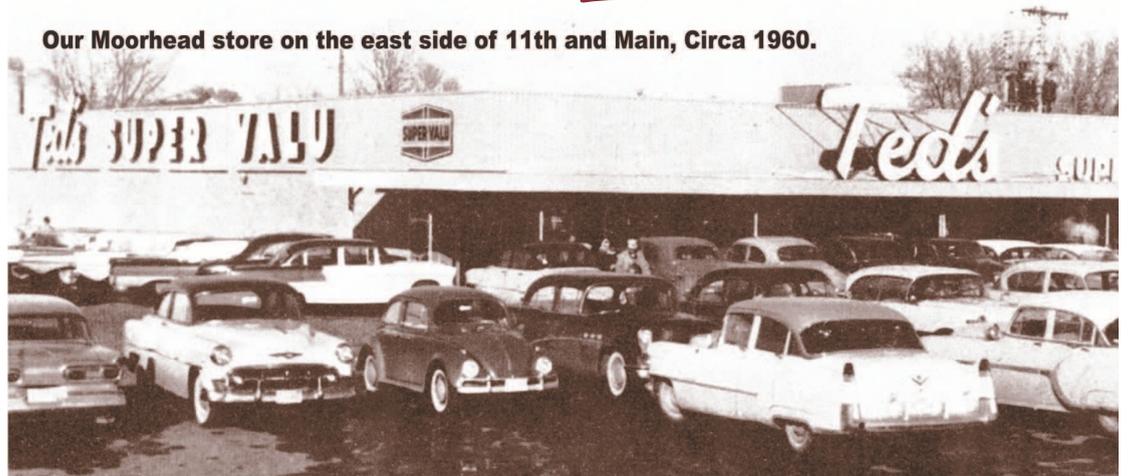


Map showing the percentage of farms with running water by township in 1949.

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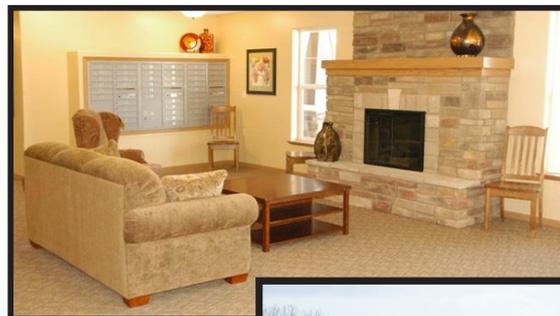
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## Civil Defense And Backyard Bunkers

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20**  
Clay County CD distributed ID bracelets to students through the Moorhead Schools. The bling reportedly cost 55 cents and was "chrome stainless steel, non-toxic and will not darken the skin." They carried the child's name, address, phone number, religious preference, next of kin and blood type. The Fargo Forum ominously reported "their melting point is between 2600 and 2750 degrees Fahrenheit." Authorities distributed nearly 5000 of the bracelets.

In 1959 CD thinking began shifting. An H-bomb test on Bikini Atoll revealed that nuclear fallout could cover huge expanses with deadly radiation. That meant church basements, even those in DL or Fergus, made for inadequate evacuation centers. The launch of Sputnik and deployment of the first nuclear tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles in the late 1950s cut potential warning time of nuclear attack from hours to minutes.



Brochure from the American Safe-T-Shelter Company, Fargo, 1961. The company sold corrugated metal shelters for suburban homes, farms and communities. CCHS Collections

The Dwight Eisenhower administration looked at a nationwide system of public shelters but balked at the enormous price tag. Instead, in June 1959, the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization distributed a booklet, The Family Fallout Shelter, which encouraged families to construct their own bunkers. The publication contained detailed construction drawings for four different types of shelters ranging from a basic "do-it-yourself" basement concrete block structure to prefabricated underground concrete and steel bunkers.

Cost estimates varied from \$150 to \$1,500 and up which is more like \$1,100 to \$11,000 today. The booklet included suggestions on ventilation, stocking, lighting and sanitation - "Provision for emergency toilet facilities and disposal of human wastes will be an unfamiliar problem." It recommended a tightly covered 10 gallon garbage can.

Each plan included at least one right angle turn in the shelter entrance. "Radiation scatters somewhat like light. Some will go around a corner.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 46**

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# Thortvedt Family Honored With Award

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

struggles of daily life. As he grew older he began to document the events of his life, starting in 1904 with a "day journal," or diary.

Peihl explained that most diaries of pioneer life at the historical society contain only basic information about the weather or the work done on the farm each day.

"Levi's journals go into much more detail," he said. "He talks about the comings and goings of people on the farm, who was there, who was not. What he did in the morning, afternoon and evening. It's extremely detailed, which was very unusual for diaries of that period."

Thortvedt eventually got around to documenting the early events in his life and how his family ended up in the area.

"In the 1920s he wrote an extensive biography and a really nice essay about the family's experiences coming up from southeast Minnesota, and how they ended up settling along the Buffalo River by Glyndon," he said. "It's amazing, the details in there are remarkable. His memory was obviously very sharp."

Thortvedt continued his day book from 1904 until his death in 1936.

Levi Thortvedt married Ingeborg Midtgarden in 1883. Together, they raised their ten children Ole, Goodwin, Alpha, Dora, Stella, Adele, Orabel, Eva, Florence and Norman, on the



The Thortvedt farm northwest of Glyndon is shown in the above photo from the 1890s, some 20 years after the family arrived. The Thortvedts had previously lived in Minnesota's Houston and Fillmore Counties before moving north in the 1870s.

land Levi's parents homesteaded in the 1870s.

Levi encouraged his children to follow his passion for journaling, which several did.

"I think there were four members of the family that kept journals at the same time," Peihl said. "So we have four eyewitness accounts of things that were going on at the farm at that time."

Peihl said the multiple viewpoints are incredibly helpful when trying to understand details about the history of the Red River Valley as well as international events like World War I.

"It's an incredible situation where a nationwide event is going on and you can see it from four different perspectives," he said.

One of the most prolific documentarians of daily life in the Thortvedt family was Levi's daughter, Orabel, who was also an artist and attended classes in the Twin Cities during the early 1930s.

"She did pretty well for herself in the 1930s painting horses and dogs for the wealthy people down in the Twin Cities," Peihl said. "She had a talent for bringing out real personality in her art."

Unfortunately, Orabel's parents both died in 1936. She returned to the home farm and focused her attention on local history.

Orabel collected items from her life and created photo albums and scrapbooks.

"They include all sorts of things that helped document what she was interested in, as well as the local history and people she lived with," Peihl said.

Orabel also continued her art, which included works in clay, watercolor, oil, pastel and pen and ink. She completed many sketches about her family history, including their travel to America and eventual arrival in the Glyndon area.

One of the Thortvedt descendants who clearly recalls Orabel is her niece Eva Hedstrom, who grew up in the area but now lives in Anoka,

MN. Hedstrom is the daughter of Hilmen and Adele Nelson, Orabel's sister.

She submitted an essay of her memories about Orabel to the HCSCC, recalling her aunt as full of life and a lover of animals and the outdoors. And, of course, as being dedicated to preserving

the Thortvedt family history.

"Her interest in history and lineage resulted in numerous volumes of information about those who played a part in the growth of the community along the Buffalo River and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45



Orabel Thortvedt continued her father Levi's tradition of keeping day books of her experiences. She also studied art, and is shown above in a class at the Minneapolis School of Art in the early 1930s.

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## Thortvedt Family Honored With Award

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

surrounding area," Hedstrom wrote of her aunt.

Orabel also wrote a day book, like her father Levi, to keep track of life on the farm. Hedstrom recalls that she would write about farm work, special events, and visitors to the Buffalo River settlement.

"She had a lot of projects, and she was busy all the time," Hedstrom said, explaining that her aunt could be found working all around the farm. "She was in the attic, she was out in her log house, or just upstairs in her room."

Hedstrom remembers Orabel keeping a large stack of papers and magazines to be used later for scrapbooking. She estimates her aunt likely completed dozens of books in her lifetime, often divided by historical subject.

"She clipped and pasted almost daily, I think," Hedstrom said.

Orabel created a memorial to the group of settlers that arrived at the Buffalo River with her grandparents, Olav and Ingeborg.

"She put all the names of the original settlers that came with her grandfather in 1870, so there was a list of pioneers on it," Hedstrom said.

Although the monument was damaged in a windstorm, it is still partially standing on the farm.

Orabel also helped get a log cabin relocated around 1940. Now called "Orabel's Cabin," it came from a neighboring farm and was taken apart log by log to be moved.

Orabel numbered all the logs and mapped them out on a floor plan, and they were put back together accordingly at the Thortvedt farm. The building still stands, and is filled with antiques.

"She was interested in any kind of history, it seemed," Hedstrom said of her aunt. "Local, state, community, even back to Norway! Her writing and her scrapbooks are a conglomeration of all types of information. It's mostly local, but some of it is pretty extensive I'd say."

Hedstrom believes her aunt's interest in history can be traced to Orabel's father, Levi, who first started the tradition of chronicling the Thortvedt family's experiences at the Buffalo River settlement.

The dedication to documenting local history seemed to be family-wide for the Thortvedts since settling near

Glyndon in the 1870s, according to Peihl.

"Because they came so early, and were here when everyone else arrived, I think everyone in the family had a strong sense of what their family history meant to the area," he said. "They developed a love and appreciation of the things going on around them on a day-to-day basis, and made a history of the community going into the past."

The large collection of diaries, scrapbooks, photo albums and

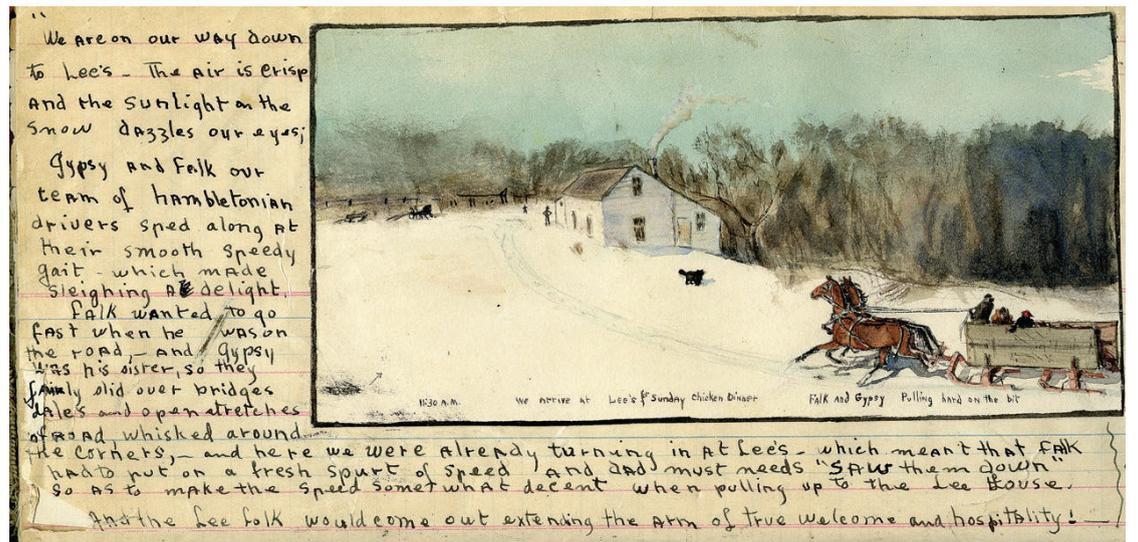
records created by the Thortvedt family has provided a unique window into a time and place in local history.

"It's what we now call the Thortvedt family papers," Peihl said. "It's an extraordinary collection. I'm astonished every time I go to look at the materials."

Peihl said the collection could easily have been thrown out or lost in time if not for the work of the Thortvedt family to preserve its history.

"The Thortvedts never did that. They kept everything in the house," he explained. "They left everything kind of like a little time capsule. We're just extremely grateful to the family for keeping this collection all together and not scattering it to the winds. It's extremely important for understanding local history."

The Thortvedt family papers exhibit will be the basis for an upcoming Hjemkomst Center exhibit.



An excerpt from one of Orabel's many scrapbooks depicts a winter trip to the neighboring Lee farm for a meal. Orabel created many scrapbooks of local history and points of interest, which she worked on throughout her lifetime.

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# Civil Defense And Backyard Bunkers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

The rest continues in a straight line. Therefore, sharp turns in a shelter entrance will reduce radiation intensity inside the shelter."

It's not known if any Clay County residents built shelters based on this booklet. In December Cass County ND Civil Defense Director Leonard Caverly estimated that about 20 - 30 Fargo families had installed shelters.

In 1960 Clay County CD began a series of classes designed to educate locals on the importance of home shelters and how to live in and stock them.

Two-hundred-seventy signed up for the first class but only 170 completed the 12-hour marathon. High school science teachers from Moorhead, Hawley and Barnesville received Geiger counter training. Moorhead added four warning sirens to the one on Fairmont Creamery.

But it took the John Kennedy administration and international tensions to give Civil Defense a real boost. JFK entered office in January 1961 committed to CD. In an address to Congress in May, he expressed his support of the concept of deterrence, that only a strong capacity for retaliation would deter the Soviets from attacking us. He went on to say,

"But this deterrent concept assumes rational calculations by rational men. And the history of this planet... is sufficient to remind us of the possibilities of an irrational attack, a miscalculation, an accidental war...which cannot be either foreseen or deterred. It is on this basis that civil defense can be readily justifiable--as insurance for the civilian population in case of an enemy miscalculation. It is insurance we trust will never be needed--but insurance which we could never forgive ourselves for foregoing in the event of catastrophe."

He proposed a massive increase in Civil Defense spending including a plan to identify public and private buildings which, when properly stocked with food, water and medical supplies, could serve as community fallout shelters.

As Kennedy spoke, the Cold War was warming up. After World War II an Iron Curtain separated West Germany from the Soviet dominated East. The communists controlled access across the border except in

divided Berlin. Thousands of East German scientists, teachers and technicians poured west. This brain drain threatened to cripple the East. On June 4, 1961 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened to sign a new treaty with East Germany, abrogating Western rights to access Berlin. He gave the US and its NATO allies until December 31 to get out of town. JFK said no dice.

Tensions built that summer. In August Khrushchev began constructing the Berlin Wall. On September 15, *LIFE* magazine published a special issue touting home fallout shelters. The piece included a letter from JFK written a week earlier in which he restated his plans for community shelters and continued, "In the meantime, there is much you can do to protect yourself - and in doing so strengthen the nation. I urge you to read and consider seriously the contents of this issue of *LIFE*..."

Whether Kennedy knew what the article would say when he signed the letter is not clear. The piece breathlessly pushed home fallout shelters as the only responsible option for American families faced with possible nuclear war and claimed "You could be among the 97% to survive if you follow advice on these pages."

The *LIFE* issue featured photos and plans for home shelters, including a pre-fab steel unit which could be erected in four hours by a man and his son, stocking advice and intoned, "If a military-objective attack should come now to an unprepared nation, 45 million Americans - a fourth of the population would die...But if Americans took precautions against fallout the mortality could drop sharply. About five million people, less than three percent of the population would die. This in itself is a ghastly number. But you have to look at it coldly."

There is no indication where *LIFE* got these numbers but Kennedy's letter gave the piece credence. It and the Berlin situation set off a nationwide fallout shelter craze.

Local interest was high. In an August 27, 1961 Fargo Forum article, Cass County CD Director Caverly and Clay County's Erickson claimed to be "swamped with shelter queries." Caverly said, "The



Harold and Ruby Briggs stand on the roof of their new fallout shelter under construction beneath the driveway of their north Moorhead home. It was the first home shelter built in Moorhead.

Fargo Forum, May 10, 1961

phone's always ringing. We get letters and at least 10 inquiring persons come in daily... I've had to quit noting on my calendar the number of inquiries received daily."

He claimed he had distributed "50,000 shelter books." Numbers of shelters actually constructed are hard to come by. Caverly estimated "well over 300 fallout shelters in Cass County." He'd estimated 90 in Fargo the previous May.

Clay County's Erickson said "a month ago I knew of only one shelter in Moorhead... Now there are many, many more. Because various contractors and residents themselves are building them... it's impossible to know how many are under construction. Too, some persons don't like to admit they are building shelters. I tell them they can use them for tornado protection, too. That makes them feel better."

The *Forum* article claimed "Many are being included in construction of new homes, most adjoining basements... One contractor reported writing three contracts in a day. Another company ran out of steel for shelters."

The one Moorhead shelter mentioned by Erickson was likely that of Harold and Ruby Briggs. In May Fargo Forum reporter Wayne Lubenow did a feature story on the north Moorhead couple's addition.

Lubenow claimed it was "the first bona fide, built-to-Civil-Defense-specification shelter in the city."

Built by Vern Pladson Construction Company of Moorhead under the Briggs' driveway, the 12 x 8 foot steel reinforced concrete bunker featured a 100-gallon hot water tank, a transistor radio, electric lanterns, a hand-operated machine for making electricity and "air vents filled with glass wool to purify fallout-

contaminated air."

Lubenow wrote Briggs "had a bit of trouble convincing his wife, Ruby, to have the shelter built. But he won her over and the shelter is the talk - and envy - of the neighborhood... The neighbors know there are two empty bunks in there and Briggs already has more applications for them than he can handle."

When Briggs quipped that he was going to have "lots of tools in the shelter - like big crow bars

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51

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## Popularity Of TV Grows In Post-War Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

began featuring early game and quiz shows including "You Bet Your Life," "The Price Is Right," "The \$64,000 Question," "What's My Line," "To Tell The Truth," "Twenty-One," "Ask Me

Another" and many more.

The genre experienced a controversy in the late 1950s when it was revealed several shows were rigged, leading to lowered ratings and lost faith in the credibility of many shows. However, the format has

survived and is thriving to this day.

In the current world of 24-hour news cycles and constant television programming, it's hard to imagine a time when the public didn't rely on television or computers to stay updated on the world. However, in the 1940s and 1950s, TV was largely still second choice to newspapers and magazines.

That began to change during the golden years of television, as groundwork was laid for the current lineup of news programs.

The news magazine format, now common in various forms worldwide, was made popular by "The Today Show" in the early 1950s. The program was the first of its kind, and began in 1952 as a way for early risers to get updated on the world as well as be entertained. Since its creation the show has never left the air.

The nightly news broadcasts seen today on NBC and CBS began during this period, both in 1948. However, they were only 15-minute broadcasts until the 1960s.

The early news programs introduced many legendary television anchors, including Walter Cronkite, Dave Garroway, John Cameron Swayze and David Brinkley.

Another notable figure during the post-war years was Edward R. Murrow, who hosted the news program "See It Now" from 1951-1958.

Murrow, a former WWII correspondent, used his program to stand up against the efforts of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who was part of the "Red Scare" attempting to expose Communist supporters in the entertainment industry.

An episode of "See It Now" began to turn public opinion against the senator when it focused on his controversial methods of rooting out supposed Communist sympathizers.

Television also slowly became involved in politics, with both the 1952 and 1956 political conventions receiving coverage. Political candidates now had to worry about how they appeared to the viewing and voting public in a way that wasn't a problem during the days of radio.

The first ever televised debate between two presidential candidates was between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy on September 26, 1960. To those

listening on the radio, Nixon was considered the winner. However, those watching the debate on television thought Kennedy had the upper hand.

The event signaled the importance of a good television appearance, as debate viewers seemed to prefer Kennedy's more relaxed demeanor and healthy appearance, compared to a slight, pale Nixon who had decided against using makeup to improve his appearance after a recent hospital stay.

Using television to cover political events was part of the hope held by many that the technology would become a way to educate the public.

Together with news, political coverage, live theater and symphonies, many hoped that television would be primarily used to educate, inform and improve the overall well-being of viewers.

Such content can still be found on television today, although it is not the main form of programming.

However, much of what was started in the early days of the medium carries on.

Many of the early news programs have continued into the present and co-exist with the 24-hour news cycle. Variety shows have greatly decreased, but sitcoms, dramas and game shows continue to be staples of American programming.

Television is now a part of daily life for nearly the entire United States, with up to 96.7 percent of households owning a TV set in 2011. For better or worse, what was once an uncertain new technology has since become ubiquitous in the homes and lives of Americans.



"I Love Lucy" ran for six seasons and became a nationwide hit. It introduced the practice of filming in front of a live audience, and was produced in Los Angeles instead of New York City.



Walter Cronkite, arguably the most famous news anchor of all time, got his start in television in the 1950s after being a WWII correspondent. He gained fame covering the 1952 and 1956 political conventions and hosting the "You Are There" television program from 1953 to 1957. In 1961 "Uncle Walter" took over as anchor of the CBS Evening News, going on to cover significant historical events such as the moon landing, JFK assassination and Watergate scandal as the most trusted name in news.

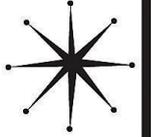
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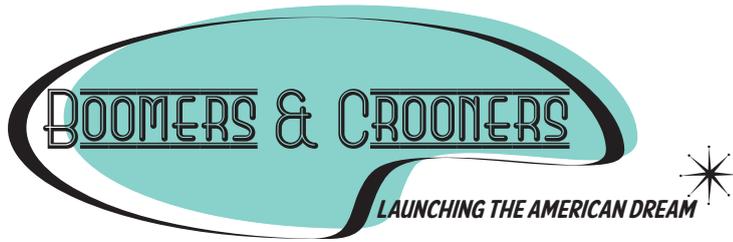


## Save The Date October 26, 2012 For Food, Fun

By: Maureen Kelly Jonason

Boomers and Crooners: Launching the American Dream is the theme of this year's fall fundraiser for the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County at the Hjemkomst Center. Join staff and volunteers for an especially fun evening of dancing to the crooner hits of the likes of Bobby Darin and Frank Sinatra.

Hawley native Noel Iverson will share his vocal talents and take us all back to a time when we could understand the lyrics and let our parents hear them! The evening will begin with a cash bar social during which attendees can stroll through the museum to enjoy *The Boom: 1945-1960 in Clay County* exhibit as well as *The Hjemkomst Sagas: One Dream, A Viking*



*Ship, Many Stories* highlighting the voyage of the ship that was built in the heart of Clay County.

Dinner will include delicious foods from many different restaurants including barbeque pork from Famous Dave's and cheese cake from the Speak Easy, mashed potatoes and gravy from the Eagle Café in Barnesville, mozzarella sticks from Mosaic Foods, great Atomic Coffee to celebrate the Atomic Age, and more!

The Northern Lights Ballroom

Dance club will be giving Boom-period dance demonstrations and will encourage dancing to the crooner tunes. Instead of the usual silent auction, we will have history-oriented fundraising opportunities that are sure to inspire all who attend! Join us on October 26 for a good time – it will hyst-or-ical!

Tickets are on sale from HCSCC board members, at the Heritage Shop in the Hjemkomst Center, or by calling 218 299-5511 Ext. 6737 or emailing [tim.jorgensen@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:tim.jorgensen@ci.moorhead.mn.us). Tickets are \$45 each when paid for ahead of time, \$50 at the door, or \$40 each when purchasing a table of eight at one time for \$320.



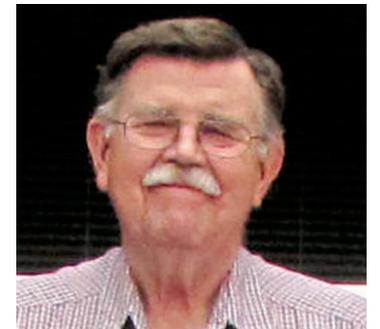
### Meet The HCSCC Board Members...



JON EVERT

Jon Evert has been a Clay County Commissioner since 1995 and is the commission's representative on the HCSCC Board. Jon lives with his wife Phyllis on their family farm near Comstock which they farmed for 27 years.

Jon was a long time member of the Red River Valley Heritage Society where he served as President for many years. He worked as coordinator of Rural Life Outreach for twenty years and serves on the boards of many other local organizations.



DALE WHITE

Dale White is a Hitterdal-area native and retired Student Counselor and Registrar from Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Moorhead. White also taught English in Minnesota schools and served as Registrar at NDSU-Bottineau.

He has three adult children and is a widower. White is a member of Vikingland Kiwanis, and was a former CCHS President and Treasurer. He currently serves as HCS vice president.



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# Harry Truman And The Baby Boom Era



In his later years Harry S. Truman was a familiar sight on the streets of his hometown Independence, Missouri as he made one of his brisk walks through the city. The cane, out of necessity, became a part of his everyday attire in later years.

Another signature was Harry's fondness for double breasted suits. Harry liked that style of suit, and probably out of financial necessity, he wore them for a very long time. Even in his retirement years, Truman dressed the part and seldom ventured out in public without a dress shirt, suit and tie.

Truman was extremely approachable in those days before the Secret Service took up the practice of guarding former presidents. However, he felt the dignity of the high office that he had held demanded the respect of formal attire whether he was on the job or just an average retired citizen out for a stroll through the neighborhood.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

of legends. As a devoted family man, he took great offense when a music critic took exception to his daughter Margaret's piano playing ability. Harry publicly, and in writing, offered to soundly thrash the critic.

Harry's language was shirt-sleeve English that the common people of America could understand. One familiar story involves his wife Bess at a social gathering when she was asked by another genteel, intellectual lady if she could possibly speak to Harry about his language. She said it would be well received by the other intellectuals if Harry would quit saying 'manure' in public. Bess was quick to reply, "You just don't understand. It has taken me years to get him to use the term 'manure' in public instead of the term that he usually uses."

Three months shy of eight years in the White House, Harry S. Truman would retire from the presidency and from public life on January 20, 1953. There were no big parades, a lifetime of assistants and servants or even so much as a few dollars in a federal pension in 1953.

Harry and Bess would pack up what belongings they could fit into their car and they would drive home, alone to Independence, Missouri where they would make their home for the rest of their lives.

There was no Secret Service protection. There was no pension. And there was not a lot of money in his bank account. Truman was the consummate "public servant". Unlike today's politicians, he did not make himself a fortune while in office or after office either. He felt it was beneath the presidential dignity to go out on the public speaking tour, accepting big bucks to deliver a speech or to write a "tell-all" book about his years in public office. He came to Washington, D.C. broke and he left town the same way.

After devoting a lifetime to government service, the Trumans returned to Missouri to live in a small home on a very tight budget. But money had never been a priority for Truman and he continued to live

a simple life in a quiet residential neighborhood.

He was a familiar sight as he took a stroll through the neighborhood, walking the dog and possibly stopping to chat with anyone who was outdoors at the time. If you wanted to stop by and meet an ex-president, all you had to do was walk up to the front door and ring the bell. Either Harry or Bess would be there to greet you. There were no servants and no ceremonies to observe.

Wherever he went, whether it be for that walk or a stop at a downtown cafe, he was always greeted by a cheerful, "Hi Harry" or a "Good morning, Mr. President".

Harry S. Truman died nearly 20 years after leaving office on December 26, 1972 at the age of 88, perhaps the nation's greatest president. For sure he was the last "people's president". Bess Truman would live another decade, dying on October 18, 1982. Harry and Bess are buried side-by-side on the grounds of the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri.

And that "S" in Harry S. Truman? That's exactly what it was, an "S". He had no middle name. The "S" was only a middle initial, not a name. It was that simple, the symbol of a simple yet great American who would become president. Perhaps the last great one.



Nassib Shaheen, born in what is now the Syria/Lebanon area, was the first person in Clay County to sign up to fight in the First World War. He was also the first Clay County soldier to die in the war. 18% of US soldiers who fought in the First World War were immigrants.

\*\*\*\*\*

Top five birth countries for Clay County immigrants in 1900 – 1. Norway (3,001 people) 2. Sweden (1,262) 3. Germany (687) 4. Canada (465) 5. England (152)

## HCSCC Interns...



BAYLEY KINNER

My name is Bayley Kinner, and I worked as a summer intern at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County at the Hjemkomst Center. This fall, I will be a senior at Minnesota State University-Moorhead majoring in history with a minor in film history/criticism. I originally wanted to be an intern for HCSCC because I wanted the true "museum experience," with time spent in the archives, collections and exhibit planning, all of which I have gained through my time here.

When I first began my internship in May, I was assigned to assist Mark Peihl in the archives with reading a collection of diaries and day books that belonged to a young woman named Orabel Thortvedt, whose grandfather was one of the first to settle in Clay County.

Getting to go back in time almost one hundred years and learning about early farm life and her first experiences with electric

\*\*\*\*\*



HEATHER MALMSKOG

Heather Malmskog is an art history major at Cornell College in Iowa. She was the general museum assistant for the summer, doing a wide range of activities to learn about museum work.

lights and cars, and getting a glimpse into the culture and society of the Red River Valley has been an amazing experience.

I also have been fortunate enough to assist Claudia Pratt in researching, writing for, and building the newly-opened exhibit on the 30th anniversary of the sailing of the Hjemkomst. I learned more than I ever could have hoped for about how much it takes to design and build a museum exhibit. The lessons that I have learned these past months I will carry with me as I continue my education and start my own career in the historical field.

After graduation in May 2013, I plan to continue my education by studying for a master's degree in Library and Information Sciences with a certificate in Archives Research. A graduate school has not yet been decided.

\*\*\*\*\*



MAIA MASTEL

My name is Maia Mastel and I began my internship in late May, right after my school year at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa came to an end.

As a Fargo native, I grew up just a few miles from the Hjemkomst Center but had never considered interning there until a professor suggested it.

A few interviews later, I was an intern under Lisa Vedaa, the collections manager. My duties consisted of cataloging artifacts, cleaning artifacts (especially postcards and photographs), manning the gift shop and admissions desk, serving at the Midwest Viking Festival, and researching for future exhibits.

My experience here has been mostly positive, and I am considering volunteering here next year. As a history and anthropology major who intends to pursue a PhD, I certainly need all the experience I can get.



## Civil Defense And Backyard Bunkers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

and picks... in case the entrance is blocked by the blast and he has to dig himself out," Ruby protested "But other people will know we're in there and they'll get us out."

Briggs replied, "Honey, there isn't going to be any other people to dig us out." The shelter cost the Briggs \$750.

Beside Pladson Construction and the do-it-yourself route, locals had other options. According to another Lubenow article in September, Moorhead contractor Arlo Buland "designed a fallout shelter he considers luxurious - for a fallout shelter." The builder reportedly spent months researching other designs but found them pretty Spartan. "You'll be in your shelter for two weeks at least, he figured so what's wrong with having a few of the comforts of home?..."

Constructed like the inside of a trailer home, the shelter has three rooms - a tiny bathroom, a kitchen and a combination living room-bedroom." The bathroom featured a little shower; the kitchen "a miniature sink and plenty of drawers and storage space" and the living room "a booth with table and upholstered seats which fold into bunk beds for four people." A mockup stood outside Buland's office at

1506 Main Avenue.

Like the Briggs' digs, Buland's shelter was 8x12 foot reinforced concrete but had a rounded, Quonset style roof and was designed to stand inside a corner of a basement. The price was flexible. A bare shelter installed in a basement would run \$850. "If you want the toilet, then you'll need plumbing. You could probably go up to \$1,800 but you'd be living good."

The Forum's reference to a contractor which had "run out of steel" may be to the American Safe-T-Shelter Company. Fargoans Erwin Quarne and Dayton Hatling opened the distributorship for corrugated steel "Living Shelters" manufactured by the Wonder Building Corporation in Chicago.

A colorful brochure in the Historical and Cultural Center's collection highlights models designed for home basements, or backyard burial; farm shelters with facilities for livestock and seed storage and community bunkers for up to 100 people. Wonder Buildings are still being sold by Hardened Structures of Virginia Beach VA.

In October 1961 Hatling pitched one of the later to the Cass County Commission for an "underground control center" to be constructed somewhere

on the Courthouse grounds. Commissioners seemed receptive but it was never built. Later that month Quarne and Hatling partnered with two other locals to form "Family Shelters, Inc.," which sold shelters made by Kelsey-Hayes Company of Detroit and Philadelphia - the same prefab unit featured in the LIFE article. Their offices and warehouse were at 233 23rd Street North in Fargo.

As Americans glanced nervously toward the sky and dug holes in their yards, President Kennedy, reportedly embarrassed by his part in the home bomb shelter craze, moved ahead with the community shelter part of his plans. He convinced Congress to spend a whopping \$207,000,000 in 1962 on CD, the most ever spent in one year on CD before or since. It primarily funded his public shelter initiative.

In late 1961 he'd initiated Phase I, a nationwide survey to find interim shelters for as many as 50 million Americans. These were marked with paper signs but not stocked. Refugees were expected to bring necessities with them. A more substantial survey in 1962 identified many more and introduced Americans to the familiar metal yellow and black Fallout Shelter signs.

Local activities tracked those on the national level. Early in 1961 the Minnesota Civil Defense Department reversed course and removed Fargo-Moorhead from its list of secondary targets. Parker Erickson told the Forum "evacuation is out and shelters are in."

Late that fall Clay County's evacuation route signs came down. The 1962 survey found 50 buildings in Moorhead and 37 in other Clay County towns adequate for use as shelters. The first survival supplies arrived in March 1963.

It was a brief hurrah for CD. After JFK's death in November 1963, most of his CD ideas moved to the back burners. Civil Defense support vacillated between anemic and weak though most of the Cold War. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, activities focused on natural disaster recovery and prevention and more recently, terrorist threats.

In November 1994 Congress

repealed the Civil Defense Act of 1950 and the yellow and black signs began to disappear. In the early 1980s I had a friend who worked for an area company with a community shelter in its basement.

His boss told him to "clear out all that junk downstairs." The junk included rusty water cans, boxes of survival biscuits and five-gallon tins of "carbohydrate supplement" all dated 1963.

Of course, I sampled the fare. The biscuits were wrapped and looked much like Graham Crackers but tasted like saltines - without the salt. And the "carbohydrate supplement" turned out to be lemon drops. The later were still pretty good but made for mighty lean rations for two-weeks in a fallout shelter.

The homeshelter phenomenon of 1961 also fizzled quickly. An AP story carried in local papers in July 1962 announced the "Shelter Boom Has Gone Bust." Like the previous year, Russian and US tanks backed away from each other on the Berlin border and tensions subsided. A later report in Newsweek magazine quoted a Michigan shelter dealer as saying that even during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, the only call he received was from a reporter asking if he still stocked shelters.

People just decided they didn't want to spend the time and effort on, as JKF put it, "insurance we trust will never be needed."

Many worried about appearing afraid and what neighbors might think of them. Others wondered about neighbors eyeing their spaces.

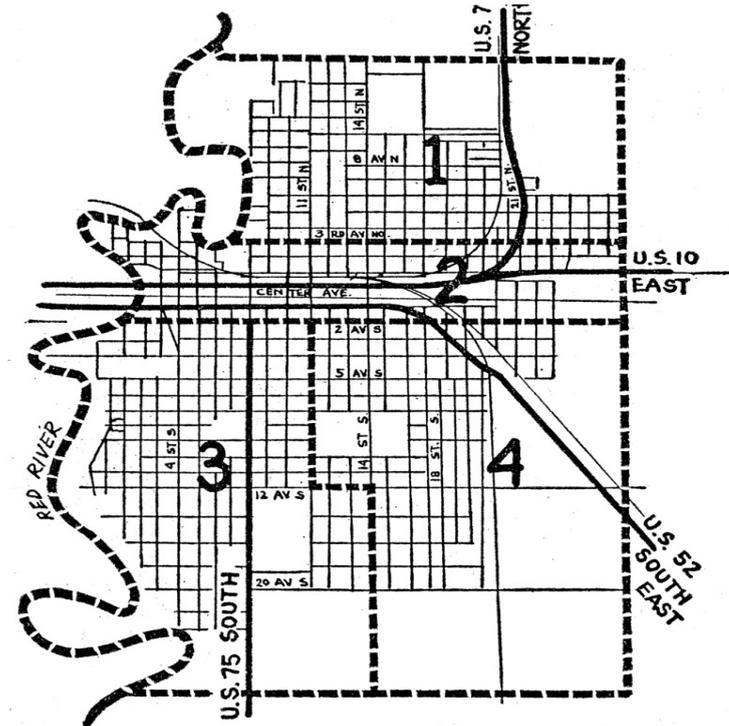
On Friday September 29, 1961, local CBS affiliate KXJB aired an episode of The Twilight Zone titled "The Shelter." It told the story of a group of friendly neighbors, one of whom had built a basement shelter. When they hear a radio report of a possible attack, the desperate families plead with the owner to let them in, turn on each other in fear and break down the shelter door - just in time to hear it was all a false alarm.

Shame faced at what they had become, they try to get back to normal relations, but they all know it's too late.

In his sign off, host Rod Serling says, "For civilization to survive, the human race has to remain civilized. Tonight's very small exercise in logic from The Twilight Zone." Fortunately, it's a lesson we did not have to learn.

There are undoubtedly lots of home shelters still out there. We know of three in Moorhead and three others in Fargo. We'd like to know more about this fascinating episode in local history.

If you have or had a shelter in your home or know of one, please contact HCSCC Archivist Mark Peihl at 218-299-5511 ext 6734, mark.peihl@ci.moorhead.mn.us. Thanks!



Moorhead evacuation map, 1957. In the 1950s Minnesota Civil Defense officials designated Fargo-Moorhead as a possible Soviet nuclear target and developed an evacuation plan. It divided Moorhead into four zones. Residents of each were to follow US Highways 52, 75 and 10 to safety some fifty plus miles away. Undated Fargo Forum clipping, ca: 1957



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# Housing Shortage Leads To Boom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

built out of wood salvaged from the bleachers and grandstand of the old Fargo-Moorhead Twins

baseball park.

As soon as building materials became available again after the war, new home construction exploded. New neighborhoods

needed new roads, new schools, new churches, and new corner stores to be built as well. The booming construction industry was a major reason for the booming American economy during these years. The 1950 census shows that 756 Clay Countians were employed in the construction industry, accounting for almost one in 10 non-farm jobs in the county.

The post-war years were a golden age for the city of Moorhead. The population was soaring, business was good, the restaurants were the best in the area, the colleges were overflowing, and Fargo watched the growth of its sister city with envy. So much of the Moorhead we see today was built in these post-war years, including the Clay County Courthouse, the

Moorhead Library, the Post Office, St. Ansgar's hospital, half of the buildings on Concordia Campus, most of our elementary and middle schools, and block after block of homes in north and south Moorhead.

Although the city is more than 140 years old, Moorhead is in many ways a Post-war Boomtown.



Mel and Lucy Johnson still live in the home they built in south Moorhead in 1957. Mel's service in WWII qualified them for a GI loan to build their Ranch style house. The Johnson's place was in a farm field south of town when it was built but now it is close to the geographical center of Moorhead. Both Mel and Lucy are volunteers at the Hjemkomst Center.



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# Meet The HCSCC Board Members...



GENE PRIM

Gene Prim is the current president of the HCSCC. He is the owner and publisher of Hawley, Barnesville, Rothsay, Lake Park, and Comorant Lakes area newspapers as well as Clay County Connection. He is a former mayor of Barnesville.

Gene has served on a number of civic and church organizations, such as the Barnesville Jaycees, Barnesville Chamber of Commerce, Barnesville Main Street Program and Rod and Gun Clubs, and enjoys hunting and traveling with his family and wife Karen.



GLORIA LEE

Gloria Lee and her husband, David, reside on the farm Gloria grew up on near Georgetown, MN. Gloria is involved in community and church activities. She enjoys reading, gardening and spending time with grandchildren. She works as a florist at Hornbacher's Osgood, Fargo.

Gloria and David have four grown children.



JIM SAUERESSIG

Jim Saueressig has been a marketing consultant in the F-M area for 30 years. He has been involved in scouting, sales and marketing executives, FM Advertising Federation, WE Fest productions, little people coaching and broadcast management.

Jim has been married to Andrea for 44 years and has four grown sons and seven grandchildren. His particular interest in is the Red River Valley history exhibit.



GAIL BLAIR

Gail Blair grew up on the family farm near Hitterdal, MN. A graduate of Concordia College, Gail is a personal banker at State Bank & Trust in Moorhead. She has a life-long interest in history and genealogy.

Gail enjoys spending time at the golf course with her husband and daughter.



DUANE WALKER

Duane Walker is a native of the Moorhead area and a graduate of Moorhead High School and Minnesota State University-Moorhead. He is a realtor with Arista Realty and a member of state and national realtors associations.

Duane enjoys family activities such as bicycling and snow-skiing with his son, daughter and wife Terri.



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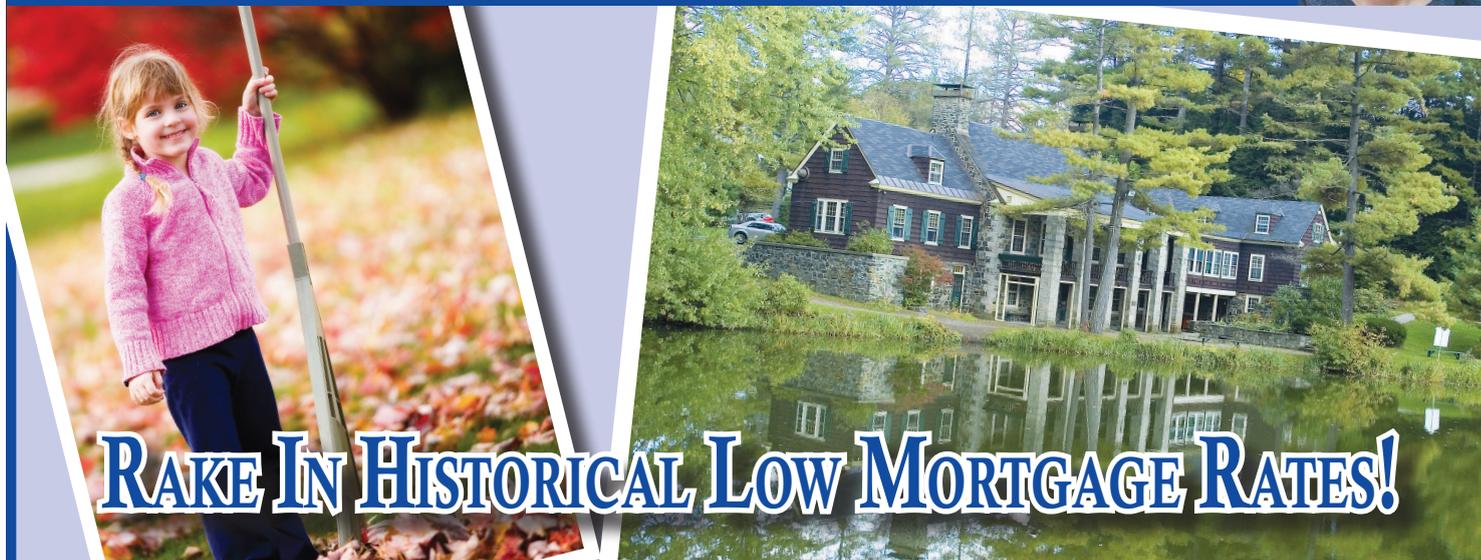
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Meet The HCSCC Board Members...



HELEN OLSON

Helen Olson was born and raised in the Rollag area. She and her husband of 53 years Robert, farmed for over 40 years in the Hawley area. They have four children and 14 grandchildren.

Helen is active in her church and community. She is an organist and pianist having played for many weddings and funerals over the years.

Bob and Helen are owners of Prairie Hills Estates Housing Development in Hawley.

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