

# Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County Newsletter



Help us  
Name that Newsletter!  
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Volume 1 Issue 1 • April 2009

## Fire Horses to the Rescue

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Snider

Brownie

Moorhead Fire Hall, about 1904. Moorhead Fire Brigade horse trainer and driver Peter Malvey is at the reins of the Eagle Hose Company's team of grays at right, Pete and Charley. At left, Henning Bergren handles the Key City Hook and Ladder Company's team, Mage and King. Beside Bergen sits Jack Prentice. On his lap is a white puppy, probably the "fire fighting" Snider. At right on the sidewalk is the department mascot, Brownie. The City Council's meeting room and offices occupied the second floor of the fire hall. *O. E. Flaten Collection. CCHS collections.*

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## Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County



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[www.info.co.clay.mn.us/history/](http://www.info.co.clay.mn.us/history/)

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New Combined  
Membership Levels!

## HCS Membership Benefits

*Keep this list of membership benefits for your records*

### **Individual-\$30 and Household-\$50:**

- Member Newsletter with fascinating historical articles and upcoming events
- Free annual admission to exhibits (Clay County Museum on third level free through June 2009)
- 15% discount in Heritage Gift Shop
- 50% off \$20/hour Archives research fee
- Invitations to HCS-sponsored special events
- Access to History Tours

### **Booster-\$75:** all of the above, plus

- 25% off archival photo reproductions
- 2 guest admission passes

### **Heritage-\$125:** all of the above, plus

- Association of Science & Technology Centers Museum Passport
- 4 total guest admission passes

### **Patron-\$250:** all of the above, plus

- One hour of free research from the Archives
- 8 total guest admission passes

### **Benefactor-\$500:** all of the above, plus

- Frameable 8" x 10" reproduction of historic photo from CCHS Archives
- 12 total guest admission passes

### **Vanguard-\$1,000:** all of the above, plus

- Two complimentary tickets to the HCS Annual Meeting
- 16 total guest admission passes

### **All Membership Levels:**

- Satisfaction of knowing you are helping to preserve the memory of our area's people and our rich heritage!

For more information call 218-299-5511  
or visit [www.hjemkomst-center.com](http://www.hjemkomst-center.com)

## Stop in the Heritage Shop

**15% off ■ HCS Members**

## Letter from the Board President ■ Darren Leno

Greetings from the board of directors of the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County.

I hope this message finds you both safe, and dry.

It has been a truly amazing experience for all of us to watch the Red River rise to levels never seen in recorded history. This flood will undoubtedly persist for a lifetime in the memories of the many thousands of us who experienced it directly or through our loved ones. From my vantage point in Oakport Township, it is not something that I will ever forget. The sites of thousands of selfless volunteers, the many random acts of kindness, the concerned phone calls from far off friends not heard from in years, the visits from the Red Cross and Salvation Army, neighbor helping neighbor, calls from church members, the sight of coast guard helicopters in the skies and the sounds of military humvee's in the flooded streets. If it is true that adversity makes us more of what we are, then our Clay County/FM community must now be a stronger, more caring, and more determined place than it was before.



As I write this, however, round two of these historic events are now unfolding. In anticipation of the Red's second crest, the Hjemkomst Center has been closed to enable the construction of a ring dike to protect the building and its contents.

I'm very proud of the efforts our staff and volunteers have taken to conduct their responsibilities under very trying circumstances, and to ensure the safety of our important artifact collection. I'm also grateful to the city of Moorhead for making the Hjemkomst Center's protection a priority.

It was one of my favorite historical figures, Winston Churchill who said under even more trying circumstances, "When you are going through hell, keep going."

That is what we all must do in the weeks ahead, because that's all we can do. Adversity always seems to come at the least convenient time. Thanks to you, we will get through this.

I look forward to seeing you on the other side of hell, hopefully at our Annual Meeting in May. I am sure that we will all have many stories to share then.

Please keep the HCS and all those severely impacted by this flood in your thoughts and prayers.

## HCS Interim Executive Director Maureen Kelly Jonason

March 1, 2009

We have so much to be grateful for! The merger is going well. We have a great hard-working core staff and have added a new events coordinator. We have an excellent new bookkeeper, Jody Barret, who has a long history of working with non-profit organizations. We have an interested and involved board of directors who are working toward an exciting future. We have an abundance of valuable volunteers who are our backbone.

Especially exciting was receiving the news that the MN Secretary of State certified our new name—the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County. We have also recently received several generous donations. RD Offutt Company sent us \$3000 to christen our new venture. The MN States Art Board awarded HHIC \$4500 to pay artists for Pangea—Cultivate Our Cultures 2009. The Lake Agassiz Regional Library of Moorhead gave us \$8000 worth of high-quality metal shelving which has helped to expand our artifact and archive storage capabilities tremendously. Flint Communications has generously donated its resources to design a new logo for HCS. As always, we are grateful to the Clay County Commission for the generous annual support. And, of course, members of both HHIC and CCHS continue to support us with donations and memberships. We are truly blessed.

As I have worked through this amazing period of transition, first as a volunteer on the Future Committee for over a year, then as Executive Director of HHIC and now as Interim Executive Director of HCS, I continue to marvel at the level of enthusiastic support we receive from the general public. Every time I present to a service club and talk about the mindful combining of resources we have planned, they share their approval. With the combination of Clay County support and the revenue from admissions, gift shop sales, grants, and donations, HCS will thrive well into the future.

Finally, I look forward to meeting as many members as I can at the May 18 annual

meeting. This special event will give HHIC and CCHS members a chance to mingle and celebrate our new joint venture—our new “baby” HCS. Please come if you can! We rely on our members so much!



Photo Provided by: The Hawley Herald

### Job description of the Interim Executive Director

As IED, I am in charge of seeing that all daily operations of the museum and archives are carried out by staff. My specific responsibilities include processing bills for the accountant, managing the budget, writing donor thank-you letters, managing the gift shop and ordering gift shop stock, paying consigners quarterly, booking traveling exhibits and managing deposits and contracts, hiring new staff, evaluating staff, supervising all staff including those paid by programs such as Experience Works and MNCEP, giving presentations to community groups, soliciting donations, writing grants, initiating fundraising and program events, maintaining board relations, attending meetings on-site and off-site to further the mission of the organization, and representing the public face of the organization in the media and at events. At the same time, I am working on all kinds of transition issues including combining insurances, notifying vendors of the joining of the two groups, and working with City staff to determine the details of changes in our contract. I love the great diversity of tasks I encounter every day and am grateful to have such a great staff and so many willing volunteers to keep operations running smoothly. I live with my husband Martin Jonason, a full-blooded Norwegian, in south Fargo.

## Meet the Staff of the HCS



**Mark Peihl**

Archivist

I'm Mark Peihl, Archivist for the HCS. As Archivist I get to take care of our paper materials (photos, documents, manuscripts, maps, etc). I also help researchers find information about their families or any aspect of the county's history. The job entails a lot of research and writing for our exhibits, website and publications. I also produce and do educational programs for church, civic and school groups on a wide variety of local history topics. My wife Gloria and I live in a seventy-five year old home in north Fargo with our Yellow Lab, Zoe. My passions are local history, hunting, fishing, hiking and canoeing.



**Lisa Vedaa**

Interim Collections Manager

Hi! I'm Lisa Vedaa, Interim Collections Manager for the HCS. I was the Director of CCHS for close to seven years, and now will be working with our wonderful historic artifacts. I am now the contact person for the donating of artifacts. If you think you have something we might like to add to our collection, give me a call! I will be working with my fellow staff members to create interesting and educational exhibits and displays for our visitors. I will be getting to know the collection more so that I can develop programs to present to tour groups and local clubs. I live with my husband and almost-2-year-old son Jacob in north Fargo, and enjoy spending time with my family, camping, and sewing.



**Michelle Kittleson**

Communications &  
Traveling Exhibit Registrar

Greetings. I'm Michelle Kittleson, Communications Coordinator & Traveling Exhibit Registrar for the HCS. As Communications Coordinator I work to promote our organization, events and exhibits by working with the local media for coverage and designing marketing material to reach the community. As Traveling Exhibit Registrar, I insure the arrival of exhibits and also shop for new exhibits. I live with my Mum in an 1898 Queen Anne Victorian home in south Fargo with our two Cardigan Welsh Corgis, Zak and Caley. When I am not in the office I enjoy spending time with dogs and horses, photography, and organic cooking.



**Markus Krueger**

Visitors Services Coordinator

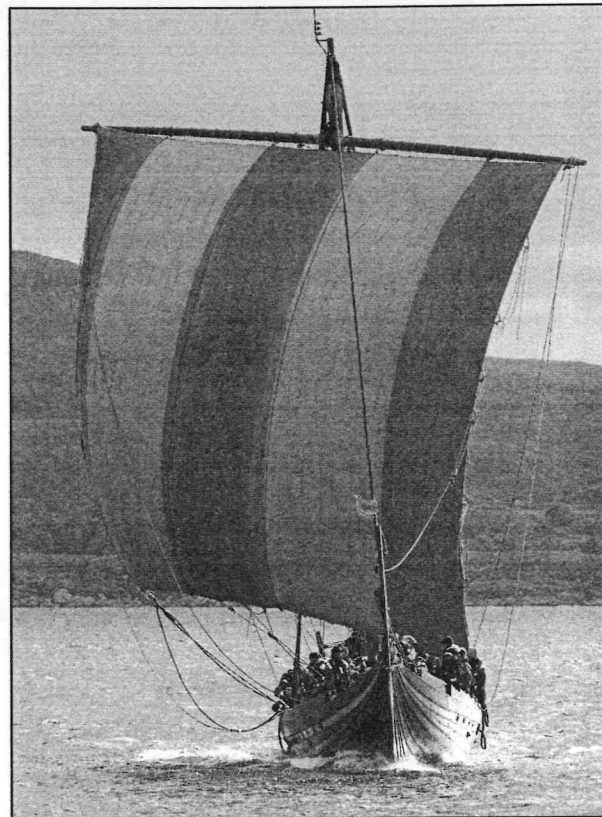
I'm Markus Krueger, Visitors Services Coordinator for the HCS. I keep track of the volunteer schedule, recruit and train new volunteers, and continue to be trained by some of our older volunteers. I schedule and give group tours of the ship and the church. I also hang and take down exhibits, make new displays, create new content for existing exhibits, help out with event planning, and run the place on the weekends. What I like best about my job is researching both Viking Age and Red River Valley history and chatting with volunteers. I live in Moorhead with my wife Megan and our three cats. My favorite hobbies include reading, woodworking, baking, and hiking.

## A New Viking Ship Goes Home...to Ireland?

By Markus Krueger, Visitor Services Coordinator

In the summer of 2007, while we were celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Hjemkomst* voyage, a new Viking ship replica was making a "hjemkomst" of its own. But the homecoming of the *Havhingsten fra Glendalough*, or *Sea Stallion from Glendalough*, was not a voyage to Scandinavia but from Scandinavia. Although the *Sea Stallion* is a replica of a Viking ship found in Denmark, the longboat's ancestral home was Ireland.

The *Sea Stallion* is a replica of a ship called *Skuldelev 2*, which was found along with four other Viking ships at the bottom of a fjord near Roskilde, Denmark. The five ships, called the *Skuldelev* ships after a nearby town, are one of the most important finds of Viking Age archeology and the Roskilde Viking Ship Museum was built to house them. These ships were probably intentionally sunk by the Danes in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century to block the harbor, quite likely from King Harald Hardrada's Norwegian fleet. All five ships have been extensively studied by scholars since their discovery in 1962. The ships ranged from small fishing boats to large cargo ships, but the most impressive was *Skuldelev 2*, the largest Viking warship yet discovered. From studying the tree rings in the lumber (a technique known as *dendochronology*), researchers can actually tell that the warship's lumber was cut in May or June of 1042 AD. They were also able to trace the source of the oak: the forest around Glendalough, Ireland, a lumber source for Norse shipyards in



The *Sea Stallion of Glendalough* off the coast of northern Scotland.

Dublin. The thought of a Viking ship made in Ireland would have been no surprise to anyone living a millennium ago. Everyone knew that Ireland was crawling with Norse Vikings, merchants, and craftsmen. The Vikings came to raid the undefended monasteries of Ireland at the close of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. As always, Vikings mixed their raiding with trading, and in short time the Viking raiding bases turned into market towns and manufacturing centers. These were Ireland's first cities and some of the country's largest cities, today, such as Cork, Waterford, Wexford and Limerick, began as Viking

© The Viking Ship Museum, Denmark. • Photo: Werner Karrassch

raiding bases. But the most powerful of them all was Dublin, founded in 841 as the first Viking base in Ireland. The Norse Kingdom of Dublin was one of the wealthiest trade and manufacturing centers in the Viking world. One of Dublin's specialties was shipbuilding.

When the Norse merchants and craftsmen settled down in the Irish towns, they soon found that it is easier to conquer a land than to defend it. Norse immigration decreased over the next century, and Irish kingdoms became more powerful. By the 1040s, when *Skuldelev 2* was being built, the Norse colonies in Ireland were in decline. The Kingdom of Dublin survived by paying tribute to surrounding Celtic kingdoms and renting out its still formidable Viking fleet as mercenaries. As for the Norse colonists, they had already begun to blend into Irish society by intermarrying with locals, converting to Christianity, wearing kilts, and speaking Irish Gaelic. Today, after over a millennium of Norse blood in the gene pool, anyone who traces their heritage to the Emerald Isle probably has a Viking or two in their family tree.

There are many questions that scholars studying the remains of *Skuldelev 2* could not answer with books or in laboratories. How would she handle at sea? How fast can she be rowed? How exactly did they fasten the rudder? How could a crew of 65 sail for weeks in a small ship without killing each other? The only way to answer questions like these is through experimental archeology: they would

have to build a replica and sail it.

Work began on the *Sea Stallion from Glendalough*, the replica of *Skuldelev 2*, in 2000. The Roskilde Viking Ship Museum's team of eight shipbuilders took four years and \$2.5 million to finish the ship, using only medieval ship building techniques and replicas of Viking Age tools. This is one difference between the *Sea Stallion* and the *Hjemkomst*. Roskilde has a team of experienced shipbuilders that have made replicas of all five of the *Skuldelev* ships and are constantly building other historical ships for the museum and for purchase. The *Hjemkomst*, on the other hand, was built by Robert Asp, a junior high guidance counselor, with help from some friends.

Asp not only used power tools in building his ship, but he even invented and welded together a hydraulic clamp, called "Jaws," specially designed for making Viking ships in the modern era. Unlike the professional boat builders on the Roskilde team, the *Hjemkomst* was the first and only boat that Robert Asp ever built.

Perhaps an even greater difference between the two ships, however, is the crew size. The *Sea Stallion from Glendalough* is packed with 65 sailors, scientists, and historians who spend their summers getting to know first hand the joys and hardships of a Viking's life sea (except for the pillaging, of course).

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## Fire Horses to the Rescue

By Mark Peihl, Archivist

Last month I was driving down Moorhead's 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North when I heard the sounds of sirens. I pulled over and watched as the fire trucks pulled out of the fire station on 11<sup>th</sup> Street heading for an emergency. It made me think about how lucky we are to have trained, dedicated professionals willing to risk their lives to save us. Our firefighters' courage is awe inspiring and humbling. Since the very beginnings of the city young people have signed up for this dangerous and vital task, and for over twenty-five years animals shared in those labors. Before trucks, carefully trained

and cared for horses insured that the firefighters and their equipment reached the scene of disasters in a timely and safe manner. This story is about those beloved animals.

Wood-frame structures made up most of early Moorhead. Homes heated with wood burning stoves and less than adequate chimneys made the place a fire trap. In October 1872, residents barely managed to fight off a prairie fire which threatened the young village. The next month 37 men organized themselves as a Volunteer Fire Department, one of Moorhead's earliest civic institutions. A subscription drive raised \$85 for equipment. We don't know what they



The Moorhead Eagle Hose Company turned out in full uniform with their hand-drawn hose cart for a 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in 1887. They pulled the cart to fires manually until 1895. The view is looking northwest from the corner of what's now Center Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> St. *CCHS Collections.*

# Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County



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Heritage  
Hjemkomst  
Interpretive  
Center

## NEEDED: FLOOD RELIEF!

April 6, 2009

Dear Members of the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County:

So much can change in a month! As of today, the Hjemkomst Center is scheduled to be surrounded by a clay dike for the rest of April. That means that the museum, which closed March 25 due to the flood, will have been closed more than a month by the time we get to reopen to the public.

**I am writing today to ask for your assistance as we struggle through this historic event.** Because of the flood, we have incurred extraordinary costs while at the same time revenue from our gift shop and admissions has dropped. Your help at this important moment will ensure that HCS will be able to deliver fully on its 2009-2010 programming commitments. When the flood waters recede, we need to be ready. Please help us by contributing what you can to help us meet our goals.

**Please consider giving a donation at this time to see us through this unexpected bump in our journey.**

A donation of \$500, \$100, or even \$50, in addition to your annual membership, would go a long way toward sustaining us. The staff continues to work very hard on maintaining the dikes while still planning for the busy year of exhibits and programs ahead. We have much to do, and when the waters recede, we'll need to put back all of the archives that we moved to the first floor for safety.

As an extra incentive, gifts of \$1000 or more will receive a very special hand-made genuine Ojibwa bow and arrow set made by a regional Native American artist. Every one who makes a contribution between now and when we reopen will receive a 20% discount coupon for the gift shop. Your extra gift at this challenging time will be put to good use, and the staff and board of HCS will be extremely grateful.

Many thanks for considering my request,

Maureen Kelly Jonason  
Interim Executive Director

initially purchased but by 1880 they had a hand-drawn hose cart equipped with a reel and 20 lengths of fifty-foot hose and a hand-drawn hook and ladder unit. The latter carried ladders to reach upper stories and apparatus for pulling down burning walls. The volunteers ran to the carts when alerts sounded, grabbed attached ropes and manually pulled the equipment to the blaze.

In 1881 Moorhead was incorporated as a city. The much larger town needed better fire protection and the firemen needed a place to store their equipment. In 1882 the city built a new city hall and fire station on the southwest corner of what's now Center Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> St. (Today the spot is home to a parking lot just west across 5<sup>th</sup> St from Scheels.) City offices and Council chambers occupied the upper story. The lower level housed the Fire Department's equipment. That year the volunteers reorganized into a Fire Brigade made up of two companies, the Eagle Hose Company and the Key City Hook and Ladder Company. The two groups engaged in a friendly rivalry and completed specialized training with their respective equipments. But they still had to pull their carts to fires by hand.

In 1965 longtime Fire Chief Francis "Tats" Remley wrote a short department history for *Minnesota Fire Chief* magazine in which he suggests that "the first horse-drawn hose wagon was put into service" in 1892. However, by early 1895 the Brigade definitely had a single hook and ladder wagon but no horses to pull it. Alarms went to both the fire station and a flour mill which sat on

the riverbank just south of the Main Avenue bridge. A whistle on the steam-powered mill signaled the volunteers around town to hustle to the fire station. It also brought draymen and others with teams to the fire hall. The first to arrive hitched his horses to the hook and ladder wagon and pulled it to the blaze. The winner of this race received a five dollar payment. The Eagle Hose Company boys still pulled their hose cart by hand.

In March 1895 the City Council, flush with saloon money and in a mood to spend, decided to buy the Brigade a hose wagon and team of horses to pull it. At least five local horsemen offered teams for between 230 and 300 dollars. Horses work well as pairs but it's important to balance the size, weight and pulling strength of the two animals or one will wind up working harder than the other. A good deal of effort went into selecting the right team. A committee of City Council members and firemen tried out each team with the hook and ladder wagon.

Today when people hear of horses pulling wagons they often imagine heavy draft horses such as Percherons, Belgians or the famous Budweiser Clydesdales. These critters can weight up to 2000 pounds each, but they were pretty rare in 19<sup>th</sup> century Moorhead. In fact, the only photos I've ever seen of local heavy draft horses are of full blooded stallions which could be bred to smaller mares to produce fauls possibly weighing 1400-1600 pounds as an adults. Typical working horses on farms and in town ran between 1100 and 1300 pounds each.

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## Fire Horses to the Rescue

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Typical riding horses run from 900 to 1100 pounds. The *Moorhead Daily News* reported the combined weights of three of the offered teams as 2285, 2535 and 2585 pounds.

In the end the committee selected the lightest and cheapest team, owned by former Moorhead mayor John Erickson. The horses required the addition of a barn on the rear (south side) of the fire hall. The city built stalls for two teams, expecting to add horses for the hook and ladder wagon at some point. Moorhead newspaperman James Fay later recalled a former City Council member telling him the sounds of snorting and horses' hooves thumping on the wooden stall floors below could be clearly heard during lulls in the Council meetings.

In early April the city appointed Eagle Hose Company member Peter Malvey as driver and horse trainer. He served in that role until 1910. Malvey knew horses. The *News* reported in mid May that the horses, named Dick and Reeve, "are now pretty well trained and will leave their stalls and run out to be hitched up as soon as the gong strikes, and the boys feel quite proud at the success they have made in training them."

Malvey and the other firemen were clearly attached to their horses. A 1936 *Daily News* article about the animals said, "it was not their intelligence alone, nor the manner in which they responded to an alarm – those were requirements fire teams had to meet in those days – but the actions of the animals as they stood in their stalls between runs, which made them 'pals' of the fire laddies."

In his 1965 article Chief Remley



Long-time Moorhead fire wagon driver and horse trainer, Peter E. Malvey. *Records. Moorhead Fire Department.*

called the horses "the pride of the department and the city. During leisure time at the fire barn, it was not an uncommon sight to see Malvey playing tag around the rigs with one of his favorite steeds. The reward for being caught was a lump of sugar. You may be assured, the horse soon learned to reverse his chase from one side to the other in order to win his prize."

This likely referred to Dick, a bay and the lighter of two horses. Reeve was gray and about 100 pounds heavier. In 1936 Malvey told the *Daily News* that Dick "was the more friendly of the original team... and would perform any number of tricks.

Seemingly almost human in intelligence, he appeared to listen to every

conversation and at times was known to relish a draught of beer when one of the boys would 'rush the growler.'" ["Rushing the growler" was 19<sup>th</sup> century term for visiting a saloon with a bucket or jug – called a growler - to fill with beer for home consumption.]

When the alarms rang, however, it was all business. A fireman hit a button on the wall releasing the stall doors. Dick and Reeve would dash out, hurry around either side of the hose wagon and sidle into their positions in front. Directly above, their harnesses and collars hung suspended from the ceiling. A rope lowered them onto the waiting horses. Firemen quickly fixed the harnesses to the wagon, closed the aluminum collars around the steeds' necks and clipped reins to the bridles. With Malvey in the driver's seat, the brakes released, the doors to the fire hall swung open and the horses galloped out on to Center Avenue "with ears pointed forward, nostrils distended and a gleam of excitement in their eyes." On the seat beside Malvey another fireman worked a foot-pedal gong. "Each push of the gear and spring operated bell seemed to act as an accelerator as the horses would seem to pick up speed with each clang as they raced gallantly to the fire." In 1898 the Key City Hook and Ladder boys made a play for their own team but their timing was wrong. Excessive spending on projects less important than fire protection put the city deeply in debt in the 1890s.

That spring residents had elected Jacob Kiefer mayor to straighten up the city's finances, and the Council denied their request. Just a week later the

*Daily News* reported a 4 a.m. residential fire on South 4<sup>th</sup> Street caused considerable damage. The blaze started in a second story bedroom. "The Hook and Ladder men after much delay, secured Mr. Barnard's team to haul the truck. Had the ladder been on hand in the first place access could have been gained to the burning room by means of the upper story windows and the chemical engine could have been used. As it is, what is not burned is destroyed by water. The heat and smoke prevented the men getting into the room by means of the stairway." Never the less, the Hooks had to rely on the "race to the fire hall" approach for three more years.

In fall 1901 Malvey's favorite horse, Dick, came up lame. As fine a pair of horses as they were, the team may have been just a bit too light for the job. Winters were especially difficult. As snow grew deep, the firemen added runners to the wagons for operating over drifts. But the team still had to drag the hose sled (it weighed 3000 pounds) across the bare wooden floor. The City Council voted to sell Dick and Reeve and purchase new teams for the department. On a cold Saturday in mid December (the high for the day was -18°!) Joseph Malchose bought Dick for \$30 and Reeve for \$80 for use on his farm near Barnesville. The *Daily News* reported that "They will take their places along side of the ordinary farm stock and will be known no more to the exciting incidents of fires and fire runs. One is excused for forgetting sentimental over a horse – they are lovable animals – and Pete Malvey

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## Fire Horses to the Rescue

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would not have shown the right stuff had he not lingered around the old bay with many a parting stroke of his sleek sides before he was led away... Pete will begin over again the education of a [new] fire team."

Eagle Hose Company's horses came first. After an exhaustive search, the Council's fire department committee purchased a pair of grays from Horace, ND farmer Peter Westlund. Named Pete and Charley, they weighed 1280 and 1320 pounds, nearly 300 pounds more than the old team. *Daily News* reported "while looking rather rough at present, they are pronounced by experienced horsemen to be a good team. They are just off the straw pile and a season of Pete Malvey's loving care in needed to show them off properly."

They turned out fine. Long time Fire Chief Nick Remley, father of later Chief "Tats" Remley, called Pete and Charley "intelligent and fast... better horse flesh was never hitched to a fire wagon." The Hook and Ladder boys wound up with a black and gray, Mage and King. This team also served utility duties, hauling and doing street work, dashing to the fire hall when needed.

The fire horses shared the fire hall with a succession of mascot dogs including two especially smart pooches, Brownie and Snider. Nick Remley recalled in a 1947 *Daily News* article Brownie "had his regular chore of letting out the horses each evening [for exercise]. The dog had been trained to jump up and throw the electrical switch that operated the electric gate [to the horses' stalls]. He would do this trick upon the bid of one of the

firemen about the same time every afternoon. Snider was a fire-fighter in his own right. He entertained the firemen for many a laughable moment with his antics about trying to paw out a paper fire that the firemen would start on the floor of the firehouse. This dog would dart back and forth, pawing at the burning paper until it was extinguished."

Pete and Charley retired about 1911 and were replaced with a pair named Nig and Ned. Mage and King also retired. Moorhead's last fire horse team, matching grays named George and Prince, took their places.

In October 1917, the two companies of the Moorhead Fire Brigade reorganized as the Moorhead Fire Department and hired three fulltime paid firemen who lived in the fire hall.

Early on June 7, 1918, the crews were called out to a fire on Moorhead's north side. It proved to be a false alarm. According to newspaper accounts, soon after the teams turned north on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Police Officer "Paxton saw smoke issuing from the back end of the [fire hall] building." By the time he reached the hall "the fire was burning in half a dozen places... In a short time the fire boys had returned and several streams of water were turned on." It was too late. Fire Chief Nick Remley told a reporter, "I cannot account for the fire in any way... There was nothing in the building from which the fire could have started... The loss will probably be about ten thousand dollars. This includes the building ...one [old] hose wagon and 600 feet of hose, and the personal property of the three men who made their home in the fire

hall. Nearly all of the uniforms are a complete loss – these were the uniforms of the volunteer members.”

Though never proven, authorities suspected arson. Suspicion fell on a former member of the department. According to fire department meeting minutes, on March 4, 1918 this fellow applied for but was denied sick benefits. This was pretty extraordinary. I couldn't find another example of a fireman being denied benefits from 1882 to 1918. Later that spring this fellow failed to register for the draft. At a special meeting of the fire department on May 13, after much discussion and a “report from the draft board that [he] was classed as a slacker [he] was upon motion, unanimously carried, given an [sic] dishonorable discharge from the department.” This also was unprecedented. It was suspected that this fellow called in the alarm and

started the fire in revenge.

The fire department set up temporary headquarters in an empty dry goods store at 302 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. and made the first steps toward a mechanized department. Less than two months later the city purchased a hose truck with a chemical fire fighting apparatus on board. This was built on the frame of a 1915 White passenger automobile. In 1919, the department sold Nig and Ned and construction began on a new brick fire station and city hall on the old site on Center Avenue. The next spring, the department received a 55 foot-long American-LaFrance hook and ladder truck. The city sold George and Prince. For the first time in 25 years, horses no longer pulled fire wagons through Moorhead's streets.

## Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County

### Annual Meeting/Fundraiser for HCS

Postponed from April 28 due to the Flood of 2009

**Re-Scheduled Date: May 18, 2009 (RSVP: May 4, 2009)**



Program		
5:30 p.m.	▪	Registration
6:00p.m.	▪	Dinner with Clarion playing background music
7:00p.m.	▪	Business Meeting/Board Election
7:20p.m.	▪	Honor Pam Burkhardt, retired CCHS Curator
7:30 p.m.	▪	New Local History Presentation by Mark Peihl
To Follow	▪	Door Prizes

**To RSVP:** Call or Email Maureen Kelly Jonason 218-299-5511 Ext. 226  
[Maureen.jonason@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:Maureen.jonason@ci.moorhead.mn.us)

# Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County



## Exhibition & Event Calendar

### Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

<b>Now - June 30, 2009</b> Keep In Touch Exhibition — CCHS Gallery
<b>April - June 2009</b> Asian Games: The Art of Contest FMVA The BIG Art Show
<b>May - June 2009</b> Prairie Churches from the State Historical Society of ND
<b>July - September 2009</b> S.P. Wange & O.E. Flaten Photography

### Upcoming Events

<b>May 18, 2009</b> HCS Annual Meeting
<b>June 26-27, 2009</b> Berquist Cabin Open House
<b>July 18-19, 2009</b> Viking Village
<b>November 14, 2009</b> Pangea-Cultivate Our Cultures Festival



The Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County  
participates in the **ASTC (American Science and  
Technology Centers)** passport program.

Clay County Historical Society  
**Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County**  
PO BOX 157 • 202 1st Ave North  
Moorhead, MN 56561-0157

Historical and Cultural Society  
of Clay County  
**Mission**



To preserve, interpret and celebrate the history of  
culture of Clay County and the region.