

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. XI NO.6

MHS APPROVES GRANT FOR MICROFILM & READER/PRINTER

In November, the Minnesota Historical Society, through its Grant-in-Aid Program, approved a grant to provide state matching funds to help the CCHS purchase a Microfilm Reader/Printer and Microfilm copies of newspapers, census and naturalization records and maps. The MHS has agreed to give the CCHS \$3946 to purchase the microfilm provided that we come up with \$4276 to purchase a machine to view and make copies from the film.

If matching funds can be raised, the Archives will have copies of every newspaper published in the county that is currently available. The county's Federal Census Schedules for 1870, 1880, 1900 and 1910, State Census Schedules for 1875, 1885, 1895 and 1905, the counties indexed natural records and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the cities of Moorhead and Barnesville. The maps were drawn by a New York company to provide construction details of individual buildings for fire insurance companies. They show the exact location and size of each building on each street and what it was used for. Updated every few years, the maps offer a detailed portrait of the cities over time.

The staff is preparing a \$2000 grant proposal to a local agency to purchase the reader/printer. In addition, about \$850 has been raised locally. This will still leave about \$1400 left to raise. Any donations toward this valuable project will be gratefully accepted.

Individuals and organizations who have contributed include: Barbara J. Bunnell, Mercedes Roos, Bette Haring, North Buffalo ALCW, Moorhead Kiwanis, Concordia College, Moorhead Lions, Doris Waller, Fine Arts Club, Robert E. Hansmann, Beverly & Lloyd Paulson.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to these folks for their help.



"HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW" ???

The Hitterdal Area Lions Club has recently donated money to the Clay County Historical Society for an artifact display case to be used in the Hitterdal Senior Citizens Center.

The display "Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow" features a straight razor and mug, a presentation box with shaving mug, brush and mirror, razor strop, lady's satin cap, a chignon, bottle of wave solution and hair necklace. Two pictures show Glenice Pick, Cromwell Township, with her long hair and Hans Langseth, Eglon Township, the man who had the world's longest beard!

This is an effort of the CCHS Outreach Program to get more artifacts out to the people in Clay County. Thanks for your support Hitterdal!!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Member:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your support throughout the year. We are looking forward to 1989 as a year of growth and progress and we look forward to your continued support.

Please take note of the article in this newsletter regarding the microfilm reader/printer. Mark wrote the grant application to the Minnesota State Historical Society for their participation in this project. Thank you, Mark, for your extra efforts. This device will be a real asset to the Society and we are seeking additional contributions to complete the project.

The Board of Directors are pleased to announce the formation of the "Clay County Historical Society Endowment Fund". The purpose of this fund is to establish a permanent endowment fund from which the investment income shall be used to supplement other fund raising activities of the Society and to provide funds annually to support the cost of operations. If you would like further information on this fund. Please give us a call.

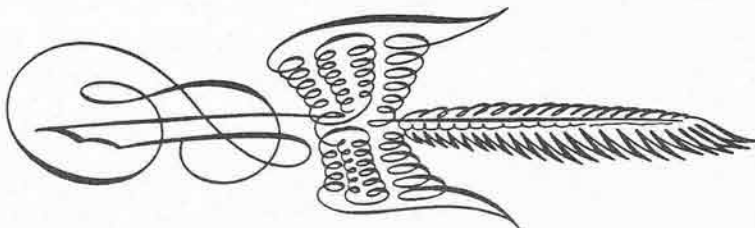
We anticipate growth and progress for the Society, but we know that this will not happen unless we plan well and then execute our plans competently. It is with that goal that we enter 1989. To assist in formulating our goals and plans for the future, the board is planning to meet at an all day seminar in January to be specifically devoted to education and planning.

We solicit your comments, suggestions and questions regarding the Society and its future.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a very happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Vernon A. Pederson
President, CCHS



DISPLAYS IN THE COUNTY

As a result of the CCHS Outreach Program, we now have 5 artifact displays on view out in the county. Listed below is a description of the display, where it is displayed and for how long.

December 28, 1988, will be the last day for "Christmas Calories" now on display at the Hawley Library. This display will be replaced with "Those Far Away Places" featuring postcards, maps and souvenirs from the warmer parts of the United States, the mysterious Mediterranean and Scandinavia. Treasures include a painted bean pod from Georgia, Turkish shoes and photos of the old country.

The Moorhead Library is currently showing "Spinning A Yarn" until December 15. Next display will be entitled "'Tis The Season" showing items used to cope with the cold; such as, a footwarmer, horsehide mitts, muff, earlaps and pocket flask.

Viking Manor's Anna Syverson carvings closes December 12 and will be replaced with "Dinner Was Served," a reminder of how things have changed at mealtime. Some of the artifacts are a double salt, crumb scraper, butter chip and a sugar cube rack. Bon Appetit!

The Ulen-Hitterdal High School at Ulen will close the display "Weights and Measures" also on December 12. Their new display is called "From Head to Toe," a collection of artifacts worn in the "good old days" which may be unfamiliar to the students. They will see button shoes and button hook, man's removable collar, a stiff shirt front, lady's long stockings, hat and hat pin.

The four new displays described above will all close the week of February 27 - March 3. Look for the next series of Clay County Outreach Displays to

open at that time. Displays currently being changed every two months.

We will continue to place display cases in the spring as funding becomes available and suitable locations are arranged. Be sure to visit the display in your area!!

NEW EXHIBIT OPENS



Keep the Home Fires Burning: World War I in the Midwest, a traveling exhibit from the Minnesota Historical Society, opened in the Clay County Museum November 12, 1988. This exhibit documents home-front activities in the Upper Midwest during World War I.

The 53 photographs and posters raise issues of dissent and support for the war, ethnic hostilities and sympathies, farm politics and government policies which were common in midwestern communities.

Supplementing the exhibit are World War I artifacts from the Clay County Historical Society collection including uniforms, equipment, dog tags and souvenirs from "over there."

Keep the Home Fires Burning will be showing until February 12, 1989.

CLAY COUNTY TRAIN ROBBERY, 1897

A scene right out of a wild west show was enacted in Clay County when heavily armed bandits robbed a train between Glyndon and Moorhead in the fall of 1897.

The Northern Pacific Railway's westbound passenger train No. 1 slipped out of Glyndon at 12:26 a.m., Sunday September 26, 1897, with Engineer T. Hooker at the controls. It was a through train to the west coast with scheduled stops at Moorhead and Fargo and points west. Behind the locomotive and coal tender were a mail car, a baggage car, an express car, two day coaches, a diner and three sleeper cars. In the express car were a safe and an armed messenger. The safe probably contained several thousand dollars. Harvest was in full swing and the coastal trains often carried lots of cash from eastern banks for grain dealers to pay farmers for their crops.

As they were pulling out, Engineer Hooker noticed "a large, raw boned man" on the front platform of the mail car directly behind the coal tender. This was not unusual. The country was full of men looking for work on threshing crews and many were riding the rails.

However, as they approached Tenney (a siding 2 1/2 miles west of Glyndon) the man, now masked, crawled over the tender, pulled two big revolvers and ordered Hooker and the fireman to stop the train. The startled men obeyed immediately.

When the train stopped, conductor "Patsy" Corcoran and brakeman Hall got off to investigate. Walking toward the locomotive they noticed that the engine and mail car had been separated from the rest of the train and were standing about half a car length down the tracks. Big revolvers loomed out of the darkness and Corcoran and

Hall soon joined their fellow trainmen in the cab accompanied by a second masked robber.

The first robber (apparently the leader) ordered Hooker to proceed past Dilworth. At the time Dilworth was just a siding with a large grainery. The engineer was told to stop a few hundred feet west of the grainery.

Route agent, D. Todd, stuck his head out the mail car door and asked what was wrong. The leader jumped down and ordered Todd and his two assistants out. He then looked down the track and said "Where the H--- is the express car? You d--- S--- -- B---; why didn't you cut off the express car?" Apparently, the assistant had uncoupled the train in the wrong place. The express car with its safe was back at Tenney with the rest of the train.

(The robbers were prepared to deal with a safe. More than a dozen sticks of dynamite were later found in the mail car wrapped with paper from the Hub clothing store in Moorhead.)

The robbers ordered all seven train men to sit in the grass along the tracks. One watched them while the other rummaged through the mail car.

His search was fruitless and the robbers turned their attention to the crew and rifled their pockets. By that time, however, the trainmen had hidden most of their valuables and the robbers collected only 30 or 40 dollars for their night's work.

The crew was loaded into the mail car and told that they were going for a little ride. The robbers shut the door and disappeared into the night. After several minutes, the men looked out and saw no one. They drove the engine and mail car

into Moorhead and notified the authorities.

Mean while, back at Tenney, the passengers at first suspected that a break down was causing their delay but began to fear a hold up. They spent an anxious two hours hiding their valuables and watching for desperadoes.

The express messenger caught on right away. Armed with a shot gun, he followed the engine and mail car down the track for a mile or so on foot then returned to the express car to get "all his refreshments ready to receive company if anybody called." Nobody did.

Hooker and Corcoran picked up a switch engine in Fargo and retrieved the train at Tenney. After brief stops in Moorhead and Fargo, No. 1 proceeded on west to the coast.

Fargo and Moorhead were in an uproar. Rumors abounded. Posse's searched the area all day Sunday but found no one.

This was the first train robbery in the region that anyone had heard of. The Moorhead Daily News called the incident "A disgrace to our civilization and a severe reflection upon the efficiency of the state governments in protecting citizens" and called upon the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho and Oregon to "put armed guards upon every through train for a time, with instructions to shoot down the miscreants who board trains for the purposes of robbery. The slaughter of a few train robbers would soon satisfy them that the employment was too risky even for the most desperate and daring."

By Monday, U.S. Marshalls, secret service agents, N.P. Railroad detectives and a Post Office inspector arrived to help local police investigate. They

were joined by some amateur sleuths motivated by a \$500 reward posted by the N.P.Ry. and the U.S. Government's offer of \$1000 for the capture of each desperado.

Over the next few weeks at least seven men (and probably many more) were arrested for the crime and then released.

On November 1, the Moorhead Daily News wrote "Where, oh where, are the men who held up the Northern Pacific train? We have been frequently promised by a large force of bright detectives and government salary absorbers that...they were spotted, rounded up, etc., and it only remained for the officers to take them when they got good and ready. It seems to us that they are taking a good deal of time for preparation. The public can stand the shock of hearing of the arrest of the guilty parties."

The public was spared that shock. No one ever stood trial for the botched hold up and the identity of the stick up men remains a mystery.



OCTOBER/NOVEMBER DONORS

Some of the donors and items donated are:

Steve Schroeder, Glyndon: burlap potato bag Owl Brand. Haggart Family of Fargo: 4 history books. Bev Woodward of Fargo: 1950s formal and gloves. Helen Wolner of Cloquet, MN: Moorhead Normal School Certificate for 1910. Fran Wahlin, Fertile, MN: Gone With the Wind style lamp. Beth Iverson, Barnesville: booklets from Dist. 39 School, Nelson Oil Co. Hawley thermometer and a pink wastebasket, 1950s, "Maid of Honor" (probably from Sears). CCHS acquired a lawn darts set, print and 1937 calendar from Alfadale Dairy in Moorhead, a handsome man's robe from the 1950s and a pinback button for the Sugar Beet Days/4-H Round-up in 1954.



NDSU HAS DISPLAY ON LACE MAKING

Be sure to visit the exhibit gallery in the lower level of NDSU's Library for the display on lace making. Sister Rosalia Haberl, Hankinson, ND, a National Heritage Fellowship winner, has an impressive display of her bobbin lace work on exhibit. An additional informative display of bobbin lace as well as tatting is presented by Red River Lacer, Phyllis Klosterman of Wyndmere, with five Christmas pieces by Pam Burkhardt. Pam is the Collections Manager for CCHS.

ETHNIC CHRISTMAS AT THE CENTER

As part of a Merry Prairie Christmas, the HHIC presents an Ethnic Christmas with trees decorated by several nationalities. One of the demonstrations scheduled for December will be the Red River Lacers making bobbin lace on Sunday, December 11 from 1-5:00 p.m. Collections' Manager, Pam Burkhardt, a member of this group, will give additional bobbin lace demonstrations on December 17 and 18 from 1-5:00 p.m. here at the Center.

WORKSHOP RESULTS



The Clay County Historical Society held a preservation workshop Saturday, November 12, 1988 at the Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center. The first session was lead by Mark Peihl, Archivist. Mark gave instructions on how to preserve your valuable family photos of yester years. Pam Burkhardt, Collections Manager, followed with a presentation regarding the correct procedures to preserve your heirloom textiles and needlework. Participants found both topics to be very informative and interesting. If you are interested in these two topics, but were unable to attend, call (218) 233-4604.

CHRISTMAS OF LONG AGO

Pearle Eide Melbye quoted in
Hitterdal: 100 Years

Christmas Eve was an exciting time. No artificial trees in those days. A pine or a spruce tree was set up in our "Front room". Red and green wax candles were placed in metal holders and put on the tree, along with other decorations. I remember stringing popcorn and cranberries to drape on the tree. We children did not realize the danger of the lighted candles on the evergreen tree. I remember Dad, nervously keeping an eye on the tree until the candles were extinguished. The lutefisk and lefse supper came first. How hard it was to wait until the dishes were done before we could open the gifts. The Christmas story was read from the Bible, carols were sung, and then the gifts were distributed.

A huge tree was also set up in the Church for the Christmas season. It had lighted candles for the children's Christmas program. A pail of water and a mop stood near the tree, supposedly to quench a fire if one started in the tree.

Here, There - Everywhere in
Clay County; Glenn Johnson

The first known Christmas holiday celebration in Clay County was at Glyndon Dec. 25, 1872. The coming of the event was publicized in the Dec. 19, 1872, issue of the Red River Gazette. Under the headline "Good news for the Little Folks" was written: Santa Claus is coming! The

old gentleman requested us to announce that he will be at the Glyndon Chapel on the evening of the 25th of December, next Wednesday, his many engagements elsewhere rendering it impossible for him to arrive any earlier. The committee appointed to make ready for his coming also requests us to say that while his appointment is more particularly with the children of the Glyndon Sunday School, yet all are cordially invited to participate in the festivities of the occasion, and to make free use of the tree is expected to bear for the school. Contributions are solicited, which can be left with her, as also presents which the different members of families or friends may wish to make each other. The committee wish it clearly understood that all the children of Glyndon and vicinity, whether they have been connected with the Sunday School or not, will be cordially welcome, and they will endeavor to see that none of them go away without at least a plum. The hearty cooperation of all friends of the little folks, as also of all who enjoy a pleasant social gathering, is asked and expected.



CCHS - 1988 Membership Information

CCHS Membership

I would like to begin/renew my membership in the Clay County Historical Society. Please enter my membership in the category I have checked below:

- () SPECIAL* \$2.00
- () INDIVIDUAL \$15.00
- () FAMILY \$25.00
- () PATRON \$50.00

*Persons residing in a nursing/retirement home.

CCHS Membership With Annual Pass

I would like to begin/renew my membership in the Clay County Historical Society. Please enter my membership in the category I have checked below:

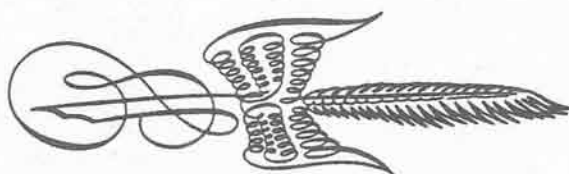
- () INDIVIDUAL \$25.00 Includes One Individual Annual Pass
- () FAMILY \$50.00 Includes One Family Annual Pass
- () PATRON \$75.00 Includes One Individual Annual Pass
- () LIFE \$300.00 Includes One Individual Annual Pass
- () COUPLE LIFE \$500.00 Includes One Family Annual Pass
- () BUSINESS \$100.00 Includes One Individual Annual Pass

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____ Phone _____

RETURN TO: Clay County Historical Society
P.O. Box 501
Moorhead, MN 56560
(218) 233-4604



CAN YOU HELP US????

Since we moved into the building, most of our clothing collection has been stored on broom and shovel handles placed between shelves in the aisles of one of our storage rooms. Only one of the three existing clothing racks is adequate. Earlier Loren Helmeke, CCHS Board Director, cut and donated enough used 1" water pipe to enable Dave Larson, HHIC Maintenance, to thread and assemble four clothing racks. Several more clothing racks are needed as well as a quilt storage rack. So, CCHS members, can you help us out? Almost any length of 1" water pipe could help us. Give us a call (233-4604) if you have some to donate.

Another item we need is an upright freezer. Our photo collection includes growing numbers of color slides, negatives and prints. The best way to store these items is to freeze them. Most color photographic materials contain organic dyes. Anything organic, like hamburger for instance, eventually decays. Organic dyes are the same. They fade and discolor. You can freeze hamburger to keep it from going bad. Color photos can be kept almost indefinitely if they are frozen.

A chest type freezer would be "OK" by an upright would allow us to build shelves inside that would make retrieving the materials much easier. A frost free model would be ideal.

If you have an old, working freezer you can donate or if you know where we can find one, please call us at 233-4604.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

A volunteer is needed about two days a month to take charge of the PAST Trunks. Duties would include repacking incoming trunks, checking the lesson plans for missing pages, monitoring evaluation forms and delivering the trunks to area schools. Training will be provided.

A volunteer is needed for 4 or more hours a week to work with the artifacts. Duties include completing a worksheet on each artifact (descriptive skills necessary), numbering the artifact and typing the necessary file cards on each. Training will be provided.

A big THANK YOU goes to volunteer Donna McMaster who helped deliver the Outreach Case to the Ulen-Hitterdal High School and a temporary case to the Hawley Senior Citizen's Center. How many volunteers would carry a 30 lb. horseweight and a 22 lb. iron up three flights of stairs? Thanks!!

Pam





CLAY COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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