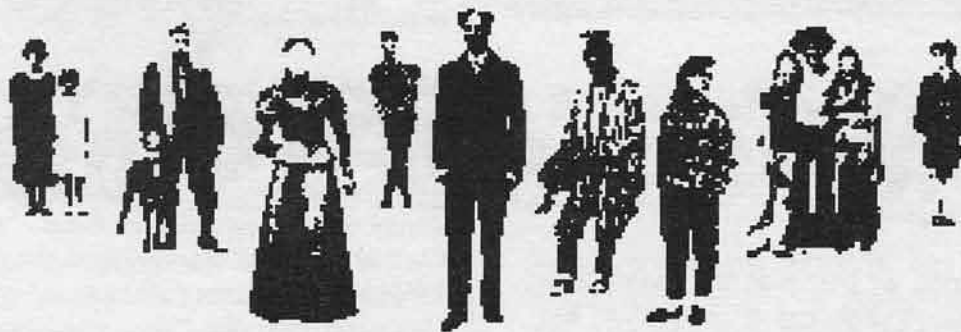


CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CCHS Newsletter

January/February 1994

Vol. XVII. No. 1



Dovre Ski Club Jump

A competitor takes to the air at the Dovre Ski Club Jump north of Moorhead about 1930. Jumpers flew up to 100 feet, landed on the river bank and slid over the river to Fargo.

Clay County Historical Society Photo

See Story on Pages 11-14.

From the Front Desk

By Margaret Ristvedt

A quick recap of the activities of Clay County Historical Society during 1993 is in order before we move on to bigger and better things in 1994.

A major change during the past year was adding a part time museum assistant to help implement exhibits and Outreach cases. Joan Erickson of Fargo, has a degree in interior design and her presence has made a profound improvement in the aesthetic quality of our exhibits.

CCHS participated in many municipal celebrations around the county in 1993. Board members, staff and a number of volunteers marched in the Felton Field Days Parade, the Hawley Rodeo Parade, the Ulen Turkey Days Parade, the Barnesville Potato Days Parade and the Valley Fest Parade in Moorhead. CCHS sponsored booths at the County Fair at Barnesville, and at the Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival in Fargo. An open house at the Bergquist Cabin during the festival was co-sponsored by the Swedish Cultural Heritage Society.

A major accomplishment during 1993 was completion of repairs on the 1936 Buffalo Fire Truck. It is now a matter of getting the motor reinstalled in the chassis and we will be up and running. CCHS plans to use the fire truck in as many county parades as possible this coming summer. That is particularly good news for those that walked in last summer's parades.

The CCHS and HHIC Boards continue to meet together quarterly. This greatly improves communication between boards and contributes toward cooperation of boards and staffs.

Our archives continue to be a beehive of industry as researchers avail themselves of the many resources. A partial list of what is available in the archives is available on request.

CCHS sponsored two tours in 1993 to the new Minnesota History Center in St. Paul and to other points-of-interest in the Twin Cities. The tours have proved themselves both entertaining and educational and plans are to continue them in 1994. Learning about our Minnesota heritage helps us build on our knowledge of Clay County.

Our Native American artifact collections were documented and appropriate agencies were notified in compliance with the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.

Along with the permanent exhibit in the CCHS Museum, two temporary exhibits drew good crowds during 1993. "Yesterday's Medicine" looked at health care (a hot issue these days) as it was in the early days of the county and through modern times. "A Century of Cycling" featured bicycles from the ordinary of the 1880s to the mountain bikes of today. In November a photographic exhibit "Then and Now" opened. Comparison photographs show how some things have changed and how others have stayed remarkably the same in Clay County.

Stop in soon and often at the Clay County Museum and Archives. We think we have something of interest for everyone.

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



202 1st Avenue North
Box 501
Moorhead, Minnesota 56560

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Be My Valentine



By Pam Burkhardt

The idea of a day (or longer) dedicated to love dates back to Italy in the 4th century BC. At that time, a pagan celebration in mid-February honored the god Lupercus by holding a lottery. Each year a young man drew the name of a young lady with whom he associated for that year. Then a new lottery was held



and a new name drawn. In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius found a more wholesome substitute for Lupercus in a saint martyred about 200 years earlier. Valentine, Bishop of Interamna, refused to

renounce Christianity and was executed on Feb. 24, 270 AD. He had become a special friend to lovers by conducting marriages in secret. Once St. Valentine was "installed" in place of Lupercus, the lottery now drew names of saints whose lives you were to emulate for a year.

Reproduced from *Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things*, Page 52.

The St. Valentine's Day card tradition also started in Italy. On St. Valentine's Day, young men wrote messages of admiration to the young lady he admired. The earliest Valentine's Day card extant [see graphic] was sent in 1415 from Charles, duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was a prisoner in the Tower of London. This card is now in the British Museum. In the 16th century, St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, tried to eliminate the custom of sending cards and reinstall the lottery of saint's names. It didn't work - more

cards were sent out than ever. In 1797, a book of verses was published for young men who couldn't compose their own. Esther Howland was the first American publisher of Valentine's Day cards. Her cards, decorated with lace, sold from five dollars to 35 dollars. Next to Christmas, more cards are exchanged on Valentine's Day than at any other time.

Cupid is another Roman connection to Valentine's Day. This chubby cherub armed with arrows dipped in love potion is the son of Venus, goddess of love and beauty.

Reference: *Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things* by Charles Panati.



From the CCHS Collection

Outreach Displays

	Opens	Closes
Hitterdal Senior Center	Feb. 9	April 13
Ulen-Hitterdal High School	Feb. 9	April 13
Viking Manor, Ulen	Feb. 9	April 13
Hawley Public Library	Feb. 9	April 13

Glyndon Community Center	Feb. 11	April 15
Moorhead Public Library	Feb. 11	April 15

Barnesville Public Library Opens in February

Sure to make you shiver, Moorhead Library's display called 'TIS THE SEASON highlights winter items familiar to us: ice skates, a variety of winter clothing, and more.



BAGS, BOXES, BOTTLES AND JARS... just some forms of containers featured in the Ulen-Hitterdal High School case.

READ ME A STORY, an appropriate exhibit for the Hawley Public Library, displays children's books from years past.

Glyndon Community Center features THOSE FAR AWAY PLACES, displaying artifacts from all over the world.

The Hitterdal Senior Center will host the timely exhibit 'T'WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR - calendars of different forms, shapes and sizes.

SMILE! A display of cameras and other items related to photography will be shown at the Viking Manor in Ulen.

Barnesville Public Library will be the location for TOYS, items from our collection of children's games and toys.

Donations

A great big thank you to the following individuals and groups who made monetary contributions to CCHS in November and December.

Dorothy Dodds, Moorhead
Margaret Moorhead, St. Helens, Ore.
Prosequi Club, Moorhead
Anonymous
Interstate Business College, Fargo
American Bank & Trust Company, Mhd
Katherine Mentjes, LeCenter

Artifacts & Donors

November/December 1993

Donors include:

Moorhead: Ed Gudmundson, First Congregational Church
Baker: Francelia Iverson
Hawley: Larry Quam
Fargo, ND: Dr. John Brophy

Artifacts include: photo copies of the First Congregational Church records 1894-1989; disk record and cassette copy of the Rev. S.G. Hauge (Hawley) singing Norwegian songs; pocket account book from the Baker State Bank; a paisley shawl ca 1850; fall-out shelter sign.

FREE BREAKFAST, DINNER or TEA SET

\$1000 PAID TO ANY PERSON WHO CAN SAY—A checker of a lifetime. An honest proposition—No hawking. No boasting about the bank. We will give every 1000 Beautifully Decorated Breakfast, Dinner or Tea Sets. Each set 64 pieces. Latest design full size for family use—no quicky introduce Carbolites, the greatest Remedy on Earth to regulate the Bowels, stimulate the Appetite, and beautify the Complexion. A good set of dishes costs \$20 or \$25. Don't waste money. We will make you a present of a complete 64 piece set, beautifully decorated in Pale Blue, Green, or Pink, exactly as we claim or forfeit our money. This advantage of this! you want to get a handsome set of dishes absolutely free.

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Send us your P. O. and Express Office address and agree to mail only 12 Boxes of Carbolites at 25¢ each a box. We will send them at once. They will like hot cakes. When sold send us only \$1.50 and keep the other \$1.50 of our money until you receive the dishes. No two ways about us. We talk straight from the shoulder and we are bound to introduce our Remedy, no matter what it costs. When we say we will give away these magnificent sets of dishes we will do it. This is a great opportunity.

Ⓢ Remember our dishes are beautifully decorated and are packed, boxed and shipped, Free of Charge.

Manufacturers' Supply Dept., 439 H. 81 Park Place, N. Y. City

PROMISE HER ANYTHING, BUT GIVE HER ...

Fast. Fast. Fast Relief... to neutralize harmful engine deposits! Advertisers promote products by promising reliability, quality, taste, relief, etc., but only if you buy their product. The promotional statements below are taken from ads printed in The Art of Advertising by Bryan Holme. See if you can guess which product is being promoted: Carter's Little Liver Pills, Coca-Cola, Maxwell House coffee, New Departure Bicycle Bells, Quaker Oats, Sunlight Soap, Toilet Soaps, Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pens. [Answers below]

- "On your way home from school, be sure to call at the Grocers' in New Street for my ____." Education endorses the worth of _____. Time cannot improve upon it. [1919]



Chris Olson (above left) and Barbara Lantis of the Great River Regional Library are shown accepting the Minnesota Library Association Public Relations award that was presented to the Cooperative Summer Library Program. Olson is a CCHS Board Member and Public Information Specialist with the Lake Agassiz Regional Library. The special honor was a reward for last summer's highly successful "Hook a Book" reading program.

- Mouson and Co.'s ____ are warranted to be made of the very best and purest materials, not to shrink or vary in shape or weight, even if kept for years. [1885]
- The standard of excellence the wide world over. In 16 different styles and prices. All dealers sell them. [1885]
- A gift that yields satisfaction by the handful...Best dealers have full stocks. Exchangeable always. [1900]
- ... A perfect remedy for Sick Headache, Dizziness, Nausea, Drowsiness, Bad Taste in the Mouth, Coated Tongue, Pain in the Side ... [1890]
- A delightful-palatable-healthy beverage. It relieves fatigue and is indispensable for Men - business and professional/students, wheelmen and athletes. Relieves mental and physical exhaustion and is the favorite drink for Ladies when thirsty-weary-despondent. [1905]
- ...And when refreshments are more officially served, this fragrant, flavor-rich ____ will meet with unanimous approval, for it is America's favorite - bought and enjoyed by more people than any other brand, at any price! [1949]
- It puts off old age by nourishing the entire system. ____ makes your blood tingle; nerves strong and steady; brain clear and active; muscles powerful. It builds children up symmetrically into brainy and robust men and women. [1902]

- Promise Her Anything Answers**
- Toilet Soap
 - The New Departure Bicycle Bells
 - Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen
 - Carter's Little Liver Pills
 - Coca-Cola
 - Maxwell House [coffee]
 - Quaker Oats
 - Sunlight Soap

The Rocking Chair:

by Claudia M. Pratt

Ms. Pratt is currently working towards a Master of Arts degree in Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. This article is based on a paper Pratt wrote for a course titled: Nineteenth Century Social and Intellectual History of the United States.

While not much is known about the origins of the rocking chair, it is unique to America, especially nineteenth century America where it was nurtured into its form and popularity. In this article Pratt explores the history of the rocking chair and the chair as a symbol of nineteenth century American democracy.



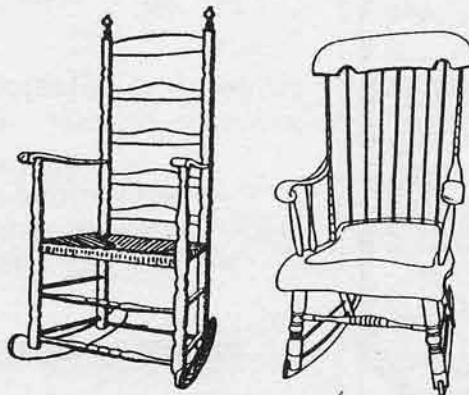
"Take it Easy. Specially adapted for rest and comfort. Recommended by scores of gentlemen. The ladies are enthusiastic about them. Graceful, Easy, Fashionable, and Inexpensive. Visitors to the U.S. will recall the luxury of these chairs, which are to be found in every American home, and no family can keep house without them. They are made in a variety of styles, so that any one's taste can be suited. Price of rockers, from 25s. to 35s."

Advertisement for Sinclair's 'American Common Sense Chairs' in *The Graphic*, 17 May 1884; London, England.¹

Benjamin Franklin had one complete with a foot pedal-operated fan. The Shaker communities made and successfully marketed them. President Abraham

From *A Short Dictionary of Furniture*

EARLY
AMERICAN
ROCKING
CHAIRS



Left: The ancestral type: a ladder-back, rush-bottomed chair, with turned uprights and stretchers. The 'bends' connecting the front and back feet transformed it into a rocker. Drawn by Ronald Escott. Right: The Boston rocker, circa 1835-60. Drawn by Marcelle Barton.

Lincoln was assassinated in one. Babies are rocked in them and numerous stories have been woven by people gently rocking in them.

It has been speculated that in the mid-eighteenth century Benjamin Franklin invented the rocking chair. Today it is believed to date from the early 1600s. In 1948 a toy rocking chair from the reign of Charles I was found in a London, England plague pit.²

Whether or not the rocking chair was invented in America, it was fully developed in America. As early as the 1760s, there are records of rocking chairs being sold or repaired in America. The earliest sighting of Franklin's rocking chair was in 1767 according to a journal of the Rev. Manasseh Cutler. Cutler notes that "He showed us ... his great armed chair, with rockers, and a large fan placed over it, with which he fans himself, keeps off flies, etc., while he sits reading, with only a small motion of his foot..."³

There are two types of the early rocking chair: one is a converted rocking chair in which curved pieces or runners have been added to the legs, and the other is designed specifically as a rocking chair. The earliest rocking chairs were probably children's chairs. Adult versions of these chairs with tacked-on runners show up later in the form of a small, armless nurse or sewing rocker; and in the form of a slat-back, fiddle-back or a Windsor chair. The earliest runner pieces extended the same distance in front and back, and were very much like cradle rockers—high, short, and stubby.⁴

The practice of adding runners to chairs continued until the mid-19th century.⁵ Much of this might have been due to economic reasons since it cost only fifty cents to add rockers, when it cost \$3.50 for a new rocking chair designed as such.⁶

Two styles were popular....

The first chairs designed specifically as rocking chairs were conceived sometime between 1790 and 1800.⁷

Two styles were popular, the slat-

Symbol of Democracy

backed chair which was popularized by the Shakers, and several variations on a Windsor-type rocking chair which was developed in furniture centers like Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.

The Shaker rocking chair was developed shortly after the religious society settled in America in 1776. They adapted the rush-bottom, New England slat-back chair by simplifying and refining the form. By 1789, the Shakers of New Lebanon, New York were selling chairs to other Shaker families and buyers in the outside world. An 1805-1807 Shaker journal indicates

that "286 chairs made and sold. Few were 'wagain seats' & 'rockin chairs' most were 'common chairs'." Only three of these were rocking chairs.⁸ After a new factory was built in 1872, the Shakers increased their output by mass producing chairs and rocking chairs became their biggest selling product. A February 1884 to March 1885 order book from the chair room, notes that 64

side chairs, 205 armed chairs, 1051 armless rockers, and 1596 armed rockers were made.⁹

The Windsor-type rocking chair was made in many of the New England states and eventually developed into what is known as the Boston rocker. Because there were no published rocking chair designs in guidebooks, each region or furniture maker developed and varied their designs in their own unique way, but the basic form of the Windsor-type remained the same. Many early Boston rockers share characteristics of

(Continued on Page 8)

This photograph of the parlor of a Clay County residence around the turn of the century features three rocking chairs. The rocker on the left is in the style of a captains chair and the two on the right are in the style of a Boston rocker. The rocker without arms might be considered a "Little Boston" for use as a sewing or nursing rocker. Note the painting on the crest of the chair. It is of the "fancy" style with its fruit, flower and leaf painting on the crest, a traditional New England motif.

Flaten/Wange Collection



Rocker (Continued from Page 7)

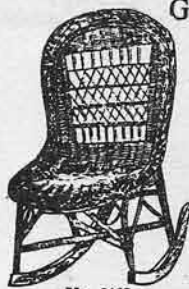
Sheraton and Windsor chairs with a rolling seat, a back with a crest-rail and spindles, and gently sloping arms.

It is believed that the first Boston rocker was made in Connecticut by Lambert Hitchcock between 1826 and 1829. Hitchcock was also the first to manufacture the chair as a true factory product.¹⁰ Around 1820, the Boston rocker was made in a settee version with an attachable fence that allowed mothers to rock their babies while sewing. They were called a cradle rocker, rocker settee or a mammy bench. A smaller version of the Boston was developed in the 1850s. The Little Boston, also called a nurse rocker, nursing chair, or sewing rocker, was characterized by its five spindles and armless nature. This model became a popular bedroom chair.¹¹

Rocking chair styles changed with the evolution of American furniture....

The rocking chair continued to follow the general style evolution of American furniture and in the 1830s it was made in the popular late Empire style. This model was a contour-backed, upholstered or cane-seated/backed easy chair on rockers, called the

Grecian rocker. In the twentieth century this rocker was renamed the Lincoln rocker because of Abraham



No. 9117.



No. 9121.

Ladies' Comfort Rocker for \$3.90.

One of the best bargains ever offered in a genuine Comfort Rocker. More satisfaction can be gotten out of one of these chairs than anything else in the furniture line. The best present you can give your wife. A chair that is made for service and durability as well as for comfort. The manufacturer who makes these reed goods has no rival in the market, and we take particular pleasure in offering this line, knowing the excellent service it will give. This rocker is made of the best selected reed with fancy open back, fancy woven rim around back and seat, woven reed seat, cane wound legs and braces. In fact, throughout it is as substantial a rocker as you could obtain at retail stores at double our price. This is positively the lowest priced first class Comfort Rocker ever put on the market.

9117 Our special price, each, natural finish... \$3.90
9118 Our special price, each, shellac finish... 4.65

Your choice of either shellac or natural finish. Always state in your order which finish you desire.

A \$6.00 Rocker for \$3.90.

This line of goods represents the newest designs for the season of 1897, in fact, they are stylish and desirable patterns not to be found in retail stores. We contract for these in large quantities with the manufacturer, and hence are able to offer them at about the prices that retailers pay for the same quality of goods. Nothing more handsome or more comfortable made. Their durability is beyond question for they are made of the choicest select reed, which is very pliable and consequently will not crack like that from which the cheap rockers are made. We guarantee that you will be pleased with this rocker and if it is not just what we represent it to be, it may be returned and we will gladly refund your money. Full roll woven reed, back and arms are peculiarly adapted to comfort and strength. Fancy woven reed back ornamented with turned balls. Close woven cane seat. Very strong fancy turned legs and spindles. Rockers securely attached to legs.

9121 Our special price, each, natural finish... \$3.90

9122 Our special price, each, shellac finish... 4.65

some or more comfortable made. Their durability is beyond question for they are made of the choicest select reed, which is very pliable and consequently will not crack like that from which the cheap rockers are made. We guarantee that you will be pleased with this rocker and if it is not just what we represent it to be, it may be returned and we will gladly refund your money. Full roll woven reed, back and arms are peculiarly adapted to comfort and strength. Fancy woven reed back ornamented with turned balls. Close woven cane seat. Very strong fancy turned legs and spindles. Rockers securely attached to legs.



No. 9137.



No. 9134.

The wants of the little ones must not be overlooked in laying in your supply of furniture. Nothing more handsome, durable or comfortable can be purchased than the beautiful Comfort Rocking Chair for children which is illustrated in accompanying cut. It has full woven reed roll around arm and back, fancy ornamented back, cane wound legs given additional strength by means of cross braces.

9134 Our special price, each, in natural finish... \$2.75

9135 Our special price, each, finished in shellac... 3.25

1897 Sears Roebuck Catalogue

Lincoln's unfortunate demise in one. Beginning in the 1850s, a similar version was popularized in the Midwest. Known as the Sleepy Hollow rocker, it was also an overstuffed rocker, with exaggerated curves and excessive comfort.¹²

In the 1800s, over 300 American patents were issued for rocking chair designs. One of these inventions was a platform type rocker. It was a chair which rocked on a spring mechanism on a stationary base and was popularized during the 1870s. This chair was known as the American Standard or Stationary rocker. It was not as cumbersome, it saved in the wear of carpets and was available in an infinite variety of finishes. George Hunzinger is regarded as the father of platform rockers because of his innovative and successful spring and hinge movement.¹³

Rocking chairs were made in a variety of materials as time passed and they grew in popularity. After the Civil War a type built of tree materials was popularized in the Adirondack Mountains, a summer retreat area of the wealthy. The Adirondack rocker was based on the style of rustic furniture built by woodsmen and hunters for their lean-tos and cabins in the region. A version of these chairs were marketed as "American Common Sense" chairs. During the American Victorian era, rockers were made out of wicker. Regions throughout America were not without their styles either.

The rocking chair as an idea...

According to material culture studies, traditions are materialized in folk objects. Objects reflect shared experience, community ideas and values which connect individuals and groups to one another and to the environment.¹⁴ In the case of the rocking chair, it is more than just a comfortable chair. When looked at closer, certain questions arise. For example, why did the rocking chair develop in America when the idea most likely originated in England? More specifically, why did it materialize in nineteenth century America? To answer these questions one needs to look at views held about the rocking chair, its use and placement in the home, and the time period in which the chair existed.

The first occurrence of the word "rocking chair" is found in the 1760s. The *Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* recognizes 1766 as the earliest recorded appearance or use of the word. England was slower than

America to use or accept the term. The *Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* notes that the first occurrence or general acceptance of "rocking chair" was in 1795.¹⁵ We know that rocking chairs were part of American culture at least as early as the 1760s. The fact that the word was placed into dictionaries tells us that the rocking chair played a part in the American society.

The rocking chair was accepted in American culture more readily than in Europe in the 1800s. Harriet Martineau, a British novelist who wrote social commentary, commented about the rocking chair after her visit to America in 1836. "The disagreeable practice of rocking in the chair... how this lazy and ungraceful indulgence ever became general, I cannot imagine, but the [American] nation seems so wedded to it, that I see little chance of its being forsaken."¹⁶ Others agreed. In her 1832 book *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Mrs. Trollop noted that American women spent too much time sewing and sitting in rocking chairs.¹⁷ Some Americans however were also wary of this new piece of furniture. For some, the rocking chair was associated with the ill and the elderly, and nineteenth century health enthusiasts even blamed them for tuberculosis. In 1865, the chair was noted as "that great barbarism, the unwieldy and disease-engendering rocking-chair."¹⁸

Despite the controversy about the rocking chair, it was found in all levels of society. In her paper on the Boston rocker, Nancy Goynes Evans states, "The American rocking chair seems to have been at home in all settings. There is hardly an inventory of the 1830s or 1840s that does not list this form [Boston rocker] at least once."¹⁹ Its placement in the American home followed changing ideas in architecture.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries no formal room ever contained a rocking chair. It was an informal piece of furniture, restricted in most homes to the kitchen and bedroom. But by the 1830s and 1840s it had also found a place in the parlor.²⁰ In 1838, after traveling in the United States, James Frewin, a builder, wrote about the Boston Rocker: "In America it is considered a compliment to give the stranger the rocking-chair as a seat; and when there is more than one kind in the house the stranger is always presented with the best."²¹ Paintings and photographs from the period show the rocking chair in the dining, living room, drawing room, bedroom, library and one room cabin.²² Often furniture of importance was displayed in paintings and photographs. This reinforces the fact that Americans valued rocking chairs in their homes.

"wooden narcotics"...

Over the ages the chair has responded to how people wished to sit.²³ Two themes which persisted in the nineteenth century home were that of comfort and versatility. The cult of domesticity generated the concept of the home as a retreat for the working man and as a dynamic work place for the woman. The rocking chair satisfied these desires. It was comfortable and comforting to fatigues. It also served as a tool for caring for the family and accommodated various sizes. Francis Grund, in 1837, described the rocker as "the *ne plus ultra* of all comforts in the shape of furniture;" and an unnamed contributor to *The Northern Galaxy* of Middletown, Vermont, in December of 1844 noted the "luxurious ease of these wooden narcotics."²⁴

On a larger scale, nineteenth century America was going through growing pains. It was a time of westward expansion, territorial conflicts, waves of

(Continued on Page 10)

RECOMMENDED READING

Denker, Ellen and Bert Denker. *The Rocking Chair Book*. New York: Mayflower Books, Inc., 1979.

Dyer, Walter, A. and Esther Stevens Fraser. *The Rocking Chair: An American Institution*. New York: The Century Co., 1928.

Evans, Nancy Goynes. "The genesis of the Boston rocking chair." *The Magazine Antiques*, v. CXXXIII/n 1, (January 1983)1: 246-253.

Muller, Charles R. and Timothy D. Rieman. *The Shaker Chair*. Canal Winchester, Ohio: The Canal Press, 1984.

Rieman, Timothy D. and Jean M. Burks. *The Complete Book of Shaker Furniture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1993.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*. New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1986.

Steinbaum, Bernice. *The Rocker: An American Design Tradition*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1992.

Rocker (Continued from Page 9)

immigration, industrialization, reform movements and varying degrees of democracy--all of which challenged the American character. It was a time of severing ties with the mother countries and a time when America was encouraged to form its own unique culture.

Americans were characterized as being rugged and practical individualists, self-reliant and informal individuals who believed in the democratic way. Keeping in mind that this was when the rocking chair developed and became popular in America, one can make connections between the American character and the rocking chair. The chair allows for individualism, it is a chair which is occupant driven, it is informal and practical.

An American institution...

The rocking chair became an institution in nineteenth century America. While the concept came from elsewhere, the chair was nurtured and fully developed in America. Patterns for the chairs were not included in the European style books of the period, therefore American craftsmen had to create chairs to fit the needs and tastes of their American clientele. The rocking chair hit its peak mid-century. That they were valued, can be seen by their popularity and by their social acceptance into the American home. Today, the rocking chair is a piece of furniture which is often passed down in a family and continues to hold a

comfortable place in and around the American home. Along with antique versions, new models are still popular pieces of furniture.

The rocking chair developed along with the American character and therefore could be considered one of the symbols of democracy. The underlying explanation of why they were so pervasive in American culture is that they silently represented the nineteenth century American who was a practical and self-reliant individualist.

1902 Sears, Roebuck Catalogue

Student Rocker.
 No. 1R5522 This Handsome Rocker has a massive golden oak frame. Hand polish finish. Spring edges, spring seat and spring back. The chair is extra large and the back is high enough so that the tufted top, shown on chair, forms a head rest. Tufted front and top with the best tow and cotton top filling. Furnished in velours, French Gobelin tapestry, crushed plush, broccatelle and leather. When made in leather the top is not tufted. Shipping weight, 40 pounds. Price, upholstered in velours.....\$8.95
 Price, upholstered in French Gobelin tapestry..... \$ 9.54
 Price, upholstered in crushed plush..... 9.75
 Price, upholstered in imitation leather..... 9.95
 Price, upholstered in genuine leather..... 12.25



Our Home Comfort Rocker.
 No. 1R5524 This illustration represents one of the latest and best designs of library rockers. The frame is of massive construction, so proportioned as to afford the greatest amount of comfort. It is beautifully upholstered, with a deep spring seat and spring back and top roll. This rocker may be had in golden oak. We are offering this rocker at extraordinary low prices. Weight, 75 pounds.
 Price, upholstered in three-tone velours...\$ 8.75
 Price, upholstered in silk tapestry..... 9.50
 Price, upholstered in best leather..... 11.40



Our Home Comfort Rocker.
 No. 1R5526 Massive frame, oak or mahogany finish, spring seat and back, well made of the best tempered steel springs and the best materials, roomy, durable and comfortable for parlor, library or living room. Weight, 90 pounds.
 Price, upholstered in velours.....\$9.45
 Price, upholstered in silk tapestry..... 9.85
 Price, upholstered in best leather..... 11.95

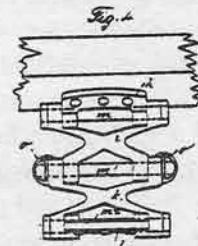
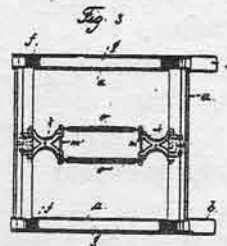
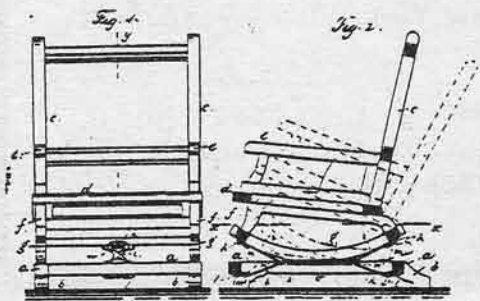


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G. HUNZINGER.
 SPRING ROCKING CHAIR.

No. 264,880.

Patented Sept. 26, 1882.



Invented
 by
 G. Hunzinger

Inventor
 George Hunzinger
 & Samuel M. Sull

From a
 1882 Patent

From pioneer transportation to modern day exercise

Skiing

By Mark Peihl

Doctors claim that cross-country skiing provides some of the best exercise available. It is not difficult to learn, you can do it here in the flatland and it is a great way to celebrate Scandinavian heritage. Skiing is Norway's greatest invention since lefse.

Sport and competitive skiing is a relatively recent innovation. Throughout most of its long history, skiing was simply a practical form of transportation. Although scholars say skis originated in the mountainous valleys of Norway, people from Scandinavia to Siberia have long strapped boards to their feet to cross deep snow. Four thousand year old rock carvings in Norway depict skiers in action. Skis dating to 500 BC have been found in bogs in Sweden. The old skis are remarkably similar to skis used in recent times. Until 120 years ago skiers strapped on boards six to 10 feet long and up to six inches wide. Held on with a simple leather strap over the instep, the boards kept the skier from sinking in deep snow and allowed him or her to either shuffle or sidestep up hills and slide quickly straight down. Skiers carried a long stout pole to help them up hill and slow themselves going down. To brake, the skier either dragged the pole alongside or rode it down like a witch on a broom.

Nearly everyone skied in Norway. Without this effective way of getting around, villages would have been isolated for months at a time. Skiing was so effective that in the 16th Century the government banned hunting on skis to save game herds from decimation. In 1716 the Norwegian Army mounted infantry companies on skis - they still do today.

When Norwegians emigrated to America in the 1800s they brought their knowledge of skiing with them. In preparing for this article, I searched our manuscript collections and local histories for accounts of skiing in

Clay County and found surprisingly few. There were several offhand references to folks skiing to school or church, along trap lines, or for the fun of it, but skiing was so common among the Scandinavian communities few people thought it remarkable enough to write about.



Knute Garsteig of Concordia College won 2nd prize at the National Intercollegiate Ski Tournament at Minneapolis in 1923. Garsteig grew up in Norway. *Concordia Annual The Scout*, 1923.

Levi Thortvedt's description of life in the Buffalo River settlement northwest of Glyndon is typical. The Thortvedts and their companions were from the mountainous Telemark region of Norway. After a stay in Houston County, Minnesota, they moved here in 1870, becoming some of the first white settlers in Clay County. Levi later wrote that in November 1870 "more snow came, knee deep on the prairies. Well now, skis had to be made in order to get around, but that was nothing. [Father] had an oak already spotted over in the woods, ideal for making skis, dry and straight grained. When Father had his skis ready (tried them on the hill and they went fast) I got the fever and he had to make a smaller pair for me."

Levi's description of the instep strap that held the skis on his feet is intriguing. "the ski bands were made from young elm saplings twisted like rope. Twisted this way they got quite limber."

The Thortvedt's neighbors were also making skis. The community members took turns skiing weekly the 17 miles to Georgetown to pick up mail. Levi reported that "The Hudson Bay [Fur Company] people at Georgetown inspected the skis with interest,

something new. They had snow shoes made of twigs and roots, but they were clumsy and heavy to navigate with in comparison to skis."

Other early residents reported trips to Alexandria for supplies - 120 miles one way. As transportation

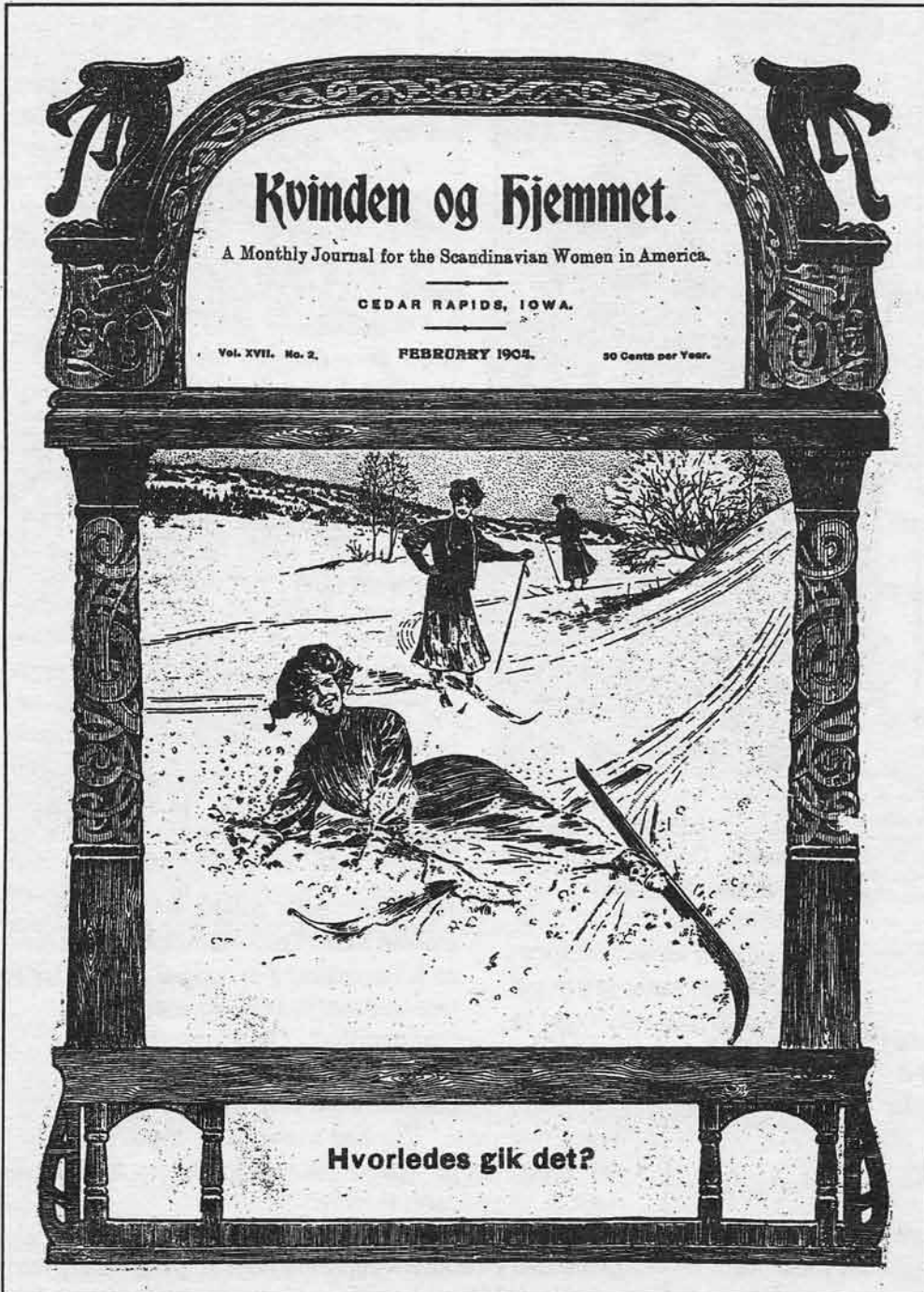
(Continue on Page 12)

Skiing (Continued from Page 11)

improved, skiing became less critical for communication but still common.

Meanwhile, back in Norway, one of the Thortved's old neighbors was changing skiing forever. Sondre Norheim was born in Telemark in 1825 and grew up skiing. His experiments with bindings led to the first real changes in ski technology in 4,000 years. Skiers had always used a simple instep strap to hold their skis on. That was fine for screaming hellbent for leather

straight down a slope, but Norheim knew that in order to control his direction he needed a stiffer binding that could transmit the side-to-side movement of his heel to the ski. He soaked thin shoots of birch roots in hot water to make them flexible and twisted them together so they would fit around his heel. The shoots dried stiff and the resulting binding left the heel free for walking but gave the skier control over his skis. Norheim also shortened his skis and carved them narrower in the middle for better control. Soon he was sweeping down slopes in graceful curves, dodging trees and stumps.



In 1868 Norheim traveled to Christiania (Oslo) to take part in a ski competition. Locals jeered this rube in peasant dress but in classic fairy tale fashion he astounded onlookers with his prowess on skis. Not only could he turn and stop on a dime but could fly off jumps and land without killing himself. Norheim established the world's first ski school and skiing would never be the same again.

(Norheim never profited from his innovations and in 1884 at 59 years of age, he emigrated to Norman County, Minnesota to improve his lot. Four years later he homesteaded near Minot, North Dakota. He died in 1897. Recently a memorial with an eternal flame was dedicated over his grave near Denbigh, North Dakota, to commemorate this hero to skiing.)

Before the turn of the century Austrians and Germans were experimenting to make Norwegian skis more adaptable to the higher, steeper slopes of the Alps. As their bindings became stiffer, keeping the heel more firmly in contact with the ski, a division began between cross country and downhill techniques. In 1936 the schism was complete when the winter Olympics added downhill and slalom racing as "Alpine" events

A young lady laughs off a snout full of snow after surviving a "facial implant."

Kvinden og Hjemmet Magazine, Feb. 1904

as opposed to the "Nordic" sports of cross country and jumping.

Meanwhile, back in Clay County, a new generation of skiers were getting hooked on jumping. Tearing straight down a slope can be pretty exhilarating but hitting a bump half way down and catching some air can really open one's eyes. Except in the hills in southeast Clay County, finding a slope long enough to build up a good head of steam can be a challenge. Late in 1922 the newly formed Dovre Ski Club of Moorhead built a ski jumping slide north of town along the Red River just west of where the old Moorhead Country Club was later built. The top of the scaffold originally stood 66 feet above the bank and 120 feet above the frozen river. Another 25 feet was added making jumps of over 100 feet possible. "Ski riders" from Winnipeg to Minneapolis attended the Dovre Club's annual tournaments at the slide well into the 1930s, drawing crowds of nearly 1,000.

The equipment was pretty primitive. Long, wide, heavy skis were easier to control in the air. "Beartrap" bindings featured clamps that held the edges of the "Yoompers" boots to the boards. With no mechanisms for release, it was imperative to avoid rolling if one fell.

(Have you ever heard the term "compound-spiral fracture?" Uff Da.)

Technique differed, too. Today jumpers stretch forward almost touching their skis. In the teens and twenties they stood nearly upright with arms waving to keep themselves from flopping backwards.

In 1935 the Dovre Club built an even bigger slide on the Fargo side of the river just east of Broadway near Trollwood Park. This whopper stood 140 feet above the ground with a 200

foot slide. It was the largest jump of its kind in the country. Skiers hit nearly 70 miles per hour before launching into space for jumps of 150 feet or more.

The new jump was fairly short lived. Bitterly cold winters in the late 1930s kept attendance at jumping events low. During World War II the big slide posed a threat to aircraft landing at Hector Field and the jump was torn down. Organized ski jumping came to an end in the area.

In the 1930s downhill skiing became so popular in the east and Europe that cross country skiing virtually disappeared. Many area servicemen picked up on skiing in Europe and brought it back with a passion to Clay County. In 1948, 60 Concordia College men and women formed a ski club. At first the enthusiasts had to train on hills near Hawley or along the Red River south of the campus. But soon they held weekly trips to ski resorts at Detroit Lakes and Dalton, Minnesota and conducted competitive meets with the NDAC (North Dakota Agricultural College, now North Dakota State University) Ski Club. The club was active until 1955.

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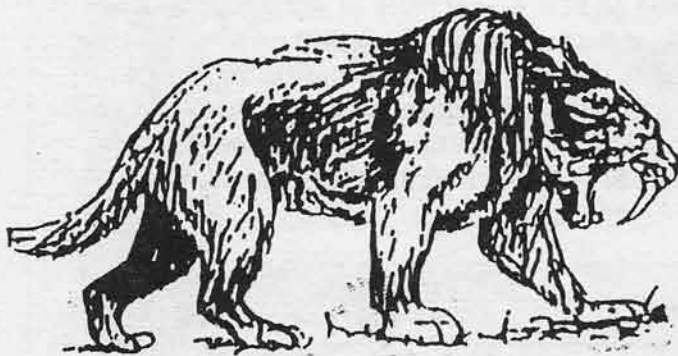
Outdoor enthusiasts hit the slopes at the Royal Oak Ski Resort near Rollag. Stan Grothe and Dean Kragerud ran the popular ski spot in the late 1960s and '70s.

Hawley Herald, Dec. 14, 1967. Hawley Herald Collection.

Dinamation's "Mammals from the Past" opens at Center on Feb. 19

Dinamation's "Mammals from the Past" are stomping their way into the Heritage Hjemkomst Center. The featured robotic creatures include: Dawn Beast (*Eobasilus*), Wart Hog (*Megchoerus latidens*), Giant Sloth (*Eremotherium*), Saber-Tooth Tiger (*Smilodon*), Ladle Tail (*Doedicurus*) and a Woolly Mammoth (*Mammuthus*). An added attraction is our baby Woolly Mammoth.

The Dawn Beast (*Eobasilus*) is a rhinoceros-like creature which stood 6 feet high and weighted nearly 4 tons. It had three sets of skin-covered, giraffe-like horns on its head and six inch canines. The creature was a herbivore, lacking upper incisors and probably had a prehensile lip to help gather food into its mouth. This creature would later be replaced by the early Perissodactyls (the order to which horses, rhinos, and tapirs belong).



The Smilodon, which means "saber tooth," stood 4 feet at the shoulder and weighted 500-600 pounds. Smilodon was one of the largest of a group of cats which evolved some 15-20 million years ago. The canines, it is believed, were used for stabbing the throat and other soft areas. Cats of today often crunch skulls and neck bones to kill their prey. The Smilodon became extinct due to the disappearance of the larger, slower-moving prey.

"Mammals from the Past" will be living at the Heritage Hjemkomst Center from February 19 to June 12. Come see the action: Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; or Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Skiing (Continued from Page 13)

In the mid 1960s, downhill took off again. Ski resorts popped up all over northern Minnesota and Clay County was no exception. In December 1967 Stan Grothe and Dean Kragerud opened Royal Oak Ski Resort a mile northeast of Rollag. The operation featured six ski runs for beginning, intermediate and advanced skiers, three tow ropes, a toboggan slide, a skating rink, snowmobile trails and short order meals. The resort was extremely popular on weekends through the end of the decade. However, the combination of a series of low snow winters and no snow making equipment hurt business and the resort closed.

Around the same time, in the early 1970s, Clay County residents discovered the long lost joys of cross country skiing. Despite the popularity of downhill skiing since the 1930s (or perhaps because of it) cross country equipment was virtually unavailable in this country. With the oil price shocks of the early 1970s,

folks were ready for an environmentally friendly winter pastime that didn't require much driving. A Fargo bicycle company, the Nomad, and Sportland in Moorhead added modern cross country equipment to their lines and a boom started. It is still going today. People found that "X-C" skiing was cheaper and easier to learn than downhill and we could do it in our own home towns no matter how flat the terrain.

There are plenty of fine places to ski today. Local park districts groom trails in Fargo's Edgewood Golf Course (where rental equipment is available) and Moorhead's Woodlawn Park. One of the nicest places to ski in Clay County is the Buffalo River State Park. Miles of groomed trails cross a wide variety of prairie and river bottom wild life habitat and terrain. Since 1983, all skiers using state park trails are required to buy a license. Fees go toward trail maintenance. An annual license is \$5 and a day pass is \$1.

So instead of cussing the winter, strap on some boards and go out and enjoy it!

CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM

"Then and Now"

"Then and Now" is a photographic look at how Clay County has changed and how, in some ways, it has stayed the same. The exhibit matches photographs in the Clay County Archives with current photographs of the same scenes, duplicating the perspectives of the original photographs whenever possible.

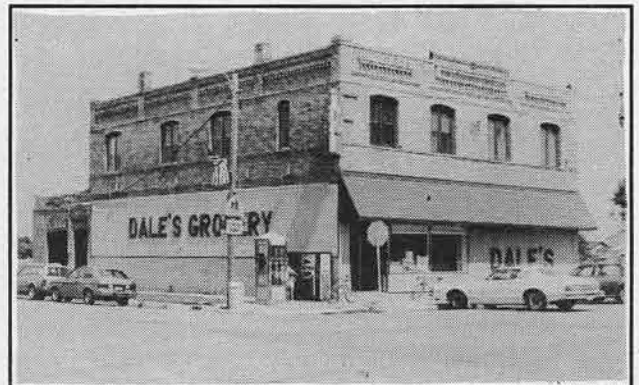
**Make plans to visit
the Clay County Museum today!!
Hours are: 9-5 Mon.-Sat.,
9-9 Thurs. and 12-5 Sun.**

Lower level of Hjemkomst Center
202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead

The **PERMANENT EXHIBIT** includes unique characterizations of one facet of the history of each county town. Together these characterizations form a chapter in the overall history of Clay County.



Ulen Mercantile ca 1910



Dale's Grocery, Ulen 1987

CCHS Memberships - New and Renewals

November/December 1993

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

John & Audrey Elton, Hawley
Marv & Shirley Dauner, Hawley
Dorothy Dodds, Moorhead
Bob & Carol Kennedy, Mhd
Dana Powers, Moorhead
Art Skolness, Glyndon
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Larry & Vicki Peihl, Fargo
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Charles Nelson, Alexandria VA
James Stenerson, Moorhead
Chris Velline, Calif.
Katherine Mentjes, LeCenter
Mel Ristvedt, Hawley
Lysle & Diane Meyer, Mhd

CCHS welcomes the following new members:

Denis Holen, Hawley
Helen M. Anton, West Fargo
Darlene Rustad, West Fargo
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