

# Clay County Historical Society

Clay County Historical Society Newsletter

July/August 2002

Volume XXV No. 4

**In this issue: CCHS "Viking" Tour • Solem Pigeforening Autograph Quilt • Final installment of *What's in a Name?* • And more!**



Several members of the Solem Lutheran Church Pigeforening (young ladies group), 1890s. The Solem Pigeforening made the autograph quilt featured in the article on page 5. Seated left to right are Carrie Larson, Mathilda Mikkelsen, Susan Larson and Louisa Mikkelsen. Standing are Ida Clemetson, Mathilda Clemetson, Marie Ness, Sophia Tang, Elizabeth Dahl, Emma M. Erickson and Sophia Mikkelsen. The photo was taken at the Amund Clemetson home. Source: *A History of Solem Lutheran Congregation, 1873-1973*.

## President's Column

By CCHS President Donna Voxland

The CCHS Staff has once again worked hard to come up with a budget for our next allocation request from Clay County. As usual, they have studied every area for the best balance of efficient service so that the request remains as low as we can make it. This means that any substantial increase in our income needs to come from within our organization.



There are several ways that we hope to accomplish this. We are planning a Business Membership campaign and would like to ask for your help. Our new director and a board member will be contacting businesses in our county in the near future. If you are familiar with a business within your home area and would like to join in this contact, it would be a great way for those businesses to understand and appreciate the work we do.

Personal contact by a hometown resident who is a historical society member will help show a prospective member that we are more than a bi-monthly newsletter. We are made up of members all across the country who understand the value of our history and want to preserve and share it. We would love to have you join us on one or more of these visits. Please contact Lisa at the CCHS office if you would like to be a part of this team or if you have a name of a business that you recommend we visit.

I would also like to urge you to consider an extra donation with your next membership renewal. We keep our dues levels as low as we can so that as many people as possible can afford the benefits of CCHS membership. Any extra donation you wish to make can be designated to a particular budget area such as the Endowment Fund, Exhibits, the Bergquist Cabin, or left undesignated for the general operation fund. A small extra donation by many people could add up to a substantial increase in our funds and enable us to continue to expand our work. Our staff and board have some wonderful dreams for CCHS just waiting to be fulfilled. We are a great county historical society and museum, but there are always more ways we can reach out and share our heritage and our staff is eager to help you do that.

## 1930 Census Here!



Attention Genealogists! The 1930 Census microfilm has arrived at the Clay County Archives. Come browse through the census and fill some of the blank spots in your family tree.

## Family History Workshop - September 28

The Heritage Education Commission will sponsor its 27th family history workshop titled "Building Your Legacy," September 28, 2002. The workshop runs from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registration is \$25, which includes a luncheon for those who register before Sept. 20. A photo contest is being held with the workshop. For more information, contact the Office of Continuing Studies at Minnesota State University-Moorhead, 218-236-2183, [www.mnstate.edu/heritage/](http://www.mnstate.edu/heritage/), [heritage@mnstate.edu](mailto:heritage@mnstate.edu).



## CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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## Viking Tour Rescheduled for December 10 & 11

The Clay County Historical Society Tour to see the Smithsonian exhibit "Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga," at the Science Museum of Minnesota, and other Twin Cities attractions, has been pushed forward one day, to allow for more flexibility in scheduling.

The tour is planned as a grand finale for the Viking Lecture Series sponsored by the Fargo Moorhead Communi-versity. Verlyn Anderson, retired Concordia College Librarian, and authority on Scandinavian history will conduct the lecture course entitled "Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga." The lectures will be held at River-view Place, 2:00-4:00 p.m., four Saturdays in November—2, 9, 16, and 23. The lecture series is free of charge, funded in part by the North Dakota Humanities Council. A reading list is now available for the lectures.

Clay County Historical Society is organizing the "Vikings" tour to the Twin Cities. Other attractions tentatively planned for the tour include a holiday lights tour of St. Paul, a Christmas theater production at St. Paul's Landmark Center, the American Swedish Institute which is extravagantly decorated for the holiday season,

the Luther Seminary and Muskego Church, and the Weyerhaeuser and Musser homes in Little Falls. The cost for the tour has been tentatively set at \$150.

You need not attend the lectures to go on the tour, nor must you go on the tour to participate in the lectures. For information about the lecture series, call the FM Communi-versity at 218-299-3438. For information about the "Vikings" tour, call the Clay County Historical Society at 218-299-5520.

## Monetary Donations and Memorials

### May and June 2002

Katherine Erickson, Moorhead  
Burt & Cathy Grover, Bellingham, WA  
FM Chapter of National Sojourners, Fargo (In memory of Paul Burkhardt)  
Cynosure Women's Club, Casselton, ND  
Robert & Melissa Teeling, Yorba Linda, CA  
Widow or Widowers Social Group, Fargo  
Joanne Howeth, Albuquerque, NM  
John Caron, Arlington, VA  
Dorothy Spriester, Deerfield, IL

## CCHS and 4-H at Clay County Fair, July 11-14

CCHS has the privilege this year to be part of a special 4-H 100th Anniversary display at the Clay County Fair in Barnesville. Selected artifacts from the CCHS collections will be used in the display in the 4-H building on the fairgrounds. Collections Manager Pam Burkhardt and Archivist Mark Peihl will be present most of the time to answer questions about the exhibit.

CCHS will also have its own booth in the Grandstand, as in the past. This year's booth will feature the map of ethnic distribu-

tion in Clay County, hands-on toys to promote the current *Toys!* exhibit at the Clay County museum, 4-H scrapbooks for the public to browse, and a drawing for a free one-year individual membership in the Clay County Historical Society!

With these great booths, along with the traditional award-winning exhibitions, carnival rides, and delicious fair food, this promises to be a FUN county fair. Please stop by our booth to say hello! (Funnell cake appreciated, but not required.)

## Tuesday Evening Hours and Carriage Rides

Looking for a relaxing, musical and cultural Tuesday evening?

Come to the Clay County Museum & Archives! In cooperation with the Log Cabin Folk Art Center on 4th Street South in Moorhead, the Clay County Museum & Archives and Hjemkomst Center have changed their Thursday evening hours of 5:00-9:00 p.m. to Tuesday nights.

The Folk Art Center has numerous free programs and concerts scheduled for this summer, including free carriage rides on Tuesday nights. The carriage rides begin at the Log Cabin on 4th Street South, and pick-up

and drop-off continuously at the Hjemkomst Center and Atomic Coffee shop between 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., until August 6.

The Clay County Museum is always free, and the Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center is offering a \$1.00 discount on Tuesday evenings, on the admission price to see the Hjemkomst ship, Stave Church, and other exhibits.

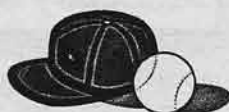
For more information about scheduled events, call CCHS at 218-299-5520, or the Folk Art Cabin at 218-299-5252.



## Outreach Displays

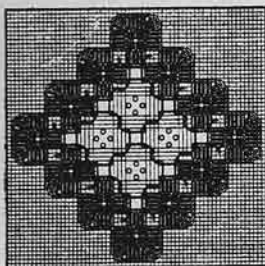
	Open	Close
Fargo CVB	May	Oct.
Hawley Public Library	August	Nov.
Moorhead Public Library	August	Sept.
Barnesville Public Library	August	Nov.

The case at the Fargo Convention and Visitors Bureau along I-94 shouts LET'S PLAY BALL! This display is a tribute to the FM area's long history of baseball and softball.



Hawley Public Library will experience a trip back in time with the photo display THEN & NOW. This display pairs an old photograph of a Clay County site with a photo taken in the same place in 1993!

The Moorhead Public Library will present A BURNING IMPRESSION. The art of pyrography or decorative wood burning is the featured craft, but examples of other wood-related arts are shown. The library will host a cultural diversity display in October.



**HARDANGER: FACTS AND FUN** at the Barnesville Public Library shows step-by-step instructions with examples, pictures and illustrations that show the basics of Hardanger for beginners. For the experi-

enced, read about the history of Hardanger and see stunning examples of this beautiful work. Come and see the beautiful work by 2001 CCHS intern Alison Ostgarden!

### IN-HOUSE DISPLAYS

A small case promoting our TOYS, TOYS, TOYS! exhibit is on view in the lobby at the Hjemkomst Center. These toys will whet your appetite for the main exhibit in the CCHS museum just down the stairs.

## Artifacts & Donors

### May and June 2002

#### Donors include:

Moorhead: "In Memory of Laurence Klepetka" by Frances Klepetka; "In Memory of Russell Lower" by Therese Lower; Corrine Lemke Estate; Irene Hogan; Dorothy Dodds; Dorothy Dodds/MSU; Louise A. Nettleton; Warren Kelly; Donna McMaster  
 Fargo, ND: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies  
 Hawley: Ronald Ulven  
 Breckinridge, MN: Alvina Drewlow  
 Goshen, IN: Hazel Nice Hassan  
 Los Angeles, CA: Dorothy Garven

**Artifacts include:** (3) letters from JG Green in rural Hawley written in 1934 & 1936 to nephew Adam Deter of Morrison, IL containing interesting descriptions of weather and agricultural conditions in the area; book with blank license forms for the sale of cigarettes, township record books for Highland Grove 1888-on and Partridge 1875-on, church records for Immanuel/Emanuel Lutheran in Dale 1923 & 1937 and photo of Pastor Halvorson Family; correspondence, financial, farming and tax records of Ivan/Ivon and Carrie Spurgeon and daughters Irene Spurgeon Lomsdalen, Freda Spurgeon and Gladys Spurgeon Garven and includes Barnesville telephone directories & sheet music (inventory is on-going); (36) books of ND & MN histories of counties, cities, ethnic groups, etc.; box of Adolph Zimmerman materials including maps, store records and several photos ["Al" was a traveler and owned a grocery store in Fargo]; an early Commodore 64 computer with software, games, supplies and accessories (most dated between 1982-1986) – lot also includes Red River Valley Commodore Users Group newsletters from March 1989 through Jan-Feb 1990 [owner Laurence Klepetka was an avid computer user and he saved everything!]; WDAY'S *Party Line* booklet, 13th year [no date] and three school booklets used in Clay Co.; an original collage entitled "Measure Me" dated Spring 1999 with history of the work by Laura Youngbird [an MSU graduate]; child's 1930s table tennis set w/box; china dinner plate, salad plate, cup and saucer used by faculty at MSTC (Moorhead State Teachers' College now MSUM); cap from the "Midway" store at Downer; Fairmont Creamery employment pins for 10, 15, 20 & 25 years, Fairmont Creamery tie clip & pins; undated price list for alcoholic beverages from "The Blackhawk" in Moorhead; horsehide robe (horse was named Bill),\* mitts and coat worn around 1900 by Melvin Ulven who farmed at Dale.

\*Bill is the second in our "stable" of horsehide lap robes. Charlie has been delighting school children for years.



# Autograph Quilts at CCHS

There are three autograph quilts in the CCHS collections. They date from 1898, 1899 and 1900. These will be the first artifacts entered in the Collections part of our web site. Quilts are extremely popular, and names on each might be of interest to genealogists. Each artifact will have one or more photographs, a brief description and the list of names. The following is the first of the three autograph quilts. Note: Descriptions might be altered before being posted on line.

## SOLEM CHURCH 1898 PIGEFORNING AUTOGRAPH COVERLET, 87"x76"

The Solem Church coverlet was the prize in a raffle held by the Solem Church Pigeforning\* in 1898. Eight-year-old Hitterdal resident Olga Mikkelsen paid 10 cents for a chance on it and won! Olga later became Mrs. Torstein Severinson of Eglon Township. The names on the coverlet come from residents in the School Districts 11, 15 and 61 and the Heglund and Solem Church areas. The center block Row 4/Block 4 commemorates the Reverend and Mrs. B.J. Larson and Kirkesanger [church singer] H. Kildal and his wife who also appear in Row 1/Block 6.

Technically speaking, this is a coverlet, not a quilt because there is no batting between the top and the backing. Names are embroidered in the four corners and center of each block with red cotton embroidery floss. The backing is three strips of fabric sewn together to make up the needed width. The feather stitching surrounds each block and keeps the two layers together. The narrow binding was made by folding the backing over the edge of the top and stitching it down by machine. Most of the feather stitching between the blocks has worn away.

Redwork or red embroidery was popular from about 1880-1920. The red embroidery floss that did not fade or bleed was available at that time. The cotton floss was sturdy and held up better than silk. Its use on quilts started at the end of the 19th century. Embroidered quilt blocks were often edged with feather stitching. Other redwork items from that time period include towels, pillowcases and splashers (used behind the bowl on the wash stand).

\*pronounced pik-a-for-en'-ing, this is Norwegian for a young woman's church group.

Information on redwork embroidery taken from *Red & White: American Redwork Quilts & Patterns* by Deborah Harding found on the womenfolk.com web site.

## NAMES ON 1898 SOLEM CHURCH PIGEFORNING QUILT

Note: rows are read left to right. Blocks are read clockwise from top left.

Missing embroidery for a single letter is indicated by brackets [ ]; missing embroidery accounting for more than one letter is underlined; and all educated guesses follow the same rule. Names appearing in the center of the block are indicated by an \*asterisk.

ROW 1/BLOCK 1: Mrs. M. O. Dalby, Mrs. B. Strand, Alma Carlson, Nellie Strand, \*Emma Larson

ROW 1/BLOCK 2: Henry Erickson, Otto [E]rickson, Ida Stephenson, Emma Erickson, \*Ole Fiskum

ROW 1/BLOCK 3: Lars [O] Mikkelsen, Ingeborg Jerde, Gustav Bredeson, Tilda Johnson, \*John Thornes

ROW 1/BLOCK 4: Emanuel Larson, John P. S\_\_ly, Mrs. A. Jore, Emma Olson, \*Annie Erickson

ROW 1/BLOCK 5: Carolina Erickson, Ernest McDonald, Emelie Erickson, Mrs. McDonald, \*Elina Grue

ROW 1/BLOCK 6: Mrs. Herring, Hans Kildal, Ingeman Kild[a]l, Anna Kildal, \*Mrs. Eline Grue

ROW 1/BLOCK 7: Sophie Omberg, August Narveson, Clara Lund, Mrs. H. Bergland, \*Andrew Skari

ROW 2/BLOCK 1: John Halvorson, Andrew Larson, Mrs. S. Lindgjerd, Erick C. Larson, \*Annie Larson

ROW 2/BLOCK 2: M. O. Grane, Mrs. M. O. Grane, Mrs. H. H. Omberg, H. H. Omberg, \*Kirsti Wange

ROW 2/BLOCK 3: Mathilde Mikkelsen, Anton Hagen, Carl Clemetson, Christian Erickson, \*Nels Mikkelsen

ROW 2/BLOCK 4: Hilda Waale, Mrs. B. Erickson, Bertha Erickson, Sophie Erickson, \*Andrew Vergedahl

ROW 2/BLOCK 5: Ole Clemetson, Mrs. O. Clemetson, Stina Peterson, Andrew Jenson, \*Petra Holden

ROW 2/BLOCK 6: Halvor Halvorson, Mrs. S. Overson, Mrs. B. Hanson, \*Gust a Overson, \*Mr. B. Hanson

ROW 2/BLOCK 7: Narve Narveson, Mrs. Narveson, Helen Thompson, Annie O. Wiprud, \*Anna Hendrickson

ROW 3/BLOCK 1: Susan Larson, Andria Wilson, Ella S. Quam, Harry Wilson, \*Alice Prosser Wilson

ROW 3/BLOCK 2: Tilda Olson, Syver Stephenson, Mary Erickson, Mrs. S. Stephenson, \*Nels Erickson

ROW 3/BLOCK 3: Jean D. Smith, Andrew Hansen, Olive Southwell, O.P. Storberg, \*Rev. O. M. Smith

ROW 3/BLOCK 4: John Eid, Axel Peterson, Mrs. Annie Bang, Conrad Bang, \*Ole Olson

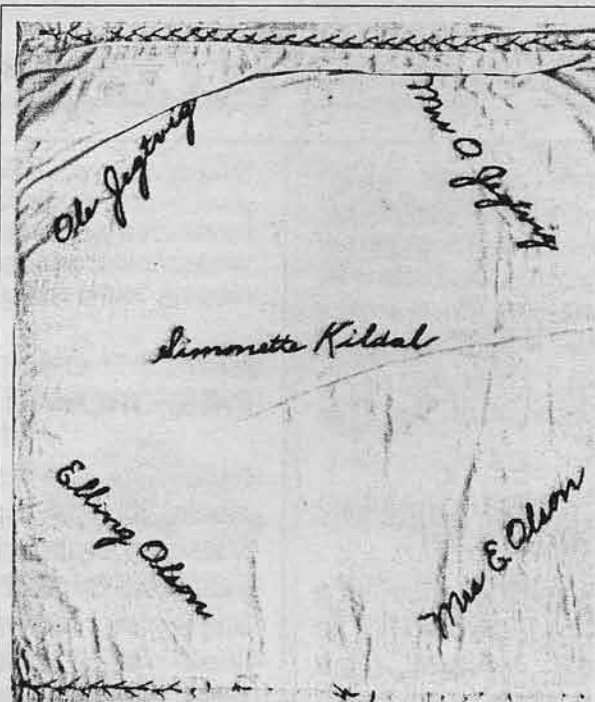
ROW 3/BLOCK 5: Lewis Tang, Iver Hendrickson, Mrs. Larson, Christian Hendrickson, \*Nels Larson

ROW 3/BLOCK 6: C. N[el]son, Mrs. C. Nelson, [A]ugust Dahl, Edward D\_\_\_I, \*Thore Syverson

ROW 3/BLOCK 7: Mrs. S. H. Dahl, Andrew H. Dahl, [A]nton Olson, Edward Narveson, \*Martin H. Dahl

ROW 4/BLOCK 1: John Hyum, Gilbert Olson, Andrew Jore, Christopher Kjos, \*Hans Halvorson

ROW 4/BLOCK 2: Carrie Larson, Chr. Rieron,



Above: One of the blocks in the Solem Pigeforening Quilt.

Lena Jore, Hellick Rieron, \*Lewis Mostrom

ROW 4/BLOCK 3: Oscar Stephenson, Louisa Stephenson, Rudolph Stephenson, Walter Stephenson, \*Emma Stephenson

ROW 4/BLOCK 4: Rev. B. J. Larson, Mrs. B. J. Larson, Mrs. H. Kildal, Kirkesanger H. Kildal, \*Solem's Pigeforening 1898

ROW 4/BLOCK 5: Otilia C. Bramer, Mr. & Mrs. J. Bramer, Julius Jacobson, Caroline Jacobson, \*Lars Handegaar[d or a]

ROW 4/BLOCK 6: Frank Burlingham, Vernon Burlingham, Clara Waale, John A. Erickson, \*Petrus Folden

ROW 4/BLOCK 7: Clara Dahl, Albert Dahl, Sevrin K. Dahl, Elizabeth Dahl, \*Helmer Jore

ROW 5/BLOCK 1: Ole Jegtvig, Mrs. O. Jegtvig, Mrs. E. Olson, Elling Olson, \*Simonette Kildal

ROW 5/BLOCK 2: Helga Halvorson, Mrs. Chr. Eid, Mrs. Severt Eid, Charles R. Credit, \*Mary E. Credit

ROW 5/BLOCK 3: Annie Mikkelsen, Nena Larson, Christina Hyum, Julia Bergside, \*Ida Eid

ROW 5/BLOCK 4: Over Overson, C. E. Lundquist, Louise Mikkelsen, P. L. Eide, \*Martin L. Mikkelsen

ROW 5/BLOCK 5: Carrie Borndal, Inga Borndal, Nels Bjorndahl, Sophie Tang, \*Ole. N. Bjorndahl

ROW 5/BLOCK 6: Kresti Quam, Chr. Clemetson, Anna Jörgenson, Mathilde Clemetson, \*C. E. Danielson

ROW 5/BLOCK 7: M. O. Rymerson, C. R. Anderson, Mrs. O. Tang, Nels N. Larson, \*Sarah Olson

ROW 6/BLOCK 1: Albert O. Berg, J. L. Johnson, Alex Camron, August Olson, \*John A. Rusfeldt



### (Autograph Quilts, continued)

ROW 6/BLOCK 2: Josie Ruud, John A. Anderson, Lewis Midtdahl, Hans Bilben, \*S. P. Wange

ROW 6/BLOCK 3: Ella S. Quam, Martin H. Kroken, Mrs. L. Mikkelsen, Sophie Mikkelsen, \*Lars Mikkelsen

ROW 6/BLOCK 4: Christian Olson, Mrs. C. Olson, Michael Kildal, Olaus Olson, \*Jacob L. Kildal

ROW 6/BLOCK 5: Adolph Bjorndahl, H.M. Tang, S. O. Tang, Erick C. Tang, \*Ole Tang

ROW 6/BLOCK 6: Lizzie Skree, J.O. Olson, John S. Rudin, Martin L. Mikkelsen, \*Sever Knutson

ROW 6/BLOCK 7: Mrs. C. Hauglum, Ole H. Gol, Amund Clemetson, Mrs. A. Clemetson, \*Andrew Larson

ROW 7/BLOCK 1: John Thornes, Annie O. Houglum, Charley O. Bramer, Hillebor Thompson, \*Anders A. Alme

ROW 7/BLOCK 2: John Jorgenson, Carl Reitan, John Nelson, Belle Nelson, \*Anne Troseth

ROW 7/BLOCK 3: Roxie Whaley, Nettie Sanden, Emma M. Clemetson, Mabel O. Hallan, \*Laura E. Johnson

ROW 7/BLOCK 4: Hannah Hagen, J. E. Johnson, Halvor H. Solem, Mrs. E. C.

Jacobson, \*Eline Eide

ROW 7/BLOCK 5: Henry Olson, Edw. Omberg, Olive Omberg, Knut Omberg, \*Annie Omberg

ROW 7/BLOCK 6: Annie Bergland, Sarah Bergland, Julia Nelson, Dortha Nelson, \*Petra Nelson

ROW 7/BLOCK 7: Nels Nelson, Ole Ols[o]n, Mrs. Ole Bergland, Ludvig [ ] Hagen, \*Lena Clemetson

ROW 8/BLOCK 1: Clara Dunnavollen, Anna B. Eid, John O. Waagen, Christopher Eid, \*Oscar Berg

ROW 8/BLOCK 2: Ole Overson, Maria Overson, Emma Overson, Clara Overson, \*Anna Dortha Overson

ROW 8/BLOCK 3: Jens O. Tang, Mrs. J. Krogh, Mrs. O. N. Larson, Mrs. Anna L. Larson, \*Stella Storla

ROW 8/BLOCK 4: Mrs. F. J. Southwell, Mrs. Lee, Brynhild Johnson, Caroline Hauge, \*Bernie Glaisyer

ROW 8/BLOCK 5: Oluf Olson, E. O. Erickson, John Anderson, Anton Jegtvig, \*S. H. Dahl

ROW 8/BLOCK 6: Kirsti Rierson, Jennie Reierson, Mrs. Reierson/Agusta Nelson, Severt Eid, \*Mrs. A Hagen

ROW 8/BLOCK 7: Miss K. Erickson, Christina Lindstrom, Clarence O. G. Bergland, Henry O. Bergland, \*Anton Markuson

## Ristvedt Says Goodbye!

By Margaret Ristvedt

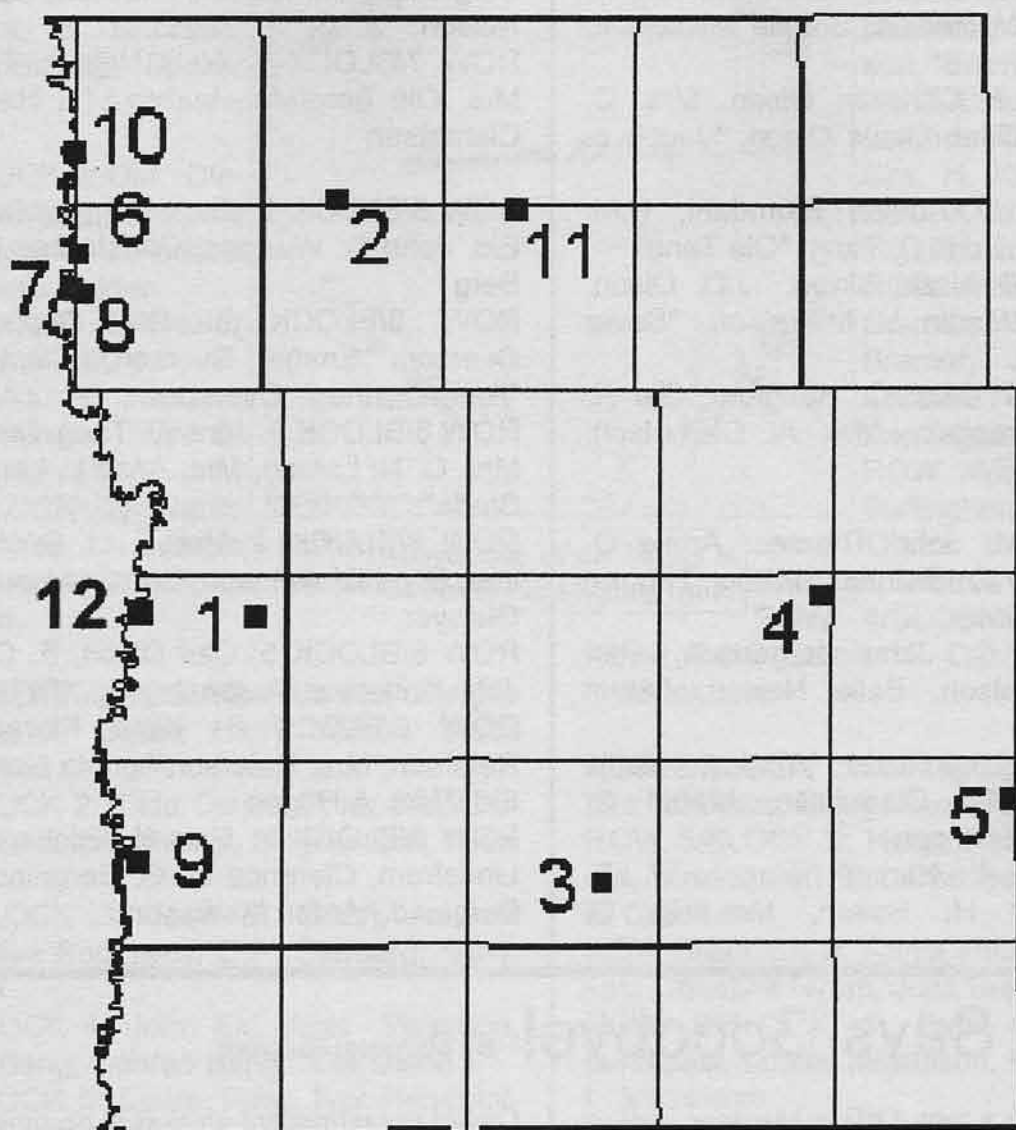
In January of 1990 a new Office Manager walked into the Hjemkomst Center as a "temp" for Clay County Historical Society. Little did I know that I would be here for the next 12½ years, nor how much I would love this job.

Over the years there were many changes in the staffing of the building and to the building itself, but many other things remained constant. I am grateful for both—the changes and the constants. In 1997 we moved in to our new spaces at the Center. A welcome change. Collections Manager Pam Burkhardt and Archivist Mark Peihl are still here, an even more welcome constant.

One of my retirement plans is to become a volunteer, as per the example set by the volunteers I have worked with. This organization has some of the best volunteers in the world. If you happen to be one of them—I want you to know how much I have appreciated knowing you and the work that you do. If any of you reading this are looking for a new volunteer opportunity—check out CCHS. You will love it!

Thank you to the Board, the CCHS Membership, all the Volunteers, and especially Pam and Mark for all the wonderful memories. I will miss CCHS—and I will keep in touch.

## CLAY COUNTY



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Little Italy                               | 8. Lafayette  |
| 2. French Settlement                          | 9. Burlington/East Burlington/<br>Lewiston/Sitomanee/<br>Citomere |
| 3. New Scotland                               | 10. Sarsfield   |
| 4. Little Stockholm                           | 11. Catton  |
| 5. Turtle Lake/Pumpkin<br>Center/Deb's Corner | 12. Burbank Station   |
| 6. Shayenne City                              |   |
| 7. Dakota City                                |   |



# Part IV of What's in a name?

By CCHS Archivist, Mark Peihl

This is the last in a series of articles about obscure named places in Clay County. In previous issues we've discussed railway stations, post offices and townships. Here we'll cover some odds and ends.

As we've seen in previous newsletter articles, members of the various ethnic groups who settled in Clay County often clustered together in distinct communities. The most famous is probably Little Italy, the area of southeast Dilworth that in the 1920s and

1930s was populated almost exclusively by Italian and Greek families. In 1906 the Northern Pacific Railway moved its division headquarters from Fargo to the siding of Dilworth. The new village quickly grew up around the operation. At the same time the NPRY was building the Stockwood Fill, the high grade between Glyndon and Hawley. The railroad had a hard time finding laborers and in 1907 began recruiting immigrants right off the boat; primarily folks from eastern

and southern Europe. Several families from the area around Naples, Italy settled in the less fashionable but inexpensive area south of the Dilworth roundhouse. By 1920 there were 133 residents of Italian descent in the village, about 15% of the total population. Each summer through the 1930s the community held the popular Our Lady of Monte Carmelo Festival. The gathering featured Italian food, music and games. The festival quietly disappeared during World War II when Italy sided with the Axis powers.

In our article on post offices I mentioned a group of

about a dozen French-Canadian families who lived in southern Viding and northern Morken Townships. These included the Levitre, Baily, Riel, Prevost and Paranto families. In the 1890s the *Moorhead Daily News* referred to the area as "The French Settlement." Real Post Office served as a center for the community.

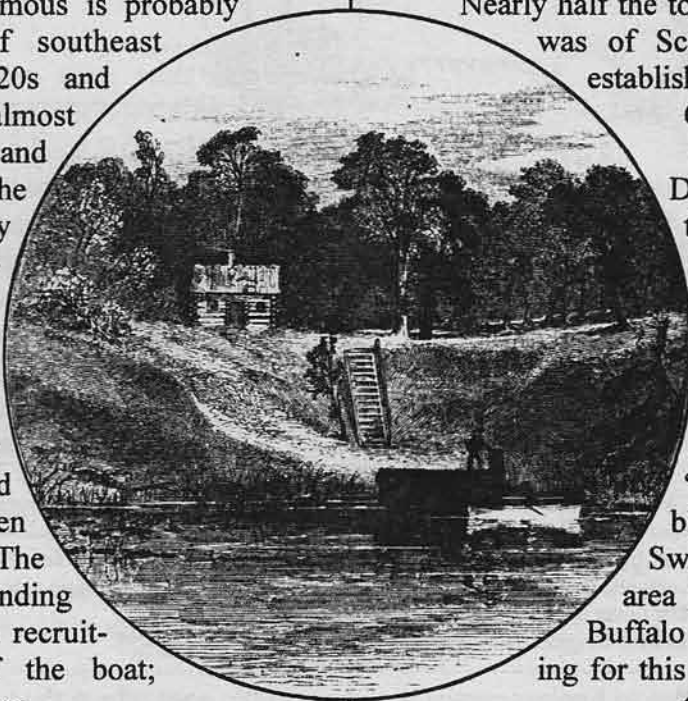
In the 1880s the area south and east of Downer in Elkton Township was known as New Scotland.

Nearly half the township's population in 1885 was of Scottish descent. These folks established one of the few rural Calvinist churches in the county, First Presbyterian of Downer. The Scots included the Lamb, Vannett, Thompson, Pender and Stewart families.

I recall the Hawley *Clay County Herald* editor referring to a part of Hawley as "Little Stockholm," presumably for concentration of Swedish families. This was the area just south and east of the Buffalo River. However, in preparing for this article, I was unable to find the reference again. If any of our readers can provide some insights, they'd be greatly appreciated!

Local newspapers often featured columns of area

news from correspondents in surrounding communities. Many covered gossip from a village, township or part of a township (such as "South Skree Tidbits" in the *Barnesville Record-Review*). Sometimes the news was from a neighborhood with a unique name. In the 1920s the *Moorhead Country Press* and the *Hawley Herald* featured news from the area around Turtle Lake in northeastern Parke Township and northwestern Cormorant Township in Becker

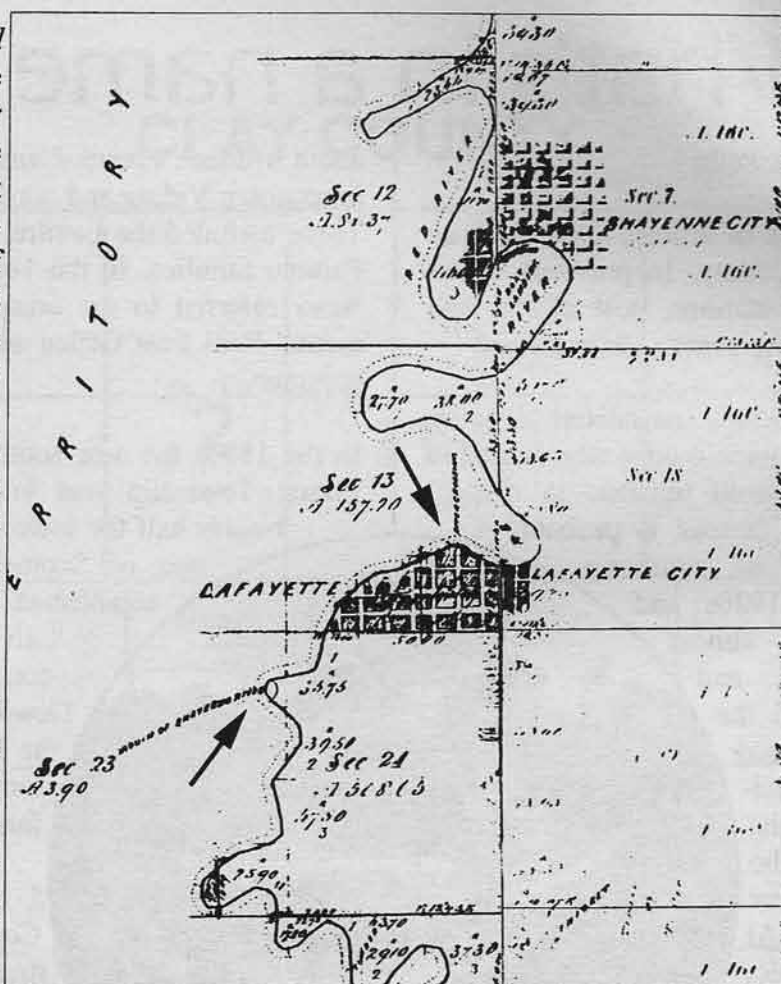


Above: One log cabin constituted the paper town of Dakotah City when journalist Manton Marble passed through on the way to the British Columbia gold fields in July 1859. Dakotah City was on the North Dakota side of the Red directly across a ford from Lafayette, four miles northwest of Kragnes. Source: *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, August 1860.

County. The *Herald* referred to it as the "Turtle Lake District" or "Pumpkin Center." The *Country Press* called it "Deb's Corner." If anyone knows the origin of these names please let us know! Likewise, the *Ulen Union* occasionally carried news from someplace called "Alkali Flats." I haven't been able to figure just where this spot was. Again, any assistance would be appreciated.

A number of Clay County "towns" have existed in name only. In the late 1850s, several "paper towns" popped up along the Red River, quickly withered and died. Southern Minnesota Territory was booming at the time. With tens of thousands of settlers flocking in each season, land prices shot up. Speculators snapped up property and marketed it at inflated rates to hapless newcomers. Fortunes were made (and lost) overnight. Scores of town site companies picked likely looking locations, laid out street grids with stakes, printed impressive-looking brochures and sold lots. Or tried to. One wag in the Territorial Legislature proposed setting aside one third of the land in Minnesota for agricultural purposes, the other two thirds for town sites and roads.

By 1856 the town site craze had reached the Red River Valley. Indian treaties had opened the land for settlement. The Red River cart trade between Fort



Town sites near the mouth of the Sheyenne River, 1859. Some sources claim there were five town sites within eight miles of the Sheyenne at one time. The upper arrow indicates the ford across the Red at Lafayette. Dakota City lay directly across the ford on the Dakota side. The lower arrow points to the mouth of the Sheyenne.  
Source: Original surveyors' plats, Kragnes Township, 1859.

"The holy grail for speculators was the spot where the railroad would cross the Red."

Garry and St. Paul was flourishing. Rumors that Congress would soon approve a land grant for a railroad between St. Paul and the west coast sent several parties to locate and plat new metropolises on the muddy Red. Late in 1856 unemployed teacher Daniel S. B. Johnston joined four other men in one such venture to the Valley. Johnston later wrote about their experiences (which mainly revolved around avoiding death by starvation and freezing).

Founding a town site in the yet-to-be-surveyed Valley involved picking the location, setting out stakes, filing a plat map with the proper authorities and holding down the site lest it be taken over by some other clown. The holy grail for speculators

was the spot where the railroad would cross the Red. Some suspected it would be the confluence of the Bois de Sioux and Otter Tail Rivers. Others thought the mouth of the Sheyenne. During the winter of 1856-1857 there were at least four other groups besides Johnston's looking for town sites. His group surveyed two sites—both in Wilkin County—Breckenridge, named for US Vice President John C. Breckenridge, and Graham's Point, named for Hudson's Bay Company fur trader Duncan Graham who had a post there in 1816. It was also the location of a well-known ford on the Red River. They also bought out some men who had held down a site near the mouth of the Sheyenne River. Johnston does not identify this third town site by name nor does he indicate its specific location. Some sources claim



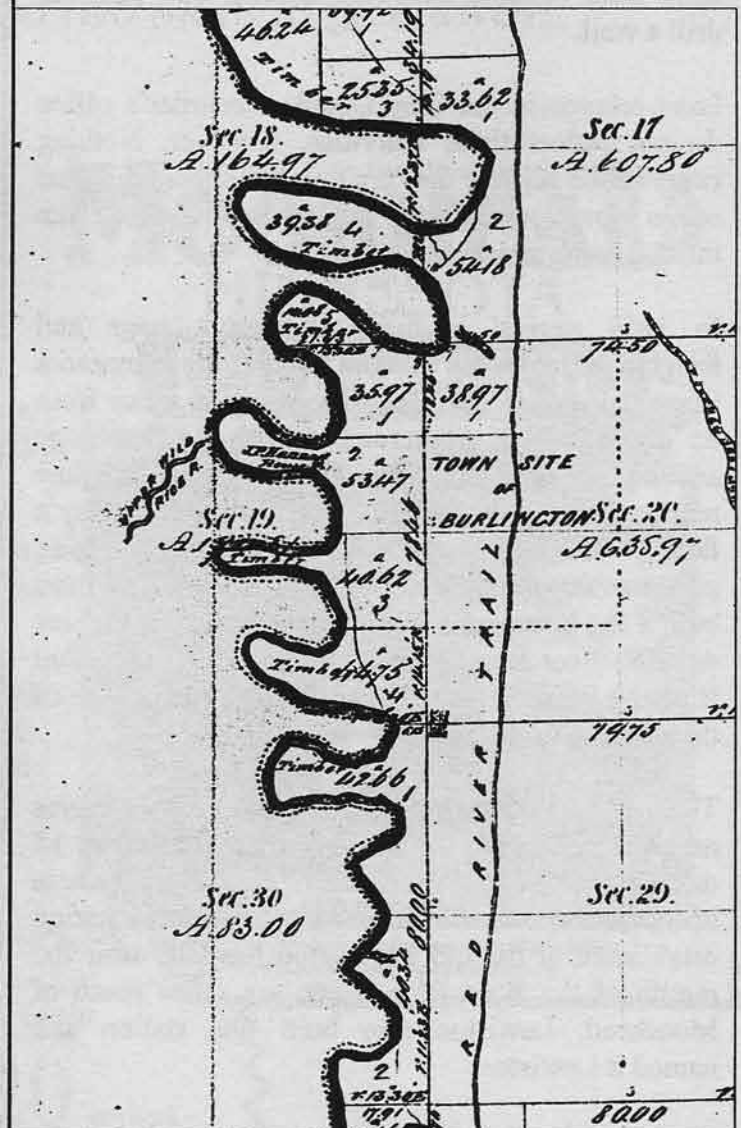
there were five town sites within eight miles of the Sheyenne confluence. When surveyors Edward Atwater and Oscar Taylor surveyed what is now Kragnes Township in summer 1859 they found two: Lafayette City in sections 13 and 18 and Shayenne City in section 7. Neither of these was right at the Sheyenne's mouth. Lafayette (the site of another Red River ford) was nearly a mile downstream; Shayenne City about  $3\frac{3}{4}$  river miles below the confluence. Several sources also claim that well-known frontiersman (and the Johnston party's guide) Pierre Bottineau and others held a town site called Dakota City on the west bank of the Red directly across from Lafayette.

Johnston also mentions two men who narrowly escaped starvation that winter while holding down a site at the mouth of the Wild Rice River. He doesn't name the site but the surveyors found a site called Burlington in sections 19 and 20, Kurtz Township, northwest of Rustad. I've also seen this listed as East Burlington. Warren Upham in his *Minnesota Place Names* mentions Sitomanee, "a village in Kurtz Township, incorporated on May 23, 1857; no trace remains." This may be another name for the Burlington site or he may be mistaken in its location. A doctor traveling through the Valley in 1859 reported camping at Citomere, probably a spelling variation. But his road log would place Citomere some twelve miles north of Graham's Point and 34 miles south of the Sheyenne River's mouth. This would be around section 17, Wolverton Township, Wilkin County (about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of the Clay-Wilkin County line or 2 miles north of the village of Wolverton).

Upham also mentions another paper town incorporated on May 23, 1857, Sarsfield: "a village of Georgetown Township, section 30, incorporated on May 23, 1857; no trace remains." Most of the paper towns were located at conspicuous bends on the river or the mouths of tributaries. The Buffalo runs into the Red in section 30, Georgetown Township so this location seems reasonable.

The town site craze did not completely end in the 1850s. Most town sites in Clay County were located by the railroads or individuals working closely with them. In November 1880, the St. Paul, Minneapolis

and Manitoba Railway platted the town site of Felton, in section 4, Flowing Township – about a mile south of the present village of Felton. This was



Townsite of Burlington at the mouth of the Wild Rice River, two miles northwest of Rustad. Note the indicated "Red River Trail" from Fort Abercrombie to Georgetown.

Source: Original surveyors' plat, Kurtz Township, 1859.

the same location as the railroad's Felton station and the Felton Post Office, established the year before. Few if any lots sold, however. In October 1882, wheat buyer Arthur W. Catton replatted the town site, naming it after himself. The *Glyndon Red River Valley News* reported that the post office name would soon be changed. "Please be getting ready to call it Catton," the article reads. Catton told the

paper that "a corner lot has been bought for a hotel site, by Mr. John Deer, who will build forthwith and open his house this fall." He also reported the sale of three other lots to area businessmen and plans to drill a well.

Land records in the Clay County Recorder's office do not reflect these activities, however. Nothing came of the scheme and the railroad siding and post office moved north to the present Felton village site the following year.

In 1859 several southern Minnesota stage and freighting companies merged to form the Minnesota Stage Company. The company extended a line from St. Cloud to Fort Abercrombie, with the first stage arriving in early summer. The next year the line reached north to the Hudson's Bay Company's facility at Georgetown. A new horse changing station was needed. MSC employee Lewis Lewiston built a log house on a high bluff over the Red where the Red Bear Restaurant now stands. It was called Burbank Station, for freighter J. L. Burbank, one of the partners of the new stagecoach line.

The spot was not centrally located on the line. It was nearly 30 miles from Fort Abercrombie but only 15 miles from Georgetown. Around 1862 Burbank was abandoned and a new, more reasonably sited station established at the old Burlington townsite near the mouth of the Wild Rice River, six miles south of Moorhead. Lewiston also built this station and named it Lewiston.

Warren Upham's work, mentioned above, brings up one final mystery town. He refers to "Carleton, a village in Moorhead Township, north of Moorhead, named for the well-known correspondent of the *Boston Journal* Charles Carleton Coffin." Coffin had accompanied a group of Northern Pacific Railway officials on a trip through the Valley in 1869 to scout out a route for the railroad and wrote a book about the trip, *Seat of Empire*. But Upham's reference is the only I've seen to village of Carleton.

If any one has knowledge of or is interested in any other Clay County place names, please let me know!

## Meet the New Director

Hello! I am happy to introduce myself as the new director of the Clay County Historical Society. I started work here May 13, and had the wonderful fortune to work with Margaret for a couple weeks, learning the operations and "ropes" in the CCHS office. We will miss her greatly, but hope to see her often when she comes back to volunteer.

I would like to tell you a little about myself. I am originally from north-central North Dakota. My father farms 40 miles southeast of Minot. I earned a bachelors degree in Public History in 1998 from North Dakota State University. While I was at NDSU, I did an internship with Pam and Mark here at the Clay County Museum.

I completed coursework toward an MA in Public History at St. Cloud State University, before accepting the curator position with the Codington County Historical Society in Watertown, South Dakota, in May 1999, where I have been the past three years.

Please stop in to the museum when you are in town, or in the neighborhood—I have met some of you already, and I look forward to meeting and knowing as many of you as possible! We appreciate your support—this is YOUR historical society. Please feel welcome to offer any suggestions anytime. Thank you, and I hope to see you soon!

## Baker & Geir Toy Collection

CCHS is pleased to announce that we will host toys from the private collections of Dean Baker and L. Duane Geir in our large hallway case from July 11 until October 19!

This large display includes wheeled and winged toys dating from 1918 to the mid-1960s. Geir and Baker are proud to share their treasures such as original and restored trucks from TONKA, a toy company from Mound, Minnesota, and a large collection of BUDDY L toys from the 1920s that have been returned to their original glory and beauty. A special fire truck section will include models of all types, from a 1918 cast iron Arcade piece to a Doepke hook and ladder from the 1950s. The collections include toys from other nations such as Canada, Great Britain, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and France. A group of restored pedal cars will also be part of this great show. This is a collection to delight all ages—don't miss it!



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*A Century of Change* is full of historic photographs and stories that provide a glimpse of Moorhead from 1900 to 2000.

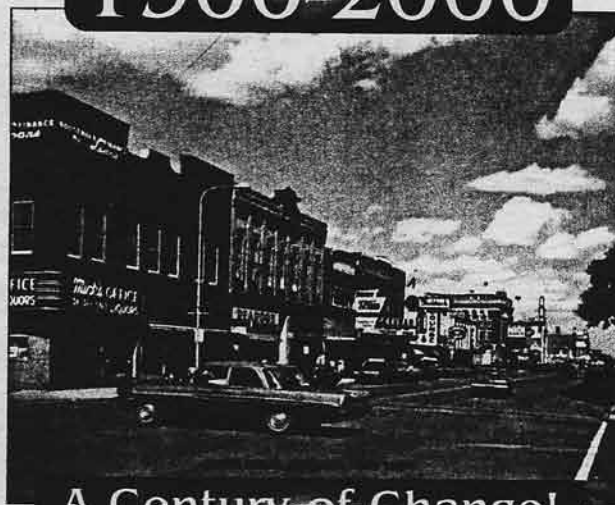
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• • • • Showing through October 2002 at the Clay County Museum • • • •



# TOYS TOYS TOYS!

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Relive your childhood through this fascinating exhibit! Toys and games from the past to the present are featured, with special emphasis on the Baby Boomers who grew up in the 1950s to 1970s. Learn how the changes in children's lives are reflected in their toys and games.



**Clay County Museum & Archives Hours: 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon.-Sat.,  
10:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Tues., 12-5 p.m. Sun.**

**Location: lower level of the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead, MN**

## New and Renewed CCHS Members

CCHS extends a very special thank you to the following individuals who renewed their memberships or became new members in May and June.

### RENEWALS

Kelly & Marjorie Aakre, Moorhead  
Norman Akesson, Davis, CA  
Marlene Ames, Fargo  
Joel Belgum, Moorhead  
Beth Brunelle, Fargo  
Irene Burkhardt, Fargo  
John Caron, Arlington, VA  
Chamber of Commerce of Fargo Moorhead  
Betty & Gene Christensen, Glyndon  
Elizabeth & Edward Clark, Moorhead  
Grace & Lyle Clark, Moorhead  
Patrick Colliton, Fargo  
Jean Doty, Hawley  
Carroll & Jean Engelhardt, Moorhead  
Katherine Erickson, Moorhead  
Rodney Erickson, Moorhead  
Jim Fay, Moorhead  
Sister Mary Ann Fay, Crookston, MN  
June & Phil Felde, Moorhead  
Gregory & Mary Gillispie, Fargo

Raymond & Joan Grefsrud, Hawley  
Burton & Catherine Grover,  
Bellingham, WA  
Pearl Grover, Moorhead  
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Bette Haring, Lake Park, MN  
Paul Harris, Moorhead  
Rae Haynes, Durango, CO  
Ralph & Ethel Hest, Moorhead  
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John Jenkins, Fargo  
Doug Johnson, Bemidji  
Joy Johnson, Moorhead  
Noma Kane-Rygg, Tucson, AZ  
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Jeanette Ladwig, Barnesville  
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Tim McLarnan, Moorhead  
Dorothy Martell, Fargo  
Moorhead Area Retired Educators  
Moorhead Drug Company  
Gary & Rebecca Olson, Moorhead  
Sherwood Peterson, Rochester

Sara Pudas, White Bear Lake  
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Vilera Rood, Moorhead  
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Mary Ellen Thompson, Fargo  
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Phyllis Wirries, Moorhead  
Rex "Skip" Wood, Moorhead  
Susan Woodstrom, Minneapolis  
Dick & Kathy Zaylskie, Fargo

### CCHS welcomes the following NEW MEMBERS

Gene & Sue Boyle, Moorhead  
Neil Frederickson, Fargo  
Lynne Olson, Fargo  
Paul Rustad, Fargo  
Teri Smith, Valley City



## Eating Out in Clay County

Everyone, it seems, enjoys having a meal somewhere other than at their home once in awhile. The next exhibit in the main gallery of the Clay County Museum will focus on the many variations of the fun and food of "eating out" in Clay County. We can all think of numerous restaurants and other eateries where we choose to dine rather than mess around in the kitchen, but what about picnics, church potlucks, and eating on the job? Or even the school cafeteria, or that "great" hospital or airplane food?



We need your help for this exhibit! If you have any memorabilia, photos, menus, restaurant dishes, or items used in any of the above situations that you would be willing to lend or donate for this exhibit, please let us know. We need an idea of what is even in existence. The exhibit will be installed the end of October, and we would appreciate your participation!

## Calendar

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| July 11-14 | Clay County Fair, Barnesville<br>CCHS Booth in Grandstand<br>4-H 100th Ann. Display in 4H bldg |
| July 17    | CCHS Board Meeting, 8:00 a.m.  |
| July 20    | Dean Baker program, 2:00-4:00<br>"Collecting Antique Toys"                                     |
| August 17  | Peggy Ramstad program, 2-4:00<br>"Collecting Paper Dolls"                                      |
| Sept. 2    | Labor Day (museum closed)  |
| Sept. 18   | CCHS Board Mtg., 8:00 am   |
| October    | Doll Collecting program  |
| October 16 | CCHS Board Meeting, 8:00 a.m.  |
| November   | New Exhibit opens in main exhibit gallery  |

## Clay County Historical Society

### Business, Individual and Organizational Support (BIOS) Members

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

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