

Clay County Historical Society

Clay County Historical Society Newsletter

March/April 2005

Volume XXVIII No. 2

In this issue:

- Annual Meeting and Exhibit Grand Opening Details and Candidates for CCHS Board
- Ghosts in the Walls: a closer look at the Douglas House artifacts, Part 2
- Inside, Outside, Upside Down Exhibit Opens April 9 and Cow Photo Mystery Solved!
- Discovering Your House's History

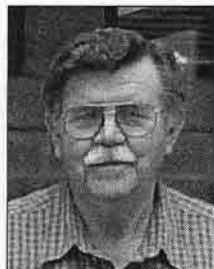


Howard Moody poses with his dog, Happy, outside his house at 221 7th Street South, Moorhead, about 1918. When was the house built? How did it change over time? Who else lived there? Answers to these questions (and similar questions about **your** house) can be found in the CCHS archives. See story on page 8.

President's Column

By Dale White, CCHS Board President

You will get this newsletter before our 2005 Annual Meeting, so consider this an extra invitation to attend that event on April 12. Not only do we **invite** you, we strongly **urge** you to attend.



The Annual Meeting is really the culmination of one Clay County Historical Society year and the beginning of the next. The organization's activities for the past year are summarized at the meeting, and broad goals for the future are addressed. Terms of some members of the Board of Directors expire at that time, and replacements are elected. While all Board meetings are open to the public, the Annual Meeting is traditionally the one where the general membership actively takes part. The program and the banquet are only added incentives for attendance. Details are found on the next page of this newsletter.

Board members who in April reach the end of their terms are Donna Voxland and Helen Rudie. Both have been involved and enthusiastic Board members for their two three-year terms. Donna was President for two years; Helen is now and has been Vice President for nearly all her tenure. They are the BEST representation of the CCHS mission—I'll personally miss both of them during Board discussions. I hope they will seek to stay very connected to the organization in a volunteer capacity.

+ + + + +

Clay County Historical Society will officially open its newest Museum exhibit April 12 immediately preceding the Annual Meeting. *Inside, Outside, Upside Down* will be a unique interpretation of County history, created by our staff with an eclectic assortment of artifacts from the CCHS collection of over 26,000 items.

You will be able to explore the many perspectives of local history via this interactive exhibit from April 12 through March 26 of 2006. Free, in the Museum, lower level of the Hjemkomst Center. Sounds like fun to me!



CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Annual Meeting and New Exhibit Opening April 12

Mark your calendars to attend the CCHS Annual Meeting and the Grand Opening of our new exhibit, *Inside, Outside, Upside Down*, Tuesday, April 12!

Inside, Outside, Upside Down will open to the public April 9, but we'd like to treat our annual meeting guests to a special reception and ribbon cutting. Join us 5:30-6:30 in the atrium outside the Clay County Museum for a reception and ribbon cutting for our new exhibit at 5:45. We've even tried to match the refreshments to the title of the exhibit—come see how we do!

The new exhibit will explore the process of learning about objects and photographs by looking at them from different perspectives. Read more about the exhibit on page seven.

The dinner for the Annual Meeting will begin at 6:30, a short business meeting will be held at 7:30 with a moment to honor special guests, and the program will begin at 8:00.

This year's program features Tim Glines, Manager of Outreach Services for the Minnesota Historical Society. Glines will speak about the county historical society movement in Minnesota and how the Clay County Historical Society has paralleled or detoured from the mainstream.

The exhibit grand opening reception is free and open to the public; cost for the annual meeting dinner is \$15 per person. The deadline for reservations was Monday, April 4, but we may still have room for one or two more—call the CCHS office to check.

Enthusiastic Candidates for Board Seats

Every year the term of another board member expires and we must say goodbye as they go on to other pursuits, taking with them the knowledge they have gained of the workings of our organization and experience working with staff and other board members. If only we could download all that experience and knowledge for our new board members....

We do hate to see our seasoned board members leave, but we eagerly welcome the fresh eyes, ears and minds of the wonderful individuals who step up to the challenge of guiding the fiscal and organizational development of CCHS. So, it is with great pleasure that the Board of Directors presents the candidates for election to the CCHS Board for 2005:

Carolyn Barden from Moorhead was appointed to fill a vacated board seat in 2003 and is up for election to her first full term. John Elton from Hawley was elected to the board in 2002, and is up for re-election for another three-year term.

Gene Prim and Ron Ulven have been nominated for election to the board seats vacated by veterans Helen

Rudie and Donna Voxland. Both Prim and Ulven have a deep interest in local history and heritage and have been very active in their communities.

Prim has been in the newspaper business since high school in Barnesville, and currently owns the *Barnesville Record-Review*, *Hawley Herald*, and *Lake Park Journal*. He was the mayor of Barnesville for a total of ten years, and has worked with the Barnesville Jaycees, Barnesville Chamber of Commerce, and the Barnesville Main Street Program.

Ulven was born and raised in Highland Grove Township and is retired from over thirty years in the banking business. He has worked with the Hawley Jaycees, Hawley Chamber of Commerce, Minnesota 4-H Foundation and the March of Dimes, and is currently the director and treasurer of the Hadeland Lag in America.

CCHS members will have the opportunity to nominate additional candidates and vote at the CCHS Annual Meeting, Tuesday, April 12, 2005, at the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead.

Outreach Displays

	<u>Open</u>	<u>Close</u>
Hawley Public Library	April	June
Moorhead Public Library	April	June
Barnesville Public Library	April	June
Fargo CVB	April	October



The Hawley Public Library opens MASH NOTES – a display about the “a-peeling” potato. Artifacts include potato mashers, a potato basket and liner as well as items from Barnesville’s Potato Days in August.

The Moorhead Public Library will LISTEN TO THE MUSIC with a display featuring musical instruments including an accordion, harmonica, radio and sheet music.

EATING OUT is at the Barnesville Public Library highlighting artifacts and photos from our national award-winning exhibit *Eating Out in Clay County*. The artifacts and photos show cafés and restaurants and eating at work and school.

Tourists will have FUN IN THE SUN at the CVB (Convention and Visitors’ Bureau) in Fargo this spring and summer. We’ll go to the ballgame, visit parks and go fishing and swimming!



The Fargo Dome has a temporary display on the Hjemkomst Center in a small case shared between CCHS and HHIC.

IN-HOUSE DISPLAYS

A new display of Beulah Forness’ exquisite, hand-decorated china has been arranged in the lobby area of the Hjemkomst Center. Forness teaches china-painting classes in the building Tuesday mornings.

Artifacts & Donors

January/February 2005

Donors include:

Moorhead: Orval Hurner, Donna Nelson, Dale White, Douglas Johnson, Fern Schellach, Audre Rusness, Vivian Wensel, Helen Danielson, City of Moorhead Parks & Recreation; Moorhead Public Schools
Barnesville: Don Krauth
Fargo: Nancy Lilleberg, Northern Improvement Company, Harold Jenkinson, Leland Delger
Pine Island, MN: Bill Denny

Artifacts: bag of materials (1886-1902) relating to the Thomas Stahl Family found behind a wall from house in Barnesville; photos, amateur newspapers* etc. relating to the Timan Olson family, Hawley; 2-ring binder containing 4x6 prints (all taken by the donor) of the 1-month demolition process of the Moorhead Elevator on 1st Avenue North; 1979 Clay County Rural Directory (1 vol.), 2 copies of photos of the Carl & Inga (Nelson)’s Grocery Store, corner of 7th & Main and an individual teapot used at the New Columbia Hotel, Mhd; booklet, *NPRwy Co. Schedule for Telegraphers* 1917; color photo of Moorhead Public Service Dept. strike in early 1980s; (2) “Party Line” [WDAY-TV show] booklets; book, *The Little Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings* 1931 and two Christmas cards late 1930s-1940s; program, Moorhead-Fargo Bridge Dedication Ceremony Oct. 29, 1936; Floberg family items: toy washing machine, (2) pair men’s ice skates scooter; pair of Snowshoes by Snocraft, Inc. of Norway, Maine used by Fritz Wensel; cornerstone from the Bethesda Swedish Lutheran Church, Mhd [later Churches United for the Homeless]; booklet, *Clay: From the Ground Up*, by League of Women voters, Mhd 1967; (5) cdbd lollipop-holding valentines, (2) publicity photos of Shirley Temple mid-1930s; voting booth in wooden box dated 1906; (2) boxes materials School Crossing Guard Program; (2 sheet) map, 1920, US/World/Minnesota; (1) vol. *Mowey’s Classified Business and Professional Directory of Our Cities of the Northwest* ca 1905 - contains towns of Minneapolis, St. Paul Fargo and Moorhead; the Denny & Hovelsrud family tree.

* In 1906, John T. Olson (b. 1895), son of Timan and Julianna Olson of Hawley, began to write amateur newspapers containing family news and local events. He bound some of them into books. Olson, surprisingly, continued this hobby into 1918. He entered the service in June 1918 and was sent to France where he died of pneumonia on Oct. 14, 1918.

Ghosts in the Walls: a closer look at the objects found in the Douglas House - Part 2

By Pam Burkhardt, CCHS Collections Manager

This article highlights some of the items found in the Douglas House on South Fourth Street in Moorhead, when it was being prepared for moving to make room for construction of new condos and apartments. CCHS Curator Pam Burkhardt and Archivist Mark Peihl have done extensive research on the items' connections to the Douglas family.

YOUTH'S COMPANION

The Thursday, June 25, 1874 edition of *The Youth's Companion* magazine found in the Douglas House is actually a single sheet measuring about 30" x 21," folded twice. Publication ran from 1827 to 1929. The publisher from 1867 to 1929 was Perry Mason* & Co. of Boston.

The name "D Windom" is printed along one irregular edge of the sheet. The subscription likely belonged to William D. Windom (age 15 in 1874), son of Minnesota US Senator William Windom and Secretary to the US Treasury. James Douglas' obituary says he married Sen. Windom's sister. Actually, the connection to the Windom family was John Douglas - James' younger brother. John Douglas and William Windom married sisters: John to Ellen Towne Hatch and William to Elizabeth Bronson Hatch. Windom appointed James Douglas as Moorhead's first Postmaster. It isn't difficult to imagine how the Windom item ended up in the Douglas house. According to the *Clay County Advocate* of Saturday, Oct. 18, 1879, the Senator "had been visiting in this locality for a few days," and "has for years been an enthusiastic admirer of the Red River Valley." Rev. O. H. Elmer's diary also records Windom's visits in 1875 and in 1878.

The Youth's Companion magazine first appeared in 1827 as a primarily religious publication for children

by Nathan Willis of Boston. It contained "left overs" from another religious publication by Willis called the *Recorder*. *The Youth's Companion* became successful because it was one of the early publications for children and because of its appeal to adults and children. The magazine regularly printed original stories and poems written especially "For the Companion" by famous authors. This issue has *A Little Cinderella* by Louisa May Alcott and *The Grand Parade*, a poem by James Judson Lord.

The success of the magazine was also due to the offering of premiums for children who gathered subscriptions to the magazine. In 1888, the School Flag Movement campaign was launched where children sold cards called "shares" in patriotism. When enough cards were sold, the school received a flag. At that time, the flag was not regularly flown at schools.

*Does the name Perry Mason sound familiar? Erle Stanley Gardner named his fictional lawyer after the publisher of a magazine he remembered from his youth.

A REAL DOLL

The 1860s, 16 1/2" tall doll is called a china head. The style of arms and legs started in the previous decade. No makers' marks are visible. There are two sewing holes on the front and back, but the head is glued, not sewn, onto a body filled with



Continued next page...

WORD PUZZLE

This puzzle appears in the *Nuts to Crack* column of the June 25, 1874 issue of *The Youth's Companion*. The word square has four letters across and four down making sixteen letters in all. Each word will appear twice, once across and once down. The answer appears on page 15.

WORD SQUARE.

My *first* a mineral is seen,
Its color oftenest is green;
My *next* an open space is known,
A surface, small or larger shown;
My *third* the forest ranges free,
A graceful animal to see;
My *fourth* both rank and title wears
Which many a man most nobly bears.
[submitted by] Aunt Lois.

reddish sawdust.

The doll's face has painted features. She has black hair with a thin, white part and blue eyes accented by a white dot by the pupil. Red appears as a dot at the inside corners of the eyes, a line over each eye and in each nostril. Her little mouth is pursed and painted a dark pink. Her cheeks are pink with only a slight orange touch. The head is in excellent shape showing a bit of wear at the back.

The china arm begins at a high "elbow" and ends with clearly defined fingers. The left arm is broken off above the "wrist." One china leg ends at the knee and has a very fat calf, as was the style in the mid-century china-heads. Her red boot is painted on her flat foot. The china part of the left leg is completely gone. The "wound" is wrapped with cloth secured with a straight pin to stop the fill from running out.

The doll is wearing only a pair of badly degraded hand-sewn, roomy black drawers/bloomers. The waist and leg seams of the garment are gathered over a narrow, brown tape resembling a shoelace and knotted at the

waist. One piece of white tape was found in the threads of the bloomers. With a bow at one end, it may have belonged to the doll's petticoat.

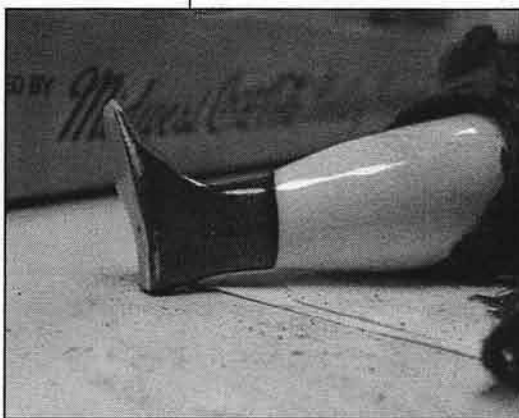
FANCYWORK

Any one of the women in the Douglas household might have tried their hand at the fancy lace patterns on this 23" x 18" advertising sheet titled "Applique & Lace Supplement issued with Part 175 (Oct. 1878) of *Bow Bells*."*** It is printed on one side in medium red ink. The sheet has six pattern illustrations of tape lace and three of lace applique offered by "Madame Elise." In one corner, Elise's books: *The Crochet and Knitting Winter Book*, *The Canadian Winter Book*, *The Book of Lace*, *The Book of Tatting* and *The Book of Honiton Lace* are priced in shillings and pence. No mailing address is given.

Madame Elise was a London dressmaker who in April 1870 was located at 170 Regent Street in London. Her letterhead read, "Antique and Modern Lace Warehouse, Court Dress Maker, Milliner, Flowers & Feathers, Manufacturer of the Richest Moire Antiques . . ." and "By Special Appointment Dressmaker to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales" and supplied Corsets, Trousseaux & Layettes.

There were a number of ladies in the Douglas household in Moorhead. Wilhelmina Squire (Mrs. James) Douglas had four daughters all born in Canada:

Mary Louise, Wilhelmina (Mina/Minnie), Helen (Nellie) and Jessie. Mrs. Douglas' mother Mary Wood Squire lived with the family until her death from rheumatic pleurisy on Feb. 23, 1876. Daughter Mary died of consumption (tuberculosis) that same year on July 3. In 1878, the ages of the three remaining daughters were between 12 & 19 years. Mother and daughters certainly did plain



Bandages on the china leg of the 1860s doll found in the Douglas House are visible at right in the photo above.

sewing and may have done fancywork like those

Continued on page 13...

Inside, Outside, Upside Down exhibit opens Apr. 9

Pick up a magnifying glass and get ready to explore history in ways you may have never imagined in CCHS' new exhibit *Inside, Outside, Upside Down!* This revealing exhibit opens Saturday, April 9 at the Clay County Museum.

Like the popular CSI: Crime Scene Investigation™ television series, historians can make the "evidence" speak. Historians like forensic scientists are thinkers, detail-oriented, able to put pieces of a puzzle together, and curious.

CCHS Archivist Mark Peihl and CCHS Collections Manager Pam Burkhardt use detective skills similar to forensic scientists every day on the job. Their goal is to find the provenance or

information behind the artifact.

"It's the mysteries behind the historical objects that make our jobs really interesting," says Burkhardt.

The investigative process used with the Douglas House objects and items found in other homes in the area will be featured in the upcoming exhibit, along with time capsules from Glyndon and Moorhead, aerial photography and more!

Visitors can create their own time capsule, view historic photos in 3D with a stereoviewer and try to identify the items in a special x-ray with the many hands-on activities in the exhibit.

Cow Photo Mystery Solved!

By Mark Peihl, CCHS Archivist

Many of our readers wrote in or called about our last issue's cover photo showing a young man measuring a cow with a curious looking instrument. Most suggested, correctly as it turned out, that he was checking the critter for "hardware disease," a sometime fatal ailment caused when cattle accidentally ingest bits of sharp metal. Here's the scoop:

I knew the photo ran in the *Hawley Herald* at some point in the 1950s or 1960s. It might have been possible to go through twenty years of microfilmed *Heralds* searching for the picture – a pretty daunting task. To shorten the time frame I studied the photo itself. The picture was taken with a Polaroid® instant camera. On the reverse in the upper left hand corner was the number "42."

An internet search revealed that the Polaroid Corporation introduced type 42 film in 1955. The photo must date from later than that. I checked a number of other Polaroid prints from the *Herald* collection and found only a few with the number 42 but lots with the number 47. Polaroid introduced type 47 film, a much faster film, in 1959. I guessed the *Herald* bought the camera after 1955 but shortly before the switch to the new film in 1959. Also, I was stubbornly sticking to the Strontium-90 theory.

Early 1958 news reports indicate that Strontium-90, a long lived and dangerous radioactive substance, was finding its way into the nation's milk supply. To me, the device looked like a Geiger counter for testing radiation levels.

Our Experience Works employee, Jane Renner, sat down



with the *Hawley Herald* for 1958 and quickly located the photo on the front page in the December 4, 1958 issue. The caption read:

"Is there a doctor in the barn? Yes, Dr. W. Ogborn, Hawley veterinarian, is checking to see if Elsie has swallowed any hardware.

"Using his electromagnetic metal detector, Dr. Ogborn can locate any metal object which might be in the cow, discover the object's shape and whether it is loose or penetrating a tissue.

"The instrument creates a humming noise in the earphones and varies in pitch when metal is located. A meter on the box also

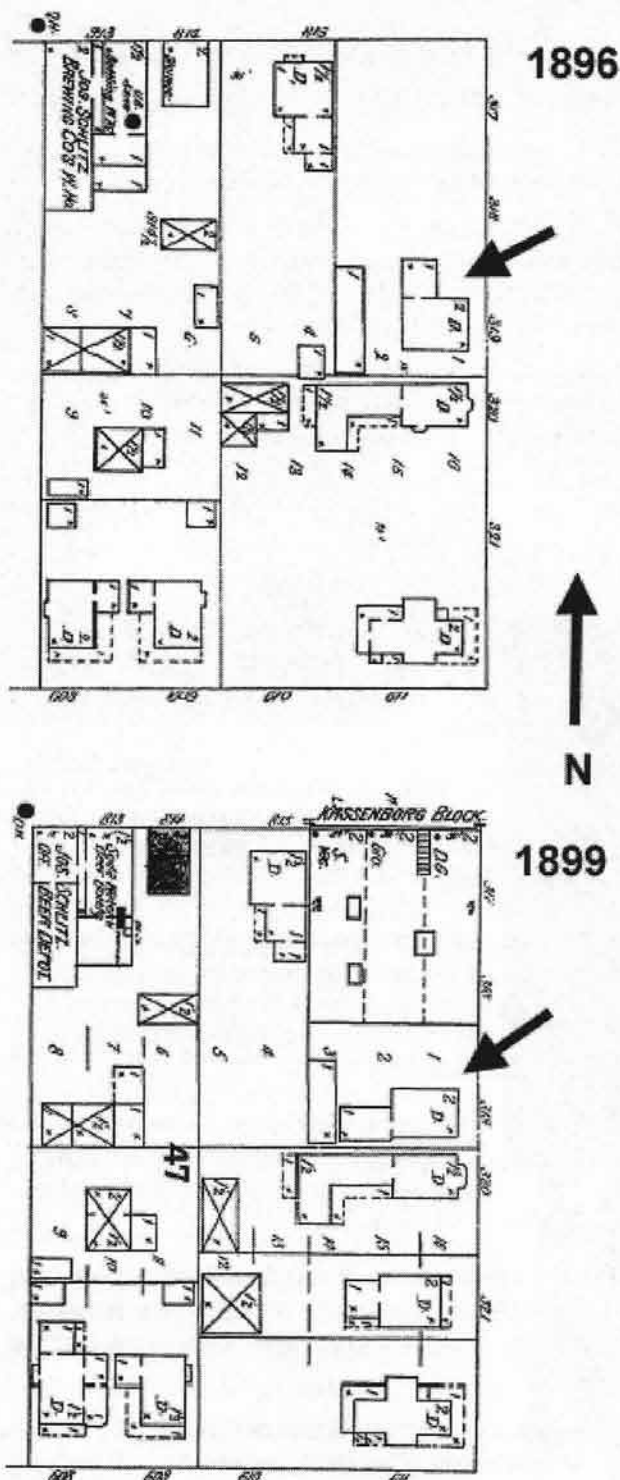
shows when metal has been found.

"Swallowing metal objects often is fatal for cows, especially when the object is long and sharp enough to pierce a tissue. Early detection of the object can mean money saved for the dairyman.

"The instrument will show whether the case requires operating. If it shows a vital organ has been pierced and the cow will die, the farmer can ship it to a slaughter house before the animal becomes too sick and poisons the meat.

"The above photo was taken at the Henry Ford farm north of Hawley. Ford has one of the top Holstein herds in the county Dairy Herd Improvement Association."

Thanks to everybody who contacted us. And now I'll slip away and eat some beef. (I hope there's no metal in it.)



Sanborn maps can illustrate changes in buildings over time. Compare this Moorhead block from 1896 and 1899 Sanborn maps above. Note the removal of an addition to the north side of the James Douglas house (see the arrows) and the new addition built on the west side (probably in 1898 when the Kassenborg Block was constructed to the north.)

Discovering

By Mark Peihl, CCHS Archivist

A couple of years ago, I bought a seventy-five-year-old house in a quiet north side Fargo neighborhood. Moving, “closing jitters” and having a place of our own made it an exciting time. But on quiet evenings I often thought about the place: When was it built? Who built it? What did it look like brand new? And who were the people who lived here? What were they like? What did they like about the place and what changes did they make in it? How has the neighborhood changed? Every year dozens of researchers visit the archives seeking answers to similar questions about their own homes. Fortunately, whether the patron lives in Moorhead, a small county town or a farmstead, we have lots of resources in the archives to help answer their queries. This article looks at some of those research tools and how they can be used to investigate house history.

Folks research their homes (or other properties) for many different reasons. Some simply want to know how old the place is. Others wonder if it’s eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Many people want to restore the home to its original appearance. A surprising number of folks are tracking down ghost stories. (I’m not kidding!) A few realize that having a documented house history might make it a more salable property to potential buyers. But most folks, like me, are just curious.

Any house history project involves two types of records: those dealing with the physical place (dirt, bricks and mortar) and those concerning the people who built and lived in the house. The paths crisscross and inform each other.

One of the best places to start research is with your neighbors (or if you inherited the property, your older relatives). Stories they can tell you about the home, its former occupants and neighborhood can be a gold mine, information you’ll never find in paper records. Tracking down and interviewing former residents can also be productive. Just use tact in approaching them.

Your House's History

It may pay to write to them first, rather than call. (Keep in mind how you would feel if a stranger suddenly began asking questions about you and your family.) It's important to realize that there will not be one, single source that will tell you your house's story. You'll need to check a variety of different types of records to piece the story together. But that's part of the fun. And we're here to help. Here are some sources.

Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are highly detailed street maps drawn by the Sanborn Map Company for cities all over the country from the 1870s through the 1960s, including Moorhead and Barnesville. The maps were designed to provide fire insurance companies with the precise locations of buildings, their uses, construction materials, distance from fire hydrants, etc. so the companies could set their rates accordingly. The company visited and remapped cities periodically. Moorhead's maps date from 1884, 1890, 1896, 1899, 1906, 1914, 1922, 1929 and 1956. Barnesville's are from 1894, 1899, 1907, 1914 and 1929. Not all parts of the towns were mapped, especially in the early years. By checking several maps for your home you can get a general time frame when it was constructed and an idea of how the home changed over the years (see the examples in the illustration on page 8).

We have microfilm copies of the Moorhead and Barnesville maps in the archives. The original maps contain color coded information which is lost in black and white microfilming. The Lake Agassiz Regional Library has Sanborn maps for all mapped Minnesota communities available online through public access terminals at each of their locations. If you have a library card, you can access them from home via the internet. (We can access these from the archives, too.) Go to <http://www.larl.org/> and click on "Online Resources," then scroll down to "Digital Sanborn Maps." You'll have to enter your library card number.

The Fargo Public Library has available the Sanborn maps for all North Dakota cities including Fargo and West Fargo. Contact the FPL at 701-241-1492 for further information.

The Fire Underwriters Inspection Bureau (also known as the General Inspection Bureau) focused on Minnesota and North Dakota towns unmapped by Sanborn. The Minnesota Historical Society has paper copies of FUIB/GIB maps for nearly all Clay County towns. Most date from the 1950s and '60s, some from the 1920s. (See the sidebar below for a list.) We had MHS shoot color 35mm slides of each map and mounted the transparencies between sheets of Mylar. We can view and copy the slides with our microfiche reader/printer. We also have paper copies of General Inspection Bureau maps for Hawley (1924 and 1933, two sheets each) and Glyndon (1933). The North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies in Fargo has FUIB/GIB maps for 409 North Dakota towns. See <http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/ndirs/collections/manuscripts/arch&hp/fire/inventory.html> for an inventory.

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Fire Underwriters' Inspection Bureau Maps in CCHS Archives:

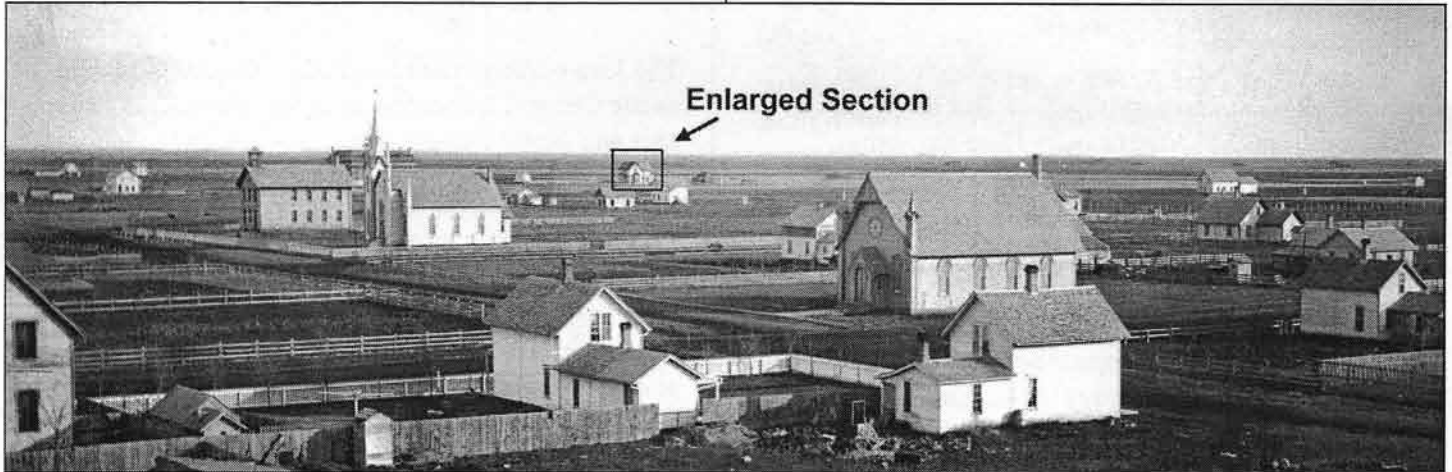
Hawley: Nov. 1924, March 1932, April 1962
 Glyndon: August 1932, March 1964
 Felton: May 1961
 Ulen: July 1956
 Kragens: February 1952
 Dilworth: Nov. 1950
 Muskoda: Feb. 1929
 Hitterdal: 1958
 Averill: May 1961
 Sabin: June 1962
 Georgetown: June 1961
 Baker: June 1961
 Downer: June 1961
 Comstock: 1961

For those with farmsteads, we have a large selection of plat maps showing property ownership from 1899 to the present. Many show not only property boundaries and owners' names but also the locations of farm buildings.

We also have a complete set of US Geological Survey topographic maps for the county. These large-scale maps date mostly from the late 1950s and '60s. They record lots of information including the locations of

have several "booster publications," most produced by area newspapers to advertise Clay County as a prosperous place to farm and do business. Some include photos of prominent residents' homes and farms.

We have a number of USDA and Geological Survey aerial photos of Moorhead from 1939, 1952, 1958, 1965, 1971 and later. These are taken looking straight down from aircraft. With a good magnifying glass, the layouts of individual homes can be clearly seen.



Semi aerial views like this one of southeast Moorhead from a four mill in 1880 can reveal details on houses visible in the distance. A good magnifying glass helps, as shown in the close-up, opposite.

buildings, including outbuildings. They are very precise. For the southwest quarter of the county we have a smaller scale USGS topo from 1905 and one for the Parke/Tansem Township area from 1917.

Though they are not technically maps, we have two "birds' eye view" drawings of Moorhead from 1874 and 1882. These show what the city would look like from several hundred feet up. Drawn by traveling draftsmen to sell to a local market, they are quite accurate, showing the locations and outside appearance of most buildings. (We featured the 1882 view in our July/August 2001 *Newsletter*.)

Photos

Many of our house researchers would love to find a photo of their home when it was new or at any time. This is often difficult. We have only a few identified photos of individual homes, most in Moorhead. Our Flaten/Wange collection features many unidentified Hawley area homes and farmsteads. (Some researchers have had luck just browsing through them.) We also

Likewise, oblique aerals (taken from planes looking down and to the side) can show more details. Our earliest oblique of Moorhead comes from a Minneapolis newspaper from the early 1920s. We have prints of most Clay County towns from the Minnesota Historical Society's Mart Aerial Photograph Collection. They date from the 1970s and early 1980s. We also have many photos taken of towns from the tops of grain elevators and other tall structures which show homes in the distance.

And former owners may have photos of your house. Sometimes a neighbor's photo of his brother waving from their driveway can also show at least part of your home in the background.

Chain of Ownership

Photos, maps and other documents can help you see what the home looked like at various times, but you can't really understand your house's history until you get to know the people who owned and lived in it in the past. One good approach is to discover the home's

chain of ownership. If you have an abstract to the title you are way ahead of the game. Each time a piece of land changes hands, is mortgaged or foreclosed on, the Recorder's Office makes a record. An abstract is a set of transcriptions of each of these records, ordered chronologically. It's important to remember that the records refer to the land, not the house. But a careful reading of the abstract can provide important clues. For instance, a sudden jump in the recorded purchase price may mean the land owner built a house on the property.

A key piece of information to know is the legal description of your property. Different from a street address, the legal description describes a parcel of land. In rural areas, it will include the Township and Range numbers, the section number and the fraction of that section. (Legal descriptions are written in just the opposite order, from the smallest division to the largest, e.g., the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 20, Township 139 North, Range 44 West [Egdon Township]). In town it will include the name of the subdivision of land, the block number and the lot number on that block (e.g., lots 17 through 20, block 1, Thompson's first Addition [Barnesville]). The legal description can be found on your deed, tax statement or (along with lots of other information) on the Clay County GIS Office website, <http://www.gis.co.clay.mn.us/>. Click on the "Maps Online" link, then click on the "Clay County Map" link. This will take you to a page where you can search for property information many ways, including by your street or 911 address or through an interactive map.

Land records are indexed in a couple of different ways. With a legal description you can check a Tract Index in the Clay County Recorder's Office. They are open for public inspection. Find the volume which covers your property and the page for your parcel (the staff can help you). There will be a list of transactions involving the land from the time it belonged to the US government. These can include warranty deeds, quit-claim-

deeds, mortgages, foreclosures, etc. The index lists the book and page number where the record itself is found. Title companies use the tract indexes to create the abstracts. The records can seem a bit arcane. But even if you just find the name of one earlier owner, you can use other, simpler indexes to track the chain.

In the archives we have a duplicate set of Grantee/Grantor Indexes. These record information similar to the Tract Indexes but are arranged by the name of the



person acquiring the land (the grantee) or the person transferring the land (the grantor). By alternating the search between the two you can track the ownership changes. Information recorded includes the participants' names, the legal description, the book and page numbers and the dates of the transaction. Two dates are listed: the date of instrument, when the participants signed the papers and the date of filing, when the Register of Deeds or Recorder got around to filing the papers officially. This can be days or weeks (or longer) after the signing.

We also have similar indexes to Miscellaneous Records. These include all sorts of stuff from name changes to articles of incorporation to mechanics liens. The latter are claims placed on property by contractors who made improvements to a home then had trouble getting paid. The index can lead you to the lien which may list a description of the work done, materials used and sub-contractors involved.

Tax records can be helpful in tracking a property. Until the 1960s Minnesota taxed not only real property but personal property. Tax assessors visited homes and recorded how many dogs, tractors, washing machines, etc. the tax payer owned and their value. We have real and personal property tax assessment rolls from the 1870s and early '80s and for every five years from 1925 to 1975. We also have Tax Lists which don't detail the personal property owned but describe land

Continued next page...

owned and taxes paid over a wider range of years: those ending in "5" between 1905 and 1975.

City Directories

If you live in Moorhead (or Fargo, West Fargo or Dilworth) the directories are a tremendous resource. I think of them as telephone books on steroids. There's an amazing amount of information in these volumes. We have a complete set from 1882 for Fargo, Moorhead begins in 1884, through 1999. (More recent directories are available at local libraries.) Until the 1950s they came out every year or two. Information recorded varies from year to year but their main feature is an alphabetical listing of each householder, his or her address and occupation. In the 1890s servants and adult children living at home were added along with the person's employer. After 1928 the householder's spouse's name is also listed. Also beginning in 1928, the directories began featuring a (very handy!) reverse directory listing. Here one can look up a street address and see who lived there and whether they were a renter

or an owner. The 1910/1911 directory also featured a reverse directory. We've keyed the Moorhead section of the 1915 directory into a database and can search it by address. To find a property in earlier directories it may be necessary to read through each alphabetical listing for your property. But that only takes about an hour for a Moorhead listing (assuming the person's name starts with a Z, not just an A). By checking backward through the volumes after finding your home you often can find the first reference to it – possibly indicating when it was built.

Since the directories list both homeowners and renters it can be possible to create a nearly complete list of everyone who's lived in your home. The street address listings can lead you to the names of former neighbors and an idea of how the neighborhood has changed. The directories added West Fargo listings in 1928, Dilworth in 1961 and limited information about Cass and Clay County farmers in 1954. If a person died or moved in the 1930s and '40s the directories indicate

Continued on page 15...

New CCHS Memberships & Renewals

CCHS extends a special thank you to the following individuals who renewed their memberships or became new members in January and February:

NEW MEMBERS

David R. Alme, Kennewick, WA
Duane Durr, Fargo
Richard & Helen Pemble, Moorhead

NEW GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

Herb Ludwig, Jr., Hawley

RENEWALS

Rod & Audrey Angstman, Moorhead
Helen Austin, Moorhead
Carl L. & June Bailey, Moorhead
Joel Belgum, Moorhead
Bentley & Bentley, DDS, Hawley
Ben E. Brunsvold, Moorhead
Olaf & Verna Cartford, Moorhead
Rick Crume, Glyndon
Helen Danielson, Moorhead
Leland & Dorothy Delger, Fargo
Roland & Beth Dille, Moorhead
June Adele Dolva, Moorhead
Eventide, Moorhead

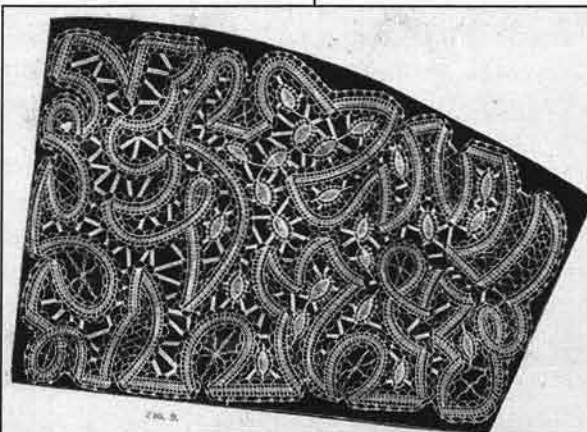
Harry & Phyllis Fillafer, Moorhead
Mike & Diane Fillmore, Hawley
Neil & Deborah Frederickson, Fargo
Howard R. Geng, Moorhead
Glenn Gilbery, Georgetown
Graham & Madrene Goeson, Moorhead
Ann P. Gytri, Felton
W. L. & Marjorie Haggart, Fargo
Neil & Polly Hanson, Glyndon
Clair O. Haugen, Moorhead
Orval Hurner, Moorhead
Tom & Beth Iverson, Moorhead
Noma Kane-Rygg, Tucson, AZ
Dr. Heidi Kassenborg, Afton, MN
Paul & Florence Korsmo, Fargo
Nona Krzyzaniak, Moorhead
Francis Kukowski, Georgetown
Brent Larson & MaryJo Schmid, Mhd
Robert & Dorothy Larson, Moorhead
Mary Leach, Glyndon
Darren & Jane Leno, Moorhead
Erling & Janice Linde, Moorhead
Ethel J. Menholt, Felton
Katherine Mentjes, LeCenter, MN
Adrian R. Minch, Fargo
Carol Moeckel, Moorhead
Charles A. Nelson, Surprise, AZ

Timothy R. Nowak, Cheyenne, WY
Doris V. Olich, Moorhead
Dr. LeRoy J. Olson, Tyler, TX
Elaine G. Oss, Elk River, MN
Marlowe & Joan Parries, Moorhead
Vernon A. Pederson, Moorhead
Sherwood & Wendy Peterson, Rochester
Lloyd G. Pladson, Pelican Rapids, MN
Pearl & Vern Quinnild, Barnesville
Grant & Peggy Ramstad, Hawley
K. Jane Renner, Moorhead
Karol Kay Peterson Rood, Jacksonville, FL
Helen Rudie, Fargo
Carol & Gordon Rustad, Moorhead
Steve & Lucia Schroeder, Glyndon
Hazel & Davis A. Scott, Moorhead
Nels & Myrtle Snustad, Moorhead
Joan Sprague, San Diego, CA
Jim & Chris Stenerson, Moorhead
Roger & Joan Stenerson, Glyndon
Dale Stensgaard, Grand Forks, ND
Ray & Erma Stordahl, Moorhead
Bob & Cindy Swenson, Moorhead
Diane Tweten Sylte, Benson, MN
Chris & Ellen Velline, Torrance, CA
Richard & Esther Vollbrecht, Moorhead
LaVonne A. Woods, Omaha, NE

Douglas House items, continued

pictured on the advertising sheet. Patterns and books were only an order away. Materials listed in the ad could be found in the area.

Increasingly popular in the second half of the 19th century, tape lace was known by many names such as modern point lace, Battenberg, Renaissance and Princess lace. The pattern was pre-stamped on a piece of cloth. Decorative tape was purchased, tacked down onto the pattern and sewn together at connecting points. Decorative needle lace filled the open spaces. When the tacking thread was removed, the new doily, table runner, dress trim, collar or cuff was finished. Designs were in imitation of the many types of needle and pillow laces made in past centuries. However, this modern lace needed no special skill or equipment. Lace applique involves applying separate motifs to a background of netting.



Fancy sleeve trim pattern from Madame Elise. Needed materials are given in a detailed description with the pattern.

Bow Bells, first issued in 1862, was published in London as a weekly story paper between 1863 and 1897. The periodical contained "fashion news, needlework patterns, color inserts, and a series of articles on outdoor pursuits for ladies (archery, skating, lawn tennis)."*** It started life as *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper* in 1850 and was quite radical for its time. Editor George William MacArthur Reynolds a writer of melodramatic fiction and publisher of a number of radical periodicals was probably the most widely read author in England in the mid-1800s. Later, publisher John Dicks changed the

name of this paper to get away from such a radical association.

**Bow Bells has its origin from the London church of St. Mary-le-Bow or Bow Church. A tradition says that only those born within the sound of the Bow [Church] bells are true Londoners or Cockneys.

***online source: *Imperial Views, Colonial Subjects: Victorian Periodicals and the Empire; Images from an Exhibition*, Yale University, August - October 1999 [<http://www.library.yale.edu/~mpowell/victorianper.html#bb>]

The Last One Hundred Years in MOORHEAD MINNESOTA

1900-2000



A Century of Change!

Published by Heritage Publications in collaboration with the Clay County Historical Society

A Great Gift for 2005!

Moorhead, 1900-2000: A Century of Change is packed with historic photographs and stories that transport you into Moorhead's colorful past. See how much Moorhead has changed!

Also available: *Fargo, ND, From Frontier Village to All America City, 1875-2000* is a unique collection of photos and stories chronicling Fargo's first 125 years.

These high-quality, paper cover books, published by Heritage Publications of Hendrum, MN, are fundraisers for the Clay and Cass County Historical Societies.

Pick up your copies today at the Clay County Museum & Archives in the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead, or send your check or money order for \$23.00 to CCHS, PO Box 501, Moorhead, MN 56561.

Call CCHS at 218-299-5520 for more information.

Sponsor, Patron, Sustaining and Supporting Memberships

This segment of our newsletter continues to grow! Thank you to all of our wonderful members for your tremendous support. Please help us thank these members for supporting the Clay County Historical Society by patronizing their businesses:

SPONSOR (\$500+)

Please consider supporting CCHS at this prestigious membership level!

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Moorhead Antique Mall
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Melberg Church Supply

Moorhead Midday-Central Lions
Richtman's Press Club
Stenerson Lumber
Ward Muscatell Automotive Group
Wells Fargo Bank MN, N A, Mhd
Wright Funeral Home

Sincere thanks goes to these individuals in the Patron, Sustaining, and Supporting membership levels:

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Darren & Jane Leno, Moorhead
Richard T. McMurray, Annandale, VA
Katherine Mentjes, LeCenter, MN

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Nels & Myrtle Snustad
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Ron & Deanna Ulven
Chris & Ellen Velline
Mark & Donna Voxland
Arthur Wenner
Dale D. White
Dick & Kathy Zaylskie

House history, continued

when the death occurred and the person's age or the place they moved to. It's almost scary how much information is recorded in city directories. Beginning in 1957 even the names and ages of minor children living at home were listed. (This feature was dropped recently to protect children from predators.)

Newspapers

If you can pin down the construction of your home to a reasonable time frame (a few months) checking for newspaper accounts can be very rewarding. Small town newspapers often carried little blurbs like, "Mr. Jones' new residence is nearly ready for occupancy." Sometimes the article will mention the contractor or

details about the house. Even if your town never had a newspaper, the Moorhead, Hawley, Ulen, Barnesville and Glyndon papers often had local correspondents from villages or townships who would send in weekly or monthly reports. Newspapers are not indexed, they take time to search and you never know what you'll find, if anything. But they can add greatly to the story and clearly nail a building's construction time.

Lots more information about former owners and their families can be found in census, naturalization and death records, obituaries, church and community histories and more. It doesn't cost anything to look so come on down and do some digging!

ANSWER TO WORD SQUARE

J A D E

A R E A

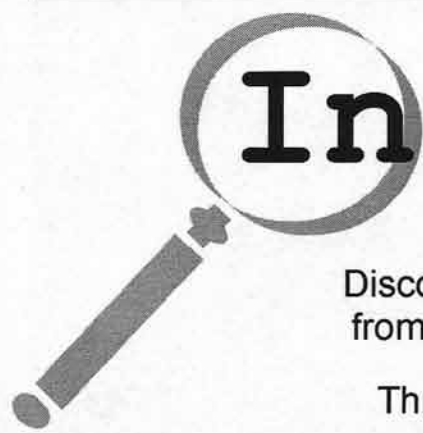
D E E R

E A R L

Calendar

- | | |
|------------|---|
| April 9 | <i>Inside, Outside, Upside Down</i> exhibit opens to public |
| April 12 | CCHS Annual Meeting and Grand Opening of <i>Inside, Outside, Upside Down</i> exhibit, 5:30-9:00pm |
| June 24-25 | Bergquist Cabin Open House, 1-4 |
| July 14-17 | Clay County Fair, Barnesville |

Schedule subject to change



Inside, Outside, Upside Down

Discover Clay County history
from a different perspective!

Through March 26, 2006

Clay County Museum Hours: 10-5 Monday-Saturday, 10-9 Tuesday, 12-5 Sunday
Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead, MN ♦ FREE ADMISSION



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YES! I would like to become a member of Clay County Historical Society

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual* \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100 |
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In addition to the great benefits listed above, Supporting, Sustaining, Patron and Sponsor members a certificate ready to frame and display, and a listing in all CCHS bi-monthly newsletters.

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