

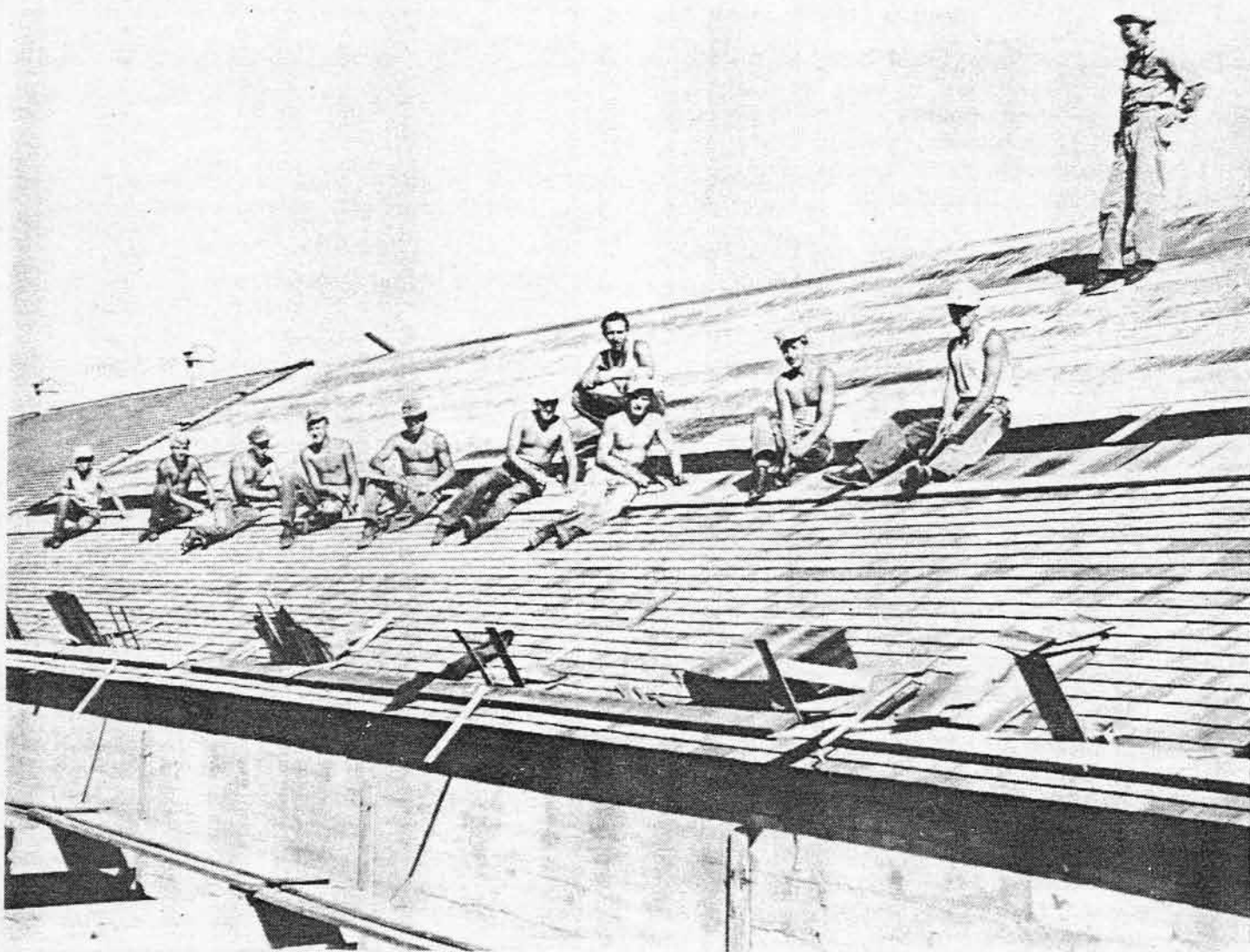
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CCHS Newsletter

March/April 1991

Vol XIV No. 2



Moorhead's POW Camp - (See story beginning on Page 15)

In addition to field labor, the POWs also did basic maintenance work. Here they repair a roof on the Peterson farm.

Florence Drury Collection

President's Message



Dear Members,

All members of the Clay County Historical Society are hereby extended a special invitation to attend the ANNUAL MEETING at the Hjemkomst Center on Thursday, Apr. 4. A full evening of enjoyment is planned including hors d'oeuvres, a banquet, entertainment and a short business meeting.

The executive board will have an update on ongoing negotiations between HHIC and CCHS concerning our occupancy at the Hjemkomst Center, and on several recent meetings with Diane Meyer, CCHS Representative on the Clay County Commission.

As your president, I urge you to attend the annual meeting for an enjoyable evening out and also so you can exercise your privilege and responsibility in the election of four new board members.

During the past year, two board members resigned and Ann Gytri of Felton and Arlo Brown of Dilworth were appointed to fill out their terms. Ann and Arlo will now be running for election, along with two new candidates yet to be named.

Finally, in this my last "President's Message," I'd like to say a personal word of commendation to our small but efficient staff. I'm particularly pleased with the media exposure we have been getting lately. Bulk mailing of a lecture series brochure was well received and several television and radio appearances developed out of that information. This exposure is good for CCHS.

Finally, your input at the annual meeting will be a great help to the Directors of

CCHS in defining our position for the coming year.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at the annual meeting - Thursday, Apr. 4 at the Hjemkomst Center.

Dan Skolness, President

P.S. I took my family to see the hologram exhibit last weekend. My five children, ages 8 - 15, used the term "awesome" repeatedly to describe the exhibit. My advice is DON'T MISS IT!!!

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



202 1st Avenue North
Box 501
Moorhead, Minnesota 56560

Board of Directors

Dan Skolness, President - Glyndon
Mercedes Roos, Secretary - Hawley
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Newsletter Production

Margaret Ristvedt, Editor/Publisher
Pam Burkhardt, Contributor
Mark Peihl, Contributor
Jim Nelson, Contributor

A potpourri of Easter lore

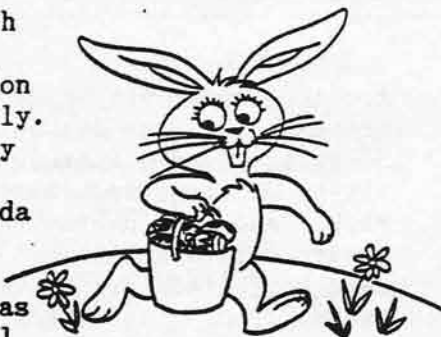
By Pam Burkhardt

Are you ready to celebrate Oestre? That's right. When the missionaries introduced the Christian religion into northern Europe, the inhabitants were already celebrating a spring festival dedicated to the Anglo-Saxon goddess Oestre. The two holidays were eventually combined and the holiday's name changed to Eostra and finally Easter.

The Easter Parade (with your Easter bonnets) started in New York around the 1860s. [It was an ancient custom to wear an article of new clothing at the beginning of a year to insure good fortune.] The upper classes in New York City sported new outfits at the Easter service and, afterwards, would stroll down the avenue (Fifth Avenue) to show off their finery. The working classes, who could not afford such classy outfits, would line the streets to see the fashions. Eventually, wages improved and more people gathered to be admired. The event was first televised in the 1950s.

By the way, a rotogravure is a printing process where pictures and words are etched into the copper cylinder on a rotary press. This was a fast printing method so you could read about your Easter finery in the newspaper the next day!

The Easter lily is a recent addition to the many floral symbols surrounding the holiday. In the 1880s, Mrs. Thomas P. Sargent, an amateur gardener from Philadelphia, was visiting Bermuda where she saw a beautiful, white trumpet lily. The bulbs she brought back with her started the American tradition of the Easter lily. [Earlier the lily bulbs had been brought to Bermuda from Japan by a returning missionary who was also a botanist.]



The Easter bunny was introduced in America by German immigrants in the 19th century.

The bunny, or more accurately the hare, was a symbol of fertility and connected with spring planting and growth. The hare made a nest where eggs were hidden. In Germany the hare hid colored eggs for the good children; none for the bad. In some cultures the rabbit, or hare, is given the task of decorating as well.

The egg is part of the creation myth in many cultures and is an important food at celebrations. Elaborate and imaginative egg decorating is done by the Poles and Ukrainians with melted bee's wax and dyes. Credit for the most elaborate and expensive of all Easter eggs must go to Carl Fabrege. He designed fabulous creations for the tsar of Russia from the late 1800s to 1914.



The famous egg-rolling contest at the White House started during the presidency of James Madison (1809 - 1817). Held on Easter Monday, the contest proved too much for the White House lawn and was moved to the Capitol terraces.

Try dyeing eggs with natural dyes such as onion skins. Peel the dry, colored skins from several onions - the more skins you have, the stronger the dye. Boil the skins in 2 cups of water for about five minutes, stirring occasionally. Strain the dye into a cup or bowl. Discard the skins. Add 1 tablespoon of vinegar to the dye. Add your clean, blown egg and let it soak, turning it occasionally until the desired color is reached. Spanish onion skins will give you a green egg (the dye will look reddish). Yellow onion skins produce a peach-colored egg. Strong tea or coffee produce browns. To give your eggs a shine, rub them with bacon fat - that's the way it was done in parts of Europe.

Sources: *Parade: Celebrations and Circus on the Move*, Gary Jennings, 1968. *Festivals for You to Celebrate*, Susan Purdy, 1969. *The Holiday Book: America's Festivals and Celebrations*, Martin Grier, 1978. *Easter Garland*, Priscilla Sawyer Lord and Daniel J. Foley, 1963.

Outreach displays

Glyndon Community Center	Mar. 1-May 10, 1991
Moorhead Public Library	Mar. 1-May 10, 1991
Hawley Public Library	Mar. 6-May 3, 1991
Hitterdal Senior Center	Mar. 6-May 3, 1991
Viking Manor, Ulen	Mar. 8-May 8, 1991

O GLYNDON, MY GLYNDON at the Glyndon Community Center features programs, commencement invitations, an original drawing from a class play, report cards and the silver anniversary booklet from the Glyndon school system from 1922 to 1959.

The Moorhead Public Library will display OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BABY! These photos from the S.P. Wange collection highlight the irresistible infants from Clay County's past.

ROCKS OF AGES will be shown at the Hawley Public Library. Rocks and minerals from Minnesota as well as from other states will be displayed. Artifacts include thompsonite, gypsum, iron ore and rocks with an organic origin.

The Hitterdal Senior Center features STITCHES IN TIME, a small display on quilts and quilting. Artifacts include quilt patches, sewing equipment and photos of quilts from the CCHS collections.

The AGE OF PLASTICS will be shown at Viking Manor. Modern uses for plastics include bullet-proof materials and natural-looking teeth! Artifacts include plastic shoes, diaper, fingernails and a Barbie doll.



Easter post card. Ca. 1930s

Nov./Dec. Donors and Artifacts

Donors include:

Moorhead	Bob Holtan of KVOX Radio, Nancy Otto, Sylvia Gibson, Corrine Lemke, Erling O. Erickson, Donna McMaster, Ruth H. Utke, Clay County Treasurer's Office, Dr. George Humphrey.
Hawley	Norman Bjorndahl, Jim Nelson, Karen Myran
Fargo, ND	Forum Publishing Co.
Valley Cty	Doreen Vangerud
Villa Pk. Il	Marilon Grant

Artifacts include:

Archival materials on S. G. Comstock, the Krabbenhofts, the Junkin family, Charlie Slayton, Glyndon schools and Hawley Area Viking Heritage organization, "Save the Parks" and area photos. Artifacts include Desert Shield and Desert Storm items, a cake knife from the Hitterdal Elevator Ass'n., four grain stack stakes, photo postcard of the KVOX studio in 1939, two stone points and a groundstone maul found at Gooseberry Park in the late teens and early 20s, a Holiday School Transportation token and a dog biscuit pin (a Clay County budget bare-bones symbol)

1991 Annual Meeting/Banquet

of the

Clay County Historical Society

at the

Hjemkomst Center
202 1st Ave. North, Moorhead, MN

April 4, 5:30 Social Hour
6:30 Banquet
1991 7:30 Program/Meeting

Guest Speaker: Michael Michlovic
MSU Professor of Anthropology
Topic: "Kensington Stone's Attraction?"

Entertainment: Carol Nelson
Well known area vocalist
Songs: "Beautiful Buffalo River"
and "Freedom"

Presentation: Mark Peihl, CCHS Archivist
Slide Show: "Buffalo River"
The story of the Buffalo River

Please return coupon below to:
Clay County Historical Society
Box 501
Moorhead, Minnesota 56560

Reservation deadline March 28



*Kensington Runestone:
Fact or Fiction??*

1991 ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
at HERITAGE-HJEMKOMST INTERPRETIVE CENTER
Moorhead, MN

Thursday, April 4, 1991

\$8.00 per person

Make Check payable to:

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Name: _____

Please check your choice of Entree
and return to CCHS before March 28, 1991

_____ Chicken Milan
_____ Roast Beef Au Jus

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Successful Clay County lawyer considered himself a loner

By Jim Nelson

Early this year Clay County lost one of its more colorful citizens. Through his work, and, to a lesser degree, his leisure, Magnus Wefald of Hawley lived a full, well-rounded life. Many Scandinavians of this generation sought work for its own gratification - and Magnus was no exception. Through his efforts, Magnus helped shape historical events, both lesser and greater, in Clay County and in Minnesota.



Magnus and Verna Wefald with their three oldest sons, Knut, Harold and Martin. Ca. 1933. S.P. Wange Photo Collection.

I recently interviewed Magnus's widow, Verna, a near centenarian herself, to find out more about Magnus. If anyone really knew Magnus it would be Verna, his wife for over 65 years.

Magnus was a practicing lawyer for 54 years and successful businessman, but the first insight Verna shared about Magnus did not have to do with these successes. The first thought Verna shared was that throughout his life, Magnus never really thought of himself as a believer. "He liked to do things on his own," she said. "He was never in athletics and he sometimes felt left out."

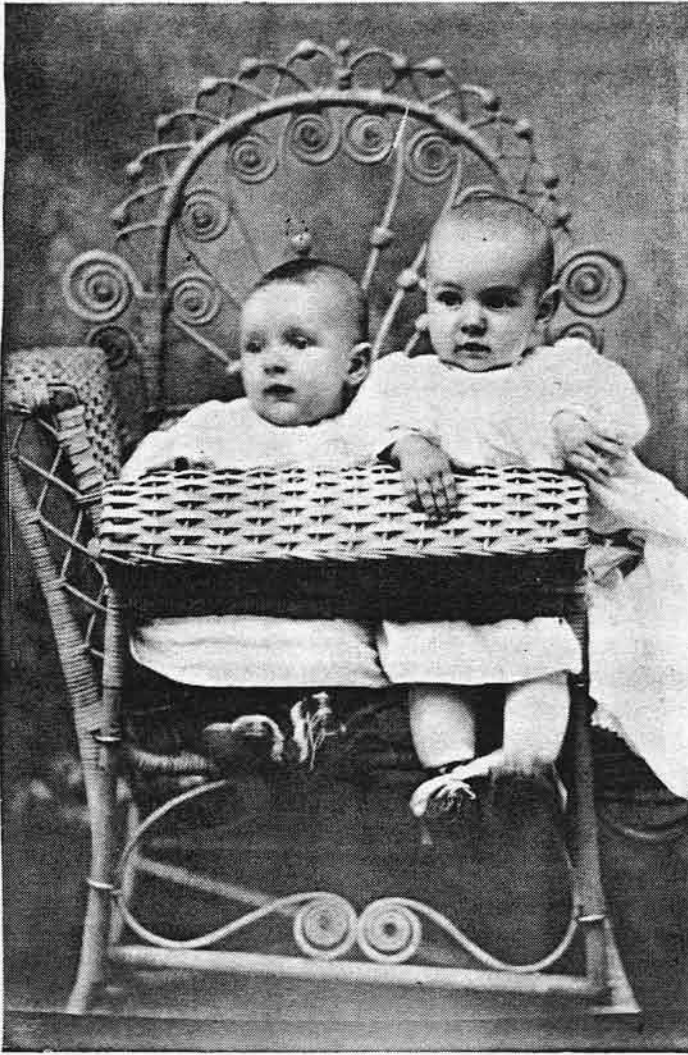
Magnus was elected State Senator in 1946 and held that office for three terms, until 1958. His father, Knud Wefald, was a U.S. Congressman from 1923 to 1926. Perhaps Magnus learned to love politics during the 1920s when, in addition to attending St. Olaf's at Northfield, he worked as his father's secretary in Washington, D.C.

During his years as a senator, Magnus was on a committee that helped lay the groundwork to place the osteopathist on the same rank as a physician. The legislation was finally passed a few years after Magnus left office in 1958, but Verna confided that being instrumental in bringing about this legislation was one of his grandest achievements in his dozen years as a senator. Another law that Magnus was proud to be a part of was one that allowed counties to levy two mills for their county library.

To round out his political career, Magnus found time to serve as mayor of Hawley in 1934.

One event Magnus was especially proud of occurred in 1916 while he was still in high school. He won a trip to the Minnesota State Fair at the Clay County Fair by raising the best potatoes for his age group. Then, while at the state fair, he won \$20 for placing first in an essay contest entitled "What I Saw That Most Impressed Me At The State Fair." Magnus was more pleased with his accomplishment of winning the trip and the essay contest than he was with the money he had won.

Another interesting event in the life of Magnus Wefald happened very early on and he could hardly be expected to remember it. Magnus was the first child baptized by Rev. S.G. Hauge at the Hawley Lutheran Church. In August of 1900, two babies, each only a few months old, were scheduled to be baptised. The babies were sons of Knud and Sarah Wefald and S.P. and Kirsten Wange. No one knows if there was any jockeying for position, but Magnus was the baby chosen to go first and therefore qualified for the honor of being the first baby baptised by Rev. Hauge in the Hawley Parish. Rev Hauge



This photo by S.P. Wange, father of Peder Wange (left) was perhaps taken in commemoration of the two infants, Peder and Magnus (right) being baptised on the same day.

S.P. Wange Photo Collection

served at Hawley Lutheran for 54 years before his death in 1964.

During his lifetime Magnus, together with his wife, Verna, donated many artifacts and documents to both the Minnesota Historical Society and the Clay County Historical Society. Those items will be preserved for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

Magnus lived his entire life in Clay County and the Wefalds were long time members and supporters of CCHS. Perhaps some day there will be time for proper research and documentation of his life. Some of the roles that could be covered are that of a husband, father, lawyer, mayor and senator.

Join us for these "3-D VISIONS" events

Light Ventures:

Exciting Adventures with Light!

Saturday, April 13 at 1 & 3 p.m.

Sunday, April 14 at 2 p.m.

A fun hands-on workshop for parents and children 3 and older that will encourage participants to explore the properties of light. Workshop by Michael Paul Gallo of Imagination Theater. Limited space - pre-registration recommended.

Laser Lore - Lasers and Their Uses

Thursday, April 18 from 7-8:30 p.m.

Explore how a laser works and discover their many applications in business, medicine, industry, communication, entertainment and research as well as get a glimpse of the future of lasers! A joint program sponsored by the MSU Barlage Center for Science and the Hjemkomst Center. Program FREE to public. Auditorium. Come early and see the "3-D VISIONS" exhibit for a special rate of \$2.50/adult and \$1/student!

\$5 Family Days

May 2-5

Couples or parents with children 17 and under admitted for this special price!

Special Program Sunday, May 5 - From Supermarkets to Fighter Jets at 2, 2:45 and 3:30 p.m. Explore the uses of holograms in every day life with Tony Kinsella, Moorhead Senior High teachers. Auditorium. FREE with admission.

Thank You received from Wadena group

A warm thank you was received in January by CCHS staff from members of the Wadena County Historical Society who recently toured the Clay County Museum and Archives. The note, signed by Pat Beaumont, Secretary of the Wadena County Historical Society, carried these words of appreciation: "Just a short, sincere "thank you" for the marvelous sharing you treated us to yesterday. We came away feeling we had learned so much!"

Preserving
Your...

FAMILY PHOTOS



1:30 - 3:00pm

Preserve your family photos for future generations to enjoy. Now is your chance to bring those old photographs up from the basement. This workshop will include storage and display ideas for old and new photographs. Special topics include color photos, slides, wedding photos, movies and videos. Handouts provided.

Mark Peihl, Archivist

HEIRLOOM TEXTILES



3:30 - 5:00pm

Whether its your great-grandmother's wedding dress, your grandmother's quilt, a sampler, a doily or any of the textiles you have inherited or purchased, let us help you preserve them. This workshop includes repair, cleaning, display & storage of heirloom textiles and needlework. All procedures will be tailored for home use. Bring an article from home for question and answer time. Handouts for care and storage provided.

Pam Burkhardt, Collections Mgr.

SPONSORED BY

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SATURDAY - MAY 18, 1991

1:30 - 5:00pm

HERITAGE-HJEMKOMST INTERPRETIVE CENTER
202 First Avenue North, Moorhead, Minnesota

Workshops open to the public.
No pre-registration necessary.

For more information call: 218-233-4604

In Honor of
Minnesota Museums'
Week, May 12-18
&
International
Museum Day, May 18

Killer Blizzard follows Spring thaw in 1941

By Mark Peihl

With spring approaching our thoughts tend toward warm sun and longer days, but it is good to remember that winter is far from over. Some of our nastiest blizzards occur in March (and November) when warm, moist air and bitter cold air are both common. When the two collide, spectacular winter storms can result. Such was the case 50 years ago this March when the area's most deadly blizzard struck.

The 1941 storm didn't last long but it blew in incredibly fast. Saturday, March 15 was cloudy but temperatures in the low 30s melted most of what little snow remained on the ground. Clay County towns were filled with farmers doing their Saturday shopping, most, lightly dressed for the mild weather.

Hundreds of miles to the north, it was a very different scene. An extremely intense



Seven stuck in car on Highway 75

G.N. Nelson and his wife rescued five stranded motorists, including Leonard Bakke of rural Moorhead, on Highway 75 south of Moorhead. Then, while following Bakke, who was on foot, to his farm just a mile off 75, the Nelson car hung up over the edge of a steep ditch. Note the lack of snow in photo. Only one half inch fell during the storm, but 70 plus mph winds reduced visibility to zero. Pictured above the morning after their ordeal are (l to r) D.J. Sigdestad of Webster, SD, his cousin Steward Sigdestad of Pierpont, SD and G.N. Nelson of Minneapolis. Others rescued besides the aforementioned include two children of D.J. Sigdestad, Joyce (14) and Duane (16).

cold front swept southeast across Canada reaching Winnipeg just after 4 p.m. By 6 it was in northeastern North Dakota. The storm struck Grand Forks "like a clap of thunder" according to one witness. Wind gusts at the Grand Forks Airport reached 85 miles per hour!

At 9 p.m. the weather bureau recording station in Moorhead's Post Office (now the Plains Art Museum) reported 30 degrees with a trace of snow and south winds at 10 mph. Things changed dramatically at 9:35 as the storm struck. The wind downtown shifted abruptly to the northwest and doubled in speed in five minutes and soon doubled again. Things were much worse out in the country. At Fargo's unsheltered Hector Field, the wind jumped from 15 to 46 mph at 9:35, then hit a peak of 74 mph at 10:08! At Hector the wind stayed above 40 mph until dawn when the storm abated. The temperature dropped too, from 30 degrees at 9 p.m. to 4 degrees at midnight. By dawn it was a bitter minus 7 degrees.

Only one-half inch of snow fell during the storm but most of it was going sideways. Property damage reports read like tornado destruction. The wind blew out many plate glass store fronts in Moorhead, ripped the sliding door off the county shed and neatly deposited it on the roof and blew down the chimney of Ulen's Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Barns near Hawley lost roofs and the steeple and cupola which had stood over the Clay County Courthouse in Moorhead since 1883 were so damaged that they had to be demolished.

The suddenness of the storm stranded thousands where they sat. Mr. and Mrs. S.P. Hanson from south of Hawley suddenly found themselves with 62 overnight house guests when the Silver Lake 4-H Club couldn't leave their home after a meeting. The Moorhead Theater hosted an all nighter for a near full house. Assistant manager Max Anderson ran the regular feature, then Sunday's feature, then every short subject in the building. "At 3:30 a.m. a piano was wheeled onto the stage and community singing whiled away the time until 4 when remaining patrons attempted to sleep."

At Hitterdal all the restaurants and stores stayed open through the night to provide

for those stranded in town, including many there to attend Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lamon's wedding dance. In Hawley many had gathered at Mac's Sweet Shop to listen to the high school district basketball tournament on radio and wound up staying the night.

Hundreds who attended the tournament in Moorhead's old Junior High School were also stuck. Paul Hanson of The Country Press reported "with but 3 minutes left in the game [between Moorhead and Barnesville for the championship - Moorhead won] they announced that everyone should remain in their seats while the awards were presented. A few moments later they announced that they should remain because of the storm that was raging outside. At once, everyone began to laugh, thinking it was a hoax to have them remain for the presentation." Police manning the exits soon convinced the crowd it was no joke and "the youngsters looked forward to a most exciting evening."

While the coaches engaged local reporters in an impromptu basketball game and band members gathered for jam sessions, other spectators poked around the building looking for a place to sleep or munched on burgers and hot dogs brought in by a few hardy souls. T.J. Bolger, a Northwestern Bell Telephone Company official, put his skills to work and soon had several outside lines open so stranded fans could call anxious relatives. Police let Moorhead residents go home at 4 a.m. but most out-of-towners stayed until late morning.

A large contingent from the Sabin-Baker area made a break for it during a brief lull. Their six car caravan managed to make it home, but it was a harrowing trip. They were lucky. Many motorists were caught on the roads by the storm and had their vehicles stall or get stuck.

Thirty-five cars were stopped on Highway 10 between Dilworth and Moorhead alone. Good Samaritans picked up the lucky ones, other spent a very cold night in their cars.

Mr. and Mrs. John Wirth of Fargo encountered perhaps the meanest man in Clay County. Shortly after the storm hit, their car stalled on Highway 10 a few miles west of Hawley. For four hours they sat

shivering. At 1:30 a car slammed into them from the rear, careened around and crashed into their front fender. Far from concerned about the damage, the Wirths were ecstatic that someone had arrived to rescue them.

A man got out of the car, yanked their door open and delivered a blistering lecture about parking on the highway without lights. He slammed the door, struggled to his own car and sped off into the storm.

The stunned Wirths sat another three hours before three young men from Moorhead-Fargo took them into Hawley. Mrs. Wirth was so cold she had to be carried from the car. The real heroine in this story may be the couple's spaniel, Queen. The Wirths took off their shoes and kept their feet warm by placing them under the dog. Queen was rewarded with a steak in Hawley.

The Wirths spent a very cold night but they survived by staying in their car. Trying to walk in the wind and bitter cold was very serious business.

Fargo Forum reporter Stanley Cowan and his son Jimmy, who lived only a block from the Junior High School left the tournament for home during the height of the storm. Cowan reported: "Telling Jimmy to keep a tight hold on the belt of my coat, we pulled our caps down over our ears and went out into the storm. We could barely see, but the going wasn't bad while we were headed with the wind. But when we turned the corner and faced the storm it literally took our breath away.

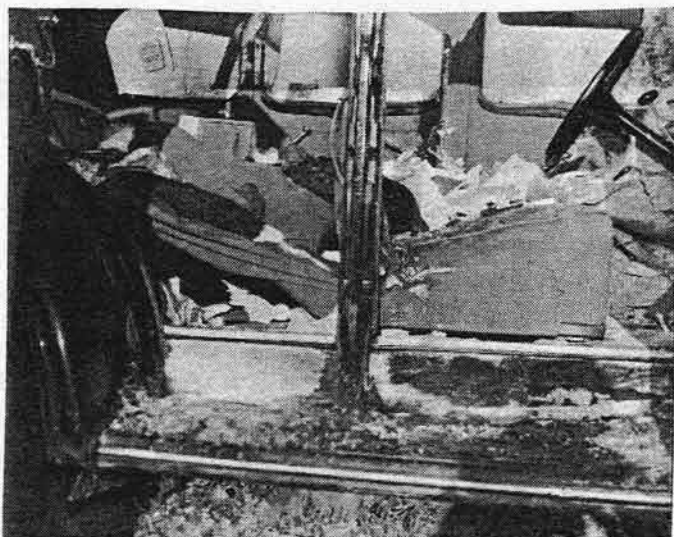
"We had to turn our heads into our coats to breath, blindly trudging down the middle of the street, we cut across back lots and reached our back door, out of breath, nearly frozen and a mass of snow. We knew then it was no joke."

Many others caught outside the shelter of town fared much worse. At least 68 people died in North Dakota and Minnesota during the storm, the highest death toll for any natural disaster in the area.

Although no one died in Clay County, a Moorhead woman and her infant son froze near Ada when they were driven from her sister's home by a chimney fire. In the

following days area newspapers carried dozens of similar heartrending stories of storm victims fates. A distressing pattern flows through these tales. Again and again the victims' leave their stalled vehicle "to seek shelter," lose their way and perish, sometimes only feet from safety. Of the 68 victims, 64 were caught in the open, three of the rest died from carbon monoxide. The lessons are clear. In a blizzard stay with your car and don't put away your survival gear until April!!

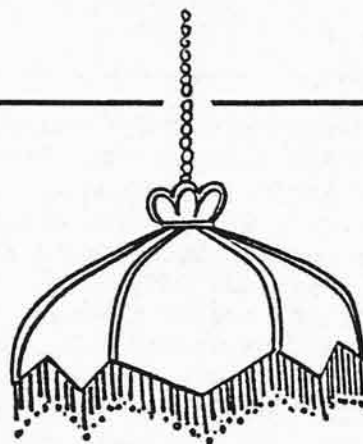
Interior a mess, but they survived



Salesman, G.N. Nelson stuffed business forms and correspondence sheets around windows and doors to keep out the snow during his ordeal. Then he chopped down the back of the front seat to form a bed. The seven lightly dressed travelers huddled together for warmth. The engine, unable to get oil because of the steep angle the car was sitting at, stalled at midnight. Two and a half hours later, Bakke braved the quarter mile walk to his farm. He returned forty minutes later with his hired man and all the clothing they could carry. After donning the extra clothing the party locked arms and struggled to the farm house, exhausted.

Forum Publishing Company Collection

CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM



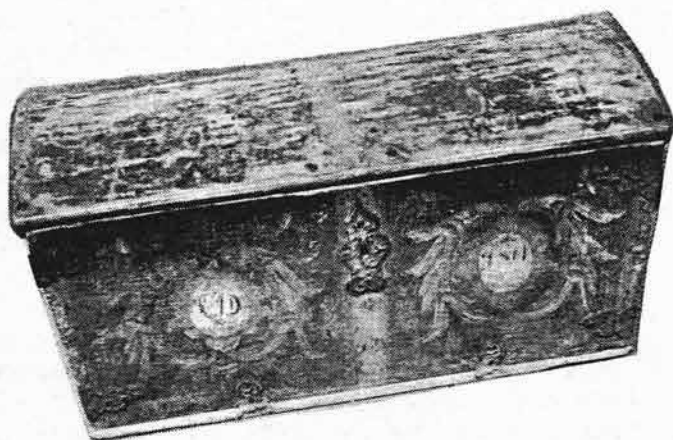
* Permanent Exhibit

Unique characterizations of one facet of the history of each county town. Together they form a chapter in the overall history of the County.

* Temporary Exhibits

The Point (Through April 30, 1991)

"The Point" which opened on July 28, looks at Moorhead's original residential district - the bend in the river that is now home to the Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center (HHIC) and Viking Ship Park. "The Point" explores who lived in the area, how the neighborhood changed over the years and why it was vacated. The exhibit includes items left behind by the residents and a fire hydrant which was removed from 1st Street and 2nd Avenue.



Scandinavian Sampler

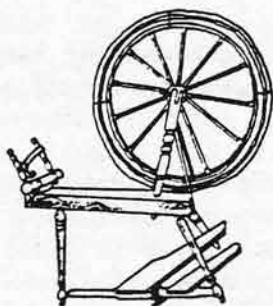
(Through September, 1991)

"Scandinavian Sampler" is an exhibit that explores the Scandinavian heritage in this area through artifacts. Many of these artifacts were brought to this country by families seeking a new beginning. What did they bring and what did they leave behind in the "old country?" This exhibit explores the Scandinavian mystique.

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

"Scandinavian Sampler" opens March 23 in Clay County Gallery

What did these Scandinavian immigrants bring with them to Clay County and what did they leave behind? The answer to the first part is simple: some of them brought everything including anvils, printing presses, livestock and beds. Others brought only a few personal possessions. They left behind family and friends as well as a familiar way of life. In SCANDINAVIAN SAMPLER we are highlighting the Scandinavian heritage as well as artifacts from the CCHS collections. Artifacts include the useful and decorative molded boxes, painted trunks, colorful wall hangings and other personal belongings.



This exhibit on our Scandinavian heritage is a reminder of those immigrants who were determined to take advantage of the opportunities that Clay County offered and of the life they left behind.

You don't have to be Scandinavian to enjoy this exhibit which opens March 23 in the CCHS Temporary Gallery, lower level of the Hjemkomst Center.

At the Heritage Shop

Featuring:

- Hologram Items
- Books
- Regional Crafts
- Educational Games
- Museum Cards

Hjemkomst Center (218) 233-5604
VISA/MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

Michlovic to be featured speaker at April 4 Annual Meeting

Michael Michlovic, Professor of Anthropology at Moorhead State University will be the featured speaker at the Clay County Historical Society annual banquet on Thursday, April 4.



Michlovic will key his speech on the Kensington Stone, specifically on why the Kensington Stone continues to attract popular attention and broad public support in spite of the rejection of the stone's historical importance and authenticity by professional historians, runologists, linguists, and archaeologists. The argument to be offered is that a wide variety of ethnic, business, media and public service interests sustain the runestone story.

Michlovic, born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, received his BA in anthropology from the University of Pittsburgh and later an MA and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Michlovic has been at MSU for 16 years.

A past editor of The Minnesota Archaeologist and past president of the Council for Minnesota Archaeology he has archaeological field experience in a number of states including Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, Minnesota and North Dakota. For the past 15 years he has been active in exploring the prehistoric archaeology of the Red River Valley.

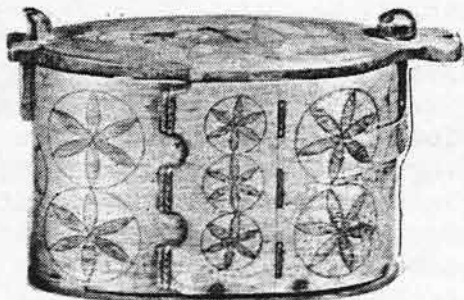
Special areas of interest include the prehistory of the North American Plains and Woodlands, and the public perception of history and prehistory.

*"Our newsletter doesn't have
a name. Can you help?????????"*

Molded boxes uniquely Scandinavian.....

By Pam Burkhardt

Molded boxes are the most widely distributed of all molded containers and found in all of the Nordic countries. The technique spread north from the continent during the Iron Age [about 500 BC]. Decorated with traditional forms and methods, the basic box acquired a variety of uses. A strong cultural heritage and only minimal foreign influence kept these boxes uniquely Scandinavian.



The overlap detail shown above provides an additional area where the maker can display his skill. This photo shows two interrupted rows of chain stitch, scalloped edge and a scratch carved motif.



The unusual double box (left) is an example of scratch carving from Sweden. The box on the right features incising, chip carving and rose painting. It is from Norway.

A molded box consists simply of a wooden splint side, a bottom and, sometimes, a lid. A molded lid may be made to fit down over the top of the box. The lid may be hinged to the back. One type, has a flat lid that snaps into place between two uprights. This last type is called an "äska" in Swedish and an "æske" in Norwegian.

All over Scandinavia the molded box has been used for transporting food or church finery. A large round box with a handle became an egg or bread carrier.

While some boxes stored cheese or butter, others held personal belongings and sewing equipment. These common containers provided carvers and painters with opportunities for displaying their skills on the lids, on the curved surfaces of the sides and on the overlaps.

Scratch carving and incising (low relief forms of decoration) are both pre-historic and medieval techniques and most associated with carved and molded wooden containers. Chip carving, with its greater relief, was inspired by Gothic design starting in the 12th century. Scratch carving is a single cut made with a sharp tool. Incising is a v-shaped groove made with two cuts of a knife. A three-dimensional chip of wood is removed in chip carving by making three vertical and three oblique cuts. Burned and stamped designs (not shown) developed during the Renaissance.

Rose painting [known as "blomstermalning" in Swedish and "rosemaling" in Norwegian] developed rather late in the folk arts with the earliest example dating from about 1700. Rose painting is a country art with its background of design inherited from the medieval period as well as the Baroque and Rococo. Rose painting uses the Baroque vine and acanthus leaf and the Rococo c-motif and flowers. Red, yellow and green predominated in early pieces. Even though floral painting developed in other European countries, the Scandinavian styles became distinctly recognizable from district to district. Attachment to custom was strong and artists often resisted change. They adopted only the styles that pleased them.

These molded boxes and others will be on display during the "Scandinavian Sampler" exhibit which opens in the Clay County Museum on Saturday, March 16.

POWs work at Moorhead truck farm

By Mark Peihl

One relatively unknown story of the home front in World War II is that of the scores of German prisoners of war who worked on Clay County farms during the summers of 1944 and 1945.

Over 420,000 German, Italian and Japanese POWs were held by the United States during WW II. America probably treated POWs better than any other belligerent. It wasn't out of any particular kindness, but because the U.S. strictly followed the 1929 Geneva Convention. However, the interpretation of the accords were subject to revision as the U.S. learned to deal with the prisoners by trial and error.

The huge number of men in uniform created a severe labor shortage in the U.S., particularly in low priority industries such as agriculture. To help out, the federal government offered to supply POWs on a contract basis to civilian employers. As long as they were not required to work on any project directly related to the war effort or in dangerous jobs, this was completely in line with the Geneva accords.

In the Spring of 1944, Moorhead area truck farmers Henry Peterson and Paul Horn contracted for 150 prisoners to work on their vegetable farms.

Army inspectors sent to locate suitable housing for the POWs initially selected a barn near the Red River on 12th Avenue South in Moorhead. Local residents objected to having POWs housed in their neighborhood so a second site, an onion warehouse on 21st Street near 4th Avenue North, was selected.

On Sunday, May 28, the first 40 Germans arrived in Moorhead from a large POW Camp at Algona, Iowa. They were accompanied by several guards and 2nd Lt. Richard M. Blair, commander of Algona Branch Camp Number One as the Moorhead facility was officially known. They spent the first night in tents on the Horn farm south of town, but soon began transforming the warehouse (which still stands) into a barracks. The remaining 110 or so arrived by train on the 31st and marched from the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot to the camp.



Except for their caps and the "PW" stamped on their blue denim work clothes, the Germans looked just like Americans. Note the guard at left armed with a sidearm.

Florence Drury Collection

The prisoners did all the work at the compound themselves including installing a water and sewer system. The government provided the materials. An eight foot wire fence surrounded the 60 x 170 foot warehouse. A guard tower was planned but apparently never built.

Six days a week, trucks from the Peterson and Horn farms picked up the POWs and their guards and carried them to the fields. There the prisoners planted, hoed and eventually picked the vegetables or did general farm maintenance; always watched by guards. They were paid, too. The contractors paid the government 40 cents an hour per prisoner for their labor, the going rate for farm labor as defined by the Clay County Wage Board. In turn, the government paid the prisoners 10 cents per hour in coupons redeemable only at the camp canteen. The remaining 30 cents went toward housing and feeding the POWs and profit for the U.S. Government. (Between June and September 1944 alone, local POW labor netted the U.S. well over \$13,000!)

Most of the prisoners had been captured in Italy and Sicily, and a few in North Africa.

German speaking T. Sgt. Eric O. Brasch, second in command and contact man between Lt. Blair and the prisoners, told the Fargo Forum "They still think Germany will win the war. They are not permitted to see newspapers or listen to the radio, and we don't tell them anything, so what they know is what they knew when they left the battlefields or whatever rumors they may have heard."

Horn and Peterson, in a 1973 interview with the Northwest Minnesota Historical Center at MSU, remembered most of the POWs as "...friendly...and quite nice people" though a little reluctant to work. Horn estimated that "Their output of work was, I suppose, about 65% compared to migrant labor from South Texas...They just couldn't keep up."

A few prisoners, particularly those captured in North Africa before Germany's decline, caused some minor problems. Florence Drury of Moorhead, bookkeeper on the Peterson Farm in 1944, remembers three "real Nazi types. They would strut around with their chests out, like [they were]

goose stepping almost." A few prisoners broke a pump with a sledge hammer and there was a sit down strike in September that ended with 14 prisoners spending a night in the Clay County Jail, but that was unusual. There were no escapes. Mrs. Drury remembers most of them as "just ordinary kids." Aside from their uniform caps and the "PW" stamped on their blue shirts and pants, they looked no different from young Americans.

That there were few problems may be due to the humane treatment they received from Horn, Peterson and Lieutenant Blair.

After the war many prisoners wrote letters (now in the NWMHC Archives) thanking the Horns and Petersons for their kind treatment. Several requested aid packages or assistance in getting to America. One remembered Peterson sending flowers and fruit to sick prisoners at St. Ansgar Hospital, two trips to a movie theater and "Bier and cigarettes" on Saturdays. The later were forbidden by Army regulations as was a memorable trip mentioned by another prisoner to Moorhead's Magic Aquarium Bar.

Lt. Blair was well liked by the contractors and Mrs. Drury. Horn said "The fellow was all right. He liked a good time rather than pay attention to duty." Blair took the POWs swimming on Sundays to the Buffalo River State Park or the Benedict Gravel Pit southeast of Moorhead.

One of his first acts was to request the city council to close 21st Street to traffic after regular business hours and on Sundays. Hundreds of curious motorists were cruising past the camp. Subjecting prisoners "to the public gaze" was contrary to the Geneva accords. The Fargo Forum reported that "groups of young girls also created something of a problem." The City complied.

A report of an inspection in August 1944 indicated that, though dimly lighted, the warehouse was "cool on hot days. A few things such as a small fish pool... have been made by the men themselves.... Some general reading books [will] be sent from Algona." Also sent were arts and crafts materials including paint and brushes, embroidery materials and a wood carving kit. One prisoner carved two decorative

wooden plaques for Mrs. Drury which she still owns. Lutheran and Catholic Church services were held on alternating Sundays.

But Blair was not universally admired. Another inspection in September described the compound as "dirty, poorly policed." The report continued "Lt. Blair's management has not been satisfactory to [Algona Camp Commander] Colonel Lobdell and he is being returned to Algona for compound duty. He has a penchant for addressing civil organizations on prisoner of war matters and is not properly versed in War Department policies to be entrusted to such public appearances."

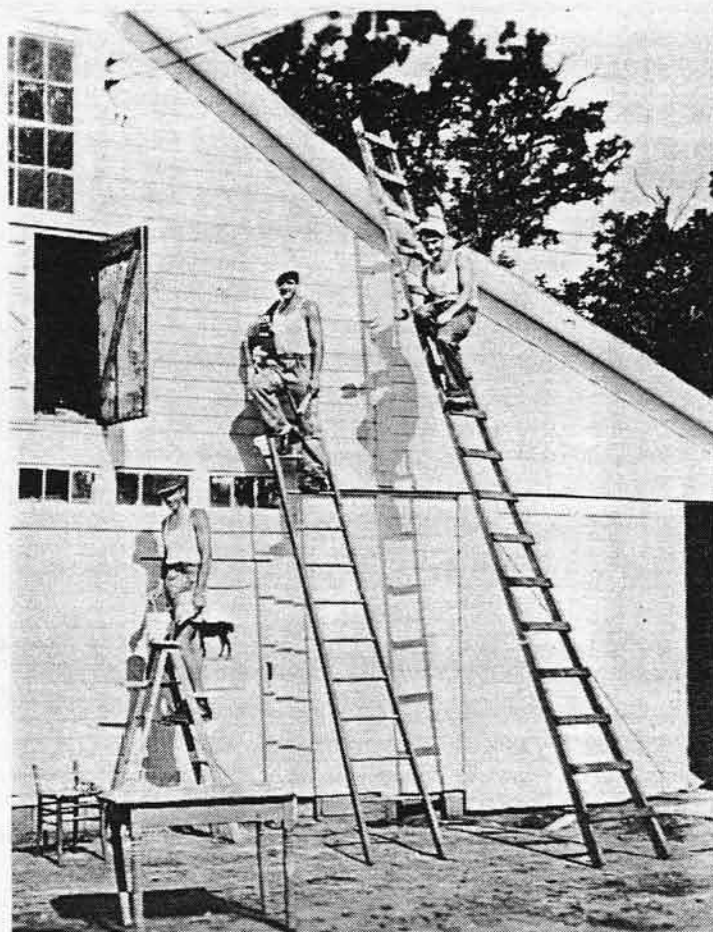
He was replaced by Lt. B.C. Davis. whose first act was to reopen 21st Street to traffic. Davis claimed the restriction had never proved successful and that "henceforth.... federal law will be invoked for those who violated non-fraternizing regulations."

He also issued new, clear cut rules to the contractors. They included limiting conversations with the prisoners to work orders, banning POWs from riding in the cabs of trucks or entering businesses and positively barring any exchanging of gifts.

The POWs were returned to Algona after the harvest in November.

In July of 1945, a much smaller group of prisoners returned to Moorhead. The new stricter regulations remained in force. \$1,100 worth of improvements were made to the warehouse including separating the kitchen and dining area from the sleeping quarters. The wire fence was removed. Roy Schultz of Adrian, MI, was a Sargent and second in command at Moorhead in 1945. He remembers "The POWs weren't going anywhere. Those guys didn't know where the hell they were." Some prisoners were also allowed to work without guards.

On the 19th of July the Army held a public hearing at the Clay County Courthouse to acquaint the public with the new rules. Some people were more concerned with the guards than the POWs. In the 1973 interview, Peterson claimed "[in 1944] we had more trouble with the guards than with the prisoners.... They were hillbillies....



Although most of the POWs were cooperative, even friendly, Florence Drury of Moorhead remembers these three as "real Nazi types" who would strut around with their chests out....like they were super men."

Florence Drury Collection

and they were very poorly educated." Horn added "...sometimes they went out with some of the neighbor's girls, and so on and their parents didn't like it very well." The Moorhead Daily News reported that in 1945 "Guards at the camp will be returning veterans who have relatives or homes in the Minnesota or North Dakota vicinity."

Other citizens were upset when they heard that the prisoners were getting meat several times a week while it was rationed to them. The Geneva Convention required that prisoners receive "the same quality and quantity of meals" as American servicemen. In 1945 faced with stricter food restrictions at home, the stipulations were re-interpreted to mean the same number of calories - 3,400 per day. Most meat, fat and sugar was removed from the POW's diet.

and replaced with starches. (Ironically, with what we know today about nutrition, this was probably a much healthier diet than what our servicemen received!) POWs only received non-restricted meat, including beef shanks, flanks and livers and salt pork, bellies and feet.

The prisoners did their own cooking. Mr. Schultz remembers "we ate the same food as the prisoners. They were very good cooks, too."

The POWs also elected their own camp leader who spoke to the authorities for all of the prisoners through an interpreter.

It was a quiet summer at the camp. Mr. Schultz laughs that "It was pretty boring duty, really. We just got them ready to go out to the fields in trucks with a few guards then got ready for them when they returned at night. That's about it."

The prisoners returned to Algona in the Fall. Most were shipped back to Germany the following year.

After Autumn, 1944, it was the policy of the U.S. Army to introduce the POWs to American style democracy and our way of life - an effort designed to create a democratic post-war Germany. Under the "Intellectual Diversion Program" the prisoners studied English, watched movies and read books and magazines selected to "reeducate" them in American ways.

But it is unlikely that the program was any more effective in instilling an appreciation for American values than the simple humane treatment that they received from Horn, Peterson and the others here in Clay County. In a letter to Peterson after the war, one former prisoner wrote in broken English, "Now I'm return from the United Staates [sic] to my homeland. I have been over there 2 1/2 years, a long time for me. But I did learn the American people and the democratic politik of America.... It was a good school for me. I want to be a democratic citizen here and the most population will the same.... Today I will thank you again through my letter. We have been [not] only good workmen, we have been good fellows, too. Every man likes you and I will never forget your truck farm."

Program Council Update

The Center's newly structured Program Council held their first meeting of the year on Wednesday, Mar. 6. Members of the Council for 1991 are: Nancy Tedros-CCHS, Mercedes Roos-CCHS, Ann Fredin-CCHS, Jon Evert-RRVHS, Marrion Walsh-RRVHS, Jim Saueressing-At-Large, Clare Johnson-At-Large, Linda Folk-At Large.

The Program Council (formally Program Task Force and Program Coordination & Management Committee) is responsible for the content development of the interpretive program (exhibits, public programs and educational services) for HHIC and CCHS.

Business at the first meeting included voting to accept the proposed Program Council statement of purpose and discussion of a tentative schedule of future issues.

If you have any program suggestions, please contact your representative or call CCHS at 233-4604.

You have to see it to believe it!

The Hjemkomst Center's new exhibit "3-D VISIONS: The Magic of Holograms" has seen over 3,000 visitors since it opened February 16. Common exclamations are: innovative!, wow!, creative!, excellent!, fascinating!, interesting!, neat! and great!

The exhibit consists of 41 holograms from images of people, animals and everyday objects to a computer generated image of a Toyota car! Visitors see four types of holograms and in a children's area, can explore the properties of light.

"3-D VISIONS" will be on exhibit through May 27. The staff encourages everyone to visit the exhibit - because you really have to see it to believe it! The Center hours are Monday - Sunday: 9-5, Thursdays: 9-9, and Sundays: Noon-5.

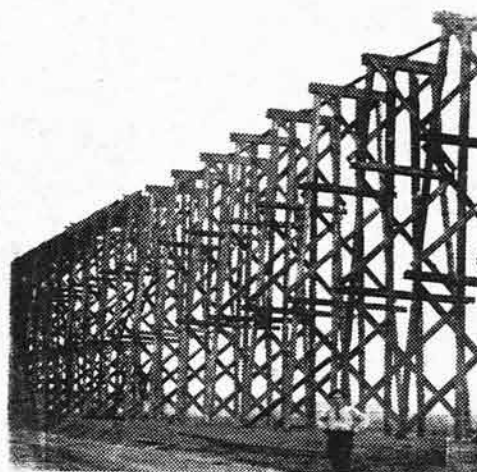
CCHS Spring Lecture Series

THURSDAYS, APR. 11, MAY 9 & JUNE 6



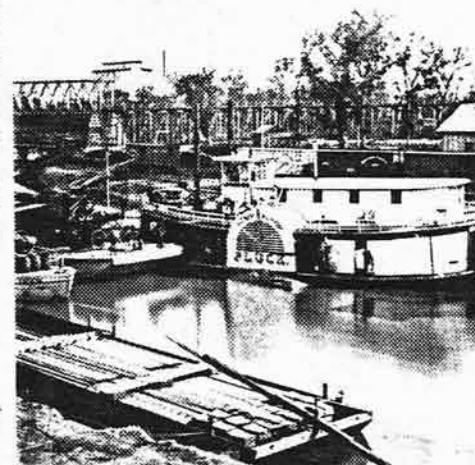
April 11 Doctor Humphrey's Home Movies:

Vintage films shot in Moorhead-Fargo in 1917 by Moorhead physician and amateur moviemaker, Edward Humphrey. Scenes include local soldiers marching off to World War I.



May 9 Stockwood Fill:

Why is the railroad up in the air east of Glyndon? The answer may surprise you. Take a new look at this major engineering feat.



June 6 Old Ruby:

The Red River and Moorhead - from steamboats to recreation, fishing to floods. How local residents have used and abused the Raging Red for over a century.

All programs begin at 7:30 p.m.
at the

Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center
202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead, MN

ALL PROGRAMS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For more information call 218-233-4604



CCHS - 1991 Membership Information

CCHS Membership

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

() INDIVIDUAL \$15.00

() FAMILY \$35.00

CCHS Membership Benefits

- ** FREE Admission to the Center
- ** Bi-monthly newsletter
- ** 25 % Discount on photo reproductions.
- ** 10 % Discount on acid-free materials
- ** Voting privileges
- ** Invitation to the annual meeting/dinner and all CCHS events

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

DATE
PURCHASED: _____

Please list additional family members needing passes. (Family member is considered husband, wife and children living at home under the age of 18.)

RETURN TO:

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Moorhead, MN 56561

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