Lamb Brothers' Brickyard, 1879 (See cutline and story Pages 3-5)
(* Annual meeting notice and reservation information on Page 15)
Dear Members,

Spring is right around the corner and sooner than we think: the wonderful sight of farmers planting their fields will let us know that spring has sprung. The Clay County Historical Society has had a fruitful winter. We have purchased a new computer and printer so we can put together an even better newsletter. The computer will also be used to facilitate computerizing the collections.

I would like to invite all of you to the CCHS Annual Meeting/Banquet (see registration form on Page 15) on Thursday, Apr. 2, at the Center. Featured speaker will be Kathy Coyle of KXJB Television. Mark Peihl will give a slide presentation on "Old Georgetown" and musical entertainment and homespun humor will be provided by Marion Bergseid of Hawley.

There will be a short annual business meeting and the election of two board members to three-year terms each as proscribed by the CCHS By-Laws. Leaving the Board are Mercedes Roos, who has served since 1985, and Nancy Tedros, who has served since 1988.

This is the only time that all CCHS members meet as a group and I strongly encourage your attendance. I'm looking forward to seeing you April 21!

Sincerely, Kelly Aakre, Board President

Olson to run for CCHS Board

Chris Olson, a Public Information Specialist with the Lake Agassiz Regional Library at Moorhead, is standing for election to the CCHS Board of Directors on April 2 at the annual meeting/banquet.

Olson's tenure as a CCHS representative on the Program Council for the past year will prove a good training ground for his position on the board. "I think the Program Council is working rather nicely," said Olson. "I am pleased with the process of long-range planning. I think we [the Program Council] have come to realize there are some limitations we have to accept because we don't have the staff or resources to do all that we would like to do." His vision for the future of CCHS includes "more outreach - and bringing more people in to feel like they belong."
Cream-colored bricks that built a town
By Mark Peihl
At the end of last century, Clay County's rich soil yielded up a raw material perfect for making a product that literally built Moorhead and other area towns - bricks.

In 1874, the three-year-old village of Moorhead was a ramshackle collection of wood frame buildings and shacks. Brick was scarce on the frontier and expensive to ship. Not one structure even had a brick chimney. This created a tremendous fire hazard. After the Bramble House Hotel nearly burned down - for the second time - the Red River Star pressed Moorhead citizens to do something about it.

Brothers John and Patrick Lamb had made bricks for years in Missouri. In the spring of 1874, they scraped top soil off an area just south of Moorhead exposing a layer of fine yellow clay. In June, they burned their first kiln and a new industry was born. In eight years, five Moorhead companies employing 135 men were making an astounding eight and a half million bricks each year. The outskirts of Moorhead glowed with burning kilns.

At the end of the last ice age, melt water formed two glacial Lake Agassizes. After the first lake drained away, a temporary re-advance of the ice caused the lake to refill about 9,900 years ago. Rivers rushing into the lakes carried huge amounts of rock ground into a fine powder by the ice sheet. This material settled to the bottom of the first lake creating a thick layer of heavy, sticky, grey-green clay. Sediments in the shallower second lake were of a lighter, yellow silt.

Local brick-makers used this two-foot-thick upper layer of yellow clay to produce a lovely cream-colored brick that the Lambs' called "Chaska Brick." Although too soft and porous for use as facing brick (on the fronts of buildings), they were perfectly good "common brick" for general construction purposes.

Early brick making was amazingly labor intensive. Workers scraped off the top soil, shoveled the yellow clay into wheelbarrows and carted it to a "Pug Mill" where it was mixed with water. The mill was a big upright steel cylinder with a pole running down the middle. Blades radiating out from the pole chopped and mixed the clay as a horse-powered sweep turned the pole.

The bricks were hand formed in wooden molds. A mold looked like a wooden box divided into six compartments with no bottom or top. The molder was the most highly skilled worker in the yard. Seated at a table in the shade, he formed a clot of clay with his hands into a (Continued on Page 4)

Cover: At the Lamb Brothers' Brickyard in 1879 workmen dismantle "hacks" of low walls of dried brick and haul them to the kiln builder in the distance. The man at center with the rake-like tool is "spattering" or smoothing the freshly made soft bricks laid out to dry. Later he'll use the tool to "skittle" or flip the bricks onto their sides to dry their bottoms. Note the empty brick molds in the right foreground.

Flaten/Wange Collection

Cord wood at the Bergquist Brickyard, 1914. It takes lots of wood to burn 200,000 bricks for a week. In 1902, brick maker Leslie Welter went all the way to Beltrami County to buy wood to feed his kilns.

Dewey Bergquist Collection
Horse power to mix clay. A horse powered sweep turns a pug mill to mix the clay with water in the Bergquist yard. Workmen cart molds filled with wet bricks and empty them on the ground. Note bricks drying in the sun at right and others "hacked" at left.

Bricks (Continued from Page 3)

rectangle slightly larger than a mold compartment. Then he raised the clot above his head and slammed it down into the wet mold filling a compartment. (The molds were kept wet to keep the clay from sticking to them. Most locally made bricks in CCHS' collections show evidence of this "slop molding" lubrication. Some later brick-makers sprinkled the wet molds with sand.) With a flat stick or blade he "struck" the brick or scraped off the excess clay. A worker loaded the mold, bricks and all, onto a wheelbarrow and hauled them to the drying yard.

Sun drying was a critical phase of brick making. About a pound of water had to be removed from the bricks before they could be fired in the kiln. If not completely dry, the bricks could bloat and deform, if they dried too much or too fast they could crack.

The worker dexterously shook the green bricks out of the mold onto the ground where they would lay for a day or so in the sun and wind. Each brick was flipped up on edge for further drying then "hacked" (stacked an inch or so apart in low walls).

All this time the bricks were at the mercy of Clay County's weather. Hail and rain storms in 1878 and 1880 ruined tens of thousands of Lamb Brothers' bricks.

After a few days workers used the dried bricks to build a "scove kiln" - a long stack of 200,000 bricks about 35 or 40 layers high with open arches running the width of the stack. Wood placed in the arches provided fuel for burning. Plastered "walls" of finished bricks surrounded the dry stack on all sides to keep out drafts and iron doors covered the ends of the arches.

Workers lighted the wood and baked the kiln at low temperatures for a couple days, then raised the heat to about 2200° F. for five days to burn the bricks hard. Workers tended and fed the fire constantly. After cooling for a couple days the kiln was dismantled and the bricks sorted. Scove kilns are notoriously inefficient. Perhaps 25% of the bricks were over or under burned and unusable.

Albert Bergquist, son of Moorhead pioneer and early brick-maker John G. Bergquist, worked in his father's
brickyard for years and called it "the hardest work I've ever done." The rough bricks left hands raw and bloody. Greasy and sticky when wet, the clay turned to choking dust when dry. Long hours under the hot sun and back breaking lifting took its toll. There could be a quarter million bricks in a kiln - each one had to be handled several times. Albert later said he didn't know if he'd go to heaven when he died, but it didn't matter, he'd worked in a brickyard and either place would be an improvement.

The layer of yellow clay underlies the entire Lake Agassiz Basin. Folks made bricks throughout the Red River Valley. In 1904 C.A. Grover and A.P. Bekkerus made bricks in Moland Township from clay dug along the Buffalo River. Presumably others in Clay County did the same, but Moorhead was the center of the industry in the county.

The industry hit its peak in the early 1880s when several factors resulted in a huge business boom in Moorhead. A building frenzy created a tremendous demand for brick. By 1882 four new brick-makers were competing with the Lamb Brothers including their own uncle, John Early. That year every brick building in Moorhead but one was made of local cream-colored brick. Many bricks were shipped to Jamestown, Bismarck and other railroad points.

John G. Bergquist was another competitor. Like most brick-makers he was also a contractor. In 1882 he donated bricks and a building site for the new Clay County Courthouse a half mile north of downtown. Bergquist owned much of the land between and hoped to increase its value. It didn't work.

Like most booms this one quickly busted. Many people lost their shirts and brick making stopped. The Lambs went into horse trading and banking. Bergquist lost a fortune in bad investments and was reduced to peddling milk door-to-door. Through hard work he rebuilt his finances and by the late 1880s he was making brick again. He continued until at least 1914.

The local clay supply was not inexhaustible. After Bergquist mined out all the clay from his first yard near the courthouse he replaced the topsoil, farmed it and opened a new yard at what is now 28th Street and 2nd Avenue North in Moorhead.

After 1900 a healthy economy again gave brick making a boost. In 1902 William Auxer and Leon Martell opened a yard in what is now the west side of Dilworth. The same year, potato dealer and grocer Leslie Welter's Moorhead Brick Company began operating nearby. These companies used brick making machines to fill the molds and covered racks to dry the bricks. They produced 30,000 to 45,000 bricks a day, nearly 10 times the amount possible from hand molding.

Eventually the local clay began running out. Competition from concrete and cement blocks lowered demand for bricks. The number of brick companies in Minnesota steadily declined through the teens and twenties. Clay County was no exception and the industry disappeared. Urban renewal wiped out most Moorhead buildings made of local brick. But there are still plenty of basements, foundations and chimneys made from the cream-colored bricks that once built Moorhead.
### Outreach Displays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Opened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitterdal Senior Center</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulen-Hitterdal High School</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viking Manor, Ulen</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawley Public Library</td>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glyndon Community Center</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorhead Public Library</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A selection of RED RIVER LAND DOLLS will be on display at the Hitterdal Senior Center and the Ulen-Hitterdal High School. These character dolls created by Mildred Heifort of Moorhead tell the story of Red River Land and pioneer days in our area.

The display at the Viking Manor Nursing Home asks WHAT IS IT?
Will you be ready with your answers?

HEAVY METAL will open at the Hawley Public Library. This display features a selection of irons from our collections.

From hats and collars to shoes and stockings, a display entitled FROM HEAD TO TOE will be seen at the Glyndon Community Center.

HAIR TODAY/GONE TOMORROW will be displayed at the Moorhead Public Library. This display looks at men's shaving tackle and women's hair care articles.

[Note: due to program changes, the Outreach Cases will be changed four times a year instead of six. These changes will take place in February, May, August and November.]

### Artifacts Donated

#### January/February 1992

**Donors include:**
- Moorhead: Jon Evert, Esther Olson, Concordia College Archives
- Dilworth: Joanne Relling
- Rollag: Norman Bjornstad
- Minneapolis: Dolores A. Zwack-Mellon
- Fargo, ND: Kenneth Gartzke

**Artifacts include:**
- Research manuscripts for Clay County Family Album: A History of Rural Clay County, 1936 and 1946-7 receipt books for two elevators in Georgetown, two notebooks containing minutes of the Clear View Homemakers' Club, a hat and hat box from Waterman's Dept. Store in Moorhead (Waterman's was destroyed by fire on Oct. 30, 1967), aerial photographs of Clay County, a trade token from "The Mill," and calendars from 1933-1940 containing farm records.

### New Members

- T.W. Richards, Moorhead
- Harry Fillafier, Moorhead
- Stan Skogen, Fargo
- Linda Lawson, Issaquah, WA
- Sherwood E. Peterson, Jr. Rochester
- Shirley Jacobson Hill, Alexandria, VA
- Sharon Hoverson, Fargo

### Donations

- Shirley Manston, Barnesville
- Frank & Peggy Borem, Martinez, CA
- Eastern Star, Moorhead
- Julie & Jodi Cresap, Hawley

---

**CONCRETE BUILDING BLOCK MACHINES**

**OUR CONCRETE BLOCK MACHINES ARE THE BEST IN THE WORLD.**

The will make more blocks per day than any other machines. They will make better proportioned and better finished blocks than any other machines and they will make more money for you. Our prices are less than one-half the prices asked for other machines not half so good as our machines.

**THERE IS BIG PROFIT IN MAKING CONCRETE BUILDING BLOCKS.**

*1908 Sears Roebuck Catalogue*
Grain growers and photographer win awards/prizes

Leif Erickson wins bronze medal at 1893 Columbian Exposition

By Pam Burkhardt  Part 2 of a 3-Part Series

The 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition, or World’s Fair, was a tremendous show designed to commemorate the discovery of America by Columbus four centuries earlier.

By whatever twist of fate, Leif Erickson, a Clay County farmer, was among the medal winners at the fair commemorating Columbus.

The Fair caught the fancy of many Clay County residents. Some traveled to see the fair, some exhibited at the fair and some took advantage of the fair’s visibility for advertising purposes - up to and including such unlikely items as "corsets."

Part 2

Grain samples exhibited at Fair

On Dec. 7, 1892, the Moorhead Daily News reported, D.L. Wellman, "noted seed wheat man of the Northwest," collected grain samples from the W.H. Davey warehouse in Moorhead to be sent to St. Paul to be "cleaned and dressed up and arranged" before being sent on to Chicago. He had gathered these samples in Clay and Norman Counties the previous year.

Judging began in August, 1893. Later that month, Rev. A.A. Zabriskie of Moorhead reported in the Moorhead Weekly News, "It is a wonderful fair. The state’s exhibits in the great exhibition buildings are excellent. I heard while there that Minnesota has won the first premium or award for wheat, on a specimen that was grown north of Moorhead."

Clay County award winners in the grain competition listed in the "Moorhead Daily News" including variety, if known, yield per acre and weight per bushel:


Barnesville area: Nathan Butler, Blue Stem oats, 42 bushels, 61 lbs. and White Russian oats, 85 bushels, 35 lbs.; Fred Mix, Scotch Fife wheat, 40 bushels, 62 lbs.

Erickson’s bronze medal and certificate awarded for the Scotch Fife wheat grown on his Moland Township farm are on display in the Clay County Museum. (See photo of certificate below.) The certificate measures 26x20 inches and the medal is 3 inches in diameter, ¼ inch thick and weighs a pound.

(Continued on Page 8)
World Fair (Continued from Page 8)
The certificate was awarded "For yield, weight and purity of variety. Planted April 15 using 6 pecks of seed per acre; harvested August 5. Yield, 34 bushels per acre. Weight, 61 pounds per bushel." The individual judge for this competition was L.H. Clark and not Mr. Briggs, the Moorhead judge. R.M. Probstfield’s bronze medal and award certificate remain in the possession of family descendants. It may be that other medals and certificates won at the World Columbian Exposition by Clay County residents survive.

But the significance of the competition went beyond medals and certificates. Agriculture was changing in the early 1890s. Better varieties which produced greater yields were necessary in a time of falling markets. The change to diversified farming was under way.

Moorhead photographer wins award
At one time, the Clay County Historical Society had on loan an award-winning photograph taken by O.E. Flaten, of Moorhead. A description of the item reveals "Mr. Flaten wanted to experiment on enlarging pictures and picked these two children [Katherine & John B. Mason Jr.] from their play, to pose for him. It is enlarged on white silk ‘Bolting’ cloth, and won first prize at the first worlds fair (sic) held in Chicago."

The Fair and advertising
"Columbus discovered America, but he never discovered anything like the bargains Asselstine will show next week." Moorhead Weekly News, Sept. 30, 1893.

F.G. Asselstine spent several weeks in Chicago in September 1893 attending the Fair and purchasing merchandise for the October grand opening of his new Moorhead dry goods store. The Fair was big news in '92 and '93 and advertisers took advantage of the public's interest. Hygeia Corsets advertised for agents for their electro-magnetic corsets by stating "Columbian Expenses" could "easily be earned" by becoming an agent for the company. Syrup of Figs started its insertion with "World's Columbian Exposition" and compared the improvements seen at the Fair with improved medicinal agents such as Syrup of Figs.

The Bancroft Hotel in Chicago placed ads in the Moorhead Weekly News in '93 advertising itself as a family hotel with baths on every floor and rates from $1 to $5 per day. The Scott Seed Company offered a Free Trip to Chicago as a prize in a contest using the letters in World's Fair. This ad was placed in the May 8 edition of Glyndon's "Red River Valley News."

Of course, the railroads were the biggest and most consistent advertisers in '92 and '93. Many of their ads contained descriptions of sights at the Fair and gave advice on how to see them. The Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railways were available from Clay County and others could be boarded from Minneapolis and St. Paul. The cost of a round trip ticket was $29.60 from both rail lines in May of '93 and dropped to $20.50 in September. They dropped again toward the end of October - the end of the Fair. You could choose a day coach, parlor car, vestibule compartment car, or travel by sleeper car train with dining and smoking cars. County residents took advantage of the excellent rail service and visited the Fair in large numbers.

At the Heritage Shop --

* Large Selection of Exhibit related Items!
  - Inventioneering Books
  - Leonardo Drawings
  - Patent Instruction Books
  - Experiment & Activity Books
  - Educational Games

* Regional Artists Gift Items

Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center
202 1st Avenue North, Box 157
Moorhead, MN 56560
(218) 233-5604
Visa/Mastercard Accepted
"Leonardo da Vinci-The Inventions" at the Center

This national traveling exhibit is based on sketches drawn by a man ahead of his time! See models of his inventions conceived about the same time Christopher Columbus was "discovering" America! The exhibit features:

* 24 working models of aeronautic, mechanical and hydraulic devices - that you can actually operate!
* 3 architectural models - St. Peter's Church, The Royal Sable, the Stair Facade!
* A 60 minute video "I, Leonardo, A Journey of the Mind"
* An Inventors' Workshop activity area and Inventor's resource materials.

Sponsored by the Lake Region Arts Council, Lake Augustus Arts Council through the City of Moorhead, and Richtman's Printing and Packaging.

Join us for these Invention Programs!

* Inventors Showcase Weekend - March 21 and 22
  Come and see examples of inventions created right here in the Red River Valley! Hjemkomst Hall will be filled with award winning inventions from recent North Dakota and Minnesota Inventors Congresses. Special demonstrations by inventors, presentations and inventions for sale.

* Metro Invention Convention, Apr. 23, 7-9 p.m.
  Student winners representing Fargo, Moorhead, and West Fargo Schools K-6 Invent America Program will be displayed and judged. Invent America, a nationwide contest designed to encourage creative and inventive thinking in children, is sponsored by the U.S. Patent Model Foundation, Washington, DC. Special open house for the area student "inventors" and their relatives.

* $5 Family Weekend - Apr. 25 and 26
  See over 80 student inventions from the Metro Invention Convention while visiting the "Leonardo" exhibit!
  Award winners from Metro area will be noted. Couples or parent(s) with children 17 and under will be admitted for a SPECIAL family rate of $5!!!

* Maps & the Columbian Encounter - May 2-Aug. 23
  Opening May 2 in Heritage Hall, along with "Leonardo da Vinci - The Inventions," will be one of two exhibits hosted this year by the Hjemkomst Center to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the New World's encounter with the Old.

The Columbus voyage of 1492 marks the beginning of the modern world. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in maps of the period. They provide a graphic portrait of this historic encounter from two sides of the Atlantic. Native American and European maps are used to reconstruct the world views of these societies both before and after 1492. It includes a 29 minute video that provides an introduction to the exhibit.

The exhibit was produced by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and is supported by several grants.

Newsletter ideas sought

Do you have a favorite topic or area of special interest that you would like to know more about? If there is something of general interest you have been wondering about, drop us a line and we will try to cover it in a future newsletter.

History has so many interesting stories to tell. Let us know which ones you want to hear!!
Who celebrated and how did they celebrate -
St. Patrick's Day in Clay County?

By Karen Waalen, Intern

St. Patrick's Day is soon upon us. In many ways March 17 has become as much an American celebration as an Irish one. The day was designated by the Irish to honor St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who baptized more than 120,000 persons and founded over 300 churches in Ireland from 432 until his death in 461 A.D. The holiday, like the Norwegians Syttende Mai, is a tradition brought to America from its country of origin with its immigrants.

In the early days of Clay County, St. Patrick's Day was celebrated in various ways. An early mention of St. Patrick's Day can be found in a March issue of the Red River Star in 1873. The paper reports that "St. Patrick's Day came and went without an ovation, a band of music, a green banner, a shamrock, or so far as we know, a mog 'o potheen." Potheen is an Irish term for distilled whiskey, so it seems as though the earliest record of the holiday could not compare with the present day impression of green ale and boisterous celebration so prevalent on college campuses.

The situation was different in 1874 when a Moorhead paper announced a "Grand Hibernian Ball" (Hibernian is another term for the Irish) held at Pinkham's Hall for a "benevolent purpose" and this was "worthy of notice and patronage." The following week the paper reported that the day was a success starting with the Fort Abercrombie Brass Band parading through town and providing music throughout the day. The ball topped the day off with people of every "creed, nationality and sect" totaling 80 couples dancing amidst evergreens and Irish mottos and designs. The report viewed the event as very respectable outside of the "spirited" voting (or bidding) for the "Chrome," which may have been a chromo-lithograph, a colored picture.

The effort to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in a grand manner carried over into 1875 in Moorhead when the Red River Star reported that a meeting was held and Arrangement, Invitation, Reception and Floor Manager Committees were set up for a celebration to take place at the Headquarters Hotel. The Howe Band was schedule to play for the enjoyment of the guests.

Celebration efforts dissipated somewhat after 1874. In 1876 and 1878 the Academy of Music and the Moorhead Minstrel Company held programs on March 17, but there was no connection made between those events and St. Patrick's Day. A simple report in The Moorhead Advocate in 1878 stated only that "It was noticed in Moorhead that more of our Teutonic citizens celebrated St. Patrick's Day than those of Hibernian extraction."

The reasons for a lull in the celebration of St. Patrick's day are mixed and many, but one obvious reason may be a lack of a large Irish population in the area. According to the 1875 census Glyndon had 246 residents, and only 11 who claimed Irish heritage. In Moorhead, approximately 40 of the 475 citizens were of Irish descent.

There was some renewed interest in the holiday in 1879. (Continued on Page 11)
Coyle to speak at CCHS Banquet, April 2

The featured speaker at the 1992 CCHS Annual Meeting/Banquet on Thursday, April 2 will be Kathy Coyle, anchor-producer of News 4 at noon on KXJB TV.

Ms. Coyle admits to "warm memories of visiting the Clay County Museum in the basement of the [County] Courthouse" as a child. Most recently the importance of preserving history touched her family in a new way when the Minnesota Historical Society accepted a collection of her late brother, Brian's, files.

Ms. Coyle grew up in Moorhead, the daughter of Sparky and Georgia Coyle, and attended the University of Minnesota. She is approaching her 19th year in broadcasting.

On April 2 Ms. Coyle will share with you her love of Clay County and the Red River Valley and its people. Please plan to attend the annual banquet.

Annual Meeting/Banquet - April 2/ (See reservation form on Page 15)

St. Patrick's Day (Continued from Page 10)

Festivities included a band led by Professor Humphrey that presented 21 musical selections. Toastmaster Jas. S.Stack, Esq. gave 11 toasts interspersed between the literary and musical entertainment. The toasts honored everything from the Cities of Moorhead and Fargo, to the Press of the Red River Valley, to Uncle Sam.

The early 1880s did not provide for any grand celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. Dances became the seemingly preferred way to celebrate the day in both Glyndon and Moorhead. In 1882 Glyndon celebrated with a "calico dance," and in 1885 held a "mixed(!!)" dance at the Masons Hall.

Moorhead had a rather quiet celebration in 1885 for a couple of interesting reasons. March 17 was a day of a solar eclipse which captured many citizens attention and slightly dimmed (no pun intended) the importance of St. Patrick's Day. The Moorhead Weekly News reported that at 12 noon only 1/4 of the sun shone. Also that day the Moorhead Weekly News reported that the Associated Press had released information claiming that former President Grant had died. The report later proved false, but the news created quite a stir. (Grant died four months later on July 23, 1885.)

But the main reason St. Patrick's Day in Moorhead was not greeted with fanfare in 1885 was of a political nature - it was election day. The Moorhead Weekly News reported that, although a few were seen wearing the green, the American duty to vote in the city elections that day outweighed the desire to celebrate.

Times have changed since the early days of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Clay County, but many characteristics of those early celebrations have survived. The holiday, historically, has been celebrated by many nationalities, not just the Irish. This still holds true. One difference today is that people seem less concerned with finding a benevolent purpose for their festivities.

Shamrocks, the wearing of the green and other important elements of St. Patrick's Day were present in early Clay County history. The following excerpt from the March 27, 1884 Moorhead Weekly News, by Owen Doherty, defines the importance of the shamrock and gives us some comprehension of the importance of a traditional Irish holiday in Clay County and American cultures. It summarizes what St. Patrick's Day is all about.

The Shamrock

The reason why Irishmen raise the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day is because of the hope that now rests on Erin's brow, which I fervently trust will be realized. It was originally represented as a lovely child standing tip-toe with a three foil, or three colored grass in her hand, and St. Patrick the Immortal Apostle of Ireland who lit in the fifth century that lamp of religion whose inextinguishable flames have penetrated the remote climes of the habitable globe used the shamrock in explaining the Trinity to the pagan Irish. This it is, in my opinion, that caused the shamrock to be adopted as a national emblem. It is the reason every true Irish Celt should raise the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day and exclaim:

O! Erin, my country! I love thy green bowers,
No music to me like the murmuring rills;
The shamrock to me is the fairest of flowers,
And nought is more dear than thy daisy-clad hills.

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!!!!
Clay County Fairgrounds, Barnesville in 1929, from a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Renewals - January/February 1992

Katherine Mentjes, Waseca
Roland & Beth Dille, Moorhead
Larry Pehl family, West Fargo
Helen Rudie, Moorhead
Lysie & Diane Meyer, Moorhead
Dorothy R. Johnson, Moorhead
Robert D. Larson, Moorhead
Erlene & Janice Linde family, Moorhead
Steve and Lucia Schroeder, Glyndon
Esther & Dick Vollbrecht, Moorhead
Olaf & Verna Cartford, Moorhead
Diane Gruhl, Hawley
Sister Mary Anna Fay, Crookston
Mary Leach, Glyndon
Ethel Menholt, Felton
Charles A. Nelson, Alexandria, VA
DeKrey-Reicirson, Moorhead
Paul Korso, Moorhead
Penelle Mork, Moorhead
Donna McMaster, Moorhead
Francis Kukowski, Moorhead
Howard Freeberg, West Fargo
Norm Bjorndahl, Hawley
Vern Pederson, Moorhead
Curtiss & Helen Danielson, Moorhead
Stella Carlson, Moorhead
Trish Olmstead, Fargo
Betty Swetland, Moorhead
Harding Noblitt, Moorhead
Mrs. Alice Polikowsky, Moorhead
Richard Mclarvie, Moorhead
Noel Mclarvie, Moorhead
Rev. Charles Hedelund, Moorhead
Inez Hogenson, Ulen
Terry Shtogaugh, Moorhead
Don & Rose-Mary Strom, Moorhead
Richard Wussow, Sabin
Adelphia Wallace, LaCanada, CA
Gordon & Carol Ekre, Hawley
Harold Helmke, Moorhead
Evelyn Langlie, Moorhead
Mrs. Leslie Weier, Jr., Moorhead
Erling Erickson, Moorhead
Howard & Marcell Wergeland, DL
Town & County Flowers, Moorhead

With Many Easter Greetings

Now the bunnies and the chicks, with their cunning little tricks, all their happy time employ, filling Easter-time with joy.

Pre-1930s Easter card
What’s in the Archives?  
Fire Maps provide a unique research resource

By Mark Peihl

An intriguing research resource that many people are not familiar with, and therefore overlook, are fire insurance maps.

After the Civil War, map companies sent draftsmen all over the country to draw highly detailed street maps of various cities. These maps provided fire insurance companies with construction details about individual buildings so they could set their rates more accurately. The largest of these map companies was the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company of New York. Between 1884 and 1956 the Sanborn Company periodically mapped the towns of Barnesville and Moorhead. CCHS has microfilm copies of these maps which can be a real gold mine for researchers. By studying changes between maps of various years, one can see how buildings and neighborhoods changed over time.

Not all buildings nor every part of town was mapped, but downtown areas and nearby residential areas are well covered. Information recorded varies from map to map, but generally the maps indicate the location, dimensions, number of stories and the use of each mapped building. The original maps are color coded to indicate the type of building construction (wood frame, brick, iron siding, etc.). The color is missing from the black and white microfilm, but comparing the shades of gray can usually reveal that information.

Typical users include homeowners trying to determine when their house was built, students studying neighborhoods or architecture, people interested in a particular business and genealogists wanting to see what sort of house or neighborhood their ancestors lived in.

I’ve used the maps to study Moorhead’s saloon industry, an historic building in Barnesville and how it was moved from site to site, and even the development of Moorhead’s 1890s red light district!

The Sanborn maps for Moorhead date from 1884, 1890, 1896, 1899, 1906, 1914, 1922, 1929 and 1956. The Barnesville maps are from 1894, 1899, 1907, 1914 and 1929.

CCHS has one original Sanborn map. It was drawn in 1929 but was up-dated in 1956 by pasting new drawings over areas that changed between those years. We also hold maps drawn by other companies showing Hawley in 1924 and 1933 and a hand colored photocopy of a 1932 Glyndon map which is privately owned.

The Minnesota Historical Society holds a complete original set of Moorhead and Barnesville Sanborn Maps and some non-Sanborn maps showing nearly all Clay County towns (from Averill to Ulen) in the 1950s and 60s. I’d like very much some day to shoot copies of those maps on Kodachrome slide film, encapsulate the slides in mylar and have them for viewing on our microfiche reader.

Stay tuned!
CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM

EXHIBIT SCHEDULE:

"The Point"  (Opens April 11)
This exhibit will look at Moorhead's original residential district - the bend in the river known as "The Point" and now occupied by the Hjemkomst Center. "The Point" is an interpretive exhibit which will explore who lived in the area, how the area changed over the years and why it was vacated.

Flood victims evacuate homes along Elm Street North. The fire hydrant shown partially submerged in the center of this picture remains on its original site in the Viking Ship Park, behind the Hjemkomst Center.

"An Ending & A Beginning"  (Through May 1)
An exhibit commemorating the 1959 deaths of rock-n-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. Richardson, who were on their way to play a concert at the Moorhead Armory when their plane crashed. Fargoan, Robert "Bobby Vee" Veline, began his career by filling in for the missing stars.

"Quilts and Other Comforts"  (Through April 5)
The best of our collections' quilts, coverlets, blankets, shawls, wall hangings and lap robes, illustrates how comfort was defined in the "good-old-days." Quilts on display date from 1876 to 1988.

A Permanent Exhibit depicts unique charactizations of one facet of the history of each county town. Together they form a chapter in the overall history of Clay County.

Make plans to visit the
Clay County Museum today!!
Hours are: 9-5 Mon.-Sat.,
9-9 Thurs. and 12-5 Sun.
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1992 Annual Meeting/Banquet
Thursday, April 2
at the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead

Drawing of Old Georgetown by Orabel Thortvedt from a photo taken in the 1880s.

Meeting/Banquet Schedule
5:30 - 6:30 - Social Hour
6:30 - 7:30 - Dinner Served
7:30 - Program/Meeting and Election of Board Members

Program
Guest Speaker: Kathy Coyle
Anchor/Producer, News 4 KXJB Television

Entertainment: Marion Bergseid, music and homespun humor, with Elva Bergseid, accompanist

Presentation: Mark Peihl, CCHS Archivist - a slide presentation on "Old Georgetown"

Door Prizes: Throughout the evening

Reservation deadline is March 27 - Call 233-4604
CCHS - 1991 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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: ____________________________________________

Family memberships, please list family members:

Husband ___________________ Wife ___________________

Children (under the age of 18)

Return to: Clay County Historical Society
P.O. Box 501
Moorhead, MN 56561
(218) 233-4604