## **CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



CCHS Newsletter November/December 1995 Vol. XVIII. No. 6



Barnesville and Moorhead Railroad workmen hurry to lay track southeast of Moorhead in late October 1880. The crossing of the Northern Pacific by this railroad (later part of the Great Northern) caused a railroad "war" between these bitter rivals. See story Pages 7-10. Flaten/Wange Collection.

## **President's Report**

By Gary H. Olson
With deep regret we accepted
the resignation of your
President, Chris D. Olson, at the
September Board Meeting. We
thank him for his untiring efforts
on our behalf this past year
during the negotiations between
the City and County to establish
a 10-year lease agreement we



can all live with. The 10-year lease has been signed and Chris is already in St. Paul having accepted his next challenge as Executive Director of Cooperating Libraries In Consortium (CLIC). His regional library experience and his involvement with negotiations such as he had here will be to his benefit and theirs. An afternoon reception in his honor on October 10 at CCHS was well attended by his many friends including members of the newly former area Resource Center Committee which he chaired. He was presented with a plaque from CCHS for his service on the board.

It will be a great honor to serve as your president. I am in my fifth year on the Board having served previously as secretary and vice president. We are looking for someone who has an interest in preserving the history of Clay County to fill out Chris Olson's term on the Board. Please contact me if you are interested. Also, the six-year terms of Larry Quam of Hawley and Robert Kennedy of Moorhead will be completed this year.

My goal as your president is to complete and tie up the loose ends of our 10-year lease agreement concerning improved signage on the inside and outside of the building. Also to work with the Moorhead Chamber of Commerce to get signage on the streets and highways listing CCHS. A \$4,000 increase as our request from Clay County for operation during 1996 will be again reviewed in the near future. We will reexamine the structure of CCHS and make sure we are carrying out the mission properly. Your Board and Staff will be working on a long range plan concerning the operation of CCHS and exhibits herein. Your suggestions are always welcome.

We together need to increase memberships in CCHS!

We have at present about 370 memberships. This should be 1000 plus in a county our size! Individual memberships are only \$15 and family memberships are \$35 per year. A small price to pay to help preserve our heritage for future generations to enjoy!

#### Temporarily away ??

Many of our valued members are heading south for the winter. Good for them!! We would probably follow if we could.

However, we do have a problem. Unless specific instructions are left with CCHS or the post office with regard to how you want your bulk mail handled, your newsletter is automatically discarded and we are billed 50 cents for every undeliverable newsletter. It counts up fast.

Please let us know if you would like your newsletter held or forwarded. We will need a change of address in order to forward it. We really appreciate your help with this matter. Thanks in advance.

# CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



202 1st Avenue North, Box 501 Moorhead, Minnesota 56560 Phone 233-4604

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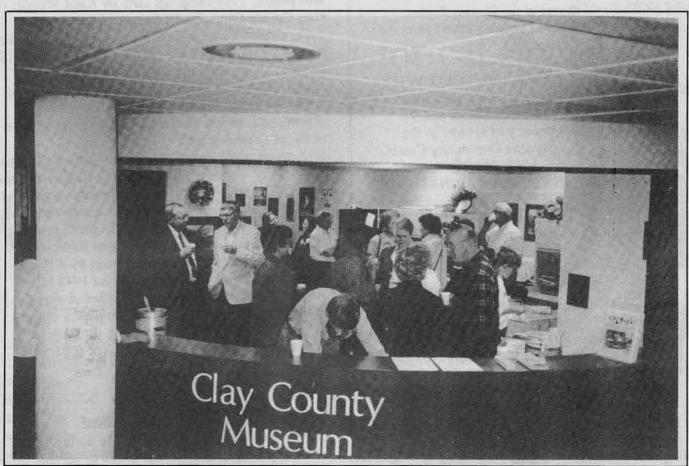
NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION Margaret Ristvedt, Editor/Publisher Pam Burkhardt, Contributor Mark Peihl, Contributor

# Power Gathering



This esteemed group has a special bond. They are all "Past Presidents" of CCHS. The group gathered to bid farewell to Chris Olson who resigned as president in October to accept a position as Executive Director of Cooperating Libraries in Consortium in St. Paul.

Past presidents pictured include front row (I to r) Olson, Nancy Tedros, Mercedes Roos, back row (I to r) Lloyd Paulson, Vern Pederson and Kelly Aakre.



The CCHS office was filled with well wishers on October 10!

## **Outreach Displays**

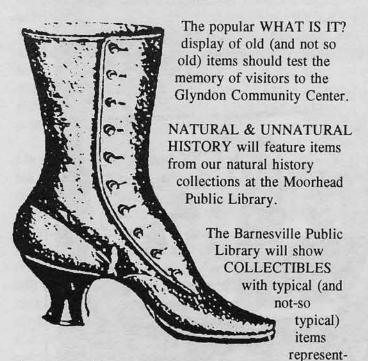
	Opens	Closes
Hitterdal Senior Center	Nov. 13	- Jan. 29
Ulen-Hitterdal High School	Nov. 13	- Jan. 29
Viking Manor, Ulen	Nov. 13	- Jan. 29
Hawley Public Library	Nov. 13	- Jan. 29
Glyndon Community Center	Nov. 15	- Jan. 31
Moorhead Public Library	Nov. 15	- Dec. 27
Barnesville Public Library	Nov. 15	- Jan. 31

The Hitterdal Senior Center shows how to PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD with shoes, corn remedies, socks, stockings and an old stocking knitting machine.

IN MY MERRY OLDSMOBILE will be at the Ulen-Hitterdal High School. Artifacts include a wooden license plate, road maps and a wooden gas gauge.

Viking Manor in Ulen features THIS OLD HOUSE with a frog-shaped door stop, old linoleum, wall paper and lovely English floor tiles.

MASH NOTES will appear at the Hawley Public Library featuring a variety of potato mashers from the collections.



ing a few of the many collecting opportunities - items include buttons, stamps, snow domes, barbed wire and marbles.

#### **Artifacts & Donors**

#### September/October 1995

#### Donors include:

Moorhead	Dorothy Dodds, Ruth Swanson, Paula
	Kay Johnson, Moorhead Degree of
	Honor Lodge No. 160, Maurice
	Floberg, Clay County Extension

Office, Helen Hedelund

Glyndon Omar Osmundson Family, Family of

Orabel Thortvedt, Sherry Watts

Georgetown City of Georgetown Hawley Mildred C. Olson

Barnesville Literary League, Craig Felde

Robbinsdale David Bjorkquist Stillwater Ann Nicklay

Minneapolis Mrs. Clifton J. Brisco

Fargo, ND Ann Rattenborg W. Fargo, ND Helen M. Anton Bellingham, WA Burton Grover Pasadena, CA Viola Mallory

#### Artifacts include:

Scrapbook, Notables of Fargo and Moorhead; Hawley area photos; 1916 campaign card for Knud Wefald; (3) Clay County Extension Homemakers scrapbooks; book, Grover: Tarje and Geline and Their Descendents to 1995; 1945 Hawley HS annual; (3) Barnesville HS annuals, 1955, 1956 and 1982; 1930 Moorhead HS annual, 1933 & 1934 MSTC annuals (2) registers of births and deaths for the Village of Georgetown; charter, seal, minute books and membership booklets of the Moorhead Degree of Honor Lodge No. 160; (15) color transparencies of fire insurance maps; copy of eulogy of Carl Bjorkquist d. 1937; (12) scrapbooks compiled by Orabel Thortvedt; secretaries' books and scrapbook of the Literary League of Barnesville; photo album of Wilson/Sannes families; (2) photo postcards of Hawley school children; Norwegian Bible: 1934 Maytag washing machine; helmet worn by 4-H club member at the Farm Boys Camp at the 1943 Minn. State Fair with signatures and addresses of attendees; corset, dresses, blouses, leggings, millinery supplies etc; sample flour sack fabrics; velvet dress ca 1938, baby clothes 1923; cup and saucer used at the MSTC Campus School.

#### **Answering Machine installed**

CCHS now has an answering machine during off hours. If you wish to know our hours or current exhibits you may call any time.

## Annuals for the CCHS Collections

A favorite research tool is the school annual. Several months ago we made a plea in our CCHS Newsletter for any school annuals from County schools, past or present. The response was gratifying.

Printed here is a list of the school annuals now in our archives. There are many gaps, so if you or someone you know has any of the missing issues and would like to donate it to CCHS - stop in. We would love to have complete sets for all the schools in Clay County.

Barnesville High School The Trojan 1955, 1956, 1982 Glyndon High School The Spud 1923 Glyndon High School 1938 [silver anniversary] Glyndon-Felton High School Buffalo 1982, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991 Hawley High School The Golden Nugget 1940 Hawley High School Maroon & Gold 1945 [newspaper format] Hawley High School The Nugget 1951, 1956, 1957, 1958 Hitterdal High School Hit-Hi Star May 1931 Moorhead High School Cho-Kio 1923, 1930, 1950, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 **Ulen High School** Seniorite 1917 (no #), 1926-27 **Ulen High School** The Panther 1935, 1940 Moorhead South Junior High South 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

Moorhead State Teachers College Campus High School Baby Dragons 1948, 1949, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955 Concordia College The Scout 1921-23, 1925-26, 1932, 1935 Moorhead State Teachers College The Bulletin 1918 Moorhead State Teachers College The Praeceptor 1933, 1934 Moorhead State Teachers College Dragon 1947, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1969, 1971 Moorhead State Teachers College

Guidon Squadron 13, 346th College

Training Detachment 1943, 1944

and a

Clay County Historical Society



### **Board of Directors**

Gary H. Olson, President Ann Gytri, Secretary
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Larry Quam
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Paul Harris Diane Meyer Diane Haugen

### Staff

Pam Burkhardt Mark Peihl Margaret Ristvedt



Fold

Line

# Julgranskorg (Christmas Tree Basket)

Swedish baskets are made at the Open House at the Bergerquist Cabin during the Scandinavian Festival in June. They take no special skills or equipment to make. The instructions, with some modification, are courtesy of the Swedish Cultural Heritage Society.

You can easily make this basket. Use two colors of paper. For a Swedish look use blue and yellow paper. DIRECTIONS: Trace pattern (as shown on this page) onto plain paper, and cut out the 1. two oval shapes. Fold on the solid line of each oval. 2. 3. After folding each oval, cut on the dotted lines of both pieces. 4. Now you are ready to weave the two pieces together. Figure #1 Fold Тор Figure #2 Hold the blue in your right hand and the yellow in your left hand. Put blue strip #1 inside yellow strip #2. 6 Put yellow strip #2 inside blue strip #1. Put blue strip #1 inside yellow strip #3. Put yellow strip #4 inside blue strip #1. 10. Now you are ready to weave the next row. Carefully move the first section up toward the top. 11 12. Put yellow strip #1 inside blue strip #2. 13 Keep alternating this weaving using all the strips until you have completed the basket. 14. Cut out the handle and paste in place as shown in Figure #2

# Railroad War of 1880

By Mark Peihl

Sometimes while waiting at crossings for Burlington Northern's familiar green and white cars to pass, I try to temper my impatience by reflecting on the importance of railroads in Clay County's development. Rails built this area. They brought people to this isolated place but, more importantly, they provided a way for farmers to ship crops to distant markets. In 1870 a mere 90 people lived in what is now Clay County. The following year rails arrived. By 1875, 1400 settlers were here; in 1885, there were over 10,000.

But it wasn't BN that made this difference. BN is a relative newcomer, formed some 25 years ago through the merger of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads. Before their combination, these powerful companies were bitter rivals for the freight and passenger business in the Valley. A short but interesting episode in this fight occurred in Clay County 115 years ago this fall. The railroad "war" of 1880 helps illustrate this rivalry.

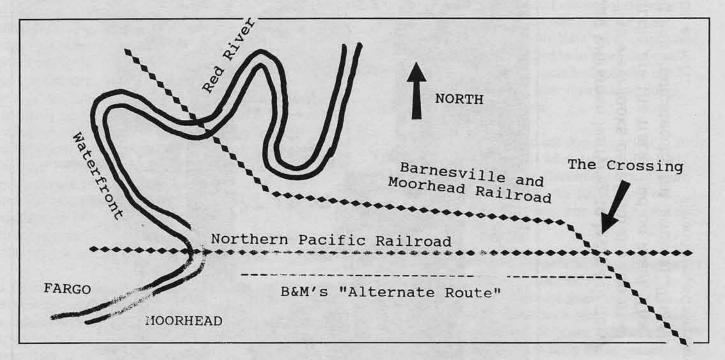
The Northern Pacific was chartered in 1870 to build a transcontinental railroad across the northern tier of the U. S. linking Lake Superior and the Great Lakes with the Pacific coast. The federal government gave the NP a huge land grant to finance construction of this

strategic line. By 1873 rails stretched from Duluth across the Red River (where the NP founded Moorhead and Fargo) to the Missouri River. Part of another line (almost wholly controlled by NP), the St. Paul and Pacific, ran a few miles north and south of Glyndon. It had been intended to link the NP mainline with the growing community that's now Winnipeg. But in 1873 the NP went bankrupt. They had built too far, too fast. Financially overextended, the line collapsed and threw the country into an economic depression.

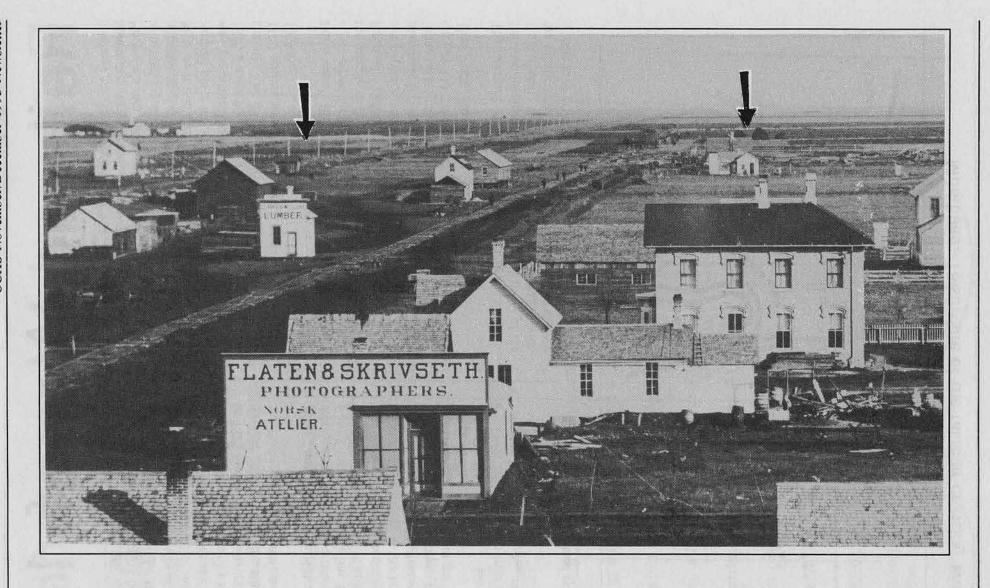
Enter James J. Hill. Jim Hill was a St. Paul entrepreneur and transportation visionary. He began as a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Fur Company shipping furs and trade goods via Red River carts through the Red River Valley. As steamboats on the Red replaced the carts, Hill moved to the boats and made a fortune. But he realized that the steamers were only one more temporary link in the improving transportation chain. When the chance came to get into railroading, he jumped at it.

By 1879, Hill had taken over the St. Paul and Pacific, renamed it the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba

(Continued on Page 9)



Moorhead, 1880. Site of the railroad crossing war.



O. E. Flaten took this photo of Barnesville and Moorhead Railroad workmen hurrying to lay track down Moorhead's Main Street (Main Avenue) on October 30, 1880. The view looks east from the top of a flour mill located where Sportland sits today. Left of Flaten's studio are the tracks laid on Main. The B&M grade can be seen near the horizon as a thin, light colored line (indicated by the arrows). The NP line is marked by the telegraph poles stretching into the distance at left.

Flaten/Wange Collection.

### Railroad Wars (Continued from Page 7)

and completed it from the Twin Cities to Breckenridge, northeast through Barnesville to Glyndon and north to Winnipeg. (Later the SPM&M was renamed the Great Northern.) But Hill was far from done. Unlike the NP, the SPM&M did not focus on reaching the west coast. Hill's strategy was to built carefully placed short lines through the Valley, get them running at a profit and build more short lines. In 1880, he planned to link Minneapolis with Grand Forks via Barnesville and Moorhead. (The Barnesville to Moorhead stretch was named, appropriately enough, the Barnesville and Moorhead Railroad.) That meant crossing the rival NP's east-west mainline somewhere.

On September 5, Hill wrote to the NP announcing the B&M would be crossing the NP's line near today's 17th Street in Moorhead. He even had the audacity to ask the NP to make the crossing frogs at their shops in Brainerd and bill his railroad! (Frogs are the pieces of rail designed to let a crossing train pass without difficulty.) NP officials fumed and the war was on.

The NP claimed a right of way extending 200 feet on either side of their tracks. Hill claimed the NP had never gotten permission from the land owner, F. J. Stickney, for the right of way, and graded his road bed right up to and across the NP's.

#### The Opening Volley

On Saturday, September 18, the NP fired the opening volley. In St. Paul Federal Circuit Court, they asked Judge Nelson for a temporary injunction to halt the B&M from crossing their line. On Sunday afternoon, four NP officials and a crew of workmen began removing the grade the B&M had built. Local opinion was clearly on the side of Jim Hill. A second railroad in competition with the NP would mean more trade and lower rates. Before the workmen finished, the Moorhead Police Chief and B&M Construction Superintendent arrived on the scene and arrested the bunch for "malicious trespass." The four NP officials languished in jail until two the next morning when the railroad sprung them on bail. Their case was set for Friday after a hearing on the injunction request.

On Thursday, Judge Nelson approved the injunction stating that though it wasn't clear that the NP owned the right of way, it was clear that Minnesota state law recognized the right of a railroad to use condemnation proceedings to cross another railroad's line. The B&M could cross the NP but not until damages to the NP

had been determined by a commission and the payment made.

The city found the NP "trespassers" not guilty the next day. The NP had won a temporary but important victory in the first round. The B&M was in a race with the Valley's notorious weather. If the NP could stall the B&M until freeze up, they might delay their competitors until spring.

Meanwhile, both companies were busy. Jim Hill hurried to finish the grade between the NP line and the Red River. He also began laying track north from Fargo on the Red River and Northern Railroad, the branch linking Fargo with Hill City, Dakota. (Today's Hillsboro, N. D.)

#### Round 2

The NP went back to the courts to open round two.

To complete his line, Hill had to build a bridge over the Red River. On October 1, the NP asked Judge Nelson for another injunction, blocking Hill's bridge. The NP claimed that the proposed bridge, downstream from the Moorhead-Fargo waterfront, would impede steamboat traffic. River trade was worth \$50,000 a year to the railroad. Its loss would be disastrous.

Judge Nelson patiently read through mounds of affidavits filed by the railroads, steamboat pilots, local citizens and others. The B&M claimed their bridge would turn to let boats pass; that if the NP was concerned about bridges, why hadn't they complained about the railroad bridge already in place at Grand Forks? And hadn't the NP itself blocked steamers from going upstream with their own bridge? Judge Nelson denied the injunction.

The NP had lost round two but they continued to stall. They delayed the finding of what damages the B&M would have to pay until the December term of court. Until the payment was made, the B&M could not cross the NP's line. That would be well into the cold season.

But Jim Hill was bound to reach Moorhead. Instead of waiting for permission to cross the NP, he took a sharp left and built a temporary grade right down Moorhead's Main Street (today's Main Avenue) to the river. Fargo livery man Al Stephans ordered a \$1,200 "omnibus" from St. Louis to carry B&M passengers

(Continued on Page 10)

# History videos available

CCHS has two exciting videos for loan on a firstcome, first serve basis.

The video "One Woman, One Vote," produced by PBS, is a history of the struggle for woman suffrage. This wonderful production brings personages like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Alice Paul to life as they each approach the struggle for suffrage from their own perspective.

The second, "Probstfield Living History Farm," documents the history of the Randolph Probstfield family and specifically their property in Oakport Township including a projected plan for restoring the property into a living



The video, produced locally, contains information compiled by Matt Schiebe for a senior thesis toward a Landscape Architectural degree at NDSU. Schiebe is a great great grandson of Probstfield.

You won't want to miss either of these exciting videos. Just stop in at the Clay County Museum and Archives, 202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead and check them out. The CCHS Museum and Archives, located in the lower level of the Hjemkomst Center, are free and open to the public.

### Railroad War (Continued from Page 9)

north across the NP's line at 4th Street and over to Fargo to make connections there.

Hill's bold move proved successful. By Saturday, October 30, the 60-man track laying crew had reached the outskirts of town working at a mile and a quarter per day pace. Townspeople planned a major celebration with bunting, fireworks, speeches and Chinese lanterns. All day long a cannon boomed "as if to encourage the boys in their good work." But the 60 man crew may have been more motivated by the supply of "good cigars and fresh beer" laid in for them at Moorhead.

The track layers reached Fourth Street by sundown with the first freight train from Minneapolis (carrying Stephans' bus) close behind. After the last spike was driven, a loud hurrah went up from the large crowd gathered, followed by three cheers for Jim Hill and his track laying crew. The celebration went on until midnight and elicited "general expressions of satisfaction from the citizens at the gentlemanly way in which the railroaders had behaved, so unlike that [behavior] often indulged in by crews of that nature."

In mid November the Barnesville and Moorhead Railroad officially became a part of the SPM&M. A month later, with damages paid up, Jim Hill received permission to cross the NP's grade. On the day after Christmas, bitter cold kept local citizens from watching as a SPM&M crew cut the NP's tracks and installed the frogs, ending the railroad war. The first train crossed the bridge to Fargo on February 6, 1881, but winter had caught up with Jim Hill. Tracking to Hillsboro was delayed until spring. The first through train from Minneapolis to Grand Forks rolled through in June.

#### **Donations**

Many thanks to the following organizations and individuals who have made monetary gifts in the past two months. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

Dr. & Mrs. David Rostad, Moorhead Edgar & Virginia Wright, Moorhead Kenneth R. Skjegstad, Moorhead Richard Bollmann, Sheboygan, WI Willis & LaVerne Kingsbury, Fargo Anonymous

#### THE BUFFALO FIRE TRUCK FUND

Teamsters Local #116, Fargo Moorhead Fire Dept. Rec. Assn., Moorhead

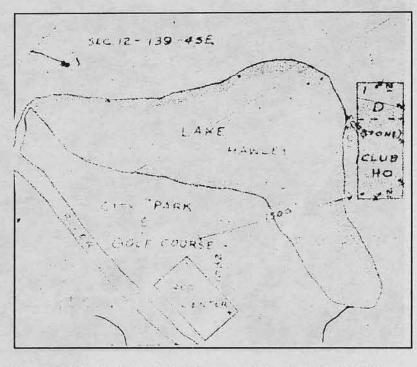
## FIRE INSURANCE MAPS!

# What's new in the Archives?

Recently CCHS acquired copies of highly detailed street maps of almost every Clay County community from Averill to Ulen. Regular readers of this space may recall that in 1989 the Society purchased microfilm copies of Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps of Moorhead and Barnesville. The Sanborn Company periodically drew highly detailed maps of many larger U. S. cities. They show the exact size and location of individual buildings, their use, number of stories, placement of windows and doors and type of construction materials used. (Fire insurance companies used the maps to determine the rates they would charge their policy holders.) The maps are invaluable to anyone studying the history of the towns or businesses, buildings or homes.

Unfortunately, most of these maps are available only on black and white microfilm. Much of the information is color coded and lost in microfilming. Also, the Sanborn Company mapped only Barnesville and Moorhead.

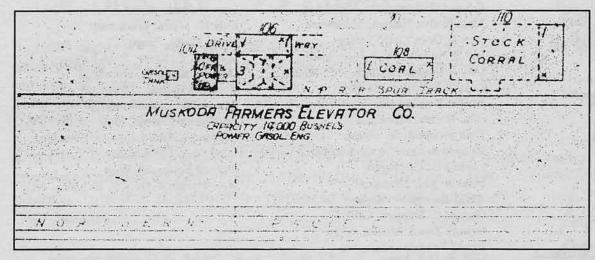
Fortunately, the Minnesota Historical Society holds many similar maps drawn by another company, The Fire Underwriters' Inspection Bureau of Minneapolis. Most date from the 1950s and early 1960s. Mapped Clay County towns include Hawley, Hitterdal, Averill, Sabin, Georgetown, Baker, Downer, Comstock, Glyndon, Felton, Ulen, Kragnes, Dilworth and even Muskoda!



Hawley City Park and Golf Course, Hawley, April 1962.

We asked MHS to shoot a color 35 mm slide of each of these maps. We removed the transparencies from their plastic 2" x 2" plastic holders and mounted them between sheets of Mylar plastic cut to microfiche size. (Microfiche is similar to microfilm copies but the information is recorded on 4 1/4" x 5 3/4" plastic cards instead of long rolls of film.) Now patrons can view the maps using our microfiche reader and make

photocopies right from the screen.



Stop in and see what your home town looked like 30 or 40 years ago! The Clay County Museum and Archives are free and open to the public.

Muskoda Farmers Elevator Company, Muskoda, February 1929.

## Olson honored at farewell open house



One of Gary H. Olson's first duties as the new president of CCHS was to present Chris Olson with a plaque in appreciation for his years of service on the CCHS Board of Directors. Chris joined the Board in 1992 and has been president for the past two years.

A large crowd treated Chris to many accolades in an impromptu sharing following the presentation ceremony.

CCHS will miss Chris's leadership but Gary comes well equipped to the position having served as secretary and most recently as Vice President.

All our best wishes to Chris in his new position in St. Paul and to Gary as he takes on this new challenge..

## **CCHS Memberships - New and Renewals**

#### September/October 1995

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

Tim McLarnan, Moorhead Allen County Public Library, Ind. Elda Lutter, Moorhead Dewey Possehl, Moorhead Donna Merchant, Minneapolis Vincent Dolva, Hawley June Dobervich, Fargo Gertrude Knutson, Moorhead Bob & JoAnn Nyquist, Moorhead Doris Backman Kirkpatrick, Wash. Clarence Bergquist, Oregon Roberts Gates, New York Francelia Iverson, Barnesville Louise Redmann, Fargo Cecil & Eleanor Johnson, Moorhead Sherwood Peterson, Baker

Dorothy Carey, Moorhead Margaret Slagle, Moorhead Ruth Franzen, Fargo Don & Delores Bekkerus, Glyndon Edward Gudmundson, Moorhead Mrs. Evalyn Hansen, Moorhead Ann & Orvis Gytri, Felton Bill & Audrey Jones, Moorhead Una & Edmund Rydeen, Pel. Rapids John & Bev Hest, Hawley Evelyn Keeping Hansen, Hawley John Holten, Moorhead Ruth Swanson, Moorhead Richard & June Chenoweth, Mhd Lloyd Pladson, Fargo Irene Hogan, Moorhead Arvid Thompson, Barnesville George C. Shippey, Calif. Deloris Zwack Mellon, Mpls. Junald Rendahl, Moorhead Richard Melarvie, Moorhead

CCHS welcomes the following new members:

Lawrence Gilbery, Moorhead
Harvey Fleshner, Iowa
Dale D. White, Moorhead
Norm Kuehl, Fargo
Maureen E. Kurtz, West Fargo
Dorothy Storandt, Moorhead
Beverly Coleman, Moorhead
Erlyce Dobromilsky, Fargo
Bev Larson, Fargo
Norman & Ruth Langseth, Glyndon
(Gift from Carol Ekre)
Richard Bollmann, Wisc.
Mrs. Margaret Ahlness, Bowman, ND

# **CLAY COUNTY** MUSEUM features

# "Moorhead, August 1923"

A unique view of what Moorhead looked like in 1923, frozen forever in O.E. Flaten's photographs.



A streetcar scene from the "1923" exhibit.

Also showing: a modified

"Old Ruby:

Red River of the North"

Topics include: steamboating & recreation

Coming in December

"Yotes for Women

In 1920, after a 72 year struggle, women won the right to vote. Seventy-five years later we examine the lives of the women who worked so hard for a right many of us now taken for granted. Who were the suffragists? How did they win the vote? Don't miss this exciting exhibit.

The Clay County Museum PERMANENT EXHIBIT includes unique characterizations of one facet of the history of towns in the county. Together they form a chapter in the overall history of Clay County.

Hours are: 9-5 Mon.-Sat., 9-9 Thurs. and 12-5 Sun. Lower level of Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave. N., Mhd.



#### CCHS - 1995 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Coun		n/renew my membership in the Cla ciety. Please enter my membershi ve checked below:
	INDIVIDUAL	\$15.00
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	DONATION	
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**		vation of our heritage
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**		Acid-Free Materials
**	Voting Priviled	
**	Invitation to a	all CCHS Events
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