

# The Hourglass

Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 1 • Spring 2012

## 2012 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 1, 6 p.m.

Dilworth Community Center, 709 1st Ave NW, Dilworth, MN



Dinner will be prepared by the Dilworth Lutheran Church Women. The menu is created using traditional recipes of the Dilworth Lutheran Church:

- Rolls with jams from The Blue House
- Cheesy potatoes
- Candied carrots
- Choice of ham & cheese stuffed chicken or glazed ham (must RSVP)
- Chocolate torte
- Vegetarian option is available on request (must RSVP)

HCSCC Volunteer Services Coordinator Markus Krueger will give a presentation on Clay County in the Dakota War.

\$15 per person. Please prepay by **April 24** to hold your reservation: HCSCC, PO Box 157, Moorhead, MN 56561-0157.

### *Did you know...*

Museums spend more than \$2.2 billion a year on education; the typical museum devotes three-quarters of its education budget to K-12 students.

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**HISTORICAL &  
CULTURAL SOCIETY**  
OF CLAY COUNTY

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Our thanks to the Moorhead City Council and  
Clay County for their continued support.

# HCSCC News

## Please Send us Your Addresses!

Are you going away for the winter or coming back for the summer? Please send your alternate address to [Kaycee.Peterson@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:Kaycee.Peterson@ci.moorhead.mn.us) to make sure you're receiving all the up-to-date information from the HCSCC!

## Regular Hours Resume at the Hjemkomst Center

The Hjemkomst Center, including Senior Connections and the museum, will be closed on Tuesdays at 5 p.m. until **March 20, 2012** when regular hours will resume: Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Sunday noon - 5 p.m.

## *The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay*

### *County opens at the Hjemkomst*

We celebrated our new exhibit, *The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay County*, on Friday, January 27, 2012 at the Hjemkomst Center museum. The event brought in more than 150 guests, who enjoyed food from the 1950s and 1960s, and had a chance to see this wonderful exhibit, which looks at the exciting years that created modern America. The exhibit covers topics from the GI Bill to the Baby Boom, changes on the farm and TV to the Korean War, and is on display through 2012.



*Ribbon cutting with the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo Chamber of Commerce for The Boom opening reception.*



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# Letter from the Board President

Gene Prim



A Busy Time of the Year . . .

The beginning of the new year saw our staff scurrying to cover all of the bases at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County. Executive Director Maureen Kelly Jonason has been out getting her wheels replaced. With two brand new knees now under her, she is again ready to hit the

ground running. She has been actively involved with the organization during her recuperation while working from home. But it's just not the same as being on the site.

In addition to their regular duties and picking up some of the slack during Maureen's absence, the rest of the staff was busy opening two new exhibits in January. *The Boom: 1945 to 1960 in Clay County* opened on Friday, January 27 to some great reviews. Those who have already attended have been impressed with the wealth of material presented as our area moved from an agrarian society to a metro arena during the baby boom after World War II. There are even more exhibits being added such as a replica bomb shelter and a most useful building, an outhouse, which was a prominent rest stop on most farms and even in towns.

Also opening in January was an exhibit of aerial photos snapped during the flood of 2009. Those

desperate days have been preserved forever in digital images recalling those troubled weeks when we did not know whether the F-M area would go under the waters of the Red River or not.

For the past three years, dating back to that 2009 flood, the Hjemkomst Center has been in danger of flooding. This year with virtually no snow cover, we will probably have no battle with the Red to contend with. Staff can devote their efforts to their regular, more constructive duties instead of moving everything to higher ground.

We're also moving into the busy time of the year for school field trips to tour the Hjemkomst Center. While we host these groups year-around, the busiest time seems to come in the spring of each year when weather is not an issue. The students really enjoy a day away from the classrooms where they have been confined for the winter months.

Looking down the road, plans are already taking shape for this year's big Midwest Viking Festival. A little further down the calendar, a big celebration is in the works commemorating Robert Asp's dream and the 30th anniversary of the sailing of the *Hjemkomst* ship from Duluth to Norway. A reunion at the Hjemkomst Center for the public and most of the crew of that historic voyage, and Asp family members is planned.

These are exciting times at the Hjemkomst Center. Take the time to come in and enjoy the exhibits. Bring a friend along. Sign them up as a new member. You will be doing us and them a big favor with a new membership.

## Update on the Bergquist Cabin

Tucked away in a little patch of land on the riverbank in north Moorhead is the Bergquist Cabin, the oldest home in Moorhead still on its original site. For those of us who can remember the colorful TV weatherman Dewey Bergquist, the name will be familiar. It was Dewey's ancestor John Bergquist who emigrated from Sweden, came to Minnesota, and built the log cabin in 1870. It was Dewey who helped to preserve the Cabin for many years prior to donating it to the HCSCC for long-term preservation. We are launching Phase 1 of a long-term plan to interpret the Cabin inside and out.

This fall, Concordia College professor Dr. Joy

Lintelman will engage her Scandinavian immigration class in researching the Bergquist family as well as Swedish bachelor farmer life to determine what sort of items Bergquist would have had in his cabin when he settled here. From there, the class's research will contribute to an informational sign that will be outside the cabin for people who visit the site. We get a lot of comments that people who walk by and discover the cabin would love to know more about it.

We will write a grant to secure funding for a

**Continued on page 6...**

# HCSCC Executive Director

Maureen Kelly Jonason

Photo courtesy of The Hawley Herald.



Greetings, Members and Happy Spring!

We are especially happy that we will probably not face the horrendous threat of flood we have endured the last three years. I heard recently that we have had only 15

inches of precipitation this winter to date when we normally get a total of 50. Of course, it's late February as I write and so we never know . . . !

Please plan to come to our annual meeting May 1 at the Dilworth Community Center. Markus has a program on Clay County and the Dakota War planned. It is the 150th anniversary of several important Clay County historical moments: the Homestead Act, the Dakota War, and, some say, the 150th of forming Clay County itself. Mark says that the actual government of Clay County did not get set up for another 10 years, but we will celebrate anyway! We will also have board elections. Rose Bergan is retiring and we need to fill her seat as well as those vacated by Pearl Quinnild, who passed away this winter, and Kelly Wambach, who resigned due to time conflicts. Fortunately, Les Bakke and Gail Blair volunteered and were appointed to fill two seats. Thanks to Rose for her years of serving on the board – especially through the merger years!

We've got some requests to make of all our members and their friends and family. We are seeking information about Clay County artists Annie Stein and Orabelle Thortvedt for a new exhibit in the future—particularly about Annie Stein since we have Orabelle's journals (and her family's as well). We need to learn more about Annie Stein and we would appreciate any and all information including the contact information of living relatives. We also want to hear from collectors of their works! Please contact Markus Krueger at [markus.krueger@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:markus.krueger@ci.moorhead.mn.us) or call 218-299-5511 Ext. 6738. As an art historian, Markus is taking the lead on this exhibit.

We are also planning “150 Years of Clay County

Fashion,” a vintage style show to share regional people's family treasures from the 1980s lime-green leisure suit to the 1880s petticoat and bustle. Please help out with this fun and educational event by loaning your family's vintage clothing for this Society fundraiser. Board member Gloria Lee is co-coordinating this event with Tim Jorgensen. Please contact one or the other about your willingness to share your historical textiles for the event which will take place September 13 at the Hjemkomst Center. In addition, as adults were much smaller in the old days, we'd appreciate a number of teens who would volunteer to model the period clothes that evening. If by chance you drop off items at the Hjemkomst, please, **please** leave your name, address, and phone number so we can contact you about the history of the item! In the meantime, talk to Gloria or Tim about participating: [dlee@feltonet.net](mailto:dlee@feltonet.net) or **call her cell:218-790-0965 for Gloria Lee and [tim.jorgensen@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:tim.jorgensen@ci.moorhead.mn.us) or 218-299-5511 Ext. 6737 for Tim.** It's not too early to express your interest in participating!

We are also excited to be combining our efforts this year with the good folks at Nordic Culture Clubs who produce the Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival each June at the Hjemkomst Center. This year, we will produce OUTSIDE the Midwest Viking Festival on the same days Nordic Culture Clubs will produce the Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival INDOORS – June 22 and 23. That means visitors will get TWO FESTIVALS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE! You can't get a better deal. Even if you are not Scandinavian (I am only married to one!), you will find so much to enjoy and learn about at this double-your-fun event. Together, we selected the theme of Nordic Footprints and we will have activities, foods, music and dance, and a lot of learning for people of all ages. Please SAVE THE DATE – June 22 and 23—and plan to come to the Nordic Footprints. The price is \$10 for an all-day pass (9am-5pm) for adults, \$5 for teens, and free for 12 and under. You will not want to miss this one!

All in all, we have, as always, so much to look forward to. Take a look at the Exhibit and Events schedule elsewhere in this newsletter and put the dates on your calendar so you do not miss out!

# SAVE THE DATE for the *Hjemkomst* 30th Anniversary Celebration!

Another important date this summer to save is July 21. That is the date of the 30th anniversary celebration of the voyage of the *Hjemkomst* to Norway in 1982. It is hard to believe that 30 years have passed since this momentous historical journey, and yet here we are. On **Saturday, July 21**, we will throw open the museum doors noon to 5 p.m. and invite the entire *Hjemkomst* community in for a celebration.

First, we will launch a brand new exhibit on the building and sailing of the ship that will be in Heritage Hall through December. Claudia Pratt has been hired to research and design the new exhibit, and funding has come from the Minnesota Historical Society through the Historical and Cultural Heritage Fund created by a vote of the people of MN on November 4, 2008.

We invite anyone and everyone who ever had anything to do with the ship to come and share their stories with the Asp family and crew members. This may well turn out to be the first time all crew members have reunited in 30 years. There will be refreshments, a crew and Asp family panel from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 21 that will be recorded for posterity, and the new exhibit

opening as well as a video camera set up to capture visitors' stories and comments.

Through another grant from the Minnesota Historical Society Legacy fund, Prairie Public Television will be video-recording interviews with the Asp children and crew members who attend, and those interviews will be transcribed for later research. Most important to learn is How did being a part of this unique period in Minnesota history impact you thirty years later? Come and hear the answer and share your own stories as well.



## The HCSCC Seeks Community Input for a new Exhibit Featuring *Hjemkomst* Voyage Artifacts

We are seeking community input for a new exhibit featuring *Hjemkomst* voyage artifacts. The exhibit, which is currently under development, opens during the *Hjemkomst* Voyage 30th Anniversary Celebration on **July 21, 2012 from 1 – 5 p.m.** The exhibit will be on display through Dec. 31, 2012.

We have hired Claudia M. Pratt of CMP Consulting for the research and design phase of the exhibit development. The exhibit will bring a fresh perspective about the *Hjemkomst* expedition. Pratt hopes the public can look at this exhibit with new eyes and be amazed again at what an accomplishment the expedition was—for the Asp family, the voyage crew, as well as the businesses and communities that supported it.

“The goal of this exhibit is to uncover information that adds to the story we’ve enjoyed for 30 years. I think what fascinates me is that it really took an enormous amount of community support in order to make this happen—a lot of personal sacrifice and perseverance. It’s

time to revisit that and get back to Bob Asp’s core ‘Dare to Dream’ message and what the expedition accomplished,” Pratt says.

We encourage our members to share their thoughts on what they would like to see in the new *Hjemkomst* exhibit by leaving their ideas in a comment book, which is located nearby the ship in the *Hjemkomst* Center. The HCSCC will also post stories, questions and information about the *Hjemkomst* ship and voyage on their new blog at [TheVikingShipHjemkomst.areavoices.com](http://TheVikingShipHjemkomst.areavoices.com). You may also contact Claudia M. Pratt at [CMPconsulting@mac.com](mailto:CMPconsulting@mac.com) or 701-371-7277 if you would like to share your story about the *Hjemkomst* and voyage or have recommendations for the new exhibit.

*The research and design phase of the exhibit development has been made possible in part by a grant from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of the Minnesotans on November 4, 2008, and administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.*

# Collections Donations

By Lisa Vedaa, Collections Manager

We are thankful to the many individuals who have contacted us to donate objects and archival materials to our historical collection the past few months.

## Donors and Accessions November 2011-January 2012

Donors: Odell Boberg, Moorhead; Helen Danielson, Harwood, ND; Paul DesJardins, Felton; Harry Fillafer, Moorhead; Richard Fredine, Moorhead; Muriel Grefsrud, Hawley; Steve Handegaard, Dalton, MN; Thomas Hannaher, Fargo; Dixie Jackson, Moorhead; Tim Jorgensen, Fargo; Don Lein, Glyndon; Margaret Metcalf, Lake Park; City of Moorhead/Mark Voxland; Oakmound 4-H Club; Gloria Peihl, Fargo; Prairie Public Broadcasting, Inc., Fargo; Norman F. Priebe, Alexandria, MN; Jerry Quam, Fargo; Bob Schiffer, MSUM; Stearns History Museum, St. Cloud;

Objects and Archival Materials Accessed: (1) men's coat, brown wool, worn by donor's father, Banker Metcalf, (1) photo print, Banker and Louise Metcalf, 1928; (1) volume, Steam Locomotives of the Great Northern Railway; (2) photos, snapshots of James Enoch Peterson in Europe during his military service in World War II; (5) Halloween costumes, c1930s; collection of materials collected by Norris Grefsrud during military service in Japan after WWII; set of china play dishes, c1931; (2) scrapbooks, re: Felton area news clippings, American Legion; (1) volume, minutes of Viking Temperance Society, Cromwell Township (in Nor-

wegian), (1) CD-R, scans of same, (1) program, marker dedication at Silver Lake Church; (1) DVD disc, copy of PBS production about the life of Jim Blanchard (first sheriff of Clay County); photographs, news clippings and books related to Verna Newell and WDAY's Party Line television program; (1) plaque, Anderson Pontiac, Moorhead, names and seniority of employees at the time that the dealership moved from downtown Moorhead to 30th Ave S in 1973; (1) dress or robe, made from bright orange terrycloth towels, c1960s/70s; (5) scrapbooks for Oakmound 4-H Club, (3) Community Pride binders, (1) Sing and be Happy song book, with Nels Vogel Music stamp, (1) 4-H secretary's book, 1959-1960, Oakmound club, (1) volume, Through the Years: Clay County 4-H, 2002, (1) pinback button, "Exhibitor Moorhead 1957;" (1) course catalog, Moorhead Area Vocational-Technical Institute Adult Education, Winter 1976; (1) metal yard sign, Jim Marcy [for] Second Ward Alderman, pre-1986; (1) invitation, Glyndon High School graduation, 1920; (1) DVD in case, "Steamboats on the Red: A Story of Buccaneers and Robber Barons" video documentary, 2011; (1) volume, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project agreement dated December 22, 2011 for presentation of report CECW-MVD (1105-2-10a) to Congress by US Army Corps of Engineers and (1) Sharpie pen used by Mayor Mark Voxland to sign aforementioned agreement; (1) menu, Northwest Orient Airlines Imperial Service flight, ca1957; minutes, financial records, and (1) rubber stamp, Clay County Safety Council, c1956-2011.

## Bergquist Cabin

### Continued from page 3...

permanent information panel and to connect with a museum cell phone system that will make it possible to call a number for a recorded guided tour of the exterior. That will be Phase II.

Phase III will also take the students' research and help us to interpret the interior with artifact reproductions and text panels that will make visiting the interior fascinating and fun. Phase IV will involve inviting school groups to come out and tour the "new and improved" Bergquist Cabin. The phases of this project will take a couple of years, depending on our ability to raise the funds.

Fortunately, for Phase I, we have received support from the Swedish Cultural Heritage Society of the Red River Valley and Bergquist family members. If

you would like to contribute to this project, please mark your donation Bergquist Cabin Fund and we will be sure to apply it directly!



# 1940 Census to be Released!

By Mark Peihl, Archivist

The National Archives will release the 1940 US Census Population Schedules this spring. Census records hold a wealth of information about families and individuals and are among the most valuable tools available to genealogists. This new treasure trove may help family historians surmount some of the “brick walls” they may have run into.

The US Constitution mandates that the federal government count each of us citizens every ten years. A lot rides on census information: representation in Congress, distribution of tax money, etc. The first census was done in 1790, the most recent in 2010. Information recorded varies from one census to the next, but much of it is very private. Federal law requires that the information about individuals and families be kept secret for 72 years. The most recent census currently available, 1930, was released in 2002. The official “census date” for the 1940 census was April 1. April Fools Day falls on a Sunday this year, so the schedules won’t be available until 9 am Eastern Time (8 am Central) Monday, April 2, 2012.

Past census schedules were released on microfilm, but the new release will be available online. The National Archives has scanned all 3.8 million pages of the census records as digital image files. These files will be available for free download from the National Archives website ([www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/](http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/)) at 8 a.m. April 2.

There will be no name index at first. Organizations like the popular subscription-based genealogy site ancestry.com and non-profits like the Mormon Church’s familysearch.org will be getting access to the digital files the same time as the rest of us. Both of the above have announced plans to begin indexing right away April 2.

In the meanwhile, the census records will be arranged by enumeration district (ED), then by family in order of visitation. In order to locate an individual or family, you will have to know in which ED they lived, and then page through that ED’s records until you locate them.

Large cities can be divided into many hundreds of EDs. Things are a bit simpler in rural areas. Clay County’s forty-six 1940 census enumeration districts (numbered 14-1 through 14-46) largely follow township and village boundaries. The city of Moorhead is divided into eight

EDs. Genealogy guru Steve Morse has developed a handy ED finder/tutorial, <http://stevemorse.org/ed/ed.php>. The site allows researchers to search for a location and find its ED number. Eventually (after the census release) your search results on Morse’s page will link directly to the first page of the appropriate ED records.

Most of the questions asked in 1940 are familiar to genealogists: name of each person, their relationship to the head of household, race, gender, age and place of birth. But several new questions reflect the nation’s difficult economic situation at the time. Taken at the tail end of the Great Depression, the country’s unemployment rate still stood at 15% in April 1940. Enumerators (the census counters) asked folks 14 and older if they had been unemployed during the week of March 24-30, or employed by a government relief agency like the Works Progress Administration or the Civilian Conservation Corps and other employment questions.

They asked about income, amount of wages and salaries earned in 1939 and whether the individual had received more than \$50 from income other than wages and salaries. These questions proved controversial. According to

National Archives research specialist Diane Petro, “Republican Senator Charles Tobey of New Hampshire mounted a campaign to force the administration to delete the questions. It was unsuccessful, but a compromise allowed individuals who did not want to give the information to the enumerator to send in a confidential card listing their

income. A ‘C’ (for confidential report) will appear in the upper right hand margin opposite the name on the census record. In the end, only 2% of the population did not



Poster advertising the 1940 US Census. National Archives.

Continued on next page...

answer the question.”

The government was also curious about Americans’ mobility, asking “In what place did this person live on April 1, 1935?” This question may prove very helpful to genealogists trying to track their ancestors’ movements.

Some census responses are so off the wall that researchers are often left to ask, “Where did they get this stuff?” Beginning in 1880 the enumerators were instructed that if they found no one home, “then it shall be lawful for the enumerator to obtain the required information, as nearly as may be practicable, from the family or families, or person or persons, living nearest to such place of abode.” (I can only imagine what some of my neighbors might have reported about me!) The 1940 enumerators’ instructions made provision for at least identifying the person providing the information: “Write an X with a circle around it in col. 7 after the name of the person who furnishes you with the information concerning the members of the household...If you find it necessary to obtain the information from a person who is not a member of the household, write the name of this person in the left-hand margin, opposite the entries for the household, thus: ‘Information from John Brown, neighbor.’”

Each two-sided census form included lines for

enumerating 80 individuals, one per line. The folks who wound up on lines 14 and 29 (about 5% of the total) were asked 15 additional questions including birth place of the



*An enumerator takes information from a farmer in his field for the 1940 US Census. Library of Congress.*

parents; whether a veteran or widow or child of a vet; if the person had received a Social Security number or had paid into the program; and if the responder was a married woman or a woman who had once been married, whether she had been married more than once, age at first marriage and number of children born to her.

I’m guessing that the National Archives’ internet lines will be pretty busy at first. As soon as is practical, we will be downloading all of the Clay County images for use here in the archives. We will also be ordering old fashioned microfilm copies of the schedules. I can hardly wait for April 2!



## Volunteer Spotlight: Ron Hagemann

How long have you volunteered at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County at the Hjemkomst Center museum?

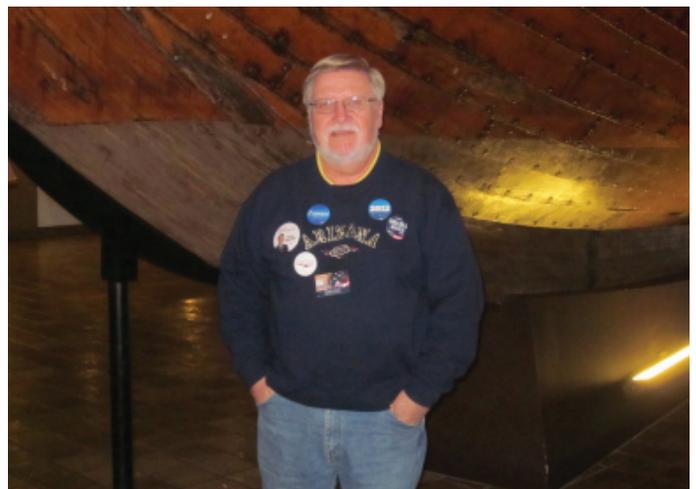
*About 6 ½ years.*

What did you do before you volunteered here?

*I taught history, mostly American history and politics/government, at Fort Dodge Senior High in Fort Dodge, IA for nearly 40 years. I also taught these subjects as an adjunct professor for Buena Vista University for nearly 30 years.*

What do you love most about volunteering here?

*I ‘loved’ teaching and I miss the excitement of sharing information/stories about the past. I feel very fortunate to be given another opportunity to ‘teach’ again! I really enjoy giving tours of both the church and the ship and in general meeting people from all over the country, for that matter, the world.*



What do you do during your spare time?

*My wife and I have become active in our church with activities and organizations within the church. I have also become active in political activities attending caucuses and conventions plus I am on the Moorhead City Charter Commission. I miss not being in Iowa during election campaigns to see almost ‘all’ the candidates but a few have come through recently. In addition, I recently joined the board of the Probstfield Farm Living History Foundation.*

# The Columbian Exhibition, the *Viking*, and the *Hjemkomst*

By Markus Krueger, Visitor Services Coordinator

Randolph Probstfield wanted very much to take his family to the 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. The old pioneer of Oakport loved fairs. Ever since the first Clay County fair in 1872, the Probstfields consistently had a large and award-winning display of their crops. He often served as a judge and helped organize exhibitions for both the Clay County and Minnesota State Fairs. In 1893, however, the Minnesota State Fair was cancelled in order to let everyone concentrate on making an impressive display for the Minnesota building in Chicago.

The Probstfields were always a respected family, but they were never wealthy. Even though he just finished a term as a state senator, R.M. Probstfield could not afford to take his family to Chicago. His Saskatchewan wheat, however, was able to attend. Randolph Probstfield was one of about a dozen Clay County farmers who received awards for their grain at the Columbian Exhibition, and his beautiful framed certificate is in our museum's archives.

The 1893 Columbian Exhibition was not just any fair; it was a World Fair and it changed America forever. An estimated 27 million people from around the world went to Chicago to celebrate the 401st anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing in America. The city of Chicago spent millions building a 686-acre gleaming town of plaster buildings that came to be known as the White City. The White City is said to be the inspiration for the Emerald City of the *Wizard of Oz*, as well as the theme parks built by Walt Disney, whose father Elias was a construction worker at that 1893 fair. Millions of Americans witnessed electric lighting for the first time at the fair and took a ride on the world's first Ferris Wheel, capable of carrying more than 2000 people at a time, 264 feet into the air.

Vendors from around the world introduced a plethora of new products at the fair, including Cracker Jacks and the zipper. Candy maker Milton Hershey was so amazed at a display of European chocolatiers that he bought some German machinery and started making milk chocolate back home in Pennsylvania. August Busch, maker of Budweiser, proclaimed himself "King of Brewers" at the fair, but every can of Pabst Blue

Ribbon beer still boasts that it was Frederick Pabst who won Chicago's beer contest 119 years ago. Some even say the Columbian Exhibition was the birthplace of the hamburger, although I am skeptical that no one in the history of humanity had thought of putting ground beef in a bun before 1893.

Clay County was well-represented at the fair. Minnesota's two agricultural judges were both from Clay County: W.H. Davy (namesake of Moorhead's Davy Park) and F.E. Briggs. Moorhead's O.E. Flaten won first prize in a photography contest. Bertha Darrow and Stella Demars of Moorhead were both selected to give concerts in the Women's Building. George Lamphere, editor of the *Moorhead Weekly News*, was one of the people who helped organize Minnesota's display building at the fair, and his newspaper included many updates and accounts from Chicago. On October 5th, Lamphere's paper quoted Moorhead's B.F. Mackall calling the fair "the most extensive and best of all international expositions that have ever been held in the world." The fair certainly had many wonders to behold, but one attraction that would have certainly caught the eye of those from Clay County, where one in three residents were Scandinavian-born, was a Viking ship from Norway.

## The *Viking*

Today, all school children are taught that Leif Erickson's ship of Norsemen beat Columbus to the New World by about 492 years. Before 1960, however, when archeologists finally discovered remains of a Norse camp in Newfoundland, there was simply no proof of Vikings ever setting foot in America. Two Icelandic Sagas tell the story of Leif Erickson establishing the Vinland colony in North America around the year 1000, but in 1893, most thought it was just a Scandinavian folk tale. The Vikings were, most believed, medieval barbarians incapable of building ships that could reach America half a millennium before Columbus. Norwegian newspaperman and sailor Magnus Andersen was determined to prove the skeptics

Continued on next page...

wrong by building a Viking ship and sailing it from Norway to America. Sailing this ship to Chicago for the celebration of Christopher Columbus' Discovery of America would be the perfect occasion to prove to the world that the Leif Erickson story could be true.

Luckily for Captain Andersen, a Viking ship had recently been found. In 1880, beneath a mound of clay southwest of Oslo, archeologists uncovered a thousand-year-old Viking ship. This ship, called the *Gokstad* ship, was the first preserved Viking ship that archeologists had ever found. Before this ship was unearthed, no one actually knew what a Viking ship even looked like. Now scholars and sailors could study every inch and measure every beam to see how the Norse people built the legendary ships that allowed them to topple kingdoms and discover new worlds. Like everyone else who saw that ship, Magnus Andersen wanted to know how she would sail.

Andersen collected donations from ordinary people all across Norway to build a replica of the *Gokstad* ship. His ship, called the *Viking*, was built in a shipyard on the Sandefjord just a few miles away from where the *Gokstad* ship was discovered. Eleven sailors were chosen from more than 200 that applied, and the ship set sail for Chicago on April 30th, 1893. The crew was



*The Viking in the White City at the 1893 Columbian Exhibition.*

greeted with celebrations and crowds all across America, especially in cities along the route with large populations of Scandinavian immigrants. The Norwegian ship overshadowed the replicas of Columbus' *Nina*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria* that were brought over by Spain. The fair promoters in their *Book of the Fair* said that the voyage of the *Viking* "proved at least the possibility of Leif Ericsson's [sic] famous exploit."

Interestingly, there was another way in which Columbus' celebration honored Leif Erickson that year.

The Clay County Archives holds an award won by Leif Erickson for his Scotch Fife wheat. This Leif Erickson, of course, was a Moland Township farmer, not an 11th-century Norse explorer.

### The *Hjemkomst* and the Viking

In 1972-'73, Robert Asp was just about ready to begin work on his own Viking ship. The Moorhead junior high guidance counselor had already obtained plans for the *Gokstad* ship from a book he checked out at Concordia College. He had already cut some logs and was looking for a space that would be big enough to build a Viking ship in. Before he started building, though, he went to Chicago to see and study a Viking ship first hand. When Robert Asp made his first trip to see Magnus Andersen's ship, it had spent decades outside in Lincoln Park, protected by nothing but a wooden canopy and a



*This is one of many photographs Robert Asp took of the Viking to guide him in his work on the Hjemkomst. The ship spent decades in Chicago's Lincoln Park protected only by a wooden canopy and a chain link fence. HCS, Tom Asp Collection.*

chain link fence. Robert Asp and various crew members made several trips to Chicago in the subsequent years as they built the *Hjemkomst*. Robert Asp never did make it to Oslo to see the *Gokstad* ship, but he did a pretty good job with his Concordia books and the *Viking* as his guide.

The *Viking's* voyage helped the *Hjemkomst* in another way, as well. E.M. "Lefty" Johnson of Hawley is one of the many unsung heroes who helped turn Robert Asp's dream into a reality. Johnson says he watched Asp build the ship "from the keel all the way up," and there was much talk of him being a member of the crew. To prepare the crew for the voyage ahead, Johnson got a

hold of the account of a *Viking* crewmember named Rasmussen. The book was written in Norwegian, of course, but Hawley in the 1970s was the kind of place where it was not difficult to find someone who grew up speaking Norwegian. Johnson asked jeweler Vic Hanson (a Swede, he recalls) to translate a portion of the memoirs. Hanson only translated the middle chapters of Rasmussen's book – those dealing directly with the voyage across - because Lefty Johnson was chiefly interested in Rasmussen for any insights he could give the *Hjemkomst* crew about what it is really like to sail a Viking ship. Lefty Johnson's most notable contribution to the *Hjemkomst*, however, was planning and executing the operation that pulled the completed 16 ton ship out of the basement of the Hawley Shipyard in 1980.

As for Magnus Andersen's ship, it is finally getting some respect after more than a century of neglect. Over the years it has moved from Chicago's Field Museum to Lincoln Park to its current location at Good Templar Park in Geneva, Illinois. In 2007, *Landmarks Illinois* named the ship one of the top ten most endangered landmarks in the state. The list brought the *Viking* the attention it needed. A few months later it received a \$52,000 grant for much needed preservation projects. In 2008, a non-profit organization called Friends of the Viking Ship formed in order to continue the restoration effort and look for a permanent indoor home for what is likely the

largest remaining artifact of the Columbian Exhibition. Find out more about the *Viking* on their website: [www.vikingship.us](http://www.vikingship.us).

**Nordic Footprints**  
**35th Annual Scandinavian Hjemkomst**  
**& 5th Annual Midwest Viking**  
**Festivals**

Friday, June 22 and  
 Saturday, June 23  
 10 am – 5 pm both days

**adults \$10/day ~ youth (13-17) \$5/day**  
**children (12 & under) free with paid adult**

Hjemkomst Center, 202 1<sup>st</sup> Ave North  
[www.hcscconline.org](http://www.hcscconline.org) or [www.nordiccultureclubs.org](http://www.nordiccultureclubs.org)

NORDIC CULTURE CLUBS  
 Lake Region Arts Council  
 HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SOCIETY OF CLAY COUNTY

In memorium: Beloved member Elaine Baron who volunteered at the Hjemkomst Center for 25 years died on March 4, 2012. She will be missed.

# Clay County Sesquicentennial?

By Mark Peihl, Archivist

Clay County celebrates an anniversary this March. On March 8, 1862 – 150 years ago - the Minnesota Legislature established Clay County along its present boundaries. Actually, little changed except the lines on some maps – there were only a handful of settlers residing in the young county. The story has more to do with the US Civil War than with the establishment of our home county.

In March 1858, two months before Minnesota became a state, the Territorial Legislature created two new Red River Valley counties. The southern Valley became Toombs County, named for Georgia Senator Robert A. Toombs. Its northern border was just a bit south of

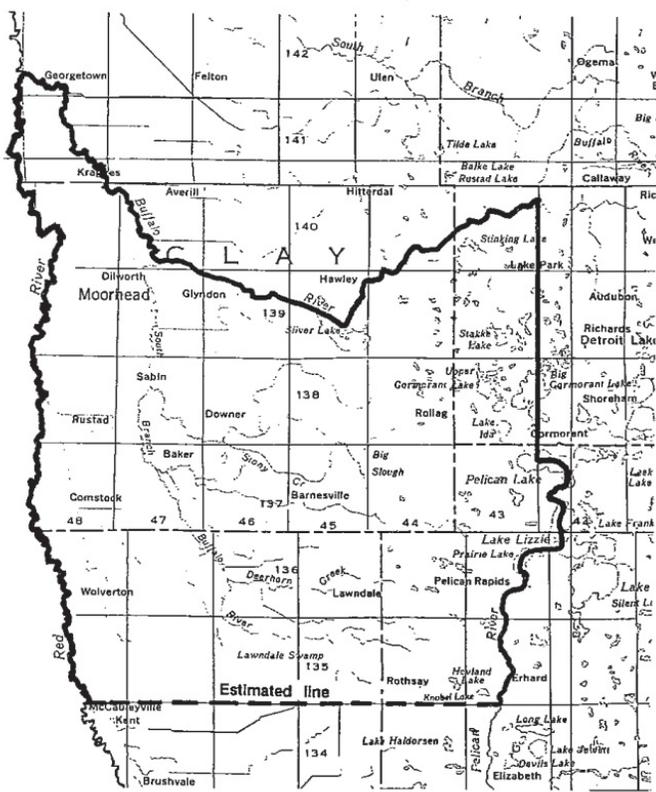
County and a bit of Otter Tail County. The Buffalo River formed its northern border. (See Map A, reproduced from the wonderful Minnesota Atlas of Historical County Boundaries, John H. Long, ed., 2000.)

Barely two years later, the legislature was changing boundaries again. The Hudson's Bay Company had established a steamboat /Red River cart transfer depot at Georgetown, just north of the Breckenridge County line. Fort Abercrombie was established some fifty miles to the south. The Toombs-Breckenridge line was moved 12 miles north to the present Clay-Wilkin border and Breckenridge was extended north to between townships 144 and 145 (12 miles north of the present Clay-Norman County line.) Breckenridge's eastern border was moved to the present Clay-Becker line. This arrangement centrally located Georgetown and Ft. Abercrombie on the western borders of Breckenridge and Toombs Counties respectively. (See map B.)

Minnesota's state borders are the result of a political squabble. Territorial Republicans, representing mainly farming interests, wanted a long, east-west state stretching from Wisconsin to the Missouri River with its northern border just north of St. Paul. Democrats, supported by merchants interested in the Canadian fur trade, wanted a north-south state. The Democrats won out. They were the ones who named townsites and counties for their southern Democrat allies.

This habit came back to haunt Minnesota after the Civil War broke out in 1861. Both John C. Breckenridge and Robert Toombs became generals in the Confederate Army. On March 8, 1862, disgusted Minnesota legislators

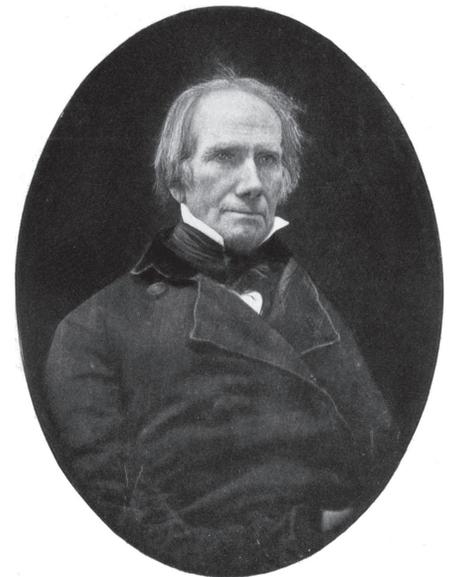
BRECKENRIDGE Boundaries  
18 Mar 1858 – 1 Nov 1860



Map A

present day Rothsay.

Immediately north was Breckenridge County, named for Vice President John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky. Breckenridge included the south part of present day Clay County, the northern two tiers of townships in Wilkin County, the western part of Becker



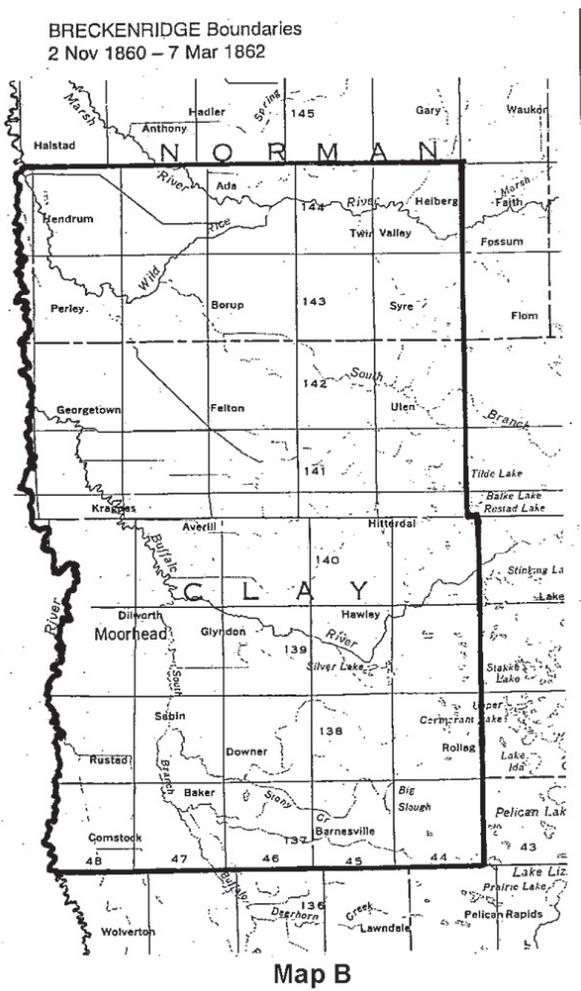
Henry Clay, namesake of Clay County

renamed Breckenridge County – Clay County, for the late Kentucky Senator Henry Clay. “The Great Pacificator,” Clay authored the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850. He was instrumental in holding the Union together in the four decades preceding the Civil War. (Later Toombs County was renamed Andy Johnson County for then-Vice President Andrew Johnson. After Johnson’s impeachment as President in 1868, it became Wilkin County, named for Alexander Wilkin, Colonel of the 9th Minnesota Infantry in the Civil War. Wilkin died in the Battle of Tupelo, Mississippi on July 14, 1864.)

The newly christened Clay County received new borders as well. The legislators lopped off the northern two tiers of townships giving the county its present shape.

Still, the new borders meant little until the Northern Pacific Railway arrived in 1871. On February 27, 1872 the State Legislature ordered that Clay County be “hereby declared to be an organized county, with all the rights and privileges and immunities of other organized counties in this state” and established Moorhead as its county seat.

The 150th anniversary of our county’s name and shape are worthy of celebrating. But let’s keep a bottle of Champagne corked until our real sesquicentennial on February 27, 2022!



## The HCSCC Receives Grants

We received a \$6,000 Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grant for a new exhibit featuring *Hjemkomst* voyage artifacts. The research and design phase of the exhibit development has been made possible in part by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of the Minnesotans on November 4, 2008 and is administered by the Minnesota Historical Society.

In addition, we received a \$2,640 Legacy Grant from the Lake Region Arts Council. The HCSCC will partner with Hawley Elementary and Concordia College to provide a high quality arts experience to residents of the greater Moorhead area in a range of ages in November 2012. The HCSCC will host the performance group, Dance Revels Moving History, in a two-part art and culture project.

We plan to engage 150 Hawley 5th and 6th graders in arts education to learn about the music, dance, and stories of the French/Ojibwe (Metis) culture, remnants of which still survive today in pockets of northern Minnesota and North Dakota. Concordia College French and education majors will participate as helpers in order

to learn how to integrate the arts into classroom teaching. The children will learn songs, dance steps, and stories of Red River heritage while practicing French and Ojibwe languages.

The second part of the project involves a public performance at Pangea—Cultivate our Cultures, our one-day family-friendly celebration of cultural diversity in our region focusing on performing arts and cultural education, at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, Minnesota on November 10.



*Pangea-Cultivate our Cultures 2011*

# 2012 Exhibition & Event Calendar

## **Current & Upcoming Exhibitions**

### **Through January 2013**

#### *The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay County*

From the GI Bill to the Baby Boom, changes on the farm and TV to the Korean War, this exhibit looks at the exciting years that created modern America.

### **February 4 through March 26**

*EXPLORING NOW: 365 Days to 50 and The sheARTS Project: Art Hats for Breast Cancer Awareness* by Claudia M. Pratt

### **March 19 through June 18**

#### *Seeds of Victory!*

An exhibit about the World War II Victory Gardens just in time for spring! This exhibit tells us how gardening and canning your own food was a patriotic duty.

### **April 9 through June 4**

*The BIG Art Show* presented by the FMVA  
FMVA Big Art Show is a wide variety of art (2D and 3D) from both emerging and established artists.

### **June 19 through September 19**

#### *Red River Watercolor Society National Juried Show*

Red River Watercolor Society is a volunteer organization that serves to promote the interest, display and education in watercolor and other water-based media in this region and nationally through their flagship National Juried Exhibition.

### **July 21 through December 31**

#### *Hjemkomst Voyage Exhibit*

The exhibit will bring a fresh perspective about the *Hjemkomst* expedition. The public can look at this exhibit with new eyes and be amazed again at what an accomplishment the expedition was— for the Asp family, the voyage crew, as well as the businesses and communities that supported it.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Tuesday, May 1, 6 p.m.**

#### Annual Meeting

The HCSCC's Annual Meeting will be held at the Dilworth Community Center.

### **Thursday, May 17, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

#### Syttende Mai Pølsefest

Join us for a lefse and hot dog lunch in recognition of Syttende Mai, Norway's Constitution Day.

### **Tuesday, June 19, 5 - 8 p.m.**

Red River Watercolor Society National Juried Show Opening Reception

### **Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (both days)**

#### Nordic Footprints

The 35th Annual Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival joins forces with the 5th Annual Midwest Viking Festival for a heck of a deal: two festivals for the price of one! Sweden is the featured country for 2012!

Enjoy the Scandinavian Quartet from Sweden as well as other musicians, dancers, booth exhibits, foods, and presentations on four floors indoors and a pretty-authentic Viking village outdoors with demonstrations of the arts, combat skills, and everyday life of the Vikings. **Per day admission: \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth (13-17), free to children 12 and under with paid adult.**

### **Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23**

#### Bergquist Cabin Open House

Join us for our annual Bergquist Cabin Open House. Stay tuned for more details.

### **Saturday, July 21, 2012, 1 - 5 p.m.**

#### *Hjemkomst Voyage 30th Reunion*

Returning crew members from the *Hjemkomst Voyage* will sit on a panel to share their memories and what their lives have been like since the voyage with the public.

### **Saturday, November 10, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

#### Pangea - Cultivate our Cultures

Celebrate our community's traditions and cultures with this local, multi-ethnic showcase of music, dance, culinary arts, and children's activities. Free and open to the public.

# New and Renewing Members

November 16, 2011 - March 1, 2012

## Individual \$30

Allen County Public  
Library  
Tochi Products  
Ron and Hallie Anderson  
Delores Bekkerus  
Mark Chekola  
Roger and Gladys  
Durensky  
Virginia Duval  
Janice Fitzsimons  
Vickie Hendrickson  
Irene Hogan  
Patricia Hoversten  
Karla Huebner  
Raymond James  
Anna Marie Johnson  
Dr. Heidi Kassenborg  
John Kolness

Eileen P. Manning Michels  
Conrad Newgren  
J.D. Quam  
Richard Sander  
Barry & Renee Steen  
Jim Steen  
Olaf R. Wicker

## Household \$50

Les Bakke  
William Sorenson and  
Carol Beckstrom  
Jerry O. and June Brantner  
Christine and Randi  
Cockerill  
Gary Hanson  
John Lindholm  
Jane Loeffler  
Daryl and Janet F.

Ostercamp  
Elsie Peterson  
Darrel and Gloria Ruud  
Herbert W. Snyder and  
Barbara Dunn  
Alvin and Diane Swanson  
Matt Trumble  
Don and Dianne Westrum

## Booster \$75

Richard Chenoweth  
Rev. Clay and Sue  
Ellingson  
Armond and Nancy  
Erickson  
Floyd Lecy  
John D. Peterson  
Linda K Wange  
Robert O Wefald

## Heritage \$125

Alliance Township  
Vikingland Kiwanis -  
Moorhead  
Roger and Betty Anda  
Verlyn and Evonne  
Anderson  
Glen and Heidi Deeton  
John and Audrey Elton  
Graham and Madrene  
Goeson  
Jim and Jan Ness  
Olin and Ruth Storvick  
Nicholas and Ene Vogel  
Kirk and Kathy Watt  
Ronald and Del Rae  
Williams

## Patron \$250

Korsmo Funeral Service  
Dennis & Kris  
Herbranson

## Benefactor \$500

Lois Selberg

\*Any errors are a result of mere human weakness and not intended to reflect a lack of respect.

# The Seeds of Victory

Home Gardening Posters from the World Wars

## March 20 - June 18



HISTORICAL &  
CULTURAL SOCIETY  
OF GREAT BRITAIN



Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County  
PO Box 157 • 202 First Avenue North  
Moorhead, MN 56561-0157



To preserve, interpret and present the history and culture of the Clay County community and its neighbors.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

# **HJEMKOMST VOYAGE 30TH REUNION SATURDAY, JULY 21, NOON - 5 P.M.**



**WE INVITE ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO EVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE SHIP TO COME AND SHARE THEIR STORIES WITH THE ASP FAMILY AND CREW MEMBERS. THIS MAY WELL TURN OUT TO BE THE FIRST TIME ALL CREW MEMBERS HAVE REUNITED IN 30 YEARS. THERE WILL BE REFRESHMENTS, A CREW AND ASP FAMILY PANEL FROM 1 TO 3 P.M. ON SATURDAY, JULY 21.**

