

The Hourglass

Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 4 • Winter 2011

2011 HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, December 10, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Hjemkomst Center

At 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., in conjunction with the art installation *Ordinary Vikings*, artist Jill Johnson will do sculpture-making demonstrations including wax mask moldings which will be added to the exhibit. At 2 p.m., Dr. Terry Shoptaugh will give a presentation on the Clay County home front.

In January, we will open a new in-house exhibit, *The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay County*. See a sneak preview of this exhibit currently under development.



The Stenerson Bros. Lumber Company's new Moorhead yard shortly after it opened in 1946. Building materials were still extremely scarce in the years right after World War II. Because of nation-wide lumber shortages, this building was constructed out of wood scavenged from the old Fargo-Moorhead Twins baseball park.

Did you Know...

The day after Thanksgiving has long been the busiest shopping day of the year, often referred to as "Black Friday" because it's the day retailers' sales become profitable: moving from "the Red" into "the Black." But the term's origin is from the Philadelphia Police Department. By 1966 the Philly cops (harried by thousands of shoppers, snarled traffic and irritated citizens) called the day "Black Friday" because of all the problems it caused. The earliest reference we've been able to find regarding the Red/Black issue is from a 1981 ABC News broadcast.

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

HCSCC News

IRA Rollover Passes for 2010 and 2011!

The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010 restored the IRA Charitable Rollover for 2010 & 2011. As a result, if you are age 70 ½ or older and have an IRA you can transfer up to \$100,000 directly to a public charity either outright or for a specific purpose, but may not be to a donor advised fund or supporting organization.

Why do this? First, a 2011 transfer qualifies for your required minimum distribution. When you make a gift directly to a charity from your IRA you may have some tax benefits to include reduced tax on your social security, retaining some deductions that are tied to your adjusted gross income, reduce state income tax and more. (Check with your accountant for information specific to your situation.) Most of all you would make the gift because you want to support the not-for-profit organization financially.

The transfer must be made directly from your IRA custodian or trustee to the charitable organization. So if you act now, you still have time to make an IRA charitable rollover gift for 2011. You should contact your IRA custodian now to begin the process.

The HCSCC Annual Fall Gala and Pangea-Cultivate our Cultures a Success!

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our annual fall gala on October 28: Celebrating the Greatest Generation as well as at the 17th annual Pangea-Cultivate our Cultures Festival on November 12.

We had approximately 150 attendees at our annual fall gala. The night was filled with great food, fun times, and some fabulous 1940s tunes! Dr. Roland Dille, former MSUM president, was the 2011 Clay County Heritage Award recipient.

Pangea-Cultivate our Cultures set a record in attendance with a total of 1,420 people stopping by the event. We had some amazing performances, and of course, delicious food! We're already looking forward to next year's event!

Check out our Facebook page to see photos from both events.



Find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/hcsc

Letter from the Board President

Gene Prim



We are rapidly closing the books on another year. The holidays will soon be upon us, and that is a busy time for us all. At the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County, the holiday season always brings a lot of visitors to the Center. Between now and the end of the year, there are a number of programs and exhibits that will be featured. Elsewhere in this

edition you can update yourself on what's coming up in the ever-changing schedule of events at our organization.

Sometimes it is easier to look forward if we take a hard look back at where we have been. The board and staff are constantly trying to re-invent ourselves to make this an organization that you can both be proud of and one that you want to come back to several times a year. In order to do that, we need to let folks know what we are all about.

During the past year, there has been a concerted and determined effort to get our name and face out into the public eye more often. Our marketing coordinator Brienne Carlsrud is always looking for new ways to get our message out. You have likely seen Executive Director Maureen Kelly Jonason or Archivist Mark Peihl either on television or in person during the past year as they spread the word about the materials, the displays, the events and the services available under our strangely shaped canvas roof on the banks of the Red River.

The year 2011 was filled with a lot of challenges and quite a few success stories. Waging the perennial war with the raging Red River has gotten to be an every-spring event, and the fight is getting tiresome. The staff at the HCSCC Center spend way too much time every spring just trying to save and protect all of the priceless displays in the HCSCC building from flood waters. We have not lost anything in recent years to the rising Red, but it's a threat every spring and drastically reduces our traffic and income when nobody can get to the Center because of flood waters. High water and road construction diverted a lot of traffic away from the Center during this past

summer, but even with the reduced accessibility, it looks like we will finish the year with a balanced budget and a small surplus.

There were a number of unique and entertaining events scheduled during this past year. The Scandinavian and Viking events during the summer always draw a lot of people as they celebrate their heritage. The *St. John's Bible* display of paintings was a highly unusual display featured this past year. If you missed it, you missed a good one.

One of our more visible events is the Annual Fall Gala and the presentation of the Heritage Award. This year that award went to Dr. Roland Dille, former president of Minnesota State University Moorhead and a local legend. Dr. Dille is in some prestigious company with this award as past recipients have included entertainer Bobby Vee, the community of Georgetown as the first settlement in Clay County as they celebrated their 150th birthday, noted historian and author Dr. Hiram Drache and now Dr. Dille.

This year the Gala focused on the contributions of "The Greatest Generation," the men and women who lived and served during World War II. They were honored at the Gala, and many of the local folks that you know were featured in our last newsletter, "A Salute to the Clay County Men and Women of the World War II Generation." That 72-page tabloid has been a big hit, especially with the men and women who served and their families. There are still some copies of these war stories available at the Center if you want to pick up a copy of the tabloid.

On a sad note, three of those soldiers featured in the "Salute" tabloid have died since their interviews and a fourth is now in a nursing home. Time marches on too quickly now for the surviving members of this generation that saved the world and whose ranks grow smaller by the day. Take the time to thank them and any serviceman for their dedicated service to our country whenever you get the chance. They were, and are, truly heroes.

Enjoy the Holidays. If you're stuck for a present, we have a great gift shop at the Hjemkomst Center. A membership in our society might also be much appreciated by that "hard-to-buy-for" individual.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

HCSCC Executive Director

Maureen Kelly Jonason

Photo courtesy of The Hawley Herald.



The end of the year is usually a good time to look back at the year past and reflect on accomplishments and challenges. But I would prefer to inspire you with plans for 2012! Our next year promises to be jam-packed with special opportunities.

First of all, 2012 is the 150th Anniversary of the forming of what was later named Clay County. I will leave it to the historians to explain the name issue. Here at HCSCC, we plan to celebrate that auspicious date with a couple of special events. First is the annual meeting. We plan to focus on Randolph Probstfield and his place in history as an early prosperous farmer from 150 years ago. The menu will include foods he mentions in his personal papers, the likes of which he grew on his own farm. A program on Probstfield will be the highlight of the evening. Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, May 8 at the Dilworth Community Center. Then, September 13, we will host "150 Years of Fashion in Clay County," a celebration of vintage clothing preserved by families throughout the county (see box below). What a fun way to look back at our County's history!

2012 also marks the 30th anniversary of the sailing of the *Hjemkomst* from Duluth to Norway. We are planning several ways to commemorate this momentous event in County history. First, we will be

having two books reprinted: *Hjemkomst: A Homecoming Odyssey*, by Rose Asp, and *A Dream is a Dream* by Robert Asp. Both of these popular books have been out of print for awhile and the 30th anniversary seems a good time to reprint them. In addition, however, we are planning a brand new exhibit on the voyage that will focus on rarely exhibited ship artifacts. The exhibit will open at the all-crew reunion scheduled for July 21 and run through December. July 21 we'll throw open the doors to a free community celebration which includes a panel forum with crew members. Even the Norwegians are coming! Watch for updates and SAVE THE DATE!

In the meantime, the HCSCC team of Mark Peihl, Lisa Vedaa, and Markus Krueger have researched, designed, and installed an exciting new local history exhibit called *The Boom: 1945-1960 in Clay County* set to open in January. Come one and come all to YOUR museum to see this fascinating look at those pivotal years of change. At the same time, plans continue to develop for a new permanent Red River exhibit we hope will be ready at the end of 2013 or early 2014.

None of these amazing activities can take place without your support. As members, you already support the mission and operations with your membership. But your year-end donations are especially important to our ability to close out the year in good standing and to launch the next year on a firm foundation. Please take a moment now to consider including HCSCC in your year-end giving. And stop by to visit us soon!

Vintage Clothes Needed

Do you have vintage clothing in your home that you would love to show off in our vintage style show next September? We are looking for fashions from every decade from the 1850s on to be modeled. We are interested in every economic status for every occasion. Full outfits are greatly appreciated, but parts and pieces are also welcomed. We are also looking for models. Typically teenagers make good models for the earlier styles. Volunteer the grandchildren!

Please contact either Gloria Lee at dlee@feltontel.net or 218-494-3609 or Tim Jorgensen at 218-299-5511 or Tim.Jorgenson@ci.moorhead.mn.us about vintage clothes you have or models you know. WE NEED YOUR HELP!



Collections Donations

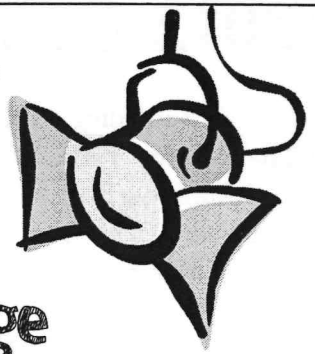
By Lisa Vedaa, Collections Manager

Donors and Accessions August-October 2011

Donors: Barbara Anton, Moorhead; Augustana College, Rock Island, IL; Shirley Carlson, Maple Grove, MN; Cass County Historical Society, West Fargo; Alex C. Dessellier, Moorhead; Carla Houle, Moorhead; Margret Kragnes, Moorhead; Kermit & Grace Kvamme, Fergus Falls, MN; Don Larew, Moorhead; Candace Mathiowetz, Moorhead; Eileen Michels, St. Paul, MN; Judy A. Olson, Moorhead; Michelle E. Peterson, Moorhead; Jerald D. Quam, Fargo; Bonnie Rehder, Moorhead; Dale White, Moorhead.

Objects and Archival Materials Accessioned: (1) issue, The Dilworth News, 21 Aug 1940; (1) dining table, circa 1950s, (2) side dining chairs, circa 1950s, (1) plastic doll, c1950s, (1) teapot, brown, green and yellow, c1950s, Vernon Kilns "Brown Eyed Susan" pattern; (2) framed prints, children playing by Phoebe MacDonald, c1950s, (1) dress, ivory lace, flower girl with (1) matching veil; (2) title abstracts, East 50 ft of Lots 13 to 18, inclusive, Block 24, Highland Addition #2, City of Moorhead, aka 1112 6th Ave S; (1) wig in box, (1) DeLendrecie's hat box containing (2) hats, (1) round hat box containing (4) hats, (1) photo of woman wearing a hat, June 1966, (1) photo of congregation at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Fargo, taken from balcony on Easter Sunday, circa early 1960s, (1) child's dress, worn by donor and (1) scanned photo of donor wearing the dress; (1) course catalog, Hope Academy, 1889-90, Moorhead, Minn.; (2) copies, The Story of Ben's Daughter: Margret Thordarson Kragnes, by Margret and Shannon Tomsen, 2011; (1) 3-sheet genealogy chart, Kari Holte & Olav Midbø family; (2) cased tintypes: Olav Aanundson Midbø 1800-1873 & Kari Mikelsdatter Holte 1809-1883; (1) volume, 3-ring binder, Flat Rate Schedule, Chevrolet, 1966, used at Kieffer Chevrolet, Moorhead; campaign materials from candidates for local political offices and position statements for the League of Women Voters, ca 1990-recent; (1) set, bear skin mitts, (1) list, NP Ry Co., St. Paul, MN, Seniority Roster, January 1, 1954; (2) crates, Fairmont Creamery Company, Moorhead, MN; (1) pump organ, from Aspelund Lutheran Church, Clay County, used 1920s-1947; (1) box, volumes and records of the Moorhead Child Psychology Club (child study club), ca 1933-2000 [box contains up to 1982]; (4) carousels, 35mm slides taken by Charles Peterson, Hawley, of construction of Hjemkomst ship, flight to Norway, arrival of ship, etc.; materials relating to CCC in Minnesota; (2) boxes of annuals, photographs, and other materials relating to Leonard and Rudolph Johnson, owners of Johnson's Roller Rink, and other family members of Bev Mislow; (1) piece, sheet music for "Love's Ship," stamped "West Piano Company, 9 4th St N, Moorhead, Minn." on cover.

Volunteer Spotlight Bruce Partridge



Bruce Partridge has been a Hopperstad Stave Church tour guide at the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County at the Hjemkomst Center museum since June 2009. Bruce is originally from Maxwell, Iowa and decided to move to Moorhead, Minn. because he likes colder climates.

He previously worked at Yonker Rehabilitation Center in Des Moines, Iowa for 20 years. He worked specifically with spiral injuries, strokes, birth defects, and head injuries. Before working at the rehab center, Bruce worked as a farmer construction worker in Central Iowa for about seven years.

Bruce's favorite part about working at the Hjemkomst Center museum is meeting new people.

"The church tours are fun; where else would I meet someone from Albania? I like the diversity of people who come through the museum, as well," Bruce said.

Bruce also likes to add some humor to his tours, often stating one of his favorite jokes at the beginning of his tour about Vik, Norway (the hometown of the original Hopperstad Stave Church): "Vik is a lot bigger than it used to be--it's now a Vik and a half."

"It's important to not just give people dry facts, but to give them enjoyment from the tour," Bruce said, "I think people retain information much better that way."

During Bruce's spare time, he enjoys reading, writing, and everything else in between.



2012 Century Farm Recognition Program

According to the Minnesota State Fair website, The Century Farm recognition program, sponsored by the Minnesota State Fair and the Minnesota Farm Bureau, recognizes farms that have been in continuous ownership by a family for 100 years or more. Since the program began in 1976, over 8,500 Minnesota farms have been recognized. Each year, Century Farm recipients receive an outdoor sign designating the farm as a "Century Farm" and a certificate signed by the governor of Minnesota and presidents of the Farm Bureau and Minnesota State Fair. Qualifying farms have been in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years and are 50 acres or more.

Here are directions on how to apply:

Visit http://www.mnstatefair.org/general_info/recognition.html to fill out an application form. The deadline for 2012 program is April 2.

Please return the application to the address below:

Minnesota State Fair
Century Farm Program
1265 Snelling Avenue North
St. Paul, MN 55108

Qualifications for entry are as follows:

1. The farm must be at least 100 years old this year (2012)

Here are the previous Clay County Century Farm families:

Howard O Sr & Evelyn Pender Baker 1895
Eldon & Patricia Solum, Baker, 1888
Curt & Beverly Hanson Butenhoff, Barnesville, 1900
Ole Egge, Barnesville, 1886
Gordon O & Claudia D Gilbertson, Barnesville, 1888
Thomas & Patricia Hilgers, Barnesville, 1878
Alden Hough, Barnesville, 1904
Russell T Lund, Barnesville, 1874
Nick Manston, Barnesville, 1886
Wayne & Grace McEvers, Barnesville, 1880
Kermit & Alice Nelson, Barnesville, 1884
Arnold Ness, Barnesville, 1875
Joseph P & Lois Pederson, Barnesville, 1892
Gordon & Maxine & Wayne Shulstad, Barnesville, 1883
Melvin Stephenson, Barnesville, 1871
Stewart & Jennifer Bjorhus, Borup, 1900
Aldus & Laverne Heiraas, Borup, 1895
Floyd D Blilie, Comstock, 1890
Earl & Loren Ingebretsen Farms, Fehon, 1885
Darlene & John Askegaard, Georgetown 1880
Joseph & Elizabeth Richards, Georgetown, 1904
Bradley Crume, Glyndon, 1899
Gordon & Mildred Juve, Glyndon, 1882

according to abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings, or other authentic land records. Please do not send originals or copies of records.

2. Your family must have owned the farm for 100 years or more. "Family" is defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father-mother-brother-sister-daughter-son-in-law).

3. Continuous residence on farm is not required, but ownership must be continuous.

4. The farm should consist of 50 or more acres and currently be involved in agricultural production. All of the qualifications must be met at the time the application is submitted. Recognition ceremonies are handled by the local county fair. If your county fair does not have a ceremony, your certificate and sign will be sent directly to you shortly after June 1. The Century Farm status is only conferred on a farm one time. New owners from the same "family," after a farm has already been designated a Century Farm may not reapply or request new certificate.

Please note: If you do not have access to the internet or would like to do more research, please contact Lisa Vedaa at 218-299-5511 Ext. 6735 or Mark Peihl at 218-299-5511 Ext. 6734.

Eugene & Carol Langlie, Glyndon, 1900
Norman & Myrtle Larson, Glyndon, 1890
Gary A Lee, Glyndon, 1870
Bradley Crume, Glyndon, 1899
Gerhard Snartland, Glyndon, 1872
Welik Wold Family, Glyndon, 1890
James & Agnes Aakre, Hawley, 1888
Avella Anderson, Hawley, 1885
Bruce & Joy Bang, Hawley, 1879
Curtis & Ardelle Berg, Hawley, 1871
Gary L Berg, Hawley, 1896
Norman Bjorndahl, Hawley, 1880
Maurice Bredeson Hawley 1882
Mr & Mrs Courtney Carlson, Hawley, 1880
Mildred & Rose Egge & Strand, Hawley, 1883
Henry & Levon Ford, Hawley, 1873
Gustav A Haug, Hawley, 1882
Ted Herbanson, Hawley, 1874
Steven & Lisa Jetvig, Hawley, 1884
Joy, Colin & Sheryl Melby, Hawley, 1887
Arlen Nelson, Hawley, 1874

Continued on next page...

Donald H Nord, Hawley, 1881
 Eldon & Margie Raknerud, Hawley, 1889
 Kermit & Ardell Rodke, Hawley, 1901
 Gordon & Mildred G Sander, Hawley, 1890
 Richard & Robert Schlatter, Hawley, 1879
 Verna & Stuart Westberg, Hawley, 1880
 Kenneth Wouters, Hawley, 1891
 Carl E Erickson, Hitterdal, 1884
 Earl S & Marcy Hillstead, Hitterdal, 1886
 Grant Lyseng, Hitterdal, 1879
 Leroy & Ardith Peterson, Hitterdal, 1901
 Audrey Savig, Hitterdal, 1910
 Lynn Anderson, Moorhead, 1887
 Warren Brendemuhl, Moorhead, 1878
 Edwin J Dahlstrom, Moorhead, 1869
 Bob & Mae Gee, Moorhead, 1879
 Richard & Josie Gilbery, Moorhead, 1892
 Jacob A Holte, Moorhead, 1877
 Duane, David & Kent Karlstrom, Moorhead, 1899
 Jesse W Larson, Moorhead, 1877
 Phyllis Nelson, Moorhead, 1890
 M.s. Nelson, L.a. Nelson & M.a. Niedfeldt, Moorhead, 1896
 The Oberg Family, Moorhead, 1891
 Maurice & May Olsgaard, Moorhead, 1895
 Anne Ramstad, Moorhead, 1874
 Melvin A Richards, Moorhead, 1890
 D H Roen, Moorhead, 1871
 Margaret Baller Sillers, Moorhead, 1882
 Charles & Arthur Swanson, Moorhead, 1891
 Wallace & Carol Thomas, Moorhead, 1883
 Orville & Myrtle Tufton, Moorhead, 1885
 Jeffery Anderson, Pelican Rapids, 1898

Gordon Gruchalla, Sabin, 1904
 Susan (Rosenfeldt) Gruchalla, Sabin, 1904
 Earl & Iris Hoppe, Sabin, 1894
 Darryl & Tammy Johnk, Sabin, 1892
 R Richard & Patsy J Koester, Sabin, 1895
 Randy & Donna Mcevers, Sabin, 1903
 Sherwood & Marilyn Peterson, Sabin, 1907
 Rodney & Randy Schmidt, Sabin, 1893
 Paul Amundson, Ulen, 1894
 Curtis N Auenson, Ulen, 1874
 Conrad B Christianson, Ulen, 1881
 Harald I Moen, Ulen, 1890
 Arvid Strand, Ulen, 1888
 Dean & Bonnie Syverson, Ulen, 1902
 Conrad N & Darlene R Wiger, Ulen, 1879



Susan Rosenfeldt Gruchalla, one of the Century Farm award winners for 2011, with HCSCC Board Member Jon Evert. Photo courtesy of the Barnesville Record-Review.

New and Renewing Members

October 1 - November 15, 2011

Individual \$30

Family Search International
 Ron Anderson
 Sharon Benzell
 Elizabeth D. Bushell
 Nancy K. Cooper
 Donald Dobmeier
 June Adele Dolva
 Teresa Garske
 Tom Hall
 LaVerne Halverson
 Deloris A. Mellon
 Dr. Jim Oliver
 Terry V. Olson

Household \$50

Rod & Audrey Angstman
 Joanne Boyland & Oscar Flores

Dennis & Kathy Bresee
 C. Owen Carlson
 Robert Dambach
 Jerome & Pam Ekre
 Clarence & Donna Hanson
 Frank & Loureigne Kimm
 Dorothy Schmidt
 Ruth E Wibe

Booster

Ken & Jan Bauer
 Olaf C. & Verna Cartford
 Jan & Larry Nelson
 Paul D. Pratt

Heritage

Gary & Rose Bergan
 Roland & Beth Dille

Paul J. & Mardeth L. Dovre
 Carroll & Jo Engelhardt
 Tom & Joyce Pettinger

Benefactor

Carl & June Bailey



Tied to History: Quilts of Clay County

In collaboration with two wonderful exhibits we had at our museum this fall, Quilt National '09 and Fiber Artists Look at the Elements, we had an in-house exhibit on display titled Tied to History: Quilts of Clay County. The exhibit was curated by HCSCC Collections Manager Lisa Vedaa and included Clay County quilts and other artifacts from our own collection at the HCSCC. The exhibit featured several types of quilts including whole cloth, log cabin, crazy quilts and autograph, among others.

In a traditional log cabin quilt block, each fabric strip is a "log" arranged around a central square that represents the hearth fire and is frequently made of red cloth. One half of the "logs" in each block are made of dark fabrics, and the other half are light fabrics.

Crazy quilts were very popular during the Victorian Era. They were typically constructed using luxurious fabrics such as silks and velvets and even included memento-type textiles such as prize and event ribbons. Crazy quilts were ornately decorated with embroidered motifs and elaborate stitches such as featherstitch, stem stitch, French knots, and satin stitch in brightly colored embroidery floss. They were meant to be seen and were most often displayed on a sofa in the parlor.

Autograph quilts, also known as Signature Quilts, are created for precious remembrance. There are two different types of these quilts. While they both carry on the tradition of signed remembrances, Friendship quilts usually use a single block pattern throughout the quilt and are more apt to incorporate fabric scraps. More formal quilts made of different block designs are called Sampler Album quilts.

Pictured below are two quilts that were included in the exhibit. Both quilts were made circa 1930s-1950s.

Octagon Block Quilt top, circa 1940s-50s: Donated by Dorothy Garven, this quilt pattern goes by many names. The earliest published name is Rolling Stone. One alternative, which was contemporary with the quilt itself, is Single Wedding Ring. It appears that this quilt top was part of a finished quilt but was removed from its backing and batting due to water damage at some point before it was donated to the HCSCC collections.

Bowtie quilt, circa late 1930s – 1940s: Donated by Charlotte Onstine, this quilt's pattern is also called Streaks of Lightning. This quilt incorporates

a number of printed fabrics which resemble patterns used in flour sack cloth from the same time period.

Do you have questions about these quilts or any of the other quilts included in the exhibit? If so, please contact Lisa Vedaa, Collections Manager at the HCSCC, at 218-299-5511 Ext. 6735 or Lisa.Vedaa@ci.moorhead.mn.us. Many thanks to Kim Baird for her insight and additional research on these quilt patterns.



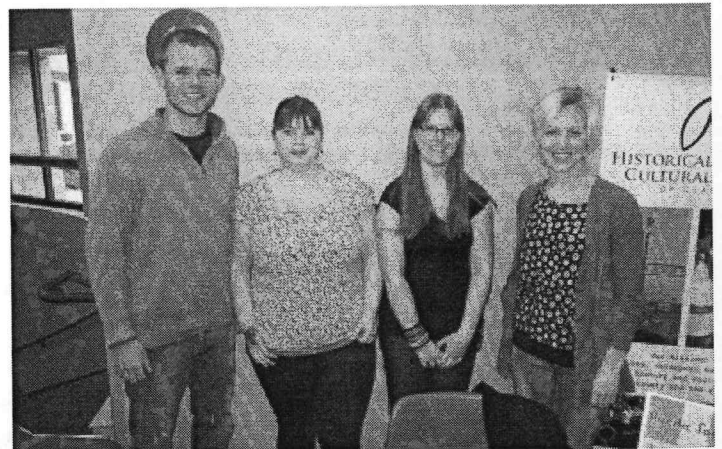
Pictured here are two quilts that were included in the exhibit. Both quilts were made circa 1930s-1950s.

New HCSCC Interns and Work Study Students

We are always so lucky to have amazing interns and work study students at our museum! This fall, we have three interns and two work study students, who have assisted us with projects while they learn about museum work. We so appreciate their help!

We have two interns from Concordia College, who are both history majors: Matt Calvert and Jennifer Battcher. We also have three Cultural Anthropology majors from Minnesota State University Moorhead: Mary Jayne Warner, Kristiina Rengo, and Linnea Dahlquist.

Picture (from l to r): Matt Calvert, Mary Jayne Warner, Linnea Dahlquist, and Kristiina Rengo. Not pictured: Jennifer Battcher.



A Step into Transition: Understanding the Portal Carvings of the Hopperstad Stave Church Replica

By Matt Calvert, HCSCC Intern

Viewing the world today, one can see many monuments and structures that are extravagantly made as testaments of religious belief. The towering statue of Jesus Christ overlooking the beautiful city of Buenos Aires or the great cathedral of Notre Dame in France are just a couple examples that may come to mind. However, there is one such monument that doesn't require an expensive plane ticket or thousands of miles of travel to see. Tucked away in Moorhead, Minnesota and located just outside of the Hjemkomst Center is a wooden church called the Hopperstad Stave Church replica.

This incredible building, which gets its name from the large, upright tree trunks that act as the church's main foundation, is a replica of the Hopperstad Stave Church located in Vik, Norway. This original building worked as a normal functioning church and likewise, stave churches acted as places of worship for many people in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden throughout much of the Middle Ages. While Sweden and Denmark no longer have stave churches, Norway has preserved twenty-eight. Although the Moorhead replica built by Guy Paulson, a native to the area, was completed in the summer of 1998, the original Hopperstad Stave church is thought to have been created around 1100 A.D. Like many of the great cathedrals of the time, stave churches displayed captivating artwork to inspire and teach visitors about the Christian faith. However, stave churches were also different in this artistic respect in one major way. Instead of using stain glass or stone to display religious images, stave churches used wood carvings to decorate and glorify the Christian God. In particular, the greatest examples of these wood carvings could be found around the portals, or in other words, the entrances of the stave churches. The positioning of these carvings was no mistake. Placing them right at the entrance of the church had a shock-and-awe effect on people who were entering the church to worship, and much like the great stained glass windows of the cathedrals in main land Europe, they demonstrated that the building was the house of the Christian God.

There are several different categories under which portal carvings can be classified. The carvings of Hopperstad replica comes from the Sogn-Valdres classification of portals, a classification in which plants

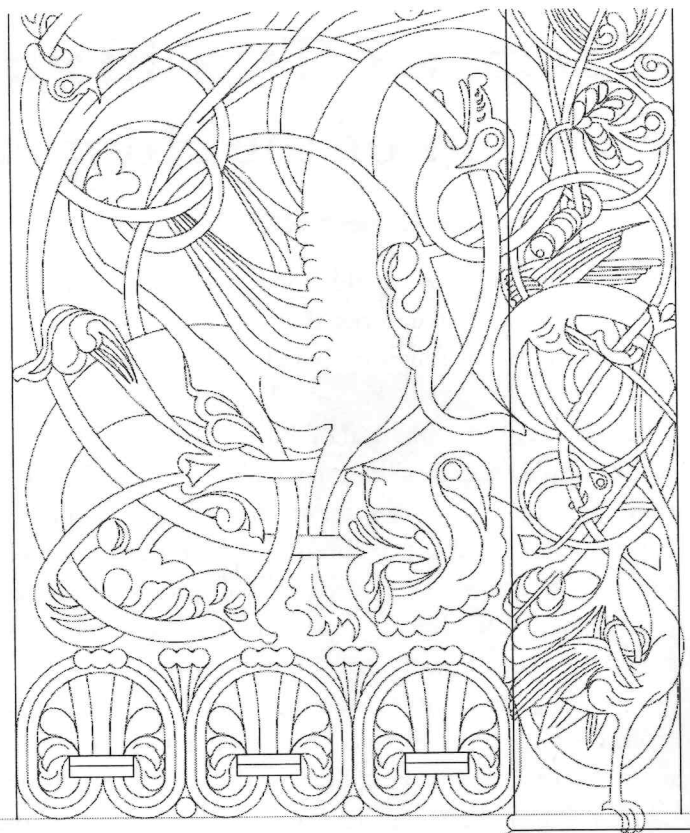
and animals are used abundantly to convey a deeper religious meaning to observers. The meaning that lies behind these carvings may be interpreted in at least two ways. The first interpretation can be understood as the visualization of battle between good and evil or the Last Judgment, and the second is demonstration of Christian dominance over the older pagan religions. It is important to note at this point that religion in Scandinavia was at a turning point at the time of the creation of the stave churches. The Norse pagan tradition of old was being pushed away for the new religion of Christianity. However, it is hard to change tradition in an instant, and because of this, old pagan tales were used to illustrate new Christian concepts. Examples of this can be seen in the Hopperstad Replica's portal depiction of the Last Judgment, where the mixtures of Norse and Christian themes are very prevalent.

Looking at the portal, the first thing one may notice is a *mêlée* of animals and plants attacking each other. This creates what Peter Anker in his book *The Art of Scandinavia calls a Combat Motif*. In the Combat Motif it seems like every type of being depicted is at war. Snakes bite dragons, vines choke snakes, and dragons reach to tear apart anything they can get their hands on. From a Norse perspective this suggests the idea of Ragnarok, the final battle between the gods which ends up causing total destruction to the world. The idea of Ragnarok has many similarities with the Last Judgment as described in the Christian scriptures. Found in the book of Romans, chapter 12, verse 7, this battle also seems to be filled with many beings fighting and with great destruction happening that ends with the good forces triumphing over the evil ones. Seeing the similarities between the two stories, it can perhaps be understood that the carving of the Hopperstad Replica's portal depicts a time and culture in transition from the old pagan ways to the new ways of the Christian faith. With this transition came beautifully styled carvings that depicted both Christian and pagan traditions that were used to demonstrate the similar concepts of the end of the world. However, a demonstration of transition to new understanding may not be the only meaning behind these carvings.

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The symbolism of Christian dominance is possibly the second message demonstrated in the portal carvings of the Hopperstad Replica Stave church. Looking at the bottom of the portal on each side of the door, one can see a lion head with vines coming out of its mouth. These vines go on to engulf the rest of the monsters carved into the portal displaying that the lion has total control and dominance over everything that is happening in the carving. According to Christian tradition, this lion represents the Lion of Judah which is a symbol of Christ. The Lion of Judah controls everything in this Combat Motif with his powerful vines preventing the destruction that could be caused by any evil forces entering the church or the souls of its believers. Displaying this dominance to visitors as they entered through the portal made a clear statement: The old pagan faith was dead, and salvation could only be found with the acceptance of Christianity.

Seeing the Hopperstad Stave Church replica's stave portal is a transcending experience. Automatically one thinks of the history and legend that lie behind the carvings that surround the entrance of the church. This reference to mystical ideas causes something to happen to a person that is beyond words. Looking over the curving vines and ferocious dragons, one can't help but be brought to a new understanding of faith and time that only inspiration from the soul can deliver.



Architect Dale Ruff and his firm, YHR Partners, Ltd., did all of the architecture work for Moorhead's Hopperstad Stave Church free of charge. This detail comes from the template Burton Youngs of YHR made for Guy Paulson to carve the front portal. It shows three Christian symbols mixed in with the Viking-style intertwined dragons: the Lion, the vine, and acanthus leaves along the bottom border.

GIFT SHOP HOURS

Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, noon - 5 p.m.

We're offering a 20% discount to the Hjemkomst Center gift shop to all HCSCC members during our annual Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 10, 2011.



2011-2012 Exhibition & Event Calendar

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Extended to January 8, 2012

Georgetown: Transportation Crossroads

This exhibit looks at the importance of Georgetown in the Red River Valley's early transportation network.

Coming to Clay County: 150 Years of Immigration

This HCSCC-produced exhibit focuses on immigrant life in Clay County and the region from the 1850s to today.

New Exhibits

November 19 – December 30, 2011

Uncle Sam's New Deal in Minnesota

Learn how the government created jobs for Minnesotans during the Great Depression through an "Alphabet Soup" of programs like the WPA and the CCC.

December 6, 2011 - January 18, 2012

Ordinary Vikings

A collection of 30 "bog stav" sculptures hanging as mobiles. Created by Jill Johnson.

Opens January 27, 2012

The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay County

The Atomic Age! The Fabulous Fifties! These years are sometimes called the "Quiet Years," but they transformed America into the country we live in today.

January – March 6, 2012

The Flood of 2009

See if you can point out your house in these aerial photographs of the Great Flood of 2009, the highest crest in recorded history.

March 15 – June 18, 2012

Seeds of Victory!

An exhibit about WWII Victory Gardens just in time for spring! This exhibit, from the State Historical Society of North Dakota, will tell us how gardening and canning your own food was a patriotic duty during WWII.

January 21 - December 30, 2012

Hjemkomst Voyage

This exhibit includes rarely seen ship artifacts.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 6, 5 - 7 p.m. (artist talk, 7 p.m.)

Ordinary Vikings Opening Reception

Tuesday, December 13, 3 p.m. in the Oak Room

Practical discussion on financial planning ideas for the 21st century

Learn how you can generate more spendable income from assets you already own. Learn how you can transfer your wealth to your children or your favorite charity and not to the IRS. You don't have to be "wealthy" to attend this workshop. The information to be shared is for everyone. Hosted by Neil Jordheim of Heartland Trust, Nick Vogel of Vogel Law, and Arnie Ellingson of AXA Advisors.

Tuesday, December 13, 6 p.m.

"How Fargo of You" Reading and Book Signing with author Marc de Celle

Saturday, Dec. 10, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Holiday Open House

We will be giving a sneak preview of the upcoming new exhibit, *The Boom: 1945 - 1960 in Clay County*. At 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., in conjunction with the art installation *Ordinary Vikings*, artist Jill Johnson will do sculpture-making demonstrations including wax mask moldings which will be added to the exhibit. Dr. Terry Shoptaugh will give a presentation on the Clay County home front at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

Annual Meeting (watch for more information in the next newsletter or on our Facebook page!)

Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23, 2012

Nordic Footprints

Midwest Viking Festival and Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival join forces for two days of ethnic fun!

Saturday, July 21, 2012

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.

Thursday, September, 13, 2012

150 Years of Fashion (see page 4 for more information!)

Friday, October 26, 2012

The HCSCC Annual Fall Fundraiser

Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County

PO Box 157 • 202 First Avenue North

Moorhead, MN 56561-0157

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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



HCSCC is open 359 days per year (blizzards and floods not included).
We will be closed December 24, 25, 31, and January 1.

Enjoy a safe and warm holiday!

HCSCC Staff and Board members