

**Reading old newspaper gives glimpse of bygone era
by Bev Jackson**

Thirty-fourth in a monthly series of Freeborn County Articles - January 2003
Bev Jackson is the executive director of the Freeborn County Historical Museum.

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Today is Wednesday, Feb. 15, 1899. You are reading the Albert Lea Enterprise.

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"The intensely cold weather of late has caused lots of trouble with water pipes at residences throughout the city. Plumbers have had more than they could do to answer the calls to thaw out pipes and repair the injured connections. Of course running water will not freeze and it seems that there were enough water patrons who understood this philosophical principle of hydrostatics to entirely empty the city water tank Friday evening.

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"Miss Emma Kleinke has engaged to work in the Skinner Mercantile Co.'s store

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"Harry Biddell is firing on No. 1 and 2 between here and Minneapolis on account of the sickness of the regular fireman.

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"Remember the ten cent social that the Presbyterian Ladies aid society will give this evening at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Danner.

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"Mrs. Oliver W. Jones, of Pickerel Lake, suffered paralytic stroke last Friday morning and her condition has ever since been critical and her death is monetarily looked for. Mrs. Jones is a daughter of the late John Ruble and a sister of Charles II and Fred Ruble of Pickerel Lake and also of Mesdames L.O. Greene and A. G. Brundin of this city. She was married about twenty-five years ago to Mr. Jones and is about forty-nine years of age. She has lived here nearly all of her life and enjoyed the respect and esteem of a large circle of friends and acquaintances. She has been in very poor health during the past ten years.

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"Chas. Howard's auction in Hayward was postponed last Thursday on account of the severe cold weather but will take place in a few days.

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"Fred Schneider Jr. of Pickerel Lake, who has suffered great pain and confinement at his home for many weeks with a sore knee, was in the city yesterday.

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"Don't forget the Temperance Rally in the First M.E. church Sunday evening. A good program has been prepared and there will be speaking by businessmen and others on the saloon question.

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"Dr. L.J. Thomas placed a quarantine on the residence of T.C. Jensen on east Clark Street, Sunday morning. Two of the children are sick, one with diphtheria and the other with scarlet fever.

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"Glen, the 2 year old child of Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Clark, residing near the Union depot, was so frightfully burned Monday afternoon as to cause death within a few hours.

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Mrs. Clark had just stepped out for a scuttle of coal, leaving her child in the kitchen, where a brisk fire was kept in a cook stove, and upon her return, which was only a few minutes, found the little one all ablaze. She hurriedly picked up the babe and carried him out and rolled him in the snow, but the poor little fellow had been so badly burned that the best of attention was unable to save him. How the fire caught in the clothes of the child is a mystery, although some surmised that he must have fallen onto the stove. The grief stricken mother is almost frantic with grief over the sad occurrence. The child was an only one and greatly beloved by its parents. Mr. Clark is an engineer on the M. & St. L R'y, and had taken the

afternoon passenger train north, but upon being appraised by telegraph of the terrible accident he returned home on the first train. The grief stricken parents have the sympathy of a host of friends in their sad affliction.

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"The weather the past three weeks has been extremely cold, the past week capping the climax with mercury every morning at 20 to 44 degrees below zero. It was frightful weather and it is to be hoped it will not be repeated for a century. The entire country has been visited by this extreme cold weather.

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"Keep off the grass' signs would not attract our attention much during the present weather, in fact, if we noticed them at all, it would only be a side glance as we tucked the top of our other ear under the rim of our cap. It seems, however, according to janitor Thompson at the court house that quite as much injury is done to lawn grass by walking over it in the winter time as during its growing time in the summer. He says that where the public cross the out house lawn in the winter the snow becomes packed that when it melts in the spring there is a hard path of ice left which so injures the growth of the grass beneath that the effect is noticeable all summer. You will probably see a sign in a few days "Keep off the snow".

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Thanks to Linda Evenson, the FCHM librarian, for bringing this newspaper page to my attention. She was researching for a client and ran across several gems. We'll share more of them as time and space allow. The format of this 1899 newspaper was interesting, with no headlines or column headings, just item following item.

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I hope you enjoyed reading these articles as much as I did.

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