

There are so many stories and people who make a community, like Morris, what it is today. This showcases just a snippet of them. It is impossible to capture them all.

Our goal is that you will find this tour to be an enjoyable activity, and educational as well. A tour, such as this, would not be possible without our research volunteers. We thank them for their hours of time and dedication. We would also like to acknowledge the researchers from the past. Their compiled historical information was a valuable resource in doing this project.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

*Stevens County*  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM**

116 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street

Morris, MN 56267

320-589-1719

[info@stevenshistorymuseum.com](mailto:info@stevenshistorymuseum.com)

[www.stevenshistorymuseum.com](http://www.stevenshistorymuseum.com)



*making history come alive*

**Self-Guided Walking Tour**

*Atlantic Avenue - Morris*

Some of the best historical artifacts are right before our very eyes. Take a walk back into time and learn a little bit about some people that helped structure Morris as we know it. The buildings on this tour were built and owned by folks who began businesses on Atlantic Avenue. They were also active in community organizations and churches and provided a foundation for the city of Morris to continue to grow.



1

## 501 Atlantic Avenue

The Morris Bakery Company opened its doors in 1896. John Linne, owner and proprietor, moved to Morris from Minneapolis. He had 10 years of experience in the baking trade before opening his own bakery in Morris. Business boomed, as John was well-known for his beautiful breads. In 1904, he decided to build a new building at 501 Atlantic Avenue, the current home of the **Common Cup**. The bakery offered all sorts of pastries, cakes, candies, cookies, doughnuts, and pies. They even baked beans on Saturdays for those that put in their orders on Fridays. The upper level of the building was a large hall (known as *Linne Hall*) that was used for groups such as Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen, Fraternal Order of Eagles, and also dances and meetings. (Mr. Linne was a member of both Knights of Pythias and the Masons.) The most notable use for Linne Hall, however, was home to an influenza hospital in 1918. Due to overflow of patients from the Morris Hospital on West 7th Street, a larger space was needed. By April of 1919, the threat of influenza had lessened enough that the hospital was able to handle the patients and Linne Hall returned to hosting dances. In 1916, John Linne sold the bakery to William Ross, after 21 years of baking in Morris. The Morris Bakery continued for many years with various owners. (One of them painting "Bob's Bakery" on the outside back wall.)



John Linne



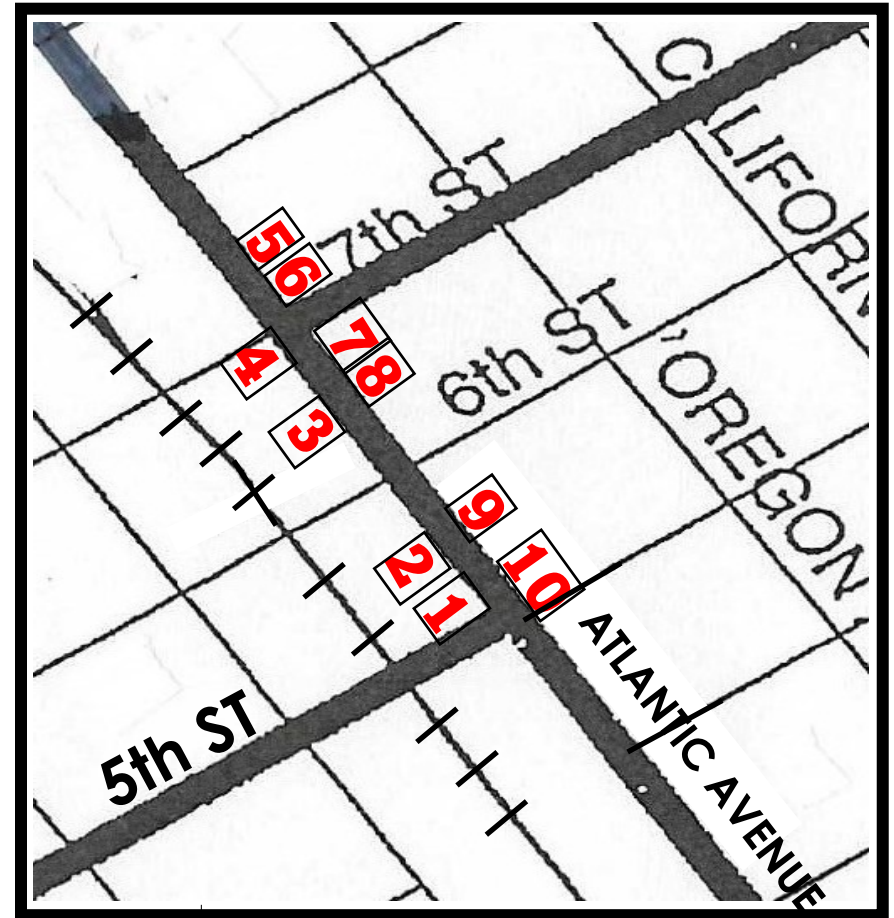
Morris Bakery Truck



...The...  
**Morris Bakery**

J. H. Linne, Prop.

*Morris, Minn. Aug. 12th 1908.*



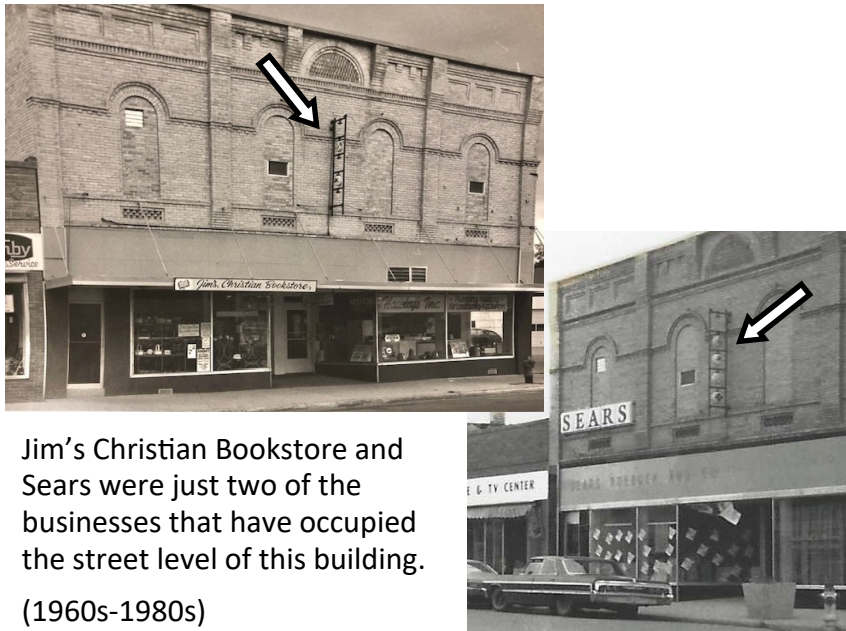
Thank you to our sponsor!





## 10 506 Atlantic Avenue

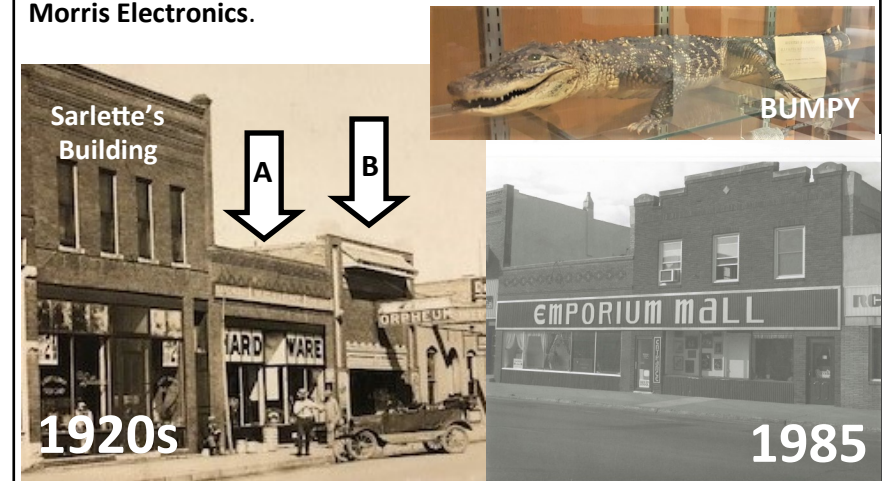
The building currently occupied by **Stone's Throw Café** has, like other old buildings, been purchased, rented, and home to many businesses over its lifetime. In 1920, it was purchased by the **Golden Sheaf Mason Lodge #133**, as they had already used the second floor for their meeting space (and currently still do) for many years prior, enduring two fires. Suckstorf Furniture occupied the lower level at the time. The Masonic emblem signs can be seen on the photos below, in the middle of the second story. Many of the prominent early businessmen were members of the Masons, not only from Morris, but including those from Donnelly, Chokio, Alberta, and Hancock. Another similar fraternal order organization was the *Knights of Pythias*. This group met in Linne Hall, above the Morris Bakery (now Common Cup), just across the street from the Masons. It was almost a requirement, that if you were a male business owner in the area, you would belong to one of these groups. The question was, which would you choose? (Notice John Linne, owner of Morris Bakery, was in both!)



## 2 511 Atlantic Avenue

W. C. "Bill" and Freddy Light, brothers, built this building, marked "A", below, for their hardware business in 1906. They had a very successful business with a tin shop in the back. Freddy sharpened everyone's ice skates in the winter. Bill died in the 1930s and his wife, Clara, took over and ran the store with Freddy. George and Edna Varnum purchased the hardware store from the Lights in 1945. Building "B", below, was the Orpheum and was the site of plays, movies, hypnotists, magicians, and vaudeville acts, and later became a pool hall and bowling alley. However, a 1950 fire burned the inside. George Varnum purchased the remnants of the Orpheum to expand his business to include a plumbing department and, in 1951, the two buildings were joined together into Varnum's Hardware. Ken Varnum took over the business from his father in 1963, and he and Marilyn ran Varnum's Ace Hardware until 1979. Probably the most notable memory people have of Varnum's Hardware is the alligator named "Bumpy" that Ken Varnum had inside his store. Bumpy was a celebrity with the kids in the area. Art Splitstoser, who had a meat market adjacent to Varnum's, would bring meat scraps to treat Bumpy. Bumpy is preserved at the UMM campus in the Biology department.

Cole VanHorn took over the building in 1980 and transformed it into the Emporium Mall in 1983. Some businesses inside included Second-Hand Rose, This 'n' That, Dog House Snack Shack and Playroom, Paradise Recycled, and VanHorn's Home Improvement. The building is almost unrecognizable now, after remodels. Today it is home to **Morris Electronics**.

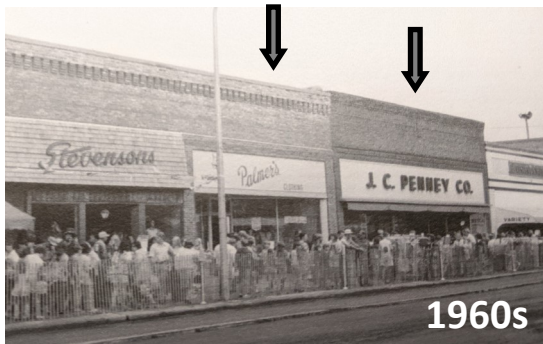


3

## 613 Atlantic Avenue

Emelia Eck was born in Pepperton Township in 1895. Her family moved into Morris after her father became too afflicted with rheumatism to farm. She never had a chance to go to high school, as her parents were poor and she had to help support the family with her sewing. She began sewing for the public at 14 years old. In the early 1900s, there were few ready made dresses and, for those who could afford it, would have Emelia design and create dresses for them. She had a special room in the family home for her sewing business and later on the second floor of the Glass Block Building (McGinnis Appliance location). Her ledger, which dates before 1917, has listed the measurements of over 300 women, clients whom she sewed garments for. The locations of these women are from all over Minnesota, the Upper Midwest, and even Pasadena, California and Vancouver, Washington. Around WWI, Emelia taught hand and machine sewing to young girls at her house. They would study with her for about a year. Sometimes she would hire them to help her after they finished their course. In the 1940s and 50s, when ready made clothing became more prevalent, Emelia worked on the floor at the J. C. Penney Store and, by 1960, she was altering for both Palmer's Clothing and J. C. Penney. She retired from seamstress work in 1971, and passed away two years later. Emelia loved clothes and fashion and she herself was always very well dressed. Some of her dresses, ledgers, and a business window with her name, are preserved at the Stevens County History Museum. She never married, devoting her

whole life to sewing for others and taking care of her mother.



1960s

J. C. Penney was located in the building now home to **Prairie Real Estate** and **Twisted Ivy**. Palmer Store was located in the space where **Anderson Acres Nursery** is now located.



**Emelia Eck**  
1914

8

## 622 Atlantic Avenue

If you look again at #7 in this brochure, you will notice "Cele's Fabrics" between Wayne's and the Ernst Shop. In the 1970s, Beverly Vikander purchased this business, combining it with "Mrs. V's" and moved her business into the building where **Valor Financial** resides. Because this building had been Liebe's Shoes, customers expected shoes when they came in, so Beverly added shoes to her inventory of fabrics and yarns, and had a shoe section called "Footprints" in the back of the store. She also sold high-quality sewing machines.



9

## 510 Atlantic Avenue

In the building where **John's Total Entertainment** has resided since 1998, was once Walt's Shoes. Walter Hadler established Walt's Shoes in 1935. The primary focus at the start was shoe repair, adding shoe sales in 1955. Walt did not begin his business in this building, as he built it in the 1950s, renting 1/2 of his building to Singer Sewing Machines and later to Sarlette's Music. It was another example of a well-known business in Morris that drew customers from miles around, selling high quality shoes and impeccable shoe repair. In 1979, Walt sold the business to his employee, Tim Esterling, who ran it for many more years, expanding into the full building with sporting goods and custom printing on sweatshirts, etc. In 1992, Tim moved Walt's Shoes to the City Center Mall and went back to focusing primarily on shoe sales.





7

## 632/630/628/624 Atlantic Avenue

This building was originally known as the Spooner Brick Block and was built in 1895 by businessman L.C. Spooner. (Later known as the Halverson Building and Johnson Building) It is the only building on Atlantic Avenue that shows the year that it was built. The first business to occupy the main level was the Olsen, Guter, Healy and Company Department Store. The first year many social gatherings and entertainments were held in the opera house on the second floor. The opera house was short lived as it was made into a store-room and various offices. After a fire in 1902, that destroyed much of the interior of the building, L.C. Spooner repaired the structure to nearly its original state. The building regained prominence as a business and social center in Morris. The Morris National Bank occupied the "corner" from 1902-1912. The Commercial Club, attired with billiard tables, reading tables, and card tables, occupied three rooms upstairs. Through the years the corner has also been the home of McCanney and Hanlon's Saloon, N. Vinje Clothing (later moving across the street), Coast to Coast, the Home Restaurant, Ben's Place, Cruze Inn, Halverson's Clothing, Arneson and Larson, O'Meara's Clothing, Wayne's Mens Wear, Wilson's Sporting Goods, Second Hand Rose, and now **Second Chance Consignment Boutique**. The post office was in this building for many years beginning in 1903. For 60 years, the Ernst Shop was in this building, in the location of what is now **Reflections**. Originally owned and operated by Margaret and Anne Ernst, they opened the store in 1922 as a millinery shop (custom made hats). Their specialty was hem-stitching and picot edging. The shop was later known for it's very elite high-quality clothing.

A minimum of 70 businesses have occupied this building over its 126 year history!



1905



1960s

4

## 619 Atlantic Avenue

By 1900, Atlantic Avenue in Morris was bustling with thriving businesses that brought people by train, and later automobiles, to Morris to do their shopping. Some of these stores were extremely well known for the quality of their product and their customer service. Both Weum's and Vinje Clothing were examples of that. Nick Vinje organized N. Vinje & Company after moving here from Moorhead. Up until that time he was a traveling salesman of caps, furs, gloves, and mittens. In 1912, Mr. Vinje incorporated his business as Vinje Clothing Co. While Weum's sold both men's and women's clothing, Vinje Clothing Co. was exclusively a men's and boy's clothing store. So it came as a big surprise, in 1923, when they added a line of women's silk hosiery, called "Holeproof". A newspaper quote about Vinje Clothing Co. states "It is noticeable that this store, known far and wide for its dependability, is filled with lines of goods that have a national reputation for the same characteristic." Mr. Vinje was not only a successful businessman, but was very active in civil affairs. Later, his son, Louis, took over the business.

Today this location is home to

**Unger Furniture**

Ad from  
1913 →



Nick Vinje

5

## 702 Atlantic Avenue

In the space where **Inherit Clothing Co.** is today, was once Grove Department Store. Owned by John Grove, he was one of the most widely known real estate men in western Minnesota and North Dakota. He brought thousands of new settlers into the Northwest during the years he was most active in this line of endeavor. Many successful farmers in this section of the state, at that time, were given their start in farming by Mr. Grove. He had faith in the land of Stevens County and what it could produce. At various times he owned many mercantiles in western Minnesota cities, in addition to this one in Morris. Many of the businesses in the early formation of Morris were financially backed and erected by Mr. Grove, including the LaGrand Hotel, which he also managed for some time. He was also the president of the Morris National Bank for a few years. Mr. Grove also took an active role in developing the residential district in Morris and erected more than 25 homes in the "Grove City" addition on the east side of Morris. Most importantly, John Grove was known for his pleasant disposition and friendly manner. He was loved by all who knew him.

John and his wife, Vine, had one daughter. Her name was Margaret and she was the librarian at the Morris Public Library (Carnegie Library Building) for 40 years.



Grove Department Store was on the street level, with a hotel on the top two floors. This photo was taken about 1900. This building later burnt, and rebuilt to a single level building, housing multiple businesses over the years. Currently remodeled in 2018 by **Inherit Co.**

6

## 700 Atlantic Avenue

The **Eul's Hardware** building is believed to be the oldest existing building on Atlantic Avenue, built in 1883. The Morris Tribune (8/29/1883) called it "...a monument of architectural beauty and mechanical skill." The building was originally erected for The First National Bank of Morris, but, after it failed in 1896, was bought out and became Citizens State Bank. Later, Citizens State Bank moved down the street. John and Mary (Hilda) Eul bought the building in 1940 and moved their hardware store (which began in a different location) to this historic structure. They constructed the addition in 1947. In the 1960s, Rit (Richard) and lone Eul took over from his father and brother. When Richard passed away, lone carried on the business, passing it on to their children, Kathy and Rob in 2010. Together, with their brother,



John and Mary Eul

Tim, they have carried on the family business into the third generation. 2021 marks the end of a long-time tradition in Morris, as the business is selling. It has been most famous for the "toy basement" which began in the 1960s. Shoppers near and far knew that if they couldn't find something anywhere else, "they could find it at Eul's".



1947