

HISTORY EDITION • SPRING 2024

Clinton

MAGAZINE

IN MEMORY OF MAXIMILIAN:

CONTRACTOR, FATHER
LEADS RESTORATION
OF CLINTON'S OLDEST
CATHOLIC CHURCH

MAKING IT HAPPEN

STUDENT UTILIZES
LOCAL MUSEUM TO
FUEL HISTORY
INTERESTS

MAKING HISTORY

GATEWAY HISTORY
CLUB PRESERVES
CLINTON'S PAST
FOR THE FUTURE

ALSO
INSIDE:

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

DESPERATE SHOT SAVED CHS BOYS
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Departments

- 4 From the Editor**
There's nothing like a good dig into history
- 5 Then & Now**
Hotel Lafayette from 1920 to 2021
- 31 Then & Now**
Artemus Lamb Mansion XX to 2024

In this issue

- 6 Making it Happen**
student utilizes local museum to fuel history interests
- 12 Skyline Center Celebrates 60 Years**
"The Swiss Army Knife of Services"
- 16 In Memory of Maximilian**
Contractor, father leads restoration of Clinton's oldest Catholic church
- 22 Making History**
Gateway History Club preserves Clinton's Past for the Future
- 26 Right place, Right time**
Desperate shot saved CHS boys basketball's 1992 state championship season

Credits

Publisher
Ron Gutierrez

Editor
Chris Baldus

Writers
Jenna Blount
Carie Kuehn
Eric Schweizer

Graphic Design
Jasmine Hundertmark
Kaylee Robinson
Shanelle Yahn

Advertising Account Executives
Tatia Earl
Andrew Price
Kayla Tegeler
Shanelle Yahn

Classified Advertising
Pam Reedy

Production Manager
Chris Mussmann

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Kaylee Robinson*

There's nothing like a good dig into history

Grandma Baldus's basement was fascinating. In the proper end, with its dark gray cinder block walls, there were old wind-up metal toys, a small wooden tetherball-type bowling game and Grandpa's huge tools. He had a crescent wrench the size of my 10-year-old arm. We loved to explore that end. It's where I found a stash of Catholic Treasure Chest comic books and one outlier, a Marvel Avengers no. 2 when the Submariner and a pretty well-spoken Hulk team up. It's beat up but is still in my collection.

The other end of the basement was through a big hole in the wall into a dug out dirt cave. The clothes washer and dryer were in there along with jars of fruits and vegetables. Other than that, we mostly found bugs and I saw my first centipede.

So, it should be no surprise that I like to dig, and the Clinton Herald has fascinating archives, but not in the basement, which is apparently scary. Maybe even centipedes. A newspaper's archives are special with photos, original negatives, clippings and papers whose pages are yellow and brittle but whose black banger headlines don't fade

— "Reds Free Three More GIs" (June 18, 1955 edition).

So while searching those archives for some of the historic photos in this edition of the magazine, I took a detour to a shelf of yellow photo paper boxes, with dates going back into the 1950s. Inside were big negatives from those old time box cameras. There was an assortment of pictures from Clinton's centennial and this one shot of two little girls holding live raccoons. Made me a little nervous for them, but I guess Clinton kids were just more rough and tumble than me. One of my sons as a toddler grabbed and ate a little spider and my wife and I went white with panic, called the poison control line, hyperventilated and were eventually talked down from the ledge. The kid, oh he was fine the whole time and went looking for another spider.

I showed the picture to Gateway History Club members who told me about a petting zoo that used to be in on of Clinton's parks. But that is a story for another time. Today, our writers Jenna Blount, Eric Schweizer, and Carie Kuhn have pulled together stories about the restoration of Clinton's oldest



Catholic church, the River Kings path to a basketball championship and a legendary bucket that got them there, the growth of the Gateway History Club, a teenager finding his passion at the Sawmill Museum, and the 60th anniversary of Skyline.

We hope you enjoy this dig into local history.

Chris Baldus
Clinton Magazine Editor
cbaldus@clintonherald.com

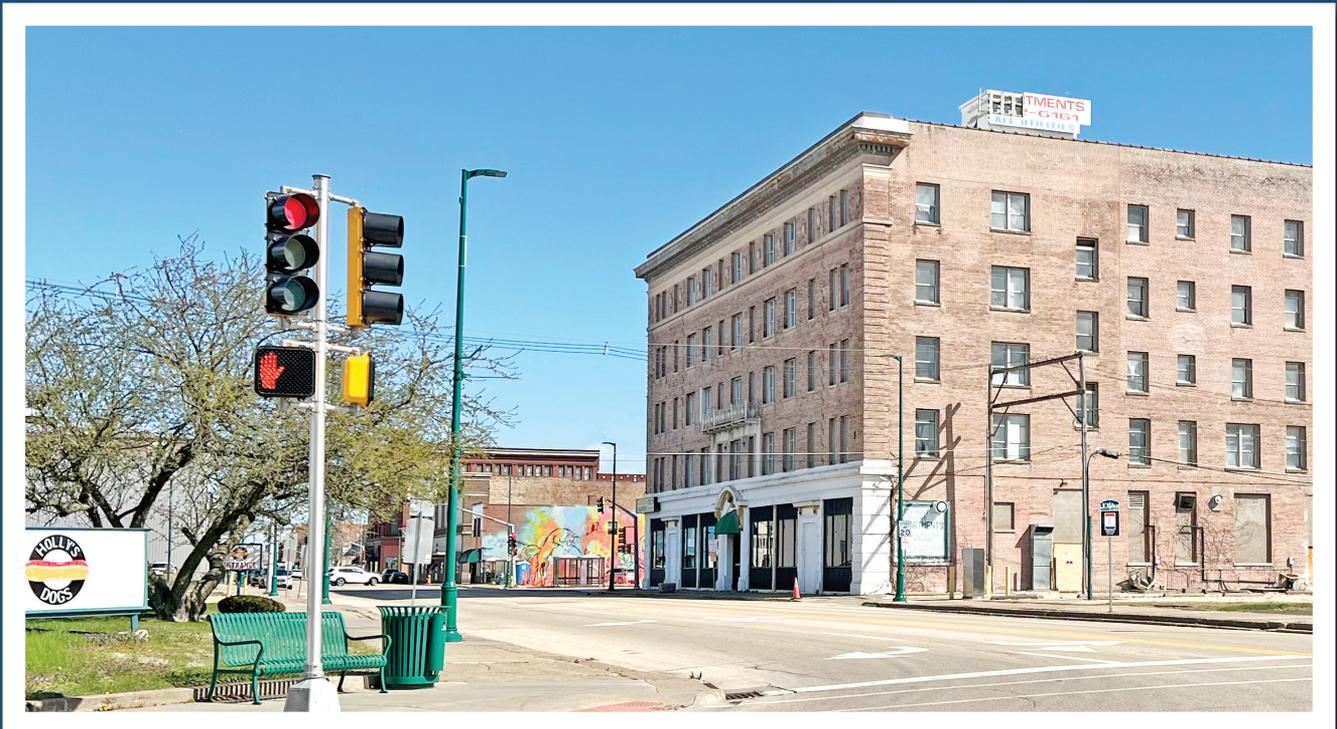
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THEN & Now



HOTEL LAFAYETTE IN THE 1920'S



HOTEL LAFAYETTE IN 2024



MAKING IT
happen

STUDENT UTILIZES LOCAL MUSEUM TO FUEL HISTORY INTERESTS

BY CARIE KUEHN

Aiden Adkins can't tell you the reason he loves history: he just does.

He always remembers being fascinated by world events, both old and new. As a sophomore in high school, he had a particular world history class at Clinton High School that fueled those interests.

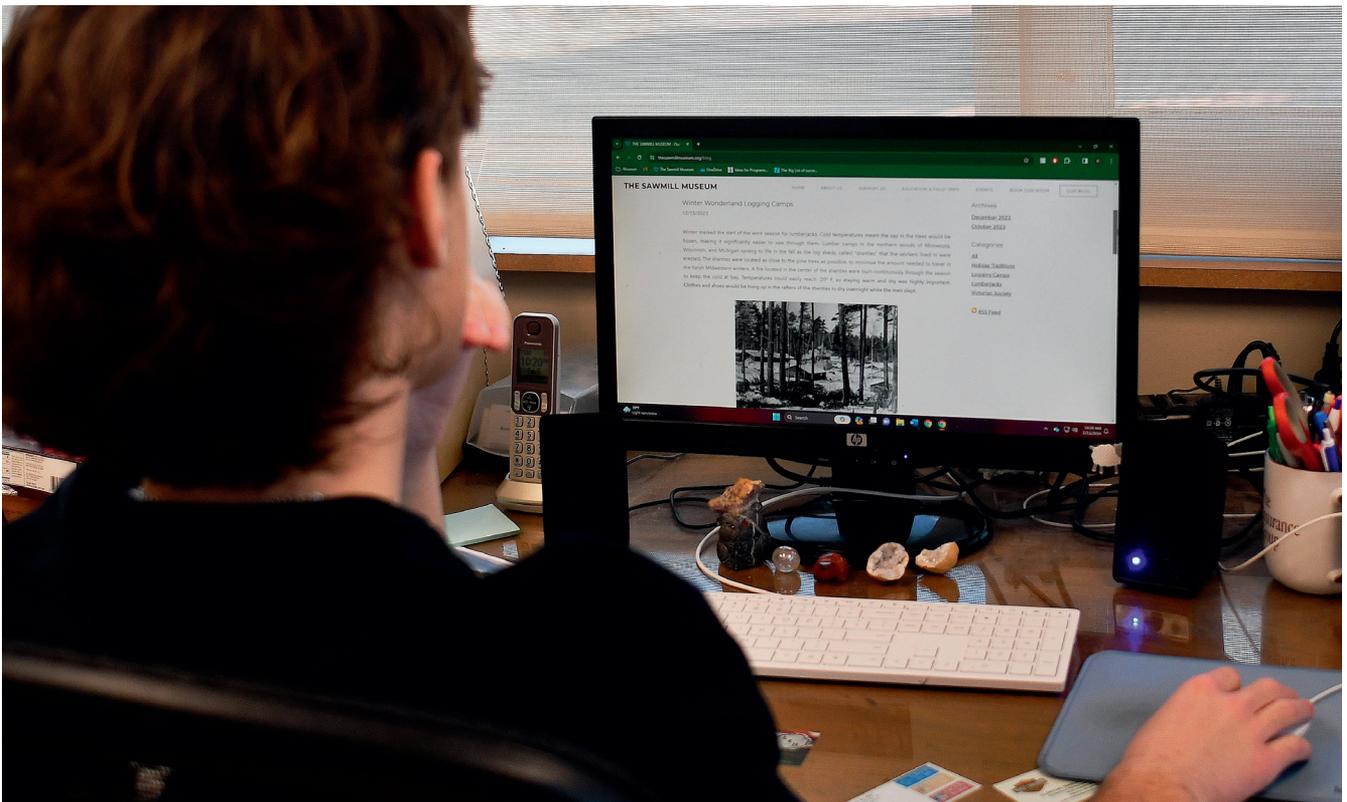
“I got super involved in the class,” Adkins recalled. “It resonated with me.”

Adkins carried that with him throughout high school. As he entered senior year, he also started looking for additional ways to prep for college. He joined Synergy, which is a group of students, teachers, and administrators who form community partnerships to help students find opportunities.

Synergy had toured the Sawmill Museum in Clinton, and from there the conversation started.

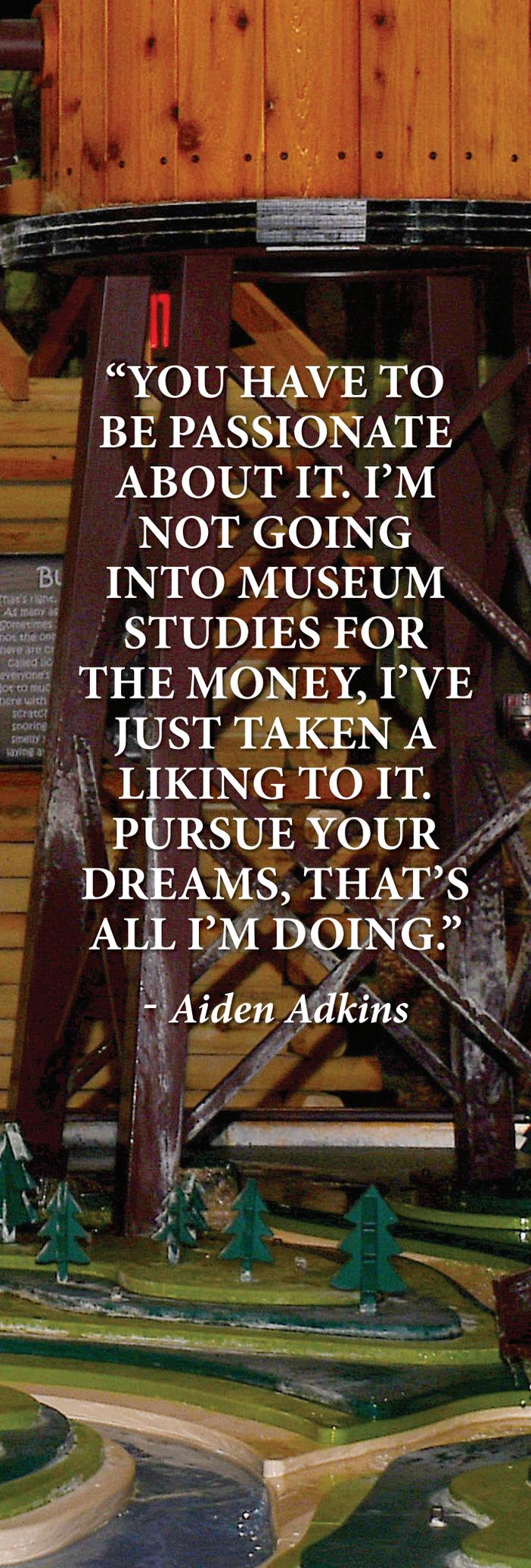
“Aiden [Adkins] came in and talked to me a little more about the museum side of things and how running the museum works, those kind of metrics,” said Eliza Mussmann, executive director of the Sawmill Museum. Mussmann was also talking with Clinton High Synergy teachers Bill Miciewicz and Kellen Schneeberger. “It just really worked out having someone who could come and help us out with a few things around here, and in exchange get a little bit of an education.”

After some maneuvering and figuring, Adkins began an internship at the Sawmill Museum in November of 2023. He's there to see the behind the scenes of how the museum works, and helps with research for the Sawmill's blog posts.



Clinton High School senior Aiden Adkins, who began an internship with the Sawmill Museum in November, takes on many tasks there including helping with research for its blog. *Photo by Carie Kuehn*





**“YOU HAVE TO
BE PASSIONATE
ABOUT IT. I’M
NOT GOING
INTO MUSEUM
STUDIES FOR
THE MONEY, I’VE
JUST TAKEN A
LIKING TO IT.
PURSUE YOUR
DREAMS, THAT’S
ALL I’M DOING.”**

- Aiden Adkins

Aiden works really hard,” said Mussmann. “He does whatever we ask of him even if it’s not the fun end of museum work. He never hesitates. He does really great research, too.”

Whether he’s researching stuff for the blog or setting out chairs for various events, he never hesitates to help with museum happenings.

“Really, anything they need, I’ll do,” Adkins said. “I just love being here. The talking heads, the water table, all the campus, everything about it I love.”

The Sawmill Museum is located in the Lyons District of Clinton. The mission is to preserve, collect, interpret, and explore the history of America’s sawmill, lumber and forestry industries. These industries have rich history in Clinton, which was once the “Lumber Capital of the World.”

“When you hear about the history of Clinton – you see it right now and it’s hard to believe it was a massive spectacle of a town at one point. I didn’t know I came from such an insane area.”

Adkins graduates this May and has plans to head to the University of Iowa with a major in history. As he works his way through his education, he hopes to land internships in college that lead him to a career in history and museum studies. He knows the opportunity he has at the Sawmill Museum will only help him further.

“I want to get an internship during my time in college, and I can put this on any application,” said Adkins. “Internships in the museum field aren’t super common until you’re a year or two into your undergrad, so being here before college is huge.”

His high hopes? Eventually be a museum curator. He’s dreaming big, but he’s confident that now that he’s found what he’s passionate about, it will all work in the end.

“You have to be passionate about it,” Adkins said. “I’m not going into museum studies for the money, I’ve just taken a liking to it. Pursue your dreams, that’s all I’m doing.”

Plus, he had the opportunity to learn more about his hometown than he could have imagined. The relationship between the Sawmill Museum and Aiden has been beneficial for him, but also for the museum.

“It can be really hard to get volunteers in,” said Mussmann. “To be able to work with a local student who is really eager and interested in museum work and get that assistance that we need, while also getting him education before he goes to school, it just worked out perfect.”

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Skyline Center, Inc.



SKYLINE CENTER, INC, *'The Swiss Army Knife of Services,'* *Celebrates 60 Years!*



Skyline Center's 60th anniversary ribbon-cutting ceremony held in November 2023.



BY JENNA BLOUNT

The long hallways of the Schick hospital buildings where Skyline Center, Inc. now operates might look somewhat similar to the hallways of a state institution for the intellectually disabled, but they certainly don't feel that way.

"It's hard to have a bad day here," Executive Director Brandon Rumler said one late February day as he walked through the halls to the Day Hab facility where residents were eager to joke with him and demonstrate the firm handshakes they'd learned.

"After 60 years, you'd think that everybody knows what Skyline does," Rumler said that day three months past celebration of the anniversary, "but that's not the case."

Rumler took on the position of executive director at Skyline after first putting in 18 years at CustomPak, first as a machine operator, then eventually as a sales account manager.

"When I was a kid, I had these Big Wheel Ride On toys, and CustomPak was bringing the Big Wheel back," Rumler said. "I had reached out to an agency similar to Skyline in Lanark, Illinois, called Rolling Hills Progress Center to see if they would package it for us."

A few years later, the director of Rolling Hills called Rumler and told him that he would be retiring — Would Rumler be interested in taking his position?

The offer was a "complete shock" to Rumler, who had only met with the director of Rolling Hills in person a couple times before, but with the experience he'd gained at CustomPak under his belt as well as personal experience with the disabled due to his uncle's quadriplegia, Rumler seemed like the perfect fit for the role. Rumler accepted the offer and would be the di-

rector of Rolling Hills for the next eight years, until the same position at Skyline was vacated by previous executive director Jack Robinson and Rumler took advantage of the opportunity to be able to work in his hometown. He was hired in September 2022.

Service providers for the intellectually disabled, such as Skyline, developed from state institutions that had come to the U.S. from Germany in the mid-1880s. Increasing numbers of individuals were placed into these institutions, though, and they became overcrowded while receiving only minimal funding for the care of residents due to social values of the time.

John F. Kennedy, two years after taking office in 1961, signed the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Act that gave the federal government an active role in addressing the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

He then, in 1965, created the President's Commission on Mental Retardation (now called the Presidential Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities) for his advisement on how disabled individuals could best be served and supported. The panel's initial recommendations resulted in the start of the Intermediate Care Facilities/Mental Retardation program in which states were compensated for meeting basic quality standards within their institutions pending the ordered closure of a number of them.

It was in this national context that Skyline's founders incorporated the non-profit in November 1963 as The Clinton Association for Day Care of Handicapped Children. Under its first director Mrs. Eugene Sheldon, the day care program opened in February 1964,

providing care for 10 children.

In 1965, the Association moved from a building on Skyline Drive into three buildings on the north end of town that were previously part of Schick Army Hospital during the second World War.

The Clinton Association for Day Care of Handicapped Children then became Skyline Center, Inc. with the award of an \$18,000 grant for the start of a workshop program in 1968. Skyline subsequently transitioned from children's to adult services and the establishment of the Community Living Program in 1976.

Skyline Residential Services incorporated in 1984, growing to eventually provide housing for individuals with intellectual disabilities in both Clinton and DeWitt.

The closing of state institutions had urged the growth of group homes which, by 1991, had become the dominant form of residential support for individuals with intellectual disabilities and have become to be referred to as simply "homes." The federal government then initiated the Medicaid Waiver program that would extend a variant of the Intermediate Care Facilities/Mental Retardation Program to community programs. Almost all of Skyline's individuals are currently funded by the waiver program.

Skyline established the Clinton Area Recycling Environment in 1989. Financial difficulties immediately became apparent until the can and bottle redemption center permanently closed in 2014. Robinson explained at the time that it was expected that the center would be able to support itself but he ultimately had to make the decision to close the center when it became evident that Iowa Legislature wasn't going to



Skyline Center, Inc. Executive Director Brandon Rumler (left) with other members of Skyline's leadership.

raise the operating fee of redemption centers as anticipated to two cents per container from the single cent per container that had been given since 1979 and the center was unable to generate any revenue.

Skyline as a whole had continued to grow, though, with the 1997 acquisition of the former Heartland warehouse and an adjoining building – 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space that Skyline turned into the DeWitt Specialty Packaging work center, employing 40 individuals.

In 2004, Skyline Home Health began to assist individuals with bathing, dressing, oral hygiene, diabetes care, wound care, medications, light housekeeping, laundry, meals, and physical or occupational therapy. Skyline's Home Health services has since expanded to providing aid to members of the community outside of Skyline.

In the spring of 2008, Meadow Heights Apartments' 26 low-income units built on 28th Avenue North for individuals with intellectual disabilities and governed by the Iowa Finance Authority opened for occupancy.

In 2012, the Iowa State Legislature passed a bill into law that removed "mental retardation" from its documents. The phrase first developed for clinical use had over time taken on negative connotations, until changes at the federal level began in 2010 when then-President Barack Obama implemented Rosa's Law that removed the phrase from federal education, health, and labor statutes, replacing it with "intellectual disability."

Then, in 2019, came the onset of the Covid pandemic.

"It was a very difficult time for everybody, but particularly community providers, because we had individuals that were quarantined at home for long periods of time which affected their mental health, affected behaviors," Rumler

said. "And throughout that time, just financially, it was a struggle, because a lot of our services were reduced because of Covid."

As opposed to state institutions that historically operated with the intent of mostly harboring individuals indoors to protect them from the stresses of the outside world, Skyline strives to do the opposite through its services and integrate individuals into the community. Day Habilitation is a service at Skyline in which its individuals are taken out into the community, maybe just to visit a museum or otherwise to volunteer in various ways.

"A lot of community involvement and outings," Rumler said. "Those all stopped."

That same year, the Eastern Iowa Mental Health and Disabilities Services Region that provides Skyline with a portion of its funding was forced to cut just over \$1 million from its budgets. The cut included \$250,000 that was provided for work spaces like Skyline's South 21st Street sheltered workshop.

The individuals working there were told they'd have to return to Skyline's Day Hab facility and wouldn't be able to work that day. Ruler said the announcement was met with heavy disappointment and a lot of tears as everyone was transported back to the north end of town.

Instead of closing the workshop, the decision was made to switch to an integrated work setting.

The 60,000 square-foot production facility allows individuals to work with coaches on employment skills and (if not employed elsewhere in the community) earn a sub-rated wage, while integrated with others not diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities, working in packing, light assembly, and order fulfillment for local businesses like CustomPak and Air Freshener. Skyline's own products, like small cotton cleaning patches are cut and packaged

for sale on Amazon or skylineproducts.org and for the use of company partners such as in firearm cleaning kits.

Working there means a lot to these individuals and gives them a feeling of purpose, Rumler said. Losing that is almost like taking away their identity.

Skyline now employs 140 staff members that provide an exceptional number of services to approximately 125 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"We're kind of a swiss army knife of community service providers, because we provide so many different services," Rumler said. "I've been telling people since our 60th celebration back in November that there's really three reasons that are keys to our success and longevity."

Skyline continues to meet a need to provide services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, they provide a high level of quality of services, and they have "a wonderful staff that is passionate about the mission," Rumler said.

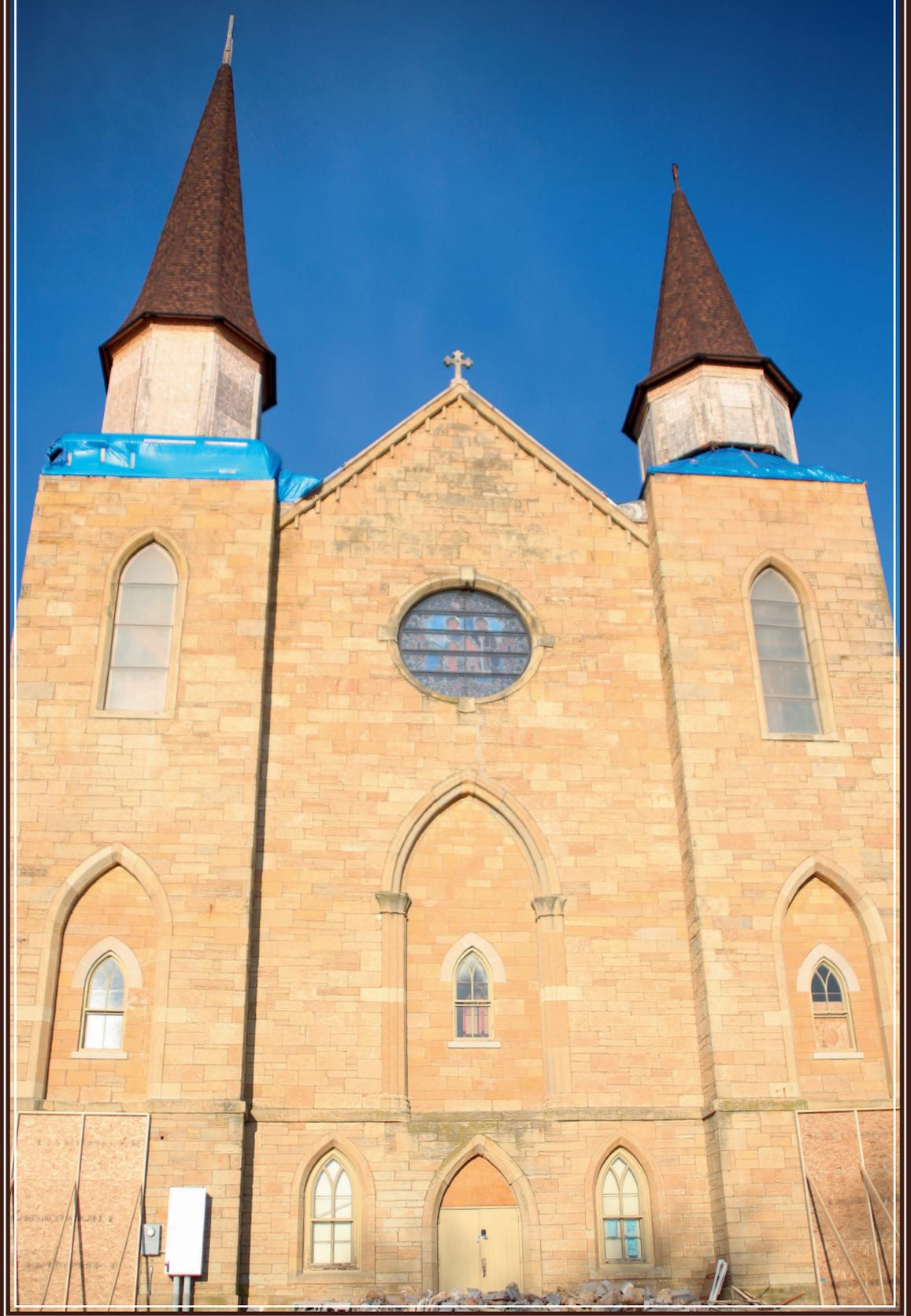
As new businesses come to the Clinton area, he added, there will be more people moving to the area and, thus, more people in need of Skyline's services.

Eventually, Rumler hopes to build a new administration building and Day Habilitation services building all-in-one as the Schick hospital buildings that were built in 1943, "It's not the most efficient," he said.

Rumler doesn't like to hear anything negative about Clinton, though.

"It really bothers me, because I'm on a side where I see people that are generous to donate or volunteer their time," he said, "Clinton is such a great community. I mean, I can't say that enough."

Learn more about Skyline Center, Inc. online at skylinecenter.org.



In memory of
MAXIMILIAN

Contractor, father leads restoration of Clinton's oldest Catholic church

BY JENNA BLOUNT

Matthew Gabbard of Thomson, Illinois, drove by St. Irenaeus Church on North Second Street one day in March 2021, two months after he and his wife, Elizabeth, announced her most recent pregnancy.

As a general contractor who'd established The Specialist, Inc. in 2008, Gabbard's attention was immediately drawn to the church's deterioration and exterior damage still evident from the previous year's derecho.

He contacted Clinton city officials to find the owner of the building and was subsequently offered the opportunity to buy it, an offer he didn't immediately accept.

Five months later, on Aug. 19, 2021, Gabbard's son, Maximilian John Pio Gabbard, was born premature at 34 weeks. Like two of the Gabbards' sons before him who were by then deceased, Maximilian was born with a genetic peroxisomal disorder in which the cells of all of his organs and systems weren't able to properly function.

Maximilian was given a life expectancy of less than one year.

For the weeks following his birth, Maximilian stayed in the neonatal intensive care unit undergoing tests, procedures and surgeries. He was able to finally come home

for five days during that September before returning to the hospital. It was during Maximilian's first, short time at home that Matthew decided to take on the project of St. Irenaeus Church.

That November, Maximilian returned home for the final time. Matthew, having come down with Covid-19, stayed isolated.

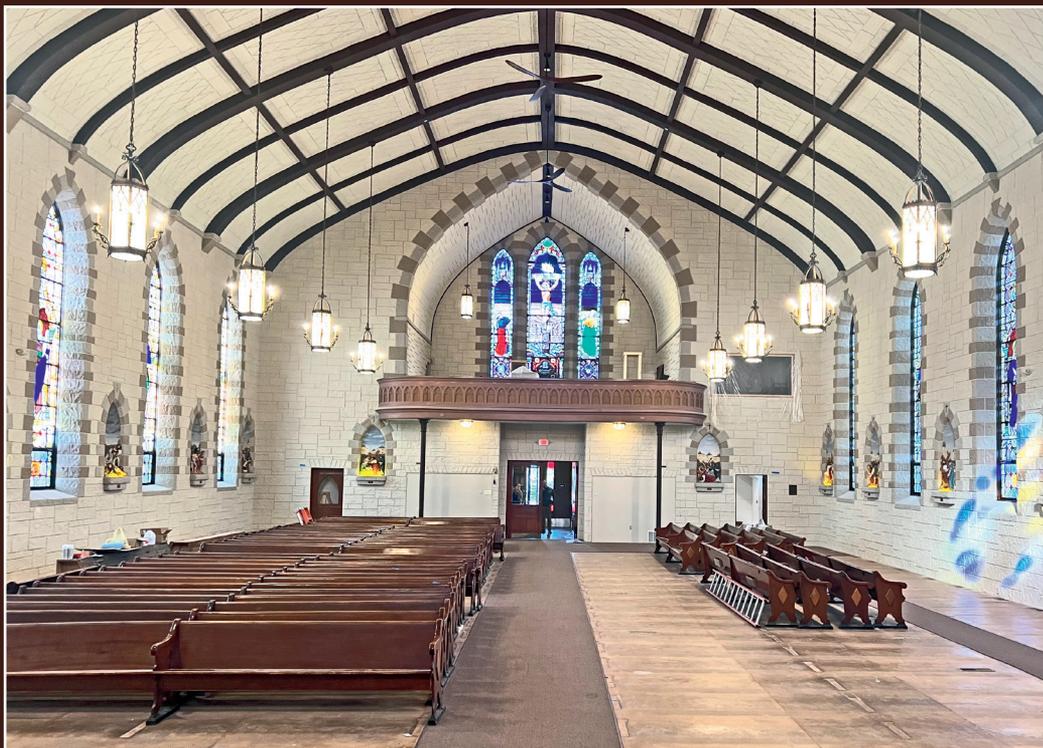
That same month, the church was acquired by "St. Irenaeus Chapel," a new non-profit that Matthew heads as its president.

When December came, Maximilian's condition began to worsen. His temperature indicated a fever, his heart raced, and he required oxygen.

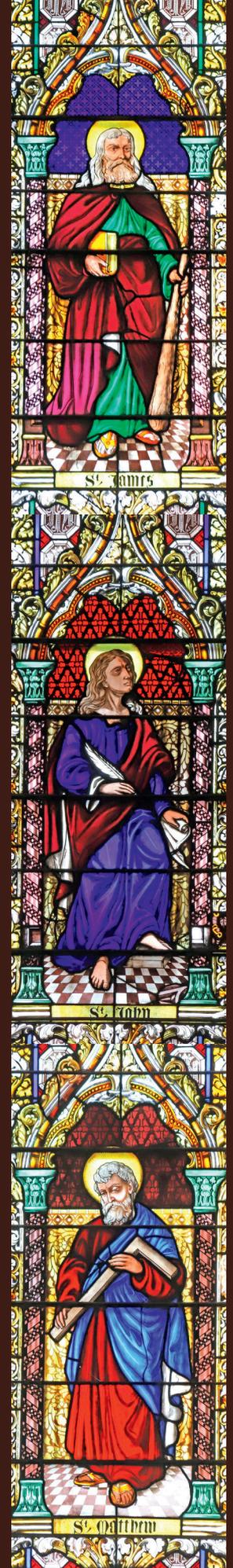
The church's chapel doors were opened on Dec. 11 for initial tours and prayers. A youth group cleaned the building.

The next day, Maximilian died at 8:29 p.m. His funeral would be the first Mass to be held at St. Irenaeus since June 2008.

Matthew continued to move forward on his pursuit to renovate the church, a project he then felt inspired to do as a memorial for his son.



The interior of St. Irenaeus Church in Clinton is undergoing a transformation from floor to ceiling, brightening the worship area with fresh paint and lighting.



"I BELIEVE THAT I AM WHERE THE LORD WANTS ME AND DOING WHAT I THINK HE WANTS ME TO DO AT THIS TIME, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO RAISING MY FAMILY AND RESTORING ST. IRENAEUS CHURCH."

- Matthew Gabbard

NAMED AFTER A BISHOP, BUILT IN WARTIME

St. Irenaeus Church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in January 1997. It was named for the bishop of Lyon, a leading Christian theologian of the second century known for his refutation of gnosticism.

The initial foundation work for the church was started in 1861, the same year that the Civil War began and just 26 years after the town of Lyons in which it would sit was established.

Early parishioners would complete most of the construction of the 130-foot by 60-foot building by 1871 at a cost of \$45,000, or what would today be about \$1.1 million.

The imposing Gothic structure was built with limestone rock hauled by horse-drawn carts from local quarries while other stones were brought down the river from farther north.

The uneven spires of French design on the building's exterior, with the north spire reaching 130 feet high and the south standing at 166 feet, were the last parts of the building to be put into place in the later 1880s.

In 1896, the St. Irenaeus Calvary Cemetery was started which, in 2021, was the location of 2,290 registered burials, including that of the church's first priest. It is said that Father Frederick Cyrillus Jean was buried in a direction that differs from the norm.

Early St. Irenaeus churchgoers were of the largely Irish and German population of Lyons at the time, its German parishioners would decide to move to what would become St. Boniface Church that was built in 1908 on Pershing Avenue.

RENOVATIONS AND A REVERSAL

St. Irenaeus Church was modernized in 1947 and the interior of the church and rectory covered in PermaStone. Wooden beams were painted onto the ceiling, even though the actual support of the structure's ceiling is provided by buttresses along the church's exterior, and electrical improvements allowed for the hanging of copper and bronze Gothic chandeliers and the installation of lighted neutral-colored Stations of the Cross.

The church's high-arching east-facing doorway measuring 24 feet in height and 12 feet in width was stoned in and the entire interior of the church was reversed to face westward by 1907 to better accommodate the church's aging parishioners.

In 1973, the church was hit by a tornado that knocked off the cross at the top of the north spire. A year later, it was replaced with an added interior steel beam.

Ten years later, a storm ripped off the old glass coverings of windows on the west side of the church, and plexiglass was later installed over these windows. A year after the storm, the original woodwork of the roof that had been damaged was replaced with steel sheeting.

Vinyl siding was added to the bell towers for extra protection from the elements of weather in 1982, and a gas line was installed to run steam heat units.

CONSOLIDATION AND DEPARTURE

St. Irenaeus became one of five churches used by Catholic

parishioners in Clinton until they consolidated in 1990. The 100-year-old St. Patrick Church was demolished in 2005 as a result of the consolidation, followed by the demolition of St. Mary Church that had been built in 1884.

The St. Irenaeus parish tried, unsuccessfully, to find a buyer of their church building after forming a property abatement committee in November 2007 and the building faced potential demolition as well until the Clinton County Historical Society purchased it in June 2010. It was bought from the Prince of Peace parish that stipulated that its future use would not be for any "sordid purposes."

The Historical Society registered the building with the state of Iowa as an LLC, then did the best it could in the following years to fund all of the building's needs, maintenance problems, and the \$16,000 restoration of 14 of the church's 23-foot-high windows, until contacted by Matthew.

PARISH FAMILIES BACKING THOROUGH RECLAMATION

As of late February, Matthew had reached about \$1.4 million of the project's estimated \$2 million total cost, funded in full by families belonging to the parish, and utilizing only local labor.

Outside, prior to landscaping, 800 square feet of brick from the double-walled chimney were knocked down over the course of five days. Both spire crosses were brought down to be repainted. A total 173 sheets of plywood, followed by 3,460 burnt sienna-colored shingles, were nailed onto the roof and spires.

Inside, an Allen C-6 organ was installed in the choir loft on the day after Maximilian died so that it would be ready for his funeral services held there at the church soon after.

A false ceiling over the basement and the coal dust-covered sawdust that had been stuffed between it and the floor of the sanctuary above was removed. The floor of the sanctuary took over 20 volunteers only three hours on one Saturday to be ripped out, and new hardwood flooring has been installed in its place.

Electrical work has been done, as well as ductwork and the installation of two new HVAC units.

The sanctuary's interior has been painted, the new altar installed in six pieces, and new fans sit just under the over-40-foot high peak of the ceiling.

In late February, Matthew was working to replace all the doors.

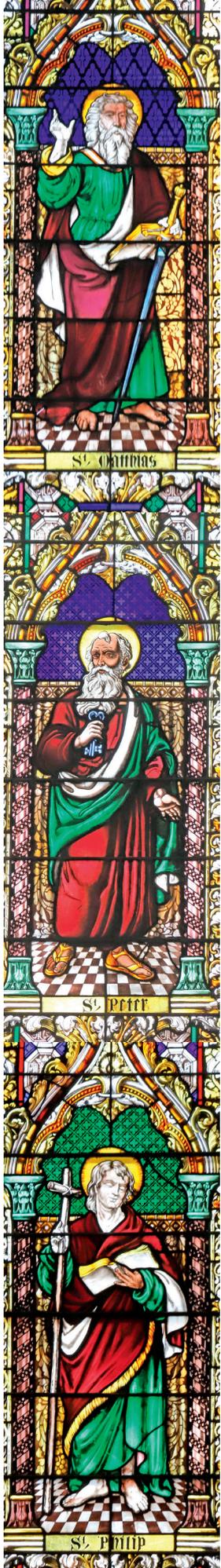
"I'm not one to cut corners," he said.

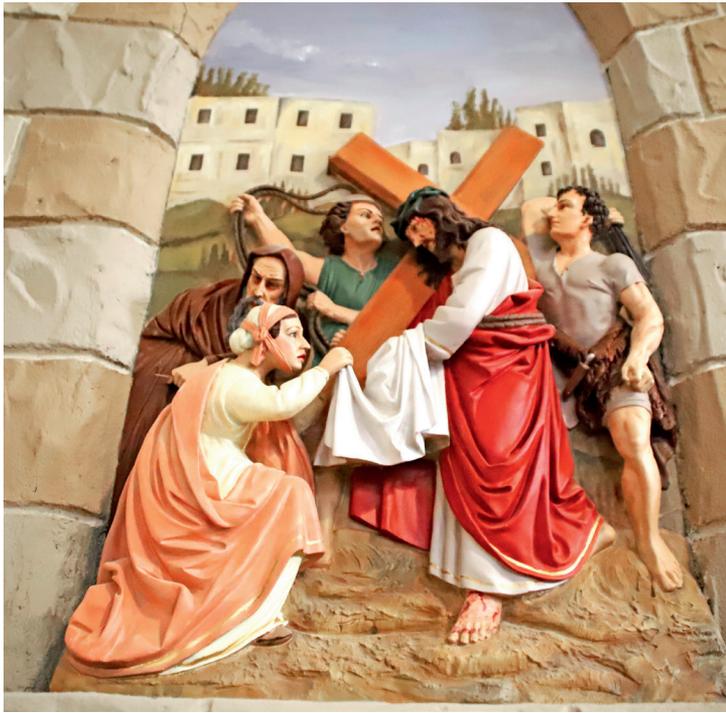
FUTURE HOME OF SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X

Once completed, St. Irenaeus, the oldest Catholic church in Clinton, will be the 104th chapel of the Society of Saint Pius X.

Though he'd known about the SSPX for more than 25 years, Matthew started going with his wife and eight children to its chapels only about six years ago.

"We have always had a love for the traditional form of the Liturgy and the traditional catechisms of the Catholic faith," he said. "We were seeking a well-ordered place where we





could go and practice living our faith more faithfully, without all the noise.”

After the Catholic Church was reformed by the 1962-1965 rulings of the Second Vatican Council, 100,000 men left the priesthood worldwide, along with 90,000 nuns, rejecting the decisions of the Council intended to modernize Catholic worship.

The Council dictated that the altar be turned to face the people, eliminating the priest’s prior position that signified the congregation being led by him to Christ. Mass was allowed to be delivered in the local vernacular, no longer in Latin as before, and women were no longer required to cover their hair in modesty during worship.

In November 1970, French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre founded the SSPX as an international pious union for the formation of priests. Father Hector Bolduc, a priest ordained by Lefebvre in 1974, then came to the United States, opening chapels to organize the SSPX’s faithful.

In the U.S. today, there are an estimated 85 priests who collectively lead 25,000 parishioners in 103 chapels located in 38 states.

The Society of Saint Pius X is a source of some controversy as a Catholic organization that operates outside of the Church hierarchy for doctrinal reasons and does so amidst accusations of anti-semitism and political leanings toward the far right.

Matthew doesn’t devote much of his time to the arguments surrounding the SSPX, though.

“The back and forth has been going on for 50 years and will probably go on for 50 more years,” he said. “I know that in my family the spiritual and personal growth has been exponential, and I have seen that in many others as well... I believe that I am where the Lord wants me and doing what I think he wants me to do at this time, especially when it comes to raising my family and restoring St. Irenaeus Church.”

While the St. Irenaeus congregation awaits the SSPX’s assignment of a priest, Matthew is planning for an open house at the church in the fall.

Photos: The Stations of the Cross sculptures, at top, are insets between the tall stain glass windows of saints. They formerly blended in with the wall color. Now they have been painted to enhance the realism of each scene. The new altar, at bottom, was installed in six pieces. Photos by Chris Baldus.



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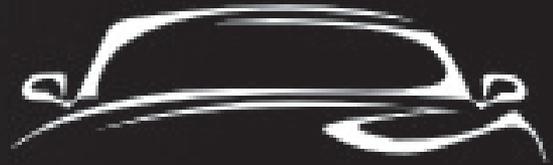
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MAKING HISTORY

Gateway History Club preserves Clinton's Past for the Future

BY JENNA BLOUNT

Gregg Obren's wife, Madonna, used to go to auctions and buy couches. Couches that she'd call her husband to come pick up.

John Rowland went to many of these auctions, and he and Madonna would have conversations about the history of the pieces they'd won, conversations that continued after Obren's arrival to haul some of them home.

The couches ended up being delivered to Hightower Place, a Clinton addiction treatment center, and the conversations had about history by the long-time collectors developed into putting a group together.

Obren had known Rowland for a good 40 years, seeing each other often when Rowland coached in programs Obren ran during the years he'd spent with Clinton's Parks and Recreation Department. After Obren had become a member of Clinton City Council, he'd sometimes see Rowland, a former councilmember himself, still attending meetings but now as a member of the audience.

Obren and Rowland began organizing, figuring out what the group would be, and finding out what parts of Clinton's history that other people were interested in.

"It turns out a lot of people were collectors," Obren says.

A HISTORY CLUB SPROUTS

The Clinton History Club was established in September of 2018, founded on the simple desire to share found information and an enthusiastic interest in the community's past.

"We're just now the next generation of wanting to talk about our history of our community and of our county," Obren says.

The club's first meetings drew crowds of up to 50 to 60 people. They met, weather permitting, at different suggested historic properties where they'd tour the buildings or listen to guest speakers. Other times, they'd meet at the Ericksen Center and indulge in simply viewing each other's personal collections of historic items and photos.

At one of these early meetings, the club toured the baseball stadium, then sat talking for an hour, joined by Clinton Baseball Club Board of Directors members Eric Van Lancker, Lydia Halback and Jurgen Duhr.

Obren and Rowland began giving presentations at American Legion posts and for Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. They visited numerous nursing homes, taking residents on short bus trips to historically significant sites.

When a larger, three-hour bus tour open to the public was organized, "the phone was ringing off the wall," Rowland recalls. "I think we turned away 100 people."

With Obren providing narration of the tour at the helm of one bus and Rowland

on the other, the two buses were taken to the historical museum, the railroad depot and the Horace Anthony House in Camanche, then throughout Downtown Clinton to most of the city's buildings listed on the U.S. Department of Interior's National Register of Historic Places, among them, the Curtis Mansion, the Lafayette Lamb House and the Wilson, Ankeny, Van Allen, Howes and Moeszinger-Marquis Buildings.

CURIOSITY SURVIVES COVID

The club's meetings and bus tours stopped with the onset of the Covid pandemic. It was during this time, though, that Rowland came up with the idea of continuing to share pieces of history via regularly emailed newsletters, starting with a list of about 300 people who wanted to receive them.

"We had a lot of photos to do this," Rowland, who's collected thousands of photos over the years, says.

His emails elicited responses from across the nation, forwarded to people in California and the state of Washington who, in turn, offered stories about their connections to Clinton that Rowland had never heard and shared photos he'd never seen.

In 2019, in cooperation with the city of Clinton, local American Legions and AmVets posts, and the Lawrence Van Hook Chapter of the Daughters of the American Legion, the club wrote for various grants to help to fund the \$37,000 restoration of the war veterans

memorial that sits on the south end of the riverfront, a memorial given national designation by the WWI Centennial Commission in 2018.

"Before Covid, the best way I can describe it," Rowland says, "it was meetings and going places, and now it's turning into more projects."

'GATEWAY' EMERGES AFTER COVID

The club emerged from the pandemic, announcing in a Clinton Herald editorial published in September 2021 that the group had been rebranded as the Gateway History Club, a name more inclusive of its outreach beyond Clinton to Camanche, Lyons, and Fulton, Illinois.

Obren and Rowland, now, are working on providing photos requested for a celebration of the 135th anniversary of the Clinton Police Department.

They've also been contacted by the City's Historic Preservation Committee about helping to make updates. Obren poses the question, "How can we create ordinances and laws and policies to safeguard properties that need to be actually renovated and salvaged instead of torn down?"

Rowland says they'd like to get QR codes developed for the historic buildings that do stand; codes that give visitors stories about the buildings and that would maybe help in the tracking of tourism.

The club is also in talks with Grow Clinton on the possible development of



The John D. Van Allen & Sons store in the original Van Allen Building was in the 200 block of 5th Avenue South before the new building was constructed in 1912-1914. Photo Courtesy of the John Rowland Collection



Pictured here is the west side of Clinton County Courthouse in 1980 with the former boiler house intact. The tall smokestack has been removed. Photo Courtesy of the John Rowland Collection



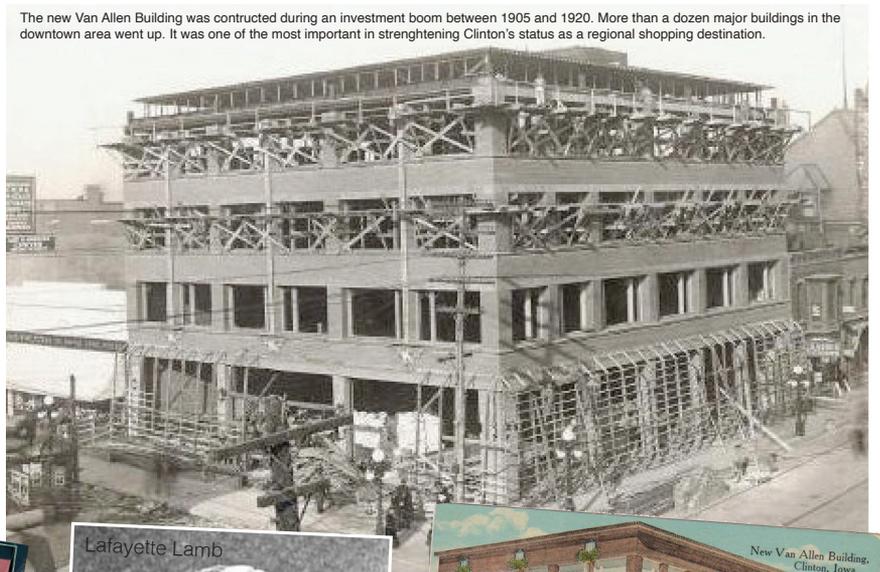
The Riverview Pool staff of 1930, the first year of the pool's operation.



A men's rental wool bathing suit, circa 1930s Clinton, that was given to Obren.



Clinton Industrial Hardball League Uniform, c. 1947-1951, given to Obren.



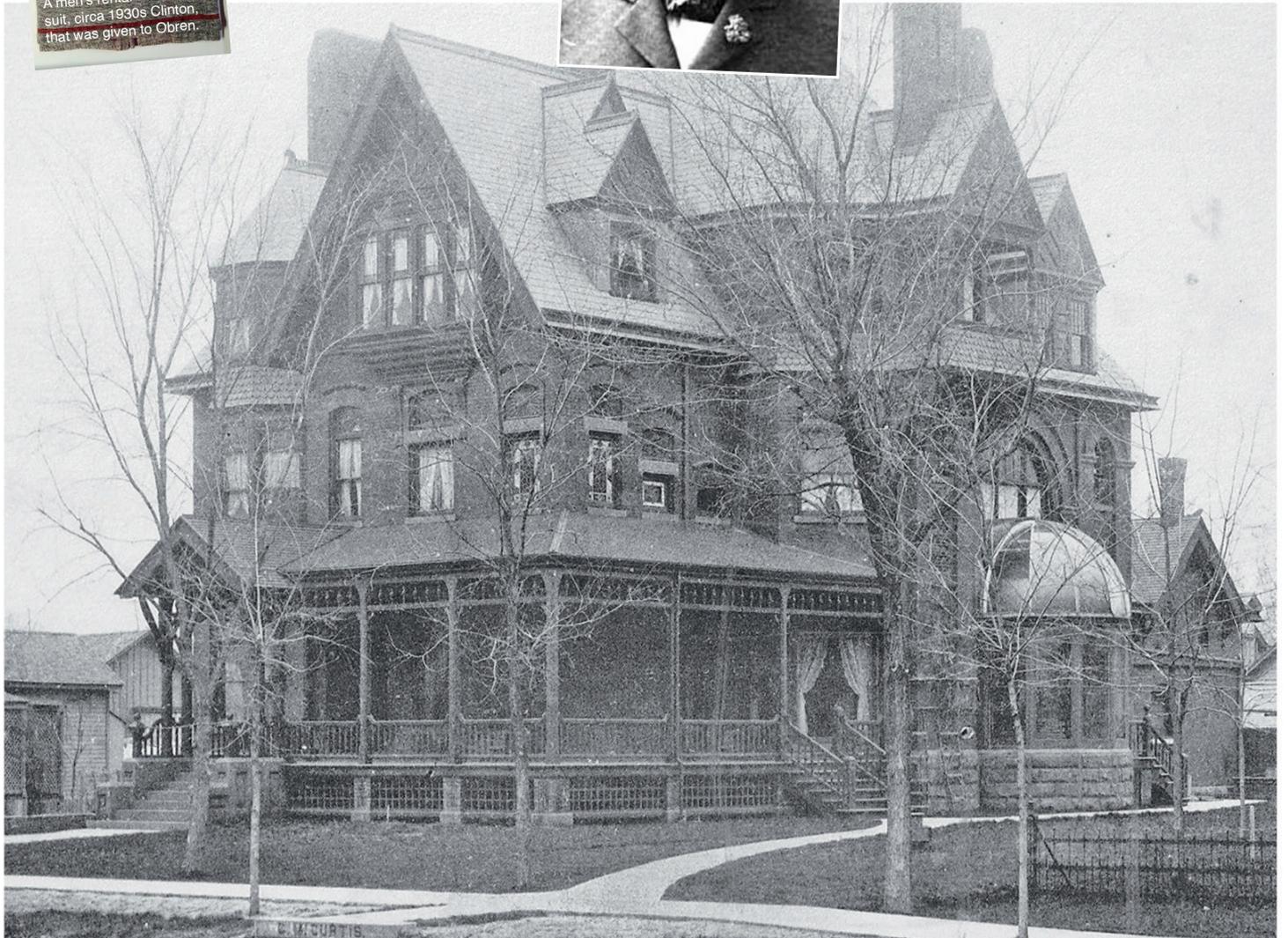
The new Van Allen Building was constructed during an investment boom between 1905 and 1920. More than a dozen major buildings in the downtown area went up. It was one of the most important in strengthening Clinton's status as a regional shopping destination.



Lafayette Lamb



New Van Allen Building, Clinton, Iowa.



Note the Curtis name on the sidewalk in this 1910 photograph of the George Curtis Mansion at 420 5th Ave. S., Clinton.



Photos: Top-Left: Clinton City Council At-Large candidates (Gregg Obren) with mediator Attorney David Pillars during a forum held in October inside Clinton City Hall Council Chambers. Top-Middle: Clinton History Club President John Rowland speaks to the Clinton History Club at Paddle Wheel Park in 2021. Top-Right: Gravestones in the Civil War section of Springdale Cemetery.

a historic preservation roundtable.

CIVIL WAR GRAVESTONES AND AUNT LIZ

Of the 10,000 gravesites in Springdale Cemetery, 62 are framed by a cement retaining wall in a section where Civil War veterans were buried. The gravestones marking where they lie started sinking into the ground long ago and the names of the veterans and years they lived have become barely legible over time.

The Gateway History Club, however, has begun the process of obtaining federal government funding to be used for the replacement of the soft limestone grave markers, those besides the approximately 20 already replaced with new granite stones.

One gravestone was replaced with an obelisk that stands taller than those it's in line with. This marks the grave of a woman, Elizabeth Fairfax, who is buried among the soldiers.

Fairfax, known as "Aunt Liz," lived in the south during the Civil War. There, Fairfax escaped from slavery and traveled north with a Union regiment, nursing the sick and wounded soldiers.

When the regiment stopped in Clinton, Fairfax decided to stay, presumably because she felt that she'd made it far enough north to be safe. She raised two kids and, according to the Clinton County Historical Society, and made a living

selling quilts. Fairfax lived in Clinton until her death in April of 1908.

"There's all these kinds of stories that we found through the years," Obren says. "People are so interested to hear."

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

Another project the Gateway History Club is working on is trying, with the Clinton Public Library, to find sources of funding while creating community interest in restoring and preserving historic photos, slides, movies, and videos of Clinton.

"Especially anything showing the old buildings or historic sites," Rowland says.

In April, the club will do a presentation at Fulton Martin House Museum on Little Rock Island.

They're also considering organizing another bus tour.

HISTORY AS AN ALLURE

In regard to Clinton's future, Rowland says the past is the best indicator.

"There's one trend that's obvious in Iowa, and it's everywhere," he says, "and it's been going on for 100 years. It's that people keep transitioning from the rural small towns to bigger populations."

According to U.S. Census data, the



Elizabeth Fairfax

population of Clinton County grew from 2,822 people in 1850 to 57,122 in 1980. Steadily decreasing since then, the population of the county in 2022 was 46,344.

"That's what the past is telling us, is that these small towns are dying, the rural area is dying," Rowland says. "If you look at the data on some of the small towns in Iowa, you'd be amazed to see that some of those towns had populations of two-, three-, or four-thousand. Today, they're lucky if they have 500 people."

Obren, though, calls attention to the city's efforts toward the contrary.

"Look at what we are trying to do and have already done, renovating, upgrading buildings in downtown," he says, going on to add that people want recreational things to do in Clinton. "If we can get history as part of that ..."

"There's a lot to offer about small towns," Rowland agrees. "But they've got a lot of work to do to sell the story."

If you know of anyone that wants to receive our free Gateway History Club newsletter and photos you can contact us at: Gregg Obren: gobren74@live.com or John Rowland: jrow242@gmail.com



RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

Desperate shot saved CHS boys basketball's 1992 state championship season

BY ERIC SCHWEIZER

Chris Johansen's last second shot hit the front of the rim. The 1992 River Kings season was nearly done.

The ball arced to the back of the rim and bounced up.

Coach Randy Teymer's River Kings had a 24-1 record going into this first-round state playoff game against highly ranked Cedar Rapids Jefferson. The game was nip and tuck all the way, but the Kings fell behind at the very end.

Down by two with seconds left, a J-Hawk tipped the length-of-the-court pass intended for Peter StremLOW. Johansen fielded it and, as he was falling out of bounds, he heaved up a desperate shot from behind the backboard.

"We ended up going down two with three seconds left. We had a play for that situation, it's just a matter of can you execute that play," former Clinton basketball coach Randy Teymer recalled in early February of this year. "There's Chris Johansen tracking the ball down, throwing it up and over the fan-shaped backboard. It hit the front of the rim, then the back of the rim and went in to tie the game as the buzzer went off. That gave us the momentum to play well enough in overtime to win and advance to the semifinals."

The River Kings went on to defeat the J-Hawks in overtime.

"It was called the home run play, and we'd work on it once a week in case we found ourselves in that situation," former Clinton basketball player Chris Powers said. "I'll be honest, it didn't usually work in practice, but fortunately things were on our side and Johansen made an awesome shot, one of the greatest shots I've still seen to this day."

Clinton Herald Sports Editor George Kampling called Johansen's tying bucket the "Shot Heard All Around Clinton."

After the 65-62 victory over the J-Hawks, the River Kings went on to win the school's one and only state championship in basketball.

The 1992 team had many quality players, but only 10 could suit up per game. The starters were Powers, StremLOW, Mike Cleppe, Jeff Werning and C.J. Rose; top subs were Johansen, Marlon Tillman, Matt Jepsen, Eric Dorsey and Kevin LaCourse.

"The main part of it was that we had a large group of returning seniors that ended up being pretty special," Teymer said. "They did well on all of their athletic teams. They knew how to win which is something important. We were able to blend in a group of juniors to play with them and we kept more kids on the team that year than we ever had. They were willing to keep competing in practice, which I think was the key to success. They kept getting better as the season went along."

They were a machine with players moving seamlessly in and out of various roles Teymer put them in.

"This team accepted being role players and coming off the bench," he said. "In one of our toughest games in the district finals, one of our players came off the bench and had two or three big assists that helped us beat a very good Bettendorf team. This group really blended well together because they liked each other and they were happy for each other when success came."

Early in the year, the Kings won the River City Classic, defeating Mater Dei 57-30, and were soon rated third in the state. In December, however, they lost their undefeated standing by losing 59-57 at Pleasant Valley.

That would be their only defeat as they had no trouble with DeWitt, North Scott and Fulton. The 82-44 victory over Fulton was an unusually big margin by which to beat the Steamers.

In January, after that blow out, the River Kings rose to first in the polls and knocked off Muscatine, Burlington and Assumption by double digits with a new high scorer every night.

Powers, the point guard, ran the team.

"It was a fun season, we pushed each other really hard," he said. "Coach DeLacy and Teymer had us in very competitive practices which really prepared us for our games. The best part about it was that it was a great season with my friends. We weren't just teammates, we were friends on and off the court."

By Feb. 24, the Kings had clinched the MAC championship by winning 61-54 over Davenport West, 85-57 over Pleasant Valley and 61-54 over Davenport West.

They beat North Scott easily 71-53 in the district, then they topped third-rated Bettendorf in the Bulldogs' own gym, 64-58.

The Kings punched their state tournament ticket with a 65-56 win over Davenport Central.

Clinton wound up with seven players on the MAC all-conference team. Cleppe and Powers were selected for the first team, along with Teymer as coach of the year. Rose and Werning were on the second team, with hot outside-shooting StremLOW on the third team.

"I was very fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. I had great coaches, players, parental support to get the kids to and from practice, the administration was awesome and we had amazing fans," Teymer said.

Werning and StremLOW were honored on the all-tournament first team. In the final game, StremLOW scored 31 points and Werning was the rebound champ for the entire tourney.

In the state title game, the River Kings handled Indianola with ease, 97-60.

"For some reason everything just clicked for us that night and we got off to a fast start. Chris Powers hit the first 3-pointer and then Peter StremLOW took it from there," Teymer said. "The kids continued to play hard the entire time, and I couldn't have been

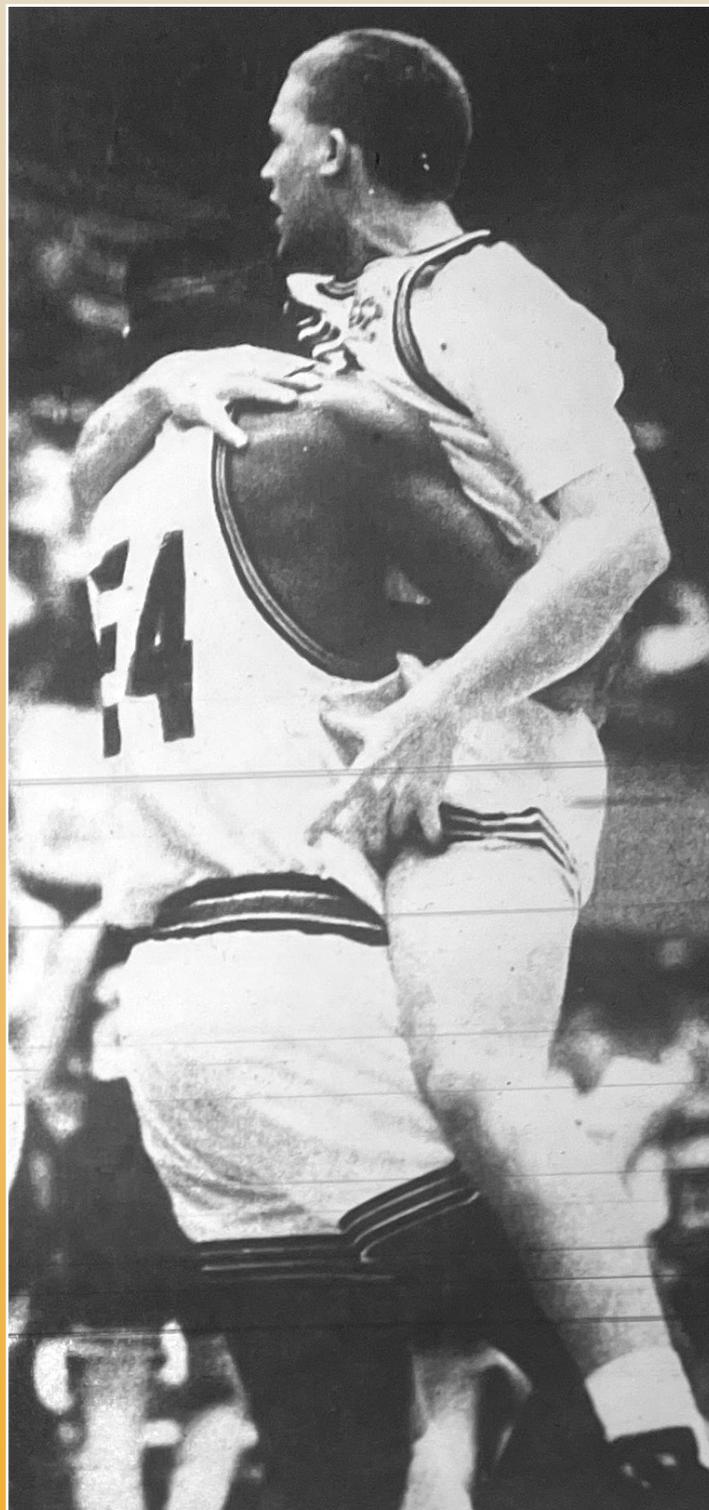
Right: C.J. Rose (54) of Clinton wraps up Chris Johansen with a bear hug following Johansen's incredulous basket as time ran out in regulation play during a Class 3A tournament quarterfinal game against Cedar Rapids-Jefferson Wednesday night. Johansen's shot tied the game at 58-58 sending it into overtime where the River Kings outscored Jefferson to take a 65-62 victory.

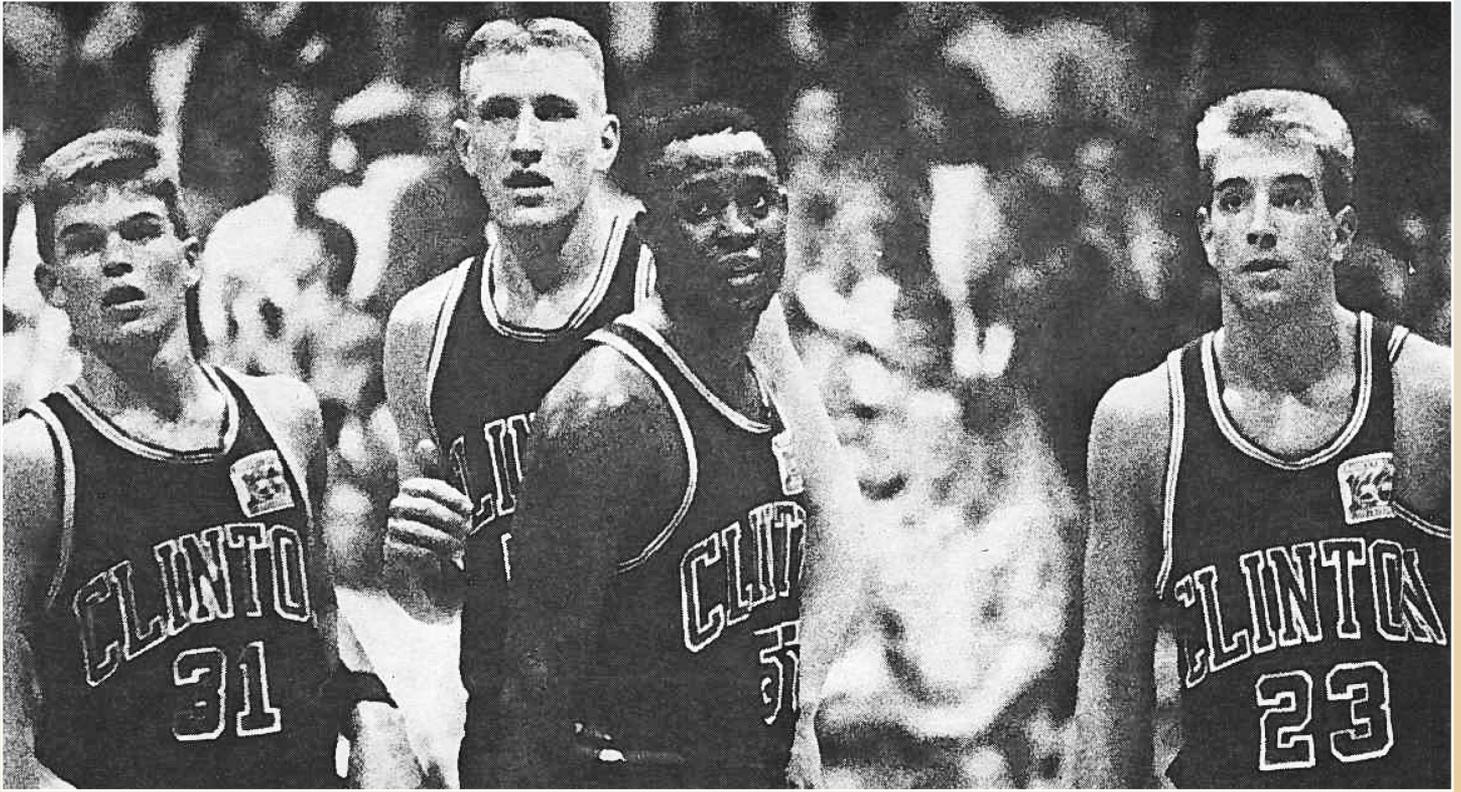
more proud of how they competed in that final game. We only had one player who didn't score that night but he contributed in many other ways."

The 37-point margin of victory is still the largest point differential in a championship game in IHSAA Boys Basketball history.

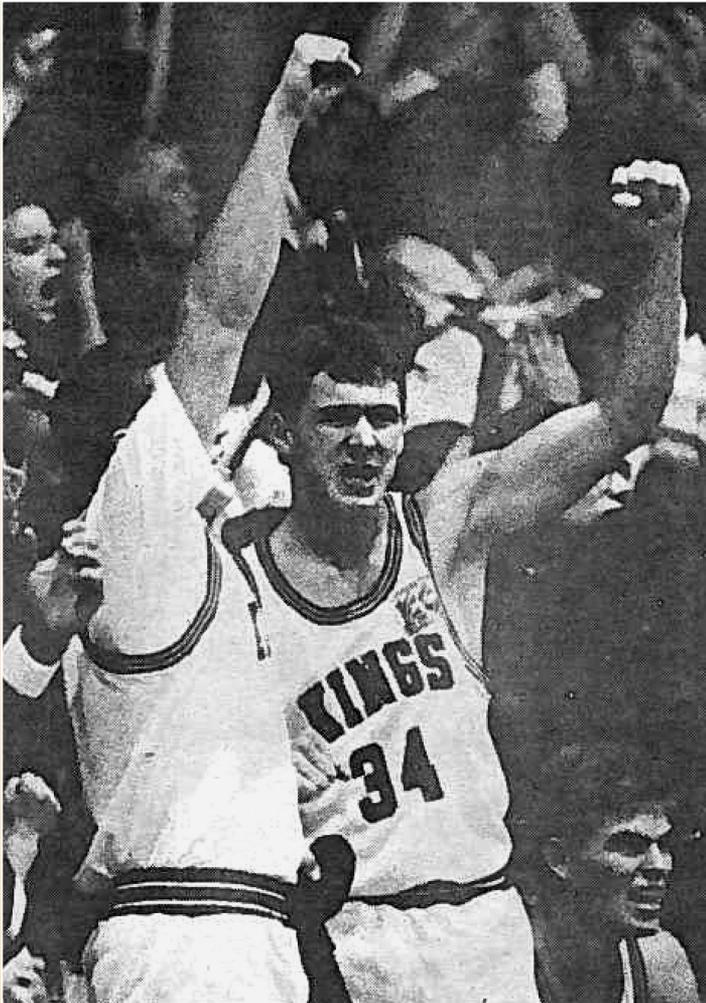
"It was a great season and it's hard to believe it was 32 years ago," Powers said. "The support that the Clinton community and surrounding communities gave us was very magical and fun to be a part of. It's something I'll never forget."

Game history for this article came from the "Clinton Herald's Decades Book 2013" by Scott Levine.

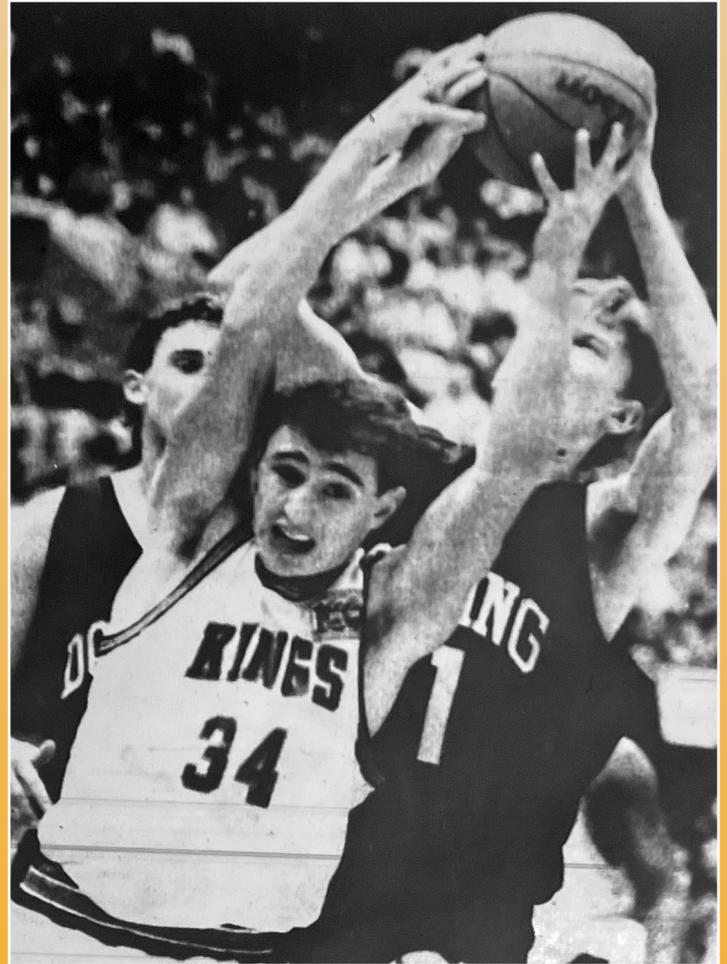




Some of the big guns in the Kings lineup (from left) Pete Stremlow, Jeff Werning, C.J. Rose and Mike Cleppe show some concern. Their intensity and concentration shown here carried through the season and to final victory.



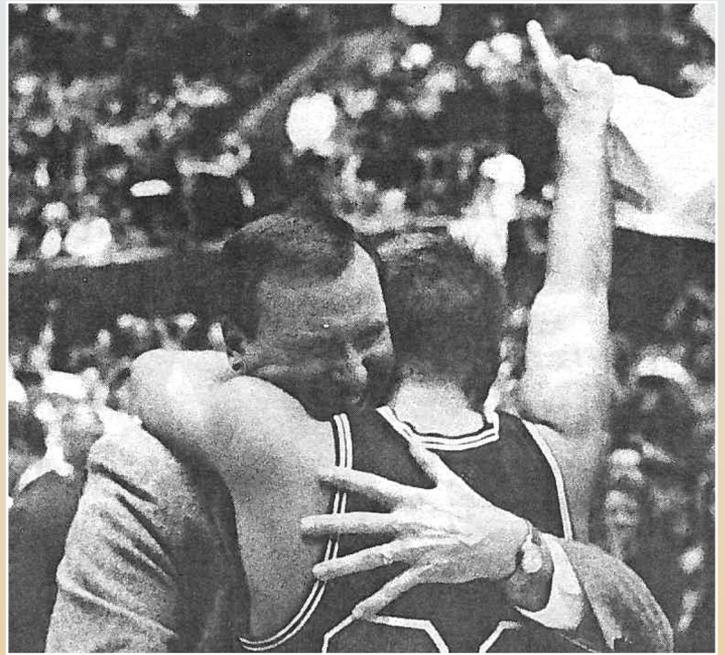
On way to state.



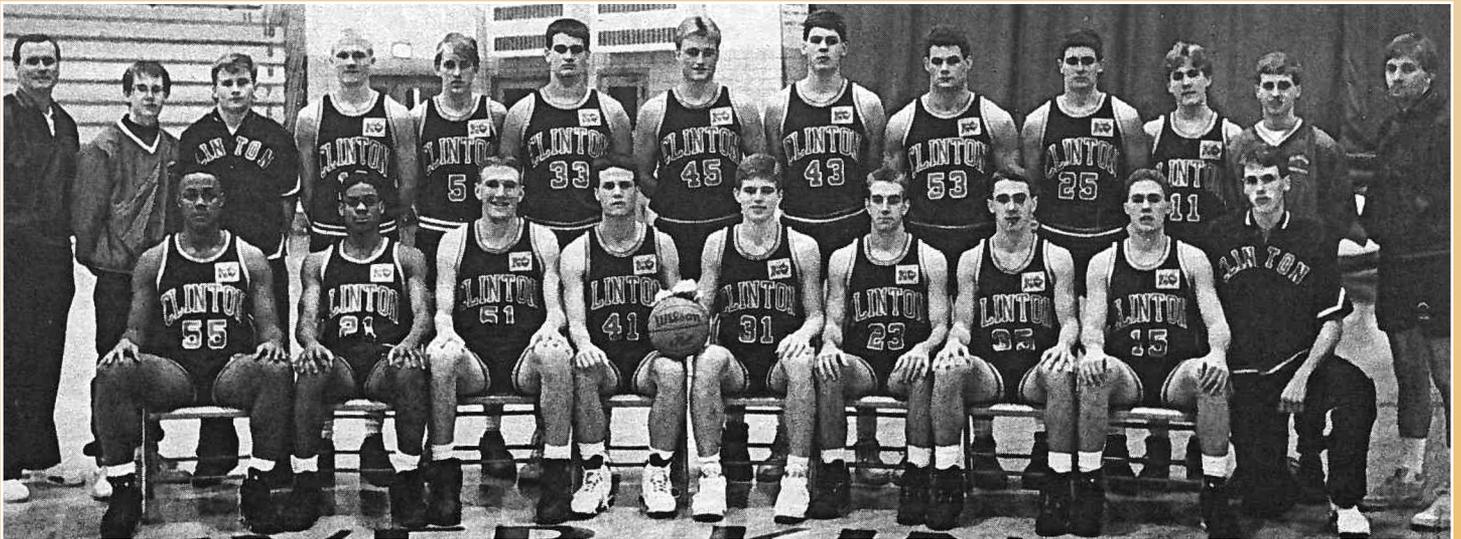
Clinton's Matt Jepsen (34) gets the rebound past Wes Des Moient Dowling's Frank Schoenauer (51) during the Friday, March 20, 1992, state semifinal game. The River Kinds won, 70-59



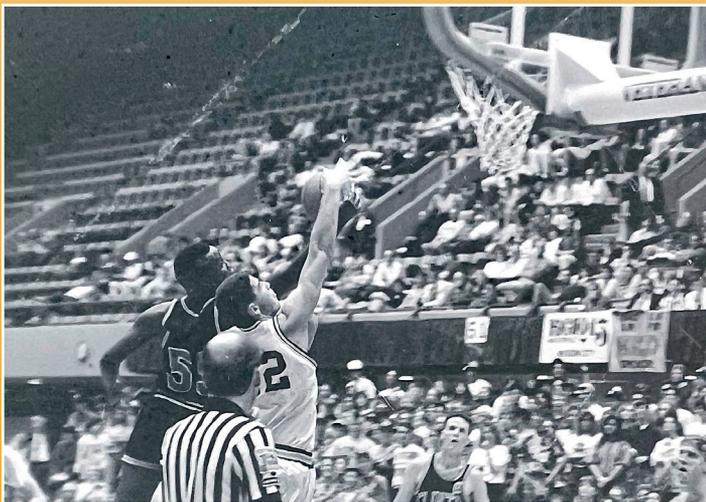
Clinton fans celebrate as the '92 Crew' wins the State Championship.



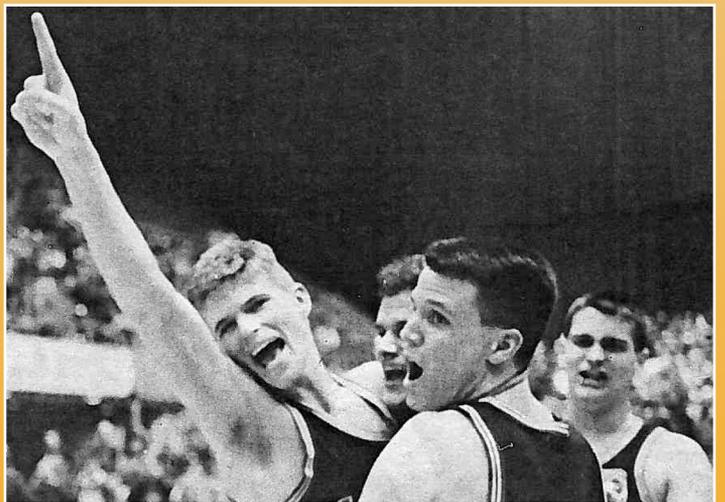
Clinton coach Randy Teymer and forward Mike Cleppe (23) share a championship victory hug.



Team members are (from left) front row: C.J. Rose, Marlon Tillman, Jeff Werning, Chris Powers, Pete Stremlow, Mike Cleppe, Matt Jensen, Chris Johansen, Leon Stark; back row: coach Randy Teymer, manager Kevin Lee, Mitch Hopkins, Scott Housing, John Hall, Jacob Dunk, Todd Zaehring, Brad Hall, Eric Dorsey, Kevin LaCourse, Jeff Reiser, manager Alan Heck, assistant coach Gary DeLacy.



Clinton's C.J. Rose blocks an Indianola player's shot while he was driving to the basket during the 1992 State Championship game.



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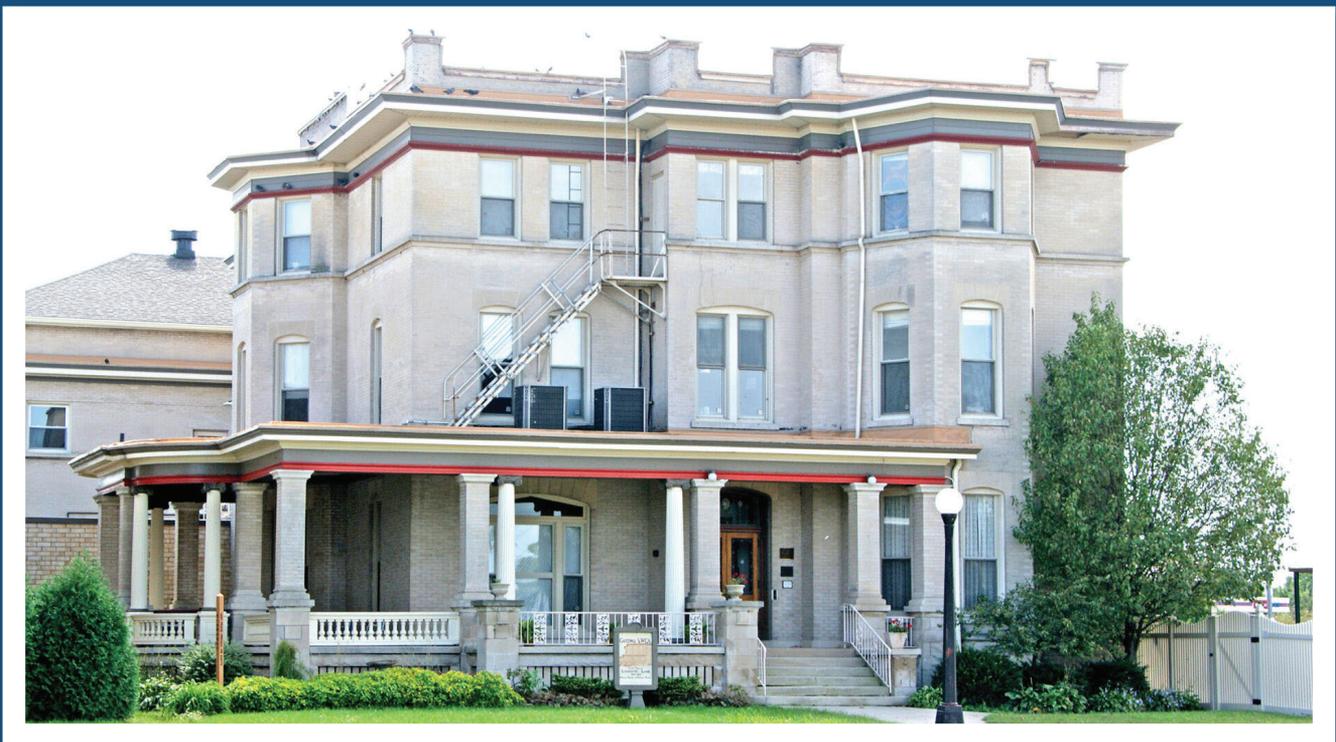


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