

# Unfolding Thanksgiving

## A Collection of Napkins



Growing up, I was taught our napkin belonged to the left of our forks when setting the table and was then placed in our laps once the meal commenced. Grandpa often tucked his into his shirt collar to protect his tie from an assault of gravy.

But have you ever considered using your napkin as a scrapbooking method?

Clara Lien of Steele did just that. From 1939 to 1994, Clara documented gatherings she attended on a napkin from that event. Her collection of napkins, housed in the museum collection, is vast. From weddings to baby showers and Christmas parties to birthdays, each napkin preserved that moment in time.

Enjoy a sampling of Clara's collection.

— Kara Haff, Public Information Officer



**1955**

"1955. Zap N.D. Mel, Andy & Clara. Morlock's. Also Melford's Birthday." This napkin documents their travels for this holiday. Melford is Clara's son. We were unable to make the connection to the Morlocks.

**1968**

"At Gertz 1968. Bismarck." This Thanksgiving was hosted by Clara's daughter LaVerne and her husband, Don Gertz. They were married in 1948.



**1973**

"Nov. 22. Thanksgiving and weekend at Glendive, Mont. with Liens. Nice time and good food. And 6-5-4. I won." This holiday was celebrated with son DeWayne Lien while he was living in Glendive.



**1974**

"Thanksgiving dinner at Zech's. Don Gertz and Trudy Halsne in hosp(ital). November 28, 1974. Very good food!"



**1941**

"Nov. 20, 1941 at Fred's." Research could not verify Fred's identity.



**1950**

"This is the turkey John & Ray brought for our Thanksgiving Dinner 1950." Clara's grand sense of humor shines on this necktie folded napkin.



**1993**

"At LaVerne & Don's. Dave & family there also. Jeanette. 1993." Dave and Jeanette are LaVerne and Don's children.