



# THE MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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### From Minnesota to the Klondike and Television

This story, submitted by Rebecca Jacobsen, Curator of Collections, Sherburne County Historical Society, is both historically interesting and organizationally instructive. It tells how the Sherburne County Historical Society mixed sound research, a little bit of luck, and some tenacity to become linked with an episode of *The American Experience* TV series to be aired in May.

## Sherburne County Historical Society Strikes Gold

by Rebecca Jacobsen

What is the connection between Sherburne County and the 1890s Klondike Gold Rush? There is none—at least, that is what we thought until the fall of 1995, when KCTS Television of Seattle, Wash., contacted us regarding their project, an *American Experience* documentary on the Klondike Gold Rush. KCTS had obtained a list of casualties from an 1898 avalanche and were seeking information about the individuals on the list. One of the names on the list was Clarence McNeil, who was from Livonia Township in Sherburne County.

Lois Gaetz, programs curator at SCHS, did some digging into Clarence's past. Unfortunately, she discovered that little information was available, except for basic census records, a cemetery record, and an obituary. From these records we learned that Clarence was a civil engineer, and that he was married to Laura Keasling, daughter of a Sherburne County commissioner.

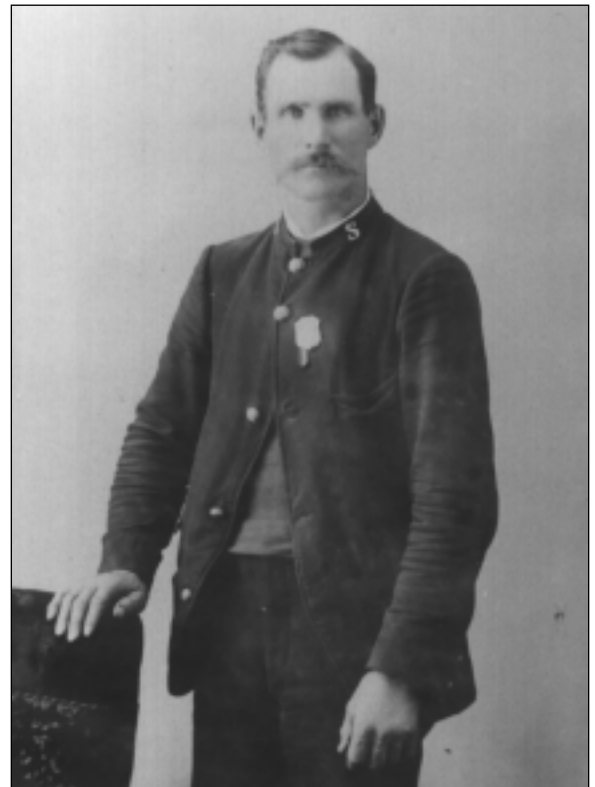


Photo courtesy Sherburne County Historical Society

Clarence McNeil, shown around 1892. The picture was taken in the G. D. Francis studio in Anoka.

Continued on page 2

### New Address for MHO Directory

The *Directory of Minnesota Historical Organizations* is published by the Historic Preservation, Field Services & Grants Department of the Minnesota Historical Society for county historical societies and their chapters; local and regional historical preservation and genealogical organizations; and related museum organizations in the state. The most recent printed issue was dated April 1996.

The directory will no longer be printed on paper and distributed to the general public. It is inevitably out of date almost immediately, and costs of printing and distribution have become prohibitive—even when it is published but once a year. The directory is available on the MHS web site ([www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)) and may be downloaded and copied freely. It is updated biweekly with corrections and additions.

We hope this is not too inconvenient for anyone. If your office does not have access to the Internet, consult the nearest library, which is online or should be soon. The library staff can provide you with access to the directory or suggest other steps you could take.



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# 10th Year for Kanabec County School Program

In the "Old Tyme Country School" program, up to 25 students from grades 1 through 8 spend five days at the Kanabec History Center creating memories from one-room, country schools of the 1920s. The students wear traditional costumes from the period, use period books, and participate in activities like those their grandparents would have enjoyed at

recess. As described in the spring 1997 issue of Kanabec History Center *News*, "The smell of the kerosene lamps, the sound of the gentle ticking of the clock on the wall and the taste of the cool, clear water of the bubbler water fountain are all guaranteed to make memories for the eager school participants."

This year's sessions are during the weeks of June 16-20, June 23-27, and July 7-11. Each daily session begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 2:30. Priority for admission is for residents of the county and/or students who attend the Kanabec County schools, though out-of-county residents are encouraged to apply.

Registration deadline is May 14. The cost is \$25/child/session for members, \$35 for non-members. For information, call (320) 679-1665; or write the Kanabec History Center, 805 W. Forest Ave., Mora, MN 55051. Applications will not be accepted by phone.

*Three students in period costume appear in the summer 1996 "Old Tyme Country School" program in the Whittier School, located on the grounds of the Kanabec History Center.*



*Photo courtesy Kanabec County Historical*

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## Sherburne County, the Klondike, and TV

*Continued from page 1*

Lois also contacted Elsie Keasling and Eunice Keasling Gaines, nieces of Laura, Clarence's widow. Neither Eunice nor Elsie were able to help with our research, so we assembled what little information we had and sent it to Seattle. We considered our Klondike connection closed.

When Fern Taylor contacted our office in April 1996, we had all but forgotten the Gold Rush documentary. Fern Taylor was the daughter-in-law of Laura Keasling (McNeil) Taylor, whose third marriage was to Elmer Taylor of Elk River. Fern had been informed of our research request by Elsie Keasling and Eunice Keasling Gaines, and offered us a collection of materials from the Elk River-Meadowvale area. Among the items were over 500 photographs from the Keasling and Taylor families, local records and memorabilia from Meadowvale, and

Clarence McNeil's letters: the last letters he wrote to Laura before he died.

We immediately contacted KCTS to see if they could still use new material. They were thrilled to hear of the existence of the letters, though they were set to begin filming shortly and were not sure if new materials could be added. We sent copies of the letters to Seattle, and once they saw the letters, they not only stopped the process in order to include Clarence's story, they chose to make him one of a few featured characters.

Lois and I have continued to work with KCTS for the past year, providing additional information, photographs, and copies of letters. This spring, the final product will air on public television. "Gold Fever" will be a 60-minute program on *The American Experience* on Monday, May 12. Check local listings for your station and time.



## A New Museum: An Occasion for Reminiscing

The Hubert H. Humphrey Museum in Waverly opened on Nov. 30, 1996, with the exhibit, *He Chose Waverly as Home*. More than 200 people attended the celebration, joined by Humphrey family members, David Hawley, a reporter and playwright who covered Humphrey's career, and music performed by the Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Jazz Band.

So far, membership support includes 85 Charter Members—10 Founders (\$1,000 each), 4 Sponsors (\$500), 15 Business (\$250), 56 Individual/Family (\$100)—who will be recognized in the permanent museum. The Citizens State Bank matched the first \$5,000 in the following way: 50 cents/dollar for each \$100 donation, and 30 cents/dollar for every \$250, \$500, and \$1,000 donation. The bank has also offered to match \$5,000 in 1997.

The creation of the museum prompted one board member to put some of his memories of the Humphrey years on paper. The following excerpt is from "Looking Back and Ahead" by Russell Gilmer, from the first issue of the museum's newsletter.

As I think back to the good old days, the late 60s and early 70s—a lot of big things were happening in Waverly during that period. The new post office was dedicated, we built the new liquor store, Waverly celebrated its Centennial, and of course, Humphrey was vice president, preparing his run for the presidency.

I was a member of the city council at the time, and being an arch-conservative during my younger years, I bucked the expenditures needed to fund the centennial celebration. Fortunately, more level heads prevailed. Waverly put on the greatest parade in the history of Wright County and I was given the important assignment of guarding the latrines at St. Mary's school, which was opened to the public during the parade. [Ed. note: In the school, latrines were known as lavatories.]

Then there was the work of sprucing up the town for Humphrey's announcement of his run for the presidency. We wanted Waverly to appear very prosperous. Unfortunately, three or four of the buildings on main street were vacant, so we bought some red, white, and blue bunting and draped the windows so no one could see in.

Yes, the Humphrey era was a great time for all of our communities. And, speaking for myself, the excitement has returned. Think of the possibilities. Think of the opportunities the influx a large number of visitors would present. Every great accomplishment starts with an idea followed by action. A sincere thanks to all the members of the museum who have given so generously of their time, talents, and resources to make the opening of the temporary museum a reality. Remember, we have only just begun.

The museum's temporary location is at 441 Atlantic in Waverly, MN 55390; (612) 658-4505; fax (612) 658-4836. It is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by appointment.



*Campaign buttons similar to this one can be seen in the new Hubert H. Humphrey Museum in Waverly. This one is a part of the MHS Museum Collections.*



## State Grants-in-Aid, Awarded for Fiscal Year 1997

The Minnesota Historical Society, on recommendation by the MHS Grants Review Committee in November and after approval by the Society's governing board in December, awarded the grants listed below. The funds were provided by the State of Minnesota. Work on the projects is scheduled to begin this spring.

**Clearwater County.** Clearwater County Historical Society, \$3,110 for exhibit environment improvements at county museum, Bagley.

**Cook County.** Cook County Historical Society, \$868 for display case replacements at county museum, Grand Marais.

**Faribault County.** Minnesota Lake Area Historical Society, \$4,000 for heating and cooling systems, Peter Kremer House.

**Goodhue County.** The Anderson Center, \$1,000 for roof and flashing restoration at Tower View, Red Wing.

**Goodhue County.** Goodhue County Historical Society, \$1,000 for transfer and processing of archaeological collections, Red Wing.

**Hubbard County.** Hubbard County Historical Society, \$4,085 for accessibility and improved drainage for Hubbard County Courthouse, Park Rapids.

**Kandiyohi County.** Kandiyohi County Historical Society, \$2,300 for purchase of storage materials for artifact packing, Willmar.

**Mille Lacs County.** Mille Lacs Lake Historical Society, \$2,000 for preservation and restoration of artifact collection after fire, Isle.

**Nicollet County.** Nicollet County Historical Society, \$2,500 for roof restoration for the Eugene Saint Julien Cox House, St. Peter.

**Pennington County.** Goodridge Area Historical Society, \$1,300 for restoration of the Hans Rod House.

**Pine County.** Hinckley Fire Museum, \$2,500 for exterior restoration to the Northern Pacific Depot, Hinckley.

**Pipestone County.** Pipestone County Historical Society, \$1,829 for window and roof restoration on Pipestone City Hall in the Pipestone Commercial District.

**Pope County.** Pope County Historical Society, \$2,500 for handicap accessible entry to county museum, Glenwood.

**Ramsey County.** Ramsey County Historical Society, \$3,500 for archaeological artifact storage and management project, St. Paul.

**Stearns County.** Stearns County Historical Society, \$2,500 for collections conservation and storage at county museum, St. Cloud.

**Stearns County.** Paynesville Area Historical Society, \$500 for conservation and storage of artifact collection.

**Waseca County.** Waseca County Historical Society, \$2,500 for foundation restoration on the Philo C. Bailey House, Waseca.

**Watonwan County.** St. James Opera House Restoration Project, \$3,000 for roof restoration on St. James Opera House, St. James.

**Wright County.** Hubert Humphrey Museum, \$1,171 for preservation of the Humphrey collections, Waverly.

**Wright County.** Wright County Historical Society, \$4,000 for security system installation, Buffalo.

**Yellow Medicine County.** Yellow Medicine County Historical Society, \$1,837 for furnace and humidifying system installation.



### County and Local Preservation Project Grants (funded with State Bond funds)

**Blue Earth County.** \$50,000 for restoration and accessibility for the Rensselaer D. Hubbard House, Mankato.

**Carlton County.** Carlton County Historical Society, \$32,500 for elevator installation, Shaw Memorial Library, Cloquet.

**Carver County.** City of Carver, \$21,825 for restoration of the wooden Railroad Water Tower in the Carver Historic District.

**Dodge County.** City of Kasson, \$50,000 for restoration of the Kasson Water Tower.

**Fillmore County.** City of Chatfield, \$11,000 for restoration of the Chatfield Public Library.

**Kanabec County.** Kanabec County, \$16,370 for tower restoration project, Kanabec County Courthouse, Mora.

**Meeker County.** City of Dassel, \$50,000 for continued restoration of the Universal Laboratories Building to house the Dassel Area Historical Society.

**Morrison County.** Morrison County, \$35,879 for foundation restoration and building systems project for the Morrison County Courthouse, Little Falls.

**St. Louis County.** University of Minnesota-Glensheen, \$27,000 for roof restoration, Chester and Clara Congdon Estate, Duluth.

**City of Winton.** \$23,500 for foundation and structural rehabilitation, Winton Community Church building.





## Mn/Model—Minnesota Archaeological Predictive Model

### Who and What It's For

Land-use planners and archaeologists will soon be able to use a computer-based tool to help them predict areas likely to contain archaeological sites. The tool is called the "Minnesota archaeological predictive model," or Mn/Model.

For instance, planners from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), can use Mn/Model to help them avoid areas that have a high probability of containing archaeological sites. The model will also help archaeologists understand the relationships between site location and variables such as distance to water, vegetation, soils, and other environmental characteristics. Then, if construction in high-potential areas cannot be avoided, archaeologists can carry out their research during the initial planning phase. In other words, in Mn/Model, archaeological resources become an initial factor in site selection. Unnecessary archaeological site destruction can be prevented, and, when significant archaeological resources are discovered, the model can help prevent project delays and additional expenditures.

Their first task is to gather data on the archaeology, geology, and geography of landscapes in Minnesota. The team's aim is to identify the environmental characteristics that are related to known archaeological sites. Then, by analyzing how these characteristics relate to areas of Minnesota less well known, they can predict the presence of archaeological sites. The data are analyzed by computer mapping experts and statisticians, who use specially designed computer software called Geographic Information Systems, or GIS.

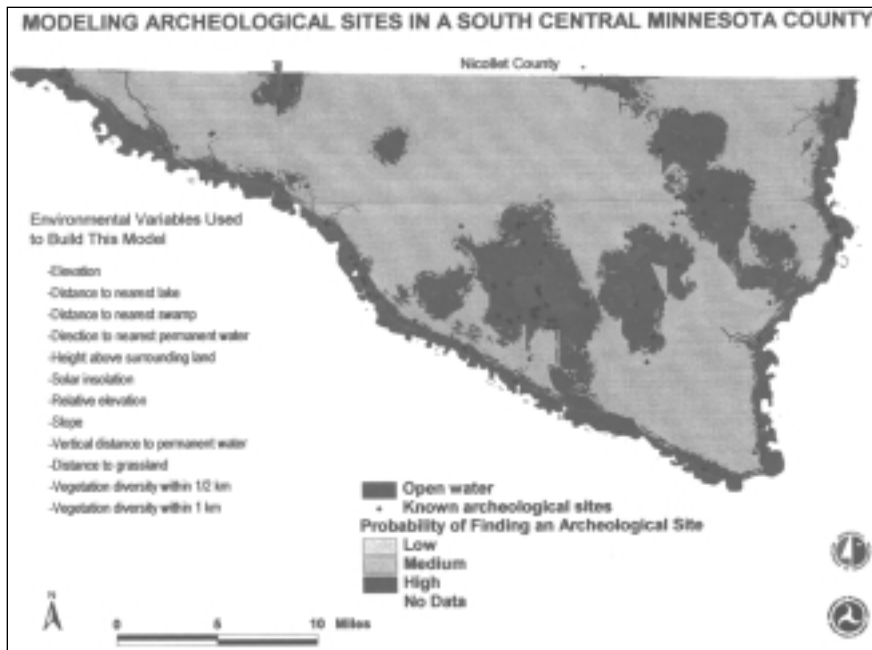
### Who Is Putting It Together

The Mn/Model project is funded by Mn/DOT using money made available through the Federal Highway Administration's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). BRW, Inc. is the lead contractor and will provide project management, coordinate archaeological research and public outreach efforts, and develop the GIS application. Other members of the team include Foth & Van Dyke, which is responsible for the geology

components. The Mississippi Valley Archaeological Center, Inc., is directing the archaeological field work and laboratory analysis, and the Leech Lake Heritage Site Program is conducting portions of the archaeological survey.

A technical advisory group has also been formed and includes representatives from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the State Historic Preservation Office in the Minnesota Historical Society, Office of the State Archaeologist, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Land Management Information Center-Minnesota Planning, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

*This map gives you an idea of the kind of information the model will provide. The original is in bright, distinct colors. This map is from the Mn/Model Newsletter, December 1996.*



### How It Works

Mn/Model has been in development for the past two years by Mn/DOT and an interdisciplinary team of archaeologists, geographic information system developers, geologists, and statisticians, headed by BRW, Inc., a Minneapolis-based consulting firm.

Additional information, including the project's research design, is available on the MHS web site: <http://www.mnhs.org/prepast/>

*by Homer Hruby  
Survey & Information Management Coordinator,  
SHPO*



## Useful Publications & Some Almost-free Exhibit Panels

### National Park Service Magazine CRM

*CRM* is an outstanding source of information for persons interested directly or indirectly in cultural resource management. Vol. 20, No. 2 (1997) is titled "African American History and Culture," and is the second issue on this subject. The first (Vol. 19, No. 2) was published in March 1996. Titled "Connections: African-American History and *CRM*," it had to be reprinted so that 11,000 copies could be sent to teachers, parks, federal agencies, state and local governments, and the general public.

The 27 articles in the new issue, in the words of Dwight T. Pitcaithley, Chief Historian of the National Park Service, strive "to connect African-American history with the specific places in this country where that history can be visited and studied."

If you have a professional interest in the field of cultural resource management (*CRM* is published by the National Park Service as a service for parks, federal agencies, Indian tribes, states, local governments, and the private sector), you can ask to be put on the mailing list. Write *CRM* (2250), U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127; call (202) 343-3395, fax (202) 343-5260.



### Historic Preservation Informational Booklets

The National Trust for Historic Preservation frequently publishes booklets on techniques and a wide range of organizational issues in its Information Series. Fifty-nine booklets have been published so far; each is available for \$6. The complete set, plus specially designed booklet holders, is available for \$150 plus shipping and handling. Some videos and back issues of *Historic Preservation Forum* are also available. For a catalog and further information, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; call (202) 588-6286.

### New Foundation Guide Published

The *Guide to Minnesota Foundations and Corporate Giving Programs* has been recognized through eight previous editions as the most comprehensive directory of grant-makers in Minnesota. It supplies information about various priorities and areas of support, grant ranges, and names of contact persons. The 1997-1998 edition is now available from the Minnesota Council on Foundations for \$50 plus shipping, handling and tax.

The council also provides free copies of the *Minnesota Common Grant Application Form*, a free subscription to *Giving Forum* newspaper, and fact sheets on Minnesota charitable giving.

For an order form, contact the Minnesota Council on Foundations, 800 Baker Building, 706 Second Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55402-3008; phone (612) 338-1989; fax (612) 337-5089; e-mail: info@mcf.org

### Minnesota Genealogist 25-Year Index Published

The "Subject Index to *Minnesota Genealogist*, 1969-1994," was published in the *Genealogist*, Vol. 25, No. 4. and supplemented in the December 1996 issue, Vol. 26, No. 4. The full index is now available from the Minnesota Genealogical Society for \$10 per copy. Shipping and handling is \$1.50 for the first copy and 50 cents for each additional copy. (Minnesota residents need to include an 80 cents sales tax for each copy.) Send your check or money order to: MGS, PO Box 16069, St. Paul, MN 55116-0069. Allow three weeks for delivery.

### A Capitol Idea: Wall Panel System Available

An exhibit wall panel system built in the mid-1980s for the State Capitol must be moved out of storage due to a spring construction project. The system is free-standing and includes 18 beige fabric wall panels, each 3 1/2' x 8'. The panels are packed in six crates along with two crates of a lighting system, which consists of track lighting that clamps on to the tracks on the panels. There is no charge for the systems, but all shipping charges must be paid by the next owner. For information, call Carolyn Kompelien at (612) 296-6808.



## Workshops on Education & Fund Raising

### AASLH Workshop on Educational Programming

“Education and Public Programming,” cosponsored by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, will be held in Madison, Wis., Thursday through Saturday, June 12-14, 1997.

The workshop will be conducted by Robin Gabriel, Director of Education for Monticello, Home of Thomas Jefferson, and Rebecca Fye, Director of Education for Wickliffe Mounds and Research Center in Wickliffe, Ky. Both have long experience in developing a variety of low-cost, high-quality educational programs.

The workshop costs \$125/person, which includes one lunch and all workshop materials. Discounts are available for full-time students.

For more information, contact AASLH Director of Programs, (615) 255-2971; fax (615) 255-2979; or <aaslh@nashville.net>



### Minnesota Council on Foundations Schedules Four Fund Raising Workshops

The Minnesota Council on Foundations will present its day-long workshop, “Grantsmanship for Beginners,” four times in 1997. Workshops will be held in St. Paul (Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, University of Minnesota, St. Paul) on March 19, Sept. 16, and Dec. 2. On June 24, the workshop will be held at Southwest State University in Marshall.

The workshops will cover researching foundations, grantwriting and related topics. The cost is \$60/person (two per organization allowed), which includes box lunch, refreshments, program materials and related costs. Attendance is limited, so register soon.

For information, contact Timi Parker-Hill, Minnesota Council on Foundations, 800 Baker Building, 706 Second Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55402-3008; phone (612) 338-1989; e-mail: info@mcf.org

## It's Tough to Be Brief and Historically Sound (Thoughts on Local History, & a New Book)

Conveying historical information in short articles, sketches, markers, signs, etc., is far from simple. In a recent article, Carol Kammen, professor of history at Cornell University, offered some instructive examples and advice about the problems caused by the need to be brief. (“On Doing Local History,” *History News*, Autumn 1996, from the American Association of State and Local History.)

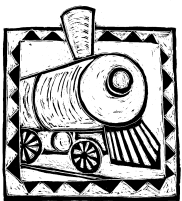
For example, in a published collection of short biographical sketches, she read that John C. Fremont “personally received the Mexican surrender of California at Cahuenga on Jan. 13, 1847.” Kammen states that, while the statement is not false, “it is inadequate and misleading, for Fremont did this despite the fact that he had no orders from his superiors to do so and he faced a court-martial for his actions.”

Historical markers also are demanding. For instance, a marker that was naming an early railroad omitted the fact that “it was horse-drawn—not steam powered,” which was the interesting and unusual aspect of the railroad. She comments that this sign

follows the patterns of signs “erected in the 1930s naming first families, first supervisors, first mills, and other initial events, as if after its period of settlement, history in the area came to a screeching halt.”

When you are asked to write markers or short sketches, “begin by questioning why the material is wanted and to what use this history is being put.” The writers noted above did not do the things she identifies as essential to the work of a historian: “evaluation, organization, critical judgment, knowledge of context, discrimination, and thoughtfulness.” We should not use our “compressed” space as an excuse. When faced with the difficult task of saying something historically sound in a brief format, take it as far as you can toward those principles.

These issues and others are discussed in a collection of essays edited by professor Kammen, *The Pursuit of Local History: Readings on Theory and Practice*, recently published by AltaMira Press in association with the AASLH. (paperback, 240 pages, \$24.95)





## Music Boxes & Organs in Sibley County

The sounds of a particularly nostalgic kind of music will fill the air in Henderson on May 18. The Sibley County Historical Society and the Music Box Society International will present a collection of still-functioning music boxes dating from the 1840s. In addition, at least five band organs will be set up to play on museum grounds.

The program will be held on the grounds of the Sibley County Museum on west Main Street in Henderson from 1 to 5 p.m.. Admission is free, but donations of \$2 or more will be accepted to help with repairing the building's porch.



To the right is a 1921 Wurlitzer Military Band Organ, owned by Tom Kuehn of Mahtomedi, Minn. It works like a miniature pipe organ to run musical rolls that produce sounds of a regular band.



Courtesy Sibley County Historical Society



Courtesy Sibley County Historical Society

The combination organ, drum, and bell music box shown above, made in 1890 by E. W. Jacarad in Geneva, Switzerland, plays ten tunes. Steel pins on a rotating cylinder, driven by clockwork or a spring, pluck the teeth of a steel comb, producing soft high-pitched sounds. The pins also drive the drums and bells. This one is owned by Lawrence Crawford of Arlington, Minn.

The Minnesota History **Interpreter** is published by the Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants Department of the Minnesota Historical Society, and distributed to Minnesota's county and local historical societies and heritage preservation commissions.

Readers are invited to submit information for publication. To be considered, items must reach the editor by the 25th of the month, two months before publication (example: publication date, October 1; submission deadline, August 25). Send to: **Interpreter** Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906. For more information call (612) 296-5434 or (612) 296-8196.

Upon request, this publication can be made available in alternative formats: audiotape, large print or computer disk.

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