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Cemetery Walk Brings Winona History to Life

Nine characters from Winona's past reappeared Oct. 8–10 to talk with visitors in Winona's Woodlawn Cemetery. They were part of the Winona County Historical Society's (WCHS) "Voices from the Past: Woodlawn Cemetery Discovery Walk" program.

Almost 500 school children, mostly sixth-graders, participated in the program on Friday, Oct. 8, and approximately 900 adults and family members attended over the weekend. Organizing and managing the program required the services of nearly 75 people—the program committee, staff, volunteer guides, National Honor Society volunteers and parking attendants—but all agreed that it was one of the most successful programs ever held by WCHS. The weather cooperated gloriously.

The one-mile tour to the grave sites lasted approximately one hour. Visitors engaged in conversations with the historical figures and enjoyed the natural history within the cemetery. Al Haake gave stonecutting demonstrations, and musical selections were performed by members of the Winona

Oratorio Chorus. Each of the historical characters was portrayed by several actors during the course of the program; 28 actors were needed over the three-day period.

An educational program designed for sixth-graders provided a living history of early Winona, and Vicki English, a Winona master gardener, spoke to the school children about the landscaping and natural history of the cemetery.

Woodlawn Cemetery, established in 1862, is the oldest cemetery in the area. It



Courtesy Winona County Historical Society

Jacques Reidelberger portrayed Stephen Taylor, the only Revolutionary War soldier buried in Minnesota. The Daughters of the American Revolution built a replica of Fort Ticonderaga around his marker.

is a public cemetery, owned and operated by an association of grave site owners with a 10-member board of directors. Its 220 acres include 27,000 graves over 55 acres; with an additional nine acres in reserve, burial needs in the area for the next 100 years should be readily accommodated.

The historical characters included the only Revolutionary War soldier buried in Minnesota; a Baptist minister; a pioneer woman who became a civic leader despite the loss of two husbands and seven children; the man who drew the original plans for Winona; a philanthropist; and a famous singer who became a patron of the arts.

A 16-page booklet for visitors included a map and information about the cemetery, advertisements from sponsors, descriptions of the historical characters, and a letter of acknowledgment and appreciation from Mark Peterson, WCHS executive director. For further information, contact WCHS at 507/454-2723, by fax 507/454-0006, or e-mail, wchs@luminet.net.



Courtesy Winona County Historical Society

Brother Paul Ostendorf, WCHS volunteer, portrays John A. Laatsch, Winona wholesale grocer, former mayor and philanthropist.



Newsletters Feature Surveys of Historical Schools, Stores and Churches

The fall issues of three county historical society newsletters presented extensive coverage of three types of important institutions: schools, stores and churches.

The July/August/September 1999 issue of the Beltrami County Historical Society (BCHS) newsletter, *The Centennial Gazette*, featured histories and historic photographs of town and country schools in the county. Stories



covered the Bemidji school system, 1898-1980, and education on the Red Lake Reservation from 1858 to 1958.

A story about rural schools in Roosevelt and East Alaska townships, which began in 1905, and Debs Consolidated School, which began in 1916, was accompanied by reminiscences of two rural school teachers, Agnes Welo and Mary Lou Fuller. The centerfold pages displayed a montage of 21 photographs of schools, students and student groups, faculty, and the Bemidji High School 1935 football team.

An article by Edythe Beckman, "Country Stores Were Social Centers," introduced stories and photographs of eight country stores in the fall 1999 issue of the *Goodhue County Historical News*, published by the Goodhue County Historical Society (GCHS).



The stores discussed were in Red Wing, Welch, Belvidere Mills, Sogn, Wacouta, White Willow, Roscoe and Wastedo; the articles mixed anecdotes with documentary research. Readers are advised to "watch future issues for the story of one 'country grocery' that has survived."

The September/October 1999 issue of *Clearwater History News* offers an eight-page "Special pullout section" titled "Historic Churches of Northern Clearwater County—A self-guided tour of some of Clearwater County's Historic Churches north of Highway 2." Articles and photographs of nine

churches are featured, seven of which were part of the 1997 *Historic Churches Tour* sponsored by

the Clearwater County Historical Society (CCHS). The other two were part of the 1998 *People and Places of Clearwater County Tour*.

The newsletters of the Beltrami County and the Clearwater County historical societies are published on tabloid-size newsprint, 16 pages each. The 12-page *Goodhue County Historical News* is on text-quality paper, each page 8.5 x 11 inches.

For additional information, call: BCHS at 218/751-7824 or by e-mail at bchsm@spacestar.net; GCHS, 651/388-6024 or mail@goodhistory.org; and CCHS, 218/785-2000.

Stearns History Museum Helps Honor Century Farms



The Stearns History Museum (SHM) recently erected new markers on eight Century Farms in Stearns County and replaced five old markers. Since 1978, 321 farms in Stearns County have been recognized as Century Farms, a status accorded farms of 50 acres or more that were settled in 1900 or earlier and were continuously owned by one family. The eight new Century Farms dated from 1860 to 1899. Cooperating with SHM were the Stearns County Parks Department and the Stearns County Highway Department.

For more information, call John Decker at 320/253-8424, or contact SHM by e-mail: Info@Stearns-Museum.org, or visit its web site, www.Stearns-Museum.org.



150th Anniversary of Dakota County: Chautauqua Program and Video



Beginning in 1998, the Dakota County Commissioners appointed a Sesquicentennial Committee of Dakota County residents to consider various ways to mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of Dakota County, one of the original nine counties of Minnesota Territory. Jean Beckman, coordinator of the Dakota City Heritage Village (DCHV) in Farmington, proposed that a Chautauqua show be developed and performed at the 1999 Dakota County Fair. She and DCHV volunteers took the lead in organizing the crews, cast and equipment, and in arranging to present the show at Dakota City on the county fairgrounds. Funding was provided by Dakota County.



MHS collections

One of the scenes in the "Follow Me" Chautauqua show was built around the monorail train pictured here. Following an 1826 English plan and manufacturing design by Enos Electric Railway Co. of Boston, this car was built in 1888 in South Park, a suburb of St. Paul in Dakota County, by a company of Dakota County businessmen led by Arthur E. Clark. They sought a franchise from the city of St. Paul to build an overhead train to Minneapolis. Enos called for steel construction, but this one was built of wood. Enos called for an elevation of 14 feet above the ground, but this one was very close to the ground. The company addressed these problems by strengthening the frame and raising the car. The Chamber of Commerce and the St. Paul Pioneer Press both favored the project. Despite vigorous protests from property owners in the area of the proposed track and an attempted bribe of a city council member by a member of the investor's group, the franchise was granted in 1888. There is no record, however, that the investors' group accepted the franchise, and in 1889 the group does not appear in the city business directory. (Source: St. Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 3, 1952.)

"Chautauqua" shows began in the late 1800s and were popular through the early 1900s. Traveling tent shows, they brought music, dance, variety acts and enlightenment to crowds of people all around the country. This one, titled "Follow Me to Dakota County 1849," was no exception. A cast of seven shared the acting, singing, dancing and playing responsibilities required by Chautauqua productions. The cast of four men and three women consisted of professionals and amateurs (including two high school students).

The script by Pete Martin, helped in his research by the Dakota County Historical Society (DCHS), includes 18 scenes. In the background of each scene, a historical photograph was projected on a large screen in the back of the stage. The scenes retell, in dialogue, songs and dancing, the stories of many significant events and key individuals (e.g., Rev. Thomas S. Williamson, Harriet Bishop, Henry Hastings Sibley and Ignatius Donnelly). Accompanying music was provided by a guitar, violin and string bass. Music and lyrics were composed by Eric Peltoniemi, and the show was directed by Terry Carlson.

The show was performed 12 times in the 300-seat Chautauqua tent; admission was free. The first performance was videotaped by Northern Dakota County Community TV, and the resulting 80-minute videotape is available for \$15 (shipping and handling included) from DCHV, P.O. Box 73, Dakota County Fairgrounds, Farmington, MN 55024, 651/460-8050; and at DCHS, 130 3rd Ave. N., South St. Paul, MN 55075, 651/451-6260. Production of the video was sponsored by Dakota County so that those not able to attend the show at the fair could enjoy it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a remarkably high-quality videotape, both in production values—sound, light and editing—and in the performance itself—script, content, music and acting. The more well-known historical names, faces and events lead to a desire to know more about the geography of the area, and the depictions of the locations of the events lead to an interest in the people and the history. The organization and production of the show and videotape are also informative and instructive.



**Christmas All Year Long:
A Different Perspective on Seasonal History**
by **Ellayne Veldes-Conyers, Director, Lyon County Historical Museum**

Opening a Christmas Tree Room in the Lyon County Historical Museum did not come out of any kind of planning. When Kevin Milton contacted me in the summer of 1997 about bringing his collection of 50 trees to the museum, I told him “no way.” I thought, “Why in the world would a museum director allow someone to bring in, on loan, 50 Christmas trees to be decorated for a season, then dismantled and stored the rest of the year?”

But Kevin would not accept a “No” without taking me and board member Kathy Lozinski to his parents’ farm-home basement to see his tree display. We were astounded to see that it resembled a smaller version of Dayton’s Department Store’s eighth floor in December.

Then he told us that, since they belonged to him, he would be responsible for decorating and maintaining the trees, which are artificial and fireproofed, and carrying his own insurance. It did not take us long to make a deal. The trees would be set up in one corner of the basement area of the museum and remain up all year. We wanted to tap into this young man’s talent for design; we knew that this outstanding display would help to bring more visitors into the museum.

The arrangement benefited everyone. Kevin’s father was ill and living in a nursing home and his mother was selling the farm and moving to town, so he needed to move the collection. He had always wanted to share it with others, and displaying them in the museum gave him a unique opportunity to do so.

The Milton Family Christmas Tree Room first opened during the Lyon County Historical Society’s annual Holiday Tour of Homes and Museum Tour on Dec. 6, 1998. It remained open through the holiday season, bringing in hundreds of visitors who had learned about the decorated trees through the media and by word of mouth.

Many of the trees are decorated according to themes. Among the themes are “Coca-Cola,” “Crayola crayons,” “moving carousels,” “Dad’s fishing vacation,” “Hallmark collectibles” and “the Fourth of July.” Among the new themes for the 1999 holiday season will be “Retired” (decorated with flamingoes, vacation brochures, etc.) and “Fruit Tree.”

The exhibit room was closed in January, but in July the museum celebrated Christmas again. Santa Claus (portrayed by a mannequin) was stationed in the museum’s storefront window, dressed in swimming trunks, wearing sunglasses and playing ball on the sandy beach. He endured the heat for the entire month, but managed to entice many visitors into the museum to find out what was going on.

We kept the Christmas Tree Room open during this time, and in our Museum Gift Shop, all the holiday decorations came out of storage, and were sold at a 40 percent discount. Our Marshall-area broadcasting stations, KMHL, KARL and KKCK, also got into the holiday mood. “The Joyce and Jerry Show” morning talk show on KMHL described Christmas items from the gift shop that listeners could win by answering historical Marshall trivia questions correctly.

This year the room will open on Dec. 5 and remain open until Dec. 31. It will include another small space for Kevin’s “Department 56” Christmas Village collection. It will be set up in a darkened and unlit room area so that the stars overhead and the village will be the only sources of light. And, for our annual Holiday Home Tour on Sunday, Dec. 5th, Santa Claus will be sitting at the museum’s wide marble staircase reading to the children gathered around him.

For more information, contact the Lyon County Historical Museum at 507/537-6580, or by fax at 507/537-7699.



Posting the *Interpreter* on the Internet

Minnesota Historical Society staff members are working on posting all issues of the *Minnesota History Interpreter* and *Minnesota Preservation Planner* published since October 1996 on the Society’s web site, www.mnhs.org. In addition, each Tech Talk article will be posted as a separate file.

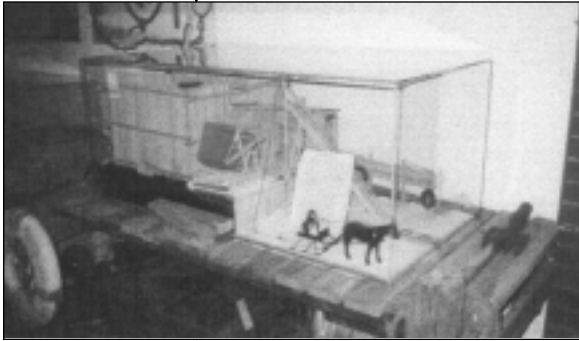
To read them, you will need to have the Adobe Acrobat Reader program in your computer. It is available for downloading without charge from the Adobe web site, www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html.

We hope to have the project completed early in the year 2000. Watch the *Interpreter* for further news.



Models of Historic Industries at Warroad Historical Society

After the federal government ruled to stop all commercial fishing on Lake of the Woods, longtime commercial fisherman Alvin Johnston became skilled at carving and model-building. He has created models of pioneer industries that vividly portray a part of the history of life in the Warroad area. So far, he has donated three of them to



Courtesy Warroad Historical Society

Above: Alvin Johnston's model of an ice house.

the Warroad Heritage Center, which has them on display.

The ice house model is a working model. The pulley can pull the ice up the ramp, and the drying frame can be turned so that one can wind the nets for

drying and mending. The model was based on the ice house on Knight's Island on Lake of the Woods.

The second donation was "Scout," a boat commissioned by the Booth Fisheries in 1923. It was licensed to carry a crew of six, 125 passengers and four automobiles; on one trip it carried 25 tons of fish. The model includes a steering wheel, a life boat, a hand-carved figurine of a fisherman and, on the lower level, fish boxes and a crane for loading and unloading.

Johnston's model of a logging camp was completed last winter. It has five buildings and a horse pulling a sled loaded with huge logs. The mess hall is complete with tables, long benches and tableware. Other buildings include the company store, a barn and an outhouse; two had skylights, which in the absence of electricity, provided light.

For more information, contact the Warroad Historical Society, 201 Main Ave. N.E., Box 688, Warroad, MN 56763; 218/386-2500

Exhibit and Fund-raiser at Cottonwood County Historical Society

"Contemplation and Image: Drawings and Paintings of Donald Kennedy" opened at the Cottonwood County Historical Society (CCHS) on Nov. 7 and will continue until Feb. 29, 2000. Many of Kennedy's 45 paintings, such as "Trash or Treasure—'34 Ford Pickup," shown here, concern historical subject matter, especially abandoned buildings and rural landscapes.

Kennedy served in the Korean War, worked for NSP for 26 years, moved to Windom in 1991, and has lived there since that time. He admits that he once had very fixed views of right and wrong in art. He especially disliked the "drippers, the scrubbers and the splatters of paint—and those who created gallery shock statements."

The gallery where Kennedy's paintings are on display was named for Robert Remick, another Windom artist, who persuaded Kennedy to loosen his prejudices and open his range of appreciation. He accepted that advice, and now is quick to remind people that his work and style are still evolving.



Photograph by Jack Elness

The opening coincided with the 98th annual meeting of CCHS, and included remarks by Kennedy and music and refreshments. It also was a fund-raising effort. Kennedy generously made several of his

unframed works available for a silent auction, the proceeds of which would go to phase two of the CCHS building expansion project. Linda Fransen, CCHS director, reported that the silent auction was only mildly successful, earning \$250 for the expansion project, but, she said, "Since this is our first attempt at a silent auction, I would try it again!"

The exhibit was sponsored in part by a grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council, with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature.

For additional information, contact CCHS at 812 Fourth Ave., Windom, MN 56101, or call 507/831-1134.

Right: Donald Kennedy's "Trash or Treasure—'34 Ford Pickup."



STAFF NEWS

Dakota City Heritage Village Seeks Curator

Dakota City Heritage Village in Farmington is searching for a curator to oversee the care, research and improvement of the Village's collection and to oversee exhibits in the museum and Village using accepted museum standards. Required: BA in American history, museum science, human ecology or related fields, and work experience in museums. Also required: skill in computer data management, research, oral and written communications and artistic creativity. Minimum annual salary: \$23,800. Send letter of interest, resume and references to Dakota City Heritage Village, Box 73, Farmington, MN 55024.



New Executive Director at Blue Earth County Historical Society

James Lundgren began work as the executive director of the Blue Earth County Historical Society (BECHS) in Mankato in August. He holds a degree in American history and American Indian studies from the University of Minnesota, and has served as a seasonal guide for the Minnesota Historical Society, program manager at Murphy's Landing in Shakopee, and most recently as executive director of the Rice County Historical Society in Faribault. Lundgren also volunteers as a re-enactor, especially in programs dealing with the history of the Upper Midwest, the Great Lakes fur trade and the War of 1812. For more information, call BECHS at 507/345-5566.

American Swedish Institute Plans Holiday Programs and Exhibits

The American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis will open two exhibits this holiday season, both of which run from Nov. 26, 1999, to Jan. 9, 2000. *Christmas in Scandinavia* features table settings from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and trees decorated with Swedish candles, *julgranskarameller* (colored tissue paper frills wrapped around candy treats), flag streamers and other traditional objects. *Illumination of a Saint: The Legend of Santa Lucia* includes photographs and story panels that tell of Lucia's beginnings as a fourth-century Christian martyr and how she became a symbol of light and hope.

Two family-oriented *julglädje* ("Christmas happiness") programs will be staged after Christmas. On Tuesday, Dec. 28 at 2 p.m., Ross Sutter will play old-time favorites on a variety of instruments, tell stories and lead families in games. On Wednesday, Dec. 29 at 2 p.m., families can learn how to make traditional Swedish tree decorations such as tomtar (elf-like figures) that they can take home with them.

Admission is \$4/adults, \$3/senior citizens and \$2/children ages 6-12. For open days and hours, call the Institute at 612/871-4907, 612/870-3342, or visit its web site: www.americanswedishinst.org.

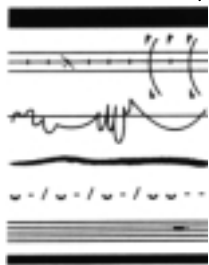
New Folk Art Directory Now Available

The 11th edition of the *Minnesota Folk Arts Directory* (for 1999-2000) was recently published by the Minnesota State Arts Board (MSAB). The directory was developed primarily to help those interested in presenting the work of Minnesota folk artists locate appropriate artists. The 52 folk artists and interpreters are listed in seven categories: dance, music and dance, multidisciplinary, music, puppetry, storytelling and visual artists. (Folk art interpreters practice traditional art forms but are not necessarily members of the community that produced the art form.)

Useful definitions of several key terms are included, for example:

"Folk arts are community-based traditional arts. Whether music, dance, handmade items or another form, a folk art item is appreciated for its aesthetic content, and for the way it represents the long-standing character of a specific folk community."

The directory is available as a PDF file on the MSAB web site, www.arts.state.mn.us; by calling 651/215-1600 or 1-800-866-2787; or by contacting the folk arts program associate by e-mail at philip.nusbaum@state.mn.us.



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Wildflowers in Northeast Minnesota: New Guide *Wildflower Safaris by Car*

Sandy Bennett and Tom Sullivan.

Schroeder, Minn.: Arctic Riviera Publishing, 1999; 138 pp, color maps and photographs; \$19.95, hardcover.

Wildflower Safaris by Car enables the reader to be in the right place at the right time to find wildflowers

while driving along Minnesota's North Shore and in the Superior National Forest. The authors used the journals and photographs they compiled over a period of eight years as they traveled more than 50,000 miles in the area. The result is a glove-compartment-size book with easy-to-read type and vivid photographs of 228 wildflowers.

The photographs are listed according to "bloom date" from May through July (and six in August, one in September and one in

October). The authors kept detailed journals of their sightings for several years, and were "amazed to find only slight deviance in the bloom dates of each flower regardless of the severity of the winters." The location of each flower and brief descriptive notes are given.

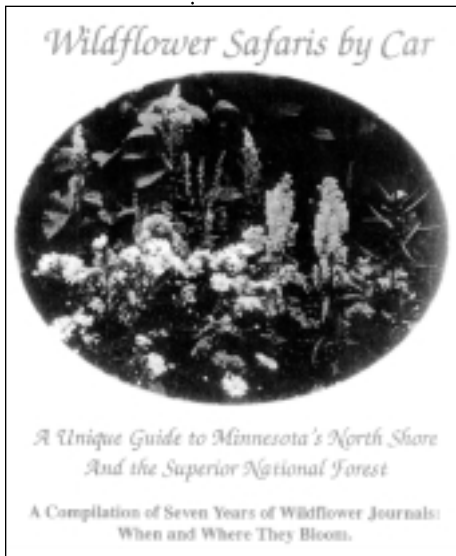
For example, below is the description of No. 34:

June 3. Forget-me-nots. (*Myosotis scorpioides*)
Location: On the Honeymoon Trail, past White Pine Lake, private driveway on north side of road going east. Profuse! A sight to behold! Bright blue flower with a yellow eye. Are 1/4" across on 2 diverging branches. Leaves are alternate, sessile and hairy.

The "Geographic Routes" near the front of the book correspond to 10 sections of detailed maps, and a list of locations with disability ramps is included. There is also a brief "El Niño Epilogue" and a glossary at the end of the book.

Bennett is president and Sullivan a charter member of the Schroeder Area Historical Society. They decided to write the book after injury and illness limited her enjoyment of wildflowers to being a passenger in a car. She realized that this is the only way many people enjoy the natural beauty of wildflowers.

For more information, write or call Arctic Riviera Publishing, 9256 W. Highway 61, Schroeder, MN 55613; 218/663-7264.



Courtesy Arctic Riviera Publishing

Above: Cover of Wildflower Safaris.

Chippewa County Historical Society Collecting Pennies for Church Window Fund

Using an unusual, even old-fashioned, method—collecting pennies—the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) is raising funds to repair the stained glass windows in the Village Church, one of the historic buildings managed by CCHS in Historic Chippewa City. A total of 10 Village Church stained glass windows of various sizes need attention: some need to be re-soldered at the joints, and some areas must be replaced due to breakage.

The penny drive, which began in 1991 and was resuscitated in Sept. 1998, will continue until the cost of \$7,550 has been raised. As reported in the Oct. 1999 CCHS newsletter, \$4,102.92 (or, 410,292 pennies) has been raised, leaving \$3,447.08 (or, 344,708 pennies) still to go.

The pennies are coming in clumps. In July, 15,500 pennies were received; in August 3,241; in September, 14,763; and in October, 1,000. They are being given in a collection box located in the Village Church, a jar at the CCHS museum gift shop, through memorials, and from the proceeds of all weddings held in Historic Chippewa City. A number of individuals have brought in buckets of pennies, and cash and checks in larger denominations have been donated.

The campaign will continue until sufficient funds have been received to restore all 10 windows. It was recently bolstered when the local chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star designated the Village Church Window Fund as its current fund-raising project.

For further information, contact CCHS, P.O. Box 303, Montevideo, MN 56265, 320/269-7636; e-mail, cchs.june@juno.com.





Fiscal Year 2000 Winter Grants Cycle Minnesota Historical Society Grants-in-Aid Program

An estimated \$90,000 will be available for award in state grants-in-aid during the Minnesota Historical Society's fiscal year 2000 winter grants cycle. The purpose of the State Grants-in-Aid program is to support projects conducted by organizations and institutions that interpret and preserve Minnesota's history. Primary recipients of these grants are regional, county and local nonprofit organizations whose primary purpose is historic preservation and/or interpretation. Through project support, the program encourages the development of historical organizations and historical programming in Minnesota. Awards are made in 10 project categories;

the maximum award is \$7,500. Grants must be matched at least on a dollar-for-dollar basis with cash, in-kind, and/or donated services and materials.

The *State Grants-in-Aid Manual*, which was issued in 1998, is still current; it details the application process and project guidelines. The application form included in the manual should be used as a template and retained for future use. Please contact Peggy Tolbert at 651/297-4416 or at peggy.tolbert@mnhs.org if you need another copy of the manual and/or application form, or if you have questions about the State Grants-in-Aid Program.

Fiscal Year 2000 Winter Grants Cycle Deadlines

<i>Grant pre-application deadline:</i>	<i>Jan. 21, 2000</i>
<i>Grant application deadline:</i>	<i>Feb. 25, 2000</i>
<i>Grants Review Committee meets:</i>	<i>April 11, 2000</i>
<i>Grant project start date (approximate):</i>	<i>early-to-mid June, 2000</i>



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Readers are invited to submit information for publication. To be considered, items must reach the editor by the 18th of the month, two months before publication (example: the deadline for the October issue is August 18). Send to: **Interpreter** Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; 651/296-8196 or jjm.smith@mnhs.org.

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