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# THE MINNESOTA HISTORY **Interpreter**

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## Territorial Sesquicentennial Fast Approaching

As most readers of the *Interpreter* are undoubtedly aware, Minnesota Territory was established on March 3, 1849, and statehood came on May 11, 1858. The first date means that the 150th anniversary of the birth of the territory, or *sesquicentennial*\*, will be celebrated in 1999. Soon there is bound to be widespread interest in matters relating to both the future and the past of the state's past—and, augmented by the advent of a new millennium, an interest in its future. The two anniversaries individually and together make up what educators call a “teachable moment,” a terrific opportunity for historical organizations to do imaginative and productive history work.

Some ideas for projects were generated at a recent meeting of the Field Advisory Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). The impetus for the brainstorming session was the news that the Minnesota Legislature made \$75,000 available to MHS for a grant program to support activities associated with the sesquicentennial and the millennium. (Key details of the grants program are summarized on p. 2, along with tips on writing grant proposals. See also p. 8 of the January 1998 issue of the *Interpreter*.)

\**Sesqui*, a Latin prefix, is a contraction of *semis* + *que*, or a “half in addition.”



This map shows the original county lines in Minnesota Territory and how far it extended to the west in 1849-51.

Minnesota Historical Society

Here is a brief review of some of the program suggestions that emerged from that meeting.

- Restore a property from the territorial period.
- Do a project involving conservation of territory-related items in your collections.
- Inventory the items in your collection that are related to the territorial period, or different examples of “marking time,” and publish a guidebook for the community and schools.
- Do a historical markers project.
- Mount an exhibit around the theme of the territory, celebrations, or looking ahead and back in time.
- Present a public program based on historical documents from the territorial period.
- Purchase a special case for displaying a particularly fragile territory-related item from your collection.
- Purchase census records or newspapers from the territorial period for your collection.

### MARK YOUR 1998 CALENDARS

**Minnesota Archaeology Week  
May 2-10**

**Historic Preservation Week  
May 11-16**

Continued on p. 2



**Sesquicentennial Possibilities**

*Continued from p. 1*

- Do an oral history project designed to capture a snapshot of life as it is lived today, i.e., when the sesquicentennial and millennium are on people's minds.
- Locate, sleeve and print (if necessary) a selection of photographs and/or negatives from "one hundred years ago" (ca. 1890–1910). Make slides and a study guide to send to schools. (Give the schools permission to scan the photographs and reproduce them in research papers and on the Internet.)
- Demonstrate the uses of technology in implementing territory- and millennium-related projects.

**Tips for Writing Proposals for Sesquicentennial & Millennium Grants**

1. Talk to staff. The grants office staff can help refer your questions to the appropriate individual.
2. Read the instructions and start early. Rushing at the last minute causes avoidable mistakes.
3. Explain how your project relates to the sesquicentennial or millennium. If your project is part of an ongoing or existing program, explain how it will be expanded to relate to the theme.
4. Write simply in straightforward language. Remember: Your reader may not know anything about your organization or your project. Use active verbs and avoid jargon. Include adequate details in both the narrative and the budget, so that your proposal describes the project accurately and comprehensively.
5. Make sure your budget is realistic and accurate; double-check your arithmetic.
6. Be creative in developing collaborations, with, for example: local and county historical organizations; schools; libraries; heritage preservation commissions; local governments—city, county or township; Indian tribes; arts organizations; chambers of commerce; local businesses; civic groups and clubs; local churches; local cable stations.
7. Keep the scope of your project in clear focus. Make sure your description of the project shows that it is achievable.
8. Include only essential supporting material. Reviewers have many applications to read; include only the best, most persuasive extra materials (e.g., newspaper articles, press releases, brochures).
9. You set the standards. Remember: the application process is highly competitive; make your application outstanding.

**Facts about the MHS Territorial Sesquicentennial & Millennium Grants Program**

- Total amount available: \$75,000
- Maximum amount for a single grant: \$7,500
- Grant funds must be matched.
- Grant categories: In general, follow the 10 categories described in the 1997 State Grants-in-Aid Manual.
- Guidelines are being distributed.
- Pre-application deadline is April 20, 1998
- Application deadline is May 15, 1998
- Grants Review committee meets in June 1998
- MHS council approves recommendations on July 16, 1998
- Work can begin in August 1998

***Special priorities guiding the grants process***

Three approaches are being especially encouraged:

- Collaboration (Projects involving more than one organization will receive special attention.)
- Public programming and educational programs
- Creativity

**Contact:** Mandy Skypala, MHS Grants Associate, (612) 296-5478.

**NOTE:** Reviewers will make a special effort to ensure that the funds are distributed statewide.





## Institute for Minnesota Archaeology Completes Active Year

The October/December 1997 issue of the *Newsletter of the Institute for Minnesota Archaeology* (IMA) includes an in-depth report on the IMA's 1998 field program, the excavation of the original site of Hamline University in Red Wing.

### *Hamline University Original Site*

The school's first building was erected there in 1856-57 and demolished by 1871, so the excavation was undertaken to document aspects of student life at a frontier educational institution. The field program included a college credit field school, a volunteer program, a hands-on program for youth groups, a teachers workshop, and ongoing public interpretations of the site. The field program excavation lasted six weeks and was open to public and school groups; some 2,500 people visited the site, an average of 30 each day.

A total of 135 square meters has now been excavated. Examination of the building's western portion supported the view that the building was poorly built, which probably contributed to the closing of the school and demolition of the building. Many artifacts were recovered and studied, including sherds of food-related vessels, ink wells, a glass wine bottle, and writing slates (some with writing still visible). To examine the area where a privy was suspected, geophysical remote sensing surveys, which included ground-penetrating radar, were employed. (No conclusive evidence of a privy pit was found.)

### *Current Research in Archaeology*

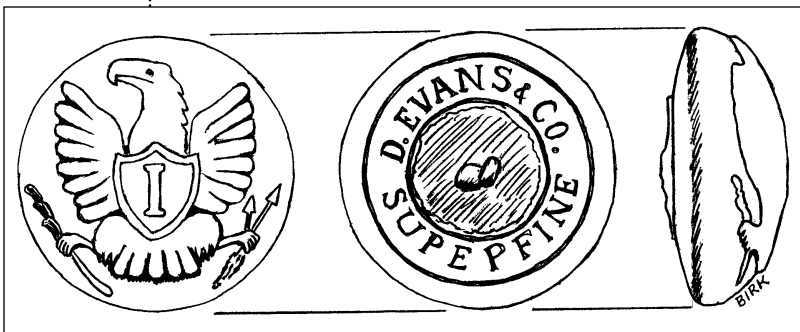
The same issue of the *Newsletter* includes an informative article about current archaeological research by Douglas Birk, Senior Research Fellow at

the IMA. The article could almost serve as an introduction to archaeological issues in Minnesota. Birk discussed four case studies to illustrate the importance of *provenience*\*—information that testifies to an object's location at the time of discovery. Such information is absolutely essential; Birk says that "an artifact without such information is very much like a bicycle without tires...it can't take you anywhere." Two of these examples are summarized here.

One example involves the finding of quartz chipping-debris in 1877 on the banks of the Mississippi River at Little Falls by geologist Newton Winchell. Because he found them buried as much as four feet below ground surface, he reasoned that they could have been deposited as long ago as the last period of glaciation, or around 12,000 years ago. A year later, Frances Eliza Babbitt, a Little Falls school teacher, carried out her own investigation. She found quartz debris and tools at a lower stratum, which she said was 12 to 15 feet below ground surface. This would be an astonishing discovery, for that debris would have been much older than Winchell's. However, other archaeologists found that Babbitt's provenience data were not correct. The debris, they showed, had worked its way down the slope from surface deposits above.

Another example concerns research that Birk is doing at the Little Elk Heritage Preserve, north of Little Falls. He recently recovered, unexpectedly, a button from the uniform of a Civil War-era United States Army officer. It is known that at that time, the army was present at Fort Ripley, farther up the river, and had contracted with Elk River residents to supply materials for a horse barn at Fort Ripley. Recall, too, that in 1862, residents of central Minnesota were very fearful that they would be attacked by Ojibwe just as settlers in southern Minnesota had been attacked by the Dakota. In this context, as Birk points out, "The button, a single artifact, raises a bevy of new questions regarding the role of the military and its actions along the river during those desperate times." Since provenience data assures the authenticity of the button, questions can be asked that may lead to new information about life in that area, not only in pre-territorial times, but in the 1860s.

For further information about IMA and its activities, call (612) 627-0315, or fax (612) 623-0177.



This is Douglas Birk's drawing of the officer's button found at the Little Elk Heritage Preserve. The button is 1.5 cm in diameter. The raised letter "I" on the shield with a raised border denotes "Infantry," and the inscription on the back is meant to read "D. Evans & Co. Superfine." (Courtesy Institute for Minnesota Archaeology.)

\**Provenience* is pronounced pro-veen'-ee-ence; sometimes the word *provenance* is used to mean the same thing.



## Intern Program at Beltrami County Historical Society

Wanda Hoyum, executive director of the Beltrami County Historical Society (BCHS) readily admits: "As director and sole staff person, I started the internship program out of desperation the day I became director in August 1996." For assistance, she called upon Bemidji State University (BSU) faculty members she had come to know while completing a degree in mass communications.

BCHS interns are not only BSU history majors. Hoyum seeks out interested students from various fields: graphic arts, public relations, journalism and computer technology. BCHS enters into a contract with both BSU and an intern that defines a specific project for each intern, though she notes that "Interns are also required to write one newsletter article and help with the daily routine of customer service, membership data entry, new archival acquisitions and various projects, events and programs."

One project, for instance, was reconstructing the photo collection. Some projects could not be completed, because of the 10-week quarter system, but now that the state university system is moving to a semester system, that may change.

She completely revamped the face, format, structure and production of the newsletter and renamed it as *The Centennial Gazette*. It is a quarterly 16-page tabloid-like publication with notices from business sponsors and ample space for photographs. In writing their newsletter articles, interns are required to do both photo research and documentary research.

### Intern Article about Women Pilots

In the October/November/December 1997 issue, Michael J. Cramer, an intern majoring in art history at BSU, wrote a two-part article about women pilots in the Bemidji area in the "Women Then and Now" regular feature section of the newsletter.

The first part focused on Katherine Stinson, a nationally known aviator who made a sensational appearance at the 1915 county fair. It included biographical facts, excerpts from newspaper accounts of the visit, and two photographs taken from photocopies of newspapers of the day. Cramer added historical context.

"The word 'first' was attached to many of Stinson's accomplishments. For example, she was the first woman aviator to master the art of sky writing, the first woman to fly to the Orient, and the first woman to fly mail for the U.S. Postal Service. When Stinson visited Bemidji in 1915, she dazzled the crowd with Bemidji's first-ever aerial show and locally was given the title of 'Bird Woman'."

In the second part, titled "Pilots of Today and Tomorrow," Cramer discussed Liz Letson, a Bemidji native and resident. She became interested in flying when her uncle, Wendell Setterberg, would fly into Bemidji and take her on rides around the area. Letson was an American Airlines flight attendant when she began studying for a pilot's license in 1991. She began taking flying lessons from Tom Letson, whom she soon married. After completing the required 20 hours of flying with an instructor and 20 hours of solo flying, she received her private pilot's license in 1992. Her solo flying included a trip to Grand Rapids, Minn. on Oct. 24, 1991. Letson said, "It was a liberating feeling navigating without an instructor. It's a day I'll never forget."

For further information about the BCHS intern program, contact Wanda Hoyum, BCHS, (218) 751-7824; fax, (218) 751-2234; e-mail: bchsm@bj.net



Courtesy Beltrami County Historical Society

Katherine Stinson is shown here receiving a parcel of mail, the first aerial service mail in Western Canada (Calgary to Edmonton), in July 1918. In supplying context for his article, BCHS intern Cramer quotes the article in the *Daily Pioneer*, Sept. 17, 1915, which quoted her as saying, "It's just like riding in a car only it's cold. You don't get frightened; you're kept too busy with levers." The *Daily Pioneer* enthusiastically continued, "This is the way pretty little Miss Katherine Stinson describes flying in an aeroplane. Miss Stinson has been secured by the fair board to make two flights daily at the fair, and arrived in Bemidji last evening. She is a good-looking young lady of about nineteen summers and has winning ways. She is single."





## Arts Board Grants to Tours & Festivals, Including Braham Pie Day



Six festivals and six tour presentations have received grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board's new program, "Arts Across Minnesota." The festivals, all of which include heritage-related components, are listed below, followed by the organization receiving the grant and the amount. (See the October 1997 *Interpreter* for an article about Braham Pie Day.)

- Braham Pie Day (Aug. 7) • Isanti County Historical Society, \$45,000
- Headwaters Music Festival (July 19-26) • Headwaters School of Music & Fine Arts, Bemidji, \$36,450
- Lemonade Concert and Art Fair (July 9) • St. Cloud State University, \$26,800
- Lincoln Avenue Fine Arts Festival (Sept. 5-6) • A Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls, \$18,600
- Marshall Festival V: Celebrating Writing in Minnesota (April 19-25) • Southwest State University, Marshall, \$45,000

1998 Stiftungsfest (Aug. 28-30) • Stiftungsfest, Norwood/Young America, \$23,900

The touring groups are:

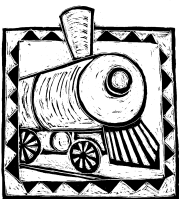
- James Sewell Ballet (March 9-14) • Northern Lakes Arts Association, Ely, \$15,000
- Minnesota Opera (May 26-30) • Fairmont Opera House, \$15,000
- Minnesota Orchestral Association (July 5-6)
  - River Bend Institute for the Arts, Faribault, \$32,925
- Ragamala Music & Dance Company (Jan. 20-24), & Zenon Dance Company (Feb. 23-27)
  - Crookston Civic Music League, \$22,750
- Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (March 3-7)
  - Princeton Public Schools, \$28,900
- Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (April 16-17)
  - Staples/Motley Public Schools, \$30,000

## MAKE A NOTE

### New Phone Numbers Looming for Parts of Metro Area

In July, St. Paul and several suburban areas will lose their current three-digit prefix, 612, and be required to use 651. The dividing line for the change runs north to south: St. Paul, Roseville, New Brighton, Arden Hills, Lino Lakes, Forest Lake, Mendota Heights, Eagan, Rosemount, Farmington, and still other points east. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (Jan. 6, 1998) also reported that there will be a "grace period" from July 1998 through January 1999. During this time, calls over the dividing line will go through with or without the area code.

After January 1999, all such calls will require 10 digits: the area code plus the telephone number. And, according to the *Pioneer Press*, "Calls that are toll-free now will remain toll-free after the area code split." The state Public Utilities Commission will probably consider another area code for the western half of the Twin Cities in the summer of 1999, to take effect in the year 2001. These changes are necessitated because of the "voracious appetite for new numbers for cellular telephones, second lines, computer modems and other devices."



## MAP/IMLS Grants Reminder

The first deadline for Museum Assessment Program (MAP) grants under MAP I (Institutional Assessment) has passed. Opportunities remain for applications in three categories in 1998; deadlines are: MAP III, Public Dimension Assessment, Feb. 27; MAP II, Collections Management Assessment, March 13; MAP I, Institutional Assessment, April 24.

MAP is administered by the American Association of Museums (AAM) with federal funds provided by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). In FY 97, 223 museums received MAP grants that totaled \$444,820. Museums may pay to participate in the Museum Assessment Program at any time. Contact MAP at (202) 289-9118 for more information.



## Planned Giving Program Started at Olmsted County Historical Society

As part of its long-range development plan, the Olmsted County Historical Society (OCHS) recently initiated a planned giving program called “Partners in Preservation.” The program is described on an insert that was included in the December 1997 issue of the OCHS newsletter, the *Olmsted Historian*. The insert specifies three immediate goals: the preservation of Mayowood, restoration of the 19th-century George Stoppel farm, and expanding OCHS programs. (Mayowood and the Stoppel farm are historically significant properties owned and managed by OCHS. Mayowood is part of the Mayowood Historic District; the District and the Stoppel Farmstead are on the National Register of Historic Places.)

Gifts donated in a planned giving program are planned during the donor’s lifetime, but take effect after the donor’s death. Making the commitment requires forethought and documentation. Several ways of including OCHS in estate plans are suggested, including wills and life income agreements such as charitable remainder trusts, gift annuities, life insurance policies, pooled income funds, and

remainder interests in residences and farms. To assure donors their gifts will be handled professionally and invested wisely, OCHS works with highly respected community foundations that specialize in managing funds given to charities.

The insert offers three examples of advantages of a planned gift: the donor’s generosity makes a difference long after his or her lifetime; the donor’s satisfaction in knowing OCHS is provided for in ways the donor desires; and—in certain cases—enjoying the added income that accrues, and reducing income and estate taxes. Benefits of being a “partner” include an annual “Partners Recognition” dinner at Mayowood, being kept up to date on OCHS plans, a membership certificate, and on-site recognition at the History Center.

The insert is a two-sided sheet. Explanatory text takes up the upper two-thirds of both sides. An information request form is on one side, and a return address is on the other side.

For further information, call executive director Ed Merrell, OCHS, (507) 282-9447.



### *unpacking on the prairie* JEWISH WOMEN *in the upper midwest*

How do you hold on to your heritage and still fit into new surroundings? How do you relate to the other ethnic groups who share your new home? This dilemma, common to many immigrants, is explored in the exhibit *Unpacking on the Prairie—Jewish Women in the Upper Midwest*. The exhibit includes story panels, media kiosks with an award-winning video, and a “Symbols of Life” interactive cart and puzzle.

The traveling version of the exhibit began its five-year tour of cities in the U.S. and Canada this January. The schedule for 1998 is:

- Jan. 19–April 12: Runestone Museum, Alexandria, Minn.
- May 4–July 26: Iowa Jewish Historical Society, Des Moines, Iowa
- Aug. 17–Nov. 8: Stearns County Historical Society, St. Cloud, Minn.
- Nov. 30–Feb. 21, 1999: St. Louis County Historical Society, Duluth, Minn.

The exhibit has been booked through Jan. 6, 2002, in the following locations: Albert Lea, Hinckley and Chisholm, Minn.; Bismarck, N.D.; Aberdeen, Pierre and Sioux Falls S.D.; West Bloomfield, Mich.; Calgary, Alberta, Canada; Washington D.C.; and Columbus, Ohio.

The gallery version of *Unpacking on the Prairie* was seen by 260,000 visitors during its year at the History Center. The exhibit was developed in partnership with the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest; support was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Bremer Foundation, and The Nathan Cummings Foundation.

For information, call Sherry Longballa, MHS Traveling Exhibits Coordinator, at 612/297-4497; fax 612/297-8224; e-mail: sherry.longballa@mnhs.org



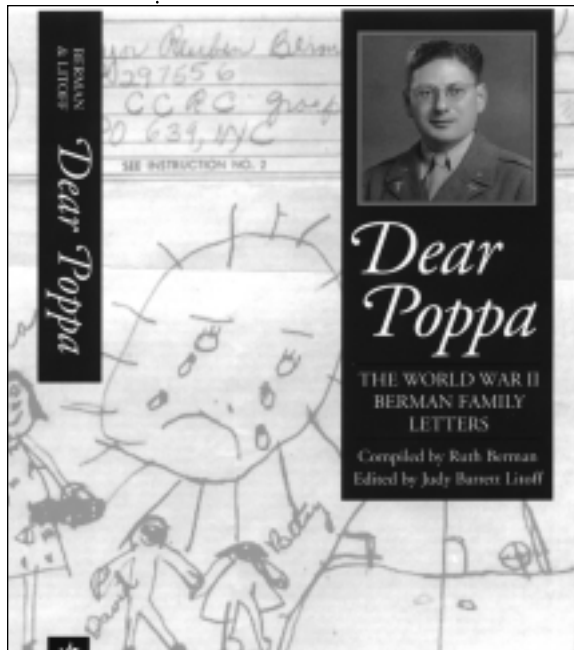
## Five New Books

### *Stevens County Food*

The *Stevens County Historical Society Cookbook* contains 220 pages of recipes from cooks in the county. The book was designed by Morris Area High School Business Education students as a commemorative item for the 1997 promotion, "Tale of Trails—Celebrating 125 Years of Morris." Cost: \$9.95 at the society's gift shop or \$14 per copy for an order by mail. Contact the Stevens County Historical Society, 116 W. 6th St., Morris, MN 56267; (320) 589-1719.

### *Family Letters Overseas during World War II*

*Dear Poppa: The World War II Berman Family Letters* from the Minnesota Historical Society Press affords the kind of insights into family life that only letters can give. The insights are strengthened in this case because they include the letters from young



This is the book jacket for *Dear Poppa*.

children to their father, a physician who served in the Army in Europe from 1943 to 1945. Most of the children's letters were typed by their mother, Isabel, in the words spoken by the children; some, from the older children, were written by hand.

The letters were collected—

together with the correspondence between Isabel Berman and her husband, Reuben—by Ruth, the youngest of the four Berman children. She has more than 1,000 letters in her collection, 340 of which have been selected for this volume by Judy Barrett Litoff, editor of other collections of letters, including *Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women of the Home Front* (1991). *Dear Poppa* also includes 22

photographs and 23 drawings.

Paper, \$15.95; cloth, \$29.95, from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, Order Dept. 100, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; (612) 297-3243; toll free: 1-800-647-7827.

### *Stillwater Artist*

*Jo Lutz Rollins and the Stillwater Art Colony* includes a biography of the artist, who was director and guiding force of the Stillwater Art Colony from 1934 to 1950. The book tells the story of the colony and its influence on the St. Croix Valley community, and includes reprints of 17 pencil sketches from Rollins' time in the St. Croix Valley. Paper, 64 pages, \$12.95 plus tax and \$1.25 postage and handling, from the Jo Rollins Project, 2511 Croixwood Blvd., Stillwater, MN 55082; (612) 439-5655.

### *History of Lake of the Woods County*

The Lake of the Woods County Historical Society (LWCHS) is commemorating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the county with its first book, *Lake of the Woods County, A History of People, Places and Events*. The book includes contributions from 39 different writers and more than 400 photographs. Essays were edited and then reviewed by a book committee from the LWCHS board of directors. The essays feature community histories and sections on transportation and industry, the fire of 1910, issues and conflicts, health and recreation, education, religion, communication, geology, early inhabitants, exploration, settlement, and later changes. \$24.95, plus tax and \$3.00 shipping and handling; write LWCHS, Box 808, Baudette, MN 56623; (218) 634-1200.

### *Church Architecture*

*In America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community*, Minnesotan Marilyn J. Chiat presents photographs and stories of more than 500 of the most culturally and historically significant of the nation's 280,000 places of worship. Her choices include well-known buildings as well as unusual ones, such as a Moorish synagogue in a neighborhood of a small town in Mississippi. The 528-page book includes 300 photographs. \$34.95 from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 432 Elizabeth Ave., Somerset, NJ 08875; (908) 469-4400.



## Field Workshops & Preservation Public Meetings in March, April & May

Included in this issue is a flyer giving the full schedule, program details, and registration form for this year's field workshops and public meetings on historic preservation. Remember: The preservation meetings are free, and are held on the Thursday evening preceding the field workshop. Briefly, the schedule is:

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY • MARCH 26 & 27 • MORTON

Both meetings: the Interpretive Center at the Lower Sioux Agency.

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY • APRIL 23 & 24 • LITTLE FALLS

The location of the Thursday evening meeting will be announced in the March *Interpreter*. Workshops: City Hall and the Musser House.

THURSDAY, MAY 7: VIRGINIA • FRIDAY, MAY 8: CHISHOLM

Thursday evening: the Coates Plaza Hotel in Virginia. Friday workshops: Ironworld, near Chisholm..

## Architalks Lecture Series in March & April

The Minnesota Historical Society and the Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library renew the popular ARCHITALKS lecture series with three illustrated lectures on the history of library design in Minnesota. Each lecture is presented twice: on Sunday at the Minnesota History Center and the next day, Monday, at the Minneapolis Public Library.

The schedule is:

SUNDAY AND MONDAY • MARCH 8 & 9 • Abigail Van Slyck: Carnegie Libraries

SUNDAY AND MONDAY • MARCH 22 & 23  
• Garneth Peterson & Jeffrey Scherer:  
Minneapolis Neighborhood Branch Libraries

SUNDAY AND MONDAY • APRIL 5 & 6 • Bill Beyer:  
University of Minnesota Libraries:  
Respecting the Past and Preparing for the  
Future

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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: the deadline for the October issue is 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.

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