



MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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Martin County Historical Society



Former residents of Cedarville, along with descendants of early settlers, gathered to dedicate a historical marker on the site where the town once stood.

Marking the spot

Lost towns of Martin County are back on the map

In every Minnesota county lie places that time forgot. They are the settlements, towns and villages that, for various reasons, failed to thrive. With too few residents to carry on everyday business, those places slipped from view – and often from memory.

Last year the Martin County Historical Society – armed with a state grant-in-aid from the Minnesota Historical Society – took steps to ensure that the county's lost towns would be remembered. Research in the society's collections and interviews with county residents

turned up references to nine communities that had disappeared – places with names like Center Chain, Lone Cedar, Nashville Center and North Star.

Staff, board and volunteers of the county society gathered all the information they could find on each site and created an exhibit, "Lost Towns of Martin County," at the society's Pioneer Museum in Fairmont. They also commissioned historical markers for five of the sites and, in July, dedicated them in ceremonies attended by more than 500 people.

State revenue shortfall creates uncertainty for state grants-in-aid

The state's anticipated revenue shortfall has created uncertainty for the winter cycle of the Minnesota Historical Society's State Grants-in-Aid program. The shortfall was recently projected at \$1.95 billion for the biennium ending June 30, 2003. To preserve the state's flexibility in addressing it, the Minnesota Department of Finance directed state agencies and state-funded entities to consider delays in spending.

Among the expenditures that might be delayed is approximately \$90,000 earmarked for matching grants through the State Grants-in-Aid program. As this issue of the *Interpreter* went to press in late December, it was not clear what amount the Society would be able to award in the winter cycle. Among the possible scenarios is that the cycle could be suspended altogether.

Tim Glines, manager of outreach services, expressed regret at the uncertainty of the situation. "With deadlines fast approaching [Jan. 18 for pre-applications, Feb. 22 for final applications], we may not be able

Revenue shortfall *continued on page 2*

Marking the spot *continued on page 2*

Marking the spot *continued from page 1*

Publicity played key role

Two of the sites proved more difficult to locate than the others, reported project director Muriel Malliet. Publicity about the project helped track them down. A notice about the approaching dedication of the Center Chain marker generated a call from a former resident with information on its original location a mile away. She brought in photographs and newspaper clippings to verify her claim.

A search for Lone Cedar led to an out-of-state landlord whose memory of a long-forgotten incident pinpointed its location. Thirty years ago he gave permission to the township board to level a hillside on his property and use the dirt for rebuilding the township road. Not long after, an elderly man came by to reprimand him for destroying the oldest historic site in the area – the place where the Lone Cedar Tavern had stood.

Publicity also helped draw crowds for each marker dedication. Former residents and descendants of early settlers, who were invited to help plan the ceremonies, came from several states and from cities around



Local schoolchildren entertained the crowd at the ceremony dedicating Cedarville's historical marker.

Minnesota. On hand, too, were state legislators, county commissioners and representatives from the Minnesota Historical Society, who praised the efforts of project participants. A videotaped record of every dedication ceremony, along with taped interviews of descendants, will become part of the Martin County Historical Society archives.

Intangible benefits abound

More than new sources about Martin County history resulted from the "Lost Towns" project. Malliet and

county society president Roy Levik point to the good will, enthusiasm and pride generated by the exhibit and special events. The project also increased visibility for the MCHS; many who contributed information and took part in the dedications were new to the organization.

Research is already underway to pin down the locations of the four remaining lost towns. Plans call for those sites to be marked later this year. For more information on the ongoing project, call Lenny Tvedten, MCHS director, 507-235-5178.

Revenue shortfall *continued from page 1*

to tell applicants for a few weeks yet what will happen. Those planning to apply should proceed with their plans, sending applications on schedule to grants assistant David Grabitske. Our office will keep all applicants informed of the status of the winter cycle."

In addition, updated information will be posted on the Society's web site at www.mnhs.org/about/grants/index.html. Applicants also may call

or e-mail Glines (651-296-5460; timothy.glines@mnhs.org) or Grabitske (651-297-4416; david.grabitske@mnhs.org).

The Certified Local Government (CLG) grants program is not affected by the state's shortfall. That program awards matching grants for planning, preservation, surveys and public education.

Also unaffected is the State Capital Project Grants-in-Aid program, which

awards grants to support historic preservation projects involving capital improvements. These grants will be awarded in the fall through state bond funds. Eligible recipients are public entities as defined by state law, including county and local jurisdictions. Some nonprofit organizations also are eligible to apply if they have entered into a qualifying lease or management agreement with an eligible public entity sponsor.

'Picture It Painted'

Grants for paint restoration beautify communities

When the Clearwater County Historical Society needed to spruce up the old county jail in Bagley, it turned to an unlikely source – the Northwest Minnesota Foundation in Bemidji. That's the regional administrator of a unique grant program sponsored by Valspar, a paint and coatings company headquartered in Minneapolis.

For more than 10 years Valspar has been working to restore Minnesota's neighborhoods through "Minnesota Beautiful: Picture It Painted," a program that provides paint supplies for all types of restoration and beautification projects. Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations for projects with significant community benefit and visual impact; applicants also must demonstrate strong volunteer participation.

Paint isn't all that grant recipients get. Valspar consultants offer technical assistance on what products to use and how to apply them. "They treat you like a valued customer," says Dan

Frank of the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls. "You have access to their full line of products, not just excess inventory. They want to ensure that your project is the best it can be."

Administered since 1997 in collaboration with the Minnesota Initiative Funds, the program each year funds about 60 projects around the state. The deadline for 2002 grants is March 1. For grant guidelines and applications, call the grant administrator in your region:

Initiative Foundation, Little Falls
877-632-9255

Initiative Fund, Owatonna
507-455-3215

Northland Foundation, Duluth
218-723-4040 or 1-800-433-4045

Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Bemidji
218-759-2057 or 1-800-659-7859



Clearwater County Historical Society

With materials donated by the Valspar Corporation, volunteers put a fresh coat of paint on this 1903 county jail, owned by the city of Bagley and maintained by the Clearwater County Historical Society.

Southwest Minnesota Foundation, Hutchinson
320-587-4848 or 1-800-594-9480

West Central Initiative, Fergus Falls
1-800-735-2239

St. Louis County society gets a new look

Preparing to celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2002, the St. Louis County Historical Society recently unveiled a new logo. With input from a survey of county residents, the firm of von Goertz and VanHove Inc. created a design that not only links the region's land, its people and its history but also reflects a more contemporary spirit.

Two design elements, the eagle and stars, represent program areas central to the work of the county

society – its new Lake Superior Ojibwe Gallery and Veterans' Memorial Hall. Trees suggest the importance of the region's forests to its development. Water represents the county's many lakes and rivers. Remaining from the old logo is the phrase "The History People," now in the form of the address for the society's web site, currently being developed.

For more information on the project call Steve Savageau, manager of administrative services, 218-733-7586.



St. Louis County Historical Society

A new logo gives the St. Louis County Historical Society a more contemporary look.

Barns, barns, barns

Familiar landmarks revisited in Goodhue County

When she returned to her native Minnesota after years as a California resident, artist Mary Ann Kenyon was dismayed to see how many old barns had disappeared. So she set about preserving those remaining by capturing them in watercolor paintings in her Zumbrota studio.

Kenyon soon discovered that others shared her passion. Retired farmer and photographer John Schwartau had long been documenting local barns. And Goodhue County Historical Society staff had researched barn types in the area. Last fall, in a series of society-sponsored programs, they pooled their collective talents and tapped a wellspring of interest in the aging structures.

A bus tour of historic barns included onsite visits with barn owners. A panel discussion brought together barn enthusiasts and researchers for a look at the art and architecture of county barns. And an

exhibit at the history museum examined the variety of barn styles and functions in the county. In addition to works by both Kenyon and Schwartau, the exhibit featured a model of the historic Dammon Round Barn, depicted in its days as a honey factory. The model maker quarried the stone for his miniature masterpiece from the same stone used for the original.

"All this grew out of the interests of area residents," says museum educator Cheryl Finnegan. "We had a wildly good turnout, including people who brought in more information on the barns in our county. Now we have a network of those interested in the topic." For more information on this



Goodhue County Historical Society

Built in 1914, the Dammon Round Barn in Red Wing exemplifies one of several new barn forms developed in the early 20th century expressly for the dairy industry.

successful venture, call Finnegan at 651-388-6024.

Local records repository established

Milaca area municipalities join forces

Too often, local government records constitute an endangered species. They may be stored in substandard town halls or scattered among town officers' homes. One Minnesota organization has taken the lead in ensuring the preservation of and access to government records in its part of the state.

Last summer the Milaca Area Historical Society approached the four towns and six townships in central

Mille Lacs County to participate in a joint project to microfilm municipal records; five signed on. Each will pay half the cost of filming its own records. A grant from the Minnesota Historical Society will cover the rest. Among the papers to be preserved on microfilm are clerk's, treasurer's and justice of the peace records, road records, and births and deaths. (Birth records will be screened to comply with data privacy laws.)

Each participating municipality gets a microfilm copy of its records. All films will be available to the public at the Milaca Community Library as part of the MAHS collection. The society plans to offer the project again to local governments that did not join the initial phase. For more information call project director Mary Jane Bridge, 320-983-3677.

NEH announces new initiative for local history

Challenge Grants to help small organizations

This spring, as part of its Challenge Grants program, the National Endowment for the Humanities will launch a new grant program, the Special Initiative for Local History. Designed to help small institutions improve their humanities resources in local history, the program will award grants of \$10,000 to \$100,000 that recipients must match one-to-one from other sources.

The initiative's goals are to:

- Build opportunities for research, education and public programs in local history, especially in communities underserved by humanities activities.
- Establish long-term partnerships among educational and cultural organizations in a community.
- Help organizations in strategic planning.

- Build a base of financial support for long-term programming.

Who is eligible?

With the exception of elementary and secondary schools, any U.S. nonprofit organization that has not previously received an NEH Challenge Grant is eligible to apply. Preference will be given to institutions with annual budgets of less than \$100,000 and to institutions setting up new endowments for humanities programs. For complete eligibility requirements, check the NEH Challenge Grants guidelines, available online at www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/challenge.html.

What activities can be funded?

Allowable activities in this program are education, public programming, research and

preservation programs (except construction and renovation support). The use of new technologies is encouraged. Examples include:

- Continuing exhibition series based on topics of community interest.
- Permanent lecture series.
- Archival research projects.
- Improved long-term care of collections.
- Establishment of community walking tours.
- Installation of electronic tours.
- Continuing neighborhood documentation projects for K-12 students.
- Continuing teacher workshops using local history resources.

Eligible expenditures of income from humanities-dedicated endowments include:

- Fees and honoraria for speakers and consultants.
- Costs for materials, publicity, facilities rental, and necessary equipment and technological improvements.
- Salary supplements for staff working on humanities programming.

How to apply

The deadline for this initiative is May 1. Use the guidelines for the NEH Challenge Grants program to prepare an application. For more information on the Special Initiative for Local History, go to www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/localhistory.html, call the NEH Office of Challenge Grants, 202-606-8309 or contact the office via e-mail at challenge@neh.gov.

Stearns History Museum



Community Quest: Lessons in local history

Projects like the Stearns History Museum's Community Quest fit guidelines of the NEH Special Initiative for Local History. The web-based education program for grades 4-12 teaches students how to use historical resources to learn about their community. Teachers from 23 schools in central Minnesota use the Community Quest Educator's Resource Kit to direct their students' research. In 2000 the project garnered a Certificate of Commendation for the Stearns History Museum from the American Association of State and Local History.

AASLH seeks award nominations

The American Association for State and Local History seeks nominations for its annual awards program, established to encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

For two of the awards, nominations may be made from the field. They are:

- Awards of Merit, recognizing performance deemed excellent compared with similar activities nationwide.
- Certificates of Commendation, presented for excellence within available means and regional standards.

Among types of eligible activities are exhibits, public programming, special projects, media/publications, preservation/restoration projects and individual achievement. Special consideration is given to new and promising ideas, approaches and innovations.

Past award recipients from Minnesota include the Stearns History Museum for Community Quest, a web-based curriculum project (see box on page 5), and the exhibit "Paper Stories: Photographs and Words from Mountain Lake," created by David Morano, associate professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

If you wish to nominate your own

or another historical organization, submit a nomination form by March 1 to state awards chair David Grabitske at the Minnesota Historical Society. Nominations are then forwarded to regional chairs for screening and submission to the AASLH Awards Committee. For more information on award categories and nomination criteria, and for copies of the official nomination form, call Grabitske at 651-297-4416 or e-mail david.grabitske@mnhs.org.

Family history classes at the Minnesota History Center

Research strategies and sources highlighted

For both beginning and more experienced researchers, these one-session classes at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul look at a variety of genealogical records and repositories. They are offered by genealogical writers/lecturers Jim and Paula Stuart Warren. For registration and costs on these and other classes, call Warren Research at 651-644-6581 or e-mail warren@spacestar.com.

Discover Your Family History
Feb. 2 and 25, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
This workshop covers the basics of genealogical research, from your own family to public repositories.

Locating and Using Passenger Arrival and Naturalization Records
Feb. 2, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Learn how to use printed, microfilmed and original sources to determine often-elusive immigration and naturalization dates.

Midwestern State Census Records (new class)

Feb. 4, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

This overview of state censuses for Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin highlights the wealth of personal information they contain.

The Most Priceless Heritage: Your Family Health History

Feb. 4, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Discover how learning family health history can be a vital link between past, present and future.

Resources of the National Archives

Feb. 23, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

This session surveys the collections of the National Archives and Records Administration as well as online, mail and in-person access to its holdings.

Newspaper Research: The Dailies, Weeklies and Beyond

Feb. 25, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Learn more about newspaper indexes, microfilming projects, and specialty papers including religious, ethnic and military publications.

State grants-in-aid awarded

Twenty-seven applicants received \$90,032 in state grants-in-aid during the Minnesota Historical Society's fiscal year 2002 fall cycle. Grants were awarded in the categories of historic properties, artifact collections, interpretive programs, microform copies, oral history, photographic collections, museum environments and technology. Staff report a growing number of technology-related grant applications for projects such as web sites, cataloging software and electronic collections access.

Becker County: Becker County Historical Society, \$7,500; textile collection storage.

Brown County: Brown County Historical Society, \$1,940; lightning arrest system for the New Ulm Post Office, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Brown County: Sleepy Eye Area Historical Society, \$522; PastPerfect museum software.

Carver County: Carver County Historical Society, \$2,400; storage shelving.

Carver County: Watertown Area Historical Society, \$554; Carver County News microfilms.

Clay County: Probstfield Living History Farm Foundation, \$5,000; historic structure report for the Randolph M. Probstfield House, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cook County: Cook County Historical Society, \$1,497; "Tourism 20 Years Later," an oral history project.

Cook County: North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum, \$884; storage area.

Douglas County: Douglas County Historical Society, \$1,000; county tax lists on microfilm.

Goodhue County: Goodhue

County Historical Society, \$1,348; photographic database project.

Hennepin County: Minneapolis American Indian Center, \$5,000; George Morrison mural restoration.

Lincoln County: Lake Benton Area Historical Society, \$3,000; microfilm reader/printer.

McLeod County: McLeod County Historical Society, \$5,000; Heritage Center humidity control.

Mille Lacs County: Milaca Area Historical Society, \$1,467; government records on microfilm.

Olmsted County: Olmsted County Historical Society, \$5,000; geothermal HVAC system.

Pope County: Pope County Historical Society, \$2,750; textile preservation and storage.

Ramsey County: White Bear Lake Area Historical Society, \$3,000; microfilm reader/printer.

Renville County: Renville County Historical Society, \$3,000; county newspapers on microfilm.

Rice County: Trondhjem Community Preservation Society Inc., \$5,000; sanctuary restoration of Trondhjem Norwegian Lutheran Church, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

St. Louis County: Sacred Heart Music Center, \$5,000; water abatement at Sacred Heart Cathedral and Cathedral School, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Becker County Historical Society

A grant to the Becker County Historical Society will provide for proper storage of its clothing collection, including this hide jacket with quillwork.

Scott County: Scott County Historical Society, \$5,000; web site development.

Stearns County: Sinclair Lewis Foundation, \$7,500; roof repair on the Sinclair Lewis Childhood Home, a National Historic Landmark.

Stearns County: Stearns History Museum, \$5,000; collections storage.

Steele County: Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum Inc., \$4,000; documentary film, phase two.

Todd County: City of Long Prairie, \$3,070; George Christie House roof and window project.

Wilkin County: Wilkin County Historical Society, \$3,000; microfilm reader/printer.

Wright County: Wright County Historical Society, \$1,600; furnishing plan for three log cabins.

Register now for spring field workshops

Sessions to focus on historical interpretation

You'll have three venues to choose from this spring for the Minnesota Historical Society's annual field workshop:

March 22 Shakopee, Scott County
April 12 Waseca, Waseca County
May 3 Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County

In a program to be repeated at each venue, presenters will focus on the theme of historical interpretation – how the past comes to life through exhibits and programs. Also on the agenda of the daylong meeting are school programs, governing boards and grants. Host historical societies in each city plan a special tour for

workshop participants.

To register: Use the form enclosed in this issue of the *Interpreter*. For more information call grants/field programs assistant David Grabitske at 651-297-4416.

Note: If you are involved in historic preservation, plan to attend a public meeting the evening before each workshop at 6:30 p.m. to discuss local preservation issues. Consult the calendar in the enclosed *Minnesota Preservation Planner* for meeting locations in each city.



Minnesota Historical Society

Spring workshops are a great place to meet your colleagues. Last year Bev Jackson of Freeborn County and Mark Peterson of Winona County compared notes and shared ideas.

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Readers are invited to submit information for publication. To be considered, items must reach the editor by the first of the month, two months before publication. Send to Interpreter Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906.

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