



THE MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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Weather of All Kinds in Clay County

The crazy winter of 1996–97 may turn out to be a mixed blessing for the exhibit described in the accompanying article. The extreme weather might increase interest in the exhibit and the subject, but it also has impeded collection of artifacts. (A notice in the January newsletter called for objects that might be in demand this year, such as: a pair of electric socks; a car antenna ball (a signal from behind a snow drift); and forecasting gadgets.) Note that the exhibit is about seasonal changes and year-round extremes—not just winter—in Clay County.

Exhibit at Clay County: “How about that weather?”

by Margaret Restvedt

Office Manager
Clay County Historical Society

“How about that weather?” sounds like a reflection of the past several months. It is. But it is also a major new exhibit, planned and developed for the Clay County Museum months prior to the winter of 1996–97.

A Grand Opening reception was scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 23, from 2 to 4 p.m. [Ed. note: Weather permitting.] Area weather forecasters were invited to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Photo courtesy Clay County Historical Society

The goal of the exhibit is to define what is unique about Clay County weather, how folks cope with our weather extremes, and how we predict the weather.

Featured sections will deal with our extreme cold, our equally extreme heat, the special times when the weather is near perfect, a section on 1936 (a record-setting year in Clay County), and how we measure, record and predict temperatures and moisture. The exhibit will include a mock-up weather station section and another station about extreme weather conditions such as blizzards, tornadoes, floods, etc.

The exhibit is on display in the Clay County Museum, in the lower level of the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead. For more information, call (218) 233-4604.



Photo courtesy Clay County Historical Society


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Two scenes
 from
 Moorhead's
 Center Avenue
 on Friday,
 Feb. 8, 1946.
 A blizzard
 with 50 mph
 winds left
 snow like this
 in many towns
 of Clay
 County.

Fines Set for Law on Indian Remains

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed in 1990, requires museums and other institutions that possess skeletal remains and culturally important relics to report their possession to American Indian tribes and to make the objects available for return. On Jan. 13, 1997, the U.S. Interior Department announced that any institution found guilty of violating this law may be fined up to \$5,000, or 0.25 percent of its annual budget, whichever is less. Fines may be higher if the relics are important for tribes' traditional rites, or if the museum has incurred additional legal costs. An additional fine of up to \$200 per day can be assessed any institution that delays in notifying a tribe after an initial fine has been imposed.

(Source: *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 24, 1997.)



Preserving Newspapers: When and How To

by Kathy Ludwig with Bryan Johnson



Most people discard and recycle their papers, but some editions that are considered special may be worth preserving and retaining. Preserving the newspapers of today presents a challenge, however, because they are printed on paper that is inherently unstable.

Historical Background

Prior to the mid-1800s, most newspapers were published on paper made from cotton rags. Many of these surviving papers are in excellent condition today, and show little sign of discoloration or brittleness. But producing paper from rags was expensive and, as the century progressed, the supply became insufficient to meet increasing demands. Around the time of the Civil War, wood was introduced as an alternative fiber. Trees were in great abundance. The wood pulp industry grew quickly, which produced a less expensive paper that was also smooth and absorbent—desirable properties for the high speed printing presses that were growing in popularity.

Chemical Problems with Newsprint

Newsprint is not a permanent-quality paper because of the wood impurities that remain in the paper after processing. These include *resins*, *tannins* and *lignins*. Lignin represents the largest percentage of impurities, 16-35 percent, depending on the type of tree. Lignin is an amorphous substance found in and around the cell walls of the fiber and may be thought of as the cement that glues the plant fibers together.

Lignin itself is not an acid, but when exposed to light, high humidity, and atmospheric pollutants, it promotes acidic reactions in the paper. Acidity causes the fibers to weaken and break,

and is the major culprit in causing paper to deteriorate and become discolored and brittle.

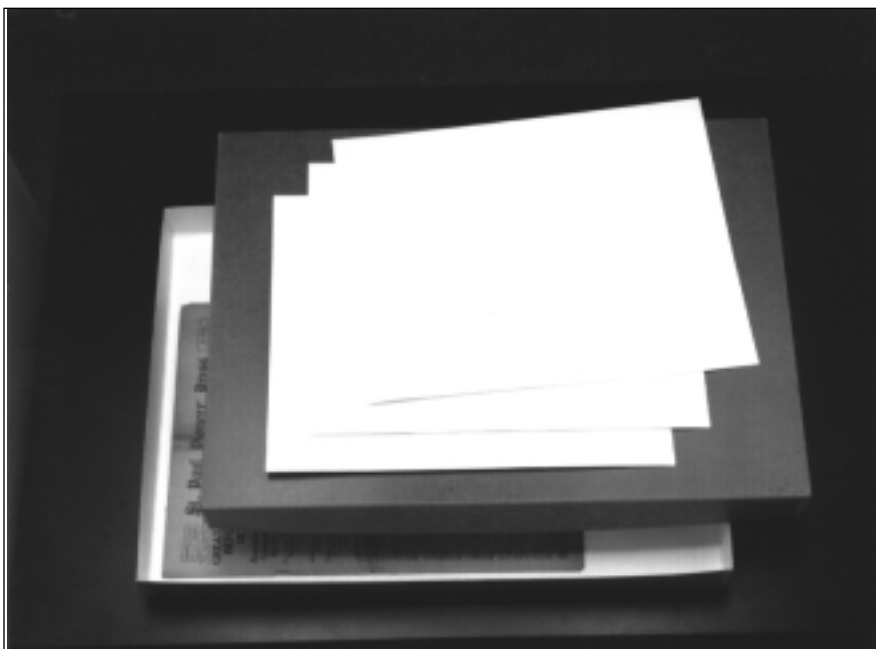
Lignin can be extracted if the paper pulp is processed chemically and fully bleached. But most modern newsprint contains a mixture of wood pulp from chemical and mechanical processes. The mechanical process involves grinding the wood to form a pulp, but it does not remove lignin from the fibers.

Saving Information in Newspapers

When newspapers or clippings are valued most for the information they contain, and not as artifacts, reformatting the information on to a more permanent quality medium may be the best preservation option. Archivaly processed microfilm will work. (Hundreds of Minnesota newspapers are published daily, many of which are preserved in microform at the MHS.)

Certain kinds of photocopies also will work. Photocopies generated onto a permanent-quality paper—that meets the ANSI Z39.48-1992 Permanence Standard—should last for 300 or more years if stored under normal conditions. (The

Continued on page 3



Minnesota Historical Society photo by Eric Mortenson.

This is a lignin-free storage box used in the newspaper collections at the Minnesota Historical Society. On the top are sheets of permanent quality paper used for interleaving newsprint pages.



Preserving Newspapers

Continued from page 2

permanence standard specifies that paper materials be formulated without acidic components, and that an alkaline compound be added to the paper or board to absorb acids as they are generated.)

When papers are valued as artifacts, however, preservation requires a stable environment and non-damaging storage materials.

Saving Newspapers: Environment and Storage

Storing the papers in a dark, stable environment of 60-70° F and 40-50 percent relative humidity will slow the rate of deterioration. A central location in

3M double-stick tape is being applied to the polyester film (Mylar D or Melinex #516), leaving a 1/4" margin from the document. Gloves help prevent fingerprints from marking the film. Note that a weight has been placed on a clean sheet to hold the document in place.



Minnesota Historical Society photo by Eric Mortenson.

one's home is usually recommended for storage, not the attic nor basement or garage. An attic can become quite hot and basements and garages are often damp. Excessive dampness or humidity—above 65 percent—is conducive to mold growth.

It is also important to store papers flat and in contact with materials that will not contribute to further damage. A chemical transfer called "acid migration" can occur in papers in contact with one another: The more acidic sheets transfer acids to less acidic sheets. To prevent this damage, the quality of cardboard boxes or paper storage folders should meet the permanence specification, and materials within the

enclosure should be interleaved with permanent quality paper.

Saving Newspapers: Encapsulation (Not Lamination)

Newsprint may also be protected by polyester film *encapsulation* or in plastic sleeves. Encapsulation was developed and tested by the Library of Congress to protect fragile and brittle papers. This process involves placing the sheet of newsprint between two clear sheets of a polyester film and sealing the film to itself, not to the paper. The film is sealed around the edge with a double-stick tape, or by machines designed to bond the film.

Encapsulation is preferred to lamination, which melts plastic into the paper and is difficult or impossible to reverse. In addition, often we do not know the long-term aging effects of the plastics or adhesives used in lamination. The encapsulation process allows one to reverse the procedure without damage to the paper.

Safe plastics for paper storage include pure polyester, polypropylene and polyethylene. These materials have no additives or surface coatings that can adversely affect the paper over time. Permanent-quality paper boxes and folders, plastic sleeves and encapsulation materials can be purchased from the conservation suppliers listed in

the box on page 4.

However, even papers that are encapsulated or placed in plastic sleeves will generate acidic gases that are trapped inside the envelope and cause deterioration. These gases need to be neutralized; there is an additional procedure that can chemically stabilize the acidic gases.

Continued on page 4



Preserving Newspapers

Continued from page 3

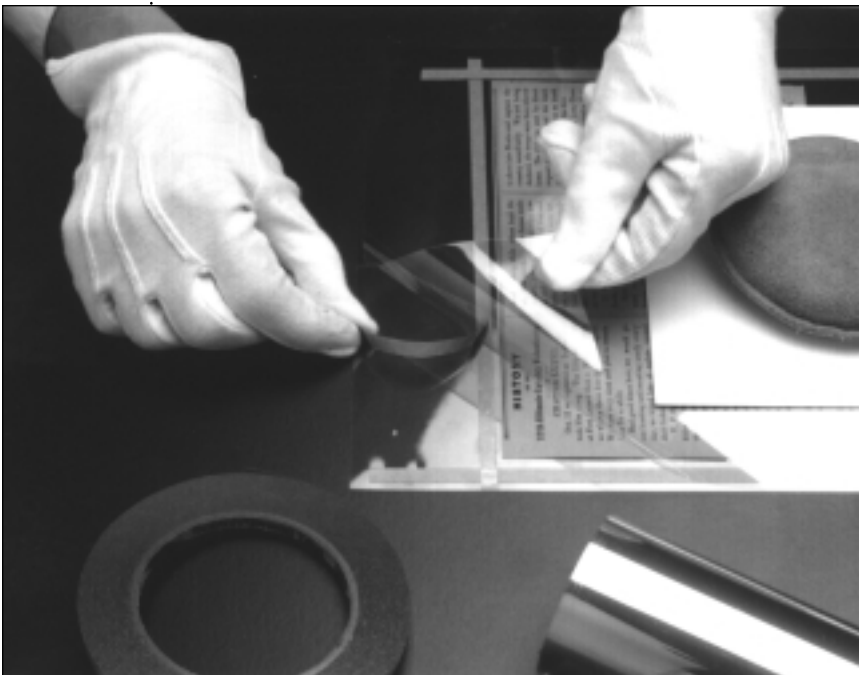
Chemical Stabilization of Acids in Paper

This procedure, called *deacidification*, is designed to neutralize the paper's acidity and leave an alkaline salt behind to absorb future acids. This chemical treatment does not stop future deterioration or restore the paper's original color or strength, but it will slow the rate of deterioration, and extend the useful life of the paper three-to-five times.

Deacidification is recommended for all papers that are encapsulated or placed in plastic sleeves. If deacidification is not possible for a sheet that requires physical protection, it will be beneficial to place a sheet of permanent-quality paper inside the capsule or sleeve. Deacidification is best performed by a conservator who can assess the paper's condition and provide the most appropriate treatment.

A list of conservation service vendors, who provide both encapsulation and deacidification services, is available from the MHS Conservation Department, (612) 297-5664.

Kathy Ludwig is archives conservator and **Bryan Johnson** is conservation assistant in the Harold and Ebba Hoffman Book/Paper Conservation Lab of the Minnesota Historical Society, located in the Minnesota History Center.



To seal the encapsulation, remove the silicon release paper from the double-stick tape. To ensure a good bond, wipe the taped film with a lint-free cloth or rub it with a paper folder Minnesota Historical Society photo by Eric Mortenson..

Some Useful Publications

Preserving Newspapers was published in 1995 by The Preservation Directorate, an office in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-4500; phone (202) 707-5213; fax (202) 707-3434.

A Technical Leaflet titled *Encapsulation in Polyester Film Using Double-sided Tape* was published in 1992 by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, 100 Brickstone Square, Andover, Mass. 01810-1494; phone (508) 470-1010; fax (508) 475-6021.

Free catalogs may be obtained by contacting the following vendors:

Gaylord Bros. Partnership Services, P.O. Box 4901, Syracuse, NY 13221-4901. Call 1-800-448-6160 or fax 1-800-272-3412.

Light Impressions, 439 Monroe Ave., P.O. Box 940, Rochester, NY 14603-0940. Call 1-800-828-6216 or fax 1-800-828-5539.

University Products, Inc., 517 Main Street, P.O. Box 101, Holyoke, MA 01041-0101. Call 1-800-762-1165 or fax 1-800-532-9281.

Keep Those Publicity Fliers and Brochures Coming

The Minnesota History Center's large brochure rack on the first level is a well-used source of information about programs and places of interest. It is a good place to display your brochures and/or promotional materials. Please send up to 500 standard-size brochures to: Merry van den Honert, Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St. Paul, MN 55102-1906.



Two Approaches to Grassroots History: Exhibit and a Conference

The Scott County Historical Society is committed to representing the interests of the entire county in accumulating and sharing its history. Its program development committee conceived "Home Town History at the Museum" as a way to achieve that goal. This program gives each municipality in the county "a two-month opportunity to exhibit or display artifacts and objects of interest from their local area," according to the SCHS newsletter of January 1997. The exhibits will be shown at the Stans Museum in Shakopee.

The guidelines emphasize that an exhibit need not be comprehensive, but rather should strive primarily to tell part of the story of the area. The SCHS staff will assist interested people in all phases of planning and mounting the exhibit, and in providing publicity.

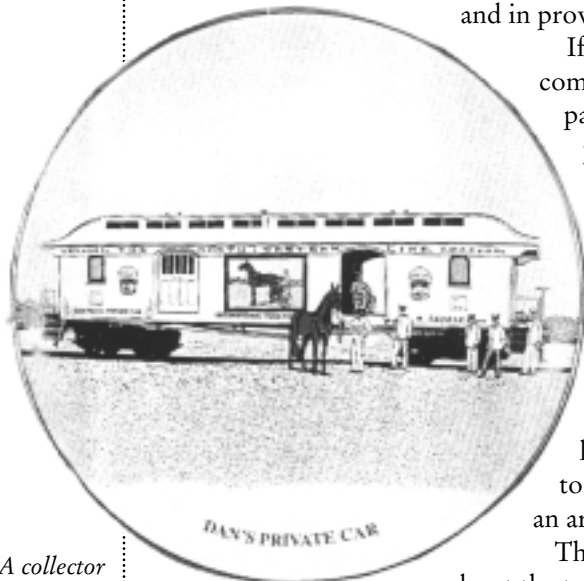
If enough communities participate, the program will in effect be doing local history on two levels: It will provide exposure to the history of the county and to things of special historical interest to the residents of an area.

The first exhibit is about the town of Savage (in Glendale Township, which was settled in 1852). Savage was first organized as *Hamilton* in 1857, and in 1904 was renamed after Marion Willis Savage, who had already brought renown to the area through his success in producing and marketing food supplements and a wide range of related items. Then in 1906 he bought a harness racing horse named Dan Patch—for \$60,000, though his friends thought such a purchase was "nuts"—and brought fame to Savage for many years.

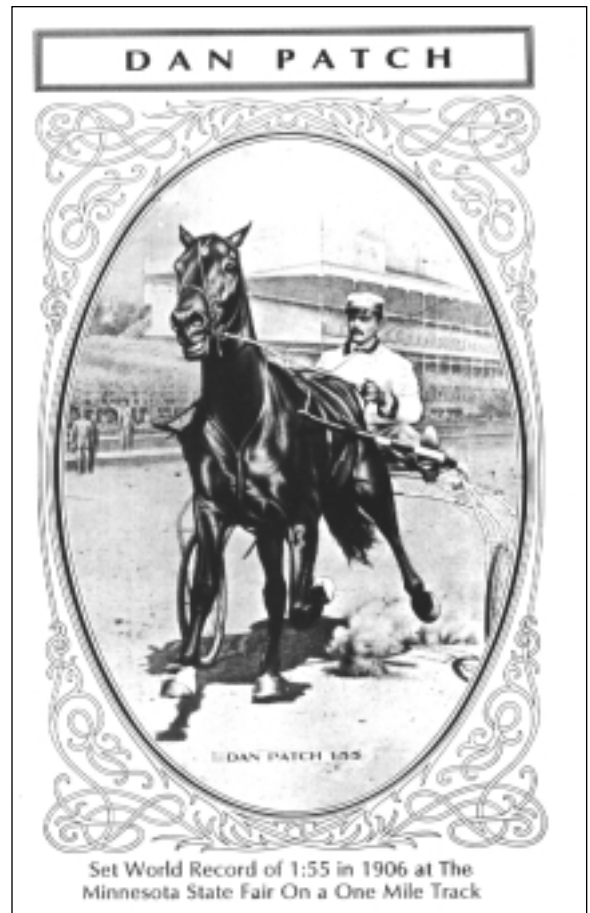
Dan Patch was the only harness racer ever to run a one-mile course under two minutes 35 times, and he became the most-celebrated "animal athlete" of all time. He was the "first commercial superstar of American sports," was given his own railroad car for his national traveling shows, and had a railroad named

after him. Dan Patch died on July 11, 1916, and M. W. Savage died four days later. The exhibit tells the story of Dan Patch in the context of the continuing changes in Savage and Scott County.

For more information or to arrange tours, call the Scott County Historical Society at (612) 445-0378.



A collector plate from the Dan Patch Era, now in the Scott County Museum collections.



Both photos courtesy of Scott County Historical Society

A postcard from the Scott County Museum collections. The address on the back of the card is "Dan Patch Historical Society, Box 1:55, Savage, MN 55378."

The **Theodore C. Blegen Memorial Conference**, to be held at the Minnesota History Center on Saturday, March 22, focuses explicitly on the presentation of grassroots history projects. The conference is named in honor of the late professor Blegen, a historian, university administrator and former director the Minnesota Historical Society, who was a staunch advocate of grassroots history.

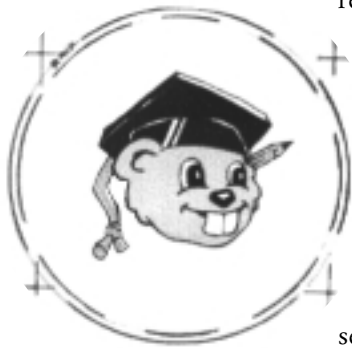
The keynote speaker, Paul Gruchow, will examine the links between our lives, the land, and teaching local history to our children. Gruchow, originally



History Day Rhodent Scholars Want You!

Here comes History Day 1997! Be a History Day judge! You can see the unique blend of scholarship and creativity produced by History Day students by judging at a regional or state contest this spring.

The National History Day program was started in 1974 as a "science fair" for history. This year participating students nationwide are researching topics based on the theme, "Triumph and Tragedy in History." Students present their research in one of four categories: exhibits, performances, media presentations, or research papers. These categories are divided into group and individual entries, and each division of a category has two age divisions: junior (grades 6-8) and senior (grades 9-12).



The "Rhodent Scholar" logo now available on History Day T-shirts.

Through cooperation between the Minnesota Historical Society and the University of Minnesota, almost 20,000 students are participating in History Day statewide this year. With an expanding program comes a greater need for judges.

Basically, judges are part of the teaching process of a History Day event. Your questions of students

and written evaluation comments are significant parts of their experience. As a judge, you can count on devoting four to six hours at a day or evening event. You first receive an orientation on how to perform your duties. At each event, judges select the best entries to move to the next level of competition. Judges are compensated with refreshments and fabulous Rhodent Scholar T-shirts. (See logo, left.)

History Day district events will take place statewide from mid-March through mid-April. The state contest on May 3 at the University of Minnesota is the culmination. Winners in the various categories at the state contest go on to the national contest in Washington, D.C., in June.

In addition to judging, you can participate in History Day by helping students who visit your museum or library, searching for source material. Ask around to find out which local schools are participating, and keep an eye open for the students. For some, it may be their first time doing "real" historical research.

If you would like more information about judging, or would like to visit an event to see what it's all about, please call State History Day Coordinator Tim Hoogland, at (612) 297-2081.

Grassroots Projects

Continued from page 5

from Montevideo, is the author of, among other works, *Grass Roots: The University of Home*, (1995) and *The Necessity of Empty Places*. (1988) Following his address, six people will present brief papers on their local history projects.

After lunch (the conference fee includes a lunch voucher for Café Minnesota as well as materials and a continental breakfast), two projects will be presented in depth. First is the "Minnesota Quilt Documentation Project," by Jean Loken and Norman Steere of the Minnesota Quilters. They will be followed by professor David Morano of Mankato State University and Mary Herbst of the Kremer House Library and Museum in Minnesota Lakes, who will present "Paper Stories: Photographs and Words."

To register for the conference, fill out the form enclosed with this issue and return it with your check to the Education Department of the Minnesota Historical Society.

This photograph of Ethel Townsend, a volunteer and president of Minnesota Lake Historical Society, was taken by David Morano inside the Kremer House in 1996.





Preservation and Archaeology Weeks in May

Minnesotans will have ample opportunity to learn about the state's above- and below-ground cultural resources during back-to-back celebrations of Archaeology Week, May 3-11, and Preservation Week, May 11-17. This year, the Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is working closely with Minnesota Archaeology Week planners to coordinate a flurry of activities for the two events. Watch for an array of jointly produced printed materials and publicity celebrating the history of our built environment.

For Preservation Week, MHS is sponsoring a number of special events organized around the national theme, "Preservation Begins at Home." A series of activities planned for Historic Fort Snelling and the Sibley House in Mendota during the weekend of May 10-11 will use these well-known sites to reexamine the beginnings of the preservation movement in Minnesota. Visitors can listen to tour guides recap the preservation history of each site, and watch as a blacksmith, a stone mason, and a timber framer demonstrate the tools and techniques that were used in the original construction and the reconstruction of the properties.

On May 14 and 15, SHPO and the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota will co-sponsor the Annual Conference for Heritage Preservation Commissions. The conference will begin on Wednesday afternoon with guided tours of the Sibley site and Fort Snelling, followed by a reception and tour of Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul. Workshops will begin at Landmark Center on Thursday morning with a keynote address by Minnesota native Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

For more information about Preservation Week, contact John Lauber, SHPO, (612) 296-5434. For information about Archaeology Week, contact Minnesota Archaeology Week coordinator James Myster at (612) 725-2411.



What are you planning for Archaeology and Preservation Weeks?

Let us know!

17th Annual Michigan Preservation Conference in April

"We Did It—So Can You: The best of preservation in Michigan" is the title of this year's Michigan Preservation Conference, April 11-12. It will be held in Bay City at the 19th-century Scottish Rite Cathedral amidst the mansions of lumber barons in the Center Avenue Historic District. Over 50 speakers will address not only basic "how to..." topics but exemplary Michigan preservation projects. For a brochure, fax (810) 625-3010. For other information, contact the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, P.O. Box 398, Clarkston, MI 48347-0398; (810) 625-8181.

Minnesota Oral History Meeting to Focus on Institutions

"More than Minutes: Giving Voice to Institutional History" is the theme of the annual Oral History Association of Minnesota conference on Saturday, April 5. Speakers include Clarke Chambers, who collects oral histories from University of Minnesota people; David Ward, who uses oral histories of prisoners for a history of penal institutions; and Marilyn Brinkman, who interviews farmers to document the impact of rural electrical cooperatives. In the afternoon, panelists Sister John Christine Wolkerstorfer, Bill Hakala, and Rhoda Lewin will discuss their work in oral history related to religious institutions.

The conference will be held in Honeywell Commons at the Minnesota History Center. The registration fee of \$25 (\$20 for association members) includes lunch; pre-registration is advised. For a detailed program and to register, contact Bev Hermes at (612) 953-0730 or Marilyn McGriff at (320) 396-3957.

Folsom House Seeks Caretakers

The W. H. C. Folsom House in Taylors Falls is seeking a live-in caretaker team to live in the air-conditioned house, year-round rent-free, and to assist in the 5-month summer guide program that begins on Memorial Day. Call (612) 465-5535 for details.



History, Historians, and Public History

Drop the word *history* from the K-12 curriculum. Imagine that.

It is recommended in an article by Pat Nickell in the Sept./Oct. 1995 issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner*. The article proposes a new organizational structure for the social studies that would rename several fields of study. *History*, for instance, would be replaced by "Time, Continuity and Change"; *geography*, by "People, Places and Environment."

Trudy Balcom, museum educator at the Winona County Historical Society learned of this proposal through the Stearns County Historical Society, and mentioned it in the January issue of the WCHS newsletter. She said that "I'm not sure what this means, but I do know that the names that we use to describe our world have a powerful effect on our perceptions."

That proposal is yet another sign of an unsteadiness in and about the field of history. It is not just the word *history* that is in question; there is also a struggle, at least three-sided, over ownership of the subject.

The public, or, more accurately, various special interests in the public, are at odds with historians, and among the latter, academic historians are at odds with public historians.

Robert Archibald, president of the Missouri Historical Society, wrote thoughtfully about these issues in the September 1996 issue of *Perspectives*, the American Historical Association newsletter. Trained as an academic historian, he recalls that when he told one of his professors of his first job, which was at a museum, he was told that "perhaps at some future time I might get a real job in history." He has seen it work the other way, too: Academic historians have been "chastised for their general ignorance of material culture and frequent disdain for the exhibit medium."

Archibald suggests that it is more fruitful to understand the differences between the two approaches than to insist that either one is more "really" history than the other one. In public history, for instance, "Our content is different, our process is different, our definitions of significance are different, and our audiences are enormous and disparate."

The kind of ferment noted by Balcom and Archibald is unsettling, but it is also an opportunity to work on understanding clearly what we are doing. Let us know what you are thinking on these problems; your responses can generate interesting and productive dialogue.



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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