



MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

April 2003, Vol. XXXI, No. 3

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Last chance to catch a
spring field workshop
insert
Preservation Planner

Published by the Minnesota Historical Society
for county and local historical societies and heritage preservation commissions

Minnesota Historical Society



Members of the Infant Welfare Society, who had their hands full at this 1924 gathering, shared a dedication to their cause.

A sense of belonging

History organizations link past, present and future

In the face of record state budget deficits, museums across Minnesota are asking themselves how to prepare for their biggest challenge in years. The task ahead: making the case – with state and local government officials, with individual donors, with prospective members – for ongoing support. Bev Jackson, executive director of the Freeborn County Historical Society, uses her biweekly column in the Albert Lea Tribune to speak out about the vital role that historical organizations play in their communities. Adapted here is her column from Dec. 8, 2002.

Do you belong? Who do you connect with in your community and why? Perhaps it's at church or bridge club or the Girl Scouts. Perhaps it's playing on a volleyball team, in the community band or with a theater group. Or is it the Sons of Norway, a writer's group, a retired teacher's organization or your county historical society that gets you out of the house?

Belonging continued on page 2

Budget crisis forces reduction in state grants-in-aid

The 2004–05 biennial budget proposed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty in February would cut state funding for the Minnesota Historical Society by \$8.046 million for the two-year period beginning July 1, 2003. This is in addition to the \$1.066 million cut from the Society's budget for fiscal year 2003, which ends June 30. Under the plan announced by the Society following the release of the governor's budget, the state grants-in-aid program would be reduced by two-thirds from its already reduced level.

That is just one of many program reductions the Society would undertake if the governor's proposal is adopted by the legislature. Historic sites would close or operate on a reduced schedule; hours and services at the History Center museum and library would be cut back; fewer programs and services would be offered; and funds to acquire historical collections would be severely limited. Nearly 200 full- and part-time employees and management staff would lose their jobs. For more information

Grants-in-aid continued on page 8

Belonging *continued from page 1*

Every organization offers benefits to its members – adventures to be had, things to be learned, skills to be shared. I came to fully appreciate the value of these diverse groups after spending time in the Freeborn County Historical Society archives. On our shelves are dozens of scrapbooks of school clubs, women's groups, organizations past and present – volumes that tell the stories of our community.

Looking over these historical records, I realized just how much things have changed. Many of the groups have disappeared, some leaving behind only newspaper clippings and a few name tags. No matter how important the mission statement, how active the members, how long the life of the organization, nothing stays the same from generation to generation. Nothing, that is, except the group of people in our community whose goal it is to preserve our history.

There may no longer be a Ku Klux Klan in Albert Lea but the uniform found in an attic and donated to the museum tells us that the group is a part of our history. One-room schoolhouses may no longer dot the countryside but photographs show the central role they once played in the lives of the county's children. The Danish Brotherhood continues to meet but records and mementos of its earlier days are safely preserved in our museum for future researchers.

Belonging to your county historical society is your opportunity to help guarantee that *your* stories will be preserved. By volunteering in the library, you can help us preserve the evidence of the past. By helping to pay the phone bill, you enable us to continue our present levels of service. By serving as a tour guide, you'll ensure that future generations



A group of young St. Paul athletes enjoyed the camaraderie at a state Sokol meet in Pine City in 1926.

know who we are and why we do what we do.

There aren't many groups that can claim to touch the past, the present

and the future. We not only make the claim – we're proving it to be true.

– *Bev Jackson, Freeborn County Historical Society*

Making the case

Spring field workshop sessions help you strategize

In these adverse economic times, it's important to be able to articulate your organization's worth, especially to funders.

Two sessions at the Minnesota Historical Society's spring field workshops will show you how.

- *Making the Case: The Importance of Local History.* Field services staff members Tim Glines and David Grabitske lead a group exercise designed to develop and refine the messages you take to stakeholders about the importance of your work.
- *Fundraising: Individual Gifts.* Marc Johnson, development director at the American

Swedish Institute, offers strategies for soliciting gifts from individual donors.

Three workshops remain:

- April 11** Fairmont
Martin County
- May 2** Alexandria
Douglas County
- May 9** Virginia
St. Louis County

It's not too late to register. Call David Grabitske at 651-297-4416. Or, if time allows, use the form enclosed in the January-February Interpreter or available online at www.mnhs.org/preserve/index/html.

Time travelers

Mille Lacs County celebrates centennial of historic railway depot

They turned back the clock in Princeton last January to raise funds for the Great Northern Depot, now home to the Mille Lacs County Historical Society museum. Historical society members recreated the depot's 1903 dedication, complete with speeches, dinner, carriage rides and a gala ball, all patterned on the depot's opening festivities 100 years ago.

Nearly 100 guests, many in period costumes, danced the night away. Proceeds from the event will help finance roof repairs to the depot, a National Register of Historic Places property. For details call the Depot Museum at 763-389-1296 or e-mail mlchsmn@hotmail.com.



Mille Lacs County Historical Society



Committee chair Becky Rittenour (third from left) and other committee volunteers donned their finery for the Mille Lacs County Historical Society's Gala Centennial Ball to raise funds for repairs to Princeton's 1903 Great Northern Depot (above).

'Threads of Identity'

Clothing collection takes center stage in Morrison County

A single catchy theme – “Threads of Identity” – tied together several programs at the Morrison County Historical Society last year. First came a clothing exhibit at the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum in Little Falls. Assembled by museum manager Mary Warner and collections curator Ann Marie Johnson, the exhibit captured all the ways our clothing defines us – from our occupations, economic status, ethnicity and gender to our social conformity and individual style.

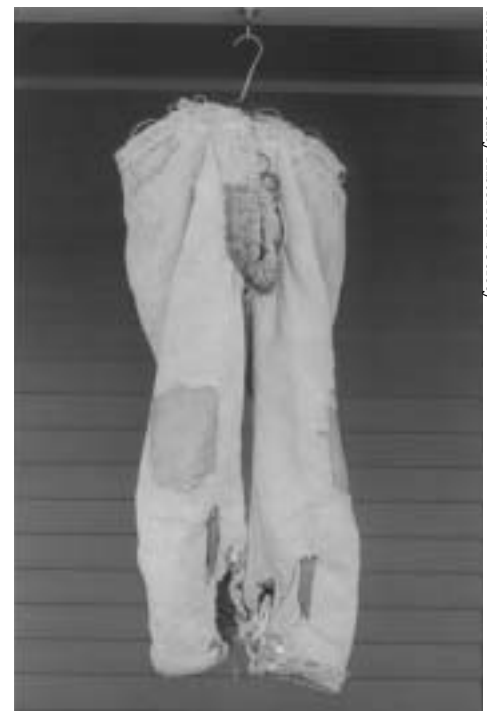
Then the society's quarterly newsletter took up the theme, telling the stories behind a handful of artifacts representing three eras of county history – a farmer's turn-of-the-century “underpants”, a World War II

army uniform and a 1980s high schooler's ripped jeans.

The culminating event was the society's annual meeting, to which members were invited to wear their own “threads of identity.”

“Not everyone was brave enough to dress up,” said Johnson, “but we got a good sampling of leisure activities, professions and time periods.” For more information on this creative endeavor, call Warner at 320-632-4007.

Samuel Thomas, an eccentric Morrison County farmer, was known as “Buckles and Snaps” for the reinforcements he incorporated into his clothing and other possessions. Worn under his overalls, these pants were made from layers of denim held together with string and twine, patched with burlap and adorned with an assortment of steel rings.



Morrison County Historical Society

Getting acquainted

Collaborative Wright County program highlights a shared history

Five Wright County organizations are working together to bring to light a little-known episode in the county's history. On April 22 they'll co-sponsor a presentation by TRACES, an organization dedicated to preserving the story of German prisoners of war housed at sites across the Upper Midwest during the last years of World War II.

"We're getting to know more members of our nonprofit community," said Wright County Historical Society curator Maureen Galvin, speaking for the other program sponsors – the Cokato and Howard Lake Historical Societies, the Buffalo Public Library and the Howard Lake Public Library, which will host the event. "This is a great

way to share duties like publicity and fundraising. And the Howard Lake Historical Society is working with students to do oral histories of local residents who remember the POW camps."

For more information about this joint endeavor, funded in part by the Minnesota Humanities Commission, call Galvin at 763-682-7323 or the Howard Lake Public Library at 320-543-2020.



Cokato Historical Society

George Wessman (second from right) of Northland Canning in Cokato supervised a group of field workers — German prisoners of war housed at the Wright County Fairgrounds in Howard Lake during World War II.

Hidden treasures

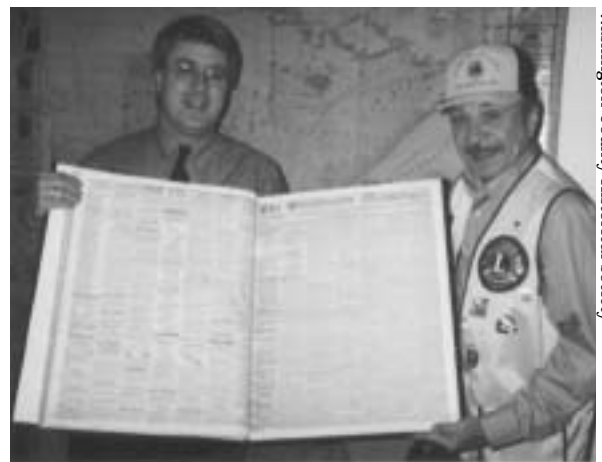
Local club helps save early Stillwater newspapers

Brent Peterson's ongoing project to index old newspapers for the Washington County Historical Society took an unexpected turn in February when he discovered a treasure in the offices of the Stillwater Gazette. It was a bound volume of the first 52 editions of the Gazette's forerunner, the weekly Stillwater Messenger, founded in 1856 – two years before statehood.

Searching for a microfilm copy to track down an article cut from the original, Peterson learned that neither the Stillwater Public Library nor the Minnesota Historical Society had that first year of issues in their collections. Recognizing the rarity of the volume,

he worked to ensure that it was microfilmed for use by future researchers. A company called Film It will soon photograph the pages for microfilming, leaving the bound volume intact.

For funding help, Peterson turned to the River Valley Lions Club, a service organization with a long history of community support. The Lions donated \$250 toward the microfilming project. For more information about this serendipitous find, call Peterson at 651-439-5956 or visit the WCHS web site at www.wchsmn.org.



Washington County Historical Society

Brent Peterson (left) of the Washington County Historical Society and Gordon Powell, president of the River Valley Lions, hold the rare first volume of the Stillwater Messenger.

Book, books, books

On Doing Local History

Carol Kammen's *On Doing Local History* has long been an invaluable aid to local historians. Now she has updated and revised this classic to reflect changes in the field of history since the book's original publication in 1986.

Kammen offers thoughtful perspectives on the themes, approaches and concerns of local historians past and present. Challenging readers to ponder what is involved in presenting the past to public audiences, she poses such probing questions as "How does each generation revise what previous generations held to be true about the past?" She also dispels the myth that amateur historians, the grassroots practitioners of local history, produce a history less rigorous or useful than that of the professional historian.

On Doing Local History, 2nd edition, by Carol Kammen (192 pages,

paper, \$24.95), is an American Association for State and Local History book. Order from AltaMira Press Order Dept., 15200 NBN Way, P.O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214; call toll free 1-800-462-6420; or fax 1-800-338-4550. For more information or to order online, go to www.altamirapress.com.

Adult Museum Programs

Adult learners provide a unique opportunity for museum educators. But what are adult learners looking for? What motivates them to attend a museum-sponsored activity? What do program planners need to know to help them get the most from their experience?

Adult Museum Programs: Designing Meaningful Experiences analyzes a wide variety of programs from the perspective of both planners and participants. Exploring what works and what doesn't, the team of authors covers 12 basic steps to use in shaping programs for adults.

This practical how-to guide (\$24.95, paper) is an American Association for State and Local History book. Order from AltaMira Press Order Dept., 15200 NBN Way, P.O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214; call toll free 1-800-462-6420; or fax 1-800-338-4550. For more information or to order online, go to www.altamirapress.com.

Federal Historic Preservation Laws

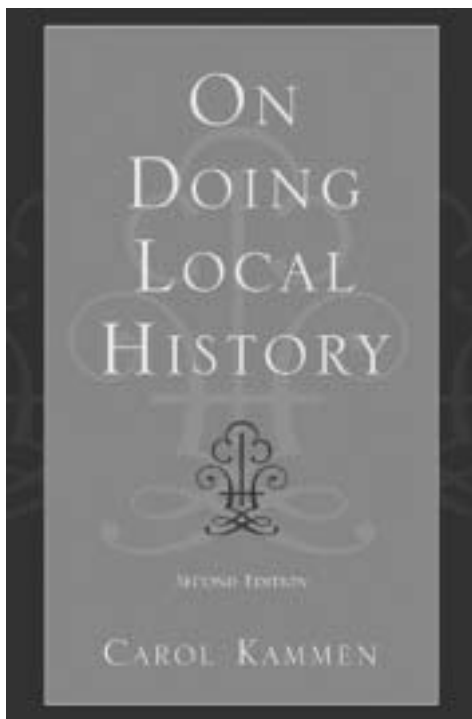
A new edition of *Federal Historic Preservation Laws* is now available from the National Park Service's National Center for Cultural Resources. The first update since 1993 (with changes in federal law through December 2001), this booklet includes 23 federal laws that



pertain to the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage.

Arranged chronologically, the laws trace the evolution of historic preservation philosophy, from the creation of the National Park Service as the lead federal preservation agency in 1916 and the Historic Sites Act of 1935 to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its major amendments in 1980 and 1992. These laws helped create a national historic preservation partnership that includes not only federal agencies but also Tribal Preservation Offices, State Historic Preservation Offices, Certified Local Governments and private organizations like the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

To request a copy, send an e-mail to crwebteam@nps.gov or write National Park Service, National Center for Cultural Resources, 1849 C Street NW (2251), Washington, D.C. 20240-0001.



On the Web

Resources for research, training, grantseeking

Minnesota history research

The Minnesota Historical Society library is working to spread the word about its collections to teachers, History Day participants and college students. To that end, a number of topics and related resources for historical research, including resources available on the web or through interlibrary loan, are now posted on the Society's web site. To see what has been compiled so far, go to www.mnhs.org/library/tips/history_topics/librarytopics.html.

Library staff would like to know what you think of the site. After checking it out, send comments by e-mail to kathryn.otto@mnhs.org.

Canadian Conservation Institute

The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) has launched a new web site, "Preserving My Heritage," designed to help individuals care for family heirlooms, treasures and works of art. The site also provides an introduction to the field of heritage conservation.

Other highlights of the web site include a virtual tour of CCI conservation laboratories and a "fun zone" that demonstrates how various photographic methods reveal characteristics of objects not visible under normal viewing. To learn more, go to www.preservation.gc.ca.

Minnesota Council on Foundations

In these times of diminishing state and federal financial support, it becomes increasingly important to seek alternate sources of support. The Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) has positioned itself as the state's leading source of grantseeking education, tools and information.



The Minnesota Council on Foundations web site at www.mcf.org includes this searchable database, accessible by subscription.

MCF's popular, long-running Grantseeking for Beginners seminar provides a comprehensive introduction to the basics of grantwriting, with advice on identifying potential funding sources, developing budgets and understanding the decision-making process from the grantmaker's point of view. Scheduled for 2003 are seminars in Duluth (April 11) and Rochester (Aug. 8) as well as St. Paul (June 5, Sept. 10 and Dec. 3).

A calendar on the MCF web site lists other training opportunities for nonprofit organizations in such areas as boards, communications, finance and accounting, human resources, nonprofit management, special events, technology and volunteerism.

See www.mcf.org/mcf/whatsnew/calendar.htm.

To save you time in your grantseeking efforts, MCF offers Minnesota Grantmakers Online, a database of Minnesota grantmakers and grants. Accessible by subscription, the searchable database lets you focus on a specific subject area, geographic area or type of support.

For a brochure describing these and other services and publications, call the Council at 612-338-1989, fax 612-337-5089, e-mail info@mcf.org, or visit the MCF web site at www.mcf.org.

NEH offers preservation assistance

Grants aid smaller organizations

New guidelines for preservation assistance grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities are now available. You have until May 15 to apply for projects slated to begin no earlier than January 2004.

Preservation assistance grants help small and mid-sized organizations improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections. Eligible applicants are museums and historical societies, libraries, town and county records offices, archival repositories, community colleges and underserved departments and units within colleges, universities and other larger institutions. Collections to be preserved may include books, journals, manuscript and archival materials, maps, moving images,

sound recordings, decorative and fine arts, prints and photographs, textiles, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture and historical objects.

Fundable activities

Organizations that have never received an NEH grant are encouraged to apply. You may request support for the following activities:

- A general preservation assessment that will help you identify your overall preservation needs and develop a long-range, prioritized preservation plan to address those needs.
- Consultation with preservation professionals to address a specific preservation issue need or problem.
- Attendance at a preservation workshop.

- Purchase of storage furniture, preservation supplies or environmental monitoring equipment.

A two-step approach

The first step in securing NEH preservation assistance funds is to apply for a general-needs assessment – a two-day onsite survey of a collection by a conservation professional, who will identify areas for improvement in a written report. You may then apply the following year for up to \$5,000 for the necessary equipment upgrades.

Guidelines may be downloaded from the NEH web site at www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html. For more information e-mail NEH's Division of Preservation and Access at preservation@neh.gov or call 202-606-8570.

Conservation matters

Workshop highlights techniques for framing

On April 24 in Fairmont, the Martin County Historical Society will host a conservation workshop conducted by Bob Herskovitz, chief conservator for the Minnesota Historical Society. Using a variety of objects – from paintings, documents and works of art on paper to photographs and textiles – he will discuss the framing of museum artifacts and treasured family possessions in ways that promote their preservation.

In this hands-on session,

Herskovitz will demonstrate such framing techniques as window mats and shadow boxes, and participants can try their hand at using some of the framing materials preferred by conservationists. Workshop attendees are encouraged to bring in items about which they have questions.

The workshop will be held from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Martin County Historical Society, 304 East Blue Earth Blvd., Fairmont. It is free and open to the public. For more information call 507-235-5178.

'Picturing the Past'

What: Minnesota Historical Society library class on caring for family photographs, films and videotapes.

When: April 22, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Where: MHS Library, Minnesota History Center, St. Paul.

Bonnie Wilson, the Society's sound and visual curator, discusses the dos and don'ts of caring for and displaying treasured family images. The fee is \$5 for Society members, \$7 for nonmembers. To register call 651-296-2143.

Grants-in-aid

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about the Society's budget reduction plans, updates on the 2003 legislative session and suggestions for contacting legislators, see the Minnesota Historical Society web site at www.mnhs.org/about/legis.html.

Tim Glines, manager of outreach services, lamented the prospect of another setback to the grants program. "After grants funding was cut in 1991, it took several years to get the program back up to its recent level," he said. "All Minnesotans must share the burden of the latest budget cuts. Unfortunately, reducing the grants program would hurt organizations that already strain to carry out their important work." There is a bright side, Glines noted. "The program will not be eliminated altogether."

One round, not two

If the proposed reductions are enacted into law, it is likely that only \$50,000 will be available for state grants-in-aid in each of the next two fiscal years. In that case, there would be only one round each year instead of two: the fall round will go ahead, while the winter round of state grants-in-aid would be canceled.

Application deadlines for the fall 2003 round of state grants-in-aid have been set:

- Aug. 1** Pre-application due.
- Aug. 29** Grant application due.
- Oct. 2** Grants Review Committee meets.

Updated information about budget reductions will be posted in MNLOCALHISTORY, the Society's free

electronic list service. To subscribe send an e-mail with "Subscribe MNLOCALHISTORY" as the sole text to majordomo@state.mn.us.

For updates specifically about grants, go to www.mnhs.org/about/grants/index.html or contact Glines (651-296-5460; timothy.glines@mnhs.org) or David Grabitske (651-297-4416; david.grabitske@mnhs.org).

CLG grants unchanged

The Certified Local Government (CLG) grants program is not affected by the state budget. That program, which alone will constitute the winter grants cycle, awards federal matching grants to cities for planning, preservation, surveys and public education.

Minnesota History Interpreter is published nine times a year by the Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants Department of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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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