



MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

March 2001, Vol. XXIX, No. 2

INSIDE

page 5

Tech Talk:

Exhibiting borrowed objects

insert

Spring field workshops

schedule and registration form

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

MacDonald and Mack Architects



With its horizontal lines and flat roof, the Prairie-style Stewart Memorial Presbyterian Church in south Minneapolis was a radical departure from established concepts of church design when it was built in 1910. Today the restored church is home to the Redeemer Missionary Baptist congregation.

Reaping the rewards

Three restoration projects stir community pride

Planning. Teamwork. An unshakable belief in the cause. Throw in a dash of inspiration and a generous dose of fund-raising and you have the makings of a winning restoration project.

That's what experience taught the tireless volunteers in three Minnesota communities as they tackled the challenges of bringing new life to historic buildings. In Minneapolis it was the 1910 Prairie-style Stewart Memorial Presbyterian Church, reborn as the Redeemer Missionary Baptist Church. In New Ulm the childhood home of author and artist Wanda Gág

stands again as a testament to the talents of her artist father. And in Waseca the home of town father Philo C. Bailey today houses the research center of the Waseca County Historical Society. All three case studies offer models of success for anyone embarking on a historic preservation project.

A dream come true

For 11 years Cliff Johns harbored a dream: to restore the Prairie-style church building in south Minneapolis that his congregation, Redeemer

Tim Glines appointed to new post

He'll coordinate Society outreach services

"Back to the fold." That's how it felt for Tim Glines when he took up his new post Feb. 1 as manager of outreach services in the Minnesota Historical Society's Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants Department. It's been nine years since he left his position as grants manager there to take on administrative duties in Society director Nina Archabal's office.

In his new role, Glines will oversee all outreach services of the department - historic preservation education, preservation work with local governments and grants programs as well as services to county, local and special-interest historical societies. Like his predecessor, long-time field services coordinator David Nystuen, Glines will advise county and local societies on matters of museum management, programming and long-range planning and will continue to serve as a liaison to Society resources.

New post continued on page 6

Reaping the rewards continued on page 2

Reaping the rewards *continued from page 1*

Missionary Baptist Church, bought in 1988. The flat-roofed, wood-and-brick building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was designed by architects William Purcell and George Feick in 1909 and built the next year. Since then the structure had weathered the decline of the neighborhood but suffered removal of its light fixtures, the addition of a gym and other alterations that detracted from the original design.

Johns, chairman of the church's board of trustees and also a member of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, knew what needed to be done. Founding the Redeemer Restoration Project, he formed a committee that included community leaders and philanthropists as well as church members. Together they launched a capital campaign, "Simple Gifts: Restoring a Prairie School Church," that eventually raised \$2.3 million. Restoration architect Bob Mack of MacDonald and Mack Architects was hired to direct the project.

MacDonald and Mack Architects



Dark-stained oak woodwork in geometric patterns on the walls and ceiling of Stewart Memorial Presbyterian Church provide the principal decoration.

Wanda Gág House Association



Thanks to the painstaking work of conservator Dan Tarnoveanu, the childhood home of artist and author Wanda Gág in New Ulm has been restored to its original condition and colors.

Honoring the simple lines and soft colors of Purcell's original plans, Mack replaced fluorescent lights with Prairie School fixtures reproduced from early photos and drawings. Suspended ceilings were removed, new wood floors installed and a window wall restored to let in natural light. To accommodate the needs of

the modern-day congregation, Mack added a sound system, elevator, commercial kitchen and accessible entry. And for adult immersions, an important part of the Baptist faith, he built into the sanctuary a large baptismal tank that fits under the choir loft floor and behind a wood panel; both slide away to reveal the tank.

Today Johns' dream has been fully realized. The building, one of the few Prairie School churches in the country, is once again a showcase of Purcell and Feick's progressive

New Ulm Journal



Hobart Anderson, a founding member of the Wanda Gág House Association, points out restored decorative scrolls on the parlor walls and ceiling.

architectural ideas. And, reports Redeemer's head minister, Rev. Alfred L. Harris, the congregation sees in the rebirth of their church building a symbol of spiritual renewal.

An artist's vision

When he wasn't painting church murals and decorating houses, New Ulm artist Anton Gág unleashed his creativity on his own family's home. He soon filled the 1890s Queen Anne-style house with a profusion of decoration - fanciful borders on the walls and ceiling of the children's bedroom, floral motifs in a second-floor photography studio, decorative scrolls on the parlor walls and a complex geometric border in the dining room. Each room of the house was ornamented differently but with a chromatic harmony of rich greens, deep reds and warm golds that unified the whole.

As the house changed hands over the years, Gág's work disappeared under layers of paint. Water damaged the plaster reliefs, and siding covered the clapboard-and-shingle sheathing. But the building's importance as the childhood home of noted author and artist Wanda Gág was not forgotten. When the house came up for sale in 1988, a group of New Ulm residents jumped at the chance to buy it. They

put down earnest money, then formed the Wanda Gág House Association to raise the \$24,000 selling price. Four local families donated \$5,000 each; the remaining \$4,000 came in \$100 gifts from dozens of other donors.

Following advice from state historical architect Charles Nelson, the group proceeded slowly and deliberately, tackling the restoration room by room. To return Anton Gág's work to its original splendor, the association hired conservator Dan Tarnoveanu of Renaissance Art, Restoration and Architecture, who also masterminded the two-year restoration of the rathskeller-themed State Capitol cafeteria. With the help of a state grant-in-aid, Tarnoveanu recently completed work on Anton Gág's studio and the children's bedroom. Planned for 2001 are restoration of the parents' bedroom, kitchen and pantry.

Charlotte Anderson, who with her husband, Hobart, has been involved from the beginning, is proud of the association's accomplishments. "We have a winning team," she said, "and so many enthusiastic volunteers who asked to take part. Our 18-member

board - a good mix of younger and older folks, men and women - organized the project, identifying specific jobs to be filled." That careful planning paid off. The group recently won an award from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota for preserving an important local landmark.

'The best deal ever'

Margaret Sinn has a knack for stretching a dollar. When the Waseca County Historical Society decided to restore the historic Philo C. Bailey House, it was up to director Sinn to find the resources. The 1868 house, purchased by the county society in 1991, needed extensive work. Porches had to be rebuilt, windows replaced, masonry repaired and plumbing, heating and electrical systems upgraded. To leverage a larger, capital grant for the restoration from the state grants-in-aid program, Sinn hatched a plan.

Her strategy: turn ownership of the building over to the county, negotiate a lease agreement for the county society and thus qualify for a capital grant, given to county and local jurisdictions. She drove a hard bargain with county officials: the county society would lease the house for the next 100 years, continue to administer its programs as before, direct the restoration work, then open a research center in the newly refurbished facility - all for a leasing fee of one dollar. "I knew we wouldn't want to give up the house after 100 years," she explained, "so I got an option to re-lease it for another 100 years. That will cost us one more dollar."



Philo C. Bailey, who lived in this Italianate house from 1872 until his death in 1907, played a leading role in Waseca's business, civic and social life. The house was recently restored by the Waseca County Historical Society for use as its research center.

To save even more money, Sinn and her board relied largely on volunteer labor. Only the new roof and a few other jobs were hired out. Volunteers did the rest, all coordinated by WCHS board president Don Wynnemer. A corps group of six local men did the lion's share of the work, each donating two full days a week, then taking projects home with them - porch spindles to turn, windows to rebuild, woodwork to strip. Their labors were rewarded in December when the Waseca Chamber of Commerce presented the county society with the James Donohue Award, given on occasion for exceptional long-term contributions to the city. Said one county official when he saw the finished house, "That's the best deal we ever made."

Today researchers and students work in quiet comfort at the new WCHS research center. And the Philo C. Bailey House, home of one of Waseca's earliest settlers, stands proudly as the oldest house in Waseca with its historical integrity still intact.

Linda Mack's article "An uncommon church is reborn," from the Star Tribune, Dec. 24, 2000, was used in the preparation of this story.



Volunteers (left to right) Dick Marcus, Donn Wynnemer, George Kastelle and Jerry Rutledge, along with their colleagues Phil Allen and Keith Smith (not pictured), each donated hundreds of hours of labor to restore the 1868 Philo C. Bailey House, one of Waseca's oldest residences.

History hits the road

Traveling exhibit celebrates Fargo-Moorhead anniversary

Residents of the Fargo-Moorhead area won't have to go far to see a new exhibit commemorating the 125th anniversary of their cities. The exhibit is coming to them.

Prepared by the Clay County Historical Society from materials in its collections, the traveling exhibit features historic photographs of life in the two cities – early modes of transportation, recreational activities and the roots of the region's economy in agriculture.

For one full year the exhibit, titled "Fargo-Moorhead: 125 Years Together," will be on the road, traveling to public venues throughout the region. The first stop last fall: a shopping center in Fargo. Then it was on to the Moorhead Center Mall. To catch holiday travelers, the exhibit hung from November to January at Hector International Airport.

CCHS archivist Mark Peihl, who assembled the exhibit, plans to schedule it this spring at each of the half-dozen public and parochial high schools in Fargo and Moorhead. The

Ella Haukinson Collection, Clay County Historical Society



After Moorhead residents complained of youth "skinny-dipping" in the Red River near their homes, the city in 1931 built this swimming area, complete with diving platform, rope swing and changing booth. Local Boy Scouts served as lifeguards. This photograph appears in the traveling exhibit, "Fargo-Moorhead: 125 Years Together."

photographic display will remain in each school for several weeks. In late June it will come to rest in Moorhead's Hjemkomst Center, where it will remain through 2001.

For more information on how Peihl integrated the exhibit with the

communities' year-long anniversary celebration and tips on how he managed the logistics of such an ambitious traveling schedule, call him at 218-299-5520 or e-mail mpeihl@juno.com.

History Discovery Day proves popular with Winona educators

More than 70 educators turned out in October for the Winona County Historical Society's first History Discovery Day. Designed to introduce educators to the variety of resources available at the county museum, the event drew teachers from throughout the county as well as students from Winona State University. It is sure to become an annual event.

Volunteers greeted guests at the door and handed out information packets about the museum's exhibits,

school tours, archives and web site. Staff and volunteers stationed throughout the museum answered questions as visitors explored the facility. One popular stop was the May W. Murray Education Center, where teachers could study the contents of artifact trunks loaned to schools for classroom use. Educators also had the opportunity to see a work in progress – a research project on several rural townships that will gather information from census records, plat maps and manuscript materials for

use online or in the classroom.

"This event is part of our new emphasis on outreach to teachers," explained WCHS director Mark Peterson. "We want to encourage them to take full advantage of all the resources we have to offer. And, of course, we want them to come back with their students." For information on how the staff put together this successful event, call the county society at 507-454-2723.

Exhibiting borrowed objects

New AAM guidelines help shape policy

No single museum can contain every object worthy of study. So museums have traditionally exhibited not only objects from their own collections but also objects borrowed from other museums and from private individuals and organizations. Borrowing objects allows museums to create more comprehensive exhibits and to make objects accessible that would otherwise be seen by only a few.

To guide this practice of borrowing objects, the American Association of Museums (AAM) has issued a set of standards that you can use to develop your own institutional policies. These standards grew out of the AAM's Code of Ethics for Museums, designed to set the highest standard of ethical practices for the nation's museums. The standards for borrowing objects, developed by an AAM task force, are based on the following underlying principles:

- To foster public confidence, museums must adhere to an ethical standard that exceeds legal minimums.
- To ensure accountability, museums must have a formally stated mission and written policies and procedures that guide their actions.
- As publicly accountable institutions, museums must make their actions visible and understandable to the public, especially where lack of visibility could lead to the appearance of conflict of interest.

AAM guidelines on exhibiting borrowed objects

Before exhibiting borrowed objects, your museum should have in place a written policy, approved by your governing authority and publicly accessible on request, that addresses the following issues:

I. Borrowing objects

Your policy should:

1. Ensure that you have determined a clear connection between the display of the object and your museum's mission and that the inclusion of the object is consistent with the intellectual integrity of the exhibition.
2. Require that you examine the lender's relationship to your institution to determine if there are potential conflicts of interest, or an appearance of a conflict, such as in cases where the lender has a formal or informal connection to museum decision-making. For example, is the lender a board member, staff member or donor?
3. Include guidelines and procedures to address such conflicts. For example, you may require withdrawal from the decision-making process of those with a real or perceived conflict, you may disclose the conflict or you may decline the loan.
4. Prohibit the museum from accepting any commission or fee from the sale of objects borrowed for exhibition. This prohibition does not apply to such displays as craft shows, where objects are explicitly gathered for sale.

II. Lender involvement

To ensure that your museum maintains intellectual integrity and institutional control over the exhibition, the museum:

1. Should retain full decision-making authority over the content and presentation of the exhibition.
2. May, while retaining that authority, consult with a potential lender on objects to be selected from the lender's collection and the significance to be given those objects in the exhibition.
3. Should make public the source of funding if the lender is also a funder of the exhibition. You should avoid requests for anonymity from a lender or funder where anonymity would conceal a conflict of interest (real or perceived) or raise other ethical issues.

As our society has come to rely on museums for education about, as well as preservation of, its cultural heritage, it has also come to expect more of its museums – more accountability, more transparency of action and more leadership in the community. Developing policies and ethical standards for your own museum, such as these on exhibiting borrowed objects, is an important part of earning – and keeping – the public's trust and confidence in your mission to collect, preserve and interpret your community's history.

Source: Museum News, November/December 2000, published by the American Association of Museums. "AAM Guidelines on Exhibiting Borrowed Objects" © July 2000, American Association of Museums.

Long-awaited Goodhue County history book available

For its latest publishing venture, the Goodhue County Historical Society turned again to Red Wing native Frederick L. Johnson, a longtime history teacher in the St. Paul public schools. Johnson's new book, *Goodhue County, Minnesota: A Narrative History* (\$24.95), rolled off the presses last fall just in time for holiday gift-giving.

In a colorful and entertaining narrative, Johnson celebrates the lives of county residents both prominent and ordinary. Alongside such personages as Tatankamani (Red Wing), General Lauris Norstad, head

of NATO during World War II, and Ambassador Eugenie Anderson stand the many citizens who, "with faith in their ability and a willingness to work" were "the real builders of Goodhue County."

The book contains more than 100 photographs and maps. To order from the GCHS museum bookstore, call 651-388-6024. Also available is Johnson's first book, *The Sea Wing Disaster* (\$7.95), published by the county society in 1986. It recounts the sinking of a 19th-century river excursion boat that took more than 100 lives.



Tim Glines, the Minnesota Historical Society's new manager of outreach services.

New post *continued from page 1*

"We all benefited from David's countless contributions in the field during his many years of service," said Glines. "I may not cover as many miles as he did but I plan to be just as dedicated to the needs of Minnesota's outstanding historical organizations."

Glines comes to his new position well acquainted with the study of history, the state of Minnesota and the workings of county societies. A Minnesota resident since 1974, he holds a degree in history from the University of Wisconsin, served as assistant director of the Ramsey County Historical Society and for six years administered the Minnesota Humanities Commission's statewide grants program before coming to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1987.

During the year ahead, Glines will begin developing a comprehensive plan for Society outreach services, working across departments. "To better coordinate our outreach work, we'll seek input from all our constituencies," said Glines.

"I look forward to getting back to history at the grass-roots level," he added. "It will be great to renew old friendships around the state. And I expect to make many new friends at the Minnesota Historical Organizations field workshops this spring. See you there!"

Book series offers preservation advice

Experts share tips on care of family heirlooms, museum collections, historic houses



Whether you're sorting old family photos, worried about climate control or working on a historic house, three titles

from Heritage Preservation will help you preserve your treasured belongings.

The latest volume in the organization's Caring series is *Caring for Your Family Treasures* (\$24.95 paper), offering expert information and practical instructions on how to care for family heirlooms. Top museum conservators advise on such matters as maintaining a deteriorating photo album, polishing silver, storing home movies and creating safe

display conditions for objects from old toys to quilts to clocks.

Also in the series is *Caring for Your Collections* (\$24.50 paper, \$39.95 hardcover), in which conservation professionals share their expertise on caring for art and objects. This practical guide concentrates on preventive maintenance, explaining how to watch for damage and when and how to get help from a conservator if damage does occur. Rounding out the Caring series, *Caring for Your Historic House* (\$24.50 paper, \$39.95 hardcover), published with the National Park Service, covers repair and maintenance of historic houses.

To order, call toll-free 1-888-388-6789 or e-mail www.heritagepreservation.org. Volume discounts are available.

Coming soon to a city near you Workshops on preserving family treasures

It will be a busy spring for Minnesota Historical Society chief conservator Bob Herskovitz as he takes to the road once again with his conservation workshop, "Preserving Your Family Treasures."

Ten cities will host the workshops, designed to teach people how to care for their family heirlooms. Using items that participants bring in - from the family bible and grandma's wedding dress to baby's quilt and grandpa's service medals - Herskovitz offers tips on how to preserve, store and display books, textiles, photographs, wood and metal objects and more.

The following workshops, presented as part of the Society's conservation outreach program and co-sponsored by local organizations, are free and open to the public. Call the local sponsor for details.

- **March 3: Northfield***
United Methodist Church, 1 to 3 p.m.
Sponsors: Northfield Historical Society, Northfield Community Education. 507-645-9268.
- **March 12: Hutchinson**
McLeod County Historical Society, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsors:* MCHS, Hutchinson Community Education. 320-587-2109.

- **April 2: Detroit Lakes****
Becker County Historical Society, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsor:* BCHS. 218-847-2938.
- **April 3, 4: Crookston****
Polk County Historical Society, 7 to 9 p.m. (April 3), 9 to 11 a.m. (April 4). *Sponsors:* Crookston Schools Community Education, Fertile-Beltrami Community Education, PCHS, Crookston Golden Links, Polk County Extension Service. 218-281-2159.
- **April 5: Ada****
Dekko Center, 6:30 to 9 p.m. *Sponsor:* Norman County Historical Society. 218-784-4173 or 218-356-8767.
- **April 18: Waseca**
Waseca County Historical Society, noon to 1 p.m. *Sponsor:* WCHS. 507-835-7700.
- **April 19: Fairmont***
Martin County Historical Society, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsors:* MCHS, Fairmont Community Education and Recreation. 507-235-5178.
- **April 23, Montevideo**
Historic Chippewa City, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsors:* Chippewa County Historical Society, Montevideo Community Education. 320-269-7636.
- **April 24, Grand Rapids****
Grand Rapids Public Library, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsors:* Grand Rapids Public



Minnesota Historical Society chief conservator Bob Herskovitz (left) advises participants on the care of textiles at his conservation workshop, "Preserving Your Family Treasures."

Library, Itasca County Historical Society. Made possible in part by the Blandin Foundation. 218-326-7640.

- **April 25, Buffalo**
Wright County Historical Society, 7 to 9 p.m. *Sponsors:* WCHS, Buffalo Community Education. 763-682-7323.

To schedule a conservation workshop in your community, call the Society's Conservation Department, 651-297-1867, or e-mail conservationhelp@mnhs.org. To check on workshops currently scheduled, visit www.mnhs.org/preserve/treasures/workshops.html.

- *Made possible in part by a grant from the Land O'Lakes Foundation.*
- ** *Made possible in part by a grant from the George W. Neilson Foundation.*

Site manager sought

The Washington County Historical Society seeks qualified candidates for the part-time position of site manager at the Warden's House Museum in Stillwater. The 1853 house today serves as the WCHS headquarters and a museum interpreting pioneer and lumberjack life.

Duties: Care for the site and collections, train and supervise volunteers, handle publicity and develop programs. Qualifications: Museum and/or curatorial experience desired. Salary negotiable. Send resumes to Search Committee, attn. Nancy Goodman, WCHS, P.O. Box 167, Stillwater, MN 55082-0167, or e-mail WashingtonCoHist@aol.com.

Oral History Association to meet at U of M

The annual conference of the Oral History Association of Minnesota will convene Saturday, March 31, at the Immigration History Research Center on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota. This year's

theme: Minnesota labor history. For more information call association president Kurt Kragness, director, Sherburne County Historical Society, 763-261-4433, fax 763-261-4437, or e-mail kjkrag@worldnet.att.net.

Genealogy classes at the Minnesota History Center

Explore sources and strategies for researching family history

These one-session classes at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul are offered by Jim and Paula Stuart Warren, nationally recognized genealogical researchers and lecturers. For registration and costs, call Warren Research at 651-644-6581 or e-mail warren@spacestar.com.

Discover Your Family History

March 31, 12:30 to 3 p.m. or April 30, 12:30 to 3 p.m.

Designed for beginners, this workshop surveys basic repositories for genealogical research.

A New Spot on Your Ancestral Map

March 31, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Learn how to locate historical, geographical and genealogical sources in areas unfamiliar to you.

Ancestors Hanging on Your Family Tree: Using Court and Institutional Records

April 28, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

These records reveal key personal and medical information.

Researching Midwestern River People

April 28, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Examine the abundant resources for researching nomadic river workers –

shipping company records, membership organizations, photography collections and more.

The Most Priceless Heritage: Family Health History

April 28, 2:30 to 4 p.m.

This non-technical class offers practical steps for gathering and sharing health information.

Research at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

April 30, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Explore the genealogical records, historical collections and web site of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

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 (example: deadline for March issue is Jan. 1). Send to Interpreter Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906. Phone: 612-729-4729; e-mail nordreeves@earthlink.net.

Material from this issue may be reprinted with the following credit line: Reprinted with permission from *Minnesota History Interpreter*, March 2001, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, published by the Minnesota Historical Society. Do not reprint material taken from another source without permission.

On request, this publication is available in alternative formats: audiotape, large print or computer disk.

For address corrections call Michele Decker at 651-296-5434 or e-mail michele.decker@mnhs.org.

Britta Bloomberg, Head,
Historic Preservation, Field Services
and Grants Department
Tim Glines, Manager, Outreach Services
Mary Ann Nord, Editor
Kate Raver, Layout

www.mnhs.org



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

345 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Paul, MN
Permit No. 854