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# MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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## Working wonders

### Sentencing to Service program helps nonprofits fill funding gaps

When Donna Siemers needs help around the house – the Washington County Historic Courthouse, that is – she knows who to call.

For more than 15 years Siemers, volunteer coordinator at the site, has relied on crews from the state's Sentencing to Service program to ready the courthouse for its annual Christmas at the Courthouse fundraiser. The crews hang holiday lights inside and out and set up tables and chairs – jobs that the site's small maintenance staff can't make time for.

"We have an ongoing partnership with STS," says Siemers. "We use them regularly for a variety of projects – landscaping, recycling, painting, repairs. Last year alone STS provided us with 397 hours of labor. That's the equivalent of having one extra staff person for 10 weeks! And we're not the only ones in the county who depend on the program. Churches and senior citizen centers use STS crews, too."

#### For the public good

That's just the kind of community resource Gov. Rudy Perpich envisioned in 1986 when he urged the Minnesota Legislature to establish the Sentencing to Service program. Today, courts across the state use STS

as a sentencing alternative, putting carefully selected, nondangerous offenders to work on community improvement projects under the close supervision of a crew leader. Clients range from state parks and county agencies to local schools and nonprofit organizations.

Among them are more than a dozen county historical societies that use the program for projects they couldn't otherwise afford to undertake. "Our crews are very busy right now," reports Mike Stoltman, supervisor of the STS program in Region I, encompassing 18 counties in northwestern Minnesota. "With budgets being cut everywhere, we're helping a lot of people make ends meet."

Since the program began, Minnesotans have benefited from more than nine million hours of offender labor. Much of the work done by STS crews, such as maintenance and snow removal, is behind the scenes. Higher-profile projects like natural disaster response have made a critical difference.



Washington County Historic Courthouse

**A worker from a Sentencing to Service crew hangs holiday lights for a fundraiser at the Washington County Historic Courthouse.**

#### To the rescue

"I don't know what we would have done without them," says Charleen Haugen, director of the Roseau County Historical Society. Two years ago when the region experienced severe flooding, STS crews helped with sandbagging.

*Working wonders continued on page 2*

## Working wonders *continued from page 1*

This spring when rivers again threatened to overrun their banks, Haugen called Frank Haubrick, the local crew chief. "He was at our door with a crew the very next morning," she recalls. "They moved things out of harm's way and then made bases for all our file cabinets to keep them off the floor."

**"With budgets being cut everywhere, we're helping a lot of people make ends meet."**

*Mike Stoltman  
Region I Supervisor  
Sentencing to Service*

Less urgent but equally appreciated was the work done by an STS crew for the Beltrami County Historical Society. "One of our properties, the Doud Cabin, needed a new roof," explains Wanda Hoyum, BCHS executive director. "Last summer descendants of homesteader Freeman Doud donated funds for cedar shakes.



*Otter Tail County Historical Society*

**STS crew chief Greg Peterson (right) joins his crew in tending the Otter Tail County Historical Society's heirloom garden.**

But with the cost of labor so high, we couldn't afford to have the shakes put on. As it happened, one of the STS crews had a skilled roofer so we got the job done at no cost."

Because crews change often, matching skills to the job at hand is a hit-or-miss proposition. But Chris Schuelke, director of the Otter Tail County Historical Society, also reports having good luck. "For a site improvement project, we got a crew with some experienced painters and skilled carpenters," he says. "We use STS crews three or four times a year, usually for seasonal work and other jobs that call for less-skilled labor. For example, they helped us clean up recently after our roof leaked, and they've tended our heirloom garden at the county museum for years."

A number of historical societies use STS crews for heavy jobs - cutting down trees or laying rock or moving large artifacts or assembling shelving - when able-bodied volunteers are scarce.

### **Collaboration made easy**

"I just call the jail whenever I need help and I usually get a crew within a week," says Schuelke about



*Beltrami County Historical Society*

**Reroofing the 1896 Doud Cabin in Beltrami County gave the STS crew a sense of pride, reports their crew chief. "This is something they can show their kids."**

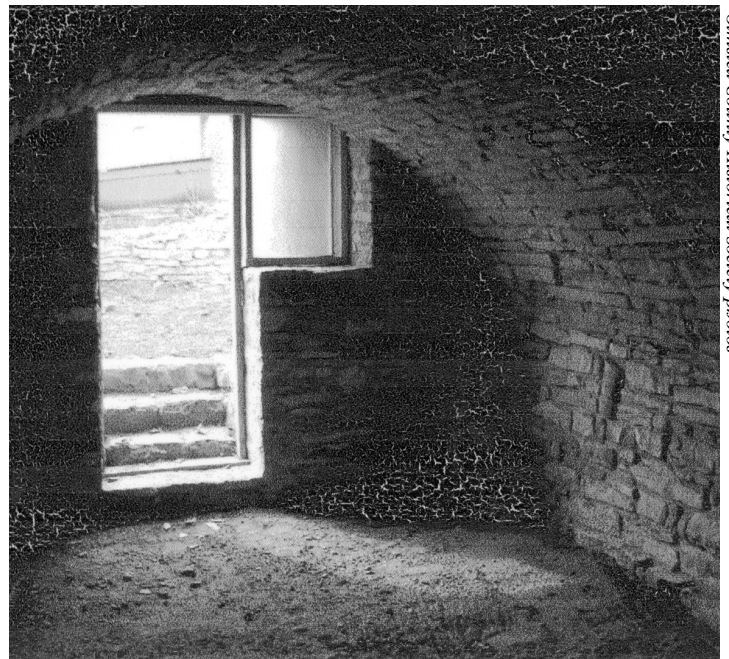
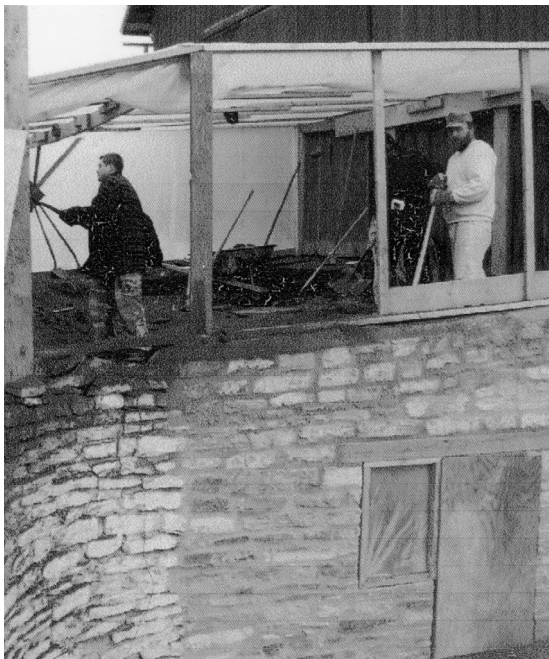
how he uses the program. Erin McMillan, executive director of the Becker County Historical Society, sometimes gets same-day service from her crew chief. In counties where demand for STS crews is high, the process for requesting a crew may be

more formal and the wait longer. On rare occasions when work is slow, crew chiefs may call around to see who needs something done.

**"Anyone who hasn't used STS doesn't know what they're missing."**

*Charleen Haugen  
Roseau County Historical Society*

Each time she schedules an STS crew, McMillan draws on her experience managing volunteers. "It's important to have the job laid out step by step, all necessary supplies on hand and a staff member assigned to the group," she says. "When the crew arrives in the morning, we give them an orientation about the job and about our museum - where to find the staff if they're needed, what's off limits, where the bathrooms are. On their lunch break, most of the workers spend time looking at our exhibits. One of the best things about the program is that it introduces our



*Olmsted County Historical Society photos*

**At the Olmsted County Historical Society's Stoppel Farm, masons restored a rock-dug cave like the one in which the Stoppel family spent their first winter on the site in 1856. A Sentencing to Service crew helped excavate the top of the cave, install a membrane and lay drain tiles. Right: the completed project.**

museum to a segment of the community that may not have been here before. Sometimes, after they finish their sentences, they come back with their families."

#### **Benefits for all**

As McMillan and others have discovered, the benefits of the STS program go beyond the value of the labor and the projects the crews complete. Minnesota's use of this restorative justice model has proven beneficial for everyone - county governments, communities, taxpaying citizens and, not least, participating offenders. The program not only enables them to reduce their sentences and fines but also gives them productive work, new skills and a more positive outlook.

For Roseau County's Charleen Haugen, who calls her local crew

chief "the best," the workers' job satisfaction is a key to the program's success. So she makes sure that she expresses her gratitude to them every time. "When the crew walks out the door at the end of a job, I shake hands with every one of them to let the guys know we appreciate them. Anyone who hasn't used STS doesn't know what they're missing."

Nearly every Minnesota county has a Sentencing to Service program. For more information, a map of the five STS regions and a project proposal form, go to the Department of Corrections web site, [www.doc.state.mn.us/STS\\_ProjectProposal/STS\\_PPMMap.htm](http://www.doc.state.mn.us/STS_ProjectProposal/STS_PPMMap.htm).

## New perspectives

### Two exhibits revisit Minnesota's Dakota communities

At the heart of the Goodhue County Historical Society's new exhibit, "Coming Home: The Prairie Island Indian Community," are relationships – the relationship of the Dakota people to their homeland, the troubled relations between cultures during the U.S.-Dakota War, and new relationships formed as the Dakota rebuilt their lives at Prairie Island.

The permanent exhibition, which opened in June, replaces one about the Dakota people that had been installed in 1993. "The old exhibit lacked a story line," says GCHS librarian/archivist Sharon Schroeder. "We decided to focus on a specific community, the Prairie Island Dakota, and tell the story

more from their viewpoint." Schroeder worked with an advisory board recruited from Prairie Island – three women, all educators, and a man who had worked extensively on his family history. "They helped with the exhibit planning, contributed lots of information, wrote some of the exhibit copy and reviewed everything the staff generated," she says.

What visitors to the exhibit will take away is a story of the resilience of a people. Removed from their thriving village along the Mississippi River by treaties and the ensuing war, the Dakota eventually began returning to the area near Red Wing. By 1890



From "Coming Home": A Prairie Island family attends a 1927 celebration in Frontenac.

there were 46 Dakota people living at Prairie Island. In the years that followed they rebuilt their lives, holding onto their cultural traditions and adopting new ones. "Coming Home" celebrates the community they built, complete with baseball games as well as powwows.

The exhibit opening drew a crowd from the Prairie Island Community. "We've made a good start at building new relationships," says Schroeder. "It was slow going at first – we initially didn't get much encouragement from Prairie Island. But that's often how it is with relationships – they take time to grow. Feedback since the exhibit opened has been very positive. One visitor said he wouldn't change a thing, then offered lots of great ideas for adding to it!"

For more information about the challenges and rewards of putting this exhibit together, call Schroeder at 651-388-6024 or e-mail [goodhuecountyhis@qwest.net](mailto:goodhuecountyhis@qwest.net).

### 'Cloudy Waters' opens at History Center

Minnesota Historical Society



At the center of "Cloudy Waters" is a 10-foot circular pool onto which images of Dakota people are projected.

Developed by award-winning Dakota video producer-director Mona Smith in collaboration with the Society's audio-visual team, the exhibit blends the techniques of performance art and theatrical staging. The result is an evocative environment centered on water, with ambient nature sounds woven together with the voices of Dakota people.

Last summer's Grand Excursion on the Mississippi River gave the Minnesota Historical Society pause to consider the effects of the 1854 excursion on the region's Dakota people. Viewed as progress by the country's business leaders and government officials, that event meant something quite different to those who stood in its path. "Cloudy Waters," a new exhibit at the History Center in St. Paul, looks at the relationship of the Dakota to the river, at once a source of cultural strength and a symbol of loss.

Developed by award-winning Dakota video producer-director Mona Smith in collaboration with the Society's audio-visual team, the exhibit blends the techniques of performance art and



## For the record

### Sherburne County society conducts first-ever collections inventory

With one eye on an eventual move to a new facility, the Sherburne County Historical Society in 2003 undertook its first-ever inventory of the 3,000 three-dimensional objects in its collection. A critical piece of the project would be photo documentation of the entire collection. Armed with a state grant-in-aid from the Minnesota Historical Society, SCHS staff set about equipping a small photographic studio at the historical society.

Lack of an inventory had long hampered research in the collection. Nor had there ever been a photographic record of the objects. Staff designed the documentation project to generate two kinds of images: archival black-and-white prints for the collections records (with one set kept offsite in the event of a disaster) and digital photos for a computerized collections management database (PastPerfect). To keep the project moving smoothly,

two cameras would be set up on separate tripods.

After researching equipment and film processing services, SCHS curator and project director

Sharon Clothier included several local vendors among those selected for the project. "I recommend using a local vendor who offers excellent service and help when you need it," she says. "In the end, it's a better value than a cheap price from a questionable vendor."

Part of the grant was set aside to hire a photographer. A professional matchmaker couldn't have found a more perfect match for the job than intern Jason Haug, a senior history major at St. Cloud State University planning to pursue a graduate degree in public history. "Hiring a reliable, hard-working intern was key to the project's success," reports Clothier. "He not only took all the artifact photos but also helped us fill in information gaps on our records and identify objects in need of conservation."

Clothier found other benefits along the way. "It was an excellent way to get to know the collection," she says. "It also gave



Sherburne County Historical Society photos

Intern Jason Haug photographs an artifact from the Sherburne County Historical Society collection. A state grant-in-aid funded his stipend as well as all the equipment used in the photo documentation project.

us an accurate count of objects and enabled us to update location information. We even found objects long listed as missing." Most important, the inventory and photographic record made possible better documentation of the collections and improved access through the searchable database. Now the Sherburne County Historical Society can better fulfill the stated aims of its collections management policy: to make collections available to the public for research purposes and through exhibitions and public programming.

There's one more bonus, says Clothier. "Having the equipment in place will let us continue to photograph objects as our collection grows."

For more information about this photo documentation project, call the Sherburne County Historical Society at 763-261-4433.



Curator Sharon Clothier checks the collections inventory in PastPerfect, complete with artifact photo.

## AASLH honors innovations in local history

### Eight Minnesota nominees garner awards

This fall the spotlight will shine on the North Star state as the American Association for State and Local History hands out its annual awards for achievement in local, state and regional history. Minnesota landed eight organizations and individuals on the list of 102 being honored for their outstanding contributions to the field – the state’s best showing in the award program’s 59-year history.

Certificates of Commendation go to the City of Anoka and the Anoka County Historical Society for

the Akin Riverside Park History Promenade, cited as an outstanding example of melding learning with outdoor recreation through the placement of historical markers on a public trail. The park is located at the junction of the Rum and Mississippi Rivers in downtown Anoka, a site important to the town’s growth and development. William Morgan of St. Cloud State University, who evaluated the project, praised it as a best-practice standard for others to follow. “Anyone who stops to read these

signs,” he said, “will walk away with a sense of the history that surrounds this restful place.”

Vickie Wendel of the Anoka County Historical Society, which was hired by the city to consult on the project, called the interpretive trail “an outstanding community effort.”

The planning committee, with representatives from the Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission, the Anoka Park Board and the county historical society, created an interpretive plan for the trails and boat landing that encompasses such themes as the history of recreation and the settlement of the county.

The Clay County Historical Society in Moorhead earned a Certificate of Commendation for its exhibit, “Eating Out in Clay County” (see the March 2003 Interpreter). This entertaining exhibit captured the experience of eating away from home – from school lunches and coffee breaks at work to restaurant meals and church basement potlucks. Among the themes explored were the fellowship of eating out, the evolution of the restaurant business and the popularity of community events centered on food.



An interpretive trail marker in Akin Riverside Park, Anoka County.

Visitors could stop in at the “History Café” in the exhibit gallery for food-themed games and activities. There they were invited to record their memories of favorite meals out. Comments revealed the changing tastes and experiences of visitors young and old. Neighboring Clearwater County Historical Society director Tamara Edevold recalled an unforgettable fine-dining adventure: “My husband once won a prize for selling the most merchandise in a week at OK Hardware. The prize was an elegant dinner at the Tree Top. I had duck à l’orange!”

For their groundbreaking fieldwork statewide in the realms of historic preservation and museum science, the Minnesota Historical Society’s historical architect, Charles W. Nelson, and retired field services coordinator, David Nystuen, have been recognized with AASLH Awards of Merit. Over the course of



From “Eating Out in Clay County”: Cooks and their student assistants at Moorhead’s Central Junior High serve librarian Robert Klaboe in 1971.

Moorhead Central Junior High School Photograph Collection

Minnesota Historical Society

three decades, the two shared their considerable expertise with an ever-expanding number of history partners – Nelson supplying technical assistance with the preservation of countless structures, and Nystuen imparting his knowledge of nonprofits, historical interpretation and museum best practices. “Because of their good work,” says Tim Glines, manager of outreach services at the Society, “Minnesota’s local history community has a tradition of excellence in programming, high public trust and esteem, and commitment to standards that are admired by colleagues across the country.”



Also earning an Award of Merit is the Sibley House Association of the Minnesota Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The DAR chapter, credited with opening the first public history site in the state, is being honored for pioneering historic preservation and historic site interpretation in Minnesota. The work of these remarkable women not only ensured the preservation of the home



DAR members gather at the Henry H. Sibley House in Dakota County, ca. 1917.

of Minnesota’s first governor but also established a professional level of historic site interpretation. After 93 years of tireless site administration, the Sibley House Association in January 2004 turned over all aspects of ownership to the care of the Minnesota Historical Society.



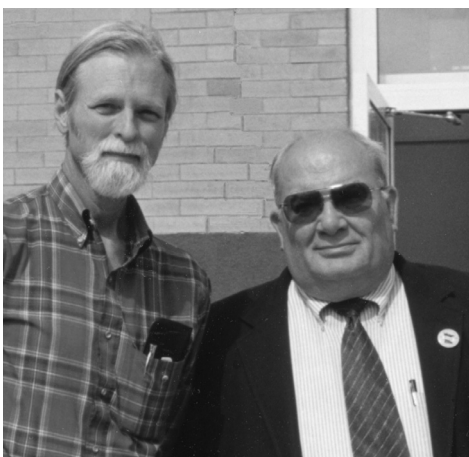
Several years ago the Minnesota Historical Society undertook preservation of one of the state’s National Historic Landmarks with an innovative strategy – building a museum within the ruins of the fire-ravaged Washburn A Mill. The resulting Mill City Museum, which tells the story of Minneapolis’s reign as the flour-milling capital of the world, has won an AASLH Award of Merit. At the center of this state-of-the-art history museum is the remarkable Flour Tower, a powerful combination of oral history, imagery and technology guaranteed to enthrall visitors of all ages.



The second edition of the Society’s Northern Lights history curriculum, like the first an Award of Merit

winner, is more than a revision (see the September-October 2003 Interpreter). It’s a fresh approach to the state’s history, with new interpretations and an array of teaching tools for different learning styles. Singled out as an exemplary history curriculum, the three components of Northern Lights (student edition, annotated teacher’s edition and classroom resources workbook) provide a complete package for teaching Minnesota history. Congratulations to all!

*The AASLH awards program, initiated in 1945, encourages standards of excellence in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. Awards of merit are presented for performance deemed excellent compared nationally with similar activities. Certificates of commendation recognize excellence within the context of available means and regional standards. The awards program is intended not only to honor significant achievement in the field but also to bring public recognition to the contributions made by history organizations large and small. For more information, go to [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org) or contact David Grabitske, AASLH Awards state chair, at 651-297-4416 or e-mail [david.grabitske@mnhs.org](mailto:david.grabitske@mnhs.org).*



Charles Nelson (left) and David Nystuen at the Sauk Centre Area Historical Society, 1998.



# BULLETIN BOARD

## 2005 field workshops set

Mark your calendars now for a 2005 MHS field workshop:

- March 18* South St. Paul,  
Dakota County
- April 8* Winona,  
Winona County
- April 22* Willmar,  
Kandiyohi County
- May 6* Two Harbors,  
Lake County
- May 20* Site to be announced,  
northwestern Minnesota

The workshop theme is "Milestones," with sessions addressing such topics as the role of historical organizations in community festivals, commemoration of controversial historical events, and recording your organization's own milestones.

Watch for more information in the

January-February 2005 Interpreter. Meanwhile, address questions to Tim Glines, manager of outreach services, at 651-296-5460 or

timothy.glines@mnhs.org, or David Grabitske, field programs assistant, at 651-297-4416 or david.grabitske@mnhs.org.

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## Dates to remember

*Sept. 23-24*

### **25th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference, St. Cloud.**

Register before Sept. 9. For details, call 651-296-5434 or e-mail mnshpo@mnhs.org.

*Dec. 1*

### **Application deadline for MAP and CAP grants.**

The Museum Assessment Program (MAP) awards grants on a first-come, first-served basis for assessments in four areas - operations, collections management, governance and public

aspects. For a grant packet, call 202-289-9118, e-mail map@aam-us.org or go to [www.aam-us.org/programs/map/map.cfm](http://www.aam-us.org/programs/map/map.cfm).

The Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) funds an on-site survey of a museum's collections, environmental conditions and sites. The resulting report can serve as the basis for a long-range conservation plan. Applications for 2005 will be available Oct. 8. For more information go to [www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/CAPAPPPG.HTM](http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/CAPAPPPG.HTM).

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