



# THE MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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## Mural of Early 1900s Landscape in Downtown Montgomery

In 1997, owner Bob Sawyers decided that a mural was the best way to revive a deteriorating graffiti-covered soft-brick wall of the 1905 Kaisershott Building on South First Street in Montgomery, Le Sueur County. He contacted the staff of Mobilize Montgomery, Inc., who then contacted Victor Arthur Garcia, owner of a sign-painting business in Montgomery. Garcia agreed to paint a historic mural on the 10-by-40-foot wall and an 8-by-10-foot side panel. The mural was begun in February 1997 and completed in July 2000.

Garcia based his mural on a photograph of Montgomery's Main Street taken in the early 1900s, which depicts life on Main Street around the turn of the last century. It is on the south wall of the Kaisershott Building, the building located at the left end of the mural, so viewers can readily identify changes that have taken place along the street. The mural was painted on MDO board and then mounted on the wall. Garcia, originally from St. Paul's West Side, credits two teachers, Phyllis Anderson and Bara Arens, with developing his interest in painting.

The project had several purposes. It made a statement of continued community support for local artists, heightened awareness of the community's



Courtesy Mobilize Montgomery, Inc.

history and its commitment to historic preservation, and to protect a beautiful historic building. The Arts & Heritage Center of Montgomery, Mobilize Montgomery, Montgomery Area Community Club, Sawyer and Sawyer Properties, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota State Arts Board sponsored the project.

For further information, contact Troy Domine or Renee Southworth at Mobilize Montgomery, Inc., 206 First St. S., Montgomery, MN 56069, or call 507/364-5577.

  
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*Right: Detail section from the Montgomery mural, showing a group of people standing near the center of the mural, below.*



Courtesy Mobilize Montgomery, Inc.



## Daedalus Devotes Entire Issue to Minnesota

Readers may remember the famous Aug. 13, 1973, issue of Time magazine: On the cover were the words “The Good Life in Minnesota” and a picture of smiling Gov. Wendell Anderson in angler’s gear holding a large fish. The Summer 2000 issue of *Daedalus*, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, is also about Minnesota, though with a different approach and without photographs. The title of the issue is “Minnesota: A Different America?”

*Daedalus*, the prestigious quarterly journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, can be counted among the more thoughtful and influential journals of opinion now being published. Among topics treated in recent issues were “Brazil” (Spring 2000), “America’s Museums” (Summer 1999), “The Brain” (Spring 1998), and “The Quest for World Order” (Summer 1995). In a list of topics such as these, it is natural to ask, Why should *Daedalus*, for the first time, devote an issue to a particular state?

### Why Minnesota?

In answering the question in his preface, editor Stephen R. Graubard said that he had learned that many Europeans were distressed with “what they perceived to be a growing distance between Europe and the United States.” They also knew that most of what their own media told them of this country was limited to events in Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles, and they wondered about the areas passed over by such coverage.

They knew that there had been “homogenization” among regions in their own countries, but they could still tell the difference among the regions; they wondered “whether all regional differences in the United States had in fact disappeared.” If there were still differences, it would be useful to draw attention to them.

Graubard’s sources confessed to particular ignorance about the home states of two recent U.S. presidents and two recent vice presidents, Texas and Minnesota. Soon the idea took shape to do “two *Daedalus* studies of the two states at either end of the north-south highway Interstate 3. While support for the Minnesota project quickly developed in Minnesota, there was no comparable support for a study of Texas, although one friend of the Journal was

more than ready to help with funds from his own private foundation. The publication of this issue on Minnesota may stimulate interest in such a possibility, in Texas and even elsewhere.”

### Contents of the issue

A listing of a few of the 17 authors (most of whom hold academic positions) and their topics will serve as an introduction to the range of topics. Rhoda Gilman, research associate at the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) and author of the MHS Press textbook *Northern Lights*, begins the issue with “The History and Peopling of Minnesota: Its Culture.” Annette Atkins, professor of history at St. Johns University/ College of St. Benedict and a member of the MHS executive council, contributed “Facing Minnesota,” an essay about Minnesotans of strong character. Thomas Peacock and Donald Day, assistant professors of

education at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, wrote “Nations within a Nation: The Dakota and Ojibwe of Minnesota.”

Virginia Gray, professor of political science at the University of Minnesota and Wyman Spano, consultant and publisher of *Politics in Minnesota*, contributed “The Irresistible Force Meets the Immovable Object: Minnesota’s Moralistic Political Culture Confronts Jesse Ventura.” Michael O’Keefe, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, wrote “Social

*“Winter, however, turned to spring and, half an hour later, to summer. Finally, I got it.”*

Joe Dowling,  
Artistic Director,  
Guthrie Theatre,  
*Daedalus*,  
Summer 2000

Services: Minnesota as Innovator.” Joe Dowling, artistic director of the Guthrie Theater, contributed the essay “Theater and the Arts: A Personal Reflection,” in which he writes of his seasonal, cultural and social experiences.

*Daedalus* costs \$7.95/copy, and is available at many bookstores or from *Daedalus*, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, MA 02138; 617/491-2600; fax 617/576-5088. For more information, visit its web site, [www.amacad.org](http://www.amacad.org).





## Aitkin Museum Hosts Ojibwe Art Exhibit

by Cherie Holm, Treasurer, Jaques Art Center

More than 200 people attended the festive opening of the exhibit *Our Mother Earth: A Tribute to Ojibwe Art* at the Jaques Art Center in Aitkin on Aug. 4. The exhibit, which features a retrospective view of George Morrison's artistic career and the work of Karen Savage-Blue, Patrick DesJarlait, Carl Gawboy, Cynthia Holmz and Steve Premo, is scheduled to run until Sept. 18.

Professional advisors from the Minnesota Historical Society and the Tweed Museum at the University of Minnesota-Duluth assisted in mounting

the exhibit, and Wendy Savage of Fond du Lac provided the volunteer curators with professional assistance.

The Jaques Art Center, which has occupied the 1911 Carnegie Building in Aitkin since 1995, presents art exhibits, workshops and lectures, and serves as a showplace for the art of Francis Lee Jaques and Florence Page Jaques. The art center's fund to upgrade the building to ADA standards has grown to near \$40,000 and is projected to reach its goal by 2002.

## New Statement of Vision for Institute for Minnesota Archaeology

Rhoda Gilman, chair of the board of directors of the Institute for Minnesota Archaeology (IMA), continued her discussion of the Institute's long-range plan in the July 2000 issue of its newsletter. The plan includes a statement of a new vision for the future of the IMA, which is: "To awaken citizens of the Upper Midwest to the importance of the human

and environmental stories that are inscribed in the earth around them; to bring together in a spirit of respect and cooperation the divided groups that have a stake in knowing the past through archaeology; and to lead the region into an era of sustained research, awareness of its diverse heritage, and stewardship of its threatened resources."

Gilman emphasized the difficulties now facing archaeology in Minnesota, including the decline of sponsorship by educational and non-profit organizations, and the piecemeal nature of the archaeological research that is undertaken in compliance with preservation laws. One of the challenges facing IMA, she says, is to "provide an interface between local communities and the archaeological profession." Another is to make local agencies and preservation groups more aware of cultural resources outside of archives and buildings; these resources, which lie right at their feet, have great potential for "education, tourism and understanding the future as well as the past."

For more information, contact IMA, 287 E. 6th St., Suite 260, St. Paul, MN 55101; call 651/848-0095; e-mail, [ima@imnarch.org](mailto:ima@imnarch.org); or visit its Web site, [www.imnarch.org](http://www.imnarch.org).



The Institute for  
Minnesota  
Archaeology

## Goodhue County Historical Society Seeks Librarian/Archivist

The Goodhue County Historical Society (GCHS) in Red Wing is seeking a new librarian/archivist to be responsible for the GCHS library and archival holdings. Experience in designing World Wide Web sites and newsletters is a very desirable qualification. For information and an application, call GCHS at 651/388-6024. GCHS is an EOE employer. E-mail: [mail@goodhistory.org](mailto:mail@goodhistory.org); Web site: [www.goodhistory.org](http://www.goodhistory.org).



### New Voluntary Program for Museum Assessment

The American Association of Museums (AAM) has announced a new museum assessment program on governance. The program will help a museum's leadership and governing body examine the museum's structure, roles and responsibilities. AAM is seeking funding to underwrite all costs of participation by museums. The museums that serve as pilot sites will complete a self-study, receive a visit by peer reviewers, collaborate on an assessment report, and participate in evaluation meetings. The pilot program will be held between December 2000 and June 2001.

For more information, contact Beth Merritt, Assistant Director, Museum Assessment Program, at 202/218-7661, or by e-mail at [bmerritt@aam-us.org](mailto:bmerritt@aam-us.org).

### 'Dakota Series 2000' Lectures in September

"The Métis in Minnesota," a series of evening lectures and panel discussions about the French-Indian culture of the Upper Midwest in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, continues through September. The programs will be held in the house built by Hypolite Dupuis, a French-Canadian fur trade clerk who married a Métis woman, which is part of the Sibley House Historic Site, 1357 Sibley Memorial Highway (State Highway 13), in Mendota.

"Becoming a Part of Minnesota: Territory to Statehood and Beyond" is the subject of a panel discussion on Tuesday, Sept. 19. The panel members are John Schade, genealogist and former enrollment officer for the Prairie Island Sioux Community; Helen White, editor and publisher of the Taylors Falls *Dalles Visitor* who has done extensive research on the Fort Snelling area; and Dr. Laura Peers,

a specialist in Canadian ethnographic history, visiting Minnesota from the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University.

The topic of a panel discussion on Tuesday, Sept. 26 is "Being Mixed-race: 19th Century Mendota-area Case Studies." Panelists are Alan Woolworth, former senior research historian at the Minnesota Historical Society; Richard Williams, fur trade historian at Historic Fort Snelling; and David Grabitske, interpreter at the Sibley House Historic Site.

The series is supported by funds from the Minnesota Humanities Commission in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Minnesota State Legislature. Seating is limited to 60 people; make reservations by calling 651/452-1596.

### Minnesota Music Exhibit to Open at Minnesota History Center in October

Covering 6,200 square feet, the exhibit *Sounds Good to Me: Music in Minnesota* is perhaps the most ambitious exhibit ever produced by the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) at the Minnesota History Center. The exhibit opens to the public on Sunday, Oct. 22. The opening will be accompanied by a festival featuring music and dance performances throughout the History Center.

The exhibit is not just about Minnesota's musical superstars nor, as exhibit curator Benjamin Filene says, is it a "textbook-like march through time. We're telling stories that visitors can use to make connections between the past and their own lives, their own relationship to music." To accomplish this, the exhibit team considered many formats but finally decided to use a streetscape. This allows the exhibit to present many of the settings in which music is produced and enjoyed: a home parlor, a ballroom, a high school bandroom, a concert hall, a deejay booth, a tent and an instrument store.

For more information, call 651/296-6126, 1-800-657-3773, or TTY 651/282-6073, or visit the MHS web site, [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org).





## Preserving Your Heirlooms: Conservation Workshops

From Luverne to International Falls, Moorhead to Rochester, people have brought their heirlooms – or things they hope to save for their own heirs – to workshops that are part of a new outreach program of the Minnesota Historical Society’s Conservation Department.

Chief conservator Bob Herskovitz has held more than two dozen workshops around Minnesota this year and plans numerous others, with most co-sponsored by local historical organizations. Herskovitz offers advice on how to preserve a variety of materials for generations to come. The items people bring in come in all sizes, ranging from small – Bibles, military medals and pictures, for example – to large, such as a wooden settee, quilts and wedding gowns.

Herskovitz not only tells the item’s owner how to care for and preserve the object, he uses it as an example for the audience to learn how to preserve their own similar materials. He also offers general tips on how to properly care for paper, photographs, textiles, metal and wood. No monetary appraisals are given.

The programs are presented as part of the Society’s Conservation Outreach Program. Recent workshops have taken place in Windom, Luverne, Redwood

Falls, International Falls and Baudette. The programs planned for the end of September include a workshop in Bagley on Sept. 17, one in Walker on Sept. 20, and two programs in Moorhead on Sept. 21 and 22. Wadena County Historical Society is the co-sponsor of the Sept. 20 program. The Sept. 21 co-sponsors are the Clay County Historical Society and Moorhead Community Education. On Sept. 22, the program also is co-sponsored by Senior Connections of Moorhead. On Oct. 24, the workshop moves to Benson with local co-sponsor the Swift County Historical Society. On Nov. 13, Herskovitz will be in Worthington for a program co-sponsored by the Nobles County Historical Society.

Land O’Lakes Foundation and the George W. Neilson Foundation have helped underwrite some of the workshops. For information about future plans or to discuss a co-sponsorship, call 651/297-1867 or 1-800-657-3773. The e-mail address is [conservationhelp@mnhs.org](mailto:conservationhelp@mnhs.org). Online, visit [www.mnhs.org/preserve/treasures/workshops.html](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/treasures/workshops.html).



### The IRS on ‘Political Activities’ and Non-profit Organizations

According to AVISO, the newsletter of the American Association of Museums (AAM), the Internal Revenue Service again issued a notice concerning election-year activities by non-profit organizations. Participation in or intervening in political campaigns of candidates for public office, or “electioneering,” is forbidden, and violation “could result in the loss of tax-exempt status or an excise tax on the cost of the prohibited activity.” AVISO says this should not be confused with “lobbying or issue advocacy that such organizations, including museums, have a right to do.” For more information, visit the AAM Web site, [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).



## Group Tourism and Museums: Different Rules

Katherine Khalife, a former tour group organizer, discussed the two sides of the question of the value of tour groups in the Spring 2000 issue of *History News*, the magazine of the American Association of State and Local History. From her experience, she believes that staff members at many museums and historic sites have mixed feelings about tour group visitors. On one hand, visitors in groups “expect to get in at a reduced rate, demand special treatment, don’t show up on time, and cancel all the time.” On the other hand, group tours “increase visitation, provide greater visibility and bring in revenue.”

Though “not all trips to historical institutions were unpleasant,” Khalife states, many encounters left her feeling her bookings were not appreciated. For example, she recalls withering glances, unmarked passenger drop-off areas that confused drivers, elderly clients left waiting while staff made sure the escort wasn’t trying to cheat them, and a general climate of suspicion. She often found that she encountered the most difficulty with museums and historic sites.

### *Like ships passing in the night*

Then, after working for a while with museums and historic sites, Khalife discovered that the problem arose because they were, she says, “simply applying museum-world standards to an industry that operates by different rules.” For example, museum and sites staffs become irate over tour cancellations. But so do tour organizers, a fact easily overlooked by staff at the site being visited. Khalife points out that deposits are not successful deterrents, because cancellations, which can be as high as 50 percent, are simply “a fact of life in the tour industry.”

Site staffs are also irritated when a group says that it must complete its tour in a too-short period of time, say less than an hour. However, there are special issues in group tourism sometimes make longer visits simply impossible; these include competition with other tours and mixed interests among the group’s members. Perhaps the basic reason, she says, is that “group tours have always been considered overview experiences. Unfortunately, that’s all a lot of consumers want or expect them to be.”

### *Tips toward “group friendly” practices*

Khalife offers ten suggestions for making a site more “group-friendly,” which are summarized below.

1. Prepare for the unexpected with flexible policies concerning delays.
2. Develop special packages for group tours, such as behind-the-scenes visits or demonstrations that are not available to the general public.
3. Admit drivers and escorts without charge.
4. Set group minimums at reasonable sizes, as low as 10 or 12.
5. Make sure someone can answer the three basic questions from tour organizers: price, availability and length of tour.
6. State the rules in a pleasant and positive way.
7. Provide detailed, clear information for bus drivers.
8. Listen to visitors; a comment from one is probably one that others also would like to make.
9. Give the visitors something that will help them remember you. For example, consider small packages with practical items such as a greeting card or locally made food.
10. Remember that visitors are fascinated by staff members, especially tour guides.

Khalife can be reached at 13 Cambridge Village, Lancaster, PA 17602-1155; 717/290-1616; or by e-mail, [kkhalife@aol.com](mailto:kkhalife@aol.com).





## Stearns History Museum Web Curriculum Project Wins AASLH Award

The Stearns History Museum (SHM) has received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) for the museum's web-based local history curriculum,

"Community Quest." The award, to be presented at the AASLH annual meeting on Sept. 22, represents "excellence within the context of available means and regional standards."

The SHM saw the "Community Quest" as a natural outgrowth of its mission, but it was also

undertaken in response to appeals by social studies teachers to provide resources for teaching their students about local history in ways consistent with Minnesota's new graduation standards. It was decided at the outset of the project to design the project for the Internet, in order to enable rural schools with

limited resources to have access to county historical materials and to give their students access to research tools. Most Minnesota schools are now online, so having the project on the Internet also would provide a practical way for all students with access to computers to learn to use the Internet.

"Community Quest" is presented in three units. Unit one focuses on environment, people and places; unit two on community formation, including culture, settlement and diversity; and unit three on changes in the community. The data is based on the history of Stearns County, but the model of the processes can be adapted for other schools and communities.

For more information, contact SHM at 320/253-8424, e-mail [info@stearns-museum.org](mailto:info@stearns-museum.org), or visit its Web site, [www.stearns-museum.org](http://www.stearns-museum.org). Also, see the article about "Community Quest" in the December 1998 issue of the *Interpreter*, available under "Publications" on the Minnesota Historical Society web site at [www.mnhs.org/about](http://www.mnhs.org/about).



## Mark Your Calendars: American Swedish Institute Holiday Programs

The Christmas season at the American Swedish Institute (ASI) will open with the sound of a *nåverlur* (birch bark horn) announcing Christmas fairs on two Saturdays, Nov. 4 and 18. On Nov. 4 the Museum Christmas Shop will open, and the Nov. 18 fair features a Swedish *bageri* (bakery).

The annual exhibit *Christmas in Scandinavia* opens Friday, Nov. 24, 2000, and continues through Jan. 14, 2001. The exhibit features decorated trees and table settings from each of the Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The exhibit *Illumination of a Saint: The Legend of Santa Lucia* opens on Friday, Nov. 24, 2000 and continues through Jan. 14, 2001. Photographs and story panels tell about the legends of the historic Lucia, a Fourth-century Christian martyr, and how the holiday is celebrated today. Lucia Day initiates the Christmas season in Sweden on Dec. 13.

The fairs and exhibits are included in museum admission: \$4 adults, \$3 senior citizens and \$2 ages 6-12. For hours of operation and other information, including how to obtain slides of the Santa Lucia exhibit, call 612/871-4907, or visit the Institute's web site at [www.americanswedishinst.org](http://www.americanswedishinst.org). The ASI is located at 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55407.



## Association of Midwest Museums Conference

To some people, the theme of this year's Association of Midwest Museum's (AMM) conference, "Branding Museums: Creating Identity," might suggest ranch work in the Southwest. For the program planners in Columbus, Ohio, it refers to the process of giving a museum a particular kind of recognition factor in its community, a "brand name." The conference will be held in Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 4-7.

John Pepper, chairman of the Executive Committee of the board of Procter & Gamble, will be the keynote speaker on Thursday morning, Oct. 5.

Conference sessions and action labs will focus on various inter-related aspects of marketing, fund-raising, management and exhibit content of museums. Registration for AMM members is \$180 and \$215 for non-members. There are varying fees for separate portions of the conference program. For information about membership and the conference, call 314/454-3110, e-mail: mmcdirect2@aol.com, or visit the AMM web site, [www.midwestmuseums.org](http://www.midwestmuseums.org).



## NEH Local History Project Receives National Award

My History Is America's History, a guidebook produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), recently was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Association of Educational Publishers.

The book, part of an NEH initiative in partnership with the White House Millennium Council and several other national cultural organizations including Heritage Preservation, provides information about gathering and preserving family stories, heirlooms and artifacts. The July/August 2000 issue of *Humanities*, the NEH magazine, states that "the project was designed to emphasize the connection between personal and national history."

For more information, instructions on ordering the guidebook or to download it, visit the guidebook's web site, [www.myhistory.org](http://www.myhistory.org). Also see the article in the February 2000 issue of the *Interpreter*, available online under "Publications" at [www.mnhs.org/about](http://www.mnhs.org/about).

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Readers are invited to submit information for publication. To be considered, items must reach the editor by the 18th of the month, two months before publication (example: the deadline for the October issue is August 18). Send to: **Interpreter** Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; 651/222-7384 or [jpcsmh@uswest.net](mailto:jpcsmh@uswest.net).

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