



ST. LOUIS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2021/2022, 2023

"The Society is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, educational, literary, and scientific purposes. The general nature and purpose of the Society shall be the collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history and prehistory of St. Louis County and the State of Minnesota. In addition to collection and preserving objects of material culture and historical research material, the Society shall maintain and operate a museum, through agreement with St. Louis County."

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Statement from the Executive Director

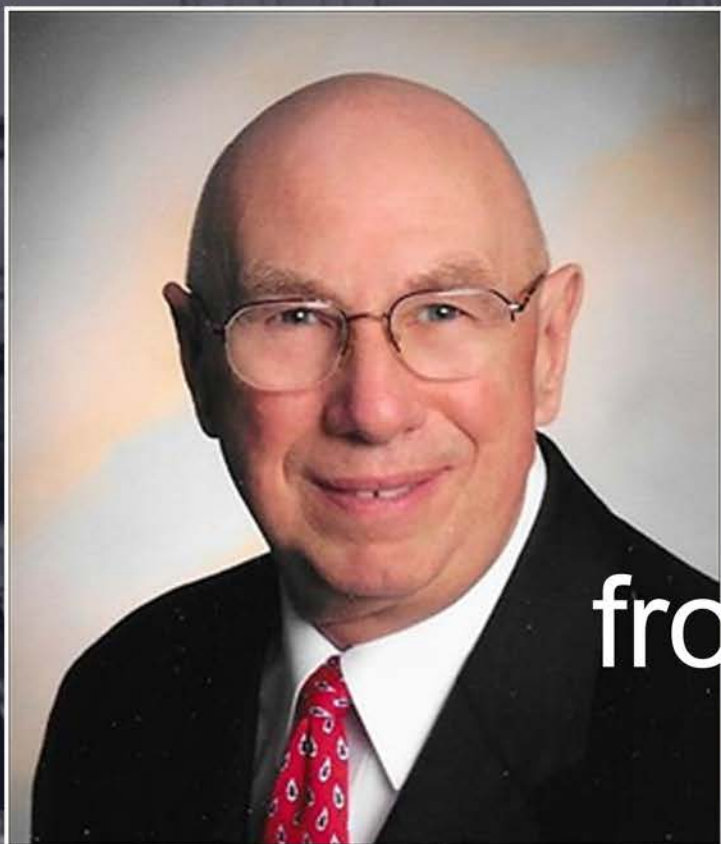


When I was younger, I disliked history. Shocking to hear, perhaps, but important for me to admit. I had a hard time grasping the importance of the subject compared to other core fields. There are many events that helped remedy this, but one in particular stands out in my mind.

Following the passing of my grandfather during my junior year, my parents and I had a lot of materials to go through that had collected over his lifetime. As I turned a photograph over, I discovered that my grandfather had been twenty-one when it was taken, the same age I was at the time. Until then, I had not given much thought to the idea that my grandpa had once been my age and experienced a lifetime of personal history; personal history that I would never learn from the source. How had he felt about the numerous technologies that had been invented in his life, or the world-shaking events that had occurred? How had he felt about the events that may have only been reported in the local paper, but were no less important to him? Just who had Harry Jensen been beyond a grandfather?

These types of connections are what I want to help the Society continue to foster. Connections to personal and local history, along with the opportunity to share these experiences so we all continue to grow. To me, history isn't just about the names that shook the world, but the names that we personally connect. Sometimes, the most important history in our lives isn't found in an encyclopedia, but a family photo album.

I am incredibly thankful for my staff and volunteers who take the time out of their lives to ensure that history is engaging and relevant to all of our guests. I also extend my thanks to St. Louis County and the Society's Board of Governors, for providing their support to make these opportunities for connection a reality. And of course thank you to our members and guests, who make these endeavors worthwhile. Nicholas Jensen



Statement from the Board President

My appreciation for the value of studying history began when I entered the Minnesota Military Academy as an Officer Candidate. It quickly became clear to me that by studying military biographies, bibliographies and military operations at all levels that I could gain insight, awareness and knowledge that would take me years to experience. This realization was the catalyst that began my passion for studying history.

The study of history and the application of lessons and learning from the past can and should help us to make better decisions for current issues.

The work carried out by the St. Louis County Historical Society to "Collect, Preserve, and Disseminate Knowledge" is critical if we are to have artifacts and archives available for viewing, research and education for future generations. This information establishes facts and creates understanding that help us reach new and better conclusions to help resolve future issues.

Due to Covid and its aftermath, the past three years have been extremely disruptive for all organizations including the Society. We have had the added burden of staff turnover and the retirement of our long serving Executive Director. We have hired a new Executive Director and are in the process of an assessment of the Society coupled with a Strategic Planning component. We have two major exhibit projects, "A County Built on Iron" and a state-of-the-art upgrade to "Medal of Honor Row". Both are on hold awaiting the HVAC project planned for the Depot.

With your commitment and support the Society will continue to be one of the best Historical Societies in the State of Minnesota. Brig Gen (Bvt) Ron L. Hein

Board of Governors

Board of Governors 2021-2022

- Neill Atkins
- Michele Hakala-Beeksma (President)
- Amanda Bauer
- Leone Graf
- Ronald Hein (Vice President)
- Karen Keenan
- Sammy Maida
- John Marshall (Secretary)
- Lawrence Sommer
- Marc Stam
- Daniel Streu (Treasurer)
- Beth Olson (St. Louis County Commissioner Representative)
- Michael Jugovich (St. Louis County Commissioner Alternate)

Board of Governors 2022-2023

- Daniel Streu (President/Treasurer)
- Amanda Goodman (Vice President)
- John Marshall (Secretary)
- Alan Anderson
- Leone Graf
- Karen Keenan
- Sammy Maida
- Steven Matthews
- Thomas Peacock
- Adam Soderlind
- Lawrence Sommer
- Jeffrey Wencil
- Ronald Hein (President Emeritus)
- Ashley Grimm (St. Louis County Commissioner Representative)
- Paul McDonald (St. Louis County Commissioner Alternate)

Board of Governors 2023-2024

- Daniel Streu (President/Treasurer, term officially ended in May)
- John Marshall (Secretary, term officially ended in 2023)
- Ronald Hein (President Emeritus, term began in May)
- Jeffrey Wencil (Vice-President)
- Steven Matthews (Secretary, term officially began in 2023)
- Alan Anderson (resigned)
- Leone Graf
- Karen Keenan
- Michele Hakala-Beeksma
- Brandon Hartung
- Lawrence Sommer
- Tim McLoughlin
- Linda Nervick
- Ashley Grimm (St. Louis County Commissioner Representative)
- Paul McDonald (St. Louis County Commissioner Alternate)
- Annie Harala (St. Louis County Commissioner Representative)

* Affiliate representatives are also members of the Board of Governors, and can be found on pg. 10

Acc. No. Description of Article

Date Recd. DATE ACK

Museum Card

Donor Card

Name & Address of Donor

Veterans Memorial Hall Advisory Committee

2021-2023

- John W. Marshall (Chair)
- Dennis Hughes (Former Chair)
- Donna Bergstrom
- Ronald L. Hein
- Warren High (Emeritus)
- Charles Koenig
- Andrew Meyer
- Scott E. Markle
- Tim McLoughlin
- Robert Thompson
- Daniel P. Streu
- Tedd Ells
- John S. Werner

2023-2024

- John W. Marshall (Chair)
- Andrew Meyer (Vice Chair)
- Donna Bergstrom
- Ronald L. Hein
- Charles Koenig
- Dennis Hughes
- Scott E. Markle
- Daniel P. Streu
- Tedd Ells/Nadine Wells, Veterans Service Officer
- Robert Thompson

American Indian Advisory Committee 2021-2024

- Vernon Zacher (Chair), Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe
- Michele Hakala-Beeksma, At Large Representative
- Michael Gillespie, At Large Representative
- Jaylen Strong, Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe
- Marie Spry, Grand Portage Band of Ojibwe

SLCHS Financials

2021

SUPPORT/REVENUE

	General Operations	Museum Operations	County Project Grant	Veterans Memorial Hall	American Indian	Fesler Gallery	Erie & Mining History	Totals
St. Louis County Allocation	345,464	29,665		138,450	19,771			533,350
Contributions, Scholarship Funds, & Depot United	23,652	2,331		12,011	3,665		4,352	46,011
Grants: Depot Foundation, MHS, LKJ & Other	12,000	102,242		3,000				117,242
Fundraiser: Remembrance Dinner				9,510				9,510
Membership Dues	7,953							7,953
Erie Books & Prints Sales & Antique Appraisal Funds	492			276			10,022	10,790
Interest Income & Misc. Revenue	1,053	12		4				1,069
Total Income	390,614	134,250	0	163,251	23,436	0	14,374	725,925

EXPENSES

Payroll Expenses	158,931	143,637		98,154	21,941			422,663
Program/Fundraising	505			11,036	6,762		2,250	20,553
IT, Equipment, Internet, Website, Phones	13,887	6,143		9,275	538		698	30,541
Office Supplies, Postage, Dues & Subscriptions	6,573	1,091		1,685	317		873	10,539
Staff Expenses & Training	1,902	784		177			486	3,349
Audit, 990 & Accounting Services	14,315			6,135				20,450
Office & Exhibit Cleaning	4,218			1,418				5,636
Oral History & Mining Exhibit Professional Services	618	1,990		926			4,173	7,707
Legal Services	10,584	10,766		2,232				23,582
St. Louis County Depot Rent	12,030			5,470				17,500
Maintenance of Artifacts/Exhibits & Insurance	2,732	17,366		5,495	1,454		50,000	77,047
Interest Expense, Newsletter & Misc. Expenses	10,543	1,421		1,945			348	14,257
Six Iron Range Affiliates Distributions	85,115							85,115
Total Operating Expenses	321,953	183,198	0	143,948	31,012	0	58,828	738,939

2022

SUPPORT/REVENUE

	General Operations	Museum Operations	County Project Grant	Veterans Memorial Hall	American Indian	Fesler Gallery	Erie & Mining History	Totals
St. Louis County Allocation	358,864		99,000	88,133				545,998
Contributions, Scholarship Funds, & Depot United	23,333	5,237		13,781	2,200		1,135	45,687
Grants: Depot Foundation, MHS & Cleveland Cliffs	3,703	44,982					10,000	58,685
Fundraisers: Cold War & Remembrance Dinners				11,889				11,889
Membership Dues	8,180						700	8,880
Erie Books & Prints Sales & Antique Appraisal Funds	478			991			4,506	5,975
Interest Income & Misc. Revenue	86	35		1,500				1,621
Total Income	394,644	50,254	99,000	116,295	2,200	0	16,341	678,735

EXPENSES

Payroll Expenses	164,196	60,317	64,114	84,146	162			372,934
Program/Fundraising	6,002	5		4,581	2,065		3,676	16,329
IT, Equipment, Internet, Website, Phones	15,855	4,944		6,409	641		123	27,970
Office Supplies, Postage, Dues & Subscriptions	4,228	986		1,290	55		525	7,084
Staff Expenses & Training	3,855	577		414			46	4,892
Audit, 990 & Accounting Services	14,333			7,243				21,576
Office & Exhibit Cleaning	4,515			2,108				6,623
Oral History, Centennial & Professional Services	20,296			4,076			950	25,322
Legal Services	6,553	2,672						9,225
St. Louis County Depot Rent	11,555			4,776				16,331
Maintenance of Artifacts/Exhibits & Insurance	3,340	58,854		10,999	649	30		73,872
Interest Expense, Newsletter & Misc. Expenses	5,383	548	127	5,193			200	11,450

SLCHS Financials (cont.)

Six Iron Range Affiliates Distributions	100,116							100,116
Total Operating Expenses	360,227	128,903	64,240	131,235	3,571	30	5,520	693,734

2023

SUPPORT/REVENUE

	General Operations	Museum Operations	County Project Grant	Veterans Memorial Hall	American Indian	Fesler Gallery	Erie & Mining History	Totals
St. Louis County Allocation	395,665		99,000	101,333				595,998
Contributions, Scholarship Funds, & Depot United	5,246			23,451	2,446			31,143
Grants: DSACF & Depot Foundation	2,003			3,500				5,503
Fundraiser: Remembrance Dinner				12,422				12,422
Membership Dues	13,596							13,596
Erie Books & Prints Sales & Antique Appraisal Funds	1,238			228			3,763	5,229
Interest Income & Misc. Revenue	85			2,506				2,591
Total Income	417,833	0	99,000	143,440	2,446	0	3,763	666,482

EXPENSES

Payroll Expenses	160,488	9,949	76,240	53,732				300,409
Program/Fundraising	2,885		3,217	5,941	1,523		1,499	15,065
IT, Equipment, Internet, Website, Phones	15,606	4,674	2,172	4,285				26,737
Office Supplies, Postage, Dues & Subscriptions	5,381	712		1,464	46		321	7,923
Staff Expenses & Training	1,187	276	172	624	1		88	2,348
Audit, 990 & Accounting Services	16,982			7,278				24,260
Office & Exhibit Cleaning	5,460			2,340				7,800
Centennial Book & Other Professional Services	7,798		403					8,200
Legal Services	7,622			1,516				9,139
St. Louis County Depot Rent	42,670			18,287				60,957
Maintenance of Artifacts/Exhibits & Insurance	2,788	9,398	35,258	12,400	37		1,710	61,591
Interest Expense, Newsletter & Misc. Expenses	6,782	18	95	2,100				8,995
Six Iron Range Affiliates Distributions	106,116							106,116
Total Operating Expenses	381,765	25,027	117,556	109,967	1,607	0	3,618	639,540

NOTES

1. MHS: Minnesota Historical Society/Legacy LKJ: Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation DSACF: Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
2. Cents are rounded to nearest dollar in figures reported but used to calculate totals.
3. Figures are based on December Financials for each year.
4. 2021 and 2022 payroll include staff paid by a Legacy Grant for collections inventory as part of the Collections Accessibility Initiative.
5. When expenses exceed income, the Society used funds from prior years or was reimbursed the next year.

For adjustments and additional details, please see our audits and 990s at <https://www.thehistorypeople.org/official-documents>.

The 2023 audit and 990 should be posted online by 9/30/2024 or sooner.

Affiliates

Affiliates 2021-2022:

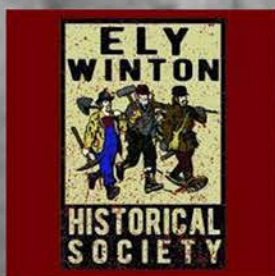
- Celia Domich, Ely-Winton Historical Society
- Mary Palcich Keyes, Hibbing Historical Society
- Matthew Marolt, Minnesota Museum of Mining
- Ron Sutton, Sisu Heritage, Inc.
- Linda Folstad, Tower-Soudan Historical Society
- Jeanne Maki, Virginia Area Historical Society

Affiliates 2022-2023:

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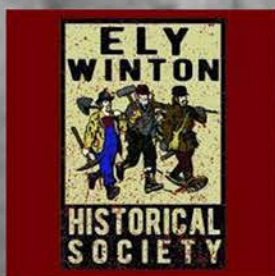
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Events Snapshot

Annual Remembrance Dinners: 2021-2023

The 16th Annual Remembrance Dinner in 2021 featured Donna Bergstrom USMC Lt Col (Ret.) as speaker. Her presentation's topic was "Intel Up! Highlights from History, Glimpses into the Future of Military Intelligence." The Mike Colalillo Medal of Honor Scholarship was awarded to Anna Palodichuk during the dinner as well.



Our 2022 keynote speaker for the Remembrance Dinner was Brigadier General Daniel Gabrielli. He spoke about his experience leading "Operation Allies Welcome" wherein he facilitated the resettlement of 7000 refugees from Afghanistan. The Mike Colalillo Medal of Honor Scholarship was awarded to Megan Nygaard.

Thank you to everyone who made the 2023 Remembrance Dinner such a success, held in honor of CSM John Werner who passed away that year, and to honor his contributions to veterans affairs in this area and beyond. General Joseph L. Votel's presentation on the "Return to Great Power Great Competition" was informative and timely.



Native American Heritage Day: 2021-2023



The 2021 Native American Heritage Day consisted of a drum song, a talk from Michele Hakala-Beeksma about Beargrease History, lunch with Native American-themed food, and children's activities of making drums, watching a lacrosse demonstration, and mitten craft.

The 2022 Native American Heritage Day featured cultural speakers, activities for children provided by the 1854 Treaty Authority and Committee members, a drum circle, a lacrosse demonstration, and children's story time. There was also an exhibit of Ojibwe Bandolier Bags from the Society's collections.



The 2023 Native American Heritage Day event included Native American-themed food in the form of frybread tacos, a hand drummer, and children's activities including making dreamcatchers and loom-beading. This event featured Dr. Jill Doerfler as a speaker and other local Native American authors discussing their work, and saw the long-awaited return of the refurbished Lake Superior Ojibwe Gallery.

Events, Continued

2023- “Hurrah for the Red and White!” This sweeping exhibition’s title was borrowed from Central High’s school song. It included more than 150 artifacts that ranged from band uniforms and cheerleader sweaters to the Trojan head from the gym floor, yearbooks, and much more. Designed by Duluth artist and Central alum Gary Lundstrom. “The history of Duluth Central High School is a big part of the history of the city, so this exhibit will appeal to everyone,” said Duluth Central Alumni Association Chair Don Ness. “The Duluth Central Alumni Association is indebted to many people whose foresight and generosity make this a true reflection of what Duluth Central, its students and teachers were all about.”



Gary Lundstrom also completed a restoration of the J.C. Ryan Forestry Room in 2022. He went on to re-configure the Depot’s SLCHS “A County Built on Iron” exhibit (that is due for an even larger enhancement in 2024).

A high latitude town in idyllic surroundings - and itinerant downtown wildlife. Sound familiar? In March 2023 we met on the Alaskan Riviera for a screening of 3 episodes of “Northern Exposure” in the LSRM. We saw how authoring history and asserting one’s place within history is as relevant today as it was in the early 1990s. It was an evening of “postmodern pining for the pre-plugged-in.”



Our “Duluth and the Cold War” exhibit was launched on October 20, 2023 during our annual Remembrance Dinner. This traveling exhibit features six pull-up panels and a 9.5’ Douglas Air-2 Genie Missile replica. The panes discuss the logistics and history of Duluth during the Cold War. Larry and Barb Sommer, and Gary Lundstrom put this incredible exhibit together, and it is currently on display on the second floor in the Depot! Pictured here are Board President Brig Gen (Bvt, Ret.) Ron L. Hein and Brig Gen Raymond T. Klosowski.

Programs: History in a Pint

The History in a Pint program series is presented by Veterans Memorial Hall wherein a veteran, or a veteran's story is presented about their experiences serving in the military while enjoying a pint of beer available for purchase from some of our local brewers. All programs are free, all are welcome to attend, ask questions and join in camaraderie.



2021- We hosted three History in a Pint programs. • "Killer Eyes in the Korean War." • "We Never Forgot Him: USMC SGT James Joseph Hubert's Long Journey Home." • "Albert Woolson— Last Civil War Veteran." Thank you to Erickson-Dale-Korea USMCR.

2022- We hosted four History in a Pint programs. • "Joseph Gomer— One of the Last Tuskegee Airmen." • "Treasures from the David Wisted Post #28." • "Saluting the Civil War— Minnesota's Role." • "USS Indianapolis— Delivery of the Bomb."

2023- We hosted four History in a Pint programs. To broaden our reach, our first event was brought to regional affiliates in Chisholm, Ely, and to Ecumen. • "USMC SGT James Joseph Hubert's Long Journey Home" • "Medal of Honor Recipient Henry A. Courtney" presented in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.



HISTORY IN A PINT IS A RECURRING PROGRAM OF THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL



Sergeant James Joseph Hubert, USMC



Sergeant James Joseph Hubert was killed in the Battle of Tarawa. 72 years later his remains were accounted for, and repatriated to Duluth. A scholarship was created in his honor to provide assistance to Denfeld H.S. students who demonstrate as Hubert did—perseverance and determination. Scholarship info: www.dsacommunityfoundation.org/event/james-j-hubert-memorial-scholarship-fund

ON THE ROAD AT THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY FAIR, August 2nd, 5PM. Fairground Arena, US-169 & East 23rd Street, Hibbing, MN





WITH GUEST SPEAKER DOUG OHMAN—HISTORIAN, AUTHOR, AND STORY-TELLER. www.pioneerphotography.com, Facebook/Pioneer Photography



MINNESOTANS IN THE CIVIL WAR

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17th, 5:30 IN THE LAKE SUPERIOR RAILROAD MUSEUM



HISTORY IN A PINT IS A RECURRING PROGRAM OF THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL

100 Years! 1922- 2022

ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY CENTENNIAL PARTY

FEATURING

-LAURA VELVET AND THE
BOOKHOUSE BOYS

-STEVE SOLKELA'S ONE
MAN BAND

-KEN BUEHLER, MASTER OF CEREMONIES

-FREE APPETIZERS

-CASH BAR

A **FREE** & INFORMAL EVENT AT THE DEPOT-

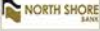
FR I. SEPTEMBER 16, 4-9PM

506 WEST MICHIGAN ST. DULUTH

THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIER SPONSOR!

National Bank
of Commerce

AND FOR THE GENEROUS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OF



September 16, 2022 the Society hosted a free, come-as-you-are party in the Depot's Great Hall to celebrate its first 100 years. Ken Buehler, beloved broadcaster and Director of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum was the night's MC, and Mayor Emily Larson proclaimed the day as St. Louis County Historical Day. Laura Velvet and the Bookhouse Boys, and Steve Solkela's "overpopulated" one man band were the featured entertainment. New displays drawing from the breadth of our collection were displayed, and our galleries were open to tour. Plus - we premiered a new, exhaustively researched publication, "100 Years," featuring high resolution images of our holdings, free to new and continuing members. Many thanks to our premier sponsor National Bank of Commerce, and others who contributed to make this event happen. We couldn't have done it without you!

100 Years- Celebrating the Collection from 1922-2022

100 YEARS



St. Louis County Historical Society
Celebrating the Collection from 1922 to 2022
by Kathleen M. Cargill MA

The 2022 Centennial Book was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who was dedicated to this project and their support of the St. Louis County Historical Society led by JoAnne Grahek Coombe, Sponsors included the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation, The Depot Foundation, St. Louis County, and Signature Wealth Management. Special thanks to Gary Lundstrom of Great Lake Design, Jeff Frey of CPL Imaging, Marlene Wisuri of Dovetailed Press, Aimee Brown of the

Kathryn A. Martin Library at UMD, the St. Louis County Historical Society Board of Governors and its staff: Julie Bolos, Jay R. Hagen, Marci Strack, Allie Melander, Ryan Kuchta, Lindsey Wood, Beatrice Domfeld, Katelyn Brinza, Erin E. Hicks, Abby Johnson, Terry Johnson, Robert Jan Quene, Tim White, and Kathleen M. Cargill. Every new member gets one for free!

Reviews from our feedback survey have stated that the book is: "An innovative commemorative history; not just another history book. An excellent volume." "First, aesthetically it is beautifully delivered: shape, colors, photos, chapters. Secondly, it contains really important info on the SLCHS collection in a very accessible format." "Quality paper, well displayed, easy to read, informative with personal human-interest stories; very inviting photos that support narratives. It makes you want to go to the next page!" 90% of book reviewers stated that the book had piqued their interest in visiting the museum. One respondent donated \$300 to the Society in gratitude for the book.



Depot Square



Depot Square recreates the feeling of 1910 Duluth with a wide variety of exhibits ranging from Duluth Fire Dept. No. 1 to the Zelda Theater. One hundred years ago Duluth was a burgeoning city with a population of 78,000 — almost the same size it is today. The mining, lumbering, manufacturing, distribution and transportation



industries all contributed to an economic boom that put “the zenith city of the unsalted seas” on the map. Pictured here are a station master’s office, Superior Street in Duluth as it looked in 1910, a turn of the century drug store and a dressmaker’s shop. Artifacts from over 100 years of the Society’s collecting contribute greatly to the authentic capture of this unique moment in time.

Traveling Exhibits

The SLCHS has 19 traveling exhibits covering a wide range of historical topics. They were viewed by 430,000+ people. In addition, the Traveling Exhibits Catalogue was refreshed to include new exhibits. These are listed on the Society's website and include information on how historical societies, schools, libraries, and other non-profits may borrow an exhibit. The Catalog is available on our website: thehistorypeople.org/traveling-exhibits

American Indian:

Ojibwe Faces and Stories

Fine Art and Photographs:

Albin Zaverl Art: Old Country Memories

Immigrants:

Children of the Finnish Homesteads: Growing up in Northern Minnesota, 1900-1945

Finns of Western Lake Superior

Preserving the Old Country: The Experiences of Croatians, Serbians, and Slovenians in St. Louis County

To America with Love: Journey of a Young Woman from Southern Italy to Northeast Minnesota

Local and County History:

Marshall Wells Hardware

Return to the River

The Promise, The Promise Kept, The Promise Realized, The Promise Renewed: The History of the Erie Mining Company

Military Related:

500 Days: 125th Field Artillery Photographs

Albert Woolson – the Last Civil War Soldier

Desert Medics

Duluth and the Cold War

James Joseph Hubert: Duluth WWII Hero Returns Home

Joe Gomer: Honoring a Legacy

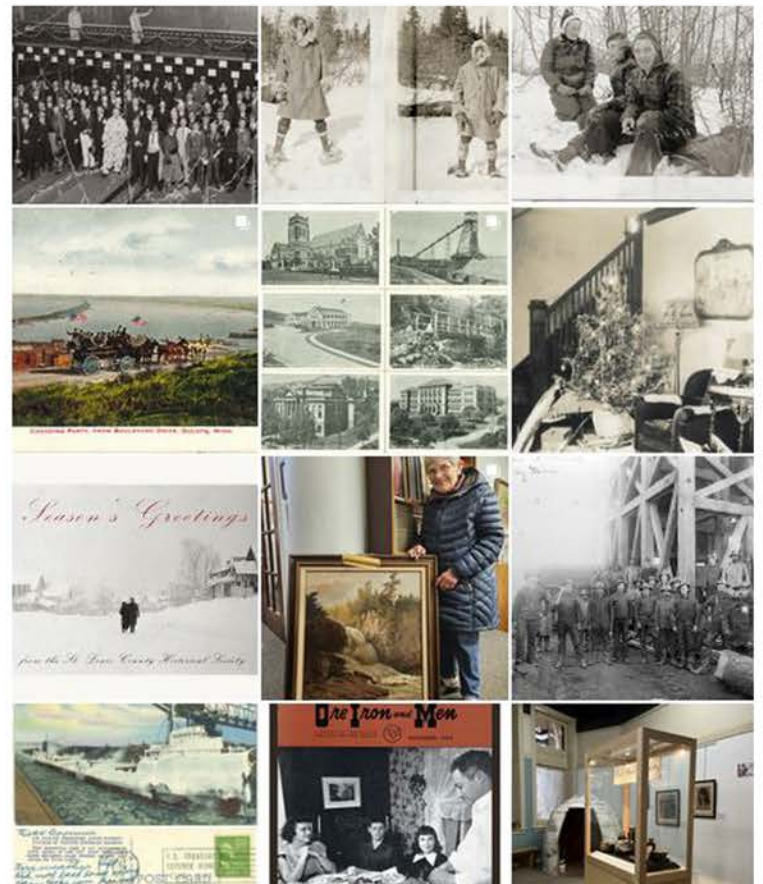
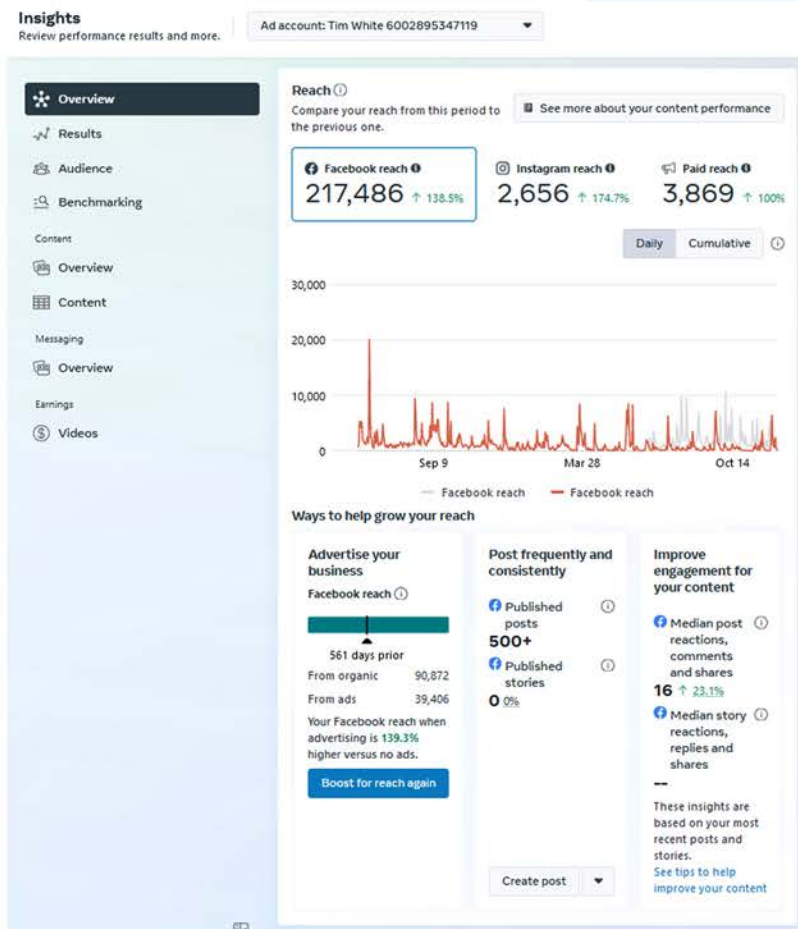
Joe Gomer: Preserving a Legacy

Never Forgotten: Man Behind the Medal. The Life Henry A. Courtney, Jr.

Salute to Servicewomen: Women in the United States Military

The 18 – Civil War Exhibit

The Society's social media platforms (primarily Facebook and Instagram) have seen a marked upswing since June of 2022. Most notable are our Instagram's 662.1% growth in profile visits, and a 334.6% increase in Facebook profile visits. Metrics such as reach on Instagram were up 174%, while Facebook new likes and new followers have all seen higher percentage growth than in previous years, and we've gained 118 new followers on Instagram. Find us at www.facebook.com/stlouiscountyhistoricalsociety/, and at www.instagram.com/thehistorypeople/.



Challenges and Celebrations

2023 “The Move”

Much of our 2023 was consumed with entirely relocating the Society’s stored items to offsite storage to accomodate changes being made at the Depot. St. Louis County required that we move 3,000 square feet of artifact space to prepare for HVAC updates and installation in the Depot building. Some items were moved to a different space within the building itself, while others have moved to a nearby County-leased storage space. Planning that had begun in 2022 was carried out by the hard work of project manager Ron Hein, Jay Hagen, Terry Johnson, and Nick Jensen moving artifacts from oversize storage to turret storage. Wherley and Associates then completed the transfer (in eight stages!). We are so thankful for such a dedicated staff, ready to help wherever needed and to get things done! The artifacts move has been an extensive and involved undertaking led by Ron Hein, and coordinated by Interim Collections Manager, Jay Hagen. They’ve worked tirelessly on facilitating this move, and ensuring that each phase has been carefully managed and accomplished with quality results.

Thank you to all involved.



Challenges/ Celebrations (cont.)

Retrospective of a Remarkable Leader

Museum exhibits are central to the Society's success. Among dozens of small and large exhibits at the Depot, the six areas below represent the breadth and historical awareness within JoAnne Coombe's leadership during the past 34 years.



A County Built on Iron, recently refreshed and scheduled for an extensive renovation, depicts the everyday life of early Iron Range miners. Just granted state funds for a significant redesign, the exhibit will include the Ojibwe historical perspective and impacts.

The Immigrant Waiting Room recreates a space in the Depot that welcomed thousands of immigrants traveling to northeastern Minnesota by rail in the 19th Century.

Veterans Memorial Hall Gallery invites patrons to learn about the central role played by the county's citizens in times of war. To honor those who have fallen, including women and men of all ethnic groups and from all military ranks, resulted from JoAnne's close collaboration with local veterans' organizations and the Veterans Memorial Hall Advisory Committee. An extensive project is in place to revitalize Medal of Honor Row.

The Lake Superior Ojibwe Gallery was the vision of an Ojibwe woman who worked with JoAnne and the American Indian Advisory Committee to create a museum space focused on sharing Ojibwe culture.

The J.C. Ryan Forest History Room is a tribute to early lumber industry, and to William F. Roleff who photographed camp life. Under JoAnne's watch, this expansive exhibit was significantly redesigned in 1990 and again in 2022 to better pay tribute to the area's loggers and craftspeople.

Women's history was a focus under JoAnne's leadership. The subject is woven into almost every collection the Society owns and is part of historical presentations and exhibits from American Indians to immigrants to military veterans. The positive impact on museum exhibits created under JoAnne Coombe's direction cannot be measured on one sheet of paper. JoAnne successfully guided the Society through many challenges; her writing skill secured myriad grant funds for programs, events, and exhibits. Her collaboration with those interested in history and with the direct descendants of miners and loggers, are reflected in two large permanent exhibits. Her visionary work with local Ojibwe people is evident in the gallery and in annual Native celebrations. Under her leadership, military veterans found a welcome home in a permanent gallery to honor those who served our country. Dozens of smaller programs, events, traveling exhibits, and cultural celebrations reflect JoAnne's determination to educate the public by showcasing the depth of the county's people from multi-ethnic and multi-religious backgrounds.

With her foresight, hard work, and vision JoAnne Grahek Coombe has set the stage for the future of the Society and its museum. Grateful members of Society staff, Board of Governors, American Indian Advisory Committee, and Veterans Memorial Hall Advisory Committee are united in thanking this extraordinary woman.

Featured Collection Items

2021 • Ten plus linear feet of archival materials were donated to Society for processing and transfer to the UMD Library. By cataloging and developing programs in tandem, Society staff continues to provide new and engaging exhibits and programs while gaining physical control of the collection. The Society's collections cataloging and inventory project, funded in part by the 2021 Collections Accessibility Initiative grant 5590G, was accomplished by year-end. Processed 80% of the donation back log from 2015-2018; researched provenance (history of ownership) and historic use of 2,000 items; created 5,000 unique object catalog records; increased Social Media engagement by 25%; organized 2,500 sq. feet of Collection Access Points; and digitized 30 linear feet of archival material. Fifty-three Found-in-Collection objects were processed. The team has catalogued 9,000 artifacts and completed the work on the artifacts from Turret storage. There are 16,000 3-D artifacts in the collection and cataloging is 65% complete.

2022 • Fifteen linear feet of archival material were donated to the Society, processed by Society staff/interns for addition to the Northeast Minnesota Historical collection. Hundreds of thousands of individual 3-D artifacts are estimated to be held in public trust. Actual numbers are contingent on completion of an ongoing inventory/re-cataloging project.

2023 • The St. Louis County Historical Society applied for and received a grant from the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant program. This grant will enable the Society to continue the inventory and Re-cataloging Project. This is a long term project that will enable our entire 3-D artifact collection to be available for viewing online.

The image above is from a generous recent donation by Mary Neustel of a Feodor von Luerzer (1851 - 1913) landscape. Feodor von Luerzer was born in Austria in 1851. Von Luerzer immigrated to the United States in 1886. He lived in Milwaukee and Cleveland before moving to Duluth, Minnesota in 1889. Von Luerzer died in Spokane, Washington, in 1913.



Volunteer Spotlight



The St. Louis County Historical Society relies heavily on the good will and hard work of numerous volunteers; Kevin Appel (USAR) is among this selfless group.

"I have been a volunteer for Veterans Memorial Hall for over five years. I cross-reference multiple data sources to ensure that all St. Louis County veterans are noted on the Veterans Memorial Hall website, and that their information is correct. I believe that Veterans Memorial Hall offers researchers and family genealogists an excellent avenue to discover more information about their family members, and other service members."

"I believe that Veterans Memorial Hall is a vital space for St. Louis County veterans, and that the measure of a nation is based on how it treats its veterans. I took an oath to defend the Constitution, and now that I am retired, I feel that volunteering is a gift, an opportunity to "pay it forward" to support veterans in any way that I can. I get a great amount of satisfaction in supporting the veterans of the area, and I am sure that is something everyone would feel volunteering with the Society. I would urge anybody interested in volunteering to reach out to St. Louis County Historical Society to see how they can help."

Acknowledgements

THANK YOU! Your contributions will have lasting impacts for generations to come. Thank you to St. Louis County, The Depot Foundation, grantors, members, sponsors, local military veterans, contractors, community members, staff, and all who contribute time, funds, and energy to the Society. Your gift enables us to continue our Mission to Collect, Preserve, and Disseminate our shared local and National histories. We look forward to continuing our partnership and legacy with you in the future.

"No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."

Alfred North Whitehead, English mathematician and philosopher

The 2021/2022, 2023 Annual Report of the St. Louis County Historical Society was produced by Hannah Green, designed by Tim White with contributions from Ronald Hein, Nicholas Jensen, Kathleen Cargill, Julie Bolos, JoAnne Coombe, Jay Hagen, Michele Hakala-Beeksmas, David Benson, Kevin Appel, and many more. Photos not directly attributed from Society staff and volunteers, affiliate partners, the Depot, Envato Elements stock imagery, and The Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, housed in the Kathryn A. Martin Library, on permanent loan from the St. Louis County Historical Society. Special thanks to St. Louis County, The Depot Foundation, University of Minnesota Duluth, and the Lake Superior Railroad Museum for their ongoing support for general operations and special projects. SLCHS serves as the state-designated history service provider for the County of St. Louis. This is the 99th, 100th, and 101st annual report that will be submitted to the Minnesota Historical Society since William E. Culkin submitted his report in 1923.



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