



A Letter From Our President and Our CEO

Whether they realize it or not, many Minnesotans first interact with the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) in elementary and middle school. Thousands of students participate in hands-on history lessons at our historic sites and museums each year. Across Minnesota, more than 90% of sixth graders learn the stories of our state through the *Northern Lights* curriculum, which has been produced by MNHS since 1989.

For the past four years, departments across MNHS have collaborated with countless external partners on a massive undertaking – updating *Northern Lights* based on feedback and to meet revised state academic standards. Creating the third edition, which will be available in the summer of 2026, aligns with our strategic imperative of **expanding authority and expertise**. As we commemorate America's semiquincentennial at that time, we will share this gift with the next generation of Minnesotans to help them steward our shared history going forward.

Another strategic imperative we are working toward is **reenvisioning space**, which allows us to push history to all corners of Minnesota. In FY25, we completed the Regional Daily Newspapers special project, digitizing 1.26 million pages of daily newspapers in Duluth, Rochester, St. Cloud, and St. Paul. Newspaper digitization makes important sources of history available to the public, bringing forward the experiences of people, their towns and cities, and the events and experiences that shape Minnesota.

We launched the award-winning *Minnesota Unraveled* podcast in FY25 to explore Minnesota's stories and how they connect to the present. With 15 episodes and 38,000 downloads in its first year, *Minnesota Unraveled* is one way we are fulfilling our strategic imperative of **transforming access** by removing barriers and increasing access to MNHS content for new and existing audiences.

Institutional changes implemented over the summer have put us on a path for our fourth strategic imperative, **creating a sustainable future**. Programmatic changes at three historic sites and the Gale Family Library, combined with a reduction in our workforce, has put us on a path to resolve our structural deficit. While these changes are challenging, they are necessary to continue our legacy of serving the people of Minnesota.

Speaking of legacy, please join us in honoring the legacy of Kennon Rothchild, whose contributions to the Minnesota Historical Society will be remembered for generations. Ken served on the MNHS Executive Council for nearly 40 years, including six years as president. During that time, he was instrumental in the fundraising for and construction of the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, in numerous key acquisitions to the collections, and in the growth of the MNHS Endowment Fund. He also championed the preservation and sharing of Women's Business History. Few people have done as much for MNHS as Ken. He passed away in August, and we are dedicating this annual report to Kennon Rothchild.

We would also like to offer our enormous gratitude to all the people of Minnesota who support MNHS and our mission. Thank you to our members, donors, visitors, legislators, employees, volunteers, interns, and our Executive Council for your commitment to MNHS in the past, present, and future.



President

Kent WhitworthDirector and CEO



Judge Peter M. Reyes, Jr.



Kent Whitworth



608 new acquisitions

to the MNHS Collections in FY25 across manuscripts, fine art, 3D, sound/visual, and maps and rare books.

New Acquisitions include the Military Intelligence Service Language School graph collection — a unique set of images documenting the service and activities of numerous Japanese-Americans serving in the Military Intelligence Service Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling in Minnesota.

13 new titles

published by MNHS Press

Longtime editor Ann Regan received the 2025 Kay Sexton Award from the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library for her significant contributions to and leadership in Minnesota's literary community.



18,536 membership households

In the May 2025 Membership Survey, MNHS members responded that they love the breadth of access, educational and fun experiences, excellent staff and resources, and the sense of contributing to preserving Minnesota's history.

2025AT A GLANCE

352

North Star Circle Members

102

Legacy Society Members

\$6 million

received in gifts and pledges

\$2.5 million

in planned gift commitments

21st Anniversary

of the Legacy Society



MNopedia views topped more than

1 million views

for the first time in FY25!



More than

824,600 visitors

explored MNHS sites in FY25.

MNHS hosted four free admission days in FY25, creating greater access to history for more than 22,600 people.



752 volunteers

supported MNHS by providing more than

16,000 hours

at historic sites, National History Day, and special events.



1.5 million pages

of current and historic newspapers were added to the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub.

More than

8.1 million pages

are now available.





19,000 students

from around Minnesota participated in National History Day.

59 students

represented Minnesota in the national competition.

They were awarded 4 medals, 5 finalists, and 7 honorable mentions.



Courtesy: Lake Minnetonka Historical Society

\$6.8 million

provided by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for

185 Legacy Grants

A project by the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society to repair the boat 'Minnehaha', listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



15 episodes

of the Minnesota Unraveled podcast

38,000 downloads





Left: *Minnesota* (where girls shoot hoops) exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.

Right: Marian Bemis Johnson and Dorothy McIntyre at the exhibit's grand opening.

Slam Dunk for *Girlhood*

GIRLS HAVE CHANGED HISTORY.

Girls have spoken up, challenged expectations, and been on the front lines of social change. *Girlhood (It's complicated)*, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution, brought a fresh perspective on women's history to the Minnesota History Center.

Girlhood originally opened at the National Museum of American History in 2020 during the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage. The History Center is among a limited number of museums capable of hosting an exhibit of this scope and scale, which ran from September 7, 2024, through June 1, 2025.

In addition to the traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian, the MNHS exhibits department developed a local component focused on girls' basketball called *Minnesota* (where girls shoot hoops). The Minnesota sports community rallied around this local section, which highlighted

the long history of girls' basketball in the state, dating back to 1892. From the exhibit's development, to its opening, to special events, Minnesota sports pioneers were ambassadors for the exhibit. They gave their stories, loaned their memorabilia, and shared their passion with their communities.

After the exhibit closed, several of the contributors were able to keep a piece of this treasured memory. Minnesota athletes featured in the exhibit were offered the graphic panels that told their stories. The remaining exhibit panels were sent to the Minnesota State High School League for a 2026 exhibit marking the 50th anniversary of the first official high school girls' basketball tournament.

Thank you to exhibit sponsors UnitedHealthcare, Securian, Woman's Organization of the Minnesota Historical Society (WOMNHS), and Judy Schwartau for their support.





Above: Lake Bronson dam, under construction by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Left: Artifact discovered by volunteers during Lake Bronson Archaeology Survey.

Hundreds of artifacts were uncovered—some potentially dating back thousands of years.

Archaeology Survey at Lake Bronson

IN NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA,

archaeologists and volunteers engaged in a unique opportunity to study a moment frozen in time. Throughout the summer, teams walked the lakebed of Lake Bronson, looking for debris and archaeological sites that have spent the last 90 years underwater.

The once-in-a-generation project was possible because of low water levels during construction to replace the dam in Lake Bronson State Park, Hundreds of artifacts were uncovered—some potentially dating back thousands of years. Archaeologists identified areas where pre-contact Indigenous people processed bison and did flint knapping.

The discoveries will be processed, studied, and eventually returned to Kittson County to be displayed at the museum and state park, providing opportunities for the public to learn about the area's history. As for the volunteers, they have lessons and memories to last a lifetime.

Some of the volunteers shared their sentiments:

"I learned SO much from the archaeologist and intern. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be a part of this exciting and important project!"

"It was fun and educational! I enjoyed everyone's sense of adventure."

"I especially enjoyed discovering items on the Bronson homestead, learning from our archaeologist, and talking with the other participants."

"Wow! What more can be said?"





Left: WOMNHS President Lori Tripp; Past Presidents Barb Nelson, Sue Mollner, Rita Dillon, Sharon Sorensen; and MNHS Director Kent Whitworth

75 Years of WOMNHS Power

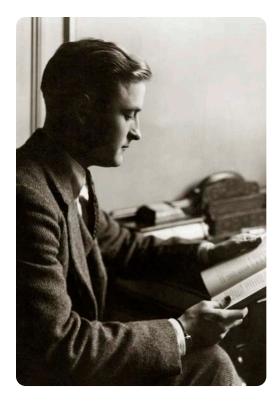
THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY (WOMNHS) celebrated
75 years of providing unparalleled
support for the Society and
bringing the past to life for
Minnesotans and beyond.

WOMNHS was founded in January 1949, the year that marked the centennial anniversaries for both the Minnesota Territory and the Minnesota Historical Society. According to research by historian Mark Haidet, then-MNHS Superintendent Harold Dean Cater described the society as "woefully understaffed" for the "herculean" task of celebrating the centennials. Cater turned to Vivan O'Gara Weyerhaeuser, whose newly formed Women's Organization hosted teas, arranged exhibits, promoted MNHS memberships, and built strong public relations for MNHS, making the centennial a success.

Haidet's research also highlights the contributions of the organization throughout several time periods:

 In the early 1950s, WOMNHS, which included several teachers in its membership, became involved in education. Members served as museum guides for school groups, and the organization sponsored the first Teacher's Institute.

- In 1977, WOMNHS answered the request from Minnesota First Lady Lola Perpich to arrange tours of the Governor's Residence. The tours became widely popular, with thousands of visitors touring the mansion over the next several decades.
- Since the opening of the Minnesota History Center in 1992, WOMNHS volunteers have generously donated thousands of hours for projects such as mailing membership renewals, working in the State Archives, and even making bobbleheads for the opening of the Then, Now, Wow exhibit.
- To celebrate their 50th anniversary in 1999, the organization launched an effort to build The Women's Organization Sites Enhancement Fund. Through the generous contributions of its members, this endowed fund has grown to more than \$369,000; and since 2006, it has provided more than \$120,000 to support several projects at MNHS historic sites including The Split Rock Lighthouse Centennial Celebration in 2010 and the revitalization of Historic Fort Snelling.







Above: Photograph of F. Scott Fitzgerald, approximately 1920, and artifacts on display.

Celebrating the St. Paul Roots of F. Scott Fitzgerald

THE ROARING TWENTIES NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE! A century after the publication of *The Great Gatsby*, MNHS joined in the city-wide celebration of one of St. Paul's most famous authors: F. Scott Fitzgerald.

MNHS holds an extraordinary collection of photos, maps, newspapers, letters, books, and other historical materials related to Fitzgerald. For the 100-year anniversary, staff put together a display, titled *That's My Middle West: F. Scott Fitzgerald's St. Paul,* featuring more than 50 items from the collections.

The free display at the Minnesota History Center explored Fitzgerald's early life and influences during his time in St. Paul. *That's My Middle West* also shared a slice of Fitzgerald's influence on American culture since he burst onto the literary scene.

The celebration at the History Center continued with a live reading of *The Great Gatsby* on April 10, 2025, 100 years to the day after the novel was published. MNHS staff and a number of special guests read the novel from start to finish, which took just under six hours to complete.

FINANCIALS

As a nonprofit organization, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) serves all the people of Minnesota. Our annual expenditures of roughly \$75 million come from public funding, earned revenue, and private funding that work together to deliver vibrant, crucial programs and services.

Typically, two-thirds of our operating support comes from the State of Minnesota. We deliver functions designated by state law, such as managing critical records and collections and operating and preserving important historic destinations. State support includes funding from the state's General Fund, Legacy Amendment (Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund) for statewide history and grant programs, and capital funding to preserve historic structures.

MNHS receives private support from donors, foundations, members, and corporations. Their gifts support general operations, school field trips, acquisitions, conservation, and community outreach. Finally, revenue from

admissions fees, rentals, museum stores, and other activities provides a base of funding while keeping history accessible and at family-friendly prices.

Despite the budgetary challenges MNHS faced in FY25 due to external factors, we are pleased to report that we ended the fiscal year with financial stability. This was achieved by closely monitoring our operations for efficiency and strategically reallocating resources to programs that offered the greatest impact for our visitors. As we continue to implement changes to our operational structure, we are confident that we will achieve long-term sustainability.

MNHS concluded FY25 with a strong balance sheet and the resources to support future operations. Our FY25 audited financial statements are available on the MNHS website. MNHS received an unmodified opinion from auditors Clifton Larson Allen, which is the highest level of assurance a CPA firm can provide for a financial statement audit.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (\$ in Millions)

SUPPORT	
MN State Appropriations	\$ 52
Contributions & Memberships	5
Total Support	57
REVENUE	
Earned Revenue	12
Total Support & Revenue	69
Investment Return	17
Total Support, Revenue & Investment	\$ 86

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Change In Net Assets	\$ 11
Total Expenses	\$ 75
Total Admin Expenses	16
Management & General Development & Membership	14 2
Total Program Expenses	59
Sites & Museums Library & Collections Education & Outreach Heritage Preservation/Grants	\$ 21 14 15 9

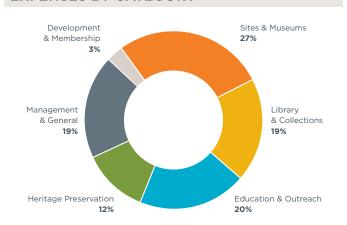
BALANCE	SHEET	(\$ in	Millions)

ASSETS	
Cash	\$ 7
Investments	190
Property & Equipment (Net)	110
Other Assets	42
Total Assets	\$ 349

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 349
Net Assets	335
Liabilities	\$ 14

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



NORTH STAR CIRCLE

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors in our North Star Circle for their leadership support from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. The commitment and generosity of our North Star Circle members sustains our work to serve all the people of Minnesota by creating powerful engagement with history to cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society.

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